

Department of Psychology  
Legal Psychology Graduate Program  
Graduate Student Handbook



Program Requirements  
and Procedures



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## Program Overview

Legal Psychology is a young, vibrant, exciting and growing field. FIU is one of the few universities in the world with a doctoral concentration in legal psychology. We have excellent professors and students. This program offers students broad training in psychology and in-depth training in legal psychology as well as more traditional concentrations (e.g., social, cognitive, developmental psychology). Research, professional, and pedagogical skills are strongly emphasized. Students may also in some cases obtain experience in the legal system by participating in field research, expert witness cases, and through potential opportunities for collaboration with [FIU's law school](#). We are further affiliated with FIU's [Global Forensic Justice Center](#).

The Legal Psychology Program is committed to embracing diversity and creating an equitable and inclusive environment. We adopt and support the [Department of Psychology's Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#). In addition, our program supports Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). Read our Statement to Address AAPI Hate [here](#). For more information about the Legal Psychology PhD program you can also see our website: <https://case.fiu.edu/psychology/phd-in-legal-psychology/index.html>.

***NOTE: There is a lot very useful and important information in the Psychology Department Graduate Student Handbook on the [Psychology Department Resources page](#). Please make sure you review it carefully. This document focuses on the Legal Psychology Program specifically and thus does not cover general UGS (University Graduate School), CASE (College of Arts, Sciences, and Education) or Psychology Department policies in detail. You are expected to be familiar with the relevant UGS, CASE, and Department policies, which override program policies. You should also carefully attend to all emails from the Psychology Graduate Program Director with details about procedures and deadlines. Be aware that faculty do not receive those emails and thus may not be aware of all the details that students are informed of.***

## Admissions Requirements and Procedures

The application requirements are described [here](#). Successful applicants demonstrate a strong interest in legal psychology, significant research experience and a good fit with faculty in the program. Additionally, successful applicants will demonstrate a record of academic achievement evidenced by a high GPA; show significant professional accomplishments as described in personal statements; and have supportive letters of recommendations from past mentors. Applications are due by December 1 at 5pm EST and will be reviewed by the Legal Psychology faculty by the end of January at the latest. In a given year 2-5 students will typically be accepted; admission is competitive. All admitted students are provided with a graduate assistantship (GA). GAs are classified as Graduate Assistants, Graduate Teaching Assistants or Graduate Research Assistants. A graduate assistantship provides a stipend, tuition waiver and the option to purchase health insurance. Admitted students who maintain good academic standing are guaranteed four years of support. Graduate assistantships are on 12-month contracts (stipend \$20,154 as of Spring 2022). Most students are funded through their fifth year, contingent upon satisfactory progress in the program.

## Admissions Requirements

- **Degree:** Bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline from an accredited college or university
- **GPA:** Applicants must have a 3.0 average or higher during the last two years of the undergraduate program
- **GRE:** General test required. (But check the Psychology Department website; this may be waived some years.)
- **Statement of Intent/Personal Statement:** Discuss motivations and career goals; research experience, skills and plans; and faculty with whom you hope to work if admitted, making note of research interests and relevance, skills and goals.
- **Curriculum vitae or resume:** This includes pertinent information on previous experience, education, honors, awards, interests, community service and achievements.
- **Letters of Recommendation:** Three letters written on official letterhead. Ideally, at least two letters would be from faculty evaluating the student's potential for graduate work. Letters of recommendation are uploaded online by the recommender.
- **Departmental Application:** Fill out the [Graduate Programs in Psychology application](#) and upload it through the online admissions application portal
- **Transcripts:** [Submitting Transcripts](#). This includes university/college official transcript from all institutions previously attended in a sealed institution envelope. Addresses and other methods of submitting your transcripts can be found clicking [here](#). If you graduated from FIU, you do not need to request transcripts unless you attended another institution afterwards. Students who have received an education from non-English speaking countries must have their transcripts translated when sent to FIU. If sending electronically, institutions can have transcripts emailed to Graduate Admissions at [gradadm@fiu.edu](mailto:gradadm@fiu.edu).  
*Foreign Applicants:* Please note you must provide a copy of your transcripts to graduate admissions and a translation from a recognized translation agency or official translator. Some suggested agencies are listed [here](#).
- **Additional Requirements:**
  - Completion of an undergraduate or graduate research methods course as a prerequisite
  - Two writing samples - academic or professional, no length requirement
  - Ability to work full time, in-person, toward the degree
  - Previous research experience strongly preferred
  - International graduate student applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). A total score of 92 on the iBT TOEFL (equivalent to 580 in the TOEFL) is required

## Ph.D. Degree Requirements

University, departmental, and program degree requirements are listed in the [Graduate Catalog](#). Requirements include 75 semester hours beyond the Bachelors degree. The program of studies, approved by the Legal Psychology Graduate Program Committee (LPGPC; comprised of all Legal Psychology faculty), includes: 9 hours of common core courses in Statistics/Methodology; 18 hours of basic psychology, applied legal psychology, or integration of psychology and law; 15 hours of electives (as approved by the student's graduate advisor); 18 hours of supervised research credits; completion of a Master's Project; successful completion of [the Qualifying Exam](#); 15 hours of Doctoral Dissertation credits and completion of the

dissertation project. The LPGPC will try to accommodate individual needs within reason, which means there is some flexibility within the system. Please be advised that the courses below are not offered every semester and new courses may also be added to this list. Talk to your advisor, or the Legal Psychology program director if you are unsure about which courses to take. A proposed schedule can be found at the end of this document.

## **Transfer Credits**

Students with graduate coursework from an accredited university may transfer up to 6 credits toward the master's degree and up to 36 credits of graduate coursework toward the doctorate degree. The LPGPC reviews applications for transfer credit. The LPGPC also reviews requests to waive course requirements. Please be aware that transferring in courses will rarely have an impact on time to degree, and any such impact will be minimal. Note that a thesis from a previous institution may be transferred in, with LPGPC approval.

## **Course Requirements for Ph.D.**

(a) [Statistics & Methodology Courses](#) (9 Credits)

PSY 5939 Quantitative Methods 1

PSY 5939 Quantitative Methods 2

PSY 5246C Multivariate Statistics

(b) 6 courses (total of 18 credits) on basic psychology, applied legal psychology, or integration of psychology and law (approved by the program director and your advisor; \* indicates commonly taken courses, if you wish to talk a course not designated with a \* make sure you discuss it with your advisor; make sure your choices align with the requirements for the master's degree. Please be aware that LAW courses are not covered by tuition waivers and may not be possible to enroll in.):

CJE 5024 Violent Crime

CJL 6418 Law and Social Control

CJL 6422 Advanced Seminar in Criminal Law and Procedure

CJL 6558 Legal Issues in Juvenile Justice

CLP 5185 Current Issues in Mental Health

CLP 6395 Forensic Psychology

CLP 6438 Psychological Assessment

DEP 5068 Applied Life Span Developmental Psychology

DEP 5099 Proseminar in Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence

\*EXP 5099 Proseminar in Experimental Psychology

EXP 5527 Memory and Consciousness

EXP 5508 Applied Cognitive Psychology

INP 5095 Proseminar in Industrial Psychology

INP 5136 Psychology of Legal Consultation

INP 6115 Psychology of Culture and Organizations

INP 6940 Strategies and Methods of Applied Psychological Research

POS 6286 Judicial Research

POS 6612 Seminar US Supreme Court

PSY 5939 Special Topics  
\*SOP 5058 Proseminar in Social Psychology  
SOP 6098 Proseminar in Legal Psychology  
SOP 6441 Seminar in Social Cognition  
SOP 6752 Psychology of Juries  
\*SOP 5753 Wrongful Convictions  
\*SOP 5754 Eyewitnesses  
\*SOP 5755 Development & the Law  
\*SOP 5756 Investigative Interviewing  
\*SOP 5757 Interrogation and Deception Detection  
LAW 6310 Alternative Dispute Resolution  
LAW 6112 Criminal Procedure  
LAW 6114 Advanced Criminal Procedure  
LAW 6330 Evidence  
LAW 6710 Family Law  
LAW 6381 Interviewing and Counseling  
LAW 6363 Trial Practice  
LAW 7549 Employment Discrimination  
LAW 6714 Children and the Law  
LAW 6253 Comparative Criminal Law  
LAW 7308 Complex Litigation  
LAW 6720 Health Law  
LAW 6555 Law and Economics  
LAW 6313 Negotiation and Mediation  
LAW 6234 Race and the Law  
LAW 6235 Women and the Law

