Research Graduate Programme

Student Handbook

(2026)

National University of Singapore

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Department of Psychology

Last Updated: **October 2026**

IMPORTANT: This version is meant for graduate students matriculated in and after the Academic Year of 2017-18.

This handbook serves as a general guide. While we aim to cover common topics, it cannot include every possible scenario or individual circumstance and should not be relied upon as a definitive statement of policies, requirements, or entitlements.

Students should refer to official documents and direct communications (e.g., offer letters, scholarship terms, and emails from the University or relevant offices) for information applicable to their individual circumstances. If in doubt, please consult the Department administration

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1. Staff Contact

Throughout the manual, there will be references to different roles. The table below provides the key contact persons for your reference.

Role	Name	Email
Graduate Research Administrator	Ms Lau Tin Chi	l.tinchi@nus.edu.sg
Conference Funding and Fieldwork Support	Ms Harlizah Binte Abdul Hamid	psyhah@nus.edu.sg
Director of Graduate Studies	Dr Cynthia Siew	Contact via administrator

2. Graduate Research Areas

The graduate programme of the Department of Psychology is divided into six research areas. They are:

Clinical Science
Cognitive Psychology
Developmental Psychology
Quantitative Psychology
Cognitive neuroscience
Social and Personality Psychology

These six research areas reflect the diversity of research topics that our faculty have considerable expertise in. Prospective students are welcome to explore the specific research interests of individual faculty members within these areas. Please note that only full-time faculty members can supervise graduate students.

Other than these six research areas, the department has several faculty members who work on two research themes focusing on (a) *Emotion*, and (b) *Language and Communication*. Prospective students interested in these two themes stand to benefit from a graduate training that approaches these topics from a multidisciplinary angle.

2.1. Clinical Science

The *Clinical Science* area has research interests in psychological and physical well-being. Faculty members investigate various aspects surrounding psychological disorders and symptoms, including etiology, assessment, and intervention strategies. Notable expertise in this area includes emotion dysregulation, neuropsychology, autistic spectrum disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, and therapy approaches like cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness. Faculty members specialising in health psychology examine adjustment and treatment adherence to physical illness, with a particular focus on renal diseases.

For more information regarding the research of individual faculty members in the Clinical Science area, please visit their personal webpages.

> *Core Faculty:* Hasse De Meyer, Kenji Gwee, Kean Hsu, Lohsnah Jeevanandam, Stephanie Lee, Matthew Lim, Donald Yeo, Nur Hani Zainal
>
> *Affiliated Faculty*: Stuart Derbyshire, Ryan Hong, Adela Isvoranu

2.2. Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive Psychology studies how people perceive, remember, learn, and process information. Areas of inquiry include perception, attention, memory, interval timing, and language processing. The Cognitive Psychology group at NUS Psychology has notable strengths in the following specific topics: lexical processing, the organization of lexical knowledge in memory, visual attention and visual-spatial perception, and auditory-related Cognitive Psychology. The Cognitive Psychology group emphasizes research informed by theory and uses both behavioral approaches and techniques such as event-related potentials (ERPs), and neuroimaging.

For more information regarding the research of individual faculty members in the Cognitive Psychology area, please visit their personal webpages.

Core Faculty: Winston Goh, Nicholas Hon, Stephen Lim, Colin Palmer, Steven Pan, Cynthia Siew, Melvin Yap

Affiliated Faculty: Maria Kozhevnikov

2.3. Developmental Psychology

Faculty members in the Developmental Psychology area are broadly interested in growth processes in the cognitive and socio-emotional functioning of infants, children, and adolescents. The group has specific expertise in infant language development, children's socio-emotional and moral development in cross-cultural contexts, and attachment relationships in adolescents. Faculty members use a range of experimental and survey methods to address important issues in human development.

For more information regarding the research of individual faculty members in the Developmental Psychology area, please visit their personal webpages.

Core Faculty: Ding Xiao Pan, Lee Li Neng, Nina Powell, Sim Tick Ngee

Affiliated Faculty: Adela Isvoranu

2.4. Quantitative Psychology

The Quantitative Psychology area focuses on advancing methodological and statistical techniques used in psychological research. The area has notable expertise in advanced statistical procedures like functional and multivariate data analysis, Bayesian statistics, structural equation modelling, meta-analysis, and meta-analytic structural equation modelling. Graduate students in this area would gain a comprehensive understanding of various statistical techniques and be in a good position to handle and evaluate empirical data.

For more information regarding the research of individual faculty members in the Quantitative Psychology area, please visit their personal webpages.

Core Faculty: Mike Cheung, Sacha Epskamp, Adela Isvoranu

2.5. Cognitive neuroscience

The Cognitive neuroscience area is a diverse and multidisciplinary group engaging in a wide spectrum of research topics. These topics include examining the neurological bases of (a) cognitive functions like memory, attention, and decision making, (b) perceptions of emotion, and (c) the experience of pain. Related research foci consist of molecular genetics of human behavior, neuroeconomics, and non-human primate neurophysiology. Faculty members in this group are united by an interest in understanding the biological and neurological underpinnings of cognitive function and behavior, and their use of neuroimaging techniques such as EEG and fMRI.

For more information regarding the research of individual faculty members in the Cognitive neuroscience area, please visit their personal webpages.

Core Faculty: Stuart Derbyshire, Maria Kozhevnikov, Camilo Libedinsky, Colin Palmer

Affiliated Faculty: Nicholas Hon

2.6. Social and Personality Psychology

The Social and Personality Psychology group is broadly interested in understanding human behavior from multiple perspectives – from within- person factors (e.g., personality, emotion, and motivation) to those external of individuals (e.g., interpersonal and intergroup contextual influences). Faculty members in this group have interests in a wide range of topics such as attitudes and persuasion, positive emotions, motivation and goal pursuit, moral judgements and emotions, interpersonal relationships, personality and psychopathology, negotiation and conflict management, and dynamics of trust in organizational contexts. In their research, members use a variety of designs and statistical techniques like multilevel analysis, structural equation modelling, and meta-analysis.

For more information regarding the research of individual faculty members in the Social and Personality Psychology area, please visit their personal webpages.

Core Faculty: Al Au, Cha Yeow Siah, Ryan Hong, Jia Lile, Smrithi Prasad, Michelle See, Eddie Tong

Affiliated Faculty: Nina Powell

2.7. Research Theme: Emotion

Faculty members study various aspects of emotion and affect. They include the neurophysiological basis of emotions in humans and non-human animals, the appraisal process in emotional experience, the relation between Cognitive Psychology and emotion, and emotion dysregulation.

For more information regarding the research of individual faculty members in the Emotion research theme, please visit their personal webpages.

Faculty: Eddie Tong, Stuart Derbyshire

2.8. Research Theme: Language and Communication

Faculty members in this theme are united in their interests surrounding language and communication. Topics of enquiry include infant language acquisition, lexical and reading processes, lexical representation in memory, and communicative functions of emotion, among others.

For more information regarding the research of individual faculty members in the Language and Communication research theme, please visit their personal webpages.

Faculty: Melvin Yap, Winston Goh, Cynthia Siew

The graduate student's area of research and training will follow the area for which your thesis advisor is listed. If your thesis advisor is listed for more than one area, please discuss the area relevant for you together with your thesis advisor.

3. Financial Assistance

3.1. NUS Research Scholarship

The NUS Research Scholarship (RS) is awarded to outstanding candidates when they apply to our graduate programme. For more information, please refer to https://fass.nus.edu.sg/graduate/research/scholarships/nus-research-scholarship/. The end-date of award is the end of the fourth year of candidature for PhD candidates and end of second year for Master's candidates.

The Research Scholarship is initially awarded for one year, and may be renewed each semester, together with your candidature, on the basis of your performance in the previous semesters and the recommendation of the Faculty. This renewal is tied in with the submission of a progress report that you are required to submit at the end of each semester, once in August and once in January. Your thesis advisor, Head of Department/Director of Graduate Studies, and Faculty will complete their assessments and make recommendations for the continuation of your scholarship. You will be notified about this via email.

While each renewal of a scholarship will usually be for a period of six months, a shorter period of renewal or no renewal may result if your progress is found to be unsatisfactory. Please note that if your progress is found to be unsatisfactory before the renewal is due, your monthly stipend can be suspended or your scholarship/fee waiver terminated without notice.

