

## The Psychology Accelerated Master's Degree Program

### College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

A new Accelerated Bachelor's and Master's Degree Program (AMDP) in Psychology is available for current students interested in research. The program combines requirements for a B.A. or B.S. degree with a terminal master's degree. The program is completed during the senior year and one additional year of graduate study. Undergraduates already engaged in research with a psychology faculty mentor have the opportunity to continue their work over multiple terms, with growing responsibilities and opportunities. The skills and first-hand experience student's gain will assist with decisions about pursuing doctoral training programs, finding specialized areas of interest, and competing for admission to highly selective programs. Advanced degrees are helpful in some areas of employment; however, this program is focused solely on academic research training. The AMDP will not offer any options leading to professional certifications in clinical or counseling psychology. The *M.S. degree in Psychology* awarded through the AMDP is a terminal degree, with no relation to the doctoral program. For students who have already demonstrated their interest and aptitude in academic research, the AMDP provides the advantage of a master's degree in one additional year of study.

### Curriculum

AMDP includes 6 areas of emphasis: brain & behavior; clinical science; cognition and cognitive neuroscience; developmental psychology; personality and social contexts; and social psychology. A course of study for the final 4 semesters will complete the requirements for both the bachelors and Master's degrees:

- I. Sub-Plan Area Core Courses [5 credits]  
Each student will complete two graduate level core courses in their selected area within psychology. [Click here for list of approved courses.](#)
- II. Psy 519 Supervised Research [repeated each semester, 3 credits each term for 6 credits] Each student will work independently with their faculty mentor on a research project continuing throughout the year they are in the program. The project must include collection of qualitative or quantitative data, or significant secondary analyses. This course will introduce AMDP students as a group to professional research and ethical issues, related doctoral programs and career opportunities, and thesis preparation guidelines.
- III. Psy 613 Advanced Statistical Methods I [4 credits] This course covers study design and inferential data analysis in the behavioral sciences.
- IV. Cognate Course(s) [3 credits] Three course credits at or above the 400 level in any graduate program outside of Psychology, or in the Psychology graduate program but in a different subfield. May be met by one or more courses.
- V. Additional Electives Students should select additional graduate courses during their senior year within their declared sub-plan, or from any other sub-plan listed. Electives are available to AMDP students only by permission of instructor. Further courses in statistics are especially recommended.
- VI. Master's Thesis Each student will complete a written APA-style report on their research and submit it by April 15th of the last year of their program. Theses will be reviewed by a first and second faculty reader for approval. The student must secure a 2<sup>nd</sup> reader and submit their thesis directly to the reader for evaluation.

Students are strongly encouraged to take additional courses within their area sub-plan during their Senior year, and are eligible to take additional graduate courses in other areas by permission of instructor. Alternatively, students may take 12 credits each term during their 5<sup>th</sup> year in AMDP. A suggested course is the Pro Seminar each area offers. Substitution for required courses with others (such as topical seminars) within and outside of psychology can be approved by petition.

## Sample Time Line for AMDP Completion

*Terms 1-2:* Begin undergraduate study.

*Terms 3-6:* Complete prerequisites, declare major, and complete at least one advanced course.

*Terms 7 and 8:* Enroll as advanced undergraduate, complete major requirements, and begin master's program courses.

*Terms 9 and 10:* Enroll as Rackham graduate student for at least 9 credits per term.

<u>Fall Course Elections</u>	<u>Winter Course Elections</u>
Psy 519 [3 credits]	Psy 519 [3 credits]
Psy 613 [4 credits]	Area Core course 2 [2-3 credits]
Area Core course 1 [3 credits]	Cognate course [3 credits]
Graduate Level Elective [if applicable]	Graduate Level Elective [if applicable]

*April 15:* Thesis due.

