

Board Meeting  
March 15, 2017

ESTABLISH THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE,  
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES AND THE GRADUATE  
COLLEGE, URBANA

**Action:** Establish the Master of Science in Psychological Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Vice President, University of Illinois with the advice of the Urbana-Champaign Senate recommends approval of a proposal from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Graduate College to establish the Master of Science in Psychological Science.

Currently, the Department of Psychology has three graduate-level degrees: a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), a Master of Science (M.S.), and a Master of Arts (M.A.), all in Psychology. The M.A. no longer admits students nor awards degrees, and a companion proposal seeks its elimination. The M.S. is not required of doctoral students; it is awarded when students pursuing the Ph.D. are unable to complete the doctoral requirements but have satisfactorily completed 32-hours of graduate work, including an acceptable thesis. Students do not apply to the M.S. Thus, the highly-competitive doctoral program is the only available option for prospective graduate students. The

proposed Master of Science in Psychological Science (M.S.) will provide a masters-level option for students interested in graduate education in the Department of Psychology.

The M.S. in Psychological Science is a two-year, research-based program designed for students who seek research experience coupled with advanced coursework focused on experimental techniques and professional development. A master's thesis is not required. The M.S. in Psychological Science will be a self-supporting program designed to provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to be competitive for admission to doctoral programs and/or to pursue professional opportunities within industry.

In the field of psychology, a growing educational trend is the provision of advanced training for students who wish to pursue doctoral education but did not have sufficient preparation as part of their undergraduate education. For a variety of reasons, applicants to the doctoral program require a master's program to garner the research experience and opportunities necessary to be competitive for admission. The M.S. in Psychological Science, with both a strong graduate-level curriculum and an intensive research experience, would meet the educational needs of these students.

Having graduate coursework and research experience at a top-ranked program will also be desirable to students who wish to pursue professional careers upon earning the M.S. in Psychological Science. Knowledge of human behavior and advanced analytic and statistical skills have become increasingly desirable across sectors. Graduates of the program will be competitive for placements in education, industry,

consulting, state and federal government, and healthcare systems based on current hiring requirements in these areas.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.