

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY

MASTERS OF ARTS RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

# Graduate Student

## Handbook 2025

# SJSU | DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

One Washington Square  
San Jose, CA 95192-0120  
[www.sjsu.edu/psych](http://www.sjsu.edu/psych) | [psychology@sjsu.edu](mailto:psychology@sjsu.edu)  
408-924-5600 | Fax 408-924-5605

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Document created and revised by Christine Ma-Kellams, Evan Palmer, Clifton Oyamot, Ronald Rogers, and Greg Feist

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# Main Campus Map



# REx MA Degree Program At A Glance

	<b>Coursework</b>	<b>Paperwork</b>	<b>Thesis</b>
<b>Fall 20--</b> Semester 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Seminar (280)</li> <li>Advanced Statistics (245)</li> <li>[breadth course]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check graduate category. If <i>Conditional</i> see coordinator ASAP</li> <li>Begin using your SJSU assigned email address</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify adviser</li> <li>Meet with coordinator</li> <li>Develop thesis ideas</li> <li><i>Highly Recommended:</i> become involved in a faculty lab</li> </ul>
<b>Spring 20--</b> Semester 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experimental Design (220)</li> <li>Multivariate Analysis (235)</li> <li>[breadth course]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit <a href="#">Advancement to Candidacy form</a> (end of semester)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare thesis proposal &amp; present it</li> <li>Establish thesis committee</li> <li>Submit IRB application</li> <li>Receive <a href="#">thesis approval</a> from advisor and committee</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 20--</b> Semester 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Master's Thesis (299)</a> – thesis development</li> <li>Receive RP grade for 299 (in progress)</li> <li>[breadth course]</li> <li>[elective]</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Be aware of thesis submission deadlines</a></li> <li>Collect data</li> <li>Analyze data</li> </ul>
<b>Spring 20--</b> Semester 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Master's Thesis (299)</a></li> <li>Receive RP grade for 299 (in progress) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>[breadth course]</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply for graduation through MySJSU</li> <li>Coordinator submits <i>Culminating Experience</i> form</li> <li>Advisor changes 299 RP grade to CR (credit)</li> <li><a href="#">Commencement Information</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write thesis</li> <li>Defend thesis</li> <li>Revise thesis in response to committee and submit thesis to Graduate Studies.</li> <li>Revise and resubmit thesis in response to Graduate Studies feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 20--</b> Semester 5+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Continuous Enrollment (1290R)</a> - to remain in good standing with SJSU until thesis is complete. See the <a href="#">College of Graduate Studies</a> for more information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Seven Year Time Limit</a> for course work credit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work towards thesis completion</li> </ul>

The above checklist is focused on the general steps needed to complete our degree program. Important information about completing your degree at SJSU can be found at the following:

- [Fall](#) and [Spring Registration Fees](#). Full-time enrollment is 6.1 or more units.
- [Steps for Completing your Graduate Degree](#)
- [Candidacy and Graduation Deadlines](#)
- [Master's Thesis](#)

Chapter

1

## Getting Started

*Now that you are in graduate school, what should you do and what should you know in order to maximize your chances of success?*

W

Welcome to the MA in Research and Experimental (REx) Psychology program at SJSU! The purpose of this Handbook is to provide information about our program and to answer many of the questions you will have as you progress through the REx program. Please review this document carefully and keep it for reference throughout your time here as a student.

### About This Handbook

Before we begin, let me introduce you to the organization and helpful features of this handbook. Overall, the organization of the handbook is meant to mirror your progression through the program.

- Chapter 1 will introduce you to important aspects of graduate study.
- Chapter 2 serves as a description of our program, including our mission, degree requirements, faculty, resources at your disposal, advancement to candidacy, and steps toward graduation..
- Chapter 3 will be a very important chapter for all of you. In this chapter you will find a comprehensive discussion of everything to do with your master's thesis.
- Chapter 4 will describe everything you need to know about graduation — the culmination of all your hard work!
- Appendix A describes SJSU academic policies as they relate to your rights and responsibilities as a graduate student.

One last note before we begin. You'll notice icons strategically placed throughout this handbook. These icons are meant to draw your attention to something important within the text, e.g., a valuable bit of information, an important form, or a helpful online resource. Keep an eye or two out for these icons throughout the handbook.

## Where to Find Help

Help is always just a phone call or click away. You should always feel absolutely free to contact the MA Program Coordinator with any questions or problems that you may have. The Coordinator is here as a resource to you and you should definitely make use of her/him whenever you need help. Here is a list of people and pages that you may wish to contact for particular questions or problems.

### Issues Concerning the REx MA Program or its Faculty

#### The REx MA Program Coordinator

Dr. Christine Ma-Kellams	Phone:	408.924.5642
DMH 322	Email:	<a href="mailto:christine.ma-kellams@sjsu.edu">christine.ma-kellams@sjsu.edu</a>

#### The Department Chair

Dr. Evan Palmer	Phone:	408.924.5650
DMH 157	Email:	<a href="mailto:evan.palmer@sjsu.edu">evan.palmer@sjsu.edu</a>

### Issues Concerning Course Registration or Other Administrative Services

#### Graduate Administrative Assistant

Jeanne Stam	Phone:	408.924.5603
DMH 157	Email:	<a href="mailto:jeanne.stamm@sjsu.edu">jeanne.stamm@sjsu.edu</a>

#### Administrative Support/Hiring/Finance

Nha-Nghi Nguyen	Phone:	408.924.5602
DMH 157	Email:	<a href="mailto:nha-nghi.nguyen@sjsu.edu">nha-nghi.nguyen@sjsu.edu</a>

## Issues Concerning Graduate School at the University Level

## Graduate Studies

## Issues Concerning Your Mental Health & Stress Management

## Counseling Services

Student Wellness Center      Phone: 408.924.5910  
Room 300

## Issues Concerning Your Safety

## University Police

7<sup>th</sup> Street Parking Garage Phone: 408.924.2222

## Academic Resources

## Library

The [SJSU library](#) has many resources to support student academic success (e.g., study spaces, collaborative spaces, tutoring, writing center, computing, 3D printing), including the [Grad Lab](#), a graduate students only space.

The SJSU library also has a librarian who specializes in psychology (and other social sciences), and this librarian can serve as a very valuable resource for helping you to develop research ideas and locating appropriate research materials.

## Psychology Library Liaison:

Christa Bailey

408-808-2422

Christa.Bailey@sjsu.edu

<http://libguides.sjsu.edu/psychology>

## Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](#) located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

## ACCESS Success Center

The [ACCESS Success Center](#) is a resource for College of Social Sciences students, which includes psychology majors. This center provides mentoring, tutoring, and advising especially geared for social science majors. The center provides workshops and presentations on writing, statistics, graduate school applications, and so forth.

## SJSU Peer Connections

[Peer Connections](#), a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B.

## SJSU Writing Center

The [SJSU Writing Center](#) is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](#).

## The Graduate School Difference

***“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,*** These words were true for Charles Dickens (1812 - 1870) in “A Tale of Two Cities” and they are also true of graduate school! For many of you, graduate school will be a time in your life when you experience some of your greatest “highs”, as well as your deepest “lows.” Nothing you do will alter this fact, but what you do can dramatically affect the ratio between positive and negative experiences — maximizing your time spent enjoying the ride. There are two important concepts that you must get your head around; the earlier, the better.

*First, graduate school is not merely a simple continuation of your senior year as an undergraduate.* What you will be exposed to, how much you will be exposed to, and, most

importantly, what will be expected from you will be dramatically different from your experiences as an undergraduate. You are becoming masters of a field! That is to say, you not only need to *know* information, but you need to be able to *use* the information, often in new, creative, and sophisticated ways.

Second, *you must gain control over and take responsibility for your progress*. Although we are here to help, your ultimate success in our program and in your career will depend on your personal approach and commitment to your graduate education. Will you approach your studies as a means to a grade or as a means to mastery? Will you self-engage in the many facets of science (e.g., the literature, research, data analysis, interpretation, conference presentations, publishing, etc.), or will you wait to be told what to do next? As the program faculty we are here to expose you to the theory, techniques, and experiences which make-up the science of psychology. Whether or not a scientist and scholar are born-out of this exposure will depend entirely on your efforts and commitment to your graduate experience.

In the great tradition of Top Ten lists, the following are some tips for success (in no particular order). These are likely issues you will address while you are here at SJSU.

### Top ten tips for success

#### **1. Aim for Mastery – Not the Top of the Class**

One of the classic things that will happen to many people in graduate school is they will realize they are no longer the smartest person in the class. You are here because, in all likelihood, you were one of the smartest in the class. Now you are in a class of “smarties.”

Each person around you will bring something to your knowledge. We want you to continue to do your best, but notice that the competition factor is no longer required. Aim for mastery of the material you are given. Compete within yourself. All of you are successful in that you are here.

#### **2. Aim High and Then Raise the Bar**

What you are about to do will take a lot of courage! You are going to try to develop your core skills as a researcher and scholar in just a few short years. Growth is challenging and sometimes stressful. In this process notice your desire to do just enough to get by and then return to your value of becoming better at what you want to do. Set your sights high, aim for those goals, and then be brave and raise that bar of success.

#### **3. Take Responsibility**

This is not the same as other experiences you may have had where your teachers or colleagues will tell you what you need to do. Part of becoming a professional is learning to take responsibility for your education and development. This means asking questions AND looking for answers on your own.

Get the most out of your graduate education. Take advantage of opportunities that come your way. This may include attending workshops, presenting at conferences, or teaching a lecture or two.

When you hear about an experience someone else is having or just had, ask how you can get that, too. There are very few opportunities in this field that only happen one time. You must take action and seek out what you desire.

#### **4. Change your Study Habits**

You will likely need to learn to study differently than you did in your undergraduate work. Three main issues require you to change how you approach learning this material:

- Not only is the material different, but there is a lot more of it
- Your goal now is NOT memorization, but integration and utilization
- Your answers to questions need to be sophisticated, not generic.

With respect to the first issue, there is a great deal to read. Ask yourself to step up to the challenge of reading what you have been assigned. Be sure to budget your time and make choices about how you allocate your time.

Your professors are not sadistic (well, not all of them). They are not trying to break you or cause you to go blind. Instead, they have very thoughtfully narrowed down a massive literature into what they think you can and must read in a semester. Yes, all of your professors know you have more than one course.

Do not try to do the reading by looking for the answers to test questions; read for what you need to learn for your development and what the professor is asking you to *learn*. Do ALL of the reading. DO NOT skim.

With respect to the second and third issues, remember that you are developing your knowledge base as a scientist and scholar of psychology. Your answers to difficult questions must show that you appreciate the complexity of the issues raised. Your answers to questions need to show that your knowledge base is building over time and integrates material from all of your coursework.

#### **5. Utilize Your Peers**

I can't tell you how many colleagues have shared that when they got into graduate school, they were certain that they were the only one struggling and that they'd soon be kicked-out once their true abilities became known. The truth was that almost everyone was struggling; just about everyone was second-guessing their abilities. You can get so many things from your peers or fellow students. Here are just a few great features:

- Form study groups – study out loud, share the wealth, and talk out the issues

- Utilize social support – get help with your stress, have lunch together, laugh together
- Normalize your experience – talk to your friends about your challenges and experiences - odds are your colleagues feel the same way, and you didn't even know it. The world feels more manageable when you are not alone.

## **6. Improve your writing**

Great writing is a notable characteristic of successful scientists. Clarity in writing is essential in your life as a student – writing papers, answering exam questions – and as your life as a professional writing journal articles, reviews, grant proposals, and on and on and on. SJSU has several resources that you can draw upon to improve your writing. See the *Where to Find Help* section for a list of them.

## **7. Talk in Class Discussions**

One of the best ways you will learn course material is to talk out loud during class discussions. Your ability to talk about psychology is not only critical for your education, but essential for your career! Many people are shy at first, and that makes sense. Still, be sure to try to develop your voice and get in on those discussions.

To this end, attendance in graduate school is essential and an important part of the program. You're expected to consistently attend all your graduate courses and reliably meet their deadlines.

In addition to class discussions, you'll also be expected to present your research to the public (e.g., as a PSYC 220 requirement).

## **8. Ask for help**

Graduate school is a difficult, challenging, and stressful experience. Please ask for help WHEN you need it, not after it is too late to do anything about it. We are committed to your success in this process.

## **9. Connect with the Faculty**

Identifying your thesis advisor early in your graduate career is by far the most important thing that you can do to maximize your chance of success. Take every opportunity to get to know our faculty — stop by office hours, come to hear them speak during colloquia; make an appointment to learn about their research. Not only will you quickly identify which faculty member you share research interests with, but you will begin the building of professional relationships that will serve you well for the rest of your career.

## **10. Maintain a Balance in Your Life**

Remember that only part of what you are doing is graduate school that sits in the context of the rest of your life. Your challenge will be to balance the incredible demands of this program with the rest of your life.

Please tend to your other relationships in your life. Enjoy this process as one of the many experiences open to you all of the time. Your life is happening right now, it is not waiting for you for when you “finally finish school.”

## Staying Focused in the Program<sup>1</sup>

### Choosing a Research Topic

Along with choosing an adviser, the most important decision you will make in graduate school is choosing a research topic. You will likely spend a number of years, and possibly the rest of your career, working in the general field that you select now.

You might be tempted to tackle something ambitious that will win a big prize. Resist that temptation. This is the beginning of your career. The point of graduate school is to learn to do research. Be aware that your original topic, especially in psychology, might not work out. A good thesis adviser will have backup plans in case your original project fails to yield results.

