

**Department of Psychology**  
**Combined BA/MA Program**

Wesleyan University



General Guidelines, Application Process & Student Forms  
<http://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/BA-MA.html> .

Please direct questions regarding this program to the Psychology Department's BA/MA chair, Andrea Negrete, 860-685-2868, Judd Hall Room 404, [anegrete@wesleyan.edu](mailto:anegrete@wesleyan.edu), or administrative assistant, Cathy Race, 860-685-2343, Judd Hall Room 107-B, [crace@wesleyan.edu](mailto:crace@wesleyan.edu).

### **APPLICATION TIMING**

- There will be only one application period from September. 1 – January 15.
- **The online application deadline is January 15.**
- Students completing their BA in May apply to the BA/MA program by mid-January of their senior year.
- Students completing their BA in December apply to the BA/MA program by mid-January just prior to their senior year.

### **Outline of the application process**

- September 1 – Jan 15: Application submission.
- By January 31: Academic departments complete review of applications to their department and rank their candidates.
- By February 28: The Director of Graduate Studies and the BA/MA committee of the Graduate Council review applications and department recommendations and complete the admission decisions.
- March: Admission decisions are released to applicants. If more qualified students apply than they can be accommodated, students will be placed on a waitlist and may be admitted as spaces become available.
- Many students in the BA/MA program use the summer for research; this should be discussed with the faculty mentor.

To start an application for the BA/MA program you must first create an account.

[On-line application](https://admission.wesleyan.edu/apply/) (<https://admission.wesleyan.edu/apply/>)

## **BA/MA Program in the Sciences**

The science programs at Wesleyan offer a variety of excellent research opportunities. In fact, the opportunity to carry out significant research is one of the strongest features of the sciences here. Many undergraduates carry out research in close collaboration with a faculty member, and those who do often report that it has been the most valuable part of their education. Some students have been interested in more intensive involvement in research than is possible in the traditional undergraduate setting. Such students can apply to programs leading to the MA (Master of Arts) degree after an additional year of study following the BA (Bachelor of Arts). This additional year has provided them with the opportunity to devote more time to developing and carrying out research projects, or to completing research projects they began as undergraduates.

Wesleyan offers the combined BA/MA program for those undergraduate students interested in the intensive research experience and opportunities afforded by an additional year of study. The program has a strong research orientation, and also includes coursework, seminars, and, in some cases, teaching. The program also provides a strong professional background for either further advanced study or employment in industry. Completion of both BA and MA requirements requires careful planning of one's schedule of courses and research prior to applying and during the MA year. A student hoping to enter this program should declare the intention to do so early enough in his or her academic career to permit the design of an acceptable academic and research during the junior, senior, and MA years with both the major department and a research advisor within that department.

## **Major Areas of Research**

Not all faculty are able to sponsor BA/MA student applications every year, and not every student who wishes to apply for a BA/MA is guaranteed to find a mentor. Often, faculty sponsor applications for students whom they know from class or research labs. Students have the best chances of finding a mentor if they get involved in research and start the search process early.

## **Facilities and Resources**

Research facilities in the department include active, well-equipped laboratories for the study of behavioral neuroscience, human development, human cognition, cultural psychology, psycholinguistics, and social psychology. There are substantial library resources on campus totaling over a million volumes. Campus and departmental computing facilities are readily available. A department colloquium series also affords students an opportunity to hear and meet informally with speakers from around the country and sometimes internationally. BA/MA students present their work in the annual research poster session in the spring.

## Combined Degree

Students enrolled in this program, upon successful completion of the degree requirements, receive a BA after four years and an MA at the end of the additional year. From the perspective of the University, students are considered undergraduates during their senior undergraduate year and become graduate students in their 5<sup>th</sup> year. (For students who complete the BA in 6 or 7 semesters rather than the canonical 8, students are considered undergraduates through their senior year and graduate students the following year.) *Note that certain requirements of the Psychology BA/MA program differ from requirements of BA/MA programs in other departments at Wesleyan University. A detailed description of the BA/MA program in Psychology follows.*

### How the Psychology Department's Graduate Committee Assess Applications to the BA/MA program

The Psychology Department's Graduate Committee will evaluate applicants' potential to successfully graduate from the BA/MA program in Psychology. To assess this potential, the committee will take into consideration the following aspects of applications:

- Strong academic record.
- Evidence of advanced academic coursework.
- Evidence of substantive research experience.
- Motivation and preparation to conduct independent research.
- Motivation to work collaboratively with the BA/MA mentor.
- Clarity and quality of the proposed research program.
- Evidence of support from the faculty mentor for the proposed research program.

