

Graduate Student Handbook

Texas A&M, Psychology Department

Forward

On behalf of the graduate student population, and the Psychology Department Organization of Graduate Students (PDOGS) we would like to welcome you to Texas A&M, and the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. Graduate school is an interesting time for anyone who endeavors it. You are expected to figure things out on your own, creating novel ideas and systems through research and investigation, and organizing and motivating yourself through what may be the onset of a long and fruitful post-graduate career. Simultaneously, graduate students are expected to follow the guiding wisdom of seasoned professors and researchers, administrators and mentors. This combination of responsibility to yourself and others is novel for some, but expected for all, and represents an introduction to the demands of the careers and positions, academic or otherwise, that will most probably follow your graduation.

Historically, it has been common for graduate students to talk to their more advanced peers and mentoring faculty whenever they have questions, concerns, or comments about anything. However, because no one has all the answers, and because you don't always have someone you want to talk to about a subject, and because you don't always know who to talk to, the PDOGS have endeavored to create a guiding book for first year students and beyond, where we attempt to address a plurality of questions and concerns any graduate student may have. We encourage you to foster a communicative relationship with your mentors and peers, but we will also try to answer your concerns in this handbook. If nothing else, you may at least learn of the right person to talk to about your concerns. Whether the issue is as simple as obtaining office supplies (see the *Available Services* section) or as personal as changing mentors (see *Personal Issues* within the *Services Section*), we hope that the combined experience presented in this brief book may help many future students. If you find some information is missing from this handbook, feel free to contact a PDOGS representative.

As you begin your graduate student experience, please consider the most encouraging, and motivating words I was given about this journey:

"If you've been admitted to the program, that means we all recognize you to be far overqualified for the position, and for obtaining a Ph.D. Remember, though, you get as much out of your time here as you put in."

-Unrecalled Speaker

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People: Key faculty and Staff

Administrative Faculty

Department Head: Heather Lench

Associate Department Head: Lisa Geraci

Associate Head of Programs: Sherecce Fields

Associate Head of Graduate Studies: Charles Samuelson (Soon to be Takashi Yamauchi)

Associate Head of Undergraduate Studies: Mindy Bergman

Director of Clinical Training: Steve Balsis

Area Heads (currently subject to change)

Behavioral & Cellular Neuroscience:

Clinical: Dr. Steve Balsis

Social & Personality: Dr. Becca Schlegel

Industrial/Organizational: Dr. Winfred Arthur, Jr.

Cognition & Cognitive Neuroscience: Darrell Worthy

Our Amazing Staff!

Administrative Coordinator: Peggy Brigman

Administrative Associate: Audra Garcia

Administrative Associate: Stormy Brewer

Psychology Clinic Administrative Associate: Brandi Mathis

Business Administrator: Lorie Tubbs

Business Associate: Fritzie Freeman

Business Coordinator: Brooklynn Smith

Executive Assistant: Jeannine Scambray

IT: Troyce Wilson, Hugh McCann

Before You Arrive

Here are some resources that will help make your transition to Bryan/College Station a bit easier! Don't hesitate to reach out to current students too, as they are happy to answer questions about specific apartment complexes, areas of town, and just about anything else you might want to know!

Bus routes

Consider looking at the [off-campus bus routes](#) if you don't plan on having a car, or don't want to spend hundreds of dollars on a parking pass every year.

Finding a place to live

There are tons of places to live in B/CS. Also consider looking into getting a realtor who specializes in rentals to help you find a place to live if you are interested in living in more of a townhouse or house rental instead of an apartment complex ([Sandy Rodie](#) was excellent in coordinating long-distance). Note that the owner of the property pays for the realty service, so you won't have to pay anything to get help finding a place!

Check out TAMU's off-campus living resources for a broad overview of most places to live: <http://studentlife.tamu.edu/agoss.offcampushousing>

Below is a partial list of apartment complexes that current graduate students have lived at, along with key information from the graduate students who lived there about their experiences. **TIP:** Utilities are cheaper in Bryan, so if your rent doesn't include all utilities keep that in mind!