***You might be*** Your topic should be original, and it should advance what is known about your ***tempted to tackle*** field. But it should be something that you and your adviser believe you can ***something*** complete and write up in about 2 years. When you enter the next stage of your ***ambitious that will*** career, you can advance to another aspect of the topic if it still interests you. ***win a big prize.*** Remember also that your overall field of research is more important than the ***Resist that*** specific subfield that you might explore in school. The techniques and principles ***Temptation.*** learned in graduate school will serve you well even as you move to new subfields or specialties.

### Achieving Breadth

Your main focus in graduate school is to learn the fundamentals of your discipline, but you also want to broaden your competence and acquire other career skills that can enhance your value to employers. Breadth can be described under two categories—academic and career.

For academic breadth, master's-degree recipients should have some familiarity with one or more subfields. For example, a cognitive psychologist may well benefit from courses in biological psychology, or vice versa. Such breadth might allow you to see your own work in a fuller context and understand interdisciplinary questions.

Be aware of how easy it is to overspecialize in pursuing a research topic. An excessively narrow “field of view” might slow your recognition of emerging fields of research, limit your later research contributions, or restrict your career options.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from “Careers in Science and Engineering: A Student Planning Guide to Grad School and Beyond”, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy Press, Washington D.C., 1996.

Career breadth is attained through such activities as summer internships and on-campus research programs that work in collaboration with industry or government agencies (e.g., NASA). Internships with industry or government laboratories take time away from campus-based research or classes. But they can lead to broader perspectives, new contacts, and better jobs. They can also help you to mature and develop confidence in your ability to succeed in the nonacademic world. Taken together, these effects might paradoxically shorten the total time spent in school.

### Ensuring Steady Progress

How long does it take to finish graduate school? A master's program with a thesis requirement (i.e., our program) can be expected to take 2-3 years to complete. Working expeditiously is important. Increases in degree times are generally undesirable and often imply that students are not making the best use of their time. Slow progress might mean that someone has become too comfortable in the educational environment, isn't properly motivated to find answers, or has bogged down in techniques. Some corporations and Ph.D. programs use time to degree as an indicator of a student's initiative and drive, and it may influence their decision about whether to invite a student for an interview. That said, these entities also recognize that master's students are often faced with outside responsibilities (e.g., having to maintain outside employment) that can influence a student's time to degree. If you find yourself taking longer than is expected, you should seriously and honestly attempt to identify the underlying causes in order to calculate their potential impact on your future career choices.

If your thesis work does not involve you with others, join or form a thesis support group. Giving talks and exchanging critiques with trusted peers — say, once a month or once a semester — can help to keep you moving, extend your contacts, and moderate the intensity of solitary scholarship. Reach out to other students and faculty. The presence and empathy of others can make your graduate years both more gratifying and more productive.

Chapter

2

# The MA in Research and Experimental Psychology Program

*What will it take to earn your Master's degree and who is here to see you through the process?*

T

This chapter will introduce you to the mission of our program, the faculty that make-up the program, and the degree requirements that you must fulfill in order to earn your degree.

## Our Mission

The Master of Arts Program in Research and Experimental Psychology (affectionately referred to as the **REx MA Program**) affords its candidates an opportunity for advanced study of psychological theory and research techniques with the following objectives in mind:

### To succeed in business, industry and or a research setting

Our program's emphasis on the mastery of statistical and methodological procedures, research experience, and critical thinking produces graduates who are well suited for many careers in business, government, and/or an array of research settings.

### To earn my Ph.D. in psychology

The coursework and experience obtained in the Research and Experimental Psychology Program is designed to enhance students' credentials when applying to highly competitive doctoral programs.

## Program Goals and Learning Outcomes

### Goal 1. Advanced Knowledge

Graduates of our program will have advanced understanding of the major theoretical perspectives in psychology. Students completing the MA in Research and Experimental Psychology program will understand the major theoretical perspectives and research methods across areas of experimental psychology, (i.e., Developmental, Social, Cognitive, and Physiological).

### Goal 2. Research Methods & Scholarship

Graduates of our program will possess an advanced level of competence in research methods, statistical techniques, and technical writing skills. Students completing the MA in Research & Psychology program are required to complete a thesis. The thesis will...

- **Outcome 2.1** – demonstrate creative problem-solving in the design, and implementation of empirical research.
- **Outcome 2.2** – demonstrate project management skills in the implementation of empirical research.
- **Outcome 2.3** – demonstrate advanced competency in the statistical analysis and interpretation of empirical research findings.
- **Outcome 2.4** – be able to communicate (oral and written) their research findings at a professional level.

### Goal 3. Career Enhancement

Graduates of our program will experience career enhancement resulting from the receipt of a master's degree in psychology. Students completing the MA in Research and Psychology program

will achieve career enhancement through placement in a doctoral program or acceptance of a position requiring a master's in psychology in the public or private sector.

## Degree Requirements

### Summary of Degree Requirements

General university requirements and procedures for completing the Master of Arts degree are described in the Academic Regulations section of this catalog. In addition to these, the following departmental requirements must be fulfilled.

- A. The student's combined total of approved undergraduate and graduate work in psychology must be at least 60 semester units, including 30 units for the MA Degree Program.
- B. The student must complete at least 30 approved graduate units. At least 27 of these 30 units must be Psychology or Statistics units, and of the 27, at least 24 must be 200-level courses, i.e., up to six units may be from 100-level courses with the program coordinator's approval.
- C. Summary of Minimum Grades Policy for Research and Experimental Psychology MA Program:
  - a. Only courses passed with a grade of B- (2.7) or better can be counted to fulfill requirements of the program.
  - b. Required courses with grades of C+ (2.3) or lower must be repeated.
  - c. Only 9 units of courses may be repeated during graduate study.
- D. Summary of Academic Probation and Disqualification Policy for Research and Experimental Psychology MA Program:
  - a. A semester GPA of  $< 3.0$  will result in the student being placed on academic probation.
  - b. While on academic probation, a second semester with a GPA  $< 3.0$  will result in academic disqualification.
  - c. The student will remain on academic probation until they have a semester with  $\geq 3.0$  and their cumulative graduate GPA is  $\geq 3.0$ .
  - d. At least one graded course must be taken each Fall and Spring semester while on probation.
- E. The candidate must complete an acceptable thesis. This thesis will be a quantitative investigation of some degree of originality and of publication caliber.
- F. Satisfactory performance on a final examination is required. This examination may be written, oral or both, as determined by the student's thesis advisory committee. This is typically satisfied through the oral defense of the student's thesis research.
- G. Students must satisfy the general university requirements for candidacy (see University catalog), including completion of the Graduate English Writing Requirement (see below).

## Specific Course Requirements

Program of Study	Course Number	Units
<b>Core Domain (12 units)</b>		
General Seminar	Psyc 280	3
Advanced Statistics	Stat 245	3
Seminar in Experimental Psychology	Psyc 220	3
Multivariate Analysis	Stat 235	3
<b>Breadth Domain (12 units)* –take any four courses listed below</b>		
Cognition	Psyc 235	3
Developmental	Psyc 204	3
Learning	Psyc 255	3
Perception	Psyc 256	3
Personality	Psyc 200	3
Physiological	Psyc 230	3
Psycholinguistics	Psyc 237	3
Social	Psyc 254	3
<b>Applied Domain (6 units)</b>		
Elective**	100- or 200-level	3
Thesis	Psyc 299	3
<b>Total Graduate Units:</b>		<b>30</b>

\* *These courses will rotate; each being offered every other year.*

\*\* *Other courses (100 level or 200 level), either within or outside the psychology department, may be approved upon consultation with the REx MA Program Coordinator.*

Non-REx MA courses may serve as an elective if it supports your professional and academic goals and are approved by your thesis advisor and Coordinator. Examples of such courses include, but are not limited to, human factors-related courses, Programming for Social Scientists (ENGR 120), and so forth. Please consult with the Coordinator prior to enrolling for these type of classes.

### REx MA Course Scheduling and Planning Your Schedule

In general, courses are scheduled as shown in the table below. Although all efforts are made to adhere to this scheduling, there may be modifications from time to time. Check with the REx MA Coordinator for the latest schedule. You may also use this table to plan your own schedule.

**2027-2028**

Fall	Spring
General Seminar (Psyc 280)	Experimental Psychology (Psyc 220)
Advanced Statistics (Stat 245)	Multivariate Statistics (Stat 235)
Developmental (Psyc 204)	Learning (Psyc 255)
Perception (Psyc 256)	Social (Psyc 254)
Elective or 299	Elective or 299

2026-2027	
Fall	Spring
General Seminar (Psyc 280)	Experimental Psychology (Psyc 220)
Advanced Statistics (Stat 245)	Multivariate (Stat 235)
Cognition (Psyc 235)	Personality (Psyc 200)
Psycholinguistics (Psyc 237)	Physiological (Psyc 230)
Elective or 299	Elective or 299

2025-2026	
Fall	Spring
General Seminar (Psyc 280)	Experimental Psychology (Psyc 220)
Advanced Statistics (Stat 245)	Multivariate Statistics (Stat 235)
Developmental (Psyc 204)	Learning (Psyc 255)
Perception (Psyc 256)	Social (Psyc 254)
Elective or 299	Elective or 299

## Thesis Requirement

The thesis serves as the culmination of a student's coursework, research experience, and growth as a scholar and scientist. This process is guided closely by a thesis advisor; a tenured or tenure-track faculty member of the Department of Psychology. As the student's ideas develop into a full thesis proposal, a thesis advisory committee is formed in order to provide further guidance and expertise. Collection of the thesis data begins once the proposal has been approved by the committee and the proper animal care/human subjects' approval has been obtained. The introduction, analysis, and interpretations of these data will form the core of the student's written master's thesis. These efforts all culminate in an oral presentation and defense before

the thesis committee. A detailed statement of thesis policies is available in the Psychology Department Office and on the departmental web site (<http://www.sjsu.edu/psych/>).

### **Competency in Written English**

One of the least known requirements for graduate students is the competency in written English requirement. All graduate students must successfully demonstrate their competency in written English before they can be admitted into candidacy. Advancement to candidacy forms cannot be approved until this competency is met. A graduate student can fulfill this competency by completing one of the following:

#### **Hold a CSU bachelor's degree**

A student who holds a valid CSU bachelor's degree after 1982 will automatically fulfill the competency in written English.

#### **Complete an Approved SJSU Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) Course**

Complete a pre-approved SJSU course that is at least 3 units and in which a major report is required. The report must be least 30% of the course grade. Below is a list of our graduate courses that are recognized by Graduate Studies as fulfilling this requirement.

- PSYC 280: General Seminar

#### **WST & 100W Course**

Receiving a high enough score on the WST to waive 100W OR passing the WST and completing a 100W course will fulfill competency in written English.

#### **Professional Publication**

The Graduate Studies Office may approve a professional publication for which the graduate student was the sole author in order to fulfill a student's competency in written English. The Program Coordinator must petition for this on behalf of the student and submit all supporting documents directly to the Graduate Studies Office.

#### **Complete an Equivalent Outside Course**

A student may fulfill competency by completing an upper division course at another university that is deemed by the Graduate Studies Office as equivalent in content and writing requirements to the SJSU 100W. The Program Coordinator must petition for this on behalf of the student and submit all supporting documents directly to the Graduate Studies Office.

### **Registering for Your Courses**

The descriptions of and actual times for the courses listed above (and all other courses) can be found in the "SJSU Catalog" and "Schedule of Class" available online at:

[SJSU Catalog](#)

## Class Schedule

### Using the Online Registration System

In order to register for classes you will need to use SJSU's on-line registration system available at <http://my.sjsu.edu>. To use this system you will need the user ID and password that were sent to you by Admissions. Go to the website for questions and answers in this process.

You will register at <http://my.sjsu.edu/> The system will actually enroll you in courses, if space is available and all, if any, prerequisites have been met. Course confirmation is dependent on your paying fees by the payment deadline. **Remember, no bills are mailed to students.**

### “Faculty Consent” When Adding a Graduate Course

You will need to obtain **Permission Numbers** for all of the graduate-level courses in psychology. You can get these codes by emailing the instructor directly (get their email from the Psychology website <http://www.sjsu.edu/psych/Faculty-Staff/>). It is not unusual for faculty to wait until the first day of class to distribute add codes. Don’t worry! Space is reserved for MA students in the courses that we offer. To add the course, use the Permission Number with the Class Number for that specific course section, as listed in the Schedule of Classes.

## Web Registration Instructions

Open a new browser window and point to [my.sjsu.edu](http://my.sjsu.edu)

### **Step 1: Verify Day and Time/Check your Enrollment Appointment**

Verify your registration start day and time by viewing your Enrollment Appointment at [my.sjsu.edu](http://my.sjsu.edu). You will not be able to register before your appointment time. Enrollment appointments are not mailed to students.

Complete the registration worksheet before calling logging on to the system. Have alternate schedules or classes prepared in the event the course is either closed or cancelled.

### **Step 2: Navigate to “My Self Service” > “Add/Drop a Class”**

### **Step 3: Add/Drop your class**

To “Add Classes” -- Type the 5 digit Class Nbr and hit the “TAB” key on your keyboard. If you received a Class Permission Number, enter it in the available field. Then click the “okay” button to return to the main Add Classes page. Click the “submit” button.

To “Drop Classes” -- Click on “Drop Classes” and locate the specific class you wish to drop. Select in the Action column (using the drop down in that row to select “Drop.” Click the “submit” button.

### **Step 4: View and Print Your Class Schedule**

### **Step 5: Pay Your Fees**

Go to Account Summary in Finances to get your fee amount. Check back the next business day to obtain the fee payment due date.

### **Step 6: Finalize Your Registration**

Print a copy of your class schedule or current summary for your records and click on the “Sign Out” button at the top of the page.

