

**Milestones Agreement Form**  
**School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences**  
**Ph.D. Programs in:**  
**Cognition and Neuroscience**  
**Communication Sciences and Disorders**  
**Psychological Sciences**

This form is provided for the purpose of informing students about the academic milestones that they will be expected to reach in order to earn their Ph.D. in the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences as well as when they are expected to complete these milestones. Students are expected to reach each milestone within the specified time period in order to make satisfactory progress through the program. Students who are not making satisfactory progress may lose funding, be placed on academic probation, or be dismissed from the program.

**Academic Advising:**

Upon entering a Ph.D. Program in the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences, all students will be assigned a Research Advisor and an Academic Advisor.

**Research Advisor:**

The research advisor is the primary faculty member with whom the student works and who provides mentoring in research, guidance in the selection of courses, and assistance in preparation and modification of the degree plan, and general career guidance. The research advisor supervises and must sign off on the student's qualifying proposals and papers, and other documents submitted to faculty committees. The Research Advisor is also responsible for conducting an annual evaluation of the student's academic and research performance. The Research Advisor's review is included in the faculty's annual review of doctoral student performance which determines retention and funding. In most cases, the research advisor will become the chair of the student's dissertation committee and will have responsibility, along with the dissertation committee in guiding the student through completion of the dissertation.

All new students, upon entry, have selected or been assigned a research advisor. Occasionally, a student may wish to change research advisors. There are many reasons a student may seek a change. But, changes should be carefully considered since starting in a new lab or new area can result in delays in meeting deadlines. You should seek the advice of your Area Head or the Associate Dean before initiating a change. There are also situations in which a research advisor may no longer wish to serve as a student's advisor. Whether by student choice or faculty decision, **a student who at any time lacks a research advisor for a semester will be dismissed from the program.**

**Academic Advisor:**

The Area Head for each Ph.D. program is the Academic Advisor for students in that program. The Academic Advisors may be consulted on any matter pertaining to doctoral study. Issues related to course requirements, program procedures and opportunities, credit transfers, and other student academic issues should be addressed to the academic advisors.

## **Requirements for all Students in PhD. Programs in the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences:**

### **Plan 1**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Year

By February 1: Submit Qualifying Thesis Prospectus and form Qualifying Thesis Committee  
By August 1: Submit full draft of Thesis Proposal to the Qualifying Thesis Committee

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

By October 1: Thesis Proposal approved by entire committee  
By February 1: Progress report due to Thesis Committee  
By August 1: Final, full draft of Qualifying Thesis due to the Thesis Committee

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

By October 1: Qualifying Thesis completed and defended  
All coursework except optional advanced seminars completed  
Dissertation Committee formed

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Year

Full draft of Dissertation Proposal submitted to the Dissertation Committee  
Dissertation Proposal approved and defended and dissertation research commenced

#### 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year\*

Full draft of the Dissertation to the Committee  
Final Dissertation approved by the Committee and defense scheduled  
Dissertation Defense successfully completed and all revisions approved  
Exit interview completed and submitted to SED

\*It is expected that students will complete the program in 5 years. However, we recognize that some dissertations may require additional time.

### **Plan 2**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Year

By February 15: Submit First Qualifying Project proposal

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

By October 1: Submit First Qualifying Project  
By December 1: All revisions to the First Qualifying Project successfully completed  
By February 1: Second Qualifying Project Proposal submitted

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

By October 1: Second Qualifying Project submitted  
By December 1: All revisions to the Second Qualifying Project successfully completed  
All coursework except optional advanced seminars completed  
Dissertation Committee formed

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Year

Full draft of Dissertation Proposal submitted to the Dissertation Committee  
Dissertation Proposal approved and defended and dissertation research commenced

## 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year\*

Full draft of the Dissertation submitted to the Committee  
Final Dissertation approved by the Committee and defense scheduled  
Dissertation Defense successfully completed and all revisions approved  
Exit interview completed and submitted to SED

\*It is expected that students will complete the program in 5 years. However, we recognize that some dissertations may require additional time.

## Systems Neuroscience

### 1<sup>st</sup> Year

By February 1: Submit First Year Project proposal and form First Year Project committee

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Year

By September 1: Submit First Year Project to First Year Project committee  
By end of fall semester: All revisions to the First Year Project successfully completed  
Defend First Year Project and present grant/dissertation specific aims  
By end of spring semester: Dissertation Committee formed

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Year

All coursework except optional advanced seminars completed  
By September 1: NRSA-style draft of Dissertation Proposal submitted to the Dissertation Committee  
By December 1: Dissertation proposal revisions completed and dissertation proposal defense scheduled  
By end of spring semester: Dissertation Proposal approved and defended

### 4<sup>th</sup> Year

Dissertation research

### 5<sup>th</sup> Year

Full draft of the Dissertation submitted to the Committee  
Final Dissertation approved by the Committee and defense scheduled\*  
Dissertation Defense successfully completed and all revisions approved  
Exit interview completed and submitted to SED

\*At least one first-authored research paper must be accepted by a peer-reviewed journal before the dissertation defense can be scheduled.

## Degree Completion Checklist for Students:

- Maintain active student status by registering for courses every fall and spring semester
- Submit your signed *Milestones Agreement Form* to your advisor before the end of your first semester
- Complete all required organized coursework
- Schedule and successfully complete required qualifying papers
- Select the Chair and members of your dissertation committee
- Prepare and successfully present your dissertation proposal
- Enroll in required dissertation hours and complete your dissertation
- Successfully complete your defense of your dissertation
- Submit required documentation to the Graduate School for completion and graduation

Status/Progress of student's research for \_\_\_\_\_ semesters:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Progress is satisfactory in all aspects
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quality of work is generally satisfactory, but student is falling behind the expected schedule; more effort is indicated
- \_\_\_\_\_ Progress is on schedule but quality of work needs to be improved to ensure an acceptable final product
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work is sufficiently behind schedule that finishing within the support or time limits is unlikely
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quality of work is below that expected for the degree; a large change is necessary in either the effort and result being obtained or in the degree being attempted
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student is committed but appears to not have the capacity to complete the degree and should be counseled to change majors or to withdraw
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other/additional comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of remaining organized courses required for degree completion: \_\_\_\_\_

How many doctoral hours will student have accumulated by the end of this semester: \_\_\_\_\_

Currently how is the student supported? TA\_\_\_\_ RA\_\_\_\_ Self-supported\_\_\_\_

I have read this form and have had the opportunity to discuss the information contained in it with my advisor. I understand the academic milestones that I am expected to reach in order to successfully complete the \_\_\_\_\_ program, as well as the expected timeline for completing these milestones.

Committee Members:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervising Professor

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Printed Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor's Printed Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date