

**Seton Hall University**  
**College of Education and Human Services**  
**Department of Professional Psychology and**  
**Family Therapy**

**Counseling Psychology Ph.D. Program**  
**Accredited by the American Psychological Association**

# **Guide to Research Training**

## **2009-10**

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## **Introduction**

Counseling Psychology is a broadly-based applied specialty within the science of psychology. As psychologists, we are committed to the generation and application of psychological knowledge based on scientific views of the world. As counseling psychologists, we are engaged in the pursuit and application of psychological knowledge to promote optimal development for individuals, groups, and systems, and to provide remedies for psychological difficulty.

Counseling psychology training programs are committed to the integration of a science base with practice application and the development of research that is relevant to practice. Our ideal is that each scientist would be a practitioner in some field and that each practitioner would be engaged in scholarly inquiry. All counseling psychologists are expected to develop critical thinking skills regardless of professional goals. We believe that an attitude of scholarly inquiry is critical to all activities of counseling psychologists.

Research training in our counseling psychology program is an extensive, supervised series of experiences, which progress toward greater autonomy, culminating in the doctoral dissertation. Working toward and achieving success in scholarly endeavors can be some of the most exciting, stimulating, and rewarding experiences of a student's graduate career.

This Guide to Research Training details policies, procedures and activities associated with the research training components of the Counseling Psychology doctoral program. The design of this component of the program, as well as the associated policies and procedures, has been done with close attention to helping students attain the goals of the Counseling Psychology Program and be successful in their scientific endeavors.

Students have the responsibility to satisfy the Program research requirements that are in effect at the time of their admission. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with their advisors prior to beginning any research activities.

## **The Research Component**

The Counseling Psychology Program faculty are committed to a scientist-practitioner model of training, which dictates that research is an integral component of the training program from the initial stages of the doctoral experience with the goal of producing practitioners who are engaged in scholarly inquiry. The scientist-practitioner model integrates a science base with practical application leading to research that is relevant to practice. Regardless of the work setting or specific professional responsibilities, the practitioner is committed to the exercise of scientific inquiry along systematic lines culminating in periodic convention presentations and/or publications of scientific merit. The practitioner is one who not only integrates scientific thinking with counseling practice but who holds scientific activity in high esteem, both in words and action. The outcome objective for the Program is for students to make from 1-2 presentations at state, regional, or national conventions and publish 1-2 refereed journal articles before completing the Ph.D. degree. The research component begins with a year long independent study under the direction of a faculty member who serves as your project advisor. For the duration of your doctoral program, you will be working under the direction of your dissertation advisor to complete your research competence and dissertation projects.

In addition to familiarizing themselves with the Program's research requirements, students should review the requirements of the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board (IRB), which are available on the web at: <http://provost.shu.edu/IRB>. Students should complete the IRB

training on protection of human subjects upon entry to the doctoral program. Also, students should be aware that all research proposals require a pre-IRB review to ensure scientific merit of the study. For dissertation research, each student's dissertation committee will review the proposal and attest to its scientific merit. The PPFT Department Chair, Dr. Laura Palmer, will certify the scientific merit for non-dissertation student research and for faculty research. Content area specialists will be enlisted to assist the Chair as needed.

## **Cultural and Individual Differences**

A critical dimension of research training involves the enhancement of the student's awareness, knowledge and skills with regard to the role of cultural factors in research. Our program takes a broad, inclusive approach to defining culture, including ability, age, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Each student is expected to develop sensitivity, knowledge, and skills appropriate to attending to these issues in your research. Regardless of the nature of your research, each project must appropriately attend to the relevant cultural issues associated with the topic. Students are encouraged to visit the Science Directorate (<http://www.apa.org/science/>) and Science Student Council (<http://www.apa.org/science/apasscweb.html>) of APA for information and resources related to cultural and individual differences in research.