## Transferring Graduate Credit to Our Program

Graduate students seeking a master’s degree in Experimental Psychology are allowed to transfer up to six units (two courses) of previous course work into their graduate record. There are two types of transfer units allowed and they have their separate procedures for applying for approval. Graduate units from outside institutions must be approved by the Program Coordinator and Graduate Studies and Research. In addition SJSU undergraduates may be allowed to transfer units completed as an undergraduate to their graduate program provided they meet certain requirements.

Prior approval of transfer units must be completed before a student submits their Advancement to Candidacy form. Once graduate transfer units are approved they can be listed in a student's graduate program of study.

### Graduate Credit from Units Completed as SJSU Undergraduate

Graduate students who completed courses as an undergraduate or Open University at SJSU have the option of transferring units from these courses up to a maximum of 6 semester units (or two courses; total includes any outside transfer units as well). If these requirements are met, you can simply enter the courses on your candidacy form in Section D without the need to receive prior permission from Graduate Studies Office or to file any other form. The signature of the graduate advisor on the candidacy form will indicate to Graduate Studies Office that the advisor approves of the transfer. In order to qualify the course(s) must meet these requirements:

- None of the courses that are being applied for graduate credits were required to receive the bachelor's degree (includes courses used for the major, minor and total units needed for graduation).
- Courses used for graduate credit must be at least a 2.5 GPA(C+).
- Courses must not be older than 7 years.

If the courses were taken from at an outside (non-SJSU) institution, then if you wish to apply for these units you must submit the [Request for Validation of Transfer Credit](#). The Program Coordinator must sign this form before submitting it to the Graduate Studies Office.

#### When to turn in this form

Submit this form at the start of your second semester and before you submit your Advancement to Candidacy form. You will be notified via mail if units were granted or denied.

### Graduate Transfer Units from Outside Institutions

Graduate students may also transfer graduate units earned from outside institutions. Transfer units may not be more than 6 semester units (or two course; includes any SJSU undergrad transfer units as well). In order to qualify for transfer the course(s) must meet these requirements:

- Course credit must have been received from an accredited institution.
- Courses used for graduate credit must be at least a 2.0 GPA (C).
- Courses must not be taken in extension division.
- Courses must be upper division or graduate level.
- Courses must have been taken in graduate standing at the other university (e.g. no courses taken as an undergraduate are allowed).
- Courses must not be older than 7 years.

Students wishing to apply for these units must submit the [Request for Validation of Transfer Credit](#). The Program Coordinator must sign this form before submitting it to the Graduate Studies Office.

#### When to turn in this form

Submit this form anytime before you submit your Advancement to Candidacy form. You will be notified via mail if units were granted or denied.

### Graduate Academic Standing and GPA Requirements

You are required to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 ("B") in completing the requirements the graduate program. All students must be in clear academic standing (cumulative 3.0 GPA in graduate division) at SJSU to receive a Master's degree from this university.

You must complete all courses in your graduate program with grades of A, B, or CR. Grades of C, D, F, U or NC in any course are considered to be unsatisfactory. Any unsatisfactory grades will remain on your graduate record and will continue to be computed in your grade point average. If you receive an unsatisfactory grade in a course after advancement to candidacy, you must submit a Request for Course Substitution in Master's Degree Program Form through the Program Coordinator to add another course to the graduate degree program. The added course must have an equivalent unit value to that of the course in which the unsatisfactory grade was received.

### Graduate Academic Standards

If you have a semester with < 3.0 GPA or if your cumulative GPA falls below the 3.0 minimum GPA you become in danger of being disqualified. Here is the progression to disqualification that you should avoid.

#### Probation

After semester grades are posted, if your GPA in the semester is below 3.0 or your cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, you will be placed on probation. You should receive notice of this status. However, it is the responsibility of the student to find out if their GPA falls below 3.0.

*Note: Courses taken at lower division level are not figured into the graduate student's overall GPA. When placed on probation you will have to enroll in the subsequent semester and take at least one upper division letter graded course to raise your GPA to 3.0.*

#### Disqualification

If at any point after being placed on probation you fail to meet these requirements or do not raise your GPA to 3.0 you will be disqualified from the University. Being disqualified prevents you from taking any 200 level courses at SJSU or through Open University. You will not be allowed to re-apply to your graduate program unless re-instated.

Graduate students do have the option of immediately appealing a disqualification or probation. Forms to appeal may be picked up at the Admissions and Records Office. Consultation with your graduate advisor is essential towards this appeal process.

### **Re-instatement**

If a student has been disqualified, a student must petition for re-instatement if they plan on re-applying for graduate admission. The process for reinstatement is completely different from applying for re-admission. Graduate students must meet with their graduate advisor to form a program of study that can be used to petition for re-instatement.

After completing their program of study, graduate students must petition with the Admissions and Standards Committee for re-instatement at least 30 days prior to the first day of the semester in which they plan on returning. Reinstatement petitions may be picked up at the Office of Admissions and Records.

### **After Re-instatement**

After a student is re-instated they must still apply for admission to the University. Once admitted a student is placed on probation until their cumulative GPA is raised above 3.0. Failure to raise the GPA above 3.0 will result in a second and final disqualification.

*Note: The cycle presented here is a summary of the procedures a student must go through to maintain good academic standing. For a full description of the policies and procedures please read the Graduate Academic Standards section under Graduate and Post Baccalaureate Information in the latest San Jose State University Catalog.*

### **Grading System for Graduate Work**

[http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/students/grades-grades\\_changes/grade\\_symbols\\_and\\_values/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/students/grades-grades_changes/grade_symbols_and_values/index.html)

Traditional letter grades are used for all courses taken by graduate students except for field work, thesis, project, individual study, and internship courses, which are usually graded credit/no credit. Graduate students do not have the option of choice between the traditional or non-traditional grading system. A grade of Credit in a graduate-level course indicates performance by the student equal to a letter grade of "C" or above.

The cumulative GPA for advancement to candidacy for the master's degree (3.0 minimum) includes all letter-graded work in 100-level or 200-level courses completed within the preceding seven years and for which the student received graduate credit, excluding transfer courses taken as an undergraduate at SJSU, or at another institution. For the award of the master's degree, all of the course grades on the student's candidacy form are included in the GPA, with the exception of the transfer courses indicated above, and must be at least at the 3.0 level.

The cumulative GPA of the graduate student is computed by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of graded units attempted at SJSU, excluding Open University courses, subsequent to enrollment in the graduate school.

### **Graduate Student Funding Opportunities**

There are several scholarships, assistantships, and programs available to graduate students during their time here at SJSU. Here are several opportunities available to qualified graduate students.

#### **Teaching/Research Assistantships**

If you are interested in obtaining an Instructional Student Assistant (ISA) position, please contact

Nha-Nghi Nguyen at [nha-nghi.nguyen@sjsu.edu](mailto:nha-nghi.nguyen@sjsu.edu) with an email expressing your interest, and a resume/CV as soon as possible. We usually have ISA positions in Statistics and Introduction to Psychology, but some other courses may be available.

The availability of paid research assistantships is limited to faculty who currently have external grants. Inquiries made with individual faculty.

Throughout the semester, the Coordinator will inform students of ISA or other opportunities that become available on campus. Another resource for finding out about potential job opportunities are second year MA students.

#### **Department of Psychology Scholarships & Awards**

Through generous gifts, endowments and grants, we are able to offer [Psychology Department Scholarships](#) which recognize our undergraduate and graduate students' academic excellence, research creativity, service, and educational resilience.

#### **College of Social Science Scholarships**

Outstanding achievement by students majoring in one of the Social Sciences is recognized by the award of [College Scholarships](#) at a Spring Honors Ceremony. These scholarships are designed to reward academic excellence, as well as to help finance the ever-increasing costs of higher education.

#### **Office of Graduate Studies Funding Opportunities**

The [College of Graduate Studies](#) offers links several scholarships, programs, and competitions to support graduate student scholarship. These include support for graduate studies, programs for those hoping to attain a PhD, and the Outstanding Thesis Award.

#### **SJSU General Scholarships**

These pages provide announcements for many SJSU scholarships, as well as a searchable database and links to private foundations. You should check back periodically to see what is available, especially at the beginning of each term.

[SJSU Financial Aid and Scholarship Office](#)

[FastWeb: Scholarships, Financial Aid and Colleges](#)

Chapter

3

## Advancement to Candidacy

# A

fter a student has completed 9 units of work or usually after their first two semesters, a student is ready to apply for candidacy into the master's program. Even though a student has already been admitted into a department's graduate program, the advancement to candidacy process is an important step towards graduation. An approved candidacy signifies that the University and your department has approved the work you have completed already and also approves your plan for completing the remaining units left for your master's degree. Thus it is essential that you meet both University and department requirements for advancing to candidacy.

### Before Applying for Candidacy

You must meet certain requirements before applying to candidacy. Your admission into candidacy will be delayed or denied if the following conditions are not already met.

- **Have any planned transfer units approved**

Before applying for Candidacy, a student must petition and receive approval for transfer credit work that they are interested in receiving (see “Transferring Graduate Credit to Our Program” for more discussion).

- **Minimum work already completed**

A student must have completed a minimum of 9 units of graded work as a graduate student in 100 or 200 level courses.

- **GPA minimum**

A student must have a GPA of at least 3.0 (B) in all courses taken after their bachelor’s degree. The courses listed in the candidacy form must also be at least a 3.0.

- **Competency in Written English**

As explained in the previous section, a graduate student must have already fulfilled their competency in written English before applying for candidacy. Listing a course on the candidacy form that a student plans on taking in the future to fulfill this competency is not acceptable.

- **Graduate Classification**

A graduate student must be a classified graduate student. Your classification is listed in your admissions letter. If you were admitted into conditionally classified status you must turn in the [Change of Classification in Master’s Program](#) to switch classifications to classified graduate.

## Applying for Candidacy

If you have met the perquisites for applying to candidacy, then you must fill out the [Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy](#). This form will be used to officially map out your intended program of study towards completing your master’s degree. It must be signed by the Program Coordinator and it will be approved or denied by the Graduate Studies Office. You will receive a letter notifying you of the decision.

## Your Department

To start the process, obtain the candidacy form from either Graduate Studies or the Program Coordinator. Once you have the form you should meet with your thesis advisor to discuss the courses you will take in order to finish the program. Take the completed form to the Program Coordinator for their signature. The Coordinator should make a copy of the signed form for both you and your departmental file. Once the form has been signed and copies have been made, turn the form into Graduate Studies.

## Program Requirements

In addition to having your graduate advisor sign the candidacy form there are other requirements needed for your candidacy to be approved.

- No more than required amount of units needed for the program may be listed.
- At least 80% of the units for the program must be in residence (i.e. 80% of the units must be taken as a graduate student at SJSU). Any transfer credit work listed must be already approved.
- At least 60% of the units must be graded and NOT pass/fail and at least 50% of the units must be from 200 level courses.
- No continuing education courses may be listed as part of the 9 units of graded work that should be already completed in the program.
- No more than 6 units of credit for course 299 (Plan A) may be included or attempted.
- Psych 299 (Thesis) must be listed in the candidacy.
- All courses listed must be less than seven years old.

### Filling out the Form

The [Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy](#) is intended for you to list all the courses and requirements that you have met and plan on meeting in order to receive your master's degree. Here is a breakdown of each section so you will know what is required for you to list.

#### When to turn in this form

The [Petition for Advancement to Graduate Candidacy](#) should be turned in after you have completed the prerequisites listed at the start of this section. It must be turned in at least two semesters before your intended graduation semester. Please see the Graduate Studies homepage to see the deadlines dates for turning in this form.

A completed candidacy form is included on the following page for illustrative purposes. Please meet with your thesis adviser and/or the program coordinator if you have specific questions about your form and/or program of study.

### Fixing problems with Candidacy

Problems with candidacy applications can significantly delay a student's graduation. The following are some important steps to avoid following into this situation.

### Prerequisite and Program Requirement Problems

If any program requirements are not met, the Graduate Studies Office will send you a detailed letter explaining why your program was denied and what you need to do to fix any problems. A copy of this denial letter is also sent to your department. Please contact your graduate advisor to help rectify these deficiencies as soon as possible. Your graduate advisor will work with your

Graduate Studies evaluator to help solve any problems. Please follow up on any problems to make sure your program is eventually approved.

### Course Substitutions to Candidacy

If your candidacy application is approved, you will receive an acceptance letter detailing what steps are now needed to complete your program. One of most common mistakes graduate students make is to not follow the approved program of study. A signed and approved program of study is equivalent to a signed contract that you have made with the University and your department. It is an agreement that states what courses you intend to take and if successful will allow you to receive your master's degree.

If you alter your program of study you must submit a [Request for Course Substitution in Master's Degree Program form](#) to graduate studies. Your graduate advisor must sign this form. This form will show the course you are removing from your program and which course you are substituting in. If you alter your program and do not submit this substitution form it will delay your application to graduate.

#### When to turn in this form

The [Request for Course Substitution](#) in Master's Degree Program form should be turned when you know you will not be able to take a course that you listed in your approved program of study. There are no deadlines to turn this form in but it should be turned in before you apply to graduate.

Chapter

4

# Your Master's Thesis

*It is now time to put your ideas and skills to work.*

W

riting a master's thesis is decidedly the toughest way to graduate from a program. It generally involves more effort and time than the graduation options offered through other types of programs. But it also offers several advantages that you should carefully consider:

Writing a master's thesis can:

- help you gain entrance into Ph.D. programs
- help you become an expert in an area of technical communication
- serve as a basis for publishable articles

- demonstrate the ability to independently organize, manage, and execute a complex project

Your thesis is often your first real opportunity to shine! It will be the culmination of all your coursework, research experience, and growth as a scholar and scientist. Your thesis represents your opportunity to show the world that you are indeed a master of psychology.

