

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 (in the short term may be “PSY 5939 Special Topics”)

\*SOP 5754 Eyewitnesses (in the short term may be “PSY 5939 Special Topics”)

\*SOP 5755 Development & the Law (in the short term may be “PSY 5939 Special Topics”)

\*SOP 5756 Investigative Interviewing (in the short term may be “PSY 5939 Special Topics”)

\*SOP 5757 Interrogation and Deception Detection (in the short term may be “PSY 5939 Special Topics”)

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)

(d) PSY 5918 Supervised research (18 credits; typically 6 credits taken in summers of years 1-3)

(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](#) consisting of three separate subexams covering legal psychology, methods/statistics, and a minor area (social, developmental, or cognitive)

(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. Passing the [Qualifying Exam](#) is a prerequisite 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. 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 give 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 UGS three weeks before the deadline, to the College of Arts, Sciences & Education (CASE) one week before the UGS deadline, and to the Psychology Graduate Director one week before the CASE deadline. In other words, you must have submit the online dissertation milestone forms to the Graduate Program Director (*not* the Legal Psychology program director) 5 weeks before they are due. 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 at the previously linked website).

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 include 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. 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 three hours for their committee meeting.

Dissertation defenses similarly 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 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). Details can be found on the UGS website.

To stay on track, 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 bring all relevant paperwork (e.g., forms requiring committee signatures; CASE rubrics) to the proposal and defense (if in person), or provide that paperwork within 24 hours of the proposal and defense (if remote). 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 (9 credits from the following)
  - a. SOP 6098 Proseminar in Legal Psychology
  - b. SOP 5753 Wrongful Convictions (in the short term may be "PSY 5939 Special Topics")
  - c. SOP 5754 Eyewitnesses (in the short term may be "PSY 5939 Special Topics")
  - d. SOP 5755 Development & the Law (in the short term may be "PSY 5939 Special Topics")
  - e. SOP 5756 Investigative Interviewing (in the short term may be "PSY 5939 Special Topics")
  - f. SOP 5757 Interrogation and Deception Detection (in the short term may be "PSY 5939 Special Topics")
3. Basic Psychology Courses (9 credits from the following)
  - a. SOP 5058 Proseminar in Social Psychology
  - b. SOP 6441 Seminar in Social Cognition
  - c. EXP 5099 Pro-seminar in Experimental Psychology
  - d. EXP 5508 Applied Cognitive Psychology
  - e. Developmental courses as relevant to students' research interests and approved by the LPGPC
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 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. 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 bring all relevant paperwork (e.g., forms requiring committee signatures, CASE rubrics, etc.) to the defense (if in person), or provide that paperwork within 24 hours of the defense (if remote). 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 summer after 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

**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.

## 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](#). 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 pre-requisite 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. This deadline may come very shortly after receiving Quals scores, typically in early August. This is a very narrow window of only a few days, as the application should not be submitted until grades for the current semester have posted. 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 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.

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), iIRG (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. For example, there is an opportunity to earn a CogNeuro or [Quant minor](#). If you are interested in this, please discuss with your advisor and/or the Psychology Graduate Program Director. 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.

### Annual Evaluations

Student performance is evaluated each year. 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 in the dropbox and/or the Legal Psychology Teams page and should be emailed to your major professor. 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. 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.

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.

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 and form a Master’s Project Committee 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, and a Legal Psychology Dropbox folder. Program documents are stored in these locations. To get access to these folders you should contact the Legal Psychology Program Director. 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.
- As a graduate student you are both a student and employee; as such you have two FIU email accounts.
- 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).
- 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.
  - 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 (Fisher); Quantitative Methods 1; Social Psychology

**Spring 2019:** Applied Cognitive (Fisher); Quantitative Methods 2; Wrongful Convictions (Schreiber Compo)

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

### **Year 2:**

**Fall 2019:** Interrogation & Deception (Evans); Multivariate Stats; Elective

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

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

### **Year 3:**

**Fall 2020:** Interviewing (Schreiber Compo); 3 Supervised Research credits; Elective

**Spring 2021:** Eyewitness (Charman), 6 Supervised Research credits (as Electives)

**\*Summer 2021:** 6 Supervised Research credits & **TAKE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION**

### **Year 4:**

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

**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); Final semester in program

\* 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 spring in year 2 (ideally sooner), 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 for more personalized timelines; this timeline represents the most typical timeline, but students are often able (and encouraged) to propose their Thesis Project and Dissertation earlier than indicated here.

## 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. Shannon Pruden: Graduate Program Director

Dr. Kristin Nichols-Lopez: Associate Chair dealing with graduate student issues

Jackie Pena: Office Manager (general inquiries)

Brandon Isahack: Graduate Program Secretary (contracts and other important paperwork)

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 367C

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 369A

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 367A

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, *Assistant 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 367B

E-mail: dgoldfar@fiu.edu

Haley Dawson, Psychology Student Graduate Education Committee (SGEC) member  
(for the 2022-2023 academic year)