To be considered for renewal, candidates must complete a minimum of two graded courses per semester, which must count towards their GPA. A PhD candidate must achieve a minimum GPA of 3.50 during the semesters that you are completing your coursework component. For the remaining semesters, renewal will depend on your progress in your research/thesis.

Scholarship recipients will be required by the Department to assist in teaching or departmental work. In most cases, this service will entail teaching duties, which will be assigned to you at the beginning of each academic year. In this context, you are expected to do *3 to 4 hours of classroom teaching*. It is understood that you will use additional time to prepare for your teaching and to assist the lecturer in matters of course administration (e.g., answering student queries on Canvas, grading). At the beginning of the semester, you will complete a Teaching Assistant Agreement form together with the instructor you are assigned to. This form will explicitly specify the nature of your duties and the amount of time you are expected to allocate to different duties.

Please see this teaching service as a valuable opportunity for learning effective classroom teaching. As such, we encourage you to work together with the lecturer to optimise your learning experience.

3.2. Graduate Teaching Fellowship (GTF)

A Graduate Teaching Fellowship (GTF) may be awarded to outstanding PhD and/or Master's candidates when they apply to our graduate programme. Master's GTF recipients receive a monthly pay of S$2300 to S$2400* whereas PhD recipients get S$2500 to S$2700* depending on their citizenship status. Typically, PhD students will receive up to 4 years of GTF, subject to satisfactory teaching performance. Typically, Master's students will receive up to 2 years of GTF, subject to satisfactory teaching performance.

**Amount may vary depending on your matriculation year.*

A GTF recipient will be required to devote some hours per week teaching in the Psychology Department. The specific teaching duties will be assigned to you at the beginning of each academic year. In this context, GTFs will generally be required to clock 160 – 170 hours for each semester of the appointment. This includes an average of *3 to 4 hours of in-classroom teaching* per week, along with preparation, lecture attendance, consultations, marking, examination invigilation, etc. At the beginning of the semester, you will complete a Teaching Assistant Agreement form together with the instructor you are assigned to. This form will explicitly specify the nature of your duties and the amount of time you are expected to allocate to different duties.

This teaching service is a valuable opportunity for learning effective classroom teaching. As such, we encourage you to work together with the lecturer to optimise your learning experience.

The allocation of Graduate Teaching Fellowships does ***not*** include any tuition fee allowance.

Note: GTF scheme will be discontinued for new incoming students with effect from AY2026/27.

3.3. Tuition Fee Allowance

The NUS Tuition Fee Allowance (TFA) is awarded to outstanding graduate students for research leading to a higher degree at the University. The Award does not consist of a monthly stipend. The TFA will pay the prevailing applicable tuition fees for the recipient. The TFA is tenable for 1 year in the first instance and thereafter may, subject to the recipient's satisfactory progress, be renewed each semester at the University's discretion. The maximum period of the Award is 2 years for Master's candidates and 4 years for PhD candidates.

Note: Tuition Fee Allowances will no longer be allocated from 2023 onwards.

3.4. Graduate Assistantship Programme (GAP)

Recipients of RSs and TFAs are obliged to fulfil the Graduate Assistantship Programme. This programme requires all financial support recipients to work in the Department in order to fulfil

graduation requirements. The work involved can be supervision/research duties and other developmental assignments (e.g., conducting tutorials/lab demonstration, preparing teaching materials or developing new experiments for teaching purposes, performing invigilation duties, etc.).

The total number of hours required differs between recipients who are international students and Singaporeans or Singapore Permanent Residents. You will need to fulfil your GAP requirements before thesis submission. For international PhD RS students, the total number of hours needed under GAP is 416 over the entire candidature. For international PhD students with TFA, the total number of hours needed under GAP is 208 over the entire candidature. For Singaporeans and Singapore Permanent Residents with RS, the total number of hours required is 208 over the entire candidature. For Singaporeans and Singapore Permanent Residents with TFA, the total number of hours required is 104 over the entire candidature.

Please refer to your award letters for specific information on your GAP requirements. For queries, please approach the Department Administrator.

3.5. Teaching Awards

Both the Department and the Faculty confer teaching awards to recognize excellence in teaching. Applications for these awards are announced by the Faculty and you are welcome to nominate yourself and submit the required documents to our Department. In addition to considering self-nominations, our Department reviews the teaching evaluations from graduate students serving as teaching assistants and invites students with outstanding scores and qualitative comments to submit the required documents for the award. Based on those documents, the Department will recommend a selection of students for the teaching award to the Faculty.

3.6. Applying for Financial Support After Admittance into Programme

The number of research scholarships and graduate teaching assistantships are very limited and so these scholarships/assistantships are awarded on a very competitive basis during the application process.

If you were admitted into the PhD programme without financial assistance, you may apply for a Research Scholarship (RS) or GTF (Graduate Teaching Fellowship) after you have demonstrated competence in our programme. To this end, you should have completed at least two graded courses per semester, which count towards the Cumulative Average Point (GPA), and obtained a minimum GPA of 4.0. Additionally, you should have demonstrated research competence during projects completed together with your thesis advisor or as an Independent Study Course.

If you satisfy these requirements, you may submit a letter of request outlining your achievements and justifying the requested financial support. This letter should be accompanied by a letter of support from your thesis advisor. Both should be addressed to the Director of Graduate Studies via the Department Administrator by November 1 for consideration for the academic year starting in August of the next calendar year.

For Master's students, this process is not applicable as the scholarships are paid for only 2 years after admission. Thus, the time-frame necessary for fulfilling the scholarship requirements would be too short for the scholarship to take effect.

However, do note that the number of RSs and GTFs is very limited and so it is extremely difficult to get support from these sources once you are in the programme. It is strongly encouraged that you speak to your thesis advisor about the possibility of getting some support from their grant.

Please note that other schemes are available on the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) website:

https://fass.nus.edu.sg/graduate/research/scholarships/

4. Graduate Courses

As discussed above in Section 1, the Psychology Graduate Programme is divided into 6 research areas. Graduate students typically get specialized training in one of these areas. For most areas, with the exception of Quantitative Psychology, at least 2 area courses will be available to students over a 2-year period. Typically, in each area, one course will be a general survey course that covers broad and fundamental knowledge bases (e.g., PL5303 – Advanced Cognitive Psychology) whereas the other course will be a more specialized course that focuses on specific topics (e.g., PL6883 – Special Topics in Cognitive Psychology). For example, the Special Topics course in Cognitive Psychology can include in-depth treatment on attention and perception, memory, psycholinguistics and language processes, respectively. The specific content of a Special Topics course may differ from year to year and is dependent on student interest and faculty availability. Please refer to Table 1 for an overview of courses.

NB. Some areas do not follow the above format. The Clinical Science area offers 2 general survey courses – one in clinical and the other in health psychology. The Developmental Psychology area currently offers only one general survey course and no Special Topics course.

4.1. Availability of Graduate Courses

The availability of graduate courses depends on student demand and staff availability. The following paragraphs outline the projected availability of courses. If you are interested in a particular course that is not offered on a regular basis, you may contact the Director of Graduate Studies to inquire about course availability and to express your interest in the course. Based on student feedback, less frequently taught courses may be made available.

4.2. General Content and Quantitative Courses

Two courses will be offered every academic year, usually in Semester 1. They are:

PL6770 – Graduate Research Seminar
PL5221 – Analysis of Psychological Data Using General Linear Models

At least 1 of the other 2 quantitative courses will be offered every academic year, usually in Semester 2. They are:

PL5222 – Multivariate Statistics in Psychology
PL5225 – Structural Equation Modelling

The remaining 4 courses in this domain are research project courses where a student works with a faculty member on an empirical project or a reading seminar for one semester. As such these courses are generally available and students should approach prospective faculty members to secure their consent to mount the course. The specific content of the course will be decided jointly between the faculty member and the student. Do note that there are specific requirements associated with each course; please refer to Table 1 for detailed information.

PL5660 – Independent Study Course (Master's students; not student's thesis advisor) PL6660 – Independent Study Course (PhD students; not student's thesis advisor) PL6208 – Empirical Research Project (PhD students; student's own thesis advisor) PL6215 – Selected Applications in Psychology

4.3. Area Courses

All area courses are listed in Table 1. The department strives to offer 1 course from each area every academic year (either in Semester 1 or 2), alternating between the general survey course and the Special Topics course. For example, if PL5308 – Advanced Cognitive neuroscience is being offered this year, then PL6888 – Selected Topics in Cognitive neuroscience will likely be offered the following year. In this way, Master's students who wish to read 2 courses within their own research area should be able to cover them over a 2-year candidature period. The same applies to PhD students who normally endeavour to complete most of their courses in their first 2 years of candidature, though they have the flexibility to read courses into their third year.

