

Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology

Fall 2021 Edition

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Psychology: <http://www.mtsu.edu/psychology/>

Clinical Psychology: <http://mtsu.edu/programs/clinical-psychology-ma/index.php>

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Psychology Department

Academic Classroom Building, Suite 240
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The Psychology Department at Middle Tennessee State University offers graduate study leading to the Master of Arts with an emphasis in Clinical Psychology. The Clinical Psychology program emphasizes a broadly based scientific practitioner approach. Graduates are prepared to pursue doctoral training and/or employment involving psychological assessment and diagnostic interviewing and/or the application of **applied behavior analysis***. The skills training does **not** prepare students to practice psychotherapy or professional counseling at the terminal master's level.

The program offers training in psychological assessment, including diagnostic interviewing and cognitive, personality, and applied testing. The curriculum and practica are designed to meet certification requirements for the State of Tennessee's Certified Psychological Assistant (CPA), the current master's level certification under the Board of Examiners in Psychology. Because of frequent changes in the Tennessee licensure and certification laws, however, we cannot guarantee that our program will fully meet the requirements when you apply for certification. We also cannot guarantee that you would meet certification/licensure requirements for other states.

In addition to the core requirements, the Clinical Psychology program offers training in three specializations. The first specialization is **general clinical**, allowing students to take a broad range of electives, including additional assessment courses. The second specialization is in **health/neuropsychology**. This specialization would be suitable for students who wish to enhance their knowledge of and skills in the area of neuropsychology and the links between physical and psychological health. It also would be an appropriate specialization for those interested in pursuing a doctorate in the areas of neuropsychology, health psychology, or behavioral medicine. The third specialization, **applied behavior analysis***, is designed to teach students the theory and application of behavioral assessment, intervention, and research. This specialization is appropriate for students with an interest in pursuing career opportunities applying learning theories (both operant and respondent) to affect behavior change in individuals and groups. Diverse application of these principles is emphasized in this specialization. For students who plan to pursue doctoral training, any of the specializations would be appropriate.

Facilities in the Psychology Department include a computer laboratory, remote access to the university computing facility, standard apparatus for human research, a library of many standardized psychological assessment tools, and laboratories with videotaping equipment. The MTSU Clinical Psychology program is a member of the Council of Applied Masters Programs in Psychology (CAMPP).

***Effective August 2020, new applications for the applied behavior analysis specialization will not be accepted.**

Clinical Faculty & Areas of Interest

Paul S. Foster, PhD

ACB 336 (615) 898-2007
Paul.Foster@mtsu.edu
Neuropsychology
(PhD, Virginia Tech)

Mary Ellen Fromuth, PhD

Coordinator, Clinical Master's Program
ACB 330 (615) 898-2548
MaryEllen.Fromuth@mtsu.edu
Child Psychopathology, Child Sexual Abuse, Interpersonal Violence
(PhD, Auburn University)

Ann Galizio, PhD.

ACB 371 (615) 898-2319
Ann.Galizio@mtsu.edu
Translational behavior analysis (including human and animal models), autism spectrum disorder, behavioral variability and stereotypy, delay discounting
(PhD, Utah State University)

James Loveless, PhD

ACB 361 (615) 898-5288
James.Loveless@mtsu.edu
Clinical Health Psychology, Behavioral Medicine, Adult Psychopathology, Evidence Based Psychotherapy, Psychophysiology
(PhD, East Carolina University)

Ciera Schoonover, Ph.D.

ACB 331 (615) 898-2584
Ciera.Schoonover@mtsu.edu
Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Behavioral Parent Training Interventions, Disruptive Behavior Disorders in Childhood, Child Welfare, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Childhood Traumatic Stress
(PhD, Central Michigan University)

Chris Tate, PhD

ACB 257 (615) 898-5452 *Field Practicum Coordinator & Comprehensive Exams Coordinator*
James.Tate@mtsu.edu
Psychological Assessment, Behavioral Medicine/Health Psychology, Substance Abuse, Smoking Cessation
(PhD, Auburn University)

Kim Ujcich Ward, PhD

ACB 373 (615) 898-2188
Kimberly.Ward@mtsu.edu
Applied Behavior Analysis, Parenting and Family Functioning, Eating & Feeding disorders
(PhD, West Virginia University)

Advisors

When you enter the Clinical Psychology program you are automatically assigned an advisor. This is usually based on the first letter of your last name or on your planned area of specialization. You have the option of keeping your assigned advisor or choosing another one.

You may change advisors at any time, but you must make sure that both the old advisor and the new advisor agree to the switch. Your advisor must approve any degree plan changes. Be sure to complete a revision form to document any changes. You also must coordinate with your original advisor to transfer your file to your new advisor.

[Revision Form](#)

Advisors are an important reference source for completing the Clinical Psychology program. They can help you with your course selection, program changes, updates in licensure and certification requirements, and any other concerns or questions you might have about the program. You will be required to meet with your advisor at least once per semester to complete a "POD" (Permission of Department) form, prior to registering for the next semester. It also is suggested that you talk with a number of faculty for "informal" advice throughout your time as a student.

To make an appointment with your advisor, simply call or email the advisor. To make sure your advisor is on-campus during a particular semester, call the psychology office.