(c) Electives (15 credits approved by the student's graduate advisor. Common electives include additional legal psychology courses, additional statistics courses, and/or Supervised Research credits. Note, if you include qualitative methods in your dissertation, you need to take a Qualitative Methods course, e.g., PSY 5930; EDF 6475; EDF 7404)

(d) PSY 5918 Supervised research (18 credits; typically 6 credits taken in summers of years 1 and 2 plus additional credits taken over the 3 years, and possibly 6 credits in summer of year 3)

(e) Master's Project (Note that this project is done completely in-house; students should NOT sign up for Master's thesis credits or complete UGS M-forms; students may sign up for Supervised Research credits while working on their project but are not required to)

(f) [Qualifying Exam](#)

(g) Dissertation (15 Credits; 3 per semester for 5 semesters)

Students enroll in Dissertation Credits (PSY 7980) after meeting the pre-candidacy requirements (see below) and while working on their dissertation. Defending the Master's Project and passing the [Qualifying Exam](#) are prerequisites to registering for Doctoral Dissertation credits. Once a

student registers for dissertation credits with their primary advisor, the student must continue to register for three credits of dissertation each term until the dissertation is completed. No other courses will be covered by a tuition waiver once the student begins to take dissertation credits. Only three dissertation credits can be taken in a given semester. Note that up until the student's final semester a grade of "IP" (in progress) will be given for Dissertation Credits.

## **Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee should be formed by the end of the student's first year in the program. **Make sure to check UGS deadlines for submission of the appropriate paperwork.** As a general rule, [online dissertation milestone forms](#) (including the Appointment of Dissertation Committee form, formerly known as the D1) are due to the College of Arts, Sciences & Education (CASE) one week before they are due to UGS, and to the Psychology Graduate Director one week before the CASE deadline. In other words, you must submit the online dissertation milestone forms 2 weeks before they are due according to the UGS website. (Note there is an important exception relating to the Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense milestone form – see Dissertation Requirements below). The committee must be approved by the student's advisor, Graduate Program Director, the Dean of CASE, and Dean of the University Graduate School. The dissertation committee will consist of at least four members. The Committee Chair (also called "Major Professor") must be a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and must be associated with the Legal Psychology graduate program. The major professor must also hold Dissertation Advisor Status within the University. The Committee must also contain at least one other faculty member from the Department of Psychology and at least one other faculty member from a department other than Psychology. These members must be Graduate Faculty at FIU. Other members may be appointed if approved by the University Graduate School. (Note, this committee may or may not overlap with your thesis committee.)

Information on the Dissertation processes (including links to the online dissertation milestone forms, formerly known as D-forms) are available on the [Psychology Department resources website](#) (see also the Psychology Graduate Student Handbook, which can be found at the previously linked website).

## **Dissertation Requirements**

A dissertation is required of all candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The dissertation shall constitute a significant contribution to knowledge in the field of Legal Psychology. The dissertation must show technical mastery of a special field, capacity for independent research, and scholarly ability. The topic for the dissertation must be approved by the student's dissertation committee.

The candidate engaged in dissertation preparation (i.e., having submitted their online application for candidacy dissertation milestone form, formerly known as the D-2) must be registered for 3 Dissertation Research Credits (PSY 7980) each semester (and nothing else), including summer sessions, once he or she begins such preparation. The candidate must be enrolled for dissertation credits during the semester in which the doctoral degree is awarded (regardless of whether you attend graduation).



The procedures for completing the dissertation are described in detail by the University Graduate School (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/>) and are available on the [Psychology Department resources website](#) and here <https://case.fiu.edu/psychology/resources/doctoral-dissertation-process/index.html> (see also the Psychology Graduate Student Handbook which can be found on the Psychology Department resources website or the [Graduate Psychology Programs sharepoint page](#)).

A dissertation proposal consists of both a written proposal, as well as a presentation to your Dissertation Committee on the proposed study/studies. The written proposal is expected to be of a longer length than the Master's Project proposal. Students must also submit a separate five-page overview of their Dissertation Proposal when they fill out the online Dissertation Proposal milestone form (formerly known as the D3). Students should carefully review the requirements for the dissertation proposal milestone (which includes study IRB approval) well in advance of their proposal. (See <https://case.fiu.edu/psychology/resources/doctoral-dissertation-process/index.html>) The oral presentation to the committee takes approximately two hours in length, but may take up to three or more as needed. Students proposing in the Spring semester are also strongly encouraged to schedule their [annual evaluation meeting](#) to directly follow their Dissertation Proposal. When annual evaluations and proposals are scheduled together, students are encouraged to set aside at least three hours for their committee meeting.

Dissertation defenses consist of both a written Dissertation, as well as a presentation of the Dissertation to your Dissertation Committee. Numerous parties, including CASE and UGS, will review your final dissertation document. Students should thus pay careful attention to the formatting requirements for this document, paperwork, and the deadlines for submission of the online milestone form (Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense, formerly the D-5). **It is also important to remember that your deadline for submitting the Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense is 5 weeks before your defense date. The UGS deadline does not apply to you unless you are defending on the last possible day (in which case you must submit it 2 weeks before the UGS deadline, as with other milestones).** Further details can be found on the UGS website. You should submit your dissertation to your committee 2 weeks before your defense date.

To be on track for a 5-year graduation, proposals should take **place no later than** the end of the spring semester of the fourth year (and ideally earlier) and defenses should take place by the end of the spring semester of the fifth year. Students should circulate their written proposal and defense documents at least two weeks prior to their committee meeting unless their committee has provided permission to provide the documents later. To allow sufficient time for planning, students should start to coordinate with their committee as to the timing of their proposal at least one month prior to the student's desired proposal date, and two months prior to the desired defense date. Students should provide all relevant paperwork (e.g., forms requiring committee signatures; CASE rubrics) by the day of the proposal and defense. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of what paperwork is required.

Dissertation proposals and defenses should take place during the fall or spring semesters. If your proposal/defense is likely to be on the cusp (e.g., after classes end but before grades are



due), discuss with your committee whether or not this is allowable. Should there be a situation that makes a fall or spring proposal/defense impossible, students may petition to propose/defend during the summer by submitting a memo to their committee making the request that faculty volunteer to participate in their proposal/defense in the summer, and providing a justification. Memos should be submitted at least two weeks before the end of the spring semester. If granted, the proposal/defense must take place during the first two full weeks of June (to facilitate graduation, defenses can be requested on alternate dates, pending faculty availability). If not granted, the proposal/defense will be deferred until the following fall semester. Proposals but not defenses may take place over Zoom, as long as this is consistent with current departmental, CASE and UGS policies. Students are not expected to provide food or beverages during in-person proposals or defenses.