As much as the department strives to offer 2 area courses over a 2-year period, this arrangement is however not guaranteed. Courses may not be offered due to staffing issues (e.g., unavailability of faculty member) or low projected student demand.

4.4. Research Theme Courses

In the event of sufficient student demand and interest, the department may offer courses related to our 2 research themes: (a) Emotion, and (b) Language and Communication. As of now, only 1 course on Emotion is available: PL6889 – Selected Topics in Emotion Psychology.

Table 1 - Graduate Courses

Course Code	***Title***	***Remarks***
General Content and Quantitative Courses		
PL6770	Graduate Research Seminar	Graded as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
PL5660	Independent Study Course	For Master's candidates; to be done with faculty member who is not the student's thesis advisor
PL6660	Independent Study Course	For PhD candidates; to be done with faculty member who is not the student's thesis advisor
PL6208	Empirical Research Project	For PhD candidates; to be done with the student's thesis advisor
PL5221	Analysis of Psychological Data Using GLM	
PL5222	Multivariate Statistics in Psychology	
PL5225	Structural Equation Modelling	
PL6215	Selected Applications in Psychology	This course can be offered by a visiting faculty from time to time. Alternatively, this can be a reading seminar between a faculty member (can be thesis advisor) and student where content is decided jointly.
Clinical Science Courses		
PL5306	Advanced Clinical Psychology	General survey course
PL5307	Advanced Health Psychology	General survey course

Course Code	***Title***	***Remarks***
Cognitive Psychology Courses		
PL5303	Advanced Cognitive Psychology	General survey course
PL6883	Selected Topics in Cognitive Psychology	Specific content may differ across years depending on faculty expertise
Developmental Psychology Courses		
PL5304	Advanced Developmental Psychology	General survey course
Cognitive neuroscience Courses		
PL5308	Advanced Cognitive neuroscience	General survey course
PL6888	Selected Topics in Cognitive neuroscience	Specific content may differ across years depending on faculty expertise
Social and Personality Psychology Courses		
PL5305	Advanced Social Psychology	General survey course
PL6885	Selected Topics in Social, Personality, Industrial-Organizational Psychology	Specific content may differ across years depending on faculty expertise
Research Theme Courses		
PL6889	Selected Topics in Emotion Psychology	Specific content may differ across years depending on faculty expertise

5. Graduation Requirements for Master's Students

5.1. Course Requirements

Master's students are required to complete a minimum of 4 courses:

- PL6770 - Graduate Research Seminar
- PL5221 - Analysis of Psychology Data Using GLM or PL5222 - Multivariate Statistics in Psychology
- 2 electives:
  - can be 4000, 5000, or 6000 level courses; within or outside of one's area. Only 1 4000 level course can be read.
  - In lieu of a content course, 1 elective can be fulfilled by doing an Independent Study Course (i.e., PL5660) with a faculty member who is NOT the primary thesis advisor.

The GPA of your courses should not fall below 2.5 for two consecutive terms or 3.0 for three consecutive terms. If it does, the candidature will be terminated by the university.

Based on these requirements and the availability of courses, we suggest that you consider the following schedule when planning your courses, to the extent that these courses are offered at the semesters listed below.

Semester 1 PL6770 - Graduate Research Seminar

PL5221- Analysis of Psychological Data Using GLM

Semester 2 Elective Course 1

Elective Course 2

We require you to take the Graduate Research Seminar in your first year, which may be offered in either Semester 1 or 2. This seminar will provide valuable information concerning the graduate programme and equip you with basic knowledge and skills that will be relevant for your research career. We strongly encourage you to take PL5221 (if you have not taken this course as an undergraduate student) during your first year. The statistical methods taught in this course will be relevant for the planning and execution of your research projects. The enrolment in elective courses will depend on the specific courses offered and your interests.

Students wanting to read more courses or courses outside of Psychology should seek the approval of their thesis advisor first, and then seek permission by sending an email to psybox2@nus.edu.sg, copying their thesis advisor.

5.2. Advice on Course Planning

The department believes that the student and his/her thesis advisor are in the best position to determine the best foundations for the academic development of the student. As such, the student is strongly encouraged to discuss the appropriate courses to read with their primary thesis advisor.

Students will have at least 2 electives to be completed. They are strongly encouraged to read courses related to their identified research area. For example, if you are a student from the Cognitive Psychology area, you are encouraged to complete the Advanced Cognitive Psychology and the Special Topics in Cognitive Psychology courses. Alternatively, you may decide to do an Independent Study Course with a faculty member in the Cognitive Psychology area. However, this is just a recommendation (not a requirement). As stated in the preceding paragraph, you and your thesis advisor are in the best position to decide the specific elective courses you will be reading.

Being a student in the *Quantitative Area* requires some special considerations. If you are a Master's student in the Quantitative Area, you may read all three quantitative courses (PL5221 as requirement and the other two as electives) or substitute 1 elective with an Independent Study Course. If you have already read some of these courses as an undergraduate, you will need to read other courses as substitutes (for fulfilment of the minimum 4 courses in the programme). The substitute course can be a content course or a quantitative/statistics course from other departments (e.g., the Departments of Statistics or Management). Please seek approval from your thesis advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies via the Department Administrator for reading courses from other departments.

Students can read beyond the minimum requirement of 4 courses. For example, if a student reads a total of 3 graded elective courses (i.e., 1 more than the requirement of 2 electives), the computed GPA will be based on the 2 best grades on the electives (plus the compulsory courses).

5.3. Grades

In order to graduate with a Master's degree, you have to achieve a minimum GPA of 3.0 and have passed the Master's thesis. Additionally, you cannot have failed more than two courses during your candidacy. If applicable, you are required to obtain a C or better in the graduate English course - intermediate level (CELC).

More information on GPA for continuation and graduation can be found here: https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/gd/

5.4. Thesis

In order to obtain a Master's degree, you need to do empirical work and submit it in written form as a Master's thesis. The maximum word limit for this thesis is 30,000 words. The thesis should be written following the APA guidelines and has to be submitted after completion of your course requirements and within the maximum period of candidacy (i.e., 3 years). The student should format the thesis in accordance to the Office of the University Registrar guidelines.

https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/

The thesis will be examined by 2 reviewers, one of whom can be from another department or research institution. The aim of your research presented in the thesis should be the generation of new knowledge. However, it is not essential that you are able to support your research hypotheses. Rather, the presented work should demonstrate your ability to independently conduct quality research and to integrate your work with the existing literature in a meaningful way.

5.4.1. Thesis Format

The default format for the Master's thesis is the one described in the preceding section (Section 4.4. Thesis). Unlike the PhD dissertation, the Faculty is not considering the use of publication format for Master's theses (for more information, see Section 5.6. Thesis Format), but Master's students can format their thesis as if they are preparing for manuscript submission. If they have submitted the manuscript for review, then they can use that as the main body of the Master's thesis.

5.4.2. Thesis Submission and Examination

Note: The nomination of examiners is done by the thesis advisor, not by the candidate. Nomination of examiners should be done at least one month before thesis is expected to be submitted for examination. An email to nominate examiners will be generated either 28 days before student's proposed thesis submission date or once thesis is submitted, whichever is earlier.

Important: Candidates should **not** know the identity of the examiners until after the examination.

Candidates have to submit their theses for examination (after being approved by their thesis advisor(s) and Head of Department) by the maximum period of candidature or such date as stipulated by the thesis advisors or the University, whichever date is earlier. The procedures for Thesis Submission and tuition fee deadlines are provided by the Office of the University Registrar

(see https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/ > Fees > Tuition Fees Payable for Thesis Submission for more information).

Submission of thesis for examination will be done online via a workflow in the Education Records System (myEduRec).

Please refer to the Thesis Submission workflow and user guides at the below link. https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/tm/

6. Graduation Requirements for PhD Students

6.1. Course Requirements

PhD students are required to complete a minimum of 6 courses:

- PL6770 - Graduate Research Seminar
- 2 statistics courses (from PL5221, PL5222, and PL5225)
- PL6208 - Empirical Research Project
- 2 electives:
    - can be 4000, 5000, or 6000 level courses; within or outside of one's area. Only 1 4000 level course can be read.
    - In lieu of a content course, 1 elective can be fulfilled by doing an Independent Study Course (i.e., PL6660) with a faculty member who is NOT the primary thesis advisor.