## **Appropriate Research Projects**

Students are expected to obtain their advisor's guidance, input, and approval prior to beginning any empirical research project. More specifically, however, the advisor must be consulted where the research competence and dissertation projects are concerned. Failure to do so may result in the student's research not being accepted for the research competence project or dissertation; this would trigger the creation of a remediation plan for the student. Research may be quantitative or qualitative in nature.

## **Sequence of Research Training**

Research training continues for eight semesters and is designed to be a sequentially graded training experience. This process is closely supervised by each student's advisor. You work with your initial advisor for the first year of your program. Toward the end of your first year in the program, you should select a permanent advisor who will guide you through the remainder of your research activities at Seton Hall University. In addition, during this first year you will begin to formulate the research question(s) and/or hypotheses for your research competence project (see Research Competence Project below). After completion of your research competence project, you then will move on to your dissertation work. Completion of the dissertation is a major milestone in your training.

## **Year 1 of the Research Component**

Getting involved in research is the major goal of the first year experience. The first two semesters (CPSY8001-8002: Supervised Research in Counseling Psychology) are the beginning experiences for doctoral students, which consist of learning about the various aspects of the research process. You will work closely with your initial advisor on her or his research, and you may also assist more advanced students with their research. Your first job is to gain familiarity and comfort with research, including how to be a critical thinker and consumer of research. You

will also become knowledgeable about the extant literature in your area of research interest. Finally, you will be working with your advisor to formulate ideas for your research competence project. Ideally, you will have the introduction and method section written by the end of your first year (or some time that summer), so that you can begin data collection for your research competence project early in your second year.

**Fall Semester: CPSY 8001JA: Supervised Research in Counseling Psychology (1 credit)**  
**Course Objectives**

1. To become familiar with the professional literature in your advisor's area of interest/expertise.
2. To develop a working relationship with your advisor that would be described as a research assistant.
3. To begin formulating testable hypotheses, which are refined under your advisor's guidance and mentoring.
4. To meet once a week for 30-60 minutes with your advisor.
5. To spend 3-5 hours a week carrying out the responsibilities of a research assistant for your advisor.
6. Any publication resulting from this collaborative effort would acknowledge the research assistant's contribution in a footnote. However, before the semester begins, both the project advisor and student should refer to the authorship guidelines in the 2002 Ethics Code (APA), and to Fine, M.A. & Kurdek, L.A. (1993). Reflections on determining authorship credit and authorship order on faculty-student collaborations. *American Psychologist*, 48, 1141-1147.

**Grading:** All grades will be assigned on a satisfactory (S)/unsatisfactory (U) basis

**Spring Semester: CPSY 8002JA: Supervised Research in Counseling Psychology (1 credit)**  
**Course Objectives (Spring Semester)**

1. To remain current with the professional literature in your advisor's areas of interest and expertise.
2. To continue developing a working relationship with your advisor that would now be described as a research associate.
3. To formulate a research plan to investigate a testable hypothesis under your advisor's guidance and mentoring. Ideally, this will be the basis for your research competence project to be carried out during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of your program.
4. To meet once a week for 30-60 minutes with your advisor.
5. To spend 3-5 hours a week carrying out the responsibilities of a research associate for your advisor.
6. Any publications resulting from this collaborative effort would acknowledge the research associate's contribution as a co-author. Refer again to Fine and Kurdek (1993).

**Grading:** All grades will be assigned on a satisfactory (S)/unsatisfactory (U) basis.

## **Year 2 of the Research Component**

Conducting and completing your research competence project is the major goal of your second year experience. Students will demonstrate their completion of the research competence project by turning in a full-length manuscript in APA style. You should also submit this project for presentation at a national or regional conference, and consider submitting the manuscript publication to a peer-reviewed journal.

### **Fall Semester: Enroll in CPSY9991: Dissertation Advisement I**

Note: We allow students to defer registering for Dissertation Advisement, based on financial aid and GA reimbursement needs.