### Master's Degree Requirements for Students in the Ph.D. Program

During the course of graduate study at FIU, students in the Legal Psychology Program obtain a Master's degree by meeting the following requirements: Minimum of 36 credit-hours of coursework, as per list below, with a grade of "B" or better earned in each course. (Note, see [Transfer Credits](#) section above.)

#### **Course Requirements for Master's Degree:**

1. Statistics & Methodology Courses (9 Credits)
  - a. PSY 5939 Quantitative Methods 1
  - b. PSY 5939 Quantitative Methods 2
  - c. PSY 5246C Multivariate Statistics
2. Applied Legal Psychology core courses (12 credits from the following)
  - a. SOP 6098 Proseminar in Legal Psychology
  - b. SOP 5753 Wrongful Convictions
  - c. SOP 5754 Eyewitnesses
  - d. SOP 5755 Development & the Law
  - e. SOP 5756 Investigative Interviewing
  - f. SOP 5757 Interrogation and Deception Detection
3. Basic Psychology Courses (6 credits from the following)
  - a. SOP 5058 Proseminar in Social Psychology
  - b. SOP 6441 Seminar in Social Cognition
4. PSY 5918 Supervised Research (9 credits)

#### **Master's Project**

Students must successfully complete a Master's Thesis Project. The process of completing a Master's Project includes: (1) choosing a topic with the approval of an advisor who will serve as Chair of the student's Master's Project Committee, (2) selecting a Master's Project Committee, (3) circulating a written copy of your Master's Project Proposal to your committee; (4) presenting the Master's Project Proposal to the Committee, (4) conducting the study, (5) preparing the Master's Project document, and (6) defending the Master's Project before the committee. Following a successful Defense, the Master's Thesis Project must be submitted to and accepted by the Psychology Graduate Director. Note that the Dissertation committee and Master's Project committee may be the same (other than the Dissertation committee requirement

of an outside member) but this is not required. The final Master's Project should be in the format of an article to be submitted for publication, and of a reasonable length for publication, no less than 25 pages (as opposed to the format or length of a Dissertation).

Master's Project proposals and defenses should take place during the fall or spring semesters. To stay on track, proposals should take place by no later than the end of the spring semester of the second year and defenses should take place by the end of the spring semester of the third year. If your proposal/defense is likely to be on the cusp (e.g., after classes end but before grades are due), discuss with your committee whether or not this is allowable. Should there be a situation that makes a fall or spring proposal/defense impossible, students may petition to propose/defend during the first two weeks of June by submitting a memo to their committee making the request that faculty volunteer to participate in their proposal/defense in the summer, and providing a justification. Memos should be submitted at least two weeks before the end of the spring semester. If granted, the proposal/defense must take place during the first two full weeks of June. If not granted, the proposal/defense will be deferred until the following fall semester.

Students should circulate a copy of their Master's Project proposal and their Master's Project final document at least two weeks prior to their committee meeting, unless they have committee approval to provide it less than two weeks in advance. In order to have sufficient time to schedule the meeting and circulate the documents, students should start the scheduling process with their committee at least one month prior to the ideal proposal or defense date. Approximately three hours should be set aside for proposals and defenses and, when proposing or defending in the Spring Semester, students should schedule them to coincide with their [annual evaluation meeting](#) if possible. Proposals and defenses may take place over Zoom, as long as this is consistent with current departmental and university policies, but in person is encouraged. Students are not expected to provide food or beverages during in-person proposals or defenses. Information on the Master's Project processes (including links to the forms) are available on the [Psychology Department resources website](#) (see also the Psychology Graduate Student Handbook, which can be found at the previously linked website). Students should provide all relevant paperwork (e.g., forms requiring committee signatures; CASE rubrics) by the day of the proposal and defense. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of what paperwork is required.

### Faculty Advising

New students are paired with a faculty mentor (also referred to as "advisor") by the LPGPC based on research interests. The role of the faculty mentor is to provide the student with guidance concerning course selection and research direction, to help the student with any general transition, adjustment and related questions, to provide yearly evaluations of the student, and to conduct research with the student. However, students are strongly encouraged to work with additional faculty members on research projects.

By the end of the first year the student should have formed a dissertation committee, as per CASE requirements (see <https://case.fiu.edu/psychology/resources/doctoral-dissertation-process/index.html>). In addition, the student should be planning (or be in the process of planning) a [Master's Project](#). In doing so, the student must consult his/her faculty advisor regarding his/her plans for forming a Master's Project Committee.

The student should plan to take the [qualifying examination](#) in the spring of their third year (note this timeline may vary if the student enters the program with a Master's degree). The faculty member who agrees to Chair a student's Dissertation Committee becomes that student's Mentor from that point until graduation (this could be a different person than the advisor for the Master's Project). Note that information on the Master's and Dissertation processes/forms/timelines is available on the [Psychology Department resources website](#) and in the Psychology Graduate Student Handbook (also located on the department website).

## The Qualifying Examination

### **Past Version**

**The exam described here is an option if you joined the program before December 2023. If you joined before December 2023, you may also take the Portfolio version of the Qualifying exam, described in the next section. You must inform the faculty of your decision regarding which exam you will take by the end of January in your 3<sup>rd</sup> year. If you joined the program after December 2023 you must take the Portfolio version of the Qualifying Exam.**

**Overview.** The examination qualifying a student for doctoral candidacy (referred to as "Quals") is designed to assess the student's mastery of broad areas of psychological research and legal psychology. It is a benchmark to ensure that the student has obtained the mastery over the material required to advance to candidacy and successfully complete a doctoral dissertation. Quals is composed of three separate sub-exams covering (a) Legal psychology (8 hours), (b) Methods/Statistics (5 hours), and (c) a minor area of either Social psychology, Developmental psychology, or Cognitive psychology, as determined by the student (4 hours).

**Timing and Logistics.** Quals is expected to be taken *summer of a student's third year*, within a seven-day period during first two full weeks in June. Typically, the Legal sub-exam is taken on a Monday, the Methods sub-exam is taken on a Wednesday, and the minor area sub-exam is taking on a Friday. Students who want to take Quals during fall or spring need to discuss it with their major professor and get agreement from faculty ahead of time. By the end of March of their third year, a cohort must notify the faculty (a) which dates the exams will take place and (b) the area of each student's minor exam. If the faculty are not provided dates by the end of March, the faculty will pick the dates. Students may take quals from their home or on-campus. Students will notify the faculty of the location of their exam by the end of April. Regardless of the location of the exam, students will provide the faculty with Zoom links two weeks before their quals exam for the purposes of proctoring. The Legal and Methods sub-exams will have a one-hour submission grace-period, and the minor area exam will have a 30-minute grace period.

**Preparation.** Typically students should plan to prepare for the exam starting at the end of the spring semester of their third year. This allows roughly 5-6 weeks of time to prepare and study. The specific courses taken by a given student will generally not be considered when designing the exams so the burden is on students to seek out any information they may not have been exposed to in the classroom. A minimal reading list for the Legal and Minor area exams will be made available to students by the end of February of their third year. The minimum

reading list document contains the readings that the students are expected to have read and fully understand prior to taking the exam. Appropriately applying the items on the list will be sufficient to pass the exam, but may not guarantee a high score (i.e., > 4.0). Students are also expected to understand and be able to write on the topics and concepts that they learned about in their graduate classes. That is, it is strongly encouraged that the minimum reading list be supplemented by readings provided as part of the graduate class syllabi. During the exam, students may have access to the minimal reading list document.