The GPA for your courses should not fall below 3.0 for two consecutive terms or 3.5 for three consecutive terms. If it does, your candidature will be terminated by the university.

Based on these requirements and the availability of courses, we suggest that you consider the following schedule when planning your courses, to the extent that these courses are offered at the semesters listed below.

Semester 1	PL6770 - Graduate Research Seminar
	PL5221- Analysis of Psychological Data Using GLM
Semester 2	PL5222 - Multivariate Statistics in Psychology
	Elective Course 1
Semester 3	PL6208 - Empirical Research Project
	Elective Course 2

We require you to take the Graduate Research Seminar in your first year, which may be offered in either Semester 1 or 2. This seminar will provide valuable information concerning the graduate programme and equip you with basic knowledge and skills that will be relevant for your research career. We strongly encourage you to take PL5221 (if you have not taken this course as an undergraduate student) during your first year. The statistical methods taught in this course will be relevant for the planning and execution of your research projects. The enrolment in elective courses will depend on the specific courses offered and your interests.

Students wanting to read more courses or courses outside of Psychology should seek the approval of their thesis advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies via the Department Administrator.

6.2. Advice on Course Planning

The department believes that the student and his/her thesis advisor are in the best position to determine the best foundations for the academic development of the student. As such, the student is strongly encouraged to discuss the appropriate courses to read with their primary thesis advisor.

Students will have at least 2 electives to be completed. They are strongly encouraged to read courses related to their identified research area. For example, if you are a student from the Cognitive Psychology area, you are encouraged to complete the Advanced Cognitive Psychology and the Special Topics in Cognitive Psychology courses. Alternatively, you may decide to do an Independent Study Course with a faculty member in the Cognitive Psychology area. However, this is just a recommendation (not a requirement). As stated in the preceding paragraph, you and your thesis advisor are in the best position to decide the specific elective courses you will be reading.

Being a student in the *Quantitative Area* requires some special considerations. If you are a PhD student in the Quantitative Area, you may read all three quantitative courses (PL5221 as requirement and the other two as electives) or substitute 1 elective with an Independent Study Course. If you have already read some of these courses as an undergraduate, you will need to read courses as substitutes (for fulfilment of the minimum 6 courses in the programme). The substitute course can be a content course or a quantitative/statistics course from other departments (e.g., the Departments of Statistics or Management).

Please seek approval from your thesis advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies via the Department Administrator for reading courses from other departments.

Students can read beyond the minimum requirement of 6 courses. For example, if a student reads a total of 3 graded elective courses (i.e., 1 more than the requirement of 2 electives), the computed GPA will be based on the 2 best grades on the electives (plus the compulsory courses).

6.3. Grades

In order to graduate with a PhD, you have to achieve a minimum GPA of 3.5, obtain minimum C grade for NG5001, satisfactory pass for NG5002, pass the PhD Qualifying Exam, PhD Thesis and Oral Exam. Additionally, you cannot have failed more than two courses during your candidacy. If applicable, you are required to obtain a C or better in the graduate English course - intermediate level (CELC).

More information on GPA for continuation and graduation can be found here: https://fass.nus.edu.sg/graduate/research/programme-requirements/

6.4. PhD Qualifying Examination

The nomination of examiners is done by the thesis advisor, not by the candidate.

PhD candidates are also required to pass a Qualifying Examination (QE) in the form of comprehensive examinations and an oral defence of the thesis proposal. The comprehensive examinations comprise two written examinations that test the general competence of the candidate in his/her core area. The thesis proposal should be about 30 to 50 pages long. The oral defence of your research proposal will be held before a three-member panel or Thesis Committee [including your thesis advisor(s)] appointed by the Head of Department.

The QE will be examined by the Thesis Committee which should consist of the candidate's thesis advisor and two other experts. All examiners must be available to conduct the examinations.

Students must satisfy the following conditions before being allowed to sit for the PhD QE:

• Complete a minimum of 5 courses, including PL6208, with a minimum GPA of 3.50;

• Where applicable, obtain satisfactory grades in the CELC graduate English courses at intermediate level; and

• Other Departmental requirements.

The QE should be passed within the first two years of the PhD candidature. Within this period, a second PhD QE may be attempted should the candidate fail the first attempt. This applies to both full-time and part-time candidates. For research scholars, the scholarship will only be suspended upon the recommendation of the Department. A student who is unable to pass the PhD QE by the end of the second year of his/her candidature may be downgraded to the Master's programme if he/she can complete a reasonably good Master's thesis. For research scholars, the scholarship in such cases will be terminated. Otherwise, the candidature of such students will be terminated.

6.4.1. Comprehensive Examinations (CE)

6.4.1.1. Rationale and Aims

A PhD graduate in Psychology is expected to have in-depth knowledge of his/her chosen thesis research topic, and also demonstrate competence in the broader research areas that relate to the thesis topic as well as the general sub-field of psychology that is more closely related to his/her thesis research topic.

As a guideline, "sub-field of psychology" refers to the narrower and more specialized research focus that is closely related to the thesis (e.g., neuroscience of attention, cognitive-behavioural therapy, working memory, group behaviour) whereas "broader research areas that relate to the thesis topic" refer to the core area of the PhD dissertation (i.e., *Clinical Science*; *Cognitive*

Psychology; *Developmental Psychology*; *Quantitative Psychology*; *Cognitive neuroscience*; and *Social and Personality Psychology*). Thus, a candidate is typically expected to be competent in his/her thesis research topic as well as his/her broader research area in Psychology. In this discussion, "competence" is defined as the mastery of the content of a basic undergraduate course in those areas or sub-fields. Leaving aside issues relating to performance or teaching abilities, the idea is that a PhD graduate should have the requisite knowledge to teach an undergraduate course in his/her research areas or sub-fields.

For example, a candidate may be writing a dissertation on the role of social support in cardiovascular disorders. The Comprehensive Exams would allow the candidate to demonstrate his/her "competence" in (for example) both cardiovascular psychology and more broadly in health psychology.

Note that some areas consist of several sub-disciplines of psychology (e.g., the *Social and Personality Psychology* area). For the CE1, the student is expected to be knowledgeable in the specific sub-discipline in which he or she is affiliated to. For example, if a student is under the *Social, Personality, and Industrial- Organizational Psychology* area, the primary focus of the student may be in social psychology. Therefore, CE1 should test the student's competence in social psychology only (excluding personality and I-O psychology). The thesis advisor plays the critical role in defining the appropriate boundary for the CE1 through the reading list.

6.4.1.2. Number of Comprehensive Examinations

The candidate must complete two Comprehensive Examinations (CE1 and CE2):

CE1 will cover the general area of psychology (e.g., social psychology) related to the candidate's thesis research area.

CE2 will be in the candidate's thesis research area (e.g., attitudes and persuasion) but should be broader than the thesis research topic (e.g., the role of attitudes in making people more environmentally conscious). The requirements of CE2 can either be fulfilled as a written exam or as a review paper.

After completing CE1 and CE2, there will be a one-hour oral exam where candidates have to defend their answers for both components.

6.4.1.3. Timing of the Comprehensive Examinations

After consultation with the Thesis Committee, the candidate should set dates for the CE (take-home exam/s and oral defence) and inform the Department Administrator of the dates.

Assuming a candidate is taking the review paper option for CE2, the Thesis Committee should also inform the Department Administrator of the deadline they provided to the candidate for submitting his/her review paper. The written exam/s should be conducted within the period of one working week, and an oral defence of the answers will take place not later than one working week after the final written exam. The examiners will then have two working weeks after the oral exam to evaluate the CE and must then reach a consensus on whether to submit a Pass or Fail result to the Department.