Obtaining Your Master's Degree

To receive your Master's Degree, you must complete the following within the six year time limit:

- 1) Complete the pre/corequisites as mentioned below
- 2) Be positively evaluated by a committee comprised of Clinical Psychology faculty
- 3) Successfully complete and present a thesis
- 4) Pass a Comprehensive Examination
- 5) Complete a total of 46 semester hours, which include:
 - 22 semester hours of required core clinical courses (see below)
 - 3 semester hours of off-campus practica
 - 6 semester hours of statistics (3 for the **ABA Specialization)
 - 3 semester hours of thesis
 - 12 semester hours of approved electives in a specified track

Graduation Requirements

Candidate must

1. demonstrate knowledge of the core areas of psychology by completing the following courses at either the undergraduate or graduate level (relevant courses offered at MTSU are listed in parentheses):
 - a. group measurement/testing (PSY 4260/5260 or 6050);
 - b. abnormal psychology (PSY 3230/5230);
 - c. learning or cognition (PSY 4040, 4480, 5480*, or 6190*);
 - d. social or developmental (PSY 2210, 2300, 4190, 4210/5210, 4610/5610, 6120*, 6130*, 6410);
 - e. brain and behavior, sensation and perception, or research methods (PSY 3070/5070, 4780/5780, 4240/5240, or 4030/5030);
 - f. basic statistics (PSY 3020)

Courses marked with an asterisk () may be counted as an approved graduate elective depending upon specialization.*

2. complete a total of 46 semester hours (49 for the ABA Specialization), including at least 33 hours in psychology. Only 30 percent of the total number of hours may be dually listed (5000 level meeting in conjunction with 4000 or 3000 level) courses;
3. complete PSY 6280 (PSY 3020 or equivalent is a prerequisite for PSY 6280 and 6290), 6290, and 6640 (3 hours); (Those in the ABA Specialization are only required to take one graduate statistics course: 6280 or 6290)
4. successfully write and orally present a written thesis evaluated by a committee of psychology faculty in conjunction with PSY 6640;
5. pass a written comprehensive examination prepared by the faculty in the student's concentration (may be taken no more than twice).

Graduate Clinical Psychology Curriculum:

Core Clinical Courses (Required of all general clinical & health/neuropsychology students)

PSY 5470 Theories of Counseling **OR**

PSY 6841 Theories of Individual Psychotherapy **OR**

PSY 6080 Interventions with Children and Adolescents

PSY 6020 Theories of Personality

PSY 6100 Intellectual Assessment

PSY 6101 Laboratory in Intellectual Assessment

PSY 6250 Objective Personality Assessment

PSY 6280 Psychological Statistics: Regression

PSY 6290 Psychological Statistics: ANOVA

PSY 6510 Psychopathology

PSY 6640 Thesis Research

PSY 6690 Professional Issues and Roles

PSY 6801 Interviewing and Intervention

PSY 6851 Assessment Field Practicum (Clinical)

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Electives: In addition to the core requirements and the research requirements, all clinical students must select one of three specializations within the major. The specific options are listed below:

Psychological Assistant: General Clinical Specialization

Choose four courses (12 hours) from the following list. At least one of these courses must be marked with an asterisk (*).

PSY 5480 Learning Theories*	PSY 6400 Psychological Disorders of Children
PSY 5610 Adult Psychology and Aging	PSY 6440 Advanced Applied Behavioral Analysis
PSY 5720 Multicultural Perspectives in Psychology & Education	PSY 6500 Behavioral Methodology
PSY 5780 Human Neuropsychology*	PSY 6520 Psychopharmacology*
PSY 6120 Developmental Psychology: Child	PSY 6580 Multivariate Data Analysis
PSY 6130 Developmental Psychology: Adolescent	PSY 6770 Assessment and Therapeutic Interventions for Children's Emotional Problems
PSY 6190 Advanced Cognitive Psychology*	PSY 6780 Clinical Neuropsychology*
PSY 6340 Behavioral Medicine: Theory and Application	PSY 7100 Multicultural and Social Bases for Assessment and Intervention Practices
PSY 6390 Independent Research in Psychology: Clinical	PSY 7520 Assessment and Treatment of Addictions

Health/Neuropsychology Specialization - Required: PSY 6780 Clinical Neuropsychology

Choose three courses (9 hours) from the following:

PSY 5780 Human Neuropsychology	PSY 6520 Psychopharmacology
PSY 6340 Behavioral Medicine: Theory and Applications	PSY 7520 Assessment and Treatment of Addictions
PSY 6390 Independent Research in Psychology: Clinical (3 credits)	

Core Clinical Courses required for all those with Applied Behavior Analysis**

PSY 6XXX Skills Assessment and Instructional Methods in ABA	PSY 6640 Thesis Research
PSY 6100 Intellectual Assessment	PSY 6690 Professional Issues & Roles
PSY 6101 Laboratory in Intellectual Assessment	PSY 6801 Interviewing & Intervention
PSY 6250 Objective Personality Assessment	PSY 6851 Assessment Field Practicum (Clinical)
PSY 6510 Psychopathology	PSY 6280 Psychological Statistics: Regression OR PSY 6290 Psychological Statistics: ANOVA

Behavior Analysis Specialization** Required: Twenty-one (21) hours from the following:

PSY 5480 Learning Theories	PSY 6440 Advanced Applied Behavioral Analysis
PSY 6785 Principles of Behavior Analysis	PSY 6500 Behavioral Methodology
PSY 5430 ABA Ethics	PSY 6XXX Systems Level Behavior Analysis
PSY 6400 Psychological Disorders of Children	

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Repeating Courses

Graduate Students earning a course grade of B- or lower who wish to repeat a course, can obtain a **Request to Repeat Courses** form. **(requires login)**

<https://itdwebapps.mtsu.edu/DFPassThrough/DFCasSSOAuth?TargetResource=https://dynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com/Submit/Form/Start/eab2b78d-f98c-4706-a329-383c00643918>

Revision Form (Changes in Degree Plan or Advisor)

A Revision Form is an official record. Students must file a Revision Form if they change their catalog term, specialization/track, substitute courses, or switch their advisor. Any changes that impact their Course Program of Study as depicted on DegreeWorks must be made by filing a Revision Form. You must speak to your academic advisor before filling out the Revision Form.