### Mentor Relationship

The BA/MA program involves a close working relationship between a student and a faculty mentor. *Before applying to the program, a student must have identified a faculty mentor in the Psychology Department who has agreed to direct the candidate's BA/MA research.* The student should seek advice from their advisor regarding course selection and program of research starting with preparing their application. Once a student has been admitted to the program, this mentor will officially become the student's graduate advisor.

Any questions or problems that cannot be resolved by the faculty advisor should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Program Committee Chair. The student may only change advisors in consultation with the old advisor, the new advisor, and the Graduate Program Committee.

### Credits and Course Requirements for a BA/MA in Psychology

In the BA/MA program, the MA degree requires a minimum of 6 credits in addition to the 32 needed for the BA degree. These 6 credits should be distributed as follows:

- **PSYC 549 & 550:** Thesis Research/Advanced Research Seminar (2 credits; one credit per term of second year).

- **Four credits for advanced coursework:** Any other graduate tutorials (PSYC 501/502, 503/504, 511/512; these can be taken during the undergraduate or graduate year), undergraduate tutorials taken for graduate credit (specifically, 401/402, 411/412, or 421/422; these can be taken only during the undergraduate year), undergraduate non-tutorial courses in any department (usually 200- or 300-level courses) taken for graduate credit, or graduate seminars. **No more than two of these four credits may come from tutorials.**
- **Note that teaching assistantships of any kind may *not* be used for graduate credit.**

In order for any course to be counted towards the graduate degree, the following conditions must be met.

1. **It must not have been counted towards the undergraduate Psychology major as declared on the Major Certification Form or towards any Wesleyan undergraduate graduation requirements.**
2. It must be **taken for graduate credit** (see later discussion).
3. **A grade of a B- or better must be earned in the course.** Courses taken Pass/Fail cannot be counted towards the degree.
4. The course needs to be reasonably related to the MA thesis student's research. If the course is not directly related to the research project, it needs to make a well-justified contribution to a MA course of study.

Students may elect, but are *not* required, to take the Graduate Pedagogy course (PSYC 500) coordinated through the University's Office of Graduate Student Services (OGSS) for .5 credits. Furthermore, psychology students may choose to attend a one-time three-hour pedagogy session at the start of their graduate year (see OGSS for date and time).

At the beginning of *each* semester of the MA program (by the end of the third week of classes), a Graduate Course Verification Form must be submitted to the advisor, listing the courses being taken for graduate credit that semester (if they are undergraduate courses being taken for graduate credit). Each course must be approved by the course instructor and by the student's advisor. The signature of the course instructor indicates that he or she is informed that the course is being taken for graduate credit and is aware that he or she may wish to impose more rigorous coursework or more stringent grading standards on the student in exchange for the graduate credit. Any graduate requirements must be negotiated by the instructor and the student at the beginning of the course. The signature of the graduate advisor indicates that these courses have been approved towards the MA requirements.

The student is responsible for reviewing and discussing course selection and any changes to the course plan with their advisor.

### **Research, Thesis, and Other Requirements**

A major expectation of this program is that students will spend at least 20 hours per week engaged in research. The research experience will culminate with an MA thesis demonstrating a student's original contribution to knowledge, which the student will carry out in partial

fulfillment of the degree requirements. Many students will choose not to write an undergraduate honor's thesis during their last undergraduate year because they will be writing this more substantial MA thesis during their graduate year. While there is no prohibition against writing an undergraduate thesis should the student wish to do so, it cannot substitute in any way for the student to submit an MA thesis in their graduate year.

Any original research conducted for the MA thesis needs to receive ethics approval from either the *Psychology Ethics Committee* or the *University Institutional Review Board (IRB)*. Ethics approval is required prior to initiating data collection for your research. If the proposed research poses [minimal or no risk](#) to participants, does not involve [vulnerable populations](#), or does not include the collection of [sensitive data](#), then students may submit a protocol for your proposed research to the *Psychology Ethics Committee* (via Cathy Race). For information on what is needed to submit to receive approval from this committee, please visit [Psychology Ethic Committee Guide](#). If the research involves higher risk, vulnerable populations, sensitive data, or other complications, then it must be submitted to the [University IRB](#). Students should consult with faculty mentors in developing their ethics proposals.

## Thesis

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

**Developing a proposal and establishing a committee.** An MA thesis committee should be established and must include the advisor and two or more additional faculty. Both the advisor and at least one of the additional faculty members must be in Psychology. The student should consult with the faculty mentor about possible committee members and guidelines for the proposal. The Psychology Department requires that students submit a proposal to the committee and meet with the committee at the beginning of the MA process.