## Steps in the Thesis Process

Your thesis is something that you begin the moment you begin your graduate school career. Your coursework can be seen as preparation for your thesis as means for exploring different thesis ideas, deepening your theoretical knowledge about a specific thesis topic, and developing the research methods and statistical skills needed for an empirical thesis.

Completing a thesis takes several steps, each of which will be elaborated upon in this chapter. Although this handbook describes each step, you should also discuss each of them with your advisor as each faculty has their own set of expectations and guidelines that they would their students to allow. The major steps are:

- Identifying a thesis advisor
- Forming a thesis committee
- Writing a thesis proposal and gaining committee approval
- Submitting an IRB application
- Collecting data and analyzing it
- Preparing draft of thesis
- Undergoing an oral thesis defense
- Finalizing the thesis in response to committee feedback
- Submitting the thesis to Graduate Studies and revising as needed in response to their feedback
- Submitting appropriate forms (Culminating Experience form, 299 grade changes, etc.)

**Each step may take longer than you expect! Expect the following:**

- **It may take more than a few drafts of each written product** (proposal, IRB application, thesis) before your advisor feels it is ready for the next step (submitting to the rest of the committee, IRB, or Graduate Studies).

- **“Drafts” should be considered “final” products.** Drafts that you submit to your advisor and committee should be as free of grammatical and APA style errors as possible. Your committee wants to focus on the contents of your thoughts, not punctuation and so forth. SJSU has numerous writing resources (see *Where to Find Help* section). Pairing up with one of your colleagues to proofread each others’ work can also be a good strategy.
- **It takes time for advisors and committee members to provide feedback.** Guidelines vary by advisor and other factors, but a general guideline is to build in at least 2 weeks for each draft cycle. That is, it may take 2 weeks or more for an advisor or committee member to provide thoughtful feedback on a draft.
- **Data analysis is not just running the statistics for testing your hypothesis.** It may involve cleaning the data, recoding variables, examining the descriptive characteristics of each variable (e.g., mean, median, standard deviation, shape of the distribution, identifying outliers), examining the psychometric properties of measures, aggregating individual variables into scale scores, and other analyses before getting to the actual hypothesis tests (e.g., ANOVA, multiple regression).
- **Graduate Studies guidelines are a mix of APA style and their own stylistic rules.** Learn them and follow them. In preparing the final thesis, it may save you time if you format it according to the Graduate Studies guidelines from the start, rather than writing it in standard APA format and going to fix margins, and so forth.

Yes, this is a daunting project. Yes, with planning and perseverance, you can do it!

## Finding a Thesis Advisor<sup>2</sup>

Any tenured or tenure-track faculty member of the Psychology Department can serve as the chair of your thesis committee, but at least one member of the MA faculty must sit on the thesis committee. See the [University Policy \(S14-10\)](#) on the make-up of your committee (for example, the Chair of the Committee must be full time SJSU faculty and two of the three must be SJSU faculty). A list of the MA faculty and their research interests appears at the end of this chapter, along with non-MA faculty who are currently open to serving on MA thesis committees.

Finding a faculty adviser is often the most important step in your graduate career. There is no substitute for guidance from someone who has already survived what you are attempting and who can offer wise perspective on how best to match your talents with an appropriate career. What kind of adviser should you look for? The ideal person can not only guide your career, support your research, and help to find you a job, but can also serve as a close and caring mentor—a “research aunt/uncle,” as one author puts it. Obviously, this is a rare combination, but one worth searching for.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from “Careers in Science and Engineering: A Student Planning Guide to Grad School and Beyond”, National Academy of Sciences, National Academy Press, Washington D.C., 1996.

If you arrive at graduate school without having chosen an adviser, which is commonly the case, start looking right away. Look up publications of faculty in your department; talk with support staff and professors. If possible, track down past and present students who have worked with a particular adviser.

Do you need a prominent scientist as an adviser? Prestige is important, because you will want expert guidance on your research and help in finding a job when you are finished. But you need a person who is available, who values interacting with you and other students, and who is willing to teach necessary survival skills.

Ask about the laboratory group that your potential adviser has assembled. Has the adviser secured adequate funding for the group? Does the group have off-campus, collaborative interactions with other academic or industrial groups? Look for advanced graduate students in the group who can help you when the adviser is busy.

When you choose an adviser, discuss important issues early. Be frank about your plans, your strengths, and your weak points. Where do you need help? What abilities can you offer? What commitments will be expected of you? If you will work as part of a research team, how will your role be defined and how will you gain credit for your own contribution to the team's work? Raise such questions before they grow into problems.

It is very important to remember that the education of a graduate student is the responsibility of an entire department, not just of a single adviser. Take the initiative early to form a thesis committee. Discuss your project and your status with committee members and other faculty as you go along. Every professional contact that you make strengthens your standing and raises your chances of building a rewarding career.

### The Adviser-Student Relationship

In our graduate program, you will work as a research assistant in your adviser's research program. An aspect of this research should become your own research topic. Usually such an arrangement benefits both parties: you, as a "scholar's apprentice," gain original research experience, and the professor gains much-needed assistance.

When you begin to work in such a program, find out as much as you can about it in advance. Take the initiative to educate yourself as broadly as possible about the research topic and the theoretical context in which it resides. Many students focus their energies so narrowly on a specific aspect of research that they neglect to understand the context of their work or to develop the skills that make an interdisciplinary career possible.

Make a special effort to understand how your adviser will award credit for the work you do. For example, will your name be listed first on any publications resulting from your own work? That is especially important on a joint project, where your own contributions might be hard to distinguish from those of others. Remember, one of your goals in this program should be to begin establishing a portfolio that will facilitate, rather than hinder, your next career step (e.g.,

admission into a Ph.D. program or employment in a research setting). Review another document from the Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy Group (“On Being a Scientist: Responsible Conduct in Research”<sup>3</sup>) that provides guidance on research ethics (COSEPUP, 1995). Read this booklet over before you begin research activities.

What kind of relationship will you have with your adviser: teacher-student or employer-employee? Will you be colleagues or adversaries — in school and beyond? It is primarily a professional relationship, but it is also a personal one. It will succeed only if both sides are willing to work at it. It is most likely to succeed if your major professor is someone whose standards and goals appeal to you and who has a special interest in you as a person. The best outcome is that your adviser turns out to be a true mentor—a wise and trusted counselor.

There is often an implicit contract between adviser and student: the adviser devotes time, guidance, and personal energy in the expectation that the student-apprentice will someday do research that will make the mentor proud. Does your adviser have this expectation? Do you? Can the two of you discuss other career possibilities as well?

What can you do if the relationship with your adviser is a poor one? If the two of you cannot work it out, you should try to find another professor who is qualified and willing to take you on. In general, it is best to make a change as soon as you see that the situation is unworkable. Will changing advisers slow your progress? Will you have to alter the direction of your research? Only if it is late in your student career should you endure a difficult situation rather than try for a better one. The head of the graduate program or the department chair will be able to help you to decide what to do. Do not hesitate to contact one or both!

## Developing Thesis Ideas

Although the final topic of your thesis will most likely stem from topics discussed with your thesis advisor, here are a few things to consider during the planning stage of your research.

- Start by selecting a general topic area
- Work with your advisor to develop your ideas
- Develop the research question
- Consider research in which you have been involved
- Avoid personally loaded topics
- Use recent literature

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<sup>3</sup> Can be found on the web at <http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/obas/>

- Put the research question in researchable form
- Phrase the research question as a question
- Make sure the question suggests a relationship to be examined
- Make sure the question is empirically testable
- Develop your hypotheses
- Begin to think about the design and methods required to test these hypotheses
- Honestly consider whether or not the project is feasible (e.g., time, money, etc.)

## Selecting Your Thesis Committee

Your thesis committee is a critical ingredient in designing and implementing a solid master's thesis project. Who will sit on this committee should be decided through discussions between yourself and your thesis advisor. Ideally, each member will bring something special to the table (e.g., some expertise in a research area, particular technique, methodology, or analysis).

The committee must be comprised of no fewer than three individuals, the majority of whom must be San Jose State University (SJSU) faculty members. Thus, for a three-member committee (the typical size), two must be SJSU faculty; for a four-member committee, three must be SJSU faculty; and so on. The chair of the committee must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the Department of Psychology on duty during the full academic year in which the thesis is to be done. Retired faculty or Faculty on the Early Retirement Plan (FERP's) may serve as Chairs if approved by the Department of Psychology Graduate Committee and the University Graduate Studies Office. At least one member of the committee must be an active member of the MA in Research and Experimental Psychology Program.

In forming committee, keep the following considerations and steps in mind:

- Identify formal rules about chairperson and committee members
- Identify informal norms about chairperson and committee roles
- Identify what you want from the chair-student collaboration
- Appraise potential chairperson's skills
- Expectations, feedback, timeliness and availability, assertiveness
- Investigate prospective chairpersons
- Consider past experiences with these individuals, talk with classmates, talk with faculty members
- Approach prospective chairpersons
- Identify important issues to discuss with them, communicate clearly, obtain commitment from chairperson
- Investigate prospective committee members
- Talk with chairperson, talk with classmates
- Approach prospective committee members
- Provide an overview of your study and timetable, obtain commitment from committee members
- Anticipate and try to prevent trouble spots (e.g., scheduling issues)

## Writing Your Thesis Proposal

Once your committee is formed, the next step is to put your research idea(s) into a formal proposal. The actual content of this proposal will be the fruits of much discussion with your thesis advisor and should reflect what you and your advisor consider to be a fairly complete treatment of the research area, design, methods, and analysis of your data. Once you and your advisor are satisfied with a draft of your proposal, you will submit it to your committee for comments and suggestions.

*Note: In submitting drafts of the proposal to your chair or committee, please do not expect these individuals to serve as proof readers. In fact, according to Department of Psychology policy, if a committee member encounters a total of 15 typographical, grammatical, or APA-Publication-Manual errors, she or he should return the thesis immediately to the student, without reading further.*

### Thesis Proposal Approval

Aspects of the thesis proposal approval process will vary by advisor. In general, the steps are as follows:

- As you are writing your proposal, meet with your committee members to discuss how your ideas are evolving.
- Draw on the expertise of your committee members and incorporate their suggestions – in consultation with your advisor - into your evolving proposal.
- Provide a *full draft* of your proposal (i.e., title page through references, appendices with study materials) to your advisor. Your advisor will provide feedback. This process can go several rounds until your advisor feels the proposal is ready to go to your other committee members.
- Circulate the proposal to your committee members for feedback, providing them with a reasonable window of time to do so (e.g., 2 or more weeks).
- Schedule times to discuss the proposal with each committee member.
- Discuss the feedback with your advisor, deciding which suggestions to incorporate in the final proposal. You are not required to incorporate every suggestion. However, you are expected to have a defensible rationale for the choices you make.
- Circulate the final proposal and the [MA Thesis Proposal Approval Form](#) amongst your committee members.
- Send the completed form to the MA Coordinator and keep a copy for your own files.
- Your advisor will then update the **MA Master Student Database**.

- Once your thesis has been approved, then you have permission to apply for IRB approval of your study so you can begin data collection.

### Structure of the Proposal

- Attempt to keep the proposal to 10 - 15 double-spaced pages (include title page, abstract, and references). Review as much of the literature needed to justify your hypothesis. The proposal is a plan, not a comprehensive review of the literature.
- The proposal should be in journal article format following the current Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) in every respect, except that:
- The first page should be a Proposal Title Page following the format specified by the Department (see example below).
- Include an Abstract.
- All material dealing with what is expected to happen or what will be done should be written in future tense.
- An Analyses section should be substituted for the Results section and Discussion section. The Analyses section should describe in detail the statistical analyses to be done. If hypotheses or specific research questions are stated in the introduction (which is usually the case), the Analyses section should explain in detail the statistical analyses necessary to deal with each hypothesis (or question).
- Expected results (optional). It is often useful to depict in figures or graphs your expected results. This is especially useful if you are predicting interaction effects.

## Obtaining Human or Animal Subjects Approval

Animal care and/or human subjects approval **MUST** be obtained from SJSU regardless of whether you are doing your research in conjunction with another institution and animal care/human subjects approval has been sought there. **Any data collected without IRB approval from SJSU CANNOT be used as part of your thesis!**

Submit the appropriate forms and copies of the proposal to the SJSU Foundation Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (if the study involves human beings) or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (if the study involves animals). This review may take as long as one month. If it takes longer, contact your advisor.

After the proposal and use of subjects are approved, submit evidence of those approvals to your thesis advisor. Remember to keep signed copies of these two approval forms safe in that you will need to include them as Appendix A in your final thesis.

### Obtaining Human Subjects IRB Forms

<http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/irb-forms/index.html>

### Obtaining Animal IACUC Forms

<http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/index.html>

Contact the Animal Care Facilities Manager at 408-924-4929.

### IRB and Thesis Online Workshops

#### IRB Workshop

[http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/irb/irb\\_workshop/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/gradstudies/irb/irb_workshop/index.html)

Includes video tutorials as well as sample protocols, informational documents, and discipline specific handbooks

## Data Collection and Analysis

### Collection

As you are awaiting IRB approval, a good use of your time is to prepare your study materials. Data collection can be done in a variety of ways, and one of these is through the use of the Psychology Department's participant pool. Students in *Introduction to Psychology* courses are asked to participate in research studies as part of their course experience.

Recruiting participants and tracking participation is done through the psychology department's [Research Participation System](#). Proof of IRB approval is required before studies are allowed to be posted on this system.

Other methods of recruiting participants can be used with your advisor's, committee's and IRB approval (e.g., mTurk, Qualtrics panels).