#### **Course Objectives**

1. To develop a sense of professional identity within the content area of interest of your dissertation advisor.
2. To develop a working relationship with your dissertation advisor, that would be described as approaching the role of a peer.
3. To begin your research competence project. This means you will finalize the research plan, including your testable hypotheses, and obtain IRB approval for your study. Then you should collect your data. If you happen to finish data collection during this semester, then you should begin to analyze the data.
4. To meet once a week for 30-60 minutes with your advisor.
5. To spend 3-5 hours a week carrying out the responsibilities of a professional peer with your advisor with regard to research collaboration.

### **Spring Semester: Enroll in CPSY9992: Dissertation Advisement II**

1. To develop a sense of professional identity within the content area of interest of your dissertation advisor.
2. To develop a working relationship with your dissertation advisor, that would be described as approaching the role of a peer.
3. To complete your research competence project. This means you will complete data collection, analyze the data, write-up the results, submit to present the results at a convention, and submit a manuscript for publication in a referred journal. The student should be the first author in this endeavor, and the advisor would typically be second author.
4. To meet once a week for 30-60 minutes with your advisor.
5. To spend 3-5 hours a week carrying out the responsibilities of a professional peer with your advisor with regard to research collaboration.
6. Begin formulating testable hypotheses for a dissertation under the direction of your advisor. If your dissertation is going to be in the same area as your research competence project, then it is likely that the results of your research competence project will inform your dissertation research questions and hypotheses.

## Year 3 of the Research Component

**Fall Semester: Enrollment is optional in CPSY9993: Dissertation Advisement III**

**Spring Semester: Enrollment is optional in CPSY9994: Dissertation Advisement IV**  
**Course Objectives**

1. To become a content area expert in the area of specialization of your advisor.
2. To develop a working relationship with your advisor and other dissertation committee members that could be described as collaborative and collegial.
3. To spend 5-10 hours a week working on your dissertation proposal.
4. To formalize your dissertation by having a successful dissertation proposal defense in the spring.
5. To meet once a week for 30-60 minutes with your advisor and as necessary with members of your dissertation committee.
6. Any convention presentations or publications resulting from a continuing line of inquiry established from the advising relationship would be joint authorship. It is crucial that you discuss the order of authorship with your collaborator(s) prior to beginning any projects.

## Year 4 of the Research Component

**Fall Semester: Enrollment is optional in CPSY9995: Dissertation Advisement V**

**Spring Semester: Enrollment is optional in CPSY9996: Dissertation Advisement VI**  
**Course Objectives**

1. To conduct the dissertation, write chapter 4 and 5, and successfully defend the completed dissertation.
2. To meet with your advisor and the dissertation committee as needed.
3. To submit a proposal for a convention presentation and a manuscript for publication to a refereed journal based on your dissertation with your advisor as second author.

## The Research Competence Project

Your research competence project should be an empirical project, using either quantitative or qualitative methods. Many students utilize the research competence project to inform their subsequent dissertation research (e.g., by building upon the results). In this way, we do not expect your research competence project to be a dissertation-level piece of work. Rather, we expect you to design and complete an empirical research project from start to finish with the direction and guidance of your research advisor. The use of archival data, while not ideal, is acceptable for the research competence project only if the student can articulate a sound rationale for needing to use archival data. Failure to complete the research competence project will seriously delay your progress through the program. **Students will NOT be able to hold a dissertation proposal meeting until they have successfully completed their research competence project.** In addition, failure to complete the research competence project in a timely fashion will trigger a remediation plan for that student. The completion of the research competence project will result in a work sample to be included in the student's portfolio.

## The Dissertation

Your doctoral dissertation is an original, independent research project in an area relevant to counseling psychology. It should **not** be your life's work; rather, it is a way for you to demonstrate your ability to design and conduct an empirical project from beginning to end. It will reflect your knowledge and understanding of the related literature and of the research methodology appropriate to the investigation.