Apartment Complex	Bed-rooms	Pets	Price Per Month	Notes	Recommend?
The Enclave- CS	1	Yes	\$750/month	only pay for electricity, free cable and internet, washer and dryer included, computer/study room, gym, pool, gated community, bus route drops you right at the psychology building	Yes-- I believe I live in one of the nicer and more costly places, but it has everything I wanted/needed (e.g. gated, washer & dryer, etc.)
University Park - CS	1-3	Yes - large dogs ok (+pet deposit, not sure if addtl pet rent)	\$510/month (12 mo.)	Pay for electricity (usually \$55 when cool, \$90 when hot), free cable/internet, coin laundry (\$2/load), pool no one uses, bus stop at complex. Cheap, quiet, but a bit run down. Water	If you are cheap, it's fine. There are much nicer places

				service out frequently for repairs	
The Presidio - Bryan	1	yes (pet deposit of \$500 per pet + \$10/month per pet for pet rent)	\$900/month (this includes parking)	This is one of the newer apartment complexes in the area, utilities are reasonable, we pay water. Washer/dryer in unit, walk-in closet, free internet (although if you want something faster than what they provide, you have to pay for it). Main office has Starbucks coffee (free), gym, pool, tanning bed. Covered parking is an option (if you pay for it), which is nice, especially in the summer. This apartment complex is not on the bus route, but there is a shuttle that goes to campus (if you decide not to get a parking permit).	Yes, this is the third place I've lived since moving to the area and have had almost no issues.
Lexington - CS	2	Yes; \$400 deposit, no pet rent, any size okay, but limits of "bully breeds"	\$615/month	rent includes water and internet (although I pay for my own internet as theirs is slow sometimes). Coin laundry (\$1.50/load), not-so-great-sometimes-really-dirty pool. Quiet, but not maintained super well. On the bus route (one of the last stops- sometimes good (short ride), sometimes bad (full buses). Location in general is pretty nice, grocery store and whatnot is right around the corner and there's a "park" (really just a big field) across the street. Staff is really nice and responsive.	Meh, it's cheap and I have a lot of space...but you get what you pay for. There's definitely nicer and more maintained places. Doable, though.

Eastmark at Wolf Pen Creek - CS	2	Yes - 30 lb limit (although they let me have mine and she's much bigger); \$400 deposit, 200 refundable	\$750/month	free internet & water; washer dryer hookups for some 2 bedrooms. Kind of run down, fairly quiet, on the bus route, pretty good location, really nice park right across the street.	Not so much. It's definitely livable, but you may be better off elsewhere. Cheap, though!
Plantation Oaks - CS	2	not sure	\$765/month	poorly maintained, management is awful (we lived there for ~6 months, never managed to get our lease done - which worked out because the place sucked); black mold. gross. don't.	Do not, under any circumstances, live here.
Briarwood - CS	2	Yes	\$770/month (in 2014-15)	Same management as Plantation Oaks, I believe. Maintenance never fixed anything without being harrassed, unusable pool and gym. Management clearly gives no shits about residents	If you have to.
Renaissance Park - CS	2	Yes - \$200 deposit, \$10 pet rent	\$820?/month for downstairs	Free internet, washer/dryer hookups. This complex is old buildings, like most everything else on Southwest, but under new management as of 2015. Maintenance is timely, apartments are being renovated so ours has new or newish carpet, appliances, paint, which is nice. I've heard rumor of some apartments having issues with water pipes needing maintenance, but so far, everywhere I've lived in CS has needed water line maintenance while I've lived there	Yeah. It's not the prettiest, but it's pretty decent

Parkway Circle	1-2	Yes, deposit and pet rent required though	\$740/month (for two-bedroom)	^^^similar to what was said above, internet, cable, and water included, we only pay electric. The building's old but the management is great, and some apartments have been updated/remodeled with nicer floors/cabinets/etc. The apartment complex's gym is terrible, but the pool area is very nice and set back a bit so it's fairly private. I've re-signed for next year, as this place is nice and livable particularly for the price (and a short bus ride to campus!).	Yes, it's not perfect but I'm happy here!
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Orientation Day

Many of the following subjects will be covered in a blitz of information during your orientation day. In case orientation was disorienting for you, consider the information presented below. You may also wish to look at TAMU's [new-employee page](#), since new graduate students are new employee's too!

[NETID & UIN](#)

Students, faculty, and staff at Texas A&M are given two major pieces of identifying information, a personal NETID and UIN.