Students are encouraged to initiate this process as soon as they have committed to the MA program; some students complete the proposal approval process in May or June, depending on the availability of the committee members. The approval process must be completed by the end of September; the deadline is for all students, including those starting their MA in the spring. By the first week of the fall semester, the student must get confirmation from committee members for a date for the committee to discuss and approve the thesis proposal (this can be done using an emailed calendar invitation once a satisfactory date is found). The committee meeting and approval of the thesis proposal should be completed by the end of September. The proposal must be sent to committee members at least two weeks before the meeting date. Student should take the Thesis Proposal Approval Form to the thesis proposal meeting and return the signed form along with a copy of the proposal to the faculty advisor immediately afterward.

**Summer research.** Many students find it advantageous to use the summertime to make progress on literature reviews and research. Funding is available for students who receive financial aid for the MA program. Students who are not on financial aid should discuss expectations and funding opportunities for summer research with their faculty mentor.

**The MA year.** During the MA year, the student must complete the thesis. Unlike most other rules and requirements of the program, the rules governing the completion of an MA thesis are largely determined by the University's Office of Graduate Student Services (OGSS), and all of the relevant forms are included on the Graduation Requirements – MA website. All forms are electronic and are accessible through WesPortal/Academics/Graduate Exit Forms. The electronic forms are automatically routed to the pertinent faculty members for their approval (electronic).

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; the specific timing is up to the student's committee. Note that the OGSS has a number of formatting guidelines for preparation of the thesis that are available on the Graduation Requirements – MA website.

Forms required by the Office of Graduate Student Services 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 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 on the Graduation Requirements – MA website. 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.

The exact format of the defense varies by individual faculty in the psychology department. You and your advisor should decide a format that works for you and your research. The basic flow is:

You give a research presentation on your thesis.

- The length (somewhere between 15 and 45 minutes) is negotiable.
- Whether it is open (to your friends, faculty, public) or closed (just your committee) is also negotiable.
- There is an open question period after the talk.
- You leave the room while the committee deliberates.
- You return to the room to receive your grade, feedback, and (assuming things have gone as planned) congratulations.
- Your committee will let you know what revisions or corrections **MUST BE MADE** in order for the thesis to be complete and ready for submission.

You will receive separate grades for your written thesis and oral defense. These do not go on your transcript. They do stay in your file. You may decide, at some point in the future, to authorize someone (e.g., another graduate program) to access your grade.

## **Exit Interview**

You are required to schedule an exit interview with the OGSS. You must upload the final version of the thesis before the exit appointment. Instructions about scheduling the exit appointment, submitting the electronic exit form, and uploading the final thesis are posted on the Office of Graduate Student Services website [here](#). The student should ask their advisor if s/he would like a copy of their thesis to keep in the lab for other students to use as reference.

## **Evaluation and Review**

An evaluation of BA/MA students is conducted by the Psychology Graduate Faculty Committee following the fall term. Maintaining “good standing” in the program is contingent on obtaining at least a B- in each course being applied towards the MA, the meeting of all above requirements (except in extenuating circumstances as determined by the Committee), as well as majority approval of the department faculty. Students are expected to adhere to standards, expectations, and timelines laid out by the faculty mentor, and to take the initiative to seek support if they find themselves unable or struggling to meet those expectations. A student who is not in good standing can be asked to leave the program at the discretion of the Psychology Graduate Faculty Committee.

## **Graduate Council**

The BA/MA program is under the administrative supervision of the University-wide Graduate Council, which monitors the progress of all graduate students towards completion of degree requirements. The University’s OGSS maintains a list of those enrolled in the program and administers the academic record of BA/MA students during their graduate year of the program.

## **Tuition**

Wesleyan does not charge tuition for the MA year. Students who continue beyond two semesters of the MA in order to complete the thesis are charged \$250 per semester continuation fee starting in the fall semester. Students are not allowed to continue coursework beyond the two semesters of the MA. In unusual circumstances, students can request extensions to complete their thesis in the summer, with the agreement of their advisor; in this case, they graduate with the MA degree the following May.

## **Financial Support**

Students who receive financial aid during the senior year are eligible to apply for financial aid to help cover living expenses during the MA year as well as the summer before the MA year. Any information on the OGSS website should be considered more updated than information in the Psychology BA/MA manual.