### Analysis

**Data analysis is not just running the statistics for testing your hypothesis.** It may involve cleaning the data, recoding variables, examining the descriptive characteristics of each variable (e.g., mean, median, standard deviation, shape of the distribution, identifying outliers), examining the psychometric properties of measures, aggregating individual variables into scale scores, and other analyses before getting to the actual hypothesis tests (e.g., ANOVA, multiple regression).

## Preparing a Thesis Draft

As with your proposal, you will likely write several drafts, responding to advisor feedback. When your advisor feels the draft is ready, you will send it to the rest of your committee members and begin to schedule an oral defense.

Graduate Studies guidelines are a mix of APA style and their own stylistic rules. Learn them and follow them. In preparing the final thesis, it may save you time if you format it according to the Graduate Studies guidelines from the start, rather than writing it in standard APA format and going to fix margins, and so forth.

It is important that students review the following site for the latest thesis instructions, guidelines and forms: [Thesis Forms and Documents](#)

Specific Thesis Guidelines, which also includes sample theses, can be found at [Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation Guidelines](#)

Other useful information, including links to *Criterion*, a free editing tool can be found at [Criterion Software for Editing](#)

## Thesis Defense

The thesis defense is an opportunity for you to present your research and engage in a scholarly conversation about topic in which you are now “the expert.” During the COVID-19 pandemic and related quarantine, all thesis defenses will be conducted over Zoom.

In terms of the “defense” part: you have made many decisions to get to this point – theoretical, research design, analyses used, interpreting the evidence – and during your defense you will be expected to provide justifications for those decisions and awareness of the strengths and limitations of those decisions. For example, if you chose to collect your data using a service like mTurk or Qualtrics panel surveys, what are the external and internal validity strengths and limits of such an approach?

The defense is technically open to the public, although in practice most defenses in our department are only attended by the committee.

The defense takes about one hour, although this may vary. The first part is a brief formal presentation of the research. Your committee members have already read the thesis, so an exhaustive presentation is not needed. Aim for about 20-30 minutes. The remaining time is spent in discussing your research.

At the conclusion of the defense you will be asked to leave the room while the committee discusses your thesis (don’t go far!). A committee member will inform you when you can return to the room. If the defense is being completed over Zoom, the committee will move to a breakout room for the discussion.

If all goes well, you have passed your defense, but there is still much to do. Typically, you will receive another round of revisions from your committee. You and your advisor will discuss which revisions to incorporate into your thesis.

[Thesis Committee Approval Form](#) must be signed (electronically) by each member of the committee and submitted to Graduate Studies with the Thesis.

Additional forms must be submitted as well, as outline in the next chapter.

## Thesis Submission to Graduate Studies

After your final thesis has been approved and accepted by your thesis committee it must be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office for approval. The [due dates for thesis submissions](#) are published and available from the Graduate Studies Office as well as their website—**be sure to get the correct date (often around April 15 for the Spring)!** The initial thesis copy submitted to the Graduate Studies Office must be the final typed manuscript, on regular paper, approved by the thesis committee.

Graduate Studies will **ACCEPT**, **ACCEPT WITH CORRECTIONS**, or **REJECT** your thesis. You will be notified when your thesis is ready to be picked up.

## Our Faculty

### **Dr. Arlene Asuncion Professor, Social Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5609  
Email: [arlene.asuncion@sjsu.edu](mailto:arlene.asuncion@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/arlene.asuncion/>

Dr. Arlene Asuncion earned her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1993. Dr. Asuncion was a faculty member at the University of Texas at Arlington before joining the faculty at San Jose State University in 1995.

Dr. Asuncion's current research focuses on the influence of affective states on social information processing. This work primarily examines how perceivers' mood states impact their processing of persuasive messages and information about other individuals. In addition to this research, Dr. Asuncion is also interested in peoples' stereotypes about and attitudes towards different social groups, including ethnic minorities and other stigmatized groups. She is particularly interested in how minority groups view themselves as well as each other.

Dr. Asuncion is a Professor of Psychology and teaches courses in Social Psychology at both the graduate and undergraduate levels as well as an undergraduate course on the Psychology of Prejudice.

### **Dr. Désia Bacon Assistant Professor, Developmental Psychology**

Phone: 408-924-5640  
Email: [Desia.Bacon@sjsu.edu](mailto:Desia.Bacon@sjsu.edu)

Dr. Désia Bacon earned her Ph.D. in (Developmental) Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2023. She previously earned her B.S. from the University of Central Florida, and her M.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She joined the San José State University department of Psychology faculty in Fall 2023.

Broadly, Dr. Bacon is interested in how children use the varied information in their environment to help them learn. Her primary research centers on the intersection of language and social development, with specific focus on how young children utilize perceptual and social cues in their environment to facilitate their language learning. Her research perspective is rooted in understanding how the diversity of children's lives impacts their development, utilizing a variety of research methodologies that meet families where they are at.

**Dr. Valerie Carr**  
**Professor, Neuroscience**

Phone: (408) 924-5629  
Email: [valerie.carr@sjsu.edu](mailto:valerie.carr@sjsu.edu)  
[CLIMB \(Carr Lab Investigating Memory and the Brain\)](#)

Dr Valerie Carr earned her PhD in Neuroscience from UCLA in 2008 where she examined strategic factors influencing memory in both younger and older adults. Afterwards she pursued an NIH-funded postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University where she investigated neural mechanisms of memory and how these mechanisms change with age. She is currently a Professor in the Psychology department where she leverages her knowledge of cognitive neuroscience to understand factors that influence the content, quality, and durability of memories across the lifespan.

Students in [her lab](#) conduct research investigating whether and how factors such as aerobic fitness, mobile device use, and wakeful rest affect long-term memory and executive function. Additionally, Dr Carr maintains strong collaborative relationships with researchers at [Stanford University](#) and members of the [Hippocampal Subfields Group](#) regarding the structure and function of medial temporal lobe subfields. Finally, given Dr. Carr's passion for teaching social science students how to program (see: [Applied Computing for Behavioral and Social Sciences](#)), she is involved in pedagogical research regarding interdisciplinary computing.

**Dr. Cheryl Chancellor-Freeland**  
**Professor, Biological Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5645  
Email: [cheryl.chancellor-freeland@sjsu.edu](mailto:cheryl.chancellor-freeland@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/cheryl.chancellor-freeland/>

Dr. Chancellor-Freeland received her doctorate degree from UC Santa Barbara in biopsychology in 1992. Her field of interest was thermoregulation. She completed 4.5 years of postdoctoral work at Boston University Medical School, first as a training fellow, and then as an associate in the departments of microbiology and neurobiology, respectively. This was followed by a one-year appointment as interim Writing Director at CSU Monterey Bay.

Dr. Chancellor-Freeland's research interests include the topics of stress, immunology, neurodegeneration, and cognitive performance. Publications can be found in the area of neuroscience, psychosomatic medicine, and immunology.

**Dr. Shinchieh (CJ) Duh**  
**Associate Professor, Developmental Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-6039  
Email: [CJ.Duh@sjsu.edu](mailto:CJ.Duh@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/cj.duh/index.html>

Dr. Shinchieh (C.J.) Duh earned her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of California Santa Cruz in 2014. Dr. Duh was an adjunct faculty at San Francisco State University (2011-2013) before joining the SJSU Psychology Department. Her research focuses on young children's reasoning, the processes of teaching and learning (in family or school), and cross-cultural comparisons (in the U.S., Taiwan, Korea, and China thus far). Her scholarly work can be seen in several referred journals including Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Children and Youth Services Review, Journal of Research in Childhood Education, and Journal of Education and Learning.

**Dr. Greg Feist**  
**Professor, Adult Development and Personality**

Phone: (408) 924-5617  
Email: [greg.feist@sjsu.edu](mailto:greg.feist@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/greg.feist/>

Gregory J. Feist currently is Professor of Psychology in Personality at San Jose State University. He has also taught at the College of William & Mary and the University of California at Davis. He received his PhD in 1991 from the University of California at Berkeley and his undergraduate degree in 1985 from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He is widely published in the psychology of creativity, the psychology of science, and the development of scientific talent. One major focus of his is establishing the psychology of science as an independent study of science, along the lines of the history, philosophy, and sociology of science. His major efforts toward this end are: *Psychology of Science and the Origins of the Scientific Mind* (2006, Yale University Press), which was awarded the 2007 William James Book Prize by the Division of General Psychology, American Psychological Association (APA); and was founding president of the "International Society for the Psychology of Science and Technology". Some recent research projects have included the topics:

- creativity and mental health
- motivated reasoning and scientific thinking
- creativity, language, and meaning

His research in creativity and personality has been recognized with the Berlyne Award from the Division for Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts (Division 10) of American Psychological Association (APA). Feist is former President of APA's Division 10, and is or has been on the Editorial Boards of Review of *General Psychology*, *Social Epistemology*, *Journal of Research in Personality*, and *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts*. His teaching efforts have

been recognized by outstanding teaching awards at both UC Berkeley and UC Davis. Feist is also co-author of *Psychology: Perspectives and Connections*, *Fundamental of Psychology: Perspectives and Connections*, and *Theories of Personality*, as well as co-editor of the *Handbook of the Psychology of Science*, and *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity and Personality*.

**Dr. Cary Feria**  
**Associate Professor, Perception**

Phone: (408) 924-5620  
Email: [cary.feria@sjsu.edu](mailto:cary.feria@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/cary.feria/>

Dr. Cary Feria earned her Ph.D. in Psychology from UC Irvine in 2004. She was a faculty member at Morehead State University in Kentucky before joining San Jose State University in 2008. Dr. Feria also is an adjunct faculty member in the SJSU M.S. Program in Human Factors & Ergonomics. Dr. Feria teaches courses related to Perception and Research Methods.

Dr. Feria's area of research is visual perception. Her research interests include visual attention, multiple object tracking, visual search, and depth perception. Dr. Feria also has research interests in the field of human factors.

**Dr. Bianca Hinojosa**  
**Assistant Professor, Social Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5741  
Email: [bianca.hinojosa@sjsu.edu](mailto:bianca.hinojosa@sjsu.edu)

Bianca Hinojosa earned her Ph.D. in psychological sciences with an emphasis in health psychology at the University of California, Merced. She earned her MA in general/experimental psychology at California State University, Fresno, where she was an NIH Bridges to Doctorate Scholar. Bianca researches how intergroup interactions and biases influence the well-being of people of color. Her research program broadly focuses on stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination toward the Latinx population and its effects on Latinx peoples' health and well-being.

**Dr. Christine Ma-Kellams**  
**Associate Professor, Social Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5562  
Email: [Christine.Ma-Kellams@sjsu.edu](mailto:Christine.Ma-Kellams@sjsu.edu)

Dr. Christine Ma-Kellams received her Ph.D. in social psychology from UC Santa Barbara in 2011 and completed her postdoctoral training at Harvard University. Prior to SJSU, she was an assistant professor at the University of La Verne. She joined the department of Psychology at San Jose State University in Fall 2019.

Her research interests focus on cross-cultural differences, close relationships, emotion, and decision-making. She is interested in culture, broadly defined, including not just race/ethnicity, but also class/socioeconomic status, gender, political orientation, and religion. Her recent work has included the use of Big Data in the form of internet searches to explore group differences in a variety of applied outcomes, including public health and politics.

**Dr. Evan Palmer**  
**Department Chair; Professor, Human Factors and Cognitive Science**  
Phone: (408) 924-55477  
Email: [evan.palmer@sjsu.edu](mailto:evan.palmer@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/evan.palmer>  
[lavalab.net](http://lavalab.net)

Dr. Evan Palmer holds a B.S. in Cognitive Science and a Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology, both from UCLA. Following graduate school, he completed a four year post-doctoral research fellowship at Harvard Medical School. For nine years, Dr. Palmer was a member of the Human Factors Psychology faculty at Wichita State University before joining the Psychology Department at San José State University in 2016. Dr. Palmer is the graduate coordinator of the M.A. Program in Research and Experimental Psychology in the Psychology Department and a faculty member of the M.S. Program in Human Factors/Ergonomics in the Industrial and Systems Engineering Department. He is also affiliated with the minors in Applied Computing for the Behavioral and Social Sciences and Human Systems Integration. Currently, Dr. Palmer teaches courses in Cognition, Perception, Human Factors, and Cognitive Science.

Dr. Palmer's research centers on applying principles from cognition, attention, and perception to solve real-world problems. He specializes in studying visual perception and attention and is head of the Learning, Attention, Vision, and Application (LAVA) Lab at San José State University. Current research topics include motivational design through gamification, computational theories of visual search, human factors in healthcare, data visualization, web page perception, shape perception, visual attention, and visual search. In addition to basic research, LAVA has done contract work including eye tracking analyses of restaurant menus, usability analyses of websites and products, and design of supplementary materials and website activities for a sensation and perception textbook.

**Dr. Desiree Ryan,**  
**Assistant Professor, Social**

Phone: 408-924-5545  
Email: [desiree.ryan@sjsu.edu](mailto:desiree.ryan@sjsu.edu)

Dr. Desiree Ryan received her doctorate in social psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz in Spring 2024. Her research examines classism in political contexts, media portrayals of classist stereotypes, and the implications of rising political polarization and economic inequality. She conducts student-driven, community-engaged, basic needs research examining college students' lived experiences of food and housing insecurity and their recommendations for change.

**Dr. David Schuster**  
**Professor, Human Factors**

Phone: (408) 924-5659  
Email: [david.schuster@sjsu.edu](mailto:david.schuster@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/david.schuster/>  
[VECTR Lab](#)

David Schuster earned his Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Central Florida in 2013, specializing in applied experimental psychology and human factors. While pursuing his Ph.D., Dr. Schuster was a member of the Team Performance Laboratory at the UCF Institute for Simulation and Training. During that time, Dr. Schuster supervised multiple research projects centered on understanding individual and shared cognition in complex environments. He joined the SJSU Department of Psychology in 2013.