**Exam Structure/Questions.** The *legal sub-exam* will include nine questions, with at least one question from the following six areas: Interrogation, Deception, Eyewitness Identifications, Development and the Law, Witness/Victim interviewing, and Wrongful Convictions. The remaining three questions will either also come from these topics or from another topic covered by the minimum reading list. Students must answer six questions. The *methods/statistics sub-exam* comprises four sections, which are weighted equally. These sections are: (1) analyze an SPSS dataset using the software of your choice and report the findings in an APA-style results section (this section only is open book/ open notes/ open internet), (2) answer six of eight short answer questions, (3) critique a study, and (4) design a study. The *minor area sub-exam* will include a short-answer section and a long-answer section. Three of five long-answer questions must be answered and four of six short-answer questions must be answered. Past students typically pass down their exam questions to later cohorts. Exams often include repeated questions but the number of new vs. repeat questions may vary from year to year.

**Grading.** Exams will be graded such that faculty are not provided with the identity of the student who wrote the answer where possible (i.e., this will not be possible when only one student takes an exam). Names will be removed, and responses mixed up. Note: this means students should not refer to past responses, as faculty will not know which response is being referred to. In general, two faculty members with expertise relevant to a question will grade each question; however there may be situations (especially for Minor area exams) where only one faculty member grades a given question. Faculty will provide exam grades to the students by August 1. In order to pass the qualifying exam a student must a) earn a weighted average score of at least 4.0 across the three sub-exams (with the legal sub-exam weighted .45, the methods/statistics sub-exam weighted .35, and the minor area sub-exam weighted .20) AND b) earn a score of at least 3.75 on each of the three sub-exams. Students will meet with faculty to discuss their areas for improvement if on any sub-exam their score was < 4.0. All questions are graded on a 0-6 scale, with an average score of 4.0 being considered a pass. A sub-exam score is the average score across all questions on that sub-exam (or in the case of any exam with sections, across all sections of the sub-exam).

**After the exam.** Students who *fail* the qualifying exam must petition in writing to the doctoral program director and the Director of Graduate Studies for permission to re-take the sub-exam(s) which they failed. The “re-take” will be a new exam, as opposed to the same set of questions. If students are granted the opportunity to re-take a sub-exam or the full qualifying exam, they must re-take the exam(s) within two semesters. However, to avoid falling behind in the completion of programmatic benchmarks, it is suggested that students re-take failed qualifying exams within one semester. Failure on qualifying exams will be indicated in the student’s annual evaluation form. Any student who fails the re-take of any of the qualifying

exams, or who fails a sub-exam and is not granted a re-take, will be dismissed from the doctoral training program.

After *passing* the qualifying exam, and all other relevant requirements, the student advances to candidacy (see below) by submitting the Application for Candidacy milestone online form, and is eligible for undertaking a dissertation.

### **Portfolio Version**

**If you joined the program in Fall 2023 or earlier you have the option to take the Qualifying Exam that was in the handbook at the time you joined the program (i.e., 3-day exam described above) instead of this version. You must inform the faculty of their decision regarding which exam they will take by the end of January in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year. If you joined the program after December 2023 you must take this Portfolio version of the Qualifying Exam, described below or the version that was in place when you joined the program.**

The Quals Portfolio checklist is available in the Legal Psychology Teams, and as an appendix to this Handbook. It includes skills that the faculty have determined are critical for students to achieve before moving on to candidacy. The qualifying exam will consist of submitting a “portfolio” of evidence that you have achieved these skills for evaluation. Minor edits may be made to this checklist from year to year as the guidance for appropriate evidence evolves. This portfolio approach is in line with how faculty members are evaluated (e.g., Tenure File) and with other disciplines’ move away from exam-based assessments towards skills-based assessment. It also will help you, including anyone intending to go into industry, to identify the skills that they have gained in the program. Activities completed in relation to completing thesis and course requirements cannot be used *unless otherwise indicated*. (Note, going beyond requirements, like submitting a thesis for publication, or turning a class proposal into a funding proposal may be used to demonstrate applicable skills.) Keep in mind, it is key that the evidence provided is evidence that you have achieved these skills, and so anything submitted should reflect your own work and include little to no input from your advisor/instructor/etc. As such, planning to use a thesis or thesis proposal to demonstrate a skill is ~~generally discouraged~~ **should be carefully considered and discussed with your faculty mentor**. This is because theses serve as learning opportunities, and it is expected that a thesis will receive guidance from your faculty mentor. Thus, seeking to use a thesis to demonstrate your own skill level may interfere with that learning process, or the guidance provided by your mentor may leave them unable to verify that some aspects of the project are your own work. One option which may work in some cases is to submit drafts of your thesis or thesis proposal. This is something you should discuss with your mentor. **Your mentor would need to save the submitted draft and add it to your portfolio in order to ensure the version in the portfolio is in fact the first draft.**

Each skill is divided into several sub-skills/components, and it is your responsibility to demonstrate your competence in every component (unless otherwise noted in the checklist). For each component we have provided a list of example activities/criteria that could demonstrate evidence of this skill. Unless otherwise indicated, you should complete one activity/criteria for each component. Where applicable, the same activity may be used to demonstrate multiple skill components. *The lists of example activities provided are not exhaustive lists*, so you may identify other ways you have/can demonstrate these skills, but *you should discuss with the Legal Psychology Faculty whether they agree that that activity is acceptable before you submit your qualifying exam*. You may do this at any time, and such discussions are encouraged during your

annual evaluation meeting. Annual evaluations are also an ideal time to discuss potential future activities to help fulfill the requirements for the qualifying exam. The faculty recognize that not all examples listed within a given skill component are equivalent in terms of effort and/or skill level required; they are not intended to be. They are simply different ways a student could demonstrate an appropriate skill level. By the time you submit your exam you will likely be in a situation where for many components there are multiple activities/projects you could include in your portfolio. In that case choose the one that most clearly demonstrates your skill level.

For each criterion, you will need to provide some documentation (e.g., a copy of the paper). Where the appropriate documentation is not clear, please discuss the best way to submit documentation with the faculty. The portfolio of documentation provided will be evaluated by the Legal Psychology Faculty to determine if it demonstrates evidence of competence in all skills. As such, you should actively track your progress throughout your time in the Ph.D. program and ensure you are saving anything that could be used in the portfolio. You may start “checking boxes” as soon as your first semester. You are highly encouraged to create a folder of your “portfolio” (perhaps on Teams/Sharepoint) where you regularly document anything you are likely to submit, as well as the contextual information described below that will need to accompany the items in the portfolio. When you submit your final portfolio for evaluation we suggest you do so by giving access to the folder to the Legal Psychology Faculty. If the criteria include a “verification” requirement, you are highly encouraged to seek that verification contemporaneously rather than waiting until you submit the final portfolio. This will not only avoid memory lapses but will encourage productive conversations with mentors about what constitutes (evidence of) competence in a skill and confirm faculty support early in the process. In the Legal Psychology Teams you can find a document to assist with this documentation and verification process.