### *Acceptable Dissertation Projects*

You can choose a quantitative or qualitative methodology. **Archival data will not be accepted for the dissertation.** Said another way, you must collect original data for your dissertation project. This is because the design of the dissertation experience is for you to develop an original piece of scholarship, from beginning to end; the use of archival data seriously limits the kinds of research questions that are answerable as it pre-determines the methodology. The dissertation in the form of an organized and competently written study should represent a contribution to the knowledge base in the area of counseling psychology. Guidelines are published in a "Doctoral Dissertation Procedural Information" booklet available from the College of Education and Human Services, Office of Graduate Studies, Jubilee Hall, Room 465 (973-761-9668).

### *The Dissertation Committee*

The dissertation committee consists of five members: the advisor and two other core committee members, a Chair, and an External Reader. At least two members of the dissertation committee must be a Counseling Psychology Program faculty member. The chair of the dissertation committee, who ensures the proposal and defense meetings run smoothly and adhere to college and department procedural norms, must be a faculty member in the Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy. Students are expected to complete and to defend their dissertations at the end of their fourth year in the Program, prior to beginning their internships.

### *The Proposal Meeting*

The dissertation proposal meeting can be scheduled once one's research advisor is satisfied with the quality of the student's proposal. Students are expected to provide the committee members with a copy of the final dissertation proposal at least **10 business days** prior to the proposal meeting. At the proposal meeting, the student is expected to make a brief (i.e., 5-10 minute) presentation on the dissertation. Afterwards, the members of the committee ask the student questions and comment on the proposed study. There are four possible outcomes to the proposal meeting: (a) Pass with no revisions, (b) Pass with minor revisions, (c) Pass with major revisions, and (d) Fail. The student will work with their research advisor to address the issues raised by the committee.

### *The Dissertation Defense*



The dissertation defense represents the culminating activity associated with the dissertation experience. The dissertation defense can be scheduled only in consultation with one's research advisor. As with the proposal, students are expected to provide committee members with a copy of the final dissertation at least **10 business days** prior to the defense. The actual defense is divided into two parts. The first part is a convention style presentation by the defending student to the community at large. The community at large is defined as any interested party, including family members, who wish to participate in this public dissemination of scholarly information. The public presentation will last no more than 30 minutes and will include a brief opportunity for the audience to ask questions. The dissertation committee members will not be involved in the question and answer portion of the public presentation. Immediately following the public presentation, the defending student will attend a closed dissertation defense with the dissertation committee. No individuals other than the defending student and the dissertation committee are allowed to attend the closed portion of the defense, which will last approximately one hour.

### *The Dissertation Format*

The format of the dissertation should mirror a full-length journal article submission, with some noted exceptions. First, the dissertation should adhere to APA style. There should be a title page, which should include the members of the dissertation committee. The second page is the abstract, which should be no more than 150 words.

*Chapter I: Introduction.* Chapter I is the introduction, which begins on page 3. The introduction should include an articulation of the problem/issue to be studied and the reasons for studying this problem. This section should also indicate how this particular study will add to or fill gaps in existing research. As part of the introduction, the student should also discuss why counseling psychologists should care about the problem, as well as defining any relevant constructs. The introduction should end with the purpose of the research and the hypotheses to be tested and/or the research questions being asked.

*Chapter II: Literature Review.* In Chapter II, the literature review, the student should critically review and discuss the extant literature on the constructs relevant to the dissertation topic. There should be a clear structure to the literature review, with summaries at the end of each subsection and a general summary at the end of the section. The review should be comprehensive and integrative, yet simultaneously concise.

*Chapter III: Methods.* Chapter III is the method section, which should include the subsections and material typical of a method section (i.e., participants, instruments, procedures). When you prepare your dissertation proposal, the method section should be written in future tense (i.e., what you are going to do), whereas it should be written in past tense for the final dissertation. You should also include a proposed analysis (including a power analysis for quantitative studies) and study limitations in the dissertation proposal method section.

*Chapter IV: Results.* Chapter IV should present the results of the study. Data should be presented in the clearest, most coherent manner. If tables are needed, then they should be placed after the references at the end of the document, prior to the appendices.