In order to access your revision form, locate the form under the "Forms for Current Graduate Students" heading on the College of Graduate Studies webpage.

You will be prompted to log in using your MTSU credentials to access your specific form.

[Revision Form Tutorial](#)
[Revision Form](#)

Please be aware that there are additional dynamic forms on the College of Graduate Studies webpage under "Forms for Current Graduate Students" including the request to overload form, request to change name form and others.

Liability Insurance

Liability insurance is required for all students entering the graduate Clinical Psychology program at MTSU. The purpose of the insurance is to protect you from liability in the event that a lawsuit is filed against you as a result of or during your work on your practica or in practicum courses. **You will not be allowed to enroll in any practicum or testing (e.g., 6250, 6100/6101, Field Practicum) course if your insurance binder is not current.**

MTSU has never had a lawsuit filed against a student while enrolled at MTSU. In the event a lawsuit is filed against you, the insurance company will provide for your defense in court and any settlement against you. *Note: You do not have to be at fault to be sued; the legal proceedings may support your innocence, but someone has to pay legal fees.*

The policy you obtain must cover at least \$1,000,000 for each incident with a \$3,000,000 annual aggregate. Policies can be obtained easily from one of the sources below or from any insurance company that carries professional liability insurance. The cost of a policy varies from company to company.

Once you have purchased your policy, you must provide Karen Nunley (Academic Classroom Building, Suite 240) with a *copy* of the binder each year (the front page of your policy). Insurance must be obtained by the time you register for the program and must be maintained throughout enrollment at MTSU.

The following are some companies from which insurance can be obtained. Local insurance agents also may be able to write policies for you.

Trust Professional Liability Insurance
Trust Risk Management Services, Inc.
111 Rockville Pike
Suite 700
Rockville, MD 20850
1-800-477-1200
<https://www.trustinsurance.com/Insurance-Programs/Student-Liability>
Annual Rate as of 08/10/2021: \$35

The American Professional Agency
1-800-421-6694
www.americanprofessional.com/student
Annual Rate as of 08/10/21: \$35

Note: Insurance may take a few weeks to obtain. Plan accordingly.

Skill Development Courses

These are classes in which students get hands-on experience in various aspects of clinical psychology. Each class has a different focus. Descriptions, prerequisites, and estimated hours required per week outside of class are discussed below. You also should refer to the course descriptions in the current graduate catalog.

PSY 6100 Intellectual Assessment and PSY 6101 Intellectual Assessment Lab

This class involves administering and scoring intelligence tests given to volunteers, writing psychoeducational reports, practicing giving tests to classmates while supervised, watching and scoring videos of test administrations, recording and critiquing audio and video recordings, and preparing for tests over the material studied. Approximately six different intelligence tests are covered, with each student administering around 15 tests.

A prerequisite for this class is Introduction to Psychological Testing (PSY 4260/5260) or Psychological Testing (PSY 6050). Equivalent classes from other universities also are accepted.

In addition to registration fees and textbooks, students must buy protocols for the IQ tests. Plan to spend at least \$75.00-100.00 for protocols and other testing materials. Estimated time spent outside of class averages around 20-30 hours per week. *Note: Many students consider this to be the most time-consuming class in the Clinical Master's program. Plan accordingly!*

PSY 6250 Objective Personality Assessment

This class features supervised experience in administration, scoring, and interpretation of objective personality tests. Emphasis is given to the history, organization, and interpretation of the MMPI, MMPI-2, and MMPI-3; however, the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI) is also covered to a lesser extent. You will administer the MMPI-2 and MMPI-3 to volunteers. Also, you will be required to conduct interviews and will be required to videotape these interviews. Students in this course will prepare written evaluations based on information from these personality tests and interviews. You also may administer other personality tests to participants and write evaluations. A prerequisite class for this course is Introduction to Psychological Testing (PSY 4260/5260) or Psychological Testing (PSY 6050). Equivalent classes from other universities also are accepted. You also must complete Intellectual Assessment and Lab (PSY 6100/6101) before taking this class. Psychopathology (PSY 6510) is not a required prerequisite, but it is highly recommended prior to taking this course. No extra expenses are required for this class. Students typically spend 5 to 10 hours per week outside of class on coursework.

Questions Commonly Asked About Skill Development Courses

- 1. How do I get the people I need for the classes?** For these classes, you are responsible for finding your own participants to take the tests, although your instructors may aid in the process. In Intellectual Assessment, participants may be retested depending on their ages and the specific tests administered (both children and adults are tested). Obtaining participants for Intellectual Assessment is time-consuming: Try to arrange for participants ahead of time. You also may have to obtain your own participants for Objective Personality Assessment. *Note: Immediate relatives may not be used as participants in any skill development course.*
- 2. How do I get into the courses?** In order to enroll for these classes, you need a POD (Permission of Department) Form. Every semester you will be asked to complete a form that states your intention to enroll in these courses for the next semester. Registration priorities are based on number of hours completed, progress in the program, and having a current insurance binder on file at the time the PODs are assigned.

Field Practicum

PSY 6851 Assessment Field Practicum (Clinical)

The Field Practicum requires students to apply all of the information learned in their other classes to a clinical setting. Because the Clinical Psychology program is designed to prepare graduates for certification in Tennessee as Psychological Assistants, the Field Practicum is structured to be consistent with the Field Practicum requirements described in the Tennessee Board of Examiners's Rules and Regulations Governing Certified Psychological Assistants. It is very important to plan ahead when preparing for your Field Practicum.

