

Industrial-Organizational Psychology Program Graduate Student Handbook

To be used in conjunction with the
Psychology Department Graduate Manual

Colorado State University

Version Date: Fall 2026

PREAMBLE

Handbook version date indicates the semester in which policies and procedures in this document go into effect. Students may choose to adhere to policies in the I-O Psychology Program Graduate Student Handbook version date of their admittance year or in the most up-to-date handbook. Changes to program policies and procedures must be published online in the I-O Program Graduate Student Handbook and communicated to the I-O Program faculty and students via email before they are considered in effect. Minor updates (e.g., typos, grammar revisions, clarifications) that do not alter policies or procedures may be made without changing the version date.

University and Psychology Department level policies and procedures supersede the policies in this handbook and may change during a student's tenure, even if the I-O Graduate Handbook does not. Students are required to review and adhere to University policies (available through The Graduate School website) and Psychology Department policies (available on the Psychology Department website) in addition to the policies and procedures in this Handbook.

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PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The Industrial and Organizational (I-O) Psychology Doctoral Program at Colorado State University has three primary missions:

1. Educating students in the knowledge and skills of the field
2. Developing new knowledge through research and scholarship on all aspects of people in the workplace
3. Providing service to a broad range of communities (e.g., local, state, professional, organizational, national, and global) through the application of our science.

The I-O Doctoral Program aspires to leadership in the profession and to promoting the well-being of society. Faculty aim for national and international impact and recognition, and we expect students to actively engage in supporting and achieving those goals through research and contribution to scientific presentations and publications. Maximizing personal potential and achieving personal success are seen as congruent with enhancing the effectiveness of the program, though it is important to keep in mind this must still include contributing to research. We expect high achievement from all program members, but also expect achievement to be tempered by humility, which includes a sense of obligation to community, namely within the department, I-O program, and field of I-O.

The I-O program at CSU is a full-time, resident instruction program, which cannot be completed part-time, long-distance, online, or in periodic spurts. The Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) degree is a research degree, as opposed to an applied degree, such as a PsyD (Doctorate of Psychology). This means students are expected to focus on, master, and conduct basic and applied research throughout their training, regardless of their career ambitions. Students will work closely with faculty to conduct research and obtain practice applying that knowledge. Constant involvement, presence, and attention to the training is necessary.

The program approach to graduate and undergraduate education follows the scientist-practitioner model. Thus, we view science as a means for answering the questions and solving the problems of everyday work-life, and see effective professional practice as necessarily rooted in solid science. The I-O Psychology Program has the philosophy that:

1. Teaching, research, practice, and service are integrative activities in graduate education, which is the particular focus of this handbook
2. Students are admitted and trained by the faculty as a collective
3. The graduate students and faculty of the program work together toward mutual success and progress, achieving both program mission and individual goals

We value intellectual rigor, ethical behavior, life-long learning, and innovative approaches to the advancement and application of the field of Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

TRAINING EXPECTATIONS

Program Learning Objectives

There are five Program Learning Objectives that drive our coursework and training expectations:

1. Articulate relevant psychological theories and concepts to understand, explain, and address individual and organizational behavior, at the level expected of graduate students
2. Develop and apply evidence-based methods using advanced problem-solving skills to enhance effectiveness and wellbeing in the workplace as appropriate at the graduate level
3. Demonstrate ethical, legal, and inclusive professional behavior while effectively communicating and collaborating across diverse audiences and contexts.
4. Design, conduct, analyze, and communicate original empirical research using rigorous and ethical methods
5. Reflect on and develop one's own I-O Psychology competencies through intentional, ongoing professional growth and self-awareness

I-O Program Competencies

The I-O Psychology Program at CSU aims to train students in ten major competencies. Competencies were identified and defined based on the program philosophy, program learning objectives, historical program knowledge, faculty expertise, handbooks and peer-reviewed published literature on I-O scientist-practitioner training, and guidance from the Social of Industrial-Organizational Psychology's Education and Training resources. Students are expected to engage in a range of training activities within and outside the program throughout their time in the program to develop each competency (e.g., research projects, assistantships, internships, service). Student evaluations (annual evaluations, milestone evaluations) are designed to test and develop competency progress. Students should track their development of each of these competencies during their time within the CSU I-O psychology program. All students who graduate from the program are expected to have a mastery level of the competencies.

1. **Knowledge of I-O Psychology (KNO):** Demonstrate acquired breadth and depth of knowledge across the field of I-O Psychology. Recognize and attempt to solve basic and

applied psychological problems related to the workplace from an evidence-based and scientific perspective, rooted in the literature.

2. **Research Contribution (RES):** Participate in the research process to add new knowledge, insights, or findings based on empirical evidence—that is, systematically acquired through observation and/or experimentation. Demonstrate the ability to conduct research in I-O psychology (e.g., thesis, additional projects) to advance the field. Describe how your research contributed to the I-O psychology literature through publication and presentation. Collect primary data for I-O psychology research.
3. **Data Management (DAT):** Demonstrates knowledge and skills to accurately and effectively collect, store, organize, maintain, and use data in a way that ensures its accuracy, accessibility, security, and usability. Includes developing the ability to review and clean data in preparation for analysis and develop documentation or other metadata. Demonstrate the ability to clean, organize and structure a dataset for analysis. Data management may include merging or compiling multiple datasets or gathering and using archival data.
4. **Advanced Quantitative & Analytic Skills (ANA):** Demonstrate the ability to independently conduct statistical analyses and interpret results using quantitative methods or statistical procedures that are appropriate for answering a research question. Examples of advanced quantitative methods include structural equation modeling, multilevel modeling, longitudinal modeling. Advanced methods are usually taught in courses that extend beyond the introductory (PSY 652/653) quantitative methods courses.
5. **Scientific Communication with Multiple Audiences (COM):** Demonstrates proficient oral and written communication skills for reporting scientific results in a comprehensible way when communicating with 1) faculty and peers in I-O psychology, 2) undergraduate students, and 3) managers, workers, lay audiences.
6. **Professional and Research Ethics (ETH):** Conducts oneself with an appropriate demeanor and positive attitude is expected of individuals in a workplace or professional setting. Demonstrates and promotes respect, accountability, honesty, and integrity. Complies with CSU policies and adheres to ethical standards for research and practice consistent with the APA Ethical Guidelines.
7. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ):** Exhibits knowledge about DEIJ, actively supports a work environment that welcomes, respects, and supports individuals from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Recognizes and values the unique qualities that people bring to a group or organization, and ensures that everyone, regardless of their identity, has equal access to opportunities and is treated with fairness and respect. May conduct research on vulnerable working populations or specific DEIJ topics.
8. **Leadership (LEAD):** Reveals the ability to guide, influence, motivate, and/or inspire individuals or groups to achieve a common goal or vision in research and non-research settings.
9. **Collaboration (COL):** Demonstrates the ability to work effectively within a group or team.

10. Self-Awareness about Strengths/Opportunities for Improvement (SA): Has the ability to recognize and understand one's own thoughts, behaviors, knowledge, skills, and emotions, and how they influence work-related behavior and interactions with others. Self-awareness involves being conscious of one's strengths, weaknesses, values, and motivations, and how they may affect work behavior and work products, decisions, relationships, and overall well-being.

Research Expectations

As a doctoral program, students are expected to be involved in research throughout their time in the graduate program. In the first year, students are expected to become involved in research through what is called the "first year project." The first year project is designed to engage students in empirical research as soon as possible. The exact nature of the project will vary, depending on developmental needs and available skills and resources of the student and their primary advisor. The project may be student or faculty led and it may or may not be empirical. Involvement in a first year project is usually initiated by a faculty member and is intended to promote student skills and ability to conduct independent research, as well as to help students determine personal research interests. Additionally, research in this early stage provides opportunities for advisor and student to develop a working relationship.

In year 3 and beyond, students have more flexibility in their schedules, work on faculty research as well as their own, and begin additional requirements for the PhD. Students are expected to co-author and lead professional presentations and manuscripts for publication throughout their time in the program. Students are expected to collect human subjects data at least once during their time in the program; data collection can occur through student or faculty-led projects.

In addition to ongoing research involvement, students are expected to lead their milestone research, including the thesis project and dissertation project. It is expected that the thesis and dissertation projects are submitted to peer-reviewed conferences for presentation and ideally submitted for journal publication.

To receive credit for research effort outside of required milestones, students typically take independent study credits (PSY595D in the first two years, PSY 795D after the first two years). To receive credit for milestone research, students enroll in thesis and dissertation credits (PSY 599D, PSY 699D).

Credit Hour Expectations

Minimum and Maximum Credit Hours

By CSU policy, students are considered full-time if they are enrolled in 5 credits or more in a given semester. The I-O program is a full-time program. Therefore, students are expected to take 5 credits per semester at least until they have completed most of the degree requirements, typically in the 4th or 5th year. Students should generally take no more than 12 credits of coursework per semester to ensure adequate time for research, coursework, and assistantship.

Currently, the department prefers you enroll in as many credits as possible during your first two years, to reduce tuition payments in later years.

Students must take a minimum of one credit hour to be eligible for a TA or RA position. Students should talk with their advisor and the Psychology main office about how the number of credits taken may impact student fees, eligibility for University benefits including health insurance, and eligibility for outside financial aid (e.g., student loans). There is a minimum number of credit hours per semester necessary to be eligible for health insurance through CSU and for those receiving Federal student loans and State and Federal work-study through the Financial Aid office. These minimums may change from year to year and agency to agency; if students are receiving this kind of aid, it is their responsibility to stay aware of the requirements. Students should check CSU's annual Financial Aid Guide to make sure they are taking the necessary number of credits for the type of assistance they will be, or wish to be, receiving.

Continuous Enrollment

Once the bulk of courses are completed, students do not have to take 5 or more credits in a semester to maintain progress toward the degree. For example, students focusing only on the dissertation do not need to take 5 credits.

Students must be enrolled in CSU course credit continuously throughout their training. Specifically, after students complete the degree requirements, they are expected to register for at least one credit in every fall and spring semester (there is no registration requirement in the summer) to be eligible to graduate from CSU. If you have completed all courses and dissertation hours, or if you are completing an off-campus paid internship, you can enroll for continuous registration to retain graduation eligibility. University policies on continuous registration can be viewed on the Graduate School website and/or in the Graduate Bulletin. Students are responsible for ensuring they meet Graduate School requirements. Students who are not funded through a CSU assistantship are responsible for paying for enrolled credits.

Coursework Expectations

Coursework Timing

Students' first priority should be to take courses needed to complete the degree requirements and courses that will be useful for their career development (e.g., electives). First and second year students should prioritize I-O Core coursework. Advanced I-O and Methods elective coursework are generally recommended after or at the same time as core I-O and Methods coursework. Breadth electives can be used to fill in credit hour gaps or as options are available that fit students' needs and interests.

Ideally, student coursework is completed within the first three years. Courses can be spread out a bit into the 3-5 years to accommodate a student's load, fit a student's developmental needs, and/or avoid exceeding 12 credits of coursework per semester. It may not necessarily be advantageous to "pad" enrollment with independent study credits just to reach a certain

minimum, as this may delay timely progress and completion of necessary coursework. Challenges in scheduling arise based on when various required courses are offered, such as the core psychology courses, and Advanced Seminars in I-O or in Methods & Statistics, etc.

Students should discuss their coursework timing, options, and recommendations with their advisor(s) each semester.