## Requirements

- Students must be enrolled in the College of LSA for a bachelor's degree. Per Rackham Academic Policy, students earning dual bachelor's degrees in other units are not eligible.
- Students must complete the undergraduate major and all requirements for the College of LSA degree for their B.A. or B.S. Students apply for their undergraduate degree at the end of the term in which their degree requirements are met, and may participate in the appropriate graduation ceremony for the undergraduate degree.
- As a sequential undergraduate/graduate studies program (SUGS), undergraduates may begin graduate-level coursework in their senior year of study. Students do not enroll in the Rackham Graduate School until their fifth (or last) year of study, and must be within 6 credit hours of completing the undergraduate degree at that time.
- During the fifth (or last) year, AMDP students must be registered a minimum of two full (9 credit) terms, paying full tuition in Rackham only, with no other UM registration. AMDP students must pay Rackham fees for all classes taken during the two terms they are classified as graduate students.
- For the master's degree, students must complete 24 credits at or above the 400 level that are approved for graduate credit.
- Up to six credits from other institutions (including the College of LSA) that are not used toward any requirements for other degrees can be transferred from the unit of enrollment into Rackham for credit toward the master's degree. This transfer takes place after graduation from the other unit.
- Up to nine credits used to meet the requirements of the LSA undergraduate degree may be "double counted" to meet the master's degree requirements. For example, a course that satisfies the Area Course requirement for the master's degree may be applied simultaneously to the college undergraduate requirements (must have undergraduate major advisor approval).
- A maximum of 12 credit hours taken outside the Rackham career may be allowed for the master's degree. This includes credits that are double-counted, transferred from the UM undergraduate program, or transferred from outside of UM.
- Program students must make satisfactory progress toward their master's degree, and maintain a minimum Rackham cumulative grade point average (GPA) of "B" (3.00 on a 4.00 point scale).
- The AMDP is intended for students to complete within five years (4 years of undergraduate + 1 year of master's coursework). If the AMDP requirements are not completed within this time frame, the student will be awarded only the completed B.A. or B.S. degree. Students continuing their graduate study to complete their master's degree beyond the (or last) year will be assessed tuition at the graduate level.

### *Relationship to Honors in the Major*

If accepted separately into the Honors Program for their major, AMDP students *are* eligible to receive honors in their undergraduate degree by completing its program requirements. The student may elect to submit an honors thesis and apply for their undergraduate degree with honors at the end of the senior year of study.

## Admissions

For students just beginning in the major, it is important to seek out research experiences early in the college career. Along with the Psychology faculty, the Peer Advisors can guide students in finding research opportunities and mentors of interest. Students *must* have research experience with a faculty mentor during the junior year in order to prepare for application to the AMDP program.

To ensure a close match between faculty mentor and students in the program, each applicant will apply to join the AMDP *with* their faculty mentor in the Department of Psychology. The most likely scenario is that a student would continue on a current project working with the faculty mentor. When a mentor agrees to sponsor the student in the AMDP, the faculty will write a letter of recommendation for the student. Because the faculty mentor must commit to two years of mentoring each student, the number of opportunities for students will necessarily be quite limited.

Social area applicants must be required to have a primary mentor and a secondary mentor; it is strongly recommended for applicants to other areas. In the event that a primary mentor is unexpectedly unable to serve, we require students list a potential secondary mentor in Psychology who has already agreed to fill this role. To identify a secondary mentor, please discuss this with your primary mentor. Students do not need a letter of recommendation from the secondary mentor, but will be required to list them on the Rackham application.

Students will apply to join the program in the Winter term of the senior year and indicate whether they will begin Fall or Winter term of the next academic year (please note, you must begin AMDP the term directly after you complete your undergraduate degree). Students must have *already* enrolled in two terms of directed research courses with their faculty mentor. This research activity can involve a major honors program (Psych 424 & 426), work on a senior thesis (Psych 428), or two contiguous terms of enrollment in a directed research experience (Psych 326 or 422/3). Please note these courses do not count towards the 24 credits required for AMDP. It is strongly suggested students meet with the AMDP Coordinator/Advisor to discuss their plan specifically before applying.

### *Eligibility:*

- The student must be enrolled as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.
- For *Psychology* and *Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience* majors, the student must have completed all required Breadth courses and at least one advanced elective course.
- The student must have a minimum GPA in the major of 3.2, and an overall GPA of 3.0 in their undergraduate courses.
- The student must have enrolled in a prior independent research course (e.g., Psy 326, 422, UROP, thesis, etc.) for at least two terms.
- No Graduate Record Examination Scores are submitted for application to the AMDP.

### *Application Process:*

- Every applicant must apply *with* a mentor who agrees to sponsor them.
- Prospective students will apply to the specific Sub-Plan Area program of their faculty mentor.
- Applicants will submit the Rackham application, and follow the standard procedures.
- As part of the application process, prospective students must also provide:
  - 1) a letter of support from the proposed research mentor;
  - 2) a research plan developed in collaboration with the faculty mentor;
  - 3) a personal statement; and
  - 4) a resume or CV.