The Field Practicum requires that you work a minimum of 300 hours at the agency where you are assigned. Under most circumstances, the maximum you are allowed to work is 20 hours per week for 15 weeks. Using this period of time to complete the practicum provides you with some hands on experience in the field of psychological assessment. Due to the 20 hour per week requirement, the Field Practicum may present you with considerable difficulties in terms of work schedule, childcare, etc. Please plan accordingly. For some practicum sites, deviations from the 20-hour per week requirement are acceptable. The Field Practicum Coordinator (FPC), however, must approve all exceptions, in writing, prior to the placement. All students on field placement also will meet bi-weekly with the FPC during the semester they are taking this course.

Often State Licensing and Certification Boards will ask for a listing of your clinical experiences. Therefore, you should keep records of number of clients seen (NOT NAMES!) and their approximate age, number of sessions, types of problems evaluated, number and types of tests administered, and supervision hours. A little work now makes licensing and certification later a lot easier.

Prerequisites

The Field Practicum comes at the end of the master's program. There are prerequisites that must be completed *before* you can begin your Field Practicum. The prerequisite classes are:

- Psychopathology (PSY 6510)
- Intellectual Assessment and Lab (PSY 6100 and 6101)
- Theories of Individual Psychotherapy (PSY 6841) **OR** Theories of Counseling (PSY 5470) **OR** Interventions with Children and Adolescents (PSY 6080)
- Objective Personality Assessment (PSY 6250)
- Interviewing and Intervention (PSY 6801)
- Professional Issues & Roles (PSY 6690)

In addition to completing the prerequisites, your professional liability insurance must be current, and you must receive approval from the clinical faculty and the FPC prior to contacting potential practicum sites.

Steps to setting up and registering for Clinical Assessment Field Practicum

Field Practicum Coordinator:

Chris Tate, Ph.D., ACB 257

(615) 898-5452 FAX: (615) 898-5027

E-mail: James.Tate@mtsu.edu

1. Make an appointment with the Field Practicum Coordinator during your first year in the program to describe the Field Practicum experience that you would like to have. Within one week after your meeting, file a written description of your ideal practicum site and your long-term career goals with the coordinator. If your plans and goals change during your Master's program, update your materials with the coordinator.
2. Each graduate student should meet with the Field Practicum Coordinator to discuss the practicum application process the semester before the student plans to enroll in practicum (PSY 6851). During this meeting, the Field Practicum Coordinator and the student will discuss practicum procedures and options. The student should download and bring a copy of the Field Practicum Application approval form to the meeting. Deadlines for submitting the completed Field Practicum Application Approval Form to the Field Practicum Coordinator are October 1 (for Spring practicum), March 1 (for Summer practicum), and April 15 (for Fall practicum).
3. Field Practicum Application Approval forms will be reviewed by the clinical faculty within a month after the deadline, and students will be notified by the Field Practicum Coordinator as to their status. After this approval process is completed each semester, a Field Practicum meeting will be held for those students who have been approved to go on practicum the following semester, and permission to contact practicum sites and contact information will be given to all approved practicum students.

4. Field Practicum Guidelines can be obtained from the Field Practicum Coordinator. All required forms, including Supervisor Agreement forms, will be provided by the Field Practicum Coordinator. **As soon as the signed Supervisor Agreement form is returned to the coordinator and a current insurance form is filed with Karen Nunley (Academic Classroom Building, Suite 240), the student will receive a POD to enroll in Field Practicum. Liability insurance coverage must be maintained throughout your placement.**

5. Students in Field Practicum will be required to attend scheduled bi-weekly meetings on campus with the FPC. Topics covered in Field Practicum meetings on campus include: licensing and certification information, ethics, professional issues, problems/solutions in clinical work, employment, and content not typically covered in graduate coursework. An exam over this material must be successfully completed at the end of the practicum class.

Dress Guidelines

Although what is considered appropriate dress will vary from practicum site to practicum site, and the practicum student should ask their on-site supervisor if there is a dress code (and if there is dress code documentation available), if the practicum student adheres to the following, they will likely not run afoul of a particular site's dress code.

1. Because you will likely be unaware of any dress code at a practicum site prior to interviewing, it would be a good idea to dress formally for this interview, as if you were interviewing for an employment position. You want to make as good an impression as possible. During the interview, you can inquire about a dress code and determine whether, if you eventually perform the practicum at that site, if formal dress is appropriate or whether you can dress less formally.

2. Business casual will typically be sufficient. This includes khaki/dress pants, an ironed (if necessary) buttoned down or a polo shirt, belt, and dress shoes with socks OR a dress/skirt with hemline no more than 1 inch above the knees, ironed (if necessary) blouse, shoes.

3. The following are to be avoided: Facial piercings or piercings on the head with the exception of a single piercing on the earlobes, visible tattoos, shorts, t-shirts, tennis shoes, flip flops, hair coloring that is not a natural color, and ungroomed facial hair.

Questions about the Field Practicum

1. **Can I take classes while I do the Field Practicum?** Yes, but you must have finished all of the prerequisites before you take the Field Practicum. Most students choose to work on their thesis while doing their Field Practicum. Please note that carrying a heavy course load in addition to Field Practicum could interfere with the requirements of your practicum site.
2. **Do I have to pay for the credit hours I take for my Field Practicum?** Yes.
3. **Can I set my own schedule within which I can work my required hours?** It depends on the agency. The most critical factor, however, is being supervised while working with clients.
4. **Can the agency pay me for my Field Practicum?** As per the Rules and Regulations Governing Certified Psychological Assistants, the Field Practicum must be distinct from work experience, thus you cannot be paid for Field Practicum work.