- [UINs are Universal Identification Numbers](#) and are often used when dealing with things requiring administrative access such as paying tuition, choosing classes, or looking at employment information. Your UIN is similar to your social security number, and is in fact tied to it in the university records. HINT: UINs are on A&M ID's.
- Your [NETID](#) is your username for logging into Texas A&M (TAMU) online systems and the majority of computers on campus. Your NETID is the first part of your TAMU email (e.g. [person77@tamu.edu](#)), so make sure to choose a professional one!
- Student ID: You can obtain your student ID by going to the General Services Complex (GSC) and showing a form of ID to the student ID office. They will print it on the spot! This building is on West Campus so it'd be recommended to take the bus or drive.

Funding

There are two main types of funding associated to graduate students: Fellowships (e.g. Diversity) and Departmental (e.g. Merit). Funding sources are outlined in the offer given to prospective students, and have different stipends and requirements. Notably, many fellowships do not have grading or teaching requirements, or have limited requirements (half of normal assigned teaching/grading hours) during the first three years or so. Departmental funding sources usually require some grading, teaching, or other service requirement. For questions about your own funding source, please contact your advisor, or the Head of Graduate Studies: Charles Samuelson, or OGAPS if the fellowship is through the graduate department (i.e. Diversity Fellowship).

Stipends & Payroll

During orientation, incoming graduate students complete paperwork to establish your income sources. Many students receive direct deposits to their bank accounts. Stipends and payroll are delivered at the beginning of the month, following each month's completion. NOTE: This means that your first stipend, or payments, will most likely occur in the first week of October, having completed your first month as a student in September. This catches many people off guard! Try to have some money saved for your first month!

Tuition & Fees

You are required to pay for tuition and/or fees [usually by the end of the first month of classes](#) (September or January) every semester. Depending on your funding source, most graduate students don't need to pay tuition. HOWEVER, many students are required to pay fees to the university, which can amount to more than \$1000. Further, be aware that the university sends out emails around these dates including information about your tuition/fee balance. If the number seems particularly high, consider that OGAPS (the office of graduate and professional studies) often does not process funding fully until a week or less before tuition is due. If you wish to double check information about this, go to the website included in your tuition email, or go to the tuition page under the finances tab of your [howdy](#) portal. NOTE: tuition emails often say you have a large negative balance. A negative balance means you don't need to worry about anything!

NOTE: You may be able to get your fees paid by going through the ["Request to pay fees and tuition" form](#)

Healthcare & Benefits

As a graduate student, you are an employee of Texas A&M, and are thus entitled to healthcare benefits. Depending on your funding source, you may be eligible for partial or complete healthcare coverage for yourself and dependants in your family. Please contact the business staff about any concerns you have about these information, or go to your [SSO page](#) to manage your healthcare information.

If you have a fellowship, your healthcare will function and disburse differently. You can contact Lisa Williams at OGAPS for questions about your healthcare, or the current OGAPS Award Administrator (Google-able).

Reimbursements

Travel funding

There are a number of ways to obtain travel funding, we suggest you talk to your advisor for any opportunities particular to you. The Psychology department has a fund available to graduate students for use once a year, that awards funding based on your time in the department and your productivity.

- Step 1: Fill out [this form \(See "Graduate Student Travel Fund"\)](#), try to do this at least one month before your conference date.
- Step 2: You will receive confirmation of your travel funds awarded via email, with further instructions, something like the following:
- Step 3: Submit a leave request in CONCUR for \$1 prior to your trip. Account number can be obtained by contacting Fritzie Freeman at ffreeman@tamu.edu
- Step 4: All foreign travel must be approved in advance of your trip through CONCUR or you will not be reimbursed.
- Step 5: You have up to 60 days after your trip to submit your receipts into CONCUR for reimbursement. Receipts submitted after the 60 day deadline could be considered taxable income to you.
- Step 6: All funds received this year must be spent by August 10, 2018. If you are unable to use the funds for the requested trip please notify the business office at psycbusiness@tamu.edu.

You may also seek out travel funding from a number of different organizations by award, such as [OGAPS](#), or the [graduate professional student council](#) (GPSC, a graduate student-government).

Events

There are also a number of ways to obtain reimbursements for a number of university related event, such as food and parties hosted by the department. On some occasions, you may be able to obtain refreshments for events reimbursed by the department, either through [club/organization funding](#), or by talking to your advisor (for events like lab meetings).