6.4.1.4. Scope of Comprehensive Examinations

After the content areas of the CE have been determined, the candidate must draw up a reading list for CE1. The reading list should comprise the primary sources and major studies in the relevant subject area and should generally contain a minimum of 30 titles (inclusive of books and articles). Some may consider 30 titles to be insufficient; the purpose here is to offer some guidelines for the benefit of the student, to prevent possible disputes as to what might be expected of the CE, and to ensure a required level of competence. The thesis committee will then comment on the reading list and, if appropriate, help guide the student to broaden the scope of the reading lists to include other relevant research papers. In general, reading lists must be made known to the Thesis Committee at least 5 months prior to the CE (slight alterations can be allowed subject to the Thesis Committee's consent). The Thesis Committee should provide their comments to the student within one month to allow the candidate sufficient time to prepare. Once the reading lists are finalized, they have to be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies/Head of Department for approval.

The candidate then has two options with respect to CE2. The first option is to do CE2 as a written exam, in which case he/she has to draw up a separate reading list for CE2 (subject to the same requirements for the CE1 reading list described above). The second option is to complete and submit a review paper in the candidate's specific research area. In order to select the review paper option for CE2:

a. Approval of the thesis committee is required,

b. The student will decide the scope and parameters of the review paper in consultation with the thesis committee, and the final topic has to be approved by the committee and the Director of Graduate Studies/Head of Department before work can begin,

c. The thesis advisor may provide feedback to not more than two drafts of the review paper before it is submitted, and must at no point edit the manuscript,

d. The thesis committee will also stipulate a deadline for the submission of the review paper, so that they have enough time to evaluate the paper before the oral defence is mounted.

6.4.1.5. Format of Qualifying Examinations – Comprehensive Exams

In order to qualify as a PhD candidate, the student will need to complete two comprehensive exams (Comprehensive Exam 1 – CE1, Comprehensive Exam 2 – CE2), and one PhD thesis research proposal. There will also be an oral defence for all three components (i.e., CE1, CE2, PhD thesis research proposal). The final Pass/Fail result for the QE will be based on both (i) the oral defence and (ii) the CE components.

CE1 will comprise a take-home open-book written exam. For CE1, the student needs to answer one of three questions which will be set by the thesis committee. The thesis committee must coordinate to avoid duplication or overlap and ensure sufficient coverage of the research topics. The exam papers should be submitted to the Department Administrator at least one working week before each scheduled exam. The thesis advisor, not the Department, is responsible for the coordination of the exam paper. The Department Administrator will email the exam questions to candidates at 8:30am in the morning. Candidates will have to submit their answers by 5:30 pm to their Thesis Committee members, copying the Department administrator. For candidates who are also doing CE2 as a take-home written exam, the format and requirements for CE2 are identical for CE1.

For candidates who are doing the review paper option for CE2, the review paper (typically 30-35 double-spaced pages, and no longer than 70 double-spaced pages) could take the form of an integrative review (similar to what one might submit to *Psychological Bulletin*) that describes and critically evaluates past research, while highlighting important issues that have yet to be resolved. The review paper could also take the form of a theoretical review (similar to what one might submit to *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*) that examines important issues and phenomena within the field, with meta-analytic techniques used where applicable.

A one-hour oral defence of the candidate's submissions (for both CE1 and CE2) will then take place not later than one working week after the submission of the final written exam. While the candidate is allowed to have a copy of his/her written submissions with him/her, he/she will not receive any feedback on the written answers prior to the oral defence.

6.4.1.6. Format of Qualifying Examinations – PhD Thesis Research Proposal

The thesis proposal is considered as part of the Qualifying Exams, and the student should discuss the scope of the thesis research proposal (e.g., research question, number of studies, methodology, etc.) with their thesis advisor. The oral defence of the thesis proposal will ensure that the candidate is ready to embark on his/her thesis.

The one-hour oral defence for the PhD thesis research proposal should be taken after the written CEs. The timing for this oral defence should not, however, depend on the performance for the CEs.

After consultation with the Thesis Committee, the candidate should set a date for the oral defence and inform the Department Administrator of this date The period of time between the written CEs and the oral defence should be agreed upon by the student and the Thesis Committee, but the entire QE must be completed before the end of second year of PhD candidature.

The student must submit a thesis proposal 4-8 weeks before the date of the oral exam in order to give the examiners enough time to read and frame questions.

6.4.1.7. Format and Scope of the Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal should not exceed 10,000 words and should be typed in 12pt font size with double line spacing. This word count should exclude bibliography, tables, figures and footnotes. The format should conform to APA style.

The thesis proposal should be concise, cogently argued and well-written for an intelligent reader who may be unfamiliar with the specific research topic chosen. It should therefore contain a critical review of the relevant literature that introduces the examiners to the chosen research topic and frames the hypotheses of the study. The methods of data collection should also be clearly explained.

Thesis Committee members are urged to read the proposal carefully before the oral examination in order to be fair to the student.

6.4.1.8. Format of the Oral Defence Examination

All of the Thesis Committee members (including the thesis advisor) will examine the candidate during the oral exam. For this, the student is expected to prepare a presentation (about 30 min) following which, the Thesis Committee will examine the candidate with respect to her/his subject knowledge and ability to embark on the thesis research.

6.5. Thesis Examination

In order to obtain a PhD, you need to do empirical work and submit it in written form as a PhD thesis. The maximum word limit for this thesis is 100,000 words. The thesis should be written following the APA guidelines and has to be submitted after completion of your course requirements and within the maximum period of candidacy (i.e., 5 years).

The department strongly encourages students to write their thesis in the form of one or more journal articles following the guidelines listed below (6.6.1).

The research presented in your thesis should involve primary data collection, which includes the collection of raw responses from participants in-person or online. Primary data collection can also consist of collecting statistical information from various journal articles for the purpose of conducting a meta-analysis.

The research presented in your thesis should generate new knowledge. It is essential that your research extends the existing literature in a significant way. When you and your thesis advisor consider the thesis to be ready for evaluation, you can submit your thesis to be sent out for examination.

The thesis will be examined by 2 internal examiners from NUS, including Duke-NUS. **The candidate should not know the identity of the examiners, until they have completed the oral defence.** The nomination of the examiners is done by the thesis advisor. Starting from Aug 2021, Thesis advisors who wish to nominate any external examiner will need to provide strong justification, and seek approval from the Head of Department and Vice-Dean. Although it is advisable that the examiners of your written thesis be different from the committee that served during your qualifying examinations, there can be overlap. However, this overlap should be avoided if the committee member(s) in question was substantially involved in supervising your research.

Once your examiners have examined your thesis, you will be given the examiners' reports. You will also be invited to conduct an oral defence. Schedule the oral defence such that you have enough time to address the most significant issues raised by the examiners in their written examination reports.

During the defence, the two examiners have to be present. The DGCC Chair or representative will chair your defence. It typically lasts 2 hours during which you should give a short presentation of your work (about 30 minutes). You may make this presentation part of the defence public if you wish it to be so. This presentation will be followed by a Question and Answer session where the panel and members of the audience may direct questions at you that test your mastery of your thesis research and related subjects.

The second part of the defence will comprise the examiners asking you questions regarding your thesis. This will be a private event (i.e., other members of the audience will have to leave). Your thesis advisor may remain however he or she is not supposed to comment or answer any questions on your behalf.

After your defence, the panel will consult on your performance and decide on the outcome of your defence. Possible outcomes are (1) the acceptance of your thesis with or without minor amendments that you would have to complete to the satisfaction of your thesis advisor; (2) the acceptance of your thesis pending revisions made to the satisfaction of specified reviewers; or (3) the rejection of your thesis with or without the option of resubmission and a second defence.

6.6. Thesis Format

6.6.1. Background

Publications by graduate students are strongly encouraged in the Department of Psychology. The department recognizes that having publications and/or manuscripts in a publishable form is highly advantageous to a PhD candidate's subsequent job search.

PhD students can choose between this new Article-based PhD Thesis format or the traditional monograph format. For the latter, see the following link for guidelines:

https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/docs/Guidelines-on-Format-of-Research-Thesis.pdf

6.6.2. Guidelines and Regulations for Article-based PhD Thesis Format

When a PhD candidate chooses to submit his/her dissertation in the article-based format, the following guidelines and regulations are to be adhered to.

1. At least two journal articles that fulfill the following conditions:

   - the student must be the lead author on the articles;
   - the journal articles must be based on work carried out since the student's period of registration as a doctoral candidate at NUS, and relate directly to the PhD research in the Department/Programme in which the student is registered;
   - at least one of the articles should be at least formally accepted (if not in press or published) at the time of submission, and the other article(s) should be in a publishable format, appropriate for submission to a stated journal; and
   - targeted journals must be reputable international journals, agreed beforehand with the student's thesis committee and endorsed by the Head of Department.