Grades

Students must earn at least a “B” in required courses for the course to count toward degree requirements. The I-O program expects its students to receive primarily “A” grades. If students need to retake a course for degree fulfillment, it is best to check with the graduate school for the official policy on retaking courses. In rare instances students may wish to contest a course grade (see [APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCESS](#)).

Service Expectations

Students are expected to invest themselves in the program and field. University service (e.g., IOPAC, Psychology Department committees), getting involved in professional organizations (e.g., SIOP, APA, APS, AOM) as a committee member or volunteer, and co-reviewing manuscripts for publication are common ways to fulfill service expectations. The amount and type of service will vary depending on student development and program progress. Students are encouraged to discuss service involvement with their primary advisor.

Industrial-Organizational Psychology Association of Colorado (IOPAC)

The Industrial-Organizational Psychology Association of Colorado (IOPAC) is the I-O graduate student organization at Colorado State University. You are not required to be a member of IOPAC. Membership is voluntary.

IOPAC’s Mission Statement:

- To promote professional development and growth within the field of I-O psychology.
- To provide an arena for students in CSU's I-O graduate program to voice their ideas and concerns.

IOPAC enriches the program and student experiences. For example, IOPAC brings in guest speakers on topics in I-O psychology, organizes program events (e.g., Fall banquet, a reception at SIOP, volunteering, social outings), and produces a newsletter to facilitate communication with alumni.

IOPAC is run by the graduate students of the I-O doctoral program. IOPAC is a university-sponsored association, which means that it has a faculty supervisor to ensure the integrity of the association and oversee liable actions. IOPAC’s faculty advisor is the IO Program Coordinator.

Specific positions may have faculty coordinators to assist with questions and tasks as needed. In general, the activities of IOPAC are consistent with the program philosophy in that IOPAC is instrumental in reinforcing a positive and collaborative climate amongst students and promotes mastery and excellence in performance towards the PhD. IOPAC's website is linked on the CSU IO Psychology program website.

Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology

The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) is Division 14 of the American Psychological Association and Organizational Affiliate of the Association for Psychological Science. As I-O Psychologists in training, all students should consider becoming members of SIOP. Many SIOP committees include student volunteers, and there are student volunteer positions available at each annual conference. Visit SIOP's website (<https://www.siop.org/>) for information about SIOP and how to get involved in the field of IO.

Practical Experience Expectations

As a program that trains scientist-practitioners, it is important for students to not only be engaged in research, but also the application of science and scientific approaches within working populations. During students' time in the program, it is therefore expected that they have at least one practical experience in which they work directly with working populations. The nature of this experience and how students obtain their practical experience can vary. For example, students may take a practicum or applied project course, an internship, conduct a training for employees, or conduct an applied research project (e.g., implementing and testing an intervention in a local organization or community working population). Students should discuss this expectation with their advisor to evaluate whether their experience fits the requirement.

Students who wish to pursue internships are responsible for finding and securing internships. Students should discuss internship opportunities with their advisor to help ensure timely progress and developmental fit. Students should also consult with their advisor and/or another I-O faculty member before considering consulting projects. It is generally recommended that students wait to take internships until after the second year after most core coursework is complete.

Timely Progress Expectations

Purpose

Timely progress is defined as completing the required courses and the following sequences of activities within the specified maximum time allotments. Recognizing that goals and timetables can serve to focus our attention on work to be accomplished, the I-O faculty has established a timetable of expected progress through the Doctoral Program. We think both students and faculty can benefit from clear specifications of mutual expectations for your progress.

Timetable Guidelines

Below is a timetable for students to gauge timely progress. The timetable below assumes students work on a research project with their advisor in the first year they enter into the program. Additionally, this timeline assumes students work consistently and continuously to complete the program, including summer and breaks.

Though the timetable incorporates a window in which students are considered within timely progress goals, we strongly encourage students to aim for the expected timeframe as opposed to the maximum. The range was put in place to accommodate unforeseen events or uncontrollable delays. Students may meet milestones faster than the expected time. All students are encouraged to frequently discuss timely progress expectations and adjustments with their advisors.

Missed milestones and timely progress (or lack thereof) are documented on student annual evaluations. Each year, students are expected to set realistic goals to keep them on track with these milestones. The expected timeline below includes filing relevant coursework associated with milestone completion, as required by the graduate school.

Stage	Expected	Maximum Time¹
Master's thesis proposed	4 semesters (Spring Year 2)	6 semesters (Spring Year 3)
Master's thesis defended	6 semesters (Spring Year 3)	8 semesters (Spring Year 4)
Course work completed ²	6 semesters (Spring Year 3)	8 semesters (Spring Year 4)
Comps exam attempted	7 semesters (Fall Year 4)	9 semesters (Fall Year 5)
Comps exam completed	8 semesters (Spring Year 4)	10 semesters (Spring Year 5)
Comprehensive portfolio presentation	8 semesters (Spring Year 4)	11 semesters (Fall Year 6)
Dissertation proposed	9 semesters (Fall Year 5)	13 semesters (Fall Year 7)
Dissertation defended	10 semesters (Spring Year 5)	18 semesters (Spring Year 9)
Total	5 years	9 years

¹Exceeding the maximum time and failing milestones listed here triggers a Student Success Plan, which may lead to recommendation to dismiss from the program.

²Completion of coursework can extend longer depending on the timing of course offerings and student circumstances. At this stage all I-O Core coursework should be completed and most (if not all) coursework should be completed.

Break Expectations

Graduate school is different from undergraduate training in that school is not just a 9-month program. Students are expected to work on research progress or internships during the summer months, especially to maintain timely progress. Additionally, paid assistantships include payment over breaks (spring, winter). If you have a TA or RA appointment, you are expected to be available over the entire term of your contract. That said, we all need a break from time to time. Students should decide, negotiate, and communicate plans to take time off during summer/winter/spring break (or at any other point) with their advisor, collaborators, and TA supervisor. When in doubt, students should communicate needs/capacity and ask about expectations.

Why Are We Interested in Timely Progress?

There are three main reasons we value the timely progress of students through the program:

1. Planning—the timely progression has implications for program planning in terms of scheduling of seminars, number of new students to admit into the program, amount of external monies to secure, and so forth.
2. Funding—timely or untimely progression of students places a financial burden on the program given the limited departmental and external resources available.
3. Reflection on program and individual students—in a sense, timely progression through the graduate program is a measure of productivity and professionalism both of the program and of the student. When progression slows or stops, expectations of numbers of PhD's produced are not met. Further, it reflects poorly upon the student and ultimately the program when space and faculty resources are utilized for a longer time than is planned for the individual.

Lack of Timely Progress

If students do not make timely progress, it is less likely that they will receive funding from the department. This includes such sources of monies as MAIOP funding, and GTA funding at the departmental level. More broadly, lack of timely progress can be interpreted as an indicator of poor performance for letter writers and future employers. Lack of timely progress indicates a lack of academic performance and a lack of commitment to the professional standards of our program and field.

If students are not making timely progress, they will be notified by their advisor (e.g., during annual evaluations). Students will need to meet with their faculty advisor to determine an appropriate timeframe to complete the current activity. Students who lag behind the maximum

timetable above will complete a formal Student Success Plan. As part of the Student Success Plan, students are encouraged to create and follow a plan to regain good standing in collaboration with their advisor. Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may lead to a recommendation to dismiss from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

Exceptions

We acknowledge there are certain unforeseen events that can occur during one's tenure in graduate school (i.e., illness, family needs, other personal reasons). Under such circumstances, students may petition the faculty for a leave of absence (see [LEAVE OF ABSENCE](#)). If students are granted a leave of absence, the timely progress clock will stop for the duration of the granted leave.

Students may also submit a formal written petition to the faculty requesting to stop the timely progress clock for a specified period for special developmental purposes, such as a long-term, on-site internship, where such internship is essential for your development as a consultant or scholar. Petitions should be submitted to the I-O Program Coordinator and faculty advisor for discussion among the I-O faculty. In such cases of internship or long-term developmental project, this is not considered a Leave of Absence.

Ethical Expectations

Ethical Codes

Students are expected to know and follow the [APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct](#) and [CSU Student Conduct Code](#) as well as ethical behavior as described in the Psychology Department Graduate Manual. This expectation extends to professional work outside of CSU (e.g., consulting, internship, professional service roles).

Violation of ethical codes of conduct may result in a Student Success Plan and/or recommended dismissal from the program. As part of the Student Success Plan, students are encouraged to create and follow a plan with their advisor. Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may lead to a recommendation to dismiss from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

As graduate students develop into professionals, it is essential to cultivate the ability to think critically, write clearly, and develop their own ideas. These foundational skills are central to research and practice. Overreliance on AI risks undermining the development of independent thought and scholarly integrity. The use of AI may also present risks to confidentiality, accuracy, research integrity, data security, and ethical decision-making. The purpose of this policy is to

ensure that students meet the standards of academic honesty and professional competence expected by the I-O Program, the Psychology Department, CSU, and the I-O Psychology field.

As with all tools and technologies, students should apply critical thinking, use good judgment, and ask for clarification if they are unsure whether a specific use aligns with this policy. Important, the student is responsible for all content in their work product regardless of source.

Appropriate Use: Students may use AI in limited and appropriate ways that support, but do not replace, their own work. Example tasks that may be facilitated by AI include: brainstorming, formatting, polishing, translation, coding, and literature search guidance. We strongly encourage students to consider the developmental value of AI, and whether use of AI would undermine their learning and development as a PhD level expert in IO Psychology when deciding how and when to use AI tools. Students are expected to disclose use of AI with their advisors and faculty members for program-related tasks (research, teaching, service, coursework).

When AI is used, students are expected to:

1. Independently verify AI output. Humans must lead the intellectual work and are ultimately responsible for the work, not AI. There must always be a human in the loop.
2. Be transparent by disclosing and citing how AI was used in the work product. Per APA standards, students must be able to supply the prompt and output used for documentation.
3. Follow relevant guidelines. As a baseline, we expect students to follow [APA guidelines](#) and [CSU AI policy](#) for use of AI in scholarly work. Students should also be aware of and follow policies for dissemination outlets, courses, and professional organizations as relevant for their work. Students are expected to stay up-to-date on their knowledge regarding ethical AI use and AI policies as technology and policies change. Specific course policies may differ from the program policies; in these cases, students must adhere to specific course policies regarding AI use. Students are responsible for navigating multiple and conflicting policies; in cases where policies disagree, it is recommended that students adhere to the more conservative (reduced use) policy.

Prohibited Use: There are instances where using AI is unacceptable and strictly prohibited due to ethical and legal violations.

1. AI generated work may not be submitted as one's own intellectual contribution.
2. Submitting raw identifiable human subjects data, client data, or student data to AI is not permitted. Submitting student data to AI is only permitted if de-identified and using CSU approved tools.
3. Submitting confidential documentation, communication, or manuscript materials to AI is strictly prohibited.

If students are unsure about whether it is appropriate to use AI for a specific purpose, they should speak with their advisor and seek permission from their advisor and the Program.

Violations of this policy would be considered a violation of Colorado State University academic integrity policies.

Paperwork Expectations

The Graduate School requires that students submit various forms throughout their course of study. There are critical timelines associated with some of these documents. Figuring out how to navigate all of this formal form business can be a real pain. However, it is important that students keep on top of this process, because it can keep them from graduating.

All Graduate School forms and deadline dates are available from the Graduate School Office or website: <http://graduateschool.colostate.edu>. Each form is largely self-explanatory or has instructions. For additional guidance and questions, please contact the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator, and/or contact The Graduate School for help.