In addition to the documentation of each activity, a copy of the quals portfolio checklist (see Legal Psychology Teams or Appendix) and a cover letter will need to be maintained and submitted. In the cover letter you should clearly and systematically contextualize and summarize the evidence you are providing for each skill. (An example cover letter is provided in the Legal Psychology Teams.) For example, if multiple papers are being submitted, it should be clearly laid out in the cover letter what skillset(s) each paper demonstrates, and you should describe your role. For example, if you are submitting one paper to show your ability to both conduct statistical tests and to write up the results, you would indicate (a) the title of the relevant paper, (b) what that paper is (e.g., is it the version of your thesis you submitted for publication? a paper currently under review based on a project you ran with your advisor? And (c) your role (e.g., “I conducted all analyses related to the primary hypotheses, which included X and Y on pages 16-19. A reviewer asked for an additional analysis (Z), which my advisor conducted.” If you have one paper that demonstrates multiple skillsets, as in the example provided, for the sake of efficiency, you are encouraged to submit that single paper rather than multiple papers. On the other hand, if appropriate, you may submit multiple items to demonstrate one component (e.g., one paper showing the ability to write up ANOVAs and another showing the ability run repeated measures *t*-tests). However, this is not encouraged. If you submit multiple items for one component this must be justified in the cover letter. Note, if you include an item in your portfolio that is not on the list of acceptable items it will be particularly important that in your cover letter you explain what you did (for anyone not familiar with that activity, venue, etc.) and how it demonstrates your skill level.

All documentation must be submitted no sooner than the first day of the semester in



which you will fulfill all required coursework, and no later than April 1 in the Spring of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. (Petitions for late submissions will be considered, but portfolios will not be reviewed in the summer. Petitions should include the basis for the request, the proposed alternate due date and should be sent to the Legal Program Director. The Legal Program Director will share the petition with the faculty and convey the faculty decision regarding the request.) The portfolio will be reviewed by the Legal Psychology Faculty, and you will be informed of the outcome within 15 business days. The quality of the outputs will be reviewed by the faculty as part of this review process. If the faculty decide that one or more elements in the portfolio are insufficient, they will provide feedback on the specific components with deficiencies, and you would have up to one year to submit an updated portfolio (but you would be encouraged to resubmit the portfolio as soon as possible).

**Regarding out of class exams as a way to demonstrate a skill:** We expect many students will take no out of class exams, or very few, as there are ample other opportunities for students to demonstrate their skillset. But in recognition that not every student takes the same path, exam options provide a way for students to demonstrate their competence in a skill at the end of the pre-candidacy period if they have not demonstrated their competence via other activities already. When out of class exams are used to demonstrate a skill, *all relevant exams will be taken in the semester the qualifying exam portfolio is submitted (typically spring of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year)*. Should you anticipate choosing an “out of class exam” criterion, *this should be communicated to the faculty no later than the end of the first month of the relevant semester to allow for scheduling and exam preparation*. As the number of exams, content of exams, number of students taking which exam, etc., is expected to vary from year to year, the scheduling will be determined during the relevant semester on a semester-by-semester basis. Each exam is expected to be 1-3 hours, depending on the content/skill addressed, with Statistics and Methods exams being shorter than Legal Content exams. Submitted exams will be added to your portfolio by the faculty and evaluated along with the rest of the evidence provided.

**Demonstrating Legal Psychology Knowledge:** All faculty teaching Legal Psychology courses have agreed to offer exams in their course. If the faculty instructor awards you a grade reflecting that they feel your exam demonstrates sufficient proficiency with the course material, they will add that exam to your portfolio (see Legal Psychology Knowledge sub-skills). It should be clear based on the grading scale in the course that the exam demonstrates sufficient proficiency, and the instructor will likely make this explicit as well. If it is not clear to you, ask your instructor. There are currently five legal psychology courses offered covering five broad areas: Interrogations and Deception Detection, Eyewitnesses, Development and the Law, Wrongful Convictions, and Investigative Interviewing) and as such your portfolio should demonstrate broad knowledge of at least four of these areas. (This specific aspect of the checklist is subject to change year to year if there are curricular changes).

Overall, you may demonstrate your qualifying exam knowledge via a combination of the following: (a) in-class exams (as described in this section), (b) out of class exams at the end of the pre-candidacy period, as described in the previous section, (c) review papers or chapters (see checklist).

### Admission to Candidacy for Ph.D.

Admission to candidacy for PhD is a formal step which occurs after the student has completed all precandidacy requirements, including passing the [qualifying examination](#) and defending the [thesis project](#). Students must complete the Application for Candidacy milestone

online form in order to apply for candidacy (note: this used to be called the D2). The application must be approved by the Psychology Graduate Program Director, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Dean of the University Graduate School. Admission to candidacy is a prerequisite for enrolling in Dissertation credits. See the [Psychology Department resources website](#) (see also the Psychology Graduate Student Handbook, which can be found at the previously linked website) for more details. Students are advised to be aware of deadline, so as not to miss the opportunity to advance to candidacy. It is due to UGS at least 5 business days before classes begin and due to CASE 1 week before the UGS deadline, and to the Graduate Program Director a week before the CASE deadline (see [here](#)). Make sure to advise the Legal Psychology Program Director about when you plan to submit the application so that they can provide the necessary memo to the Psychology Graduate Program Director confirming you have met all requirements.

## Professional Development

### **Conferences**

Students are strongly encouraged to become student members of the American Psychology-Law Society (AP-LS) and to attend and present at the annual conference. To join, see: [www.ap-ls.org/](http://www.ap-ls.org/). Calls for submission for the conference normally open around late September or October. All students are thus encouraged to discuss potential conference submissions with their advisor at the start of the academic year. Attending and presenting at conferences will also count towards your Qualifying Exam Portfolio (see checklist in the [Appendix](#)).

Graduate students may receive funding to cover some of the costs/fees of travel to domestic and international conferences. In order to receive funding you must apply through the [Graduate and Professional Student Committee](#) and before you can apply, you must attend a GPSC meeting. Information can be found on the website above. Funding for both domestic and international travel is currently at \$500.00 for student presenters, but **this is subject to change based on the availability of funds and the funding cycle**. There is also a lower level of funding available for students who are not presenting, who may attend for professional development. As soon as graduate students know that they would like to attend a conference, the application process should begin immediately as the deadlines are extremely firm and you must apply well in advance (at least six weeks before the start of the conference).

If graduate students are able to get travel funding through the GPSC, students can apply for matching travel funding up to \$200 through the College of Arts, Sciences & Education. More information on travel funding can be found [here](#). Note that this policy is subject to change. *Your best resource on this process is other students; faculty are not notified about changes to policies or procedures.*

Students may also attend other conferences outside of APLS. In the past, legal psychology students have attended SARMAC (Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition), iIIRG (International Investigative Interviewing Research Group), APA (American Psychological Association), and others.

### **Brown Bags (BBs)**

Brown bags are held regularly (at a time convenient for most of the Legal Psychology program) and are an opportunity to present research ideas, address program-related issues, engage in professional development discussions, etc. Students are strongly encouraged to participate by presenting in at least one brown bag during each year. Presentation content is up to the discretion of the student and his/her advisor but should relate to legal psychology or relevant topics of interest (e.g., job interviews). Some Brown Bags may be “student only.” More information will be presented during the first BB of the year.

## **Other Professional Development and Service Opportunities**

Students are encouraged to investigate other professional development and service opportunities at FIU and beyond. In the past students have successfully earned teaching certificates through the [Center for the Advancement of Teaching \(CAT\) at FIU](#). There are also opportunities to serve on student committees, or become a student representative on departmental committee and/or workgroup (e.g., Graduate Student Health and Wellness committee, Psychology Graduate Student Association). Students can learn more about these opportunities from other students or departmental communications. It is also highly encouraged that students attend any job talks in the Psychology Department when they take place. Advanced students may also be interested in becoming student reviewers; to find out more about this talk to your mentor and other students in the program. When the program hosts recruitment days and open houses, this presents another opportunity to help and get involved. Note that while service activities like those described here are not officially required, it is expected that everyone will engage in at least minimal service to the program and/or department and/or profession. This is consistent with academic norms which include service requirements and collegiality expectations. This also will count towards your Qualifying Exam Portfolio (see checklist in the [Appendix](#)).