Access

Your affiliation with TAMU, and the psychology department grants you extensive access to a number of online and analog resources. We've listed important related information here, along with information about how to gain access to places which you may require.

Computer logins

All psychology students, both graduate and undergraduate, have access to logging into psychology department computers (such as those in the Psychology Building, or in Milner) through the use of their NETID and password (the same as your email password). Further, faculty generally have server space dedicated to them which can only be accessed by particular people. This server folder is located on the S: drive on any psychology computer, under the "labs" folder. If you need access to another lab's folder, you may wish to contact the related faculty, and complete an [onboarding form](#), to be sent to liberlartsit@tamu.edu. NOTE: such forms are also commonly used for getting RA's access to these same folders.

Important Websites

[HOWDY](#): This site is hub from where you can access almost everything needed for life at TAMU, such as your email, class registration, bill statements, parking, eCampus, SSO, etc.

[SSO / workday](#): This site is connected to your employment. You can set up your benefits here (iBenefits), obtain pay stubs and tax documents (HRConnect), and complete university-required trainings here (TrainTraq). You also go here (CONCUR) to get approval for travel in order to get travel reimbursement (See the above travel reimbursement information for further CONCUR instructions). Tip: workday seems to just log you in to SSO.

[IRIS](#): This site is where you submit applications to the IRB and add personnel connected to your studies.

[eCampus](#): This is the course management website, you use this for teaching and as a student in some classes!

Library: The library houses an impressive quantity of reference material, including older textbooks that can be excellent resources for research and writing! Graduate students have the privilege of being able to check out up to 99 books at a time, for periods lasting several months. You won't regret becoming familiar with the library.

SONA: SONA is the psychology department research pool, where students can sign up for studies, and researchers can post studies. You'll need an accepted IRB application to post a study. Once you have that, [refer to the instructions on this page](#) for how to set up your study. Once you have emailed the materials to the SONA administrator, you can make a study on SONA, with the "name" that was given to you in the SONA study approval email (pay special attention to the SONA Procedures & SONA Study Request Form).

See also:

[Psychology Website](#)

[Professional Development by OGAPS](#)

Building Access

Keys: During your time at A&M, you'll need access to a number of rooms for a number of reasons. Jeannine Scambray (PSYC 232A) takes care of handling keys, and can help you with any related concerns. If you need a key for a class you teach, she can give it to you (although many rooms are moving over to the lockbox system). If you need a key for research purposes, you may need to complete [a key form](#), and get a signature from your advisor.

Buildings: Your Student ID serves many purposes, not the least of which includes granting you access to the Psychology Building after hours. Locate the card readers outside of the Psychology Building, or Milner to gain access. Depending on who you are, you may have access to other buildings using your card. Contact Jeannine Scambray if you wish to gain access to a certain building. Further, buildings are often closed at 7pm on weekdays, and on weekends, so make sure to bring your card then. For more information, visit <https://myaggiocard.tamu.edu/>. **Note** that some buildings, such as Peterson, which house lab spaces do not have swipe access; therefore you will need to talk to Jeannine about getting a building key for after-hour access.

Rooms: If you ever need to book a room for a meeting, you may do so by, first, investigating the [availability of rooms](#). Then, email either Jeannine Scambray (jscambray@tamu.edu) or Audra Garcia (amgarcia@tamu.edu). When sending your requests please provide the following:

Your name

Date you would like to reserve

Start Time/End Time of event

First Date/Ending Date (for reoccurring events only)

Please be aware that most classrooms and meeting rooms are not intended for research purposes, though lab, club, or group meetings are almost always accepted.

Requirements and expectations

The requirements for graduate students are varied and wide. We recommend you have an extensive conversation with your advisor early on in your career to discuss what the department asks of you, what your area asks of you, what your advisor asks of you, and what you might want to accomplish for yourself. Below we've described the ins and outs of many common jobs and requirements graduate students have here.

Academic requirements

Area Requirements: Each area has its own requirements. One commonality is that each area has its own form of colloquium, brown-bag, cognoscenti, or weekly meeting. These often are the best time to make announcements or voice concerns. These meetings are generally mandatory, but it is most often to your benefit to attend. While you will probably listen to a speaker about their research, these meetings are *the* way to socialize and make friends, find collaborators, and enjoy yourself with your peers.