Students are strongly encouraged to review the Psychology Department Graduate Manual for details yearly and as they approach milestone events. It is the student's responsibility, not the advisor's nor the department staff, to make sure that all of the correct paperwork has been completed and filed in an accurate and timely manner.

PRIMARY ADVISOR

Assigning a Primary Advisor

Given the critical influence of advisor on the quality and character of the graduate school experience, the choice of advisor should be made with care and consideration. In the I-O program at CSU, the process begins with a meeting between the faculty and incoming students, typically during recruitment weekend. During recruitment, the faculty and students meet to discuss their research interests, assess fit, and ask and answer questions. The final advisor-advisee assignment is based on compatibility of research interests, personality, work habits, capacity, and general outlook for both student and faculty member.

Students most often have been placed with their first choice, though this may not always be the case. Keep in mind that while students have goals for their training and want to work with a particular faculty member, that faculty member has their goals and may not be able to take on an advisee. Don't take it personally. There are many factors involved in determining whether one can take on an advisee for their doctoral training. The best relationships are formed when there is mutual agreement, interest, and bandwidth in working together.

Advisor assignments are communicated when student offers are extended after recruitment. Students are therefore typically accepted into the graduate program in I-O Psychology with a

faculty mentor assigned. In unusual cases, students may be accepted without an advisor. In these cases, a temporary advisor is assigned by the I-O faculty. This person can help to answer questions about the program and they can get students started in the right direction as they prepare to begin graduate school (in addition to peer mentorship).

Primary Advising Relationship and Responsibilities

This advisor/advisee relationship is among the most important of your graduate school experience. The advisor is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the student's academic program, including making sure all University and departmental standards are met, making sure work is up to standard, and assuring appropriate progress toward completion of the program. The advisor is responsible for guiding the direction of student research and supervising the writing of theses or dissertations. The advisor will also facilitate preparation for all degree examinations and defenses required by the program. The above being said, *the student* is responsible for being aware of published deadlines, such as those published online, as well as all procedural issues. Additionally, while the advisor oversees and facilitates degree progress, students are responsible for completing the training – which means students are expected to take ownership of acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to complete the program hurdles.

Navigating Primary Advisor Challenges

As in all relationships, the advisor-advisee relationship can be challenging to navigate at times. Students are encouraged to navigate these challenges through honest, direct, and kind one-on-one discussion with their advisor. Students who would like outside perspective, guidance, or who have questions about their advising relationship are encouraged to meet with the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator.

Changing Primary Advisors

Though the advisee-advisor relationship may feel permanent, it is not. Every year is an evaluation point where the parties in the relationship may decide a switch is desired or necessary. Faculty members can decide there is no longer a good match between themselves and the student, or vice-versa.

Students wishing to make a switch must first discuss their relationship with their current advisor. Though we recognize people sometimes just don't fit well together, we wish to avoid haphazard switching because of basic misunderstandings that can be easily clarified through a conversation, or lack of feedback to either party. Hence, we expect professional discussions to take place to resolve disagreements or misunderstandings, before determining a switch of advisor is needed.

Switches by students to another faculty member can only be made if another faculty member in the program is willing to take on the student. Per The Graduate School, it is the student's responsibility to find an advisor, and if one cannot be found, the student cannot continue. Thus, if no faculty member within the program will take on the student, the student will have to leave

the program. Such decisions are not made lightly and happen rarely, though they do happen. The advisor/advisee relationship must be developed, fostered, and maintained.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

Overview

The rationale behind courses required for the I-O program is that each course provides a foundation for the student in studying I-O Psychology specifically and, more generally, for being a scholar in the field of Psychology. The exact scheduling of required courses will depend on several factors:

1. Some courses build upon one another and should be taken in a particular sequence.
2. Some courses are offered at different times depending on faculty workload and/or preferences.
3. Scheduling conflicts with Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) may require that students delay taking certain courses.
4. Students may test out of or waive certain courses depending on previous courses taken or other circumstances.

It is important to note the resident instruction I-O Psychology Program at Colorado State University does not currently offer a terminal master's degree as part of the residential instruction program in the Department of Psychology. There is a terminal Master's in Applied I-O Psychology offered as an online degree through CSU, but this program is separate from the PhD resident instruction program to which this handbook applies. All students accepted into the doctoral program are expected to advance to the PhD level and secure a doctorate degree. Students may receive an optional MS degree after MS coursework and thesis requirements have been met. In most cases, earning the MS is an advantage for internship and job competitiveness, but the decision on whether or not to officially earn the MS is up to the discretion of the student. It is advised that students discuss whether or not they would like the optional MS with their advisor early in the program. Students who would like to earn the MS should contact the Graduate Programming Coordinator to complete the necessary forms.

The graduate school requires that students have 30 credits for the MS degree and an additional 42 credits for the PhD (72 total). Although the courses below are divided into the MS and PhD, this delineation is somewhat arbitrary and students are likely to enroll in both MS and PhD courses each semester.

I-O Core courses are required and therefore tend to be offered more regularly (yearly or every other year). Elective courses tend to be offered less regularly (every other year or less frequently, pending faculty and student availability and interest). In general, it is recommended

that students prioritize the I-O Core coursework first, as it provides critical content, methodological, and statistical foundation. However, specific course sequencing may depend on course offerings and individual student developmental needs. Students should consult with their advisor at least once every semester to plan coursework.

Courses are annotated to clarify content and rationale where needed. Course titles in parentheses refer to the informal name of the course that is most often used by faculty and students.

IMPORTANT!!! Many classroom courses have variable credit hours in the course registration system. Students should be sure to sign up for the number of credits listed here. For example, if taking 792D, please be sure to sign up for 3 credit hours.

Required Courses for the PhD in I-O Psychology

The Graduate School requires a total of 72 credit hours (30 Master's credits hours + 42 additional credit hours).

I-O Core Courses

These courses provide content, methodological, and statistical foundation necessary for success in program milestones and advanced courses.

PSY643 I-O Psychology I (Advanced I) 3 credits

PSY644 I-O Psychology II (Advanced O) 3 credits

It is strongly recommended that students take these courses within the first two years (one in Year 1, one in Year 2).

The I-O Program encourages viewing Industrial and Organizational topics in an integrated manner, though for pedagogical reasons only, the courses are offered separately. Therefore, students must take both of these courses. The order in which students take these courses is not important. Because each is only offered once every other year, students should take whichever is offered.

PSY652 Methods of Research I (Stats 1) 4 credits

PSY653 Methods of Research II (Stats 2) 4 credits

It is strongly recommended that students take these courses in Year 1 (PSY 652 in Fall, PSY 653 in Spring).

"Stats" refers to a two-sequence course in introductory statistics (quantitative research methods) and application in research. Coverage is intensive. The course includes regular weekly classes and lab time in which students will use and learn statistical computer programs.

PSY600K Advanced Measurement (Measurement) 3 credits

It is strongly recommended that students take this course in Year 1.

PSY655A Research Issues and Models (Methods) 3 credits

It is strongly recommended that students take this course in Year 1.

The Methods course focuses on research design, both quantitative and qualitative. Emphasis is on generating and developing research ideas, evaluating research approaches, and interpreting and reporting research findings.

PSY596D Group Study – IO Psychology (Weekly Seminar)

3 credits

It is strongly recommended that students take this course as they approach the comprehensive exam, in Year 3.

The weekly seminar is designed to flexibly fill in student knowledge gaps and discuss cutting edge research, methodology, and ideas. It is ideal to take this course within a year before the comprehensive exam. The course content and format may vary from semester to semester. Though the atmosphere is informal and collegial, students are expected to make clear presentations and contribute to theoretical analysis of the research being presented/discussed.

I-O Elective Courses

Students are **required to take 9 credits** of additional I-O coursework during their total time in the program. Students may choose any combination of the courses below. It is highly recommended that students discuss elective options with their advisor.

PSY727 Vocational Psychology

3 credits

PSY792D Advanced Seminar in I-O Topics

3 credits

The advanced seminar examines a particular topic in I-O Psychology in detail. Most seminars are offered for 3 credits. This course may be taken up to three times, but the content must be distinct to count toward the degree. Seminars round out student I-O knowledge and provide students with what they need to fully master the content of I-O Psychology, preparing them for academics, research, and practice. Advanced seminars have focused on topics such as Work Motivation, Diversity, Occupational Health, Job Attitudes, Selection, Training, Teams and Leadership. The topics vary by semester and by year, typically driven by faculty availability and expertise.

Methods Elective Courses

Students are **required to take 9 credits** of additional, graduate level methodology and/or statistics coursework during their total time in the program. These credits can be within or outside the Psychology department. It is highly recommended that students discuss elective options with their advisor. It is also recommended that selections are informed by the IO program training goals, skill development toward completing program milestones, and career goals.

Students may use the methods electives to earn the Advanced Quantitative Methods in Psychology graduate certificate. Please find more information in the [university catalog](#) and on the [Psychology Department website](#).

Examples of courses include, but are not limited to:

PSY750 Quantitative Methods Seminar

3 credits

The advanced seminar examines a particular methodological topic in detail. This course may be taken multiple times, but the content must be distinct to count toward the degree. Example topics include Machine Learning, Meta-Analysis, Longitudinal Modeling, and Survey Design. The topics vary by semester and by year, typically driven by faculty availability and expertise.

PSY752 Item Response Theory	3 credits
PSY753 Structural Equation Modeling	3 credits
PSY754 Multivariate Analysis	3 credits
PSY792F Special Topics in Psychology	3 credits

This is a seminar course with rotating topics. Methodological and statistical topics may be considered as credits toward the methods elective.

HDFS650 Multivariate Research Methods I	3 credits
EDRM703 Applied Longitudinal Data Analysis	3 credits
EDRM704 Qualitative Research	3 credits
EDRM705 Qualitative Data Analysis	
PBHL570 Epidemiology for Public Health	3 credits
PBHL572 Geographic Information Systems in Health	3 credits
PBHL660 Quantitative Methods in Public Health II	3 credits
Any STAT 5XX-7XX course	
Any EDRM 5XX-7XX course	

Breadth Elective Courses

Students are **required to take 9 credits** of graduate level courses outside of the IO program to complete the PhD during their total time in the program. Three of these credits must be within the Psychology department (PSYXXX) and three must be outside the Psychology department. It is highly recommended that students discuss elective options with their advisor. Courses include:

PSY 6XX-7XX Psychology	1-3 credits
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Courses included in other categories (IO Core, IO electives, Methods electives) do not count toward this requirement.