AND

2. An analytical commentary of 8,000 - 12,000 words that fulfills NUS formatting requirements and comprises:

   - a title page;
   - an abstract of up to 300 words;
   - an introductory section, highlighting the current state of knowledge and understanding in the field, identifying the research questions that have guided the PhD research, and

indicating how the publications submitted contribute to an existing body of knowledge/scholarship;

- an overview of and justification for the methodology/methods adopted in the research;
- a critical account of how the publications submitted address the guiding research questions and together make a coherent and significant contribution to knowledge and scholarship.
- an indication of potential future research direction/questions in the field; and where the portfolio includes jointly authored publications, a statement explaining the student's contribution to those papers.
- The commentary thus provides the student the opportunity not only to develop one or more fundamental methodological/conceptual/theoretical issues that they may not have been able to address fully through the submitted publications, but also to demonstrate the overall coherence of the articles.

3. The format decided by the Department is one in which the publications are placed as chapters within the structure of the thesis. The thesis must be presented in a consistent format, with material drawn from the journal articles but reworked to be integrated into the main body of the text such that the complete thesis reads seamlessly, as with a monograph thesis.

- For example, a student has 1 published article and 1 manuscript formatted in a publishable format. The student has to incorporate the analytical commentary together with these 2 articles into a coherent dissertation. One suggested sequence would be:
    - Chapter 1: Literature review and overview of methodology
    - Chapter 2: Published article (using the prepublication version)
    - Chapter 3: Publishable article
    - Chapter 4: Discussion on how the articles address the research questions and together make a coherent and significant contribution to knowledge and scholarship; and future directions
- It is expected that minimal editing is needed to incorporate the articles into the thesis. A student can use the prepublication version (i.e., the version that was accepted for publication) of the published article and edit it to fit into the overall thesis structure. For instance, the student might have to (minimally) edit the font, font size, headings and subheadings and their levels, etc. so that the presentation of the entire dissertation is consistent. One example of inconsistency would be the use of different font styles across the chapters.

4. Students will have to decide on whether to complete the normal PhD by thesis or one based on articles **within a year of passing the PhD Qualifying Examination**. If students are not certain about the publication status of their work beforehand, they can select the article-based

PhD format first.

5. A student opting for the Article-based PhD Thesis route must have the support of their thesis committee and must have met, in full, the same course and QE requirements of the degree as students on the PhD by Thesis pathway. In other words, all other requirements for the PhD degree will remain. There will be no change in the coursework requirements, or in the examination process. Examiners will be nominated through the current nomination process and make their recommendations according to the current Regulations for Graduate Research degrees of NUS (e.g. students will still have to undergo the PhD Oral Examination and will be expected to make revisions to the articles and commentary if required by the examiners, even if the articles have been accepted by/published in journals).

6. The same journal article cannot appear in more than one thesis, even if two students claim that they have equal authorship of the article. Students will be asked to sign a declaration to this effect, and to confirm that s/he is the major contributor of each of the papers included in the thesis.

7. Overall, the work submitted under the Article-based PhD Thesis route should clearly meet the standard requirements of a PhD by Thesis, in terms of language, coherence and most importantly, contribution to the discipline. The Article-based PhD Thesis will require the same amount and standard of research as a PhD by Thesis and is in no way expected to be an easier option. It might in fact be more difficult as it will have to be assessed by both journal reviewers and thesis examiners. It will be made clear to students that the successful publication of even three (or more) articles will not in and of itself be sufficient to guarantee that the thesis will be passed by the examiners.

8. All copyright and permission issues will be resolved prior to uploading of the thesis. As per normal, students will be advised to use the write-up in the "Electronic Thesis/Dissertation ("Thesis") Submission' form, RO.667/09, to seek formal approval with the respective journals to reproduce the articles in their theses. Form RO.667/09 can be found here: https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/tm/

Downloadable Form > Electronic thesis/Dissertation (Thesis) Submission Form

- In general, publishers (e.g., APA, Elsevier, Springer, Wiley) allow authors to post the prepublication version of their published articles online or deposit it into the institutional research repository, with certain conditions.
- One common condition is that authors should state that the prepublication version may not exactly replicate the authoritative document published in the journal. Another common condition is that the doi of the published version must be included on the prepublication version. Some publishers require a period of embargo (e.g., 12-24 months) before the prepublication can be made available online.

  When students submit their article-based dissertation, they incorporate the

prepublication version of their published article into their dissertation. This will allow the dissertation to be deposited and subsequently distributed online via NUS portals without copyright infringement. However, note that some publishers require a period of embargo. The student should thus select the appropriate option on Form RO.667/09 that allows for an embargo.

- Different publishers have different policies. Hence, the onus is on the student to check with the respective publishers on what is allowed under their copyright policies.
- Policies of several publishers can be found here:
    - APA: http://www.apa.org/pubs/authors/posting.aspx
    - Elsevier: https://www.elsevier.com/about/company-information/policies/sharing
    - Springer: http://www.springer.com/gp/open-access/authors-rights/self-archiving-policy/2124
    - Wiley: http://olabout.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-820227.html

6.7. Thesis Submission and Examination

Submission of thesis for examination will be done online via a workflow in the Education Records System (myEduRec).

Please refer to the Thesis Submission workflow and user guides at the below link.
https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/tm/

The procedures for Thesis Submission and tuition fee deadlines are provided by the Office of the University Registrar (see https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/ > Fees > Tuition Fees Payable for Thesis Submission for more information).

7. Candidature and Administrative Matters

7.1. Getting to Know Your Thesis advisor and Your Responsibilities

When entering our graduate programme you may be uncertain as to what your milestones are, when you should achieve them and what kind of support you can request from your thesis advisor. It is useful to clarify these issues in advance so that both you and your thesis advisor notice easily when things get "off-track". Therefore, we ask that you discuss milestones and thesis advisor/student responsibilities in advance and come to an agreement with your thesis advisor. To help with that discussion, the faculty has provided a form that you may fill out and keep as a record. To retrieve this form please visit Graduate Forms and Resources – Department of Psychology and look for the Supervisor-Student Agreement Form. If you find this agreement unsuitable you may draft your own agreement in discussion with your thesis advisor. Both of you need to sign the agreement and submit a copy to the Department Administrator before the end of your first semester.

7.2. Change of Thesis Advisor

Your thesis advisor may leave the Department during your candidacy. Additionally, it is possible that your research interests change or that you have personal difficulties with your selected thesis advisor. You should discuss your intention to change thesis advisors with your current thesis advisor and identify a potential staff member who agrees to serve as your thesis advisor for the remainder of your candidacy. The Director of Graduate Studies can be approached to help facilitate this. After discussion with all parties involved, you can proceed to apply for change of thesis advisor in EduRec.

https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/docs/UserGuide_Form_Change-of-Thesis-Advisor.pdf

The other form, which *only* needs to be completed if you have research protocols that will be used under the new thesis advisor and which were submitted for IRB approval prior to the change in thesis advisor. Look for Department/IRB Information form here

https://fass.nus.edu.sg/psy/graduate-forms-and-resources/

The forms have to be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies via the Department Administrator.

7.3. Progress Report

Your candidature as a graduate student will normally have to be renewed every semester (for

both scholars and self-financing students) contingent on satisfactory progress. The renewal usually takes place in June/December, when your thesis advisor(s) submit a half-yearly progress report. Your thesis advisor(s) will evaluate your progress and forward the report to the Department and Faculty for evaluation before renewal of your candidature is granted.

7.4. Upgrading from Master's to PhD

If you are currently in the Master's research programme and would like to work for a PhD degree, you can apply to upgrade to the PhD programme after you have satisfied the PhD QE requirements (see Section 5.4.). Upon completion of the PhD programme, you will be awarded a PhD degree but not the Master's degree. Master's students who wish to upgrade their candidature to PhD should first seek the advice of their thesis advisor(s) and/or Director of Graduate Studies.

If you are required to take the graduate English courses at the intermediate level during your Master's candidature, you must achieve an advanced level in the course after upgrading successfully, with the exception of students from the Department of Chinese Studies who are required to achieve an intermediate level of proficiency. You are required to obtain satisfactory grades (at least grade C) in the graduate English courses.