Dr. Schuster's research centers on understanding individual and shared cognition in complex environments. He has conducted research in domains such as aviation, transportation security training, and military human-robot interaction. Currently, he is interested in how complex sociotechnical systems support or hinder people, with a particular focus on decision making among cybersecurity professionals. In 2015, he was awarded a five-year NSF CAREER award to study human cognition in cyber defense. Since that time, he has been awarded supplemental scholarships from NSF to fund undergraduate research training and has mentored over 50 students in his [Virtual Environments, Cognition and Training Research \(VECTR\) Lab](#). He is a co-investigator of an NSF-funded technology pathway program, which led to a [minor in computer programming for CoSS majors](#). In total, he has been PI or Co-PI on over \$1M in externally funded research since joining SJSU. In 2017, he received the Early Career Investigator Award from the SJSU Research Foundation.

Dr. Schuster has co-authored over 30 papers in journals, edited books, and conference proceedings. His work has appeared in *Ergonomics* and *Human Factors*. Dr. Schuster has presented at the *IEEE Conference on Cognitive Methods in Situation Awareness and Decision Support* and the *NATO Information Systems and Technology Panel Symposium on Emerged and Emerging Disruptive Technologies*. He is a member of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society.

**Dr. Christina Tzeng**  
**Assistant Professor, Cognitive Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5706  
Email: [christina.tzeng@sjtu.edu](mailto:christina.tzeng@sjtu.edu)

Dr. Christina Tzeng earned her Ph.D. in Psychology from Emory University, where she continued as a postdoctoral scholar prior to joining the Psychology Department at San José State University in 2020.

Dr. Tzeng studies the plasticity of the perceptual system, focusing on the cognitive and social mechanisms that underlie how we understand spoken language. Spoken language is a highly complex signal that conveys information not only about objects and events in the world but also information about who is talking.

Despite the vast amount of variability in the production of words across different voices and communicative contexts, listeners understand spoken utterances. Dr. Tzeng's research draws from cognitive psychology, social psychology, and linguistics to explore two fundamental questions:

**How do we adapt to unfamiliar pronunciations?** Dr. Tzeng investigates how memory and attentional mechanisms affect listeners' ability to overcome variations in pronunciation and how listeners generalize this learning to novel listening situations (e.g., unfamiliar voices, accents).

**How does information about who is talking affect what we hear?** Dr. Tzeng explores how talker characteristics such as the ethnicity, language background, and age affect listeners' perception of the talker (e.g., comprehensibility, accentedness) and of what is said (e.g., *whine* vs. *wine*, *beak* vs. *peak*).

**Dr. Mark Van Selst**  
**Professor, Cognitive Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5674  
Email: [mark.vanselst@sjtu.edu](mailto:mark.vanselst@sjtu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjtu.edu/people/mark.vanselst/>

Dr. Van Selst earned his BA in Psychology from the University of British Columbia (including published work on the role of attention on self-presentation) and his MA [1991] and Ph.D. [1995] in Psychology (Cognition) at the University of Waterloo (Canada). After moving to the United

States, he worked at the NASA-Ames Research Center (Mountain View, California) as a National Research Council Resident Research Associate with the Human Systems Integration Division. He started at SJSU in 1997, achieving the rank of full professor in 2007. On the research side, Dr. Van Selst has a background and publication record in processes underlying dual-task interference, visual cognition (mental rotation, image scanning), lexical processing (word frequency effects), statistical outlier elimination procedures (monte carlo simulations), Unconscious processes (measurement issues), and the effects of alcohol on cognitive performance (including go/no-go decisions). Other domains of interest include crew miscommunication and error recovery (both planes and sailboats), design-facilitated errors, prospective memory failures, Stroop interference, and modality effects. His most recent research investigates the validity of the Implicit Association Test in examining bias in cross-cultural differences, sexuality, and pet-ownership. As the lead advisor for our undergraduate programs in the department, and as a statewide academic senator representing SJSU at the CSU system level (since 2002), he has developed expertise in student transfer, the role of general education, and alternatives to remediation. In any given semester, Dr. Van Selst typically teaches one or more of cognitive psychology, introductory psychology, research methods, and/or the capstone seminar for our undergraduate honors program (other courses on a less frequent basis).

## Affiliated Faculty

Affiliated faculty are those outside of the MA program who have expressed interest in working with MA students on a limited basis. Their primary responsibility is serving students in their own programs (e.g., MS Clinical Psychology), but may elect to serve on MA thesis committees or work with MA students on research projects if they have the time and there is compatibility between your and their interests.

### **Dr. Matthew Capriotti** **Professor of Psychology, Clinical Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5641  
Email: [matthew.capriotti@sjsu.edu](mailto:matthew.capriotti@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/matthew.capriotti/>

Dr. Capriotti earned his PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2015, and he went on to complete pre- and post-doctoral fellowships in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California San Francisco. He conducts laboratory and applied research related to (a) environmental factors and psychological processes that affect the mental health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals, and (b) behavioral assessment and treatment of obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders, with a focus on Tourette Syndrome and other tic disorders. At SJSU, Dr. Capriotti teaches classes related to clinical psychology, with an emphasis on children and adolescents.

### **Dr. Elena Klaw** **Professor of Psychology, Clinical Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5623  
Email: [elena.klaw@sjsu.edu](mailto:elena.klaw@sjsu.edu)  
Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/elena.klaw/>

Dr. Elena Klaw is a Professor in the Clinical Psychology Division and serves as the Director of the SJSU Center for Community Learning & Leadership. She is the Director of the Veterans Embracing Transition Project (VET) and from 2013 – 2015, she served as the Chair of the University Veterans Advisory Committee. She served as a co-principal investigator on the project Exploring Intimate Partner Relationship Issues Among Veterans and Their Partners on College Campuses in California, funded by the Blue Shield of California Foundation. She designed the course, Warriors at Home: Succeeding in College, Life and Relationships and has developed and evaluated intervention efforts to assist student veterans in the transition from military to civilian life. She has published in the areas of intimate violence prevention, peer leadership, service-learning, mutual help and mentoring, and has presented her work at many local, state, and national conferences and meetings.

**Dr. Erin Woodhead**

**Professor of Psychology, Clinical Psychology**

Phone: (408) 924-5641

Email: [erin.woodhead@sjsu.edu](mailto:erin.woodhead@sjsu.edu)

Web: <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/erin.woodhead/>

Dr. Woodhead received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from West Virginia University (2009). Before joining the SJSU Psychology Department, Dr. Woodhead completed clinical and research postdoctoral training in geropsychology and geriatrics at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago and at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Her research interests are in three areas: 1) substance use across the lifespan, 2) use of mental health services among older adults, and 3) mental health problems, disabilities, and accommodations among college students. She teaches undergraduate classes in aging, clinical psychology, and abnormal psychology, and graduate courses in ethics, addictions, and lifespan development.

Chapter

5

## Your Final Semester and Graduation

*You've done it; you've completed your thesis. Don't slow down just yet though. There's still some work to be done!*

# Y

our final graduate semester at SJSU can be pretty intense. By now you are deep into your final project or thesis while also taking the remaining courses needed for your program. In addition to the final academic pressures a graduate student must also deal with the department and University deadlines imposed in order to successfully graduate. Here is summary of several steps that a graduate student must follow in order to graduate:

- Apply to Graduate
- Culminating Experience form (submitted by the MA Coordinator)
- Changing 299 grades from RP to CR (done by thesis advisor)

- Graduation Commencement

## Applying to Graduate

### Current Deadlines

From <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>

#### FIRST TIME APPLYING FOR GRADUATION?

[Eligible students can apply for graduation through self-service within their MySJSU account.](#) Approximately two weeks after students have been approved for advancement to candidacy by the GAPE office, they will be sent a [MySJSU](#) message prompting them to apply for graduation. This message will include instructions that are similar to the instructions in this [guide](#).

You can also review our video tutorial [here](#).

From <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>:

**NEW!! Online Graduation DATE CHANGE Request**

Only use this if you had previously applied for a graduation term and are changing your graduation to a later term. You can make a Graduation Date Change Request and pay the \$10 fee online.

**When to turn in this form**

The Application for Award of Master's Degree or Reactivation of Application for Award of Master's Degree forms should be turned in soon after your candidacy has been approved. The final deadline to apply to graduate is usually one month after the start of your intended graduation semester.

Please see the graduate studies homepage for current deadlines. You must get permission from the Graduate Studies Office if you attempt to apply to graduate after the deadline. Graduate Studies reserves the right to refuse an application if it is after the deadline.

**Candidacy and Graduation Deadlines: An Example Schedule**

Expected Graduation	Apply for Advancement to Candidacy*	Apply for Graduation†	Submit Thesis to GRADUATE STUDIES for Review‡	Submit Thesis to GRADUATE STUDIES for Publication€
December 2025	April 1, 2025	Sept. 1, 2025	Nov. 15, 2025	Jan. 30, 2026
May 2025	Oct. 1, 2024	Feb. 1, 2026	April 21, 2025	July 1, 2025
August 2025	Feb. 1, 2025	Mar. 1, 2025	July 14, 2025	Sep. 22, 2025
December 2026	April 1, 2026	Sept. 1, 2026	TBA (usually mid Nov.)	TBA (usually mid Jan.)

\*Apply after completion of 9 units and completion of Written Competency

†Apply after candidacy has been approved by Graduate Studies

‡ Submit after your thesis committee has signed off on your thesis

€ Submit after your thesis has been approved by Graduate Studies

## Culminating Experience

The last step towards graduating with your master's degree is one that is completed by the Program Coordinator. All master's students must show culmination of experience in their graduate program. In our program this is accomplished through your enrollment in Psych 299 (Thesis) coupled with your successful completion of your master's thesis.

Graduate Studies requires departments to:

- submit a **Culminating Experience** form stating that the student has completed all requirements towards their master's degree. Ask your thesis advisor to email the MA Coordinator after your defense to confirm the date that you passed your defense. The Coordinator will then submit a Culminating Experience form to GAPE.
- have the thesis advisor change 299 grades from RP to credit.

## Graduation

After you have completed your final semester, the Graduate Studies Office in cooperation with your department will now attempt to clear you for graduation. If you have met all your requirements you will be graduated and you will receive your master's degree. Graduating with your master's degree involves receiving your diploma and having your degree posted on official SJSU transcripts.

## Your Diploma

One of the last processes for clearing students for graduation is clearing your last semester grades. The graduation date for fall semester is December, Spring semester is May, and Summer semester is August. However, Admissions and Records do not usually post grades until the month following your graduation semester. Because of this delay, you should not expect to receive your diploma until six weeks after your graduation date. If after 8 weeks you still have not received your diploma or any letter notifying you of your graduation status please contact [Graduate Studies](#).

Diplomas are mailed via U.S. mail to the address that you listed in your application to graduate. Every effort has been made for you to receive an accurate and error free diploma. However, if there are any errors on your diploma please contact [Graduate Studies](#) immediately. This process is different from the University commencement and department ceremonies

## If You Didn't Graduate

If for any reason you do not fulfill all your requirements you will receive a graduation denial letter from Graduate Studies. The Graduate Studies Office will send you a detailed letter on what requirements are still pending and what is needed for you to rectify these deficiencies.

Your letter will give you a final deadline to complete all your requirements in order to graduate in your intended semester. In most cases, these shortfalls can be quickly cleared up with the help of the Program Coordinator. However, it is essential that you contact the Program Coordinator immediately after you have received this denial of graduation letter.

*Note: If your only remaining requirement for graduation is the completion of your thesis, then you should continue to register each semester for a single unit of Thesis (Psych 299). Due to the vagaries of PeopleSoft, students must maintain continuous enrollment or risk being discontinued. Technically, a student could go a single semester without registering, beyond that PeopleSoft will*

*discontinue their enrollment and the student would have to apply to the graduate school for re-admission.*

## Commencement

Beginning Spring 2018, commencement is done at the College level, and will be done at the conclusion of both Fall and Spring semesters. That is, there will be a graduation ceremony for all undergraduate and graduate programs in the College of Social Sciences. There is no separate Psychology Department graduation ceremony. However, at the conclusion of the College ceremony, there will be a Psychology reception to celebrate our graduates' accomplishments.

During the ceremony, you will be called to walk across the stage and be hooded by your thesis advisor, or other designee. It is a proud moment for you, and those who have worked with you throughout your graduate career.

It is not required for you to attend any ceremony. Your degree is conferred and mailed separately in a different process.

## The College Commencement

Information about commencement can be found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/commencement/>, including graduation preparation, regalia information, guest resources, and FAQs.

## Post-Graduation

Congratulations on a job well done and a big step in your professional development! You have now earned a Masters of Arts in Research and Experimental Psychology. As we spell out in our Mission Statement, this degree prepares you for either the PhD in Psychology or a career in research and/or teaching. We are very interested in what happens to you on this next phase of your journey and would love to hear from you and learn how you are putting your degree to work. In addition to simply sending us an email ([psycrema@sjsu.edu](mailto:psycrema@sjsu.edu)), you can stay in touch by simply connecting to the current MA Coordinator via [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

## Appendix

A

# Research & Experimental Psychology MA Program Policies

## Research and Experimental Psychology MA Program Policies on Minimum Grades in Program and Administrative Academic Probation & Disqualification

Approved by Faculty February, 2020

- Summary of Minimum Grades Policy for Research and Experimental Psychology MA Program:
  - Only courses passed with a grade of B- (2.7) or better can be counted to fulfill requirements of the program.
  - Required courses with grades of C+ (2.3) or lower must be repeated.
  - Only 9 units of courses may be repeated during graduate study.
- Summary of Administrative Academic Probation and Disqualification Policy for Research and Experimental Psychology MA Program:
  - A semester GPA of < 3.0 will result in the student being placed on administrative academic probation.
  - While on administrative academic probation, a second semester with a GPA < 3.0 will result in academic disqualification.
  - The student will remain on administrative academic probation until they have a semester with  $\geq 3.0$  and their cumulative graduate GPA is  $\geq 3.0$ .
  - At least one graded course must be taken each Fall and Spring semester while on probation.