AHS 5XX-7XX Health and Human Sciences	1-3 credits
BUS 5XX-7XX Business	1-3 credits
DSCI 5XX-7XX Data Science	1-3 credits
ECOL 5XX-7XX Ecology	1-3 credits
ECON 5XX-7XX Economics	1-3 credits
EDUC 5XX-7XX Education - General	1-3 credits
EDOD 5XX-7XX Education – Org Change and Development	1-3 credits
EDHE 5XX-7XX Education – Higher Education	1-3 credits
EDAE 5XX-7XX Education – Adult Education	1-3 credits
EDCO 5XX-7XX Education – Counseling and Career Development	1-3 credits
ERHS 5XX-7XX Environmental Health	1-3 credits

ETST 5XX-7XX Ethnic Studies	1-3 credits
FSHN 5XX-7XX Food Science and Human Nutrition	1-3 credits
GRAD 5XX-7XX The Graduate School	1-3 credits
HDFS 5XX-7XX Human Development	1-3 credits
HES 5XX-7XX Health and Exercise Sciences	1-3 credits
MIP 5XX-7XX Microbiology, Immunology, and Pathology	1-3 credits
MGT 5XX-7XX Management	1-3 credits
PBHL 5XX-7XX Public Health	1-3 credits
POLS 5XX-7XX Political Science	1-3 credits
PPA 5XX-7XX Public Policy Administration	1-3 credits
SPCM 5XX-7XX Communication Studies	1-3 credits
SOC 5XX-7XX Sociology	1-3 credits
SOWK 5XX-7XX Social Work	1-3 credits
SPMT 5XX-7XX Sports Management	1-3 credits
WS 5XX-7XX Women's Studies	1-3 credits

Non-Classroom Credits

To reach the total 72 credits required for the PhD degree, students will need to take a total of **22 additional credits beyond the requirements listed above**. These 22 credits can be fulfilled with additional classroom courses and/or non-classroom credits. Students should take the minimum listed number of credits during their total time in the program. Non-classroom credits give credit to student time spent engaging in research, practice, or advanced teaching experiences. Students must take the minimum number of credits listed. For non-classroom credits with no maximum, students are encouraged to limit non-classroom credit hours to only those necessary to meet program requirements and maintain enrollment. Students should consult with their advisor on the number of credits to take. Courses with 0 credits are optional. Students should consult with their advisor on the number of credits to take.

PSY595D Independent Study

1 – No maximum

It is recommended that students take these credits in Year 1.

Students typically sign up for independent research credits in the first two years of the program as they work on the first year project. Given that the first year is coursework-heavy, students typically do not need to enroll in many independent study credits. These credits are supervised by I-O faculty. These are not projects included as part of the required thesis.

PSY699D Independent Study

1 – No maximum

It is recommended that students take these credits in Year 2-Year 3.

Students sign up for thesis credit hours as they work on the Master's thesis. This helps ensure adequate time is allowed for thesis completion, as well as ensures thesis preparation is supervised by the student's advisor and committee members.

PSY795 Independent Study

1 – No maximum

It is recommended that students take these credits in Year 3-Year 4.

Use this for signing up for research activity after the first two years of the program but before the dissertation. These credits are supervised by I-O faculty. These are not projects included as part of the required dissertation.

PSY799D Dissertation

1 – No maximum

It is recommended that students take these credits in Year 4 +.

Students complete dissertation research under supervision of the advisor and the student's graduate committee. Activities include literature review, research design, data collection and analysis, the writing of the dissertation, and the dissertation defense. These credits should only be taken after completing the comprehensive exams and once work on the dissertation project has begun.

PSY786C Advanced Practicum in I-O Psychology

0-3 credits

This course involves practicum projects divided among students. The class generally meets once per week each semester, and projects are overseen by I-O faculty supervising the course.

PSY786J Advanced Practicum in Vocational Assessment

0-3 credits

Psychology 786J provides students with a model for conceptualizing the process of career development assessment, consulting, and coaching. The course also establishes a foundation on which to build competence in consulting with and coaching clients who have career development concerns. The course will emphasize the ethical use of assessments but also will explore basic approaches to consulting and coaching on personal career choice, choice implementation, and work adjustment issues. By the end of the semester, the goal is for students to report increased self-efficacy in basic career consultation and coaching processes such as conducting an intake, integrating and interpreting career assessment information, drawing from theoretical models of career development to facilitate effective consultations with clients who experience career concerns, and writing effective career development consultation reports. *Completing PSY 727 first is strongly advised.*

PSY 784 Supervised College Teaching

0 – 6 credits

The CSU Psychology Department offers the opportunity to apply for a teaching fellowship each year. Teaching fellows teach two sections of General Psychology (PSY 100) in the fall and other courses in the spring, depending on the needs of the department and the expertise of the Teaching Fellow. Teaching fellows are engaged in developmental teaching-focused opportunities (e.g., attending and giving workshops and presentations). Please see the [Teaching Fellowship](#) website for more details.

Required Courses for Plan A MS in I-O Psychology

The graduate school requires a total of 30 credit hours. Because coursework is described in detail above, only course names are listed here. Coursework to complete the master's degree includes:

I-O Core Courses

PSY643 I-O Psychology I (Advanced I)	3 credits
PSY644 I-O Psychology II (Advanced O)	3 credits
PSY652 Methods of Research I (Stats 1)	4 credits
PSY653 Methods of Research II (Stats 2)	4 credits
PSY600K Advanced Measurement (Measurement)	3 credits
PSY655A Research Issues and Models (Methods)	3 credits

Elective

This requirement is designed to increase the breadth of training and to allow students to customize coursework to their career goals. To meet this requirement, students must take **3 credits** from any of the following three categories: **I-O Electives, Methods Electives, Breadth Electives**. Please see a detailed description of elective categories and options above.

Required Non-Classroom Credits

To reach the total 30 credits required for the master's degree, students will need to take a total of **7 additional credits beyond the requirements listed above**. These 7 credits can be fulfilled with additional classroom courses and/or non-classroom credits. Students should take the minimum listed number of credits during their total time in the program. Non-classroom credits give credit to student time spent engaging in research, practice, or advanced teaching experiences. Students must take the minimum number of credits listed.

PSY595D Independent Study	1 – No maximum
PSY699D Independent Study	1 – No maximum

GRADUATE STUDENT EVALUATION

Overview

Purpose

Student evaluation in our program provides developmental feedback, which is essential for rigorous training of Industrial-Organizational Psychologists. Consider the evaluation as an ongoing developmental process wherein students progress from stage to stage, gaining independence, knowledge, and skills, and are assessed along the way to help provide feedback towards goal attainment (the PhD).

This section details formal evaluation procedures. Formal evaluation is necessary for several reasons:

1. It is the responsibility of the faculty to maintain a graduate program of national quality. In part, we are employed by the State of Colorado for this purpose.

2. We are also responsible to our professional colleagues to graduate qualified people into Industrial-Organizational Psychology.
3. The faculty's appraisals provide important feedback for graduate students. Identification of professional strengths and weaknesses allows you to define and develop future graduate experiences.
4. The Graduate School requires evaluating all graduate students on a regular basis.

In addition to formal evaluation, students are strongly encouraged to solicit continuous informal performance feedback from their primary advisor(s), supervisors, collaborators, and faculty to monitor and adjust their professional development.

Components

Formal evaluation is provided at several points in the program, including the annual evaluation and milestones:

1. Annual evaluations
2. Thesis proposal and defense
3. Comprehensive exam
4. Comprehensive portfolio presentation
5. Dissertation proposal and defense

The annual evaluation takes place each Spring. Students are expected to achieve each of the remaining evaluation milestones in a timely manner (see [TIMELY PROGRESS EXPECTATIONS](#)).

Annual Evaluation

Students receive formal feedback annually in the form of a written evaluation form and meeting with the primary advisor. Evaluation forms are emailed to students and faculty each Spring semester. Evaluation forms solicit developmental performance information and goal setting. Students are assessed based on program training expectations.

Students are responsible for completing the written document in full. Students are responsible for sending the form and any additional requested information to their advisor by the requested time.

The I-O faculty are responsible for providing feedback on all students' knowledge, skill development, and program progress. All program training expectations and competencies are considered. All students are discussed among the faculty. Teaching evaluations and grades are also considered. Primary advisors are expected to incorporate faculty feedback into written student evaluation forms as appropriate.

After incorporating faculty feedback, primary advisors schedule a one-on-one meeting with each student to discuss the evaluation and make any remaining revisions. Forms are signed, dated, and submitted for documentation.

Students who are evaluated as not meeting program expectations may be asked to complete a Student Success Plan. As part of the Student Success Plan, students are encouraged to create and follow a plan with their advisor. Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may lead to a recommendation to dismiss from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

Please also refer to The Department Graduate Student Handbook for department policies and procedures regarding evaluations.

Thesis

Overview and Scope

Students must conduct an original empirical thesis research project that demonstrates mastery of a topic and research methods within I-O Psychology. Projects may use secondary data. The student is required to develop a proposal, conduct the research (e.g., data collection and analysis), write the final APA-style manuscript thesis report, and formally orally defend their final report. Prior to pursuing the research for the thesis, the student must present a formal proposal (i.e., a document containing an introduction and methods section and an oral presentation of the proposal) for approval by the advisory committee. The thesis is required of all doctoral students.

The scope of the thesis is generally less than that of a doctoral dissertation. While the thesis should demonstrate some originality on the part of the student, it is not out of the ordinary for the main idea of the thesis and/or data to originate with the primary advisor, and for the advisor to play a strong supportive role in the framing of the thesis study.

The main purpose of the thesis is to demonstrate that the student has the ability to plan and complete research. The thesis process develops several program competencies, particularly those related to research and leadership. The thesis is an opportunity for the student to use what they have learned in statistics, research design, and I-O courses to develop a cogent and compelling document that furthers understanding in I-O Psychology. While this sounds like a tall order, also remember that the thesis should be above all a learning experience for the student. It is a chance to integrate everything students have learned in the service of furthering scientific knowledge.

Choosing a Thesis Topic

Deciding on a thesis topic can be frustrating for the new student when presented with so much information across all areas of I-O Psychology. There are no set rules for choosing a topic. Ideas may come from first-year research, material covered in classes, conversations with faculty, or a number of other sources. Ideally, the research is inspired by the student's interests.

At the same time, students should keep in mind that this is just the first of many career research projects. Waiting for the perfect topic or idea can lead to indecision and delayed progress through the program. There is no perfect research; all research has some flaws. Accepting this may make committing to a topic easier. Lastly, advisors have a wealth of information on identifying the cutting edge of research, narrowing ideas and operationalizing variables, and generally making a research project doable. We strongly suggest that students use advisor and other faculty expertise.

Critical Policies and Procedures to Follow

The Graduate School provides a great deal of valuable information about the nature, process, and required products for the thesis. Students are responsible for learning about and adhering to department and university policies, including deadlines, formatting, and paperwork requirements. Policies and procedures can be found on The Graduate School website, including the [CSU Thesis & Dissertation](#) webpage and the [CSU Thesis and Dissertation guide](#) as well as the Psychology Department Graduate Manual.

Putting Together a Thesis Committee

The thesis is an independent research project executed by the student under the guidance of the primary advisor and a thesis advisory committee. The thesis committee is a group of faculty members that guides and supervises the student's research. The committee meets at least two times formally: (1) the proposal meeting and (2) the defense meeting. Individual committee members may also receive copies of the student's in-progress work to provide guidance and input as deemed appropriate by the student, advisor, and committee member.

Students are required to have four committee members total, per The Graduate School policy. Members must include:

1. One member is the advisor (must be in the program)
2. One member is a faculty in the Psychology Department
3. One member is outside the Psychology Department
4. One additional member (the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator can be listed as the fourth member in name only to meet Graduate School Requirements)

Please see [Advisor & Committee Requirements website](#) for detailed information on who can serve and special notes to consider for each position.

The composition of the thesis committee is important in that it allows the student to progress to the doctoral program, both in the broadest sense of offering support and in the most specific sense of providing signatures. Care should be taken and the advisor consulted when putting the committee together. Students should consult with their faculty advisor before soliciting committee members. The choice of committee members will depend on several factors, including:

1. The expertise of potential committee members vis-à-vis your thesis topic

2. The availability of potential faculty members
3. The student and advisor's relationships with potential committee members
4. The relationships and styles of potential committee members (they will have to work together!)