Please note that if you receive the Research Scholarship upon successful application to upgrade to the PhD candidature, the normal end-date for your scholarship is four years from the time that you were admitted as a Master's student. It is recommended that you apply for upgrading to PhD as early as possible, if you are interested in pursuing a PhD degree.

7.5. Conversion between Full-time & Part-time Status

All students who would like to convert between full-time and part-time status must seek approval. If you are a research scholar and you convert to a part-time candidature without approval from the Faculty, you are liable to the penalty of having to repay the University the Scholarship and have your candidature terminated immediately.

Approval for the conversion of a student's status to part-time is granted on a case-by-case basis. For students who are receiving the Research Scholarship, approval is normally not granted within two years for Master's and four years for PhD candidates unless you have submitted a draft of the complete thesis to the thesis advisor(s); and the thesis advisor(s), in their best judgement, feel that you are able to submit the thesis for examination within three months.

You can apply to convert your status between full-time and part-time in EduRec.

https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/nusgs/gd/docs/UserGuide_Form_Conversion-of-Candidature.pdf

Please note that there is another situation where students convert from full-time to part-time candidature. When you submit your thesis, you are asked whether you want to convert from full-time to part-time candidature and the desired effective date. You are informed of the following during thesis submission:

- For current research scholars, the scholarship will cease on the day that the thesis advisor approves the thesis submission or upon the date of conversion of his/her candidature from full-time to part-time, whichever date is earlier.
- All full-time students (local and international) are required to subscribe to the University's medical insurance scheme. The scheme also covers part-time students enrolled from AY2026/27 onwards. Please refer to the University Health Centre website for details on the scheme.
- Foreign students are not eligible for a Student's Pass once their candidature is converted to part-time. (They must ensure that they stay in Singapore on a valid pass.)

7. 6. Leave Matters

The only type of leave available to non-research scholars is "leave of absence". The application must be submitted to the Department at least two weeks prior to the proposed leave period. Usually leave periods of up to two semesters may be considered for each application. Students who require more than two semesters of leave are advised to withdraw and re-apply for admission later.

Students on a research scholarship are eligible for 21 working days of vacation leave in a calendar year. Additionally, students may take leave of absence (unpaid) or maternity leave. More information on leave and application guidelines is available at:

https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/gd/

8. Practical Issues

8.1. Timeline for planning your PhD components

Date	Milestone
1 year, 4 months	• Set and confirm thesis committee (thesis advisor and 2 other members, both of which should be internal) with Director of Graduate Studies/Head of Department. • Reading lists from student to thesis committee for comments (Committee members have 1 month to suggest changes).
1 year, 5 months	• Reading lists with comments back to student. After the list is finalized, a copy should be emailed to the Department Administrator, who will then submit the lists to the Director of Graduate Studies/Head of Department for approval.
1 year, 10 months	• Student should have completed 5 of the required courses (GPA min. 3.5); this includes the empirical research project PL6208. • Student should now take the QE. • Comprehensive Exams 1 and 2, oral defence for CE1 and CE2 (1 hour), oral defence of thesis proposal. • Student should submit thesis proposal to committee 4-8 weeks prior to the defence.
2 years	Students should have completed all QE components (i.e., Comprehensive Examinations 1 and 2, oral defence for CE1 and CE2 (1 hours), oral defence of thesis proposal).
4 years	The student should complete any remaining required courses. The University does not set a deadline for thesis submission. However, given the duration of research scholarship and candidacy, the student should now be ready to submit thesis for examination. After the reviewers have sent their evaluation, an oral defence for the thesis has to be scheduled.

8.2. Ethics Clearance

You should obtain ethics clearance for any research project carried out by you unless your thesis advisor already has ethics clearance for your project(s). To this end, please submit an application to the Departmental Ethics Review Committee (DERC). The DERC will then review your application and, if applicable, send to the NUS Institutional Review Board. You will be notified when your application reaches the IRB. Depending on the timing and the nature of your application, you may have a decision within 1 to 3 months. The application material and a guide for ethics submissions can be found here:

https://fass.nus.edu.sg/psy/ethics-review-of-projects/

8.3. Academic Culture

Part of an academic culture is the open exchange of ideas. The university has put in place a number of guidelines aimed at preventing that such ideas are abused for personal benefit. One potential form of abuse is plagiarism – that is the use of existing material for an assignment, thesis or publication without properly crediting this material. Listed below is the position of the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences concerning plagiarism:

1. No student shall represent the work of another person as his/her own in any academic assignment, thesis or project even if the material so represented constitutes only a part of the work submitted.
2. No student shall copy ideas found on the Web without giving proper credit to the original sources.
3. No student shall download or copy, in part or in their entirety, articles or research papers found on the Internet and submit the paper as his/her own work.
4. No student shall contribute any work to another student if he/she knows or should know that the latter may submit the work in part or whole as his/her own.
5. Receipt of payment in whatever form for work contributed shall raise a presumption that the student had such knowledge.
6. Any student found to have committed or aided and abetted the offence of plagiarism may be subject to the following penalties depending on the severity of his involvement in the offence.

7. The student shall receive no marks or a reduction of marks for the relevant academic assignment, thesis or project;

8. The student shall fail the subject, course or programme of study, with or without any marks given for that subject, course or programme of study; and

9. The student shall be treated as having committed a disciplinary offence under section 1 of Statute 12 (Penalty) of the National University of Singapore.

10. Students should seek clarification from their respective tutors, lecturers or thesis advisors if they are unsure whether they are plagiarising the work of another person.

Please note that borrowing extensively from your own material, produced previously for credit, will also be considered plagiarism:

1. In their written assignments, students should not reproduce extensive portions (10% or more) from written assignments completed for another course(s).

2. A student who reproduces extensive portions from a previous assignment in another assignment is guilty of academic dishonesty because he/she is claiming additional credit for work which has already been done.

3. Students who wish to work in a topic which is closely related to a written assignment completed for another course should first highlight this to the lecturer concerned and produce a photocopy of the previously completed assignment for the lecturer in order to ensure that the new assignment is not a re-use of the previous work.

The definition of "plagiarism" is not clear cut and may differ somewhat depending on disciplines. You may think you know what plagiarism is and nevertheless commit some form of it because your knowledge is incomplete. To prevent this from happening please check out the following link on how to avoid plagiarism:

https://fass.nus.edu.sg/psy?s=plagiarism&domains=https%3A%2F%2Ffass.nus.edu.sg%2Fpsy&sitesearch=https%3A%2F%2Ffass.nus.edu.sg%2Fpsy

8.4. Part-time Employment

You can take up part-time employment at any time during term break. However, if you would like to work part-time during term, you can do so only after obtaining approval from the university. As you can only commence part-time employment after obtaining approval, you should apply early. Applications made during or after completion of employment will not be accepted. For more information including terms and conditions on part-time employment, visit the website of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA).

Alternatively, you may also check with OSA in person at Yusof Ishak House or email OSA.

Check out the following link for part-time opportunities within NUS:

https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/gd/

The relevant paid part-time jobs, which research scholars may be employed in at NUS, are teaching and graduate student research work. Income derived from this nature of work is subject to tax (while Singaporeans and Singapore Permanent Residents are subject to both CPF and tax).

University education at NUS is demanding, intensive, and rigorous, and thus requires a high degree of commitment. Research candidates pursuing full-time studies are expected to commit themselves to at least 40 hours per week of study. The University does not encourage full-time students to take up employment during term time that might interfere with their studies. All students should note that employment-related commitments will not be accepted as valid reasons for absence, uncompleted work, late submission of work, or poor performance, and may lead to exclusion from certain full-time programmes.

8.4.1. Research Scholars

Research scholars (especially international students) may not work more than a total of 16 hours a week for paid and unpaid work as stipulated in the Research Scholarships terms and conditions. Research scholars who are Singapore Citizens or Permanent Residents should seek the Department's advice if they wish to work more than the specified quota.

For more information, please refer to: https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/gd/

As research scholars are required to assist their Department in teaching and other departmental work for up to six hours per week without pay, they can only perform 10 hours per week of additional part-time work. Apart from this, the scholar may not accept employment, whether remunerated or not, or hold concurrently any other scholarship, fellowship or other awards, without the prior approval of the FASS Vice Dean (Graduate Studies).

8.4.2. Students who are non-Research Scholars

Full-time international students who are non-research scholars can be engaged in part- time employment not exceeding 16 hours a week when the semester is in session. The University does not specify any restrictions to part-time employment for local students. However, we do recommend that as for foreign students, 16 hours are not exceeded.
Full-time students regardless of citizenship may not accept full-time employment. If they seek to obtain full-time employment, they will have to convert their student status to part-time.

