

Villanova University  
M.S. Program in Psychology  
Program Policies

In an effort to articulate and clarify the standards which the Psychology faculty employ in making recommendations to the Graduate School concerning our graduate students, the department's Graduate Advisory Committee developed the following statement of departmental and Graduate School policies. This document allows each student to know precisely where he or she stands with regard to academic standards. By becoming familiar with department policies, each student will progress through the program in as smooth a manner as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Department if you have questions or concerns about these particular policies, or any others, in our graduate program. Moreover, should you have suggestions for altering or improving existing policies, the Department remains more than willing to receive them from you.

The policies are as follows:

1) There are virtually no restrictions on graduate students dropping courses with a WX grade until the Friday after the mid-term recess during the Fall and Spring semesters. (In summer sessions, the relevant date is the date stipulated for authorized withdrawals in the Summer Sessions Bulletin.) After that date, it is the policy of both the department and the graduate school that graduate students will be allowed to drop a course only under extraordinary circumstances (e.g., substantive non-academic reasons such as prolonged illness or serious family problems) and approval will be required from the course instructor, the departmental chairperson, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

2) It is departmental policy, and graduate students are hereby advised and informed, that a 3.0 cumulative average guideline shall be adhered to. Any student who falls below a 3.0 cumulative average shall consider him/herself terminated. However, the first time this happens the student's record will be reviewed and discussed at a faculty meeting or, on rare occasions, at a meeting of GAC open to all interested faculty. The department shall make every effort to hold these evaluations within the context of a faculty meeting to increase input from all department members. During the review, a faculty member may appeal the student's termination. If the vote is to retain the student for another semester, then he/she will receive a letter from the department chairperson informing him/her of this reprieve. This letter will also carry the warning that if the student is still below a 3.0 cumulative average at the end of any subsequent semester, he/she will be automatically terminated from the program. If the vote was for termination, then the student will be informed of that decision as well as of the existence of an appeals process which he/she can initiate by writing a letter to GAC delineating compelling extenuating circumstances that should be taken into consideration. On the second occasion that the student falls below a 3.0 cumulative average, no review of the student's record will be initiated by the department. Again, the student has the option of initiating an appeals process by letter to GAC. If no appeal is initiated or the appeal is rejected, the department will recommend to the graduate school that the individual's association with the program be terminated. The appeal process must be initiated by the student within a week of receiving notification by registered mail that the 3.0 cumulative average criterion has not been attained.

3) Continuing eligibility for financial aid is contingent upon:

- 1) a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.20 and
- 2) satisfactory completion of assistantship duties.

4) Financial Aid (Graduate Assistantships or Tuition Scholarships) in the Psychology Department is awarded with the understanding that the recipient is a full-time student in the graduate program. The continuing eligibility of a student for financial aid will be reviewed by GAC in the event that a student is not enrolled in the full complement of courses prescribed for the curriculum of the program (i.e., 9 credits during each semester of the first year and 6 credits during each semester of the second year). GAC may determine that the student is no longer eligible to retain financial aid.

Recipients of financial aid (Graduate Assistantships or Tuition Scholarships) must perform the duties assigned

to them by their faculty supervisors in a satisfactory manner. Failure to do so will result in a meeting of GAC during which written input from the student and faculty supervisor will be reviewed. GAC will make a determination regarding continued eligibility for the award.

- 5) Theses shall conform to the format specified in *A Guide to the Writing of the Master's Thesis* (Villanova Office of Graduate Studies) and *Sequence of Steps to Doing an M.S. Thesis* (Villanova Psychology Department). With the exceptions specified in those two documents, the thesis is to be prepared according to the latest version of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.
- 6) Students who do not complete their thesis by the end of the fourth semester must maintain their active status with the Department by completing a thesis continuation form available from the Psychology office. This form is a contract between the student, thesis advisor, and the Department. It must be submitted by September 1 of each year, following completion of the second academic year in the program. Further, students must register for Thesis Continuation in any semester that University resources are used, i.e., the library, laboratories, the computer facilities, and graduation itself.