*Chapter V: Discussion.* Chapter V is the discussion section, which should include a general discussion of the findings, integrate knowledge from relevant literature, and **not** go beyond the results of the study. Chapter V should also include implications for research, training, and/or practice, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

*Note.* Chapters IV and V are only included in the final dissertation, not the original proposal.

## Registering for Dissertation Advisement

There is a minimum of 6 credits of dissertation advisement that are counted in the calculation of the 97 total credit hours in the curriculum for the Counseling Psychology Ph.D. program. It is important to note, however, that students may need to enroll for more than 6 credits worth of dissertation advisement depending upon their specific situation. The most common situation where this occurs is when a student becomes ABD (i.e., she or he has finished all coursework and the pre-doctoral internship, but has not finished the dissertation). In order to stay continuously enrolled in the University after all courses and the pre-doctoral internship are completed, students must enroll in Dissertation Advisement (CPSY 9993-9999) until the dissertation is completed. Registering for dissertation advisement is no longer needed after you have successfully defended your dissertation and completed any and all suggested revisions related to your defense.

Students must meet with their advisor at the beginning of each and every semester that the student is registered for dissertation advisement. Together, the student and advisor will set reasonable written goals for the dissertation process for that semester. To obtain a passing grade in dissertation advisement, the student must attain the mutually agreed upon goals for that semester.

For one very specific instance, a student may be allowed to register for thesis continuation (THCN 8999) instead of dissertation advisement. This may be granted for a maximum of two (2) semesters **only** if all of the following criteria are met: (a) the dissertation has been successfully defended, (b) the student has completed all coursework and the pre-doctoral internship, and (c) the student needs to maintain continuous enrollment through the next scheduled Seton Hall University graduation. If the student is unable to complete all requirements within the two allowed semesters of thesis continuation, she or he will be required to continuously enroll in dissertation advisement until graduation.

## Competencies to be Developed

The research training you receive in the Counseling Psychology program at Seton Hall University is designed to help you develop knowledge about research methods and design; data analytic techniques; ethical issues in research; and scholarly writing and critical thinking skills. This is accomplished through a variety of classroom activities (e.g., CPSY 8001, 8002, 9001, 9002, 9004) and hands-on experiences (e.g., research competence project, dissertation). The development of core professional skills as a scientist is viewed in the broadest way and includes acquisition of specific methodological expertise, understanding of and ability to use research conceptualization skills, personal growth as it related to awareness of and appropriate handling of emotional reactions to research topics, awareness and appreciation of human diversity, and the development of mature ethical professionalism.

**Counseling Psychology Program Goal B1:** Demonstrate the ability to evaluate current research findings as published in scientific journals, to incorporate such findings into the practice of counseling psychology, to work collaboratively with peers in conducting research, and to communicate, in written and oral form, independent research conducted in the field.

**Research and Goal B1:** Ideally, students would be involved with fellow student colleagues and the faculty on collaborative research projects. Coursework will facilitate students' abilities to

critically evaluate and digest published research findings; individual mentorship from one's advisor will facilitate this process as well. Students will complete the research competence project and their dissertation, and these projects will incorporate relevant findings from extant knowledge within the counseling psychology professional literature.

**Counseling Psychology Program Goal B4:** Demonstrate skill and sensitivity in tailoring assessment, intervention, and evaluation efforts to a diverse client population, including individuals with disabilities and individuals of different culture, gender, race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, language, national origin, and religion.

**Research and Goal B4:** Research projects must include a diverse sample of participants where cultural demographic variables are concerned. Specifically, the population of interest should be represented appropriately in the sample. In all research projects, students are expected to attend to issues of culture (i.e., age, gender, race, culture, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, or sexual orientation) in the data collection and interpretation processes.

**Assessing outcomes for Goals B1 and B4 in Research Training:** Goals B1 and B4 will be assessed in the research training sequence by the student achieving a grade of B or better (or S in the case of pass-fail courses) in all research related courses, including CPSY 7006, 8001, 8002, 9001, 9002, and 9004. This goal will also be assessed through annual program milestones, reviewed during the student's annual portfolio meeting.