For more information, please refer to: https://myportal.nus.edu.sg/studentportal/fas/gd/

8.5. Resources for You and Your Research

8.5.1. Research Participant Programme

Undergraduate students taking PL1101E and PL2131 can take part in the Research Participant (RP) Programme in partial fulfilment of their course requirements. These students then have to complete 12 points (1 point is a maximum of 30 min) as participants in research experiments. The RP Coordinator will send out an email at the beginning of each term to indicate how many hours are available for graduate student projects. In the past, a graduate student could typically request 200 RP points in a given term. To access these points and allow undergraduates to sign up for your research, you need to submit the RP requisition form available on the RP website (https://fass.nus.edu.sg/psy/research-participation-programme/) – together with your ethics approval to the RP Coordinator.

Please note that the RP programme closes before the start of the examination period at the end of each term and only opens one or two weeks after the beginning of a new term. Occasionally, the Department offers PL1101E during the special term. If that's the case, a small number of RP points may be available from May to June or June to August. However, the RP pool is usually closed during these months. Thus, if you have to rely on RP points for your research you'll need to plan ahead.

8.5.2. Access to Departmental Facilities

There is one graduate student room (AS4-04-05) equipped with several PCs and a printer, as well as communal desk space and a limited number of lockers for graduate students.

The PCs are meant for common use (i.e., no one should be parking themselves at these spaces). Students can use their student card to access the room. A full set of guidelines is provided in Appendix 1.

For research purposes, students can access the computer and research labs available to the Department. Access to these facilities is gated by several staff members. Please drop an email to psybox13@nus.edu.sg if you would like to book any of the rooms. You may refer to the website for the rooms available and Rules and Regulations. https://fass.nus.edu.sg/psy/departmental-resources/

A photocopier is available in the Printing Room next to the General Office. The photocopier cannot be used for research purposes (e.g., photocopying questionnaires). For students who are involved in teaching courses, you may ask for the photocopying code (by individual course) from the office staff. Your card allows access to the printing room only during office hours.

Opposite the Printing Room is a pantry which you can access around the clock. You may use the microwave oven and the water dispenser. A dedicated refrigerator is also reserved for graduate students. Food and beverages in the pantry are reserved for staff only. Also, please note that departmental facilities are for the use of staff and graduate students from this department only. Anyone found to be loaning his or her student card to others for the purpose of accessing department facilities will be denied access to those facilities.

8.5.3. Financial Support for Student Projects

8.5.3.1. Thesis Support Fund (Department)

The Thesis Support Fund provided by the department supports students for approved expenses incurred towards data acquisition in the course of thesis-related research. Applications are open in August and December each year. Successful applicants are typically allocated a budget of $400 for the Master's thesis and $500 for the PhD thesis throughout the candidature period.

For more information, please refer to: https://fass.nus.edu.sg/psy/student-research-funding/

8.5.3.2. Graduate Student Research Support Scheme for Thesis-Related Fieldwork (Faculty)

Students will receive the call for funding applications during each round of applications.

Full-time students can also apply for the Graduate Research Support Scheme (GRSS), which provides funding support for conducting fieldwork or data collection directly related to their Master's or PhD thesis.

Application is competitive and priority will be given to PhD students. PhD students must have passed their Qualifying Examination (QE) before they are eligible to apply.

For overseas fieldwork, the GRSS funding limit per candidature for PhD and Master's students will be up to $6000* and $3000*, respectively. For local fieldwork, the GRSS funding limit per candidature for PhD and Master's students will be up to $3000* and $1500*, respectively.

**Amount may vary depending on the budget available in a particular year.*

8.5.4. Travel Grant for Conference Presentation (from Faculty)

Students will receive the call for funding applications during each round of applications.

All full-time graduate research students admitted may be given financial support for their

attendance/participation in conference.

Students are only allowed to be funded once under this funding scheme.

To be eligible for conference funding, students must be presenting a paper or a poster, and be the first author of the presentation.

Please note that late and retrospective applications will STRICTLY NOT be considered. Exceptions will NOT be made under any circumstances, including for those who find out about a conference after the relevant period of application is over.

Students should submit their applications to the Conference Grant Administrator even if they have not received acceptance from the conference organisers for their abstracts. Such acceptance letters may be submitted later upon receipt.

8.5.5. Travel Grant for Conference Presentation (from Department)

Students will receive the call for funding applications at the beginning of each semester.

All part-time graduate research students are eligible to apply for financial assistance. Students converting their candidature from full-time to part time, or who have been conferred their degree, are not eligible for this funding.

Students are only allowed to be funded once under this funding scheme. Those who have been granted financial support for their conferences from the Faculty before are not allowed to apply for funding again.

To be eligible for conference funding, students must be presenting a paper or a poster, and be the first author of the presentation.

Students should submit their applications to the Conference Grant Administrator at least one month before your conference and even if they have not received acceptance from the conference organisers for their abstracts. Such acceptance letters may be submitted later upon receipt. Please write in to us if extensions are needed.

9. Graduate Exchange

Students in the Psychology Graduate Programme may explore the option of going on Graduate Student Exchange. The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences has arranged exchange agreements with a number of schools (for a full list of schools please visit https://fass.nus.edu.sg/about-us/what-makes-us-global/graduate-students/graduate-exchange/). The exchange may last from three months up to a year.

Students may pursue these and other exchange opportunities that may be organized on a case by case in agreement with their thesis advisors. As several parties are involved in the exchange it needs to be planned early. Moreover, it is recommended that students start a discussion with their thesis advisor at least 1 year prior to them leaving Singapore. Applications to the faculty need to be submitted 6 months before departure. Due to the limited candidature of Master's students, they are encouraged to go on exchange during term break and consider shorter visits (e.g., summer school). PhD students should preferably plan to go on exchange after having passed their qualifying exams.

In order to pursue graduate exchange sponsored by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, students need to have a GPA greater than 3.5 and their visit needs to have a clear relevance for their academic pursuit. The faculty calls for graduate student exchange applications once a semester. The relevant application information can be found here: https://fass.nus.edu.sg/about-us/what-makes-us-global/graduate-students/graduate-exchange/. The filled in forms need to be submitted to the Head of Department who will then forward this to the faculty level for consideration. A decision will be made within 3 to 4 weeks. Students are to submit a report within one month after completion of the exchange.

Students may also pursue graduate exchange on a more informal, case-by-case basis. For example, the student's thesis advisor may have overseas collaborators who the student may visit for a research project. In this case, exchange matters must be coordinated with the thesis advisor and the following points should be adhered to:

1. The hosting thesis advisor and the student's home department/thesis advisor must agree on what the purpose of the exchange will be, with proper documentation.

2. All other administrative matters (e.g. fees, grades, courses, housing etc.) must be subject to NUS's regulations and other agreements (e.g. MOU with the foreign university etc.)

Appendix 1. Graduate Student Room Rules of Good Conduct

Dear students,

In an effort to make your stay in our programme as pleasant and productive as possible, the department has made this space available for your daily use. As this space will be used by many students, please abide by the following rules, which hopefully will ensure a fruitful and pleasant work environment. If you have issues with these rules (i.e., would like to remove, revise or expand them) or would like to report rule violation, please contact Director of Graduate Studies via the Department Administrator. Students who persistently violate these rules or are persistently inconsiderate to other students may lose the privilege of using this space.

Ensure the room is as quiet as possible:

1. This room is strictly for individual student work.
2. Please keep your volume to a minimum. If there is a need for conversations, they should be held as quietly as possible.

Help keep the room and its interior clean:

1. Please keep the workspace clean and (reasonably) tidy.
2. Do not leave food waste in the bin overnight as it makes the room smell and will attract pests.
3. If the room requires cleaning, please look for the cleaning lady to assist with cleaning.

Help keep the room safe:

1. If you are leaving the room (even for a short while) and there is no one else inside, make sure you close the door.
2. If you are the last one out at the end of the day, make sure the door is locked and the lights are switched off.
3. If you notice anything in the room that is damaged or not working properly, please inform the Department Administrator as soon as possible so they can be fixed promptly.

All desks operate on a hotdesking basis and reservation of seats is **STRICTLY** NOT ALLOWED.