Thesis

About Your Thesis

A thesis is a research project that you develop, implement, and write up using the format of a standard empirical research study in psychology. It involves a literature review, a statement of hypotheses, use of standardized psychological tests or other measuring instruments, statistical analyses of the data, and writing your conclusions. The thesis must be written in APA style.

Deciding on a topic for your thesis can be done by researching areas you are interested in at the library. You can make the final decision by approaching those professors with whom you would like to work and finding out if they are interested in working on that topic with you (and have the time and the expertise to do so).

You sign up for variable credit (1-6 hours) when registering for thesis (PSY 6640). You must enroll for at least 1 credit hour of thesis each semester from the time you begin working on the proposal until you finish. You will receive either an "S" (satisfactory) or a "U" (unsatisfactory) grade for each semester you are registered. Keep in mind that it will probably take at least one calendar year to complete your thesis. You need 3 hours with an "S" to complete your thesis. Consult with your advisor before registering for thesis credits. Note that the Graduate Catalog states: Once the student has begun taking thesis research, he/she is expected to enroll in at least 1 semester hour of thesis research (PSY 6640) until the thesis is completed.

Please be aware that federal student loans will cover up to a total of 6 credit hours of thesis work.

Once each semester the Records Office sends out class rolls to all instructors requiring that they identify students who are not actually attending courses for which they are enrolled. For financial aid purposes, it is important that you are putting in a commensurate amount of effort for the number of thesis credits for which you are enrolled. The bottom line is that if you are signed up for thesis credits, you need to have contact with your advisor on a regular basis and put in the number of hours that are commensurate with your thesis credits. If you sign up for thesis credits and do not meet with your advisor and/or do not put in the required amount of work, not only may you receive a "U" for thesis, but this may have negative implications for your financial aid. We urge you to consult with your thesis advisor about his/her expectations for the number of hours you need to work on your thesis each week.

Thesis Committee & Selection

You must select a thesis committee that consists of a Thesis Advisor, a Committee Member, and a Critical Reader. Your committee can be made up of anyone on the psychology faculty, but either the Advisor or the Committee Member must be a core Clinical Faculty Member (see page 4). The Thesis Advisor is the person with whom you will work most closely. This person should have an interest in your topic and will give you direction and guidance from your thesis' inception to its final approval. The Committee Member also should have some interest in your topic but is not as involved in the process as the Thesis Advisor. This person also provides advice and suggestions from beginning to end. The Critical Reader only makes suggestions for revisions or changes on the proposal and is no longer involved once the proposal is approved. It is important to choose faculty for your committee with whom you can easily work, and who are knowledgeable about your topic.

You must submit an Advisory Committee Form to formally establish your committee and chair. This should be done in the beginning stages of the writing process, before your proposal.

[Advisory Committee Form](#)

Thesis Proposal Approval Form

You must submit a Thesis Proposal Approval Form upon completion of your proposal and once your study has been approved by the IRB. You will need to print and sign it or obtain digital signatures of your committee members.

[Thesis Proposal Approval Form](#)

Thesis Timeline

The time needed to complete a thesis and each of its parts will vary depending on the complexity of the study, the form of data collection, and other variables. Plan on about one year of work.

Proposal

Plan on using at least one semester for completing the proposal process. Although there are no formal deadlines for submitting a proposal, there are several factors to consider:

- IRB Review (downloadable forms at <http://www.mtsu.edu/irb/forms.php>):

During the regular academic year:

- Expedited reviews generally are completed one to two weeks after submission.
- Proposals for full review are considered once a month. Proposals are due two weeks before the meeting. Consult with your thesis chair or the website above to find out the exact dates for the semester for which you want to submit your proposal.

During the summer:

- It is best to have your proposal reviewed during the regular academic year.
- Obtaining IRB approval is less predictable in the summer and will generally take longer. The procedures for obtaining full review vary from summer to summer.

Note: If you are conducting research at another institution, that institution also will have to give approval. You need to take into account that each place has its own procedures, and time for approval may vary.

- When meeting with your chair or your committee about your proposal, submit the proposal to them for review at least one week in advance or obtain digital signatures of your committee members.

- Faculty members have varying schedules in the summer and take their vacations at different times. Additionally, some faculty members are generally not on campus during the summer. Plan accordingly.
- Committees do not always approve a proposal at the first meeting.
- The library is not open as much over the various breaks.

Completion of Thesis

- Dates for the thesis to be submitted to the graduate office vary from semester to semester. Please consult the Graduate Studies Academic calendar for the exact dates. Generally the dates are:

Fall: mid - late October

Spring: mid - late March

Summer: mid - late June

- The thesis needs to go to your thesis committee at least one week before it is due. Again, please keep in mind that your committee may (most likely will) require changes in your thesis. These changes will have to be made before the thesis is submitted. Thus, it is better to give your committee a copy of your thesis at least three weeks before the due date. Do not wait until the last minute.

Thesis Presentation

Once you have completed your thesis, the final step is to present it. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as presentation at a professional meeting. Actual presentation of your thesis at a professional meeting is not necessary prior to graduation, as long as it has been accepted for presentation before you graduate. Professional meetings can include the annual meetings of national (e.g., American Psychological Association), regional (e.g., Southeastern Psychological Association), or state (e.g., Tennessee Psychological Association) organizations. Consult with your thesis advisor before you present your thesis.