### REx MA Program Minimum Grades Policy:

After being admitted to candidacy, students must maintain certain academic requirements to remain in good standing. These include:

- Completing all courses in your candidacy program with grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, or CR. Grades of C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, and F remain on the program and will continue to be computed in your grade point average. You must petition through your graduate advisor to add another course to your program with unit value equivalent to that course in which you received the unsatisfactory grade.
- Obtain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 ("B") every semester in the program and maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of a 3.0 ("B") in completing the requirements for the master's degree listed on the candidacy form. If you fail to maintain this GPA, you may be put on academic probation by the university. Failure to raise your GPA to a 3.0 or above after being placed on academic probation may then result in being academically disqualified from SJSU. If you are disqualified from the university please contact your graduate advisor as there will be several procedures you need to complete if you plan on applying for reinstatement.

## REx MA Program Administrative Academic Probation and Disqualification Policy:

Graduate students enrolled in a degree program, credential program or certificate program are subject to academic probation if either the SJSU cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 (grade of "B" on a 4.0-point scale) in all units attempted subsequent to matriculation in either conditionally classified or classified status or are subject to administrative academic probation if the graduate student's SJSU GPA for a semester is below 3.0. Courses taken at the lower-division level will be listed on the transcript but cannot be used for graduate degree credit and are not included in the GPA computations. Courses taken through SJSU Open University before matriculation will also be listed on the transcript and may, with advisor consent on the candidacy form, be used toward the graduate degree if adhering to the transfer course limitation and residency requirement. They will be figured into the GPA for advancement to candidacy and for the candidacy GPA computation at the completion of the program. All SJSU Open University course grades will be included in the SJSU Cumulative GPA, which is used to determine academic standing for degree conferral. However, courses transferred into the graduate program from other institutions or from the SJSU undergraduate career will not count in the cumulative GPA computation.

At the completion of the degree program, should the SJSU cumulative GPA fall below 3.0 at the same time that the candidacy GPA is above 3.0, the student's academic standing will reflect the former only. In this unusual circumstance, the student or program must make the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies aware of this discrepancy.

Each Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall term while on probation, the student must achieve a 3.0 GPA in the semester's work to avoid academic disqualification. To avoid disqualification, at least one graded course must be taken each Spring and Fall semester, while on probation. The student remains on continued probation as long as each individual term's work is equal to or above the 3.0 threshold but the overall GPA is still below 3.0. Probation is cleared when the SJSU cumulative GPA rises to 3.0 or better in any subsequent Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall term.

Graduate students are eligible to repeat courses with letter grades lower than "B" or with grades of "NC," "WU," or "IC" up to a total of 9 units, no matter how many units there are in the individual degree program. Exceptions may be made by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in this course repetition limit with respect to high unit clinical or field courses, as long as the exceptions do not violate probation and disqualification policies established in the major (see sections on **Probation - Administrative - Graduate and Disqualification - Administrative - Graduate**). Repeated and elective courses may not be taken through Open University. Elective classes already taken in the degree program may be added to the candidacy form by means of the **Request for Course Substitution in Graduate Degree** form. However, the two courses will be grade averaged, as courses, once graded, cannot be removed from the candidacy form. The total allowable units that can be added as either repeated classes or substituted electives can be no greater than 30% of the total number of units for the individual degree for the entire graduate career. To clarify, in a 30-unit degree program, a student may add electives or repeat classes only up to a total of 9 units.



## SJSU Academic Policies

*As a graduate student, it is important to know what rights you have under university policy, as well as your responsibilities.*

T

This chapter will present or direct you to many of the university policies that speak to your rights as a student and/or employee of SJSU. The last portion of the chapter covers topics relating more to your responsibilities as a student, scholar, and researcher. This is by no means an exhaustive

lists, so please feel free to contact the Program Coordinator, Chair of the Department, Graduate Studies, or the Human Resources department if you have further questions or concerns.

Most of the graduate study forms referred to in this section can be found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/forms/>

## Continuous Enrollment Requirement

The university's Academic Senate passed [Policy F11-2](#) that requires that all Masters students with a grade of "RP" (Research in Progress) for Psychology 299 (Master's Thesis) in spring 2012 or later semesters must be enrolled in a 1 unit supervisory course, 1290R. The course fee is approximately \$280. Enrollment in 1290R is required each semester until degree completion. The Registrar's Office will identify students who need to enroll in 1290R and contact them via MySJSU. This usually occurs shortly before or after the semester has started. Students can then enroll in the course through their MySJSU account. No permission code is needed. For more information about the continuous enrollment guidelines, see [Continuous Enrollment Guidelines](#)

## Leave of Absence

From <http://info.sjsu.edu>:

By [University Policy S15-3](#), a formal leave of absence for graduate students for medical, care-giving, military service, personal hardship, or educational reasons may be requested by submission of the fully signed and documented Leave of Absence Petition. For detailed information on the process and restrictions see [Leaves of Absence and Withdrawal](#).

Graduate students are eligible for all leaves of absence except when finished with all degree requirements other than their culminating experience (thesis, project, and/or comprehensive exam plus any other components required of the major). At that point, neither stopping out (voluntary absence for a semester) nor financial leaves are permissible and students must register for 1 unit of University Studies (UNVS) 1290R or a Departmental 1290R (Thesis/Project Supervision) through special session every semester until graduation (See Thesis and Project Work - RP Status - Graduate). During this stage of a graduate student's career, leaves of absence for any reason beyond medical or military shall be precluded except under rare circumstances.

### One Semester Leaves

Students who have attended one semester as a graduate student and are in good standing may leave SJSU for one semester (Fall or Spring) without applying for an official leave of absence. Students must return in the semester following the one semester leave or they will have to re-

apply for admission. Summer and Winter registration is not required nor do they count as being in matriculation.

Graduate students will still receive a registration notice for the semester they are supposed to return and do not have to file any special return forms.

*Note: A student may NOT take a leave in the first semester they have been admitted in to and cannot defer their admission either.*

### Official Leave of Absence

Students may miss more than one semester by applying for an [official leave request](#).

### Leave of Absence For International Students

International students may not take a leave of absence and must remain in the United States except for documented medical reasons. International students must be enrolled in a full course of study (9 units for graduate students) for two semesters annually. Winter and Summer registration is not required. If you have further questions please contact the [International Student and Scholar Services](#).

### Returning after a Non-Leave of Absence

When a graduate student wants to return after missing more than one semester and is not on a medical leave of absence, the student is no longer considered a graduate student and will have to re-apply to the University. A graduate student must follow the same rules and deadlines for applying to the semester they wish to enroll in just like all other prospective students.

Once a student is re-admitted, their previous academic history will continue to be used for their graduate career as long as it is not older than 7 years.

If a returning student has missed no more than two semesters they can fill out the [Returning Student Application form](#). While the \$55 fee is still required this abbreviated form saves the

student some time. You will not need to resubmit any transcripts if they were already turned in during the first application.

#### When to turn in this form

Submit the Returning Student Application by the departmental admission deadline. Even though you have been at SJSU before you are still bound by the same admission deadlines that other students have.

### Outdated Work (7 Year Limit)

Courses that a current graduate student has taken for their master's program [begin to expire after 7 years](#). After 7 years, the University believes a student's proficiency in the subject matter begins to become outdated. There are several options to fixing a problem of courses expiring.

#### Course Substitution

Expired courses listed in a student's candidacy form can be replaced with other courses that a student has taken by submitting a [course substitution form](#) and having the Program Coordinator sign the form.

#### Repeat the Outdated Course

A graduate student also has the option of re-taking the course without credit.

#### Revalidation

If the student wishes to re-validate an expired course they must have Program Coordinator petition for this re-validation directly to Graduate Studies. No more than 1/3 of a master's program may be considered for re-validation. If re-validation is approved by Graduate Studies, the department will give the student an examination pertinent to the subject matter of the course that is being re-validated. After re-validation is completed the Program Coordinator will contact the Graduate Studies Office and inform them of the successful revalidation. The [Revalidation](#) form is here. Note that *transfer work taken at other institutions is not eligible for revalidation*.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Presidential Directive 97-03 describes the University's policies and guidelines for securing accommodations for students with disabilities, as well as the procedures for resolving disputes. It is the purpose of this directive to assure that SJSU continues to comply with federal and state

legislation and California State University policies regarding the provision of services to students with disabilities.

For a full description, view [Presidential Directive 97-03](#).

Information about accessibility services at SJSU can be found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/accessibility/>.

## Campus Climate

University Policy S01-13, San José State University's Policy of Commitment to a Campus Climate That Values Diversity and Equal Opportunity, replaces University Policy S91-1 and affirms that San José State University (SJSU) is committed to maintaining an environment free from discrimination and harassment in compliance with all laws on non-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Furthermore, the university community has a responsibility to advocate inclusion, respect, and understanding at a level above that which is minimally required by law.

For a full description, view [SJSU Campus Climate Policy](#).

## Discrimination

Executive Order 883, System-wide Guidelines for Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Programs in Employment, supercedes Executive Order 774 and 340. The California State University is committed to maintaining a consistent and equitable set of employment practices and procedures prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, age, disability, and covered veteran status.

For a full description, view [Executive Order 883](#) (replaces 774).

Information about SJSU's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion can be found at <http://www.sjsu.edu/diversity/>

## Sexual Harassment

Executive Order 345, Prohibition of Sexual Harassment, is the California State University's system-wide policy statement requiring each campus and the Office of the Chancellor to maintain a working and learning environment free from sexual harassment for students, employees, and

those who apply for student or employee status. The California State University will take action to eliminate sexual harassment, which is conduct subject to disciplinary action.

For a full description, view [Executive Order 345](#).

Information about SJSU's commitment to gender equity and addressing sexual misconduct and violence can be found at the [Title IX Office webpage](#).

## Supervisory Personnel Responsibilities Regarding Sexual Harassment

Presidential Directive 91-08, Sexual Harassment and Special Responsibilities of Supervisory and Management Personnel Having Knowledge of Potential Sexual Harassment Situation, asserts San José State University's commitment to providing all its students and employees with a comfortable and safe environment for learning and working. The President of San José State University issued this memo to clarify for all SJSU supervisory personnel the kind of conduct that is defined as sexual harassment and the responsibilities of all supervisory personnel when they have any knowledge that sexual harassment may be taking place within the campus community.

## California Whistleblower Protection Act for Employees and Applicants for Employment

Executive Order 821, Reporting Procedures for Protected Disclosure of Improper Governmental Activities and/or Significant Threats to Health or Safety, establishes a procedure for employees and applicants for employment at California State University (CSU) to make good faith communication that discloses information that may evidence an improper government activity or any condition that may significantly threaten the health or safety of employees or the public.

California Government Code §8548 requires San José State University to inform employees of the California Whistle Blower Protection Act. This law provides SJSU employees the opportunity to report improper activities to the Bureau of State Audits (BSA). The BSA investigates:

- Illegal acts like theft, fraud, or conflicts of interest by state employees.
- Misuse or abuse of state property or time by state employees.
- Gross misconduct, incompetence, or inefficiency by state employees.

California State University Executive Orders No. 929 (replaces 821 and 822) protect SJSU employees from retaliation for reporting such information. **Concerns about retaliation should be reported to the Office for Equal Opportunity (408) 924-2255.**

Web: <http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-929.html>

## Academic Dishonesty

From <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>

Additional information can be found at [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](#).

## **S07-2 Academic Integrity Policy**

The University emphasizes responsible citizenship and an awareness of ethical choices inherent in human development. Academic honesty and fairness foster ethical standards for all those who depend upon the integrity of the university, its courses, and its degrees. University degrees are compromised and the public is defrauded if faculty members or students knowingly or unwittingly allow dishonest acts to be rewarded academically.

### **STUDENT ROLE**

The San José State University Academic Integrity Policy requires that each student:

1. Know the rules that preserve academic integrity and abide by them at all times. This includes learning and abiding by rules associated with specific classes, exams and course assignments.
2. Know the consequences of violating the Academic Integrity Policy.
3. Know the appeal rights, and the procedures to be followed in the event of an appeal.
4. Foster academic integrity among peers.

### **FACULTY MEMBER ROLE**

The San José State University Academic Integrity Policy requires that each faculty member:

1. Provide a clear and concise course syllabus that apprises students of the Academic Integrity Policy and the ethical standards and supporting procedures required in a course.
2. Make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct. Specifically, examinations should be appropriately proctored or monitored to prevent students from copying, using non-cited resources, or exchanging information. Examinations and

answers to examination questions should be kept private. Efforts should be made to give unique and varied assignments.

3. Take action against a student in accordance with this policy when supporting evidence indicates that the student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy.
4. Comply with the rules and standards of the Academic Integrity Policy.

#### OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT & ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT'S ROLE

The San José State University Academic Integrity Policy requires that the Student Conduct Administrator:

1. Comply with and enforce the [Student Conduct Code](#) which includes the Academic Integrity Policy.
2. Adjudicate student conduct cases and assign administrative sanctions to students who have violated the Student Conduct Code.
3. Serve as a resource for faculty, staff and students on matters of academic integrity and this policy.
4. Ensure dissemination of the policy to the campus community when changes are made to the policy or procedures.