Students should communicate project topic and timeline expectations when soliciting committee members to ensure a good fit. Faculty often have limited availability during the Summer term. Milestone meetings (proposals, defenses) may be difficult to schedule during this time.

Thesis Document

Students are expected to produce a written, APA style manuscript. For the proposal, documents must contain all APA sections up through the Methods section, including planned analyses and references. Document length will vary, depending on the topic area and design; students are encouraged to fully demonstrate thoughtful, thorough research design and topic knowledge while keeping in mind clear and concise writing skills.

For the defense, documents must contain all APA sections. Document length for the defense should be commensurate with a full length top-tier journal submission in I-O Psychology (e.g., Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Journal of Vocational Behavior, or Journal of Occupational Health); typically this is 30-50 pages for a full manuscript (introduction, methods, results, discussion), excluding ancillary sections (title page, abstract, references, and appendices).

It is often necessary for the committee to review additional information not included in the main body of the manuscript (e.g., all survey items, manipulation prompts). These supplementary materials may be included as APA style appendices or in an accessible online repository (e.g., OSF study website). Students may find the [Journal of Applied Psychology Methods Checklist](#) and the [Transparency and Openness Guidelines](#) helpful for outlining key methodological information to be included in the document or supplementary materials.

Before the Proposal and Defense Meetings

The student must confirm with their advisor that the thesis is ready to be scheduled for proposal/defense.

For the proposal meeting, students must send their document to committee members no later than two weeks prior to the meeting date.

For the defense meeting, students must send (1) their written document and (2) the I-O Thesis and Dissertation Committee Evaluation form to committee members no later than two weeks prior to the meeting date. The I-O Thesis and Dissertation Committee Evaluation form helps to clarify criteria for committee members and students, facilitate feedback, and intercept cases in which a committee member has major reservations that may warrant postponing the defense meeting (please see the form instructions for more detail). In the email, please notify committee members that ratings from the I-O Thesis and Dissertation Committee evaluation form should

be submitted to the advisor no later than two business days prior to the meeting. Qualitative comments on the form can be raised during the meeting or sent directly to the student by the committee member.

Students are responsible for scheduling the meeting time and place. Plan accordingly, plan ahead, and communicate. It is an unreasonable expectation that everyone should change their schedules to accommodate a deadline crunch (such as spring graduation deadlines). Meetings are typically in-person, although virtual meetings may be scheduled to accommodate student or committee members' extenuating circumstances. Meetings are typically scheduled for two hours.

It is strongly recommended that students discuss the proposal and defense in advance with their advisor. The advisor serves as a sounding board and a critic in preparation of the thesis, but also an advocate for the student. Most advisors help prepare the student for what to expect in each meeting and will support the student in front of other committee members.

During the Proposal and Defense Meeting

The thesis proposal and defense meetings include:

1. Advisor introduction
2. Formal student presentation
3. Open question and answer session
4. Closed committee question and answer session without outside guests
5. Committee deliberation without the student
6. Communicating the meeting outcome with the student

The proposal meeting is not ordinarily public. Students may not invite people outside of the thesis committee unless otherwise approved by the student's advisor. The defense meeting is open to the public. Students may invite other people outside of the thesis committee (e.g., friends, family). Students should keep in mind that the defense is also an evaluative meeting. Committee members or the student shall ask public members to leave during the question and answer session, deliberation, and/or outcome communication portions of the meeting.

Students are expected to make a brief (15-25 minute) presentation on the topic of study, its importance, the research design that will be used, and the hypotheses that are expected. The defense includes a similar presentation that summarizes proposal content and focuses more in-depth on major changes since the proposal, analysis, results, and discussion of findings.

The committee question and answer session is important for two main reasons: First, it provides the student with experience presenting original research and responding to questions and critiques from peers. Second, it allows the committee the opportunity to identify potential concerns with the research. This protects the student from doing months of work only to find out that a committee member has had a change of heart and no longer sees value in the research as originally proposed.

During the committee question and answer session, students should be prepared to explain and justify their thinking, choices, and results. Students should expect clarifying questions, as well as questions that challenge the student's thinking and research decisions. Because committee members are involved in preparation of the thesis at many stages, the defense usually contains no huge surprises from committee members. In other words, committee members are not "out to get" the student or make advancement difficult. The committee may challenge the student to explain concepts more clearly and to justify choices, as these skills are considered necessary for any researcher and are skills that should be learned before the student advances to the doctoral program. The advisor is expected to take notes during the discussion to track questions, suggestions, and changes requested by the committee.

Evaluation Criteria

The thesis defense has two components: an oral defense and a written document. The oral defense is an evaluation of the student's ability to discuss their study, defend what they did and why, and explain their findings. How students answer questions (defensively or not) matters. The thesis document is also read and evaluated by the committee members. Generally, a better and well-prepared document leads to an overall good defense. Furthermore, since this manuscript will ideally be sent to a peer-reviewed journal, pay attention to the feedback received on your drafts and in the defense meeting.

The criteria used by the committee for evaluating the thesis are the same as those applied to any original research. The thesis must deal with an important problem, represent original work making a new theoretical contribution to the field, be technically sound, and be well written. While contributions and rigor are considered in evaluating the thesis, expectations are more modest as compared to a dissertation project. It is expected that the thesis will be presented and ideally published in a peer-reviewed journal and therefore, this criterion will be considered.

During the proposal, committee members typically focus on criteria most relevant for study conceptualization and design (e.g., knowledge of relevant theory and literature, ability to identify problems, research questions, and/or hypotheses, design rigor, and feasibility) as well as oral presentation skills.

During the defense, committee members the same criteria evaluated in the proposal meeting, as well as the degree to which the study was executed in line with the agreed upon proposal design, data cleaning and analysis procedures, interpretation and implications drawn from the study findings.

The proposal meeting does not include a pass/fail decision by the committee, although it still includes a closed-door deliberation among the committee members. Proposals typically conclude with some required changes based on the committee evaluation, although the degree of changes and extent of future committee involvement varies on a case-by-case basis. Students whose proposal meeting concludes without a clear plan of action may be asked to complete a Student Success Plan. As part of the Student Success Plan, students are encouraged to create and follow a plan for navigating committee feedback in collaboration with

their advisor. Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may lead to a recommendation to dismiss from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

The defense meeting concludes with a pass/fail decision by the committee. Once the defense has officially started, it may not be suspended. That is, unsatisfactory performance is considered a failure and the defense may not be postponed to another time. If a student fails the defense, the advisor and committee will determine next steps. Students who fail the defense meeting will be asked to complete a Student Success Plan. As part of the Student Success Plan, students are encouraged to create and follow a plan for navigating committee feedback in collaboration with their advisor. Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may lead to a recommendation to dismiss from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

After the Proposal or Defense Meeting

It is a rare occurrence the student leaves the proposal or defense without having to make changes to the thesis. Very rarely do changes involve a major overhaul to the thesis, although this may be possible. Typically, changes are more major for the proposal meeting as compared to the defense meeting if the student executed their thesis as proposed. Students should be prepared to make revisions. Sometimes changes are recommended not for the document itself, but to improve the document for submission to a journal. Make note of these and be ready to act on them.

After the committee approves the written and oral defense, each member signs paperwork to document the evaluation. Students are responsible for completing paperwork and procedures required by the Psychology Department and the Graduate School. Please see [CRITICAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW](#). The Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator is also an important resource for student questions regarding The Graduate School paperwork and policies.

Comprehensive Evaluation Overview

Prior to graduate student advancement to doctoral candidacy, the comprehensive evaluation process (commonly referred to as “comps,” and known at some other institutions as preliminary or qualifying exams) is an assessment conducted to evaluate the first of our program competencies: to ensure CSU I-O psychology doctoral students have acquired breadth and depth of knowledge across the field of I-O psychology. This knowledge enables them to recognize and attempt to solve basic and applied psychological problems related to the workplace.

Whereas many universities require only formal written exams before beginning the dissertation, the I-O program at Colorado State University includes two parts: a written exam and a portfolio presentation of developmental experiences. Students first complete the comprehensive exam, followed by the portfolio presentation. Combined, the comprehensive evaluation requires students to demonstrate mastery of all 10 I-O Program Competencies. Students who pass the

comprehensive evaluation demonstrate that they have the professional knowledge and skill to complete the dissertation and graduate as a PhD level professional.

Students who pass the comprehensive evaluation (both the written exam and the portfolio presentation) are advanced to doctoral candidacy and considered doctoral candidates (colloquially known as “all but dissertation” ABD). Advancement to candidacy requires completion of the (GS16 form).

Comprehensive Exam

Purpose

The comprehensive examination is intended to both motivate and assess mastery of the knowledge and techniques of Industrial-Organizational Psychology. Exam questions sample the full spectrum of topics that fall within I-O Psychology, and require high levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Having to take such an exam is intended to motivate students to fill in gaps in their knowledge, to integrate their understanding of material, and to affirm their ability to function as a PhD level professional. Hence, the studying process should be a developmental, knowledge and confidence building experience, while completing the exam successfully affirms “mission accomplished.”

Eligibility

Students must have defended their thesis before beginning the comprehensive exam. It is recommended that students complete all IO and Methods coursework prior to taking the comprehensive exam. Students are strongly advised to consult with their advisor regarding when to take the comprehensive exam, particularly as they near completion of coursework and the thesis milestone.

Opting In

The exam will be given up to twice per academic year (Fall, Spring). Students interested in taking the comprehensive exam should notify the I-O Comprehensive Exam Coordinator faculty the Fall or Spring before they would like to take the exam via email. For example, a student who wishes to complete their comprehensive exam in the Fall should notify the I-O Comprehensive Exam Coordinator faculty by the end of the preceding Spring semester.

Withdrawal

Students may withdraw from the exam at any time before the exam has begun without penalty. It is suggested that students consult their advisor before withdrawing. Students who would like to withdraw should notify the I-O Comprehensive Exam Coordinator faculty via email as soon as possible. Once the exam has begun, students are not longer permitted to withdraw.

Accommodations

Students with academic accommodations are strongly encouraged to use their accommodations. Any accommodations should be disclosed to the I-O Comprehensive Exam Coordinator faculty as soon as possible. If students do not have accommodations but would like to pursue accommodations, they are encouraged to contact the CSU [Student Disability Center \(SDC\)](#) as soon as possible. It can take several weeks for accommodations to be processed; we advise students seeking new accommodations from SDC do so at least 2 months before the exam (see also [ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS](#)).

Content

The written exam consists of questions generated by all participating I-O Psychology faculty members. For each exam, the participating faculty submit questions to the faculty member serving as the Comprehensive Exam Coordinator. From the submitted questions, the Coordinator will create an exam designed to sample the breadth of the field. The exam consists of the following four sections:

1. Broad required question (1 required question)
2. Organizational psychology (3 questions, student chooses 2 to answer)
3. Industrial psychology (3 questions, student chooses 2 to answer)
4. Research methods and ethics (3 questions, student chooses 2 to answer)

The required question is broad, integrative, and cuts across multiple areas of I-O psychology. The remaining questions are typically on more specific topics within each area, although questions are worded broadly enough that students can draw on multiple literatures or topics to answer the question. Questions are designed to tap into an array of topics.

Format

The exam will be administered the fourth Tuesday and fourth Thursday of each Fall and Spring semester. Each section is administered during a two hour exam period. Alternative scheduling may be requested or implemented due to student and/or faculty conflicts with program-related responsibilities (e.g., teaching), unusual circumstances, or accommodations.