Suggested Procedure for Thesis

- Suggested Procedure for Thesis At every stage, consult with your Thesis Advisor, and if necessary, your Committee Members.
- Select a topic; find a Thesis Advisor who will work with you.
- Select a Committee Member and Critical Reader.
- Do a comprehensive and exhaustive literature review of your topic.
- Decide on a hypothesis or hypotheses to test.
- Create a study to test your hypothesis(es).
- Write your proposal.
- Submit it to your Thesis Advisor for review.
- File your advisory committee form for your thesis using link 'Advisory Committee form'
- Make changes (repeat as often as is necessary).
- Submit your proposal to your thesis committee at least one week prior to the thesis proposal meeting.
- Set up a meeting with your thesis committee to get their comments and decision on approval of your proposal.
- Make changes (repeat as often as is necessary).
- When approved, have your committee members sign the Thesis Proposal Approval Sheet.
- Submit an Institutional Review Board (IRB) form for your study (can be downloaded to your computer at <http://www.mtsu.edu/irb/forms.php>) to the Office of Compliance.
- Submit Thesis Proposal Approval Sheet with your letter of approval from the Research Ethics Committee to Department Chair for approval.
- After successfully completing the above steps, conduct your study and gather data. Note: You may not begin to conduct your study until this point.
- Analyze the data.
- Write up the results.
- Submit completed thesis for review to Thesis Advisor and Committee Member.
- Schedule and complete a thesis defense meeting.
- Make changes to thesis (repeat as often as is necessary).
- Submit Thesis Approval Form (<https://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/forms.php>), this form will be sent to you committee, program director, and the college of Graduate Studies

- Pay thesis book binding fee using the provided link (https://secure.touchnet.com/C20134_ustores/web/store_main.jsp?STOREID=2&SINGLESTORE=true)
- Forward your receipt to the department of psychology administrative assistants
- Submit publishing agreement form (<https://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/forms.php>)
- Before submitting thesis to the graduate school, you must check it for plagiarism. Your advisor should have a “Turn It In” drop box available for you.
- If you have not done so already, set up an account for ProQuest. Upload your thesis in a pdf format. ProQuest will offer you the chance to buy a bound thesis. Check no.
- Make any changes that the Graduate School requires before due date in the Academic Calendar (usually six weeks before the end of classes in a semester).
- Once the Dean of Graduate Studies approves, email the department secretary your PDF copy of your thesis so that they can make bound copies of it
- Present thesis.
- Submit the IRB Final Report (form available at <https://www.mtsu.edu/irb/docs/IRB-Progress-or-Final-Report.docx>).

Thesis Resources

Here are some books that have been very helpful to students working on their theses:

1. *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th ed.* (Available from Phillips Bookstore)
2. *Dissertations and Theses from Start to Finish, 3rd ed.* by J. D. Cone and S. L. Foster. (Available from the APA and from the bookstore)

College of Graduate Studies' Resources

1. *Thesis and Dissertation Manual* (Available online at <https://mtsu.edu/graduate/student/docs/MTSUStyleGuide2019.pdf>)

Questions about Your Thesis

1. **Is any financial assistance available for my thesis?** There are no monies available at MTSU for aiding you with research costs. You must provide for these costs on your own. You might be able, however, to get private foundations to help you. Funding may be available for Psi Chi student members; information on their research awards and grants can be found at Local: [Psi Chi website](#) or National: [Psi Chi website](#). Explore these options with your advisor or other faculty.
2. **Is there travel money available if I present my thesis at a conference?** The Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, upon recommendation of the Graduate Council, may award grants of up to \$500 to graduate students for travel related to presentation of research and creative scholarship at major conferences and venues. Applicants should make a case for need, and present evidence of acceptance of proposals for presentation. Priority funding will go first to graduate students presenting results of research or creative scholarship as either the sole author or the primary author(s) of a multiple authorship work. The applicant must be currently enrolled during the semester of travel. The Student Affairs and Travel Sub-Committee of the Graduate Council will consider applications shortly after receipt and awards will be made until existing funds for the semester are exhausted. Please direct applications queries to the College of Graduate Studies (615-898-2840). Student Travel Application forms are available at www.mtsu.edu/graduate/pdf/StuTravelAppl.pdf. Please talk to your advisor about possible funding available through the Psychology Department's Custom Textbook committee.
3. **Where can I get statistical help for my thesis?** Ask your committee members or your academic advisor for suggestions on how to get help.
4. **Where can I see completed theses?** The MTSU Library has a collection of theses authored by MTSU students (some who now teach in the Psychology Department). You can also access more recent theses through the online library database (<https://library.mtsu.edu/dissertations>). Additionally, your Thesis Advisor or Academic Advisor may have a collection of theses by students whom they have supervised.

Intent to Graduate Form

As stated in the Graduate Catalog: An [Intent to Graduate Form](#) is available on-line. Check the College of Graduate Studies website for the filing deadline for each semester, but it is generally around the first week of the semester in which the student intends to graduate. Don't wait until the last minute to file it, because there is a very restrictive time period for filing this form. Students also must pay graduation fees at the Business Office, and complete the College of Graduate Studies exit survey. Please be aware that if you have filed an intent to graduate form, but did not graduate, you must refile an intent to graduate every semester until you graduate.

Request to Withdraw Intent to Graduate Form

If you have filed an Intent to Graduate Form, but later realize you will not actually be graduating, you must submit this form (Request to Withdraw Intent to Graduate Form) to alert the College of Graduate Studies.

[Request to Withdraw Intent to Graduate Form.](#)

Because Intents are due early in the semester, some students realize after filing their Intent that they will not meet the requirements for degree conferral. If you have submitted an Intent, but do not actually graduate, you will not be able to register for classes again until you file this form. Once you complete all requirements and are ready to graduate in a future semester, you will need to submit your Intent to Graduate Form again.