BA/MA students receive no financial compensation for teaching apprenticeships, and credits for serving as a teaching apprentice are not counted towards the MA degree.

Some students in the BA/MA program may also be able to find support from other sources, such as a faculty member's research grant funds or departmental work. Students are encouraged to create a schedule that allows them to focus primarily on their studies and MA research.

If students are not financially supported during the summer before the MA year, they are not required to be on campus at this time. However, every effort should be made by both the advisor and the student to facilitate progress during the summer. Students not on financial aid should explore funding opportunities for summer and academic year work, including through Summer Experience grants and other opportunities at the Gordon Career Center.

Limited funds are also available to help with graduate student research needs (e.g., equipment, travel, participant payments). Students needing funds may make requests to the department through their faculty advisors.

### **Student Loans**

Technically speaking, students graduate with their class and then become a student again in September of their second year of the BA/MA program. Students with loans should place a call to the OGSS office and arrange to have the student loan companies notified that they are continuing as students if they wish to defer repayment until after the MA is completed.

### **Health Insurance**

Student status can also affect your health insurance. Please be proactive about finding out about this as individual circumstances and general policies change from year to year.

### **Housing**

BA/MA students are eligible to apply for Wesleyan graduate student housing. Graduate student housing generally becomes available in late August. For more information, please see OGSS website.

### **Application**

Potential applicants are encouraged to declare their interest in the program to potential advisors as early as possible, but application to and acceptance into the program occurs during January of the senior year. The admission process is administered by a committee of the Graduate Council. Admission to this program is based on recommendations made to the Graduate Council by the Psychology Department, the academic records of each applicant, and the availability of limited BA/MA slots. *Throughout the program, please submit a copy of all paperwork records to the faculty advisor, to assist in communication between the department and OGSS.*

## BA/MA Timeline

**Note:** For additional dates of deadlines, please see the University's Academic Calendar  
All four of the forms mentioned below can be found at the Psychology Department's website: [https://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/bama\\_guides.html](https://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/bama_guides.html)

### Senior year and summer before MA year

- September 1- mid-January – secure a faculty mentor and complete application.
- Mid-May – Undergraduate commencement
- May-September – Committee of three faculty members established.  
Fill out the Establishment of Thesis Committee Form

### MA year

- First week of fall semester - Deadline for setting a date for thesis proposal meeting.
- Fill out the Scheduling of Thesis Proposal Meeting Form (The thesis proposal should be given to the committee at least two weeks before the meeting)
- Thesis Proposal Approval Form - return this form to your advisor after the Thesis Proposal meeting, to be placed in your file that is kept with your advisor.
- At the beginning of *each* semester (by the end of the third week of classes) – fill out Graduate Course Verification Form
- April – Submit your Graduate Exit Form via Portal/Academics/Graduate Exit Form. The forms will be routed to the appropriate faculty for approval.
- Mid-April through first week of May– Oral defense/examination. (The committee should receive thesis at least two weeks before oral defense's date)
- Exit Interview.
- Mid-May – Commencement for MA Degree

## Sample Plans of Study

Note: The *italicized* items are fixed and may not be moved or replaced.

### **Senior Year, Fall Term**

No graduate credits earned

### **Senior Year, Spring Term**

Other Elective Course – 1 credit (not counted to 32-credit BA degree)

### **MA Year, Fall Term**

*Advanced Research, Graduate (PSYC 549)* – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial for Graduate Student (PSYC 501) – 1 credit

### **MA Year, Spring Term**

*Advanced Research, Graduate (PSYC 550)* – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial for Graduate Students (PSYC 502) – 1 credit

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

### **Senior Year, Fall Term**

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

### **Senior Year, Spring Term**

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

### **MA Year, Fall Term**

*Advanced Research, Graduate (PSYC 549)* – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial for Graduate Students (PSYC 501) – 1 credit

### **MA Year, Spring Term**

*Advanced Research, Graduate (PSYC 550)* – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial for Graduate Students (PSYC 502) – 1 credit

## **Online Information and Resources**

Office of Graduate Student Services – BA/MA Program

[https://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/graduate-programs/bama\\_program.html](https://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/graduate-programs/bama_program.html)

Office of Graduate Student Services – Graduation Requirements - MA

<https://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/academics/graduationrequirementsma.html>