Exam Section	Number of Questions Presented	Number of Questions Answered	Day	Planned Time	Fall 2026 Date	Spring 2027 Date
Breadth	1	1	Day 1	10 AM – 12 PM	September 15	February 9
Organizational	3	2	Day 1	1 PM – 3 PM	September 15	February 9
Industrial	3	2	Day 2	10 AM – 12 PM	September 17	February 11
Research Methods and Ethics	3	2	Day 2	1 PM – 3 PM	September 17	February 11

Students may choose where they will take the exam (e.g., classroom, conference room, graduate student office). The environment should be free from interruptions or a lot of noise. If a student wishes to take the exam in their office, they need to plan with their office mate ahead of time to avoid inconveniencing their office mate.

Relevant materials (textbooks, articles, notes, other files, other devices including cell phones) must be put away during the exam. The faculty proctor will visually inspect the space prior to the exam and can recheck the space at any time while the test is being conducted. The student may use blank paper and a pen or pencil for notes, though responses will be collected electronically. Students will be provided a department computer and external storage device. Students are expected to regularly save their work on both the computer and storage device and to double-check that their answers are properly saved at the end of each exam period.

A faculty proctor will be assigned to each exam session. The proctor will distribute a paper copy of the exam questions at the start of each exam segment, check in on the student(s) during the exam period, be available in person for questions, and retrieve the electronic responses at the conclusion of each exam session. Electronic copies of exam files will be given to a member of the Department of Psychology staff.

Evaluation Process

Students must demonstrate an expert-level knowledge of the I-O Psychology field. Responses are scored on a three-point scale: 1 = *poor*, 2 = *adequate*, 3 = *excellent*. Faculty may use decimals to reflect the continuous nature of the scale and accurately reflect the quality of the response. Graders also provide narrative feedback that describes the strengths and weaknesses of each response based on the evaluation criteria.

The evaluation criteria for a 2 (*adequate*) score includes:

1. Depth of knowledge
 - a. Answer all parts of the question in written narrative form
 - b. Key terms are clearly defined and explained
 - c. Provide support for the answer in the form of citations or reference to relevant literature to demonstrate depth of knowledge and familiarity with I-O research and theory
 - d. Be accurate/include correct content
2. Breadth of knowledge
 - a. Demonstrate breadth of knowledge by providing appropriate citations for important models, theories, major authors, and/or major works in the areas relevant for the exam section
 - b. Demonstrate synthesis of ideas and show the ability to integrate concepts and research; doesn't just regurgitate what other researchers have stated (e.g., in review chapters)
 - c. Evaluates and analyzes literature rather than just providing a laundry list of findings (evaluation need not be perfect, but clearly shows critique of literature beyond just a "brain dump")

- d. All parts of the answer clearly speak to the question
- 3. Clarity and organization in writing
 - a. Be written in a logical and well-organized manner. Punctuation and grammar need not be perfect, but should be pretty good
 - b. The answer is coherent across parts
 - c. Answer is appropriate length to answer the question (roughly 3 single-spaced pages for the required question; 1.5 single-spaced pages for all other questions)

The evaluation criteria for a 3 (*excellent*) score meets all of the criteria for 2 (*adequate*) above and...

- 1. Is exceptionally well written
- 2. Demonstrates extreme clarity of thought
- 3. Communicates innovative in ideas and possibly approach
- 4. Offers several appropriate citations
- 5. Answers all parts of the question thoroughly and with clear, relevant, and thoughtful detail
- 6. Integrates several topics, themes, or literatures
- 7. Integrates across all parts of the answer

If multiple students take the exam, a staff member or faculty not involved in grading will facilitate a blind grading process by assigning a letter (A, B, C, etc.) to identify each student. The student identity will not be revealed until all grading has been completed. Faculty grading assignments are distributed by the Comprehensive Exam Coordinator. Each response is reviewed and evaluated by two faculty members. When student responses are obviously identifiable, advising faculty will not be assigned as the grader.

Response scores are calculated by averaging the individual ratings provided by all the faculty graders who evaluated that question's response. Section scores (required, industrial, organizational, research methods/ethics) are calculated by averaging the response scores for a given section. Because the Breadth section is a single required question, the response score and section score are the same. Disagreements and failing response scores are discussed among the I-O faculty. In these cases, a third faculty grader may be sought.

Once all grading has been completed, the Comprehensive Exam Coordinator will obtain identifying information and communicate the results to each student via email (CCing student advisors). Advisors are emailed the narrative comments. Students may schedule a meeting with their advisor to obtain narrative feedback.

Evaluation Outcomes

There are four possible evaluation outcomes, summarized below.

Outcome	Description	Criteria	Timing of Follow Up	Triggers Student Success Plan?
Pass	All questions and sections passed	2.0 or better for all question scores and section scores	None	No
Remediation	Partial failed section	One question score within a multi-question section is below 2.0	By the end of the exam semester	No
Section Retake	One failed section	One section score below 2.0	Future normal exam period	Yes
Exam Retake	Exam failed	Two or more section scores below 2.0	Future normal exam period	Yes

Remediation

In the case of a deficient response to one of two exam questions (below 2.0, *adequate*), a student will be required to address the deficiencies via remediation to demonstrate knowledge and proficiency.

The student is given a revised version of the original question intended to elicit a more in-depth written response to address the deficiencies identified by the evaluators. Students are allowed to request literature from other colleagues (e.g., program peers, alumni) on a given topic (e.g., teams) and may share general aspects of the remediation experience. Students are not allowed to share the remediation document, nor discuss the specifics of the question or their response to the question, as these are considered confidential exam materials. Students may not request specific advice from others (e.g., "how would you approach this part of the question?"). Program peers should be directed to the Comps Coordinator and/or their advisor for questions about the remediation process.

The remediation process is overseen by a student's advisor with input from all I-O faculty, completed as an independent, take-home assignment over a 2-week period, and submitted back to the student's advisor and reviewed by two faculty. Evaluation criteria are the same as the original exam, plus an evaluation of whether the student corrected specific deficiencies identified in the original response. Students are notified via email of their score and decision. Students who do not complete remediation by the end of the exam semester will be required to complete a section retake during a future scheduled exam period. Please see SECTION OR EXAM FAILURE below for procedures.

Section or Exam Failure

If a section is below the passing threshold based on failure of all questions within a section, the student must retake that section of the exam. If multiple sections are found to be below the passing threshold, the entire exam must be retaken.

A retake will consist of new (different) questions administered during a future semester. For a section retake, students will be given new section question(s) only for the section they previously failed. For an exam retake, students will be given new questions for the entire exam. The retake semester should be chosen in consultation with the student's advisor. In general, students are encouraged to take the comprehensive exam the next time it is offered to avoid delaying timely progress.

Students who receive a section retake or exam retake decision must complete a Student Success Plan. As part of the Student Success Plan, students are encouraged to create and follow a plan for exam preparation in collaboration with their advisor. Students must wait until the next comprehensive exam is offered to re-take the exam. Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may lead to a recommendation to dismiss from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

Each student has one retake opportunity. If a student retakes a section, they must receive a final decision of pass or remediate to have the opportunity pass the exam. If a student retakes the exam, they must receive a final decision of pass or remediate to have the opportunity to pass the exam. Receiving a section failure or exam failure decision on a section retake or exam retake will result in recommendation for dismissal from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

Expectations for Students

Studying for the written exam is not a last-minute activity like cramming for a test. Studying for the written exam begins the first day of graduate school and continues throughout all coursework and activities up until the time of the exam. It is strongly suggested that students begin budgeting concentrated study time at least 2-3 months in advance of the exam date. Students may use peer materials or practice questions, recognizing that students are ultimately responsible for ensuring the accuracy and usefulness of those materials. Students may also consult their advisor or the I-O Comprehensive Exam Coordinator for study resources and suggestions.

Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to juggle multiple expectations, including comprehensive exam prep with ongoing research and teaching commitments. As needed, students should clearly communicate expectations and adjustment needs with their supervisors, collaborators, and advisor. Timely progress delays resulting from putting all graduate work on hold to study for the written comprehensive exam will be treated as a timely progress delay.

Comprehensive Portfolio Presentation

Purpose

In addition to a written exam, the I-O program at Colorado State University also includes a portfolio presentation in which students demonstrate that they've mastered the skills outlined in the program competencies (see [I-O PROGRAM COMPETENCIES](#)).

The purpose of the portfolio presentation is to:

1. Celebrate each student's learning journeys and create an opportunity for peer learning and role modeling of diverse career paths
2. Encourage student reflection on their developmental experiences, competencies, and future career goals
3. Evaluate mastery of the I-O Program competencies
4. Evaluate readiness for leading the dissertation project as a primary investigator

Eligibility

Students are required to have passed the comprehensive exam before presenting their comprehensive portfolio. It is recommended that students complete most or all coursework prior. Students must consult with their advisor regarding competency mastery and readiness for the dissertation before scheduling their portfolio presentation.

Content

Students must give a presentation demonstrating their mastery of the I-O Program competencies. Presentations typically review I-O related career experiences that developed and demonstrate competency mastery. The experiences that can inform development for each competency can range from individual and/or group research projects led by the student, faculty, or other students, applied internships, extra-curricular leadership experiences, engagement in professional associations or other internal (CSU) or external (outside CSU) service roles, and more. Students may include experiences before the program (e.g., previous career, undergraduate research experience) but are expected to primarily focus on experiences during their time in the CSU I-O program. Students may include experiences both within (e.g., thesis, coursework) and outside (e.g., internships, external research collaborations, service to the profession) the program. Presentation content should be clearly tied to one or more I-O Psychology Program competencies.

Format

At least one week before the presentation, students must submit their I-O Psychology Program Competency Portfolio matrix to the I-O faculty via email. The matrix includes projects completed during the course of the student's graduate career, checks to indicate the competencies developed by each project, and a brief (2-4 sentences) description of the major responsibilities and skills developed to justify and contextualize the competencies listed. A template for the matrix can be found in the annual student evaluation form. This matrix is completed during each annual evaluation.

Students present their competency portfolio in a formal oral presentation. The presentation is open to the public. The presentation should last roughly 30-45 minutes and allow the remaining time for questions. Faculty, students, and public attendees may ask questions. Faculty may ask questions about competencies and roles on the I-O Competency Portfolio matrix submitted via email. There is no standard format for presentations. Students are encouraged to structure their presentation however they would like to most clearly convey their mastery of the I-O Program competencies in a way that is true to themselves and their career journey. Creativity and personalization are encouraged.

Evaluation

Students must demonstrate a mastery of all the I-O Psychology Program competencies to pass this milestone evaluation and demonstrate readiness to complete the dissertation project. Students must also demonstrate evidence of self-reflection and developmental growth relevant to their career as an I-O Psychologist and as relevant to the program competencies. There is an expectation that significant involvement in at least two research projects in their graduate training (e.g., a thesis and some other project) represented within the portfolio. Projects can be related (e.g., two separate papers from one larger data collection effort, two projects in the same topic area), but must be distinct. Students must have collected human subjects data at least once in their graduate training or be planning to collect human subjects data for their dissertation project.

After the presentation, a vote will be held by the student's advisor in which faculty vote pass/fail. The majority of the I-O faculty must vote to pass for a student to successfully complete the milestone. Vote outcome will be communicated to the student by the student's advisor.