Comprehensive Examination

About Comps

Comprehensive exams are taken at the end of your program of study. It consists of two parts that cover material presented in all of your required courses. Currently, there is nothing on the exam that is included in elective classes or other subjects not included in the core courses, though elective course material could be included if the faculty so choose. If you transferred in a course from another university or another graduate program, you are still responsible for the content of the course as it was taught in the Clinical Psychology program at MTSU.

Design of Comps

Currently, the two parts of Comps consist of:

- 100 questions in a multiple-choice format, which comprises 50% of the total Comps grade, and
- an essay section in which you must answer 4 out of a possible 5 questions for the other half (50%) of your grade.

Comps are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. You must score at least 70% of the total to pass Comps. For example, all of the following would result in 70% of the total and a passing score: multiple choice = 90% and essay = 50%; multiple choice = 65% and essay = 75%; multiple choice = 40% and essay = 100%.

How Comps Questions Are Determined

Each faculty member contributes a list of questions forming a pool of questions. Questions are selected from this pool, which is updated periodically.

Preparing for Comps

The clinical faculty offer an orientation session during fall and spring semesters for students preparing for Comps; however, preparation is ultimately up to you. Many students form study groups to discuss questions, compile material, and study.

Registering for Comps

You are eligible to take Comps after you have completed all core courses in the program. After you have completed your core courses, discuss taking Comps with your advisor. We suggest that you do not wait until your last semester to take comps.

When you have decided to take Comps, notify Karen Nunley (615-898-5192) in Academic Classroom Building, Suite 240 so you can be placed on a list or you can register on-line at the Psychology Department website:

http://www.mtsu.edu/psychology/grad/masterexam_reg.php If you have any questions concerning Comps contact the Comps coordinator, Dr. Tate (615-898-5452).

Administration & Evaluation

Comps are generally administered usually in March, July, and October. You are given four hours to complete both portions of the exam. Once you have finished, you turn in the exam. When you turn in your exams, they are assigned a code letter so

that they may be graded anonymously. Three faculty members then evaluate your essays and if two of three members indicate that you pass a question, you receive a Pass on that essay. If two of three fail the answer, then you receive a failing grade for that question. Your score for the essay portion is the percentage of the 4 questions you pass. Your multiple-choice portion of the Comps is simply graded and averaged with your essay grade for your overall Comps grade.

After the exams are completed, it generally takes around two weeks for your grade to be reported. The length of time between taking your Comps and receiving your grade will vary, however, according to how many people take the Comps with you.

Questions about Comps

1. **Do Comps cost money or give you credit hours?** No. This is your graduation present!
2. **Can you retake Comps if you fail?** Yes, but only once. If you fail the second time, you may appeal, but it is possible that you may not receive your degree.

Note: If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, you need to contact the Clinical Comps Coordinator (currently Dr. Tate) when you sign up for comps. The Clinical Comps Coordinator will require a letter from the Disability and Access Center (615-898-2783) verifying the disability and addressing the accommodation(s) requirements that needs to be made.

3. **Do you have to be enrolled at MTSU the semester you take Comps?** Yes. It is a requirement of the College of Graduate Studies. You must be enrolled for at least 1 credit.

Ethical Behavior

Professional psychologists adhere to a specific set of Principles and Code of Conduct as published by the APA in the *Ethical Principles and Codes of Conduct*. As a student of psychology you are required to follow the same code of ethics. Ethical and professional behavior both in and out of the academic environment is required.

Academic Integrity and Misconduct at MTSU

Middle Tennessee State University strives to promote values and attitudes that are reflective of solid academic character and integrity. For this reason, MTSU expects each student to complete assignments that are original and reflective of that individual student. Academic integrity is an essential component of a quality education. When students participate in behavior that is considered to be academic misconduct, the scholarly value of their education is lessened. MTSU policies and procedures can be found at <http://www.mtsu.edu/judaff/index.php>.

Academic Misconduct Defined

At MTSU, "Academic misconduct may consist of acts of plagiarism, cheating or fabrication" (III:00:08 Academic Misconduct), or any such acts. These behaviors are defined as:

- (1) "Cheating. Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or aids in any academic exercise or test/examination." The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- (2) "Fabrication. Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise."
- (3) "Plagiarism. The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper attribution. This includes self-plagiarism, which occurs when an author submits material or research from a previous academic exercise to satisfy the requirements of another exercise and uses it without proper citation of its reuse."

Plagiarism is described further in the Harbrace *College Handbook, 11th Edition* (1990, pp. 424, 426, and 427):

You must acknowledge all material quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from any published or unpublished work. Failing to cite a source, deliberately or accidentally, is plagiarism. A paraphrase is a restatement of a source in about the same number of words. Your restatement of someone else's words should honor two important principles: your version should be almost entirely in your own words, and your words should accurately convey the content of the original passage. If you simply change a few words in a passage, you have not adequately restated it. You may be charged with plagiarism if the wording of your version follows the original too closely.

Plagiarism can include:

- Copying another student's work.
- Utilizing the wording of another author's work in your paper and not citing the author in your references.
- Using the ideas of another author in your work without citing that author in your references.
- Restating an author's works too closely.

It also is unethical to turn in the same or similar paper to two professors and claim each as an original product for a class assignment. The potential consequences for plagiarism at MTSU vary from failing the class in question to dismissal from the university.

Ethical and Professional Behavior

Members of the clinical faculty at MTSU take very seriously their responsibility to ensure that graduates of our program do no harm, intentionally or unintentionally, to consumers of psychological services. As students in a clinical psychology master's program, you are in training to work with clients who will be emotionally vulnerable and may be a danger to self or others. Therefore, your ability to perform adequately in your professional role is dependent upon both an adequate knowledge base and adequate competence in areas such as emotional maturity, ethical development, interpersonal sensitivity, social skills and ability to work under supervision. Students in the Clinical Psychology program must show sufficient professional development and psychological well-being so that they will not do harm to their clients. Failure to show sufficient development may result in requests for remediation or, in extreme cases, dismissal from the Clinical Psychology program at MTSU.