Clinical Area Specific Requirements: There are specific requirements for clinical students depending on their level in the program (e.g., intervention hours, outside practica, or assessment hours). It is recommended you visit the [Program Curricula](#) and [area specific webpage](#) for more information. It is always advised to discuss clinical requirements with your advisor(s) and the DCT on a semesterly basis

Social and Personality Area Specific Requirements: Please see the Social and Personality Curriculum document for additional information. This document should be provided to you by your advisor when you first arrive, and electronic copies will be sent out whenever an update occurs. Additional information can be found on the [Social & Personality Psychology specific webpage](#).

Faculty

Depending on your advisor, you may have meetings on a weekly or monthly basis. Some faculty opt for a recurring meeting time to keep both themselves, and you, on track. Often labs have monthly meetings, aimed at organizing the lab goals, preparing research assistants, and ensuring progress on group tasks.

Grading Assistantship/ Teaching Assistantship: GA/TA

These are jobs you take on, usually requiring 5-10 hours of commitment (each), that pay you a salary and keep you funded, The official time requirement (5/10 hrs, may have multiple, often total 20 hrs) is based on the type of funding you have, and certain people may not even need to fill these hours! The department is moving away from GA's, or grader positions, but these positions usually involve grading scantrons, entering e-campus grades, and helping with other mundane tasks for a faculty member. TA positions have a teaching requirement, and most often involve teaching a lab for intro to statistics for psychology, or experimental design (301/302). Teaching can be a very rewarding experience, but be careful about not letting it take up too much of your time. Depending on the particular faculty member, GA and TA positions can vary greatly in their commitment requirements. We recommend monitoring how much time your actual position takes, and speaking with your advisor or the person for whom you are teaching if the requirements seem to overshoot your projected weekly hours. Many faculty will tell you (more formally) that teaching pays the bills, but doesn't fill your cv like publications do, and may therefore not be your highest priority (unless you wish to take on a teaching-focused job)! Most graduate students will take on a TA position during their 2-4th years, with a greater teaching position (like teaching intro psych) around their fifth year.

Personal Requirements

Recurring forms: Every semester, you may need to submit to Peggy a [force course form](#) (such as for PSYC 685 or 691) indicating how many hours of research you are taking

Yearly requirements: Each area generally requires students to submit a self-evaluation on a yearly basis, which often amounts to an extended version of your CV. Watch out for emails about this and other similar requirements your area may have for you. Further, The department (Charlie Samuelson most often) may occasionally send out a call for updated CV's.

One-Time only's: Degree plan - The degree plan an official way the university checks up on you. Due by your fourth year, the degree plan requires you to list your dissertation committee and the classes you are going to include on your final course requirements. The degree plan often sneaks up on people, and students in their third year get academic holds close to their class registration time in the spring if they have not yet completed it. Take a look at the steps to graduation section of this handbook for more information

- **For those in I-O or Clinical:** You will need to submit two Degree plans during your time here, one for your Masters Degree/Thesis (2-3 year) and one for you Doctoral Degree/Thesis (3-5 year). Before you submit your Masters Degree Plan, you will need to submit a [MDD Petition](#) in DPSS well before you submit your degree plan. It is highly recommended you submit this petition within your first semester at TAMU to give OGAPS ample time to fulfill the request. This petition allows you to be "enrolled" in "two" graduate programs at once.

First year project poster: During (approximately) the first week of October, students in their second year must present a poster about a project they worked on during their first year. All students are required to do this, and everyone from faculty to grads and undergrads visit this 2-hr poster session. Also, there's food and cake. Contact Charlie Samuelson if you have any impending events around this time that may stop you from presenting.

Degree requirements and plans (How do I graduate?)

Masters vs Doctorates (conceptual and concrete differences): In essence, Masters' degrees are a recognition of training. Masters' degrees are often associated with the completion of a certain amount of classes and/or internship hours, and are generally aimed towards helping you obtain a non-academic job in your field. Alternatively, doctorates are an academic recognition, and essentially recognize you as an expert in your field. Because of these differences, students in more research focused programs like cognitive may not wish to obtain a masters degree. For those in I/O and Clinical, a Master's Degree is required by your area for progress in your Doctoral Program. There are certain requirements associated to completing these, and we strongly recommend you speak to your advisor, read about them in the department handbook, and visit the [OGAPS website on these graduation requirements](#). Also, take a look at the [GRAD "exit" checklist made up by the psychology department](#). Finally, we recommend taking a look at the information presented in the department handbook!