Psychology Department BA/MA Program

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/BA-MA.html>

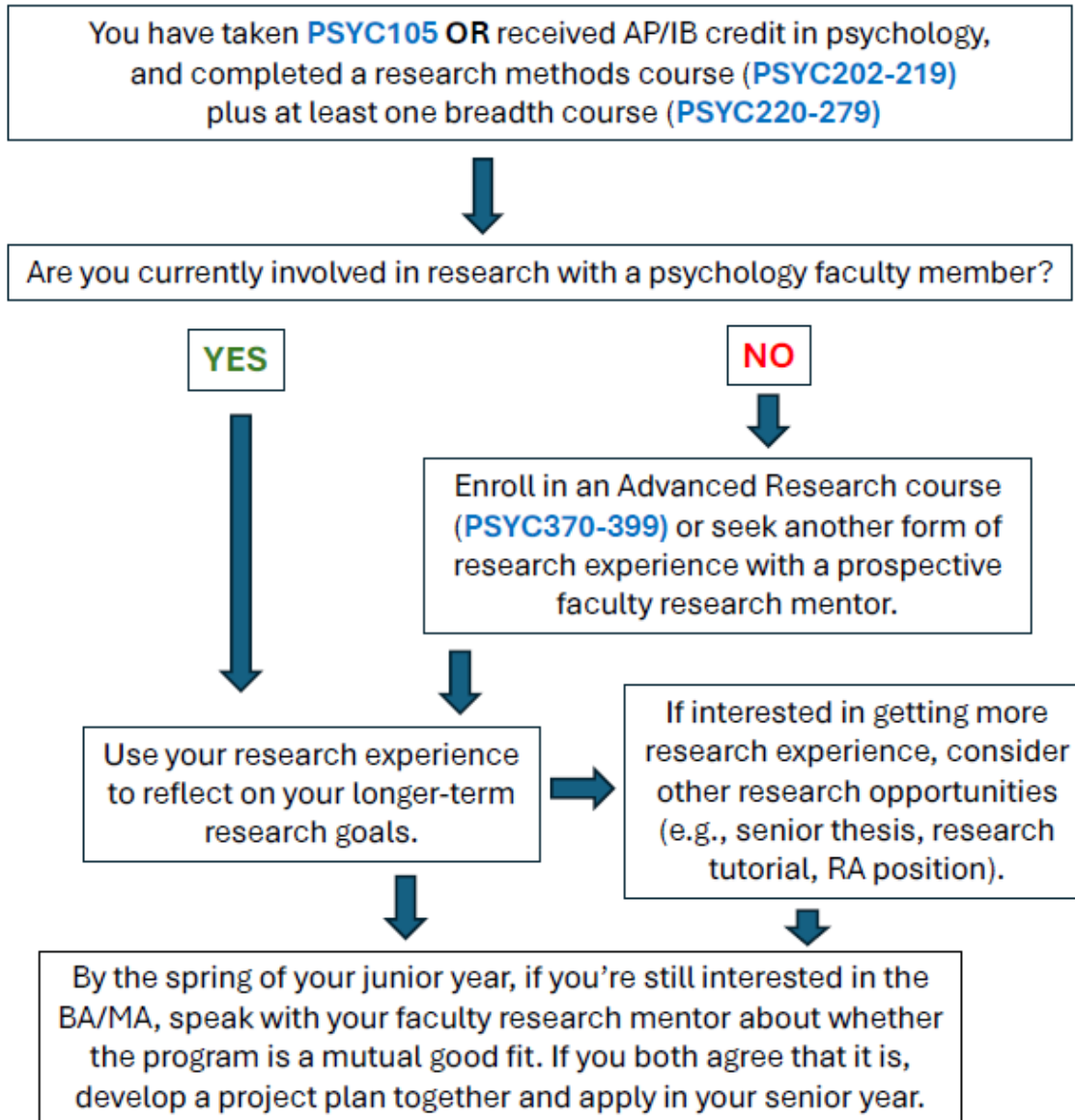
Gordon Career Center <http://www.wesleyan.edu/careercenter/>

University's Academic Calendar

<https://www.wesleyan.edu/registrar/calendars/Academic%20Calendar.html>

## BA/MA Pathway

### GUIDE FOR STUDENTS THINKING ABOUT A BA/MA IN PSYCHOLOGY



- The BA/MA program can be appropriate for students who seek to enhance needed qualifications for an entry level research job, explore an area of psychology they did not have time to pursue, or complete a research project that requires a year-long commitment.
- Upon graduation with a Psychology BA degree, most students are already prepared to enter the workforce in a range of jobs requiring research skills (e.g., research assistant/associate, market research analyst, program evaluator, outreach coordinator, etc.)
- The BA/MA program is competitive, and not all students who apply are accepted.
- Program link <https://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/BA-MA.html>