Problems in any of the above areas are referred to the student's advisor and/or the Committee for Student Development (CSD). The CSD consists of clinical faculty members and was organized to resolve ethical issues that might affect a student's performance in his/her professional role. The focus of the CSD is on enhancing student development and working with a student to resolve problems. All students are required to be familiar with and abide with the *Ethical Principles and Codes of Conduct* of the American Psychological Association.

All students are evaluated each year by the clinical faculty regarding their progress in the program and professional development.

FERPA Statement

While FERPA generally prohibits the disclosure of student PII (personal identifiable information) contained in educational records without the written consent of the student, educational institutions may disclose information within the educational record without the student's written consent under certain exceptions. Specifically, FERPA allows educational institutions to disclose a student's information without prior written consent to other "school officials," including teachers, within an agency or institution who the agency of institution determines has a legitimate educational interest (see 34 CFR § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(A)). In addition, and according to the DOE's [website](#), "school official" is not defined in the FERPA regulations; however, the DOE has stated that it "generally interprets the term to include parties such as: professors; instructors; administrators; health staff; counselors; attorneys; clerical staff; trustees; members of committees and disciplinary boards; and a contractor, volunteer or other party to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions" (see the DOE website, entitled *FERPA General Guidance for Students*).

How to File a Grievance or an Appeal

Should a student feel it is necessary to file a grievance or an appeal, the Middle Tennessee State University policies can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook, The Student Handbook, and The Graduate Catalog. Please consult these sources for policies relating to specific complaints. In general, however, an attempt should be made to resolve the issue first with the person(s) directly involved. If that fails, the issue should be taken to the coordinator of the Clinical Psychology program and/or the chair of the psychology department. A written appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies would be the next step if the issue has not been resolved. [Appeals to the Graduate Council](#). As stated above, however, consult the handbooks and graduate catalog because committees already exist to handle certain complaints (e.g., The Grade Appeals Committee).

Student Psychology Organizations

American Psychological Association

750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242
1 (800) 374-2721
www.APA.org

Association for Psychological Science

1133 15th Street, NW Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005-2077
1 (202) 293-9300
www.psychologicalscience.org

Tennessee Psychological Association

P.O. Box 281296
Memphis, Tennessee 38168
1 (901) 372-1015
www.tpaonline.org

PSI CHI/Psychology Club

MTSU P. O. Box X034
Dr. Tom Brinthaupt, Advisor
(615) 898-2581
[Psi Chi Honor Society](#)

Tennessee Association for Behavior Analysis

www.tennesseeaba.org

Association for Behavior Analysis International

550 W. Centre Ave.
Portage, MI 49024-5364
1 (269) 492-9310
www.abainternational.org

Financial Aid

Graduate Assistantships - The psychology department has a limited number of assistantships available every year. Graduate assistants may be assigned to work for a specific class, may work with faculty on research, show a film in class, administer an exam, or be assigned other duties. Assistantships are competitive. The application deadline is October 1 for spring assistantships and March 1 for fall assistantships. Application materials may be found at the psychology website <http://www.mtsu.edu/psychology/grad/assistantship.php>.

Research Assistant - A number of faculty in the psychology department have money for research assistants built into their research grants. You must contact faculty members directly and ask about current or future grants. The amount of money is dependent upon the grant.

College Work-Study - You may be eligible for the college work-study program. As part of this program you could work at a number of jobs around campus. It is possible to work in the psychology department as part of this program. Contact the Financial Aid Office on campus (MT One Stop, room 210, phone: 615- 898-2111).

Student Loans - You may be eligible for student loans. Amount of award varies. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office.

Psychology Department Awards - The department has a few awards for outstanding students. These awards are given only once each year and are competitive. The awards are the Prytula Memorial Scholarship (\$500.00), the Outstanding Graduate Student in Clinical Psychology, and the Elizabeth Wright Award.

For more information on funding for graduate school, access the “Funding” link on the MTSU College of Graduate Studies homepage (<https://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/funding.php>)

Re-enrollment and Leave of Absence

Once admitted to the Clinical Psychology program, a student must enroll every semester (excluding summers). If a leave of absence is necessary, consult with your advisor and submit a written request for a leave of absence to the clinical coordinator. This leave must be approved by the clinical faculty prior to the leave. If a student has broken continuous enrollment (i.e., not enrolled in a fall or spring semester), the student must apply to be readmitted to the Clinical Psychology program. If a student had requested and had been granted a leave of absence, the student must write a letter to the clinical coordinator requesting readmission at least 30 days prior to the semester in which the student wishes to re-enroll. If the student had not been granted a leave of absence, the student must make the request for readmission by March 1 for enrollment in the summer or fall semester and by October 1 for enrollment in the spring semester. Readmission to the graduate college is not automatically granted. In addition to a leave of absence, students also may consider applying for a “stop-out” if unable to maintain continuous enrollment (see Graduate Catalog). The form for a request to “stop-out” can be found at the [“stop out-form”](#)

Final Note

If you have any further questions, ask your advisor, contact the Clinical Psychology program coordinator, Mary Ellen Fromuth, Ph.D. at 615-898-2548, the Department Chair, Greg Schmidt, PhD., at 615-898-2706, Academic Classroom Building, Suite 240H or Karen Nunley at 615-898-5192, Academic Classroom Building, Suite 240J for assistance.

Disclaimer

Please note, that for the most current and updated information, please check both MTSU’s online Graduate Catalog and MTSU’s College of Graduate Studies webpage.