Sample Timeline: Broadly, your roadmap may look like the following:

- Year 1: GA position, Research, Classes
- Year 2: TA position, Research, Classes
 - Clinical: TA/GA position, Research, Classes, Client Therapy, Complete Master's Degree
- Year 3: TA position, Research, Classes, MAP/Master's degree, submit degree plan
 - Clinical: TA/GA position, Research, Classes, Client Therapy, Assessment Team, Outside Practica (optional), begin dissertation requirements
- Year 4: TA position, Research, Complete class requirements, Begin Dissertation requirements & do proposal meeting
 - Clinical: TA/GA position, Research, Classes, Therapy/Assessment (optional), Dissertation, Apply for Pre-Doctoral Internship
- Year 5: Teaching, Research, complete dissertation, Job searching
 - Clinical: Pre-Doctoral Internship, apply for post-doctoral positions

MAPs, Theses, and Dissertations

How do I complete these requirements? Your best first step is to talk to your advisor about these topics as early as possible. The following timeline outlines the first steps [presented by OGAPS on how to complete a dissertation](#), with the addition of some tips from previous

students. Note that each area has different specific requirements and idiosyncrasies, so be sure to talk to more senior students in your area for additional information!

1. Complete Degree Plan by 4th year (this includes all the classes you have taken, or will take, as well as an official listing for your dissertation committee members. Talk to your advisor about who to take on your committee. Complete this [through the online portal](#).
2. Complete a Preliminary exam (or a Major Area Paper). Take a look at this [preliminary exam checklist by OGAPS](#). People who present a MAP often hold their proposal meeting at the same time as their MAP presentation. Make sure you complete [this form](#) too!
3. Hold a Dissertation Proposal Meeting. This will involve 4 major steps. First, write a proposal! (talk to your advisor for information on that). Second, if you write a MAP, send it out for an initial review by your committee members, they may request you add or change stuff before they review it officially (give them 2 weeks). Then, send out an email organizing your proposal meeting, this should give the committee members at least two more weeks to review both your MAP and proposal. This email should be used to schedule your proposal meeting, since your committee members are probably busy people, it give them at least 1-2 weeks of possible proposal dates & times. Upon completion of the proposal, you will need to [complete this form](#). Be careful though! You will have 1 year of time, from the time this form is accepted by OGAPS, to defend your dissertation, so there's no need to send it out immediately.

Note: Upon completion of your graduation requirements, there are a few tasks that are not listed on the OGAPS website, but that are considered **mandatory**. Namely, an: exit interview with the department, an exit survey with OGAPS, and an exit survey sponsored by the NIH.

Day-to-day (how much time should I spend at the office?)

Many advisors recommend spending an ample amount of time at the office. Some people may prefer to work at home, but being in your office for extensive amounts of time makes you available for a large number of opportunities, especially if you are placed in the Psychology Building, or Milner. Many collaborations, new ideas, and opportunities befall people who are ready to meet with others casually. If you are planning for a research-driven career following graduate school, research-oriented advisors recommend spending approximately 40-50 hours in the lab on a weekly basis (if not more).

Clinical Students: All client paperwork MUST be completed in the clinic due to HIPAA Regulations. During your 2nd and 3rd years you will spend a lot of time working in the clinic.

Classes and Credits

How many hours should I take? Graduate students are generally required to take 9 credit hours per semester, with varying amounts during summer semesters. These 9 hours depend on your area, with some areas taking mostly courses, and others taking mostly research hours. You can apply for as many research hours as you wish per semester, but these should

generally be used to fill out your 9-hr requirement after course selection. Research hours can be applied for using [the “force Course form”](#).

In & Out-of-area courses: Most graduate students will need to take a certain number of in area, and a certain number of out-of-area courses. Many in-area courses are predetermined by your area (e.g. cognitive students must take a cognitive course), but many others are open to self selection. You may take courses as they come up, or take courses out of the Psychology Department if your advisor/Area head approve them. Out of area courses require you to take courses within psychology, but outside of your area of research. You may also be able to substitute courses from outside of psychology if approved by your advisor and the head of graduate studies, Charles Samuelson. Again, talk to senior students in your area for an idea of what courses to take, what courses count for what requirements, etc.