- Applications to be considered for Fall or Winter term are due February 1.
- Students will be notified by late April regarding admission into the Psychology AMDP and must matriculate by mid April.

## Financial Aid

The cost of the AMDP for students, including tuition (at the in-state or out-of-state resident rates), living expenses, and health care, is the student's responsibility. Please refer to the tuition section of the current Time Schedule for tuition rates on the Registrar's Office web site. Most of the need-based financial aid for undergraduates is not available to students once enrolled in a graduate program (during the fifth or last year of the AMDP). Once the B.A. or B.S. is awarded, students may be eligible for graduate financial aid in their fifth (or last) year of the AMDP. Each student who currently receives federal financial aid (loans, grants scholarships, or work-study) or would like to apply for such aid, is encouraged to see a counselor in the LSA Office of Financial Aid (located in the Student Activities Building). The counselor will be able to discuss how entering the AMDP program will affect their financial needs before applying to the program. The timesaving advantage of the AMDP program – completing a master's degree in one additional year – may be lost if one does not follow an efficient plan of study when in the program.

Financial aid for graduate students is more limited than that available to undergraduates. The majority of the graduate student aid administered by the Office of Financial Aid is in the form of loans and Work-Study awards. Graduate students who apply for financial aid are considered for the Federal Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loan, the Federal Perkins Loan, and Work-Study. In addition, the Psychology AMDP will work with the College of LSA and with Rackham Graduate School to provide some need-based financial aid for the year of study when enrolled in the graduate school. With the exception of the unsubsidized Stafford Loan, all of these programs are awarded based on financial need. In addition, graduate students may apply separately for private education loans, and the U-M offers a payment plan that allows students to pay their bills in installments.

AMDP students in their final year registered as Rackham only are eligible for Rackham Student Research Grants, Conference Travel Grant, and Graduate Student Emergency Funds. They are not eligible for any Department of Psychology sponsored awards. Students may apply for Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) positions (applications available March and October for Fall and Winter terms respectively), but must have prior approval from their faculty mentor including a plan for course and thesis completion. Students are strongly encouraged to also discuss their plan with the AMDP Academic Advisor. GSI positions are not guaranteed and applicants will be asked to attend an orientation in April.

For further information about this program, please contact [psych.amdp@umich.edu](mailto:psych.amdp@umich.edu).

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Psychology AMDP

- **Would it be possible to finish the AMDP program within four years (obtain both Bachelor's and master's degree within four years)?**  
You can apply to the program during your final year of undergraduate study.
- **If I am interested in more than one field of psychology, would it be possible to combine my interests in the Master's program instead of focusing on one field?**  
You must apply to one specific subplan within psychology. However, you may take additional courses outside of your subplan – consult with your mentor and academic advisor.
- **May I do research with two different research mentors, one in each field?**  
Faculty cosponsors are allowed, but the two mentors must each agree to a single thesis

project.

- **Would the master's degree be linked to a certain field (e.g., clinical, social, cognitive)?**

The degree is a *Master's of Science in Psychology*, and does not specify a subplan area.

- **Would there be any graduate financial aid packages available for international students?**

Financial aid for U.S. graduate students includes the sources mentioned above, and financial aid eligibility is based on need. There are no sources for international student financial aid packages. Private loans may be possible for students who do not qualify for other aid. Students should enquire at the LSA Office of Financial Aid to determine how the program would affect their eligibility for undergraduate and graduate financial aid.

- **What is the advantage of obtaining a master's degree if admission to doctoral programs in psychology is open to those with bachelor's degrees? Would it mean that there will be transferable credits if I get into a doctoral program?**

In doctoral programs, students entering with a Master's Degree may be considered to have completed some requirements for specific courses and the Master's thesis. However, there is no standard arrangement, and the decision to accept Master's coursework at another institution is determined by each doctoral program on an individual case basis. About twenty-five percent of applicants to the UM doctoral program in psychology already have a Master's Degree.

- **Which type of student is best served by the Psychology AMDP program?**

Students who already know they are interested in research, and plan to pursue further graduate training, are the intended applicants for this program. Joining the AMDP program provides the opportunity for further exploration of your interests before applying to specialized doctoral programs. It also provides more extensive research training, with the potential for publication at conferences and in journals. Students in the AMDP will be better prepared for applying to doctoral programs and other professional training, and for research positions in university, corporate and non-profit settings.