

# MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology offers the Master of Arts degree via the BA/MA program. Upon successful completion of the BA degree requirements, students become graduate students for two semesters and complete the MA. This is a combined degree program. At the time of application to the program, the student will submit a carefully devised and integrated plan of study for the two degrees designed in consultation with their faculty research advisor.

The BA/MA program involves a close working relationship between a student and a faculty advisor. Research begins during the undergraduate years, therefore a student must identify a faculty advisor in the Psychology department who will supervise the research through the conclusion of the MA degree. Non-psychology students can apply to the program to work under the mentorship of a psychology faculty.

## COURSES

The MA in Psychology requires a minimum of 6 credits above the 32 credits needed for the BA. These courses include:

Two credits for Advanced Research Seminar (PSYC 549 & 550).

Two or more approved credits for relevant non-tutorial courses (200, 300, or 500 level).

Up to two credits from tutorials (PSYC 501/502, 503/504, 511/512; 401/402, 411/412, or 421/422).

Teaching assistantships may not be used for graduate credit.

## RESEARCH

Students are expected to spend at least 20 hours per week engaged in research. The research experience culminates with an MA thesis demonstrating a student's original contribution to knowledge in the field. Many students in the BA/MA program choose not to write an undergraduate honors thesis because they will be writing a more substantial MA thesis.

Ethics approval is required prior to initiating data collection for your research. If your proposed research poses minimal or no risk to participants, does not involve vulnerable populations, or does not include the collection of sensitive data, then you may submit a protocol for your proposed research to the Psychology Ethics Committee (<https://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/resources/>) (via Catherine Race, administrative assistant). If you plan to conduct higher risk research, study vulnerable populations, collect sensitive data, or if your research involves other complications, then you are required to submit your protocol to the University IRB (<https://www.wesleyan.edu/acaf/support/reviewboard.html>).

## THESIS AND DEFENSE

Work on the MA thesis should progress as follows under the guidance of the faculty advisor.

**BA Year.** After acceptance into the BA/MA program, the student must establish an MA thesis committee that consists of the faculty advisor and two or more

additional faculty. The advisor and at least one of the additional faculty members must be in Psychology. The student must submit the Establishment of Thesis Committee Form to the faculty advisor. By the first week of May, the student must set the date for the committee meeting to discuss and approve the proposed Scheduling of Thesis Proposal Meeting Form. The thesis proposal should be given to the committee at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting. While the date must be agreed upon by the first week of May, the actual meeting may be held any time before the end of June as long as the thesis proposal is approved by the committee by the end of June. The student should take the Thesis Proposal Approval Form to the thesis proposal meeting, and must return it and a copy of the proposal to the faculty advisor by the end of June.

**MA Year.** During the MA portion of the program, the student must complete the thesis. The final copy of the written thesis should be given to committee members by the student at least two weeks before the oral defense date; specific timing is up to the student's committee.

Forms required by the Office of Graduate Student Services (OGSS) related to completion of the thesis are available online – see Graduation Requirements-MA: at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/academics/graduationrequirementsma.html>

**Oral Defense.** The oral defense/examination must be held during the oral exam period designated by the Office of Graduate Student Services (OGSS). This period is usually 3.5 weeks long and begins in mid-April and ends the first week of May. The specific dates for the beginning and end of the oral exam period are posted on the University's Academic Calendar as well as in the MA exit information. The student should bring to the oral defense two forms required by the OGSS: the Oral Examination Form and an Approval of Thesis Form to be filled out by committee members. Corrections/edits from committee members must be completed before the scheduled exit interview.

All forms are included in the MA exit information that can be found at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/academics/graduationrequirementsma.html>

The MA candidate and research advisor will agree upon the defense format. In general, the MA candidate gives a research talk, where:

- The length (somewhere between 15 and 45 minutes) is negotiable.
- Open (to friends, faculty, public) or closed (just the thesis committee) is also negotiable.
- Open question period after the talk.
  - The student leaves the room while the thesis committee discusses.
  - The student returns to the room to receive grades, feedback, and a decision regarding the defense.
  - The thesis committee will indicate what revisions or corrections MUST BE MADE in order for the thesis to be complete and ready for final submission to the OGSS.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information and all department forms, please visit Psychology Department BA/MA information <https://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/BA-MA.html>. (<https://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/BA-MA.html>)