Failure

Students who do not pass the comprehensive portfolio presentation must complete a Student Success Plan. As part of the Student Success Plan, students are encouraged to create and follow a plan for a make-up portfolio presentation in collaboration with their advisor. Students may schedule their make-up portfolio presentation when they are ready, keeping in mind timely progress expectations. Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may lead to a recommendation to dismiss from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

Doctoral Dissertation

Overview and Scope

Students must conduct an original empirical dissertation research project that demonstrates mastery of a topic and research methods within I-O Psychology. Projects may use secondary data. The student is required to develop a proposal, conduct the research (e.g., data collection and analysis), write the final APA-style manuscript dissertation report, and formally orally defend

their final report. Prior to pursuing the research for the dissertation, the student must present a formal proposal (i.e., a document containing an introduction and methods section and an oral presentation of the proposal) for approval by the advisory committee. The dissertation is required of all doctoral students.

The dissertation is the final project of your graduate career. The dissertation represents your contribution of original research to the science of industrial and organizational psychology. The purpose of the dissertation is for you to demonstrate expertise in scientific research, a thorough knowledge of the field, and the ability to pull together all that you have learned throughout your graduate career toward developing valuable new knowledge and effectively communicating it to others.

Students are expected to select a dissertation topic with relatively less guidance from their advisor. The planning, implementation, and writing of the dissertation should be based on the student's efforts. The advisor plays an exclusively guidance/feedback role, as opposed to majorly shaping ideas or methodological decisions in the thesis. The expectations for students' ability to demonstrate independent, theoretically driven, and well-designed and executed work on the dissertation are exponentially greater than the thesis. The University has an online database for all dissertations completed by graduate students at CSU. Feel free to talk with a faculty member if you have any questions.

Policies and Procedures

All policies and procedures for the dissertation are the same as those for the thesis (see [THESIS](#) sections) with two exceptions.

First, the committee composition is slightly different. Both the Psychology Department and The Graduate School require four committee members. Members must include:

1. One member is the advisor (must be tenure-line faculty member with at least 50% appointment in the program)
2. One member is a faculty in the Psychology Department
3. One member is a faculty in the Psychology Department (different program)
4. One member is outside the Psychology Department

Students may choose to use some or all of the same committee members for their thesis and dissertation committees.

Second, the criteria used by the dissertation committee for evaluating the dissertation are like those applied to any original research, though there is typically an expectation that the dissertation will be broader in scope and more illustrative of ability to function independently as a PhD-level professional than the thesis. Whereas the thesis idea generation and execution may be guided strongly by the advisor, students are expected to take greater ownership over their dissertation idea formation and execution. Dissertations are expected to reflect advanced competency levels, commensurate with being an expert in the I-O field, particularly the

dissertation topic and methodology. The dissertation must deal with an important problem in the field, provide a contribution to the existing literature, be technically sound, make a unique theoretical contribution to the field, and be well written.

GRADUATION

Dissertation Deposit

The Graduate School verifies that the title, abstract, and signature page information conform to the record system of the University. You will “deposit” your dissertation with the library electronically. Please [check The Graduate School website](#) for the exact process and requirements well in advance of the deposit deadline so as to avoid last minute crises. The Graduate School’s [Thesis & Dissertation publication](#) provides a more thorough discussion of procedures for submitting the dissertation.

Additional Forms

After the dissertation defense, The Graduate School has additional paperwork that needs to be completed for registering graduates and publishing the dissertation. Be sure to read the policies carefully and complete all forms (see [PAPERWORK EXPECTATIONS](#)).

Ceremony and Diploma

The department and university hold one graduation ceremony per year, in the Spring. The Graduate School also holds a graduation ceremony in the Fall. Summer graduates are permitted to walk in the preceding Spring or following Fall. Students can check with their advisor as to when they should walk. Not all advisors support walking/hooding prior to graduation or to the defense date. The degree certificate will be mailed to you in the months following your official and final graduation. Once students receive official confirmation from the graduate school that the degree has been conferred, students can use the PhD title.

INFORMATION FOR 1ST YEAR STUDENTS

This section is relevant regardless of whether entering with a bachelor’s or master’s degree. All first-year students at CSU should read this section.

Program Information, Policies, and Resources

You can find links to all of the important department resources, forms, and manuals on [our department "Resources + Guidelines"](#) webpage. You can find a link to the IO Program Handbook on our [program website](#). It is also strongly recommended that 1st year students read the Psychology Department Graduate Manual which has some sections dedicated to the orientation of 1st year students. Please reach out to the IO Program Coordinator and/or the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator if you have questions or concerns.

Registering for Class

The Psychology Department Graduate Student Manual contains information regarding course registration dates and links. Students need an eID to register. Students can obtain an eID at <http://eid.colostate.edu>.

Students should receive a letter from the I-O Program Coordinator in the summer before the first semester, which outlines the courses for which you are to register that fall. In the fall semester, first year students typically register for:

- PSY652 (Statistics)
- PSY643 or PSY644 (IO Psychology I or II)
- Breadth elective or I-O elective
- PSY595D (Independent study) to bring the total credit load to 12 to 15 hours

Students interested in the Occupational Health Psychology training program should also take the following course if offered:

- PSY692D (Spectrum of Occupational Health Professions)

Students entering with a Master's degree may opt for alternative coursework based on course waivers. Please see [ENTERING THE PROGRAM WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE](#) for more information.

Establishing Residency

When students arrive in Fort Collins, they should immediately begin the process of establishing Colorado residency. The Psychology Department and College of Natural Sciences will only cover out-of-state tuition on a graduate assistantship during the first year. Please refer to the Psychology Department Graduate Student Manual, which contains more in-depth information regarding establishing residency.

FUNDING PROCEDURES

Yearly Graduate Student Funding

Overview

Students are typically employed (i.e., funded) for 20 hours per week. As part of their employment, student tuition is typically covered by the funding source. Please see the Psychology Department Graduate Manual for more information on tuition fees and residency.

While funding is not guaranteed, students have historically been funded during the Fall and Spring semesters through their fifth year. Funding during the Summer term is scarce, and students are encouraged to find funding outside the department (most typically, internships). The I-O program and Psychology Department make every effort to provide funding to students who are making timely progress and are within good standing in the I-O program.

Funding should not be expected beyond the fifth year, as funding is prioritized for students in years 1-5. Therefore, students are encouraged to complete their degree training, if possible, in 5 years.

Funding Sources

Students are typically funded through:

1. Undergraduate teaching assistant (TA, e.g., lab TA, grading TA, and course development support)
2. Research assistantships (RA, e.g., faculty grants, training grant, startup funds)
3. MAIOP teaching (only available to post-comps students)
4. Internships (typically summer funding, late-stage students)

Funding Eligibility

Students do not automatically receive funding but rather are allocated funding each semester on a case-by-case basis. Students must be in good academic standing, receive satisfactory teaching and I-O program evaluations, and make timely progress in the program to receive funding. Students must have completed master's degree requirements or have a master's degree in I-O Psychology or a related field to teach lab sections. Students must have passed the comprehensive exam to teach in the MAIOP program. Please also see information in the Psychology Department Graduate Manual.

Students working 10 or more hours per week in external employment will not be recommended for simultaneous department funding except in rare circumstances pending faculty approval. It is expected that students disclose all external employment and internships to the faculty. Some funding mechanisms (e.g., training grants) have explicit restrictions on employment. Failure to adhere to eligibility criteria may result in de-prioritized funding for future semesters.

Funding Allocation

Research Assistantships are typically up to the grant holder. RA positions may be allocated informally (e.g., an advisor asks their student to work on the grant) or formally (e.g., application for training grant funding).

Internships are obtained independently by students.

Teaching assistantships (undergraduate and MAIOP) are allocated by the IO faculty twice each year (Spring, Fall). The faculty will solicit funding commitments and requests via email to students and faculty. Requests must be returned to the faculty by the date requested.

Available TA positions (undergraduate, MAIOP) depend on Psychology Department needs each semester. The Psychology Department typically requests that IO students cover the following courses:

Course Number	Course Name	Semester(s) Typically Offered	Required Coverage for IO?	Assignment Type	Hours
PSY 325	Personality	F, S	Yes	Grading	20
PSY 370	Tests & Measures	F,S	Yes	Grading	10
PSY 371	Tests & Measures	F,S	Yes	Lab	5 each
PSY 340	Organizational	F, S (Online)	Yes	Grading	10
PSY 341	Organizational	F, S (Online)	Yes	Lab	5 each
PSY 440	Industrial	F (Online), S	Yes	Grading	10
PSY 441	Industrial	F (Online), S	Yes	Lab	5 each
PSY 492D or PSY 345	Special Topics/OHP	F	Yes	Grading	10
PSY 210	Individual in Context	F, S	No	Grading	10-20
PSY 250	Research Methods	F, S	No	Grading	10-20
PSY 350	Stats	F, S	No	Grading	10-20
PSY 100	Intro	F, S	No	Grading	10-20

When allocating TA assignments, the faculty prioritize existing commitments, preferences, repeat assignments, and 20 hour assignments/less spread across courses, in that order. Student evaluations, developmental needs, timely progress, and previous TA evaluations are also considered. Student assignments may also be changed based on department-level needs.

Travel Support

Overview

Part of students' professional development includes attending and presenting at regional, national, and/or international conferences convened by professional societies such as the Society for I-O Psychology (SIOP). The I-O program strongly encourages students to present their research and attend 1-2 relevant conferences per year.

SIOP is the flagship organization for our profession, and the annual conference is a major event for research and practice discourse, as well as professional networking. Consistent with our mission to train I-O psychologists, each year the I-O program makes an effort to provide financial support for graduate students to attend SIOP using I-O Program funds. I-O Program funds may only be used toward the annual SIOP conference.

Additional sources of funding may also be available. These funds may be used to supplement I-O Program funding for SIOP or to travel to other professional conferences and meetings. Availability, amount, and criteria for these alternative funding opportunities varies from source-to-source and year-to-year. We strongly encourage students to stay aware of and apply to alternative funds. Potential sources of funding include:

- Psychology department success grants
- Faculty grants
- Training grants (e.g., MAP ERC OHP training grant)
- Travel grants through the CSU [Graduate Student Council](#)

I-O Program Funding Eligibility

To be eligible for IO travel funds, students must submit their work for presentation as a speaking role at the SIOP conference (e.g., lead author, panelist, (co-)chair). There are two exceptions to this rule: First, first year students who likely haven't had enough time to complete research for conference submission are also eligible for travel funding. Second, there may be CSU or department policies that supersede our program policy. In these cases, the program must follow policies of the institution or department. The faculty will notify students of any policy changes as they are known.

Students working full time off campus, including internships during the travel period, are not eligible. Students must be in good standing and in their fifth year or earlier to be eligible.

Exceptions to these eligibility criteria may be considered by request on a case-by-case basis.

I-O Program Funding Amount

Historically, the amount of funding available for each student is determined by taking the total amount of travel funding available and dividing it by the number of eligible students who request funding. As a result, the exact amount of funding available may vary from year to year.

I-O Program Funding Allocation

The faculty will solicit travel funding requests via email to students and faculty, typically late Fall or early Spring after SIOP decisions. Requests must be returned to the faculty by the date requested. The faculty will communicate funding amount per student via email after analyzing responses from the travel funding request.