- By the end of Year 1, students will have formulated a research plan to investigate a testable hypothesis under the mentoring of a project advisor. The research plan should be put in the student's portfolio prior to the first annual review.
- By the end of year 2, the student will have completed the research competence project and selected an appropriate dissertation topic, with the guidance of the student's advisor. Evidence of completion of this project (e.g., conference presentation or submission for publication) should be put in the student's portfolio.
- By the end of year 3, the student will have content area expertise in some aspect of counseling psychology, which will be demonstrated by the formal acceptance of a dissertation proposal. A copy of the dissertation proposal and a copy of a signed "Dissertation Proposal Approval Form" should be put in the student's portfolio.
- By the end of year 4, the student will have demonstrated an ability to integrate theory, scientific thinking, research, and professional identity, which will be demonstrated by the successful completion of the dissertation defense. A signed "Dissertation Defense Approval Form" should be put in the student's portfolio.
- By the time of graduation from the program, 90% of our students will make from 1-2 presentations at state, regional, or national conventions and 70% will publish 1-2 refereed journal articles before completing their Ph.D. degree.
- Further evidence of having attained goals B1 and B4 will be that 80% of alumni report that they do the following "often" or "always": (a) attending to issues of and respect for individual and cultural diversity, and (b) evaluating and improving through critical thinking and applying a scientific approach, (c) maintaining awareness and knowledge of current research and developments in the field, and (d) systematically evaluating one's own practice in light of these factors.

## **Other Research Experiences**

During your graduate program, you may have the opportunity to be involved in research that is neither your research competence project nor your dissertation. These kinds of activities are encouraged; however, you should consult with your advisor prior to taking on a commitment with another faculty member or fellow student where research is involved. In addition, make sure that your research requirements (i.e., research competence project, dissertation) do not suffer as a result of these other experiences. Said another way, failure to complete either your research competence project or your dissertation will prevent your graduation, whereas failure to do other kinds of research will not hold the same professional consequences.

## **Selection of Research Advisor**

Upon being admitted to the Ph.D. program, each student will be initially matched with an advisor. This initial match is made very carefully by faculty considering research interests, personality, and work styles. It is our hope that this initial match develops into a rewarding professional relationship with your advisor. Our system, however, is not perfect. Hence, every student is required to choose her or his advisor by April of their first year in the program. In making their selection, the student should consult with the faculty member to ensure a mutual perception of fit. This person, who may or may not be your initial advisor, will guide you through the research competence and dissertation projects. Hopefully, this person will also more generally serve as someone you might come to see as a mentor. Although it is our sincere hope that each of you finds an advisor who becomes a mentor, empirical research shows us that this is not always the case. If things are not going well with your advisor, we would first like you to try to discuss the issues with your advisor. We pride ourselves as a faculty on being open to student feedback and trying to facilitate the best learning environments for our students. If this is not successful, then the next step would be to discuss this issue with the Training Director of the Counseling Psychology Program and begin the process of finding a new advisor.

## **Recruitment of Seton Hall Undergraduate Psychology Students for Research Projects**

University students are often viewed as an easily accessed participant pool for psychological research, and in fact students may be encouraged by their own departments to participate in research projects. However, it is essential that recruitment of students in departments outside of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy be conducted in a way that respects the needs and preferences of the faculty and students in these departments. In particular, doctoral students should not assume that class time or extra credit would necessarily be provided for their research. The undergraduate Psychology Department has defined a specific policy and procedure for recruitment of research participants; the most current version is available from Dr. Susan Teague ([teaguesu@shu.edu](mailto:teaguesu@shu.edu)). Students who wish to recruit participants from other departments should clarify the relevant policy in advance. Any questions about the policy related to an outside department should be resolved with the assistance of the student's advisor and/or the Director of Training. Note that when students from the Undergraduate Psychology Department participate in research, it is important to keep accurate records of this and to notify their instructors.