## **Annual Evaluations**

Student performance is evaluated each year. Students who have not yet formed a dissertation committee are evaluated by their major professor, and must schedule a meeting with their major professor towards the end of the spring semester of each academic year. Students who have formed their dissertation committee with UGS must schedule a meeting with their entire committee (including all members outside of psychology) during which their performance will be evaluated. Note, this meeting can be combined with a proposal or defense, and this is encouraged when possible. Most meetings should not take more than an hour. All students will receive a written evaluation from the Graduate Program Director that will be placed in the student's file.

Each student is required to complete a [Legal Self-Evaluation Form](#) and a [UGS Self-Evaluation](#) located on [myfiu](#) (due dates will be announced annually). The Legal Self-Evaluation can be found on the Legal Psychology Teams page and should be emailed before your annual evaluation meeting to your major advisor if you have no dissertation committee; otherwise it should be emailed to your dissertation committee. The UGS Self-Evaluation form is electronic; instructions should be provided by the Graduate Program Director each year and can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook on the [Psychology Department Resources](#) page. Every effort should be made to submit the UGS form to the your major advisor before your annual evaluation meeting.

During the UGS annual evaluation process, students will be evaluated on a number of

dimensions using the following scale: (5) Consistently exceeds expectations; (4) Occasionally exceeds expectations; (3) Meets expectations; (2) Occasionally does not meet expectations; and (1) Consistently does not meet expectations. These dimensions are: Knowledge, Accountability, Productivity, Critical Thinking, Writing Ability, Communication, Leadership, and Teaching. During this meeting the student should discuss their progress on the Quals Portfolio.

Students are expected to:

1. Earn at least a “meets expectations” rating on all dimensions;
2. Meet the annual progress objective set forth for them by their major professor or Dissertation committee (as applicable);
2. Complete 24 credit hours within the previous academic year (9 credits fall; 9 credits spring; 6 credits summer) and have followed the recommended sequence of courses (unless at dissertation stage);
3. Earn no more than two grades of "B-" or below;
4. Participate in research and departmental activities (colloquia, brown bags, AP-LS or other conference);
5. Behave in a professional and ethical manner when dealing with faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, and whenever representing FIU (including at off campus event like conferences, etc.)

Failure to meet the above metrics means a student may not be eligible for funding from the University. Failure to meet these metrics may also require that a student performance improvement plan will be developed with the major advisor/dissertation committee. Should a student fail to meet the benchmarks/conditions laid out in that plan, they may be dismissed from the program.

During the annual evaluation process, the student will be provided with an annual progress objective that will list the goals to be accomplished before the next evaluation period. Students’ subsequent evaluations will be based in part on their progress towards meeting those goals.

These objectives are set to ensure that students will make timely progress through the program. The standard progress objective given to first-year students is to choose a Master’s Project advisor, form a Master’s Project Committee, and propose their thesis project before the Fall of their second year. The LPGPC reserves the right to alter the standard annual progress objectives for a student depending upon the student's situation and research plans.

The yearly evaluations play an important role in determining eligibility for Graduate Assistantships. Based on the Committee's evaluations, students will be deemed either eligible or ineligible. In the event that the number of eligible applications for Graduate Assistantships exceeds the number of available assistantships, the Committee will rank-order students for eligibility based on performance during the previous academic year. In ranking student performance, priority will be given to the following criteria:

1. **Progress in the Program:** Higher priority will be assigned to students making satisfactory progress toward the completion of program (e.g., meeting their annual

- progress objectives). Students who do not meet their annual progress objectives will be funded only in exceptional circumstances.
2. **Tenure in the Program:** Highest priority is assigned to students who have been in the program for less than five years. Graduate funding should not be expected for students who have been in the program more than four years.
  3. **Research Productivity:** Higher priority is assigned to students active in research. Evidence for research productivity includes published research, papers presented at professional conferences and reports from faculty.

## Providing Feedback / Reporting Concerns

### **1. FIU Psychology Department Diversity Committee Comment Box:**

[This comment box](#) can be used to provide ideas, suggestions, observations or experiences related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This form can be used to document concerns or to begin implementing an action item. Make sure your intention is known, so the committee can best support you. You can remain anonymous or provide as much identifying information as you wish to share. You can also direct your comment to specific members of the committee. Those you select will immediately receive an automatic notification and will plan to review the information within 48 hours. There may be a response delay, if your comment is submitted when classes are not in session (e.g., summer, spring, or winter break).

### **2. FIU Academic & Student Affairs Incident Reporting Form:**

[This form](#) may be used to report any behaviors of concern involving FIU *students*, both inside and outside of classroom settings. You can remain anonymous or provide as much identifying information as you wish to share. However, anonymous submissions do limit FIU's ability to follow up with you and gather more information if necessary. Another option can be found here: <https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/ombudsperson/>.

## Miscellaneous

- There is a Legal Psychology Team on Microsoft Teams. Program documents are stored there. Announcements and reminders will often be sent out via Teams, so you should check Teams regularly.
- New students will be assigned a "legal buddy," usually in early August, to help with their transition to FIU/Miami.
- It is strongly encouraged that all students who are eligible for the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship apply for it in their first or second year (this will help you with your [Qualifying Exam Portfolio](#) as well).
- As a graduate student you are both a student and employee; as such you have two FIU email accounts. Make sure you check both. You also should attend promptly to emails regarding e.g., cybersecurity training, conflict of interest/ outside activity reporting, emails about required compliance training, etc.
- You should assume you will be on a Teaching Assistant line unless you hear otherwise (e.g., your mentor asks you to move onto a Research Assistant line on a grant; you are awarded a fellowship).
- All students must be local to FIU and cannot hold outside employment while on

assistantship unless they have gone through the relevant petition processes (you should discuss these issues with your mentor).

- If you are interested in gaining teaching experience by teaching your own course in your final years, make sure your mentor is aware. It is also a good idea to make sure the Legal Psychology Program Director is aware so that they can make sure to communicate that to the Graduate Program Director who makes those assignments. Be sure you refer to the Psychology Graduate Student Handbook and/or reach out to the Psychology Graduate Program Director for any requirements for such an assignment (e.g., TAing for research methods). A Master's degree is not required to teach. Note that such assignments are not always available.
- There are various internal fellowships for which you may apply (e.g., Dissertation Year Fellowship). Refer to the Psychology Department, CASE, and UGS websites for more details about these; there will also be emails sent out by the Graduate Program Director when deadlines are approaching. (Note: When such fellowships are awarded, the awardee is no longer considered an FIU Employee, which has logistical complications. Please reach out to Jackie Pena in the Psychology Department and the Graduate Program Director for help with these issues.)
- UGS offers many career resources and events
- You are encouraged to create a LinkedIn profile and join the FIU Legal Psychology group.
- The Psychology Department offers Seed Funds for student research. Refer to the Psychology Department website for more details about these; there will also be emails sent out by the Graduate Program Director when deadlines are approaching.
- AP-LS (and other organizations, like SPSSI) offer grants-in-aid for student research.
- [Sona Systems is the participant pool used at FIU](#). When posting studies to SONA, you should plan to award 0.5 credits/30 minutes of participation. If a study involves two parts, you may request to also award a "bonus credit" for completion of the second part of the study. When your study is completed, please mark it as inactive.
- [Topaz](#) is the system used to [obtain ethics/IRB approval for research](#).
- In order to be included on IRB protocol you (and all team members including undergraduate RAs) must complete CITI research ethics training:
  - o Go to <http://www.citiprogram.org>; As a "new" user, you will need to click "Register"; Select "Florida International University" from the Participating Institutions; Complete the required registration fields and contact information and click submit; You will need to select "Human Subjects Research" from the CITI Enrollment web page and click next; Select the "Social & Behavioral Human Research Investigators Course" and click submit; A table will be displayed listing the course(s) you are enrolled in; You can begin the course by clicking on the course name.
- Poster printing is offered in the Psychology Department for conferences.