#### 1.0 DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

##### 1.1 CHEATING

San José State University defines cheating as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Cheating includes:

- 1.1.1 Copying, in part or in whole, from another's test or other evaluation instrument including homework assignments, worksheets, lab reports, essays, summaries, quizzes, etc.;
- 1.1.2 Submitting work previously graded in another course without prior approval by the course instructor or by departmental policy;
- 1.1.3 Submitting work simultaneously presented in two courses without prior approval by both course instructors or by the department policies of both departments;
- 1.1.4 Using or consulting sources, tools or materials prohibited by the instructor prior to, or during an examination;
- 1.1.5 Altering or interfering with the grading process;

- 1.1.6 Sitting for an examination by a surrogate, or as a surrogate;
- 1.1.7 Any other act committed by a student in the course of their academic work that defrauds or misrepresents, including aiding others in any of the actions defined above.
- 1.1.8 Failure to cite the use of any AI-assisted software constitutes a violation of SJSU policy [F15-7](#)

## 1.2 PLAGIARISM

San José State University defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements.

Plagiarism includes:

- 1.2.1 Knowingly or unknowingly incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts of, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work;
- 1.2.2 Representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawing, sculptures, or similar works as one's own.

## 2.0 NOTIFICATION OF STANDARDS OF DETECTING PLAGIARISM

San José State University or its faculty may subscribe to or use plagiarism detection services.

Any plagiarism detection service with which San José State University contracts shall ensure the anonymity of all submitted work to third parties.

Except for the stated purpose of storing submitted work in databases solely for the intended purpose of detecting plagiarism, any plagiarism detection service with which San José State University contracts shall, to the fullest extent possible, agree to assure that ownership rights of

all submitted work shall remain with the work's author and not with the plagiarism detection service.

### 3.0 EVALUATION AND REPORTING

When a faculty member suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy and is in possession of evidence to substantiate that violation it is the faculty member's responsibility to take the following steps:

3.1 Confront the situation discretely. That is, faculty members shall not discuss specific charges of cheating, plagiarism, or any other violations involving specific individuals in the classroom before other members of the class.

3.2 Communicate with the student concerning the alleged infraction; arrange for a conference to present documentation. In this conference, the student should be advised of the allegation and made aware of the supporting evidence and the probable consequences.[1] Faculty members should make their best effort to meet with the student in person, but if that is not feasible then they can communicate in writing.

3.3 Inform the student of the sanctions to be recommended in accordance with Section 4.0 if the faculty member still believes that a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy has occurred.

3.4 Report the alleged infraction and the action taken to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development on the reporting form for violations to the Academic Integrity Policy. A copy of the supporting documentation must be attached to the reporting form.

3.5 The instructor may impose the recommended penalty and make the report called for in section 3.4 without a conference when a student fails to attend a scheduled conference to discuss the alleged dishonesty, or when the apparent dishonesty is detected only near the end of the semester and the faculty member makes a good-faith, albeit unsuccessful, effort to contact the student. In either case, the student's right to appeal is preserved.

### 4.0 SANCTIONS

There shall be two major classifications of sanctions that may be imposed for violations of this policy: Academic and Administrative. Academic sanctions are actions related to the coursework or grades determined by the faculty member. Administrative sanctions are actions that address a student's status on campus and are determined by the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical

Development. Academic sanctions and Administrative sanctions may be imposed simultaneously.

#### 4.1 ACADEMIC SANCTIONS

Faculty members are responsible for determining academic sanctions. Faculty members may find it helpful to consult with their department chair, senior faculty members, or the Conduct Administrator in consideration of appropriate academic sanctions. Such sanctions shall be proportional to the offense against the Academic Integrity Policy. Usually a form of "grade modification" will be employed. Before sanctions can be employed, the faculty member must have verified the instance(s) of academic dishonesty by personal observation or documentation.

Academic dishonesty cases that occur in the classroom shall be handled by the faculty member. After action has been taken by the faculty member, the faculty member must complete a form that identifies the student who was found responsible, the general nature of the offense, the action taken, and must make a recommendation as to whether or not additional action should be considered by the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

Recommended sanctions include:

- Oral reprimand.
- Failure on the evaluation instrument.
- Reduction in course grade.
- Failure in the course.
- Referral for additional administrative sanctions.

#### FACULTY DISCRETION:

Incidents involving the careless or inept handling of quoted material that fall short of the definitions of cheating or plagiarism as defined in Items 1.1 and 1.2 of this policy may be dealt with at the discretion of the faculty member concerned.

The faculty member also has the discretion and obligation to determine whether specific acts by a student fall under the description in 1.1.7

#### ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTIONS:

As stipulated in the California Administrative Code, Section 41301, cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic program may warrant expulsion, suspension, probation or a lesser sanction. Administrative action involving academic dishonesty at San José State University is the responsibility of the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development.

- The Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development will respond to:
- Referrals from the faculty;
- Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy;
- Repeat violations as brought to attention by the faculty or through the centralized reports filed in the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development.

The Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development will notify faculty members when action has been taken. The Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development shall maintain a record of students who have been reported for violating the Academic Integrity Policy.

## 5.0 PROTECTION OF RIGHTS

Nothing in this policy is intended to deny students appropriate due process, including the right to be informed of the charges, the nature of the evidence supporting the charges, and to have a meeting with the faculty member, the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development or other decision-makers. At any such meeting statements and evidence on behalf of the student may be submitted. This policy is not intended to deny the right to appeal any decision through appropriate university channels,

When an administrative sanction is being considered, Executive Order 970, Student Disciplinary Procedures for the California State University, stipulates that a student is entitled to a hearing to determine whether violations of conduct or conduct-related regulations have occurred.

## 6.0 THREATS

Threats against any member of the faculty as a consequence of implementing this policy on academic integrity will be cause for disciplinary action under Section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations, and may also result in civil and criminal action.

## 7.0 DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

7.1 The Academic Integrity policy shall be published in the Schedule of Classes each semester and in the University Catalog. Copies of this policy shall also be held in every department office and in the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development.

7.2 Dissemination of this information shall be the responsibility of the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development. Information is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>

7.3 The Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development shall submit a statistical report on the number and type of infractions and their eventual disposition to the Academic Senate annually.

7.4 Colleges and Departments are encouraged to periodically discuss this policy at faculty meetings, including discussion of strategies for ensuring academic integrity among students.

7.5 Department chairs and Program directors should ensure that new faculty members receive a copy of this policy and a verbal explanation at the time they are given their first class assignment.

## Ethics in Research

Section 8.0 from:

### **Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. (2003)**

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Web: <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>

## 8 Research and Publication

### **8.01 Institutional Approval**

When institutional approval is required, psychologists provide accurate information about their research proposals and obtain approval prior to conducting the research. They conduct the research in accordance with the approved research protocol.

### **8.02 Informed Consent to Research**

(a) When obtaining informed consent as required in Standard 3.10, Informed Consent, psychologists inform participants about (1) the purpose of the research, expected duration, and procedures; (2) their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once participation has begun; (3) the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing; (4) reasonably foreseeable factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate such as potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects; (5) any prospective research benefits; (6) limits of confidentiality; (7) incentives for participation; and (8) whom to contact for questions about the research and research participants' rights. They provide opportunity for the prospective participants to ask questions and receive answers. (See also Standards 8.03, Informed Consent for Recording Voices and Images in Research; 8.05, Dispensing with Informed Consent for Research; and 8.07, Deception in Research.)

(b) Psychologists conducting intervention research involving the use of experimental treatments clarify to participants at the outset of the research (1) the experimental nature of the treatment; (2) the services that will or will not be available to the control group(s) if appropriate; (3) the means by which assignment to treatment and control groups will be made; (4) available treatment alternatives if an individual does not wish to participate in the research or wishes to withdraw once a study has begun; and (5) compensation for or monetary costs of participating including, if appropriate, whether reimbursement from the participant or a third-party payor will be sought. (See also Standard 8.02a, Informed Consent to Research.)

### **8.03 Informed Consent for Recording Voices and Images in Research**

Psychologists obtain informed consent from research participants prior to recording their voices or images for data collection unless (1) the research consists solely of naturalistic observations in public places, and it is not anticipated that the recording will be used in a manner that could cause personal identification or harm, or (2) the research design includes deception, and consent for the use of the recording is obtained during debriefing. (See also Standard 8.07, Deception in Research.)

### **8.04 Client/Patient, Student, and Subordinate Research Participants**

(a) When psychologists conduct research with clients/patients, students, or subordinates as participants, psychologists take steps to protect the prospective participants from adverse consequences of declining or withdrawing from participation.

(b) When research participation is a course requirement or an opportunity for extra credit, the prospective participant is given the choice of equitable alternative activities.

### **8.05 Dispensing With Informed Consent for Research**

Psychologists may dispense with informed consent only (1) where research would not reasonably be assumed to create distress or harm and involves (a) the study of normal educational practices, curricula, or classroom management methods conducted in educational settings; (b) only anonymous questionnaires, naturalistic observations, or archival research for which disclosure of responses would not place participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or damage their financial standing, employability, or reputation, and confidentiality is protected; or (c) the study of factors related to job or organization effectiveness conducted in organizational settings for which there is no risk to participants' employability, and confidentiality is protected or (2) where otherwise permitted by law or federal or institutional regulations.

### **8.06 Offering Inducements for Research Participation**

(a) Psychologists make reasonable efforts to avoid offering excessive or inappropriate financial or other inducements for research participation when such inducements are likely to coerce participation.

(b) When offering professional services as an inducement for research participation, psychologists clarify the nature of the services, as well as the risks, obligations, and limitations. (See also Standard 6.05, Barter with Clients/Patients.)

### **8.07 Deception in Research**

(a) Psychologists do not conduct a study involving deception unless they have determined that the use of deceptive techniques is justified by the study's significant prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and that effective non-deceptive alternative procedures are not feasible.

(b) Psychologists do not deceive prospective participants about research that is reasonably expected to cause physical pain or severe emotional distress.

(c) Psychologists explain any deception that is an integral feature of the design and conduct of an experiment to participants as early as is feasible, preferably at the conclusion of their participation, but no later than at the conclusion of the data collection, and permit participants to withdraw their data. (See also Standard 8.08, Debriefing.)

### 8.08 Debriefing

(a) Psychologists provide a prompt opportunity for participants to obtain appropriate information about the nature, results, and conclusions of the research, and they take reasonable steps to correct any misconceptions that participants may have of which the psychologists are aware.

(b) If scientific or humane values justify delaying or withholding this information, psychologists take reasonable measures to reduce the risk of harm.

(c) When psychologists become aware that research procedures have harmed a participant, they take reasonable steps to minimize the harm.

### 8.09 Humane Care and Use of Animals in Research

(a) Psychologists acquire, care for, use, and dispose of animals in compliance with current federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with professional standards.

(b) Psychologists trained in research methods and experienced in the care of laboratory animals supervise all procedures involving animals and are responsible for ensuring appropriate consideration of their comfort, health, and humane treatment.

(c) Psychologists ensure that all individuals under their supervision who are using animals have received instruction in research methods and in the care, maintenance, and handling of the species being used, to the extent appropriate to their role. (See also Standard 2.05, Delegation of Work to Others.)

(d) Psychologists make reasonable efforts to minimize the discomfort, infection, illness, and pain of animal subjects.

(e) Psychologists use a procedure subjecting animals to pain, stress, or privation only when an alternative procedure is unavailable and the goal is justified by its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value.

(f) Psychologists perform surgical procedures under appropriate anesthesia and follow techniques to avoid infection and minimize pain during and after surgery.

(g) When it is appropriate that an animal's life be terminated, psychologists proceed rapidly, with an effort to minimize pain and in accordance with accepted procedures.

## **8.10 Reporting Research Results**

(a) Psychologists do not fabricate data. (See also Standard 5.01a, Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements.)

(b) If psychologists discover significant errors in their published data, they take reasonable steps to correct such errors in a correction, retraction, erratum, or other appropriate publication means.

## **8.11 Plagiarism**

Psychologists do not present portions of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally.

## **8.12 Publication Credit**

(a) Psychologists take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have substantially contributed. (See also Standard 8.12b, Publication Credit.)

(b) Principal authorship and other publication credits accurately reflect the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved, regardless of their relative status. Mere possession of an institutional position, such as department chair, does not justify authorship credit. Minor contributions to the research or to the writing for publications are acknowledged appropriately, such as in footnotes or in an introductory statement.

(c) Except under exceptional circumstances, a student is listed as principal author on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student's doctoral dissertation. Faculty advisors discuss publication credit with students as early as feasible and throughout the research and publication process as appropriate. (See also Standard 8.12b, Publication Credit.)

## **8.13 Duplicate Publication of Data**

Psychologists do not publish, as original data, data that have been previously published. This does not preclude republishing data when they are accompanied by proper acknowledgment.

## **8.14 Sharing Research Data for Verification**

(a) After research results are published, psychologists do not withhold the data on which their conclusions are based from other competent professionals who seek to verify the substantive claims through reanalysis and who intend to use such data only for that purpose, provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and unless legal rights concerning proprietary data preclude their release. This does not preclude psychologists from requiring that such individuals or groups be responsible for costs associated with the provision of such information.

(b) Psychologists who request data from other psychologists to verify the substantive claims through reanalysis may use shared data only for the declared purpose. Requesting psychologists obtain prior written agreement for all other uses of the data.

### **8.15 Reviewers**

Psychologists who review material submitted for presentation, publication, grant, or research proposal review respect the confidentiality of and the proprietary rights in such information of those who submitted it