- Can I apply credits from x? You will need to discuss your area course requirements with the Area Head. It is up to the area whether your credits will transfer from another institution. For most, two courses maximum can be transferred. If they approve the transfer, you will need to submit the syllabus from the course to your advisor(s) and the Area Head for consideration.

Certifications: Certifications are qualifications you can earn, usually by completing a series of courses or attending a number of seminars. There are a number of certificates available to psychology graduate students, which may be useful depending on your area of study. See a few common certifications graduate students historically have earned below:

- [Educational Psychology Stats Certificate](#) (Advanced Research Methods)
- [Statistics Department Applied Statistics Certificate](#)
- [Africana Studies Certificate](#)
- [Women and Genders Studies certificate](#)
- [Academy for Future Faculty \(AFF\)](#)
- [OGAPS Professional Development Certificate](#)

Auditing: the practice of taking a class without officially enrolling in it. Most professors are happy to have students participating just for the possibility of learning, and will often allow you to audit a course as long as you contact them beforehand. Often audited courses expect you to complete all the course material as you would normally, with the only difference being that you would not receive university credit. This is an excellent way to advance your knowledge without having to pay extra tuition. However, be considerate of the extra coursework this will lead you to take on.

Jobs and Assignments

In total, you may be required to work up to 20 hours for either a GAR, GAT, GANT, Clinical Rotation (Clinical students only), I/O Internship (I/O students only), or a combination of these positions. These assignments depend on the type of funding you receive, and you should receive email confirmation about your assignment during the preceding semester.

- A combination could mean 10 hr GAR and 10 hr GAT for example

- Combinations typically do not occur in your first year; most likely you will have a 20 hr GAT, or GAR your first year.
- If you want to work more than your 20 hours, you must first get approval from your faculty advisor/PI and then submit for departmental approval.
- You are paid on (or near) the first of every month, beginning after one month of working. *AKA your first paycheck will come in October of your first year, not in September.*

[GAR \(research\) vs GAT \(Teaching Assistant - TA\)](#)

Use the link to view the OGAPS guidelines for each position.

GARs: These are research positions, and much like signing up for research hours, do not have any specific requirements other than you are supposed to do research for this time. More often this is under your primary advisor if they have the funds to support a student. Advisors with grants will give their students GAR positions. Some of these are through inter-departmental collaborations with faculty who have research funding. Either way, these are supported by research funding and grants.

GATs: There are two types of GAT positions: grader and instructor. First year students almost always receive a grader position, second year and beyond depend on your experience and career goals. If you previously obtained a Masters Degree, you may be asked to instruct, or co-instruct, a course during your first year. GAT Instructor positions typically begin with a 203 or 204 lab class. These are the experimental psych and statistics lab courses, with about 25-35 students per class. There is a written component to the grading and weekly course meetings.

Grader Position: As a grader, you will be assigned typically to one instructor who could have anywhere from 1-4 sections. Usually 1 section is equivalent to a 10 hr assignment, but this depends on the class size. Grader positions are reserved for large classes with high enrollment. The average course has 100-200 students per section. Responsibilities for a grader position depend on the faculty instructor you are assigned to.

Some responsibilities could include:

- Grade assignments and extra credit assignments (with large courses, if there are any written assignments, they are limited to 2-3 pages maximum).
- Grade Exams (typically scantrons, you will work with Sam in the [Scanning Services](#))
- Enter, or upload, grades on [eCampus](#) and/or [Howdy](#)
- Respond to student emails in a timely manner
- Hold weekly office hours (Jeannine will supply a TA office key to those who need it - PSYC 288)
- Schedule and conduct make-up exams with students
- Coordinate with [Disability Services](#) for students with accommodations
- Proctor exams and final exams
- Attend classes (not usually, but some require it)

TA Training: You are required to attend a one day, in-person training for the University prior to starting your TA position. Follow this [link](#) for more information. You should receive an email about TAI early- to mid-August. IN ADDITION, you must complete the online evaluation of the training to receive credit! Don't forget! You will also received department training as part of the first year seminar with Dr. Samuelson. Both are required to get your teaching certification through the department and university.

External Funding: Some students acquire external funding (e.g. NSF, NRSA, or other Fellowships). If your funding covers the minimum 20 hr requirement, then you will not be assigned a position through the university. NOTE: External funding means you're no longer an "employee" and therefore will need to secure health, dental, and/or vision insurance through other means.