Using Travel Funding

Regardless of funding source, students using CSU funding are required to complete pre-travel and post-travel authorization forms, per department procedures (see the Psychology Department Graduate Manual). The university has strict policies regarding airfare and travel booking. Students are expected to know and follow those policies. Students should note the sources of funding listed above for account numbers and CC the corresponding sources when submitting their forms. Students using I-O Program funding to travel for SIOP should CC the MAIOP Director (Alyssa Gibbons) when submitting their form.

External Employment

General Policy

Students are discouraged from having employment outside the program during the Fall and Spring semesters within the first 3 years of the program. External employment demands are not compatible with the high workload demands of a PhD program, particularly within the first few years.

Students must discuss external employment with their advisor. Students working more than 10 hours per week in external employment will not be eligible for department funding. Timely progress guidelines will not be extended if failure to meet them is due to engaging in independent consulting or other work external to the I-O program that is not sanctioned by a faculty member.

Independent Graduate Consulting

Consulting before obtaining a qualified master's degree is unacceptable, due to legal and ethical issues. Graduate students are strongly discouraged from independent consulting as an IO Psychologist until after PhD degree completion. Graduate students may not use CSU or Psychology Department resources, including but not limited to logos, letterhead, other institutional symbols, computers, software, spaces, subscriptions, or personnel in recruiting or executing consulting projects without prior written approval from their advisor and the Department Head.

If students persist and engage in consulting activities, they are required to abide by the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association)* to provide services "only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience" (p. 1063, Ethical Standard 2.01). Students are also required to disclose consulting activities to CSU via annual conflict of interest disclosures.

Students are also advised that State of Colorado legal protection and indemnity of risk that may be available for consulting and other work conducted as part of the I-O graduate training program *does not* extend to projects that they do independently. Students who take on such projects are obligated to make clear to the hiring organization that the project is not endorsed, supervised, or supported by the program, the Psychology Department, or Colorado State

University. Moreover, students should be aware that engaging in independent consulting projects on their own may risk their timely progress and evaluation of their professionalism by the I-O program. Any questions, concerns, or exceptional circumstances should be discussed with the student's primary advisor.

GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS

Each year, the I-O Program distributes awards that recognize distinct forms of excellence among graduate students in the Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychology PhD program. Collectively, they reflect the program's commitment to supporting students' well-being, advancing high-quality research, and honoring outstanding achievement in both the science and practice of I-O psychology. Details are distributed each spring via e-mail by the awards coordinator.

JKL Work-Life Balance Scholarship

Purpose: Recognizes graduate students whose plans meaningfully support work–life balance during graduate training.

Eligibility: Doctoral students in the I-O Psychology PhD program.

Primary Criteria: Preference may be given to students who have not previously received the award, emphasize use of funds for the life side of work–life balance, and are in the early years of the program.

Award & Submission: \$500 prize to be used in the manner proposed in the application. Application form and CV submitted to Ginger.Lacy-Gill@colostate.edu by March 1; selections completed by May 1.

Kevin R. Murphy Quantitative Methods Award

Purpose: Honors the legacy of Dr. Kevin R. Murphy by recognizing excellence in the clear and effective use of quantitative methods.

Eligibility: Graduate students in the CSU I-O Psychology PhD program.

Primary Criteria: Exemplary scholarly products demonstrating appropriate quantitative methods, clear and straightforward interpretation, and effective communication of conclusions.

Award & Submission: \$250 prize, award plaque. Students must submit a qualifying product to their advisor, who presents it to faculty as part of the annual evaluation.

George Thornton Outstanding Graduate Student of the Year Award

Purpose: Recognizes outstanding achievement in both the science and practice of I-O psychology among advanced students.

Eligibility: Students who have completed a master's thesis and sufficient time in the program; previous recipients are ineligible.

Primary Criteria: Demonstrated excellence in scientific research, applied practice, professional engagement, and ethical conduct.

Award & Submission: \$250 prize, award plaque, name added to departmental plaque. All students who meet eligibility criteria and have completed their Graduate Student Annual Review are automatically nominated.

OTHER POLICIES

Entering the Program with a Master's Degree

Our degree program is a PhD program and, therefore, entering with a Master's does not guarantee students have automatically fulfilled partial requirements for our program, even when the Master's degree is in I-O. Additionally, students are enrolling in this program to receive training as a PhD in I-O Psychology from CSU. It is our goal to ensure student training adequately reflects the content and rigor of our PhD program. Therefore, incoming students with a Master's degree should expect to participate in the majority of our coursework and milestone requirements.

Students entering with a Master's may choose to waive coursework and/or the thesis requirement. Be sure to complete any forms or checklists requested by the I-O Program Coordinator, your advisor, or the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator.

Coursework Waivers

Decisions on how many courses to waive and which courses to waive will vary on a case-by-case basis within the parameters of graduate school requirements. Students should expect to waive no more than three courses. A CSU PhD in IO Psychology degree represents more than an accumulation of credit hours, or a credential affirming that you are a bright and hardworking individual. It represents the successful completion of a specific set of educational experiences and communicates that you now possess a particular set of knowledge and skills. When we approve your graduation, we are vouching for the quality of your training and affirming that you have met the standards of Colorado State University.

Students should keep in mind that the statistics sequence is extremely important for graduate student success in the PhD program, and therefore, we encourage you to take these courses here at CSU even if you have taken statistics courses previously. We also typically encourage that students take the Industrial and Organizational courses within the I-O Core component of the curriculum.

Students should discuss waiver options with their advisor when they arrive to begin the PhD program before making requests. Typically, waiver decisions are made before beginning the program and are completed by the end of the first semester. Courses required for the MS and PhD here at CSU that are not waived are required, regardless of whether a student holds a Master's degree from a prior institution.

Important! Course waivers do not reduce required credit hours. The number of required credits to complete the PhD at CSU remains 42 (72 total across the MS and PhD) – regardless of how students enter the program.

Students who would like to request a waiver need to email the course instructor(s) requesting a waiver. Students should attach a syllabus (or multiple syllabi, if relevant) from the relevant course(s) completed in their Master's degree program. Instructors may ask for additional information if needed (e.g., previous exams, assignments, completing an assessment). Instructors will respond with their decision. Emails confirming a waiver may serve as an approval memo and should be saved for documentation.

Once the student has determined which course(s) will be granted a waiver, they must submit their requests online (see the Psychology Department Graduate Manual).

Thesis Waiver

Students who completed an empirical thesis from another university and wish to waive the thesis requirement must submit their thesis to their advisor via email. The advisor reviews the document to determine if the scope and rigor is comparable to our thesis requirements, and responds via email to confirm or deny a waiver. Emails confirming a waiver may serve as an approval memo and should be saved for documentation.

If the thesis is accepted, it will serve to satisfy the program requirement as a prerequisite to the Doctoral degree. Students whose thesis is waived may still be asked to complete an informal project of similar scope by their advisor (e.g., lead a research project and submit for publication). Only empirical thesis projects on an IO Psychology topic are eligible for waivers.

Accommodation Requests

As most graduate students have a dual role of student and employee, we ask that you reach out to both the [Student Disability Center \(SDC\)](#) and [Office of Equal Opportunity \(OEO\)](#) to document any needed accommodations for coursework and employment, respectively. Please see the Psychology Department Graduate Manual for more information. If you have any questions about

this process or would like guidance please reach out to the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator.

Leave of Absence

Purpose

The faculty recognizes individual circumstances sometimes make it difficult to continue with graduate education. In such cases, it can make more sense for the student to discontinue studies altogether rather than attempt to deal simultaneously with these personal demands and the demands of the graduate program. The faculty will, in special circumstances, consider a request for leave of absence from the program.

A leave of absence is defined as a period of time when the student is not enrolled in classes and is absent from campus and/or Fort Collins, but is not engaged in any significant amount of professional activity. The leave of absence halts timely progress for that semester (that is, it isn't included in the calculation of timely progress). A leave of absence does not extend funding opportunities through the department. Funding should not be expected beyond the fifth year regardless of whether they received a leave of absence.

Students must maintain continuous enrollment to maintain active registration in the program. A leave of absence will require the student to register for continuous enrollment at a cost which is paid by the student (see [CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT](#)). Students may negotiate maintained employment (e.g., TA position) during the leave period with approval from the IO faculty and the department.

Requesting a Leave of Absence

A request for leave must be submitted in writing to the I-O faculty before the leave begins and must include a statement for the reasons for the leave and activities planned during the leave. Approval of the request is a mutually binding agreement that you will rejoin the program on the specified date.

A leave of absence normally may not exceed one semester. In special circumstances, a leave may be extended for one additional semester, if the student provides rationale and makes the request before the anticipated return date. Leaves are not mechanisms for handling probationary periods and may not be granted for those who are severely out of timely progress and at risk for dismissal. Participating in a structured practicum, internship, or job does not constitute a justified reason for a leave of absence. All cases are handled on an individual basis and faculty make every attempt to fairly and appropriately consider the needs of the student when determining whether a leave should be approved.

After the Leave of Absence

After a leave of absence, students are expected to return to campus and resume academic activities. Students who do not return to the program at the agreed upon date must complete a

Student Success Plan. As part of the Student Success Plan, students are encouraged to create and follow a plan to return to program responsibilities in collaboration with their advisor. Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may lead to a recommendation to dismiss from the program (see [RECOMMENDATION FOR DISMISSAL](#) for more information).

Parental Leave

CSU provides parental leave to graduate students. This policy is different from the Leave of Absence. Please see the [Colorado State University Policy Library](#) and the Psychology Department Graduate Manual for more information.

Appeals and Complaints Process

Students have a right to appeal decisions grades and decisions made by the faculty. Students wishing to appeal such a decision should follow procedures described in the Psychology Department Graduate Manual and [The Graduate School](#).

CSU provides guidance, steps, and resources for formally and informally navigating complaints in the [Graduate Bulletin](#) and in the Psychology Department Graduate Manual. CSU has communication channels for reporting illegal and unethical behavior (e.g., sexual harassment, discrimination, fraud). Whenever possible, students are encouraged to resolve complaints informally through direct, honest conversation. The Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator is a resource for graduate students navigating conflict and difficult communication within the department.

Student Success Plan and Recommendation for Dismissal

The program can recommend to The Graduate School that a student be dismissed from the program. Recommendations for dismissal from the program may occur in rare circumstances. Students may be at risk for recommended dismissal because they are not fulfilling program training expectations including poor academic standing (i.e., do not meet the grade requirements of the program), failure to make timely progress, failure to pass the comprehensive exam, poor research, teaching, and/or service performance, or failure to secure a primary advisor. This list is not exhaustive, as it is impossible to foresee all potential situations.

In such cases, the I-O Program follows the [process outlined by The Graduate School](#). Students complete a Student Success Plan in collaboration with their advisor and the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator. The Student Success Plan outlines a remediation period (at least one semester) and steps the student must take to remediate their program progress and meet expectations. Please also see policy in the Psychology Department Graduate Manual and department's [probation policy](#).

Students may also be recommended for dismissal due to misconduct and violations of the Student Code. Please see information from [Student Conduct Services](#) for policy and procedure information.

Readmittance to the Program

Students who are dismissed from the program may opt to re-enter the program. Students who wish to re-enter the program after dismissal can reapply for admission starting the next Fall semester. This implies that students will apply at the regular time (i.e., December 1), will be considered with other new applicants, and will be notified of admission along with other applicants for the coming year.

Students may need to re-take coursework that is expired if they have not maintained continuous enrollment and/or if coursework is more than 10 years old. Please see the [Graduate Bulletin](#) for policy information. Students are advised to contact the Psychology Department Graduate Coordinator with questions and concerns.