## Example of Recommended Benchmarks

(Course specifics will vary by cohort)

### **Year 1:**

**Fall 2018:** Experimental Psychology; Quantitative Methods 1; Social Psychology

**Spring 2019:** Quantitative Methods 2; Wrongful Convictions

**\*Summer 2019:** 6 Supervised Research credits

### **Year 2:**

**Fall 2019:** Interrogation & Deception; Multivariate Stats; Elective & Propose Thesis

**Spring 2020:** Development and the Law; Elective; 3 Supervised Research credits (as Elective)

**\*Summer 2020:** 6 Supervised Research credits

### **Year 3:**

**Fall 2020:** Interviewing; 3 Supervised Research credits; Elective

**Spring 2021:** Eyewitness, 6 Supervised Research credits (as Electives) & Defend Thesis & Submit Qualifying Examination

**\*Summer 2021:** 6 Supervised Research credits or 3 Dissertation Credits

### **Year 4:**

**Fall 2021:** Dissertation credits (3 credits) & Propose Dissertation

**Spring 2022:** Dissertation credits (3 credits)

**Summer 2022:** Dissertation credits (3 credits)

### **Year 5:**

**Fall 2022:** Dissertation credits (3 credits)

**Spring 2023:** Dissertation credits (3 credits) & Defend Dissertation

\* You may sign up for summer courses should there be a relevant course available (there rarely are); discuss with your advisor.

***Master's Project:*** idea in summer of Year 1, propose by end of fall in year 2 (spring at latest), defend by end of spring of year 3

***Dissertation:*** idea in fall of Year 4; propose by end of spring in year 4 (ideally sooner); defend by end of spring in year 5

NOTE: This is a suggested timeline. Each student may proceed differently and should consult their advisor and Dissertation Committee for more personalized timelines.

## Resources

**Department of Psychology:** Graduate students have mailboxes in the psychology department. Be sure to check these regularly.

The psychology department also houses some people you might need during your tenure in the program. Here are some:

Dr. Debbie Goldfarb: Graduate Program Director

Dr. Shannon Pruden: Associate Chair dealing with graduate student issues

Jackie Pena: Office Manager (general inquiries)

Website: <https://psychology.fiu.edu/>

[See Graduate Psychology Programs sharepoint page which has many resources relevant to graduate students..](#)

Phone: 305.348.2880

Location: DM 256

**University Graduate School:** Assists both prospective and current graduate students in the pursuit of graduate-level programs of study. It is very important to attend orientation and informational sessions offered by the University Graduate School as it will ensure timely progress through the graduate program. You can find deadlines, forms and much more information about completing your dissertation

Website: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu>

Location: PC 230

E-mail: [ugs@fiu.edu](mailto:ugs@fiu.edu)

**College of Arts, Sciences & Education:** Students are required to turn in dissertation paperwork to the College of Arts, Sciences & Education. Their deadlines are typically one week before UGS deadlines. Visit their website for more information.

Website: <http://case.fiu.edu/>

Phone: 305.348.2864

E-mail: [casedean@fiu.edu](mailto:casedean@fiu.edu)

**Office of the Registrar:** Any registration issues can be solved here.

Website: [registrar.fiu.edu](http://registrar.fiu.edu)

**Financial Aid Office:** Livechat available on their website.

Website: [finaid.fiu.edu](http://finaid.fiu.edu)

Phone: 305.348.7272

## Legal Program Contacts

Jacki Evans, *Associate Professor, Director of Legal Psychology Program*

Ph.D., Psychology, Florida International University

Research Interests: Investigative Interviewing, Deception Detection, Intelligence Gathering

Office: DM 232

Email: jacevans@fiu.edu

Steve Charman, *Professor*

Ph.D., Social Psychology, Iowa State University

Research Interests: Eyewitness Memory, Lineups, Alibis, Legal Decision-Making

Office: DM 237

E-mail: charmans@fiu.edu

Nadja Schreiber Compo, *Professor*

Ph.D., Psychology, Westfaelische Wilhelms-Universitaet Muenster, Germany

Research Interests: Child Witnesses, Police Interviewing & Interrogations

Office: DM 239

E-mail: schreibe@fiu.edu

Ronald P. Fisher, *Professor*

Ph.D., Cognitive Psychology, Ohio State University

Research Interests: Eyewitness Memory, Police Interview Training, Memory Processes,  
Deception Detection

Office: ACI 376A (Biscayne Bay Campus)

E-mail: fisherr@fiu.edu

Debbie Goldfarb, *Associate Professor*

Ph.D., Developmental Psychology, University of California, Davis

JD, University of Michigan Law School

Research Interests: Children and the Law, Eyewitness Memory, Developmental  
Jurisprudence, Procedural Justice

Office: DM 236

E-mail: dgoldfar@fiu.edu

Maddy Hunter, Psychology Student Graduate Education Committee (SGEC) member  
(for the 2023-2024 academic year)

# LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY QUALIFYING EXAM: PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

## SKILL 1: RESEARCH PROCESS

In order to be prepared to successfully propose and complete a dissertation you should have competency in the following 5 key components of the research process in the field of Legal Psychology. These 5 components demonstrate competency in taking a project from beginning to end of the scientific process in the field of legal psychology (i.e., theory to deliverables). You need to check one box for each component.

### **1. Generate a Research Question and Hypothesis That Applies Basic Theory to a Legal Psych Issue**

- Relevant course paper (with verification)
- Relevant thesis or thesis proposal (with verification; **discuss with mentor: see handbook for more details**)
- Dissertation idea (5-page UGS proposal format; with verification)
- Relevant funding proposal (with verification)
- Other relevant research idea (in 5-page UGS proposal format; with verification)
- Other (enter here):

### **2. Design a Valid Experimental Study**

- Relevant course paper (with verification)
- Relevant thesis or thesis proposal (with verification; **discuss with mentor: see handbook for more details**)
- Dissertation study design (in 5-page UGS proposal format; with verification)
- Relevant funding proposal (with verification)
- Study pre-registration (with verification)
- Out-of-class exam
- Other (enter here):

### 3. Appropriately Evaluate/Critique Research

- Serving as a Law and Human Behavior editor in the editor mentoring committee (or similar)
- Co-review with mentor at least 1 paper (or a solo review)
- Lookit study review
- Out-of-class exam
- Other (enter here):

### 4. Supervise/Conduct an Experiment

- Conducted Experimental Thesis Study (COMMON)
- Primary graduate student on other experiment (COMMON)
- Other (enter here):

### 5. Submit Research for Peer Review (as an author)

- Submit major grant (e.g., NSF GRFP) (COMMON)
- Submit any paper for publication (as first author or lead graduate student author)
- Submit a Law and Human Behavior registered report (or similar)
- Other (enter here):

## SKILL 2: STATISTICS

As a Ph.D. student, and across professional pathways, it is critical that you be able to select statistical tests that are appropriate for the data you have, run those tests, and communicate the output of those tests. (Note, your demonstrated competency should address the types of statistical tests covered in your *required* statistical coursework.) You should demonstrate competency in the following 3 aspects of running and reporting statistical analyses by checking one box for each component.