How do I do these jobs?

Grading, Scantrons, & eCampus: Grading scantrons is probably the easiest assignment you may get, and involves simply going over to [TAMU's scanning services](#) room, located on the 3rd Floor of Henderson Hall, room 1157 (Phone: (979) 862-2918). Grading anything else should be clearly instructed by the teacher of that course, and often involves grading free-response questions for exams. Be ready to ask lots of questions of your instructor for these types of assignments, as they can have very wide-ranging responses. As a teacher, try to make the best use of eCampus you can. At baseline, eCampus is an excellent place to upload files for your students to access, but you may also often be required to input grades using eCampus' gradebook system. This system is a little cumbersome and slow, so I recommend using the file download & upload system to input grades. Located at the top right of the grade center on eCampus, this system lets you download your gradebook to an excel-openable file. You can then fill in your grades, and reupload the file to make the desired changes all at once. TIP: if you need to upload grades for a new assignment, make sure to make the column through ecampus, before downloading the grading file.

What can I do to make sure a semester goes well?: GAR: Make sure you and your advisor are on the same page concerning your time and effort in lab. GAT: Read through the syllabus before class starts. Clarify anything you don't understand with the instructor, students will ask you questions and they will try to use the syllabus against you for better grades, more time, due dates, etc. Know the [student code!](#) Specifically the [attendance policy](#) for make up exams. You will also memorize the [Aggie Code of Honor](#) by proxy, "An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal or tolerate those who do." Should one of your students break the Honor Code (aka cheat, plagiarize, etc.) you will work with the [Honors Council](#) to file a violation.

Teaching Resources & Disability: Some students may require certain special accomodations associated with disabilities. You should receive extensive information on the topic of disabilities during your TA training say, but in most cases these circumstances simply mean that a person may require extra time on their test (1.5 times normal test time) or taking the

test at the disabilities testing center. Students should approach you themselves about these issues, and provide you with the information about how you should handle them individually. Below, I've listed a number of useful websites for teachers at TAMU (both for your own use and to refer your students to), but my main recommendation for how to do well as a teach is to communicate thoroughly with peers, particularly those that have taught what you have taught.

- [Disability services](#)
- [Center for teaching excellence](#)
- [Writing Center](#)
- [Academic Success Center-Tutoring](#)
- [Report misconduct, emergencies, harassment, etc.](#)

Research

Research is one of the most important and daunting tasks of a graduate student. The importance of amassing publications can vary greatly depending on your particular area of study, but most hiring committees highly value quantity and quality of an applicant's population. It's a good idea to speak to your advisor early on in your graduate career to talk about how important publications can be for your career, and possibly set a goal for progress and completion of research over the course of your studies.

Resources

Technology, Free Software, & Statistics

- **Qualtrics** is a survey software available to all TAMU students and faculty. Check to see if your lab already has an account, and if not [apply here!](#)
- **MATLAB** (free for students, alongside a number of other programs at <https://software.tamu.edu/public/AvailableSoftware.aspx>)
- **Statistics:** As a TAMU student and as a Psych grad student, you have access to SPSS. As a TAMU student, you also have access to Stata and SAS. You can also request to have R installed on your office machine.
- See also the programs available to graduate students through TAMU for [free or reduced price](#), or available through any [TAMU workstation/computer](#).
- Psychology Department Integrated Biometrics system: (contact Department Head)
- Your lab may also use additional specialized software, so be sure to talk with your fellow labmates!

SONA

[Sona](#) is the research pool online system, for researchers to find participants. There are a number of steps you must follow to set up your own study on SONA, listed here. First, you need to request a researcher account. Check first with your advisor/lab mates to see if your lab uses

a shared account or individual researcher accounts. If you need an account, send the Subject Pool Coordinator an email at tamusubjectpool@gmail.com requesting a new researcher account with your name, the username you would like for your SONA account, and the email address you want associated with the SONA account. You should receive an email from SONA with a temporary password within 1-2 business days.

For every study, you must first request a study number. Note that “every study” means each individual methodology. Minor differences in method (such as different paper & paper measures) may be acceptable to run under one study number, but any differences in length of study, risks involved, or related IRB application must be different “study numbers”. In addition, each semester