

Plan of Study Worksheet Instructions

The Graduate School requires students to file a Plan of Study shortly after beginning their graduate work at Auburn. Students who have not been officially exempted from the MS requirement are supposed to file a **Master's Plan of Study** by the end of their first semester. The Graduate School, however, recognizes that our masters students are in a doctoral program and has allowed us to extend the filing deadline to the end of the third semester. Students who have been exempted from the MS requirement must submit a **Doctoral Plan of Study** *by the end of their third semester in the program*. (Students seeking exemption from the MS requirements must submit an *Exemption from Departmental Requirement* form, signed by your major professor, program director, and the department chair, authorizing your exemption from the MS thesis requirement before filing the doctoral plan of study). Students who have completed and defended the MS thesis in our program should submit a **Doctoral Plan of Study** by the beginning of the semester following the semester in which they defended the thesis and before initiating the General Doctoral Exam process.

Steps:

1. Assemble an MS Thesis Committee or Doctoral Committee and identify the committee members on the reverse side of this sheet.

The student's advisory committee approves the plan of study and is responsible for conducting examinations and supervising thesis and dissertation research. The chair of the advisory committee is referred to as the "major professor."

The *MS advisory committee* must consist of at least three faculty members. The committee chair must be a member of the Graduate Faculty and a member (not adjunct) of the department of psychology faculty.

The *Ph.D. advisory committee* must have four regular members plus the outside reader (i.e., "Graduate School Representative"). The chair must be a member (not adjunct) of the department of psychology faculty, and at least two members, including the chair, must be members of the Graduate Faculty authorized to direct doctoral students. Two of the regular members must be faculty members within the student's program area. One member must be a faculty member who is not a member of the student's program area. The committee chair need not be a faculty member within the student's program area. The outside reader typically is not chosen until a few weeks before the anticipated dissertation defense.

2. Review the courses you are required to take for your degree (as indicated on the Plan of Study Worksheet on the reverse of this sheet) and provide the data requested on the worksheet for each such course.

MS Plan of Study: Select PSYC 7990 Research and Thesis (4 hours) plus 26 semester hours of courses from the sheet *in consultation with your master's committee and program director*.

Doctoral Plan of Study: Select coursework to fulfill ALL of the requirements on

the sheet (including the MS requirements) *in consultation with your PhD advisory committee and program director.*

Exemptions: If you have been officially exempted from any required course, write in the “Substitute Courses” column next to each such course the information about the course upon which the exemption was based. Before the plan of study is approved you must submit an *Exemption from Departmental Requirement* form, signed by your major professor, your program director, the faculty member who normally teaches the course, and the department chair, authorizing your exemption from each such course. These exemptions are usually taken care of during your first semester in the program.

3. Get your Major Professor’s and Program Director’s signatures on the Plan of Study Worksheet.

4. Turn the Plan of Study worksheet in to Thane - he will prepare your Plan of Study form and give it to you for signatures.

5. Get your committee members' signatures on the Plan of Study form and sign it yourself.

6. Return your signed form to Thane. He will secure the department Chair’s signature, make a file copy and take the document to the Graduate School. After the graduate school approves the plan of study, it will be posted as “approved” on the Graduate School’s GSPOST website.

Anxiety Check: What you put on the Plan of Study is not set in stone. If your committee membership is not rock solid, don't worry - you will be able to make changes in the plan of study later on (with your committee's and the department chair's approval) using a *Revision of Existing Plan of Study* form. Similarly, if you are faced with a menu of options and can't decide which one you want, just pick one for the time being and put it on the plan of study. If you decide later that you want to take the other one instead, you can change it (with your committee's and the department chair's approval) using the revision form.

Also important: Students completing the MS plan of study should keep in mind that you are in a *doctoral* program. Your course selection and planning should be geared to meeting the Ph.D. requirements, not just the MS requirements. You should become familiar with your program's Ph.D. requirements and work with your major professor each semester to develop a schedule that helps you progress toward their fulfillment.