### 1. Determine what statistical test to use

- Relevant course paper (with verification)
- Relevant thesis or thesis proposal (with verification; **discuss with mentor: see handbook for more details**)
- Relevant grant proposal (with verification)
- Analysis plan for relevant project/data (with verification)
- Open book out-of-class exam
- Other (enter here):



## 2. Conduct basic statistical tests

- Relevant course paper (with verification)
- Relevant thesis (with verification; **discuss with mentor: see handbook for more details**)
- Other relevant research project (with verification)
- Grant final report (with verification)
- Open book out-of-class exam
- Other (enter here):

## 3. Write up and appropriately interpret the results of basic statistical tests

- Relevant course paper (with verification)
- Relevant thesis (with verification; **discuss with mentor: see handbook for more details**)
- Other relevant research paper (with verification)
- Grant final report (with verification)
- Open book out-of-class exam
- Other (enter here):

## SKILL 3: COMMUNICATE ABOUT RESEARCH TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENTISTS

Conducting research is necessary but not sufficient as a Ph.D. candidate. You also need to be able to demonstrate that you can communicate your research effectively. You should demonstrate competency in the 2 aspects of communication listed below by checking one box for each component.

### 1. Communicate about Research in Writing to Psychological Scientists

- Submission ready first author manuscript (or publication, under review manuscript, etc.; this can be based on your thesis and can include a chapter or review paper)
- Submission ready (or submitted) major grant/fellowship proposal (GRFP does not count)
- Course paper (note, it is highly discouraged to submit a paper that did not earn an A for this skill)
- Other (enter here):

### 2. Communicate about Research Orally to Psychological Scientists

- Research presentation at Brown Bag at least 3x during graduate school career (conference practice talks don't count) (COMMON)

- Present at a Major Psychology Conference at least 2x (a poster does not count) (COMMON)
- Present at a Major Psychology Conference once (posters do not count) + 2 additional talks (e.g., Brown Bag, Psychology Department Flash Talks; posters do not count)
- Other (enter here):

#### SKILL 4: KNOWLEDGE

Before embarking on a dissertation, you should have demonstrated broad knowledge of the field, and an understanding of best practices regarding research methods. You should demonstrate competency in the below aspects of knowledge by checking one box for the first component (Research Methods Practices General Knowledge) and one box for four of the five of Legal Psychology Knowledge subareas (unless otherwise agreed upon based on curricular changes).

##### **1. Research Methods Practices General Knowledge**

- TA for Teach Research Methods 1 Lab (COMMON)
- Out-of-class exam
- Other (enter here):

##### **2. Legal Psychology Knowledge: Interrogations and Deception Detection**

- strong in-class exam as described in the instructions above (COMMON)
- strong out-of-class exam as described in the instructions above
- relevant review paper or chapter
- Other (enter here):

##### **3. Legal Psychology Knowledge: Development and the Law**

- strong in-class exam as described in the instructions above (COMMON)
- strong out-of-class exam as described in the instructions above
- relevant review paper or chapter
- Other (enter here):

##### **4. Legal Psychology Knowledge: Eyewitnesses**

- strong in-class exam as described in the instructions above (COMMON)
- strong out-of-class exam as described in the instructions above
- relevant review paper or chapter
- Other (enter here):

**5. Legal Psychology Knowledge: Wrongful Convictions**

- strong in-class exam as described in the instructions above (COMMON)
- strong out-of-class exam as described in the instructions above
- relevant review paper or chapter
- Other (enter here):

**6. Legal Psychology Knowledge: Investigative Interviewing**

- strong in-class exam as described in the instructions above (COMMON)
- strong out-of-class exam as described in the instructions above
- relevant review paper or chapter
- Other (enter here):

**SKILL 5: OTHER PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

Proficiency in a variety of professional skills is critical to you as a Ph.D. candidate. For example, you may need to secure funding for your work, take advantage of your professional network, or lead a team of research assistants. As such, you should demonstrate competency in the below 5 professional skills by checking 4 boxes across at least 2 skills. It is highly suggested you select options that are most beneficial to your career goals. Options marked with \*\* can be used twice (e.g., serving for 2 years on Diversity committee counts as two boxes checked). If relevant, select the applicable box and also select “Other” and list the activity.

**1. Communicate Psychology to Laypersons/ non-Psychologists**

- Op-ed (including piece in The Conversation)
- Offering Continuing Legal Education course
- Present at Global Forensic Justice Center forensic science symposium
- Present at law conference (e.g., ABA)
- Assist with law enforcement training
- Develop and teach your own course as primary instructor
- Serve as the TA for Research Methods 2 lab
- Earn a CAT teaching certificate
- Other (enter here):

**5. Legal Psychology Knowledge: Wrongful Convictions**

- strong in-class exam as described in the instructions above (COMMON)
- strong out-of-class exam as described in the instructions above
- relevant review paper or chapter
- Other (enter here):

**6. Legal Psychology Knowledge: Investigative Interviewing**

- strong in-class exam as described in the instructions above (COMMON)
- strong out-of-class exam as described in the instructions above
- relevant review paper or chapter
- Other (enter here):

**SKILL 5: OTHER PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

Proficiency in a variety of professional skills is critical to you as a Ph.D. candidate. For example, you may need to secure funding for your work, take advantage of your professional network, or lead a team of research assistants. As such, you should demonstrate competency in the below 5 professional skills by checking 4 boxes across at least 2 skills. It is highly suggested you select options that are most beneficial to your career goals. Options marked with \*\* can be used twice (e.g., serving for 2 years on Diversity committee counts as two boxes checked). If relevant, select the applicable box and also select “Other” and list the activity.

**1. Communicate Psychology to Laypersons/ non-Psychologists**

- Op-ed (including piece in The Conversation)
- Offering Continuing Legal Education course
- Present at Global Forensic Justice Center forensic science symposium
- Present at law conference (e.g., ABA)
- Assist with law enforcement training
- Develop and teach your own course as primary instructor
- Serve as the TA for Research Methods 2 lab
- Earn a CAT teaching certificate
- Other (enter here):

## 2. Service to FIU

- \*\*Serve as a student rep on an FIU non-student committee (e.g., GEC, Diversity) for one year
- \*\*Serve on a student committee (e.g., GPSC, PGSA) for one year
- Write a 1-2 page service statement describing your service activities for your program, the department, CASE and/or FIU during your graduate career.
- Other (enter here):

## 3. Mentorship

- \*\*Serve as an (unofficial) mentor to an honors thesis student (or similar)
- \*\*Serve as an (unofficial) mentor to an undergraduate student who submits to a conference
- \*\*Serve as an (unofficial) mentor to an undergraduate student who submits for funding
- \*\*Serve as an (unofficial) mentor to an undergraduate student in research program (e.g., ARCH, McNair)
- \*\*Participate in formal mentorship program
- Write a 1-2 page mentoring statement describing your mentoring activities during your graduate career
- Other (enter here):

## 4. Engagement with or Service to the Broader Professional Community

- Attend a professional conference (not an FIU conference) at least twice. (COMMON)
- \*\*Serve on a committee for a professional conference or as a student representative for one year
- Volunteer at a professional conference
- Write a 1 page service statement describing your service activities for the professional community outside of FIU.
- Other (enter here):

## 5. Seek funding

- Submit NSF GRFP proposal (COMMON)
- \*\*Submit any external funding research proposal [any size] (COMMON)
- Apply for Dept seed funds (COMMON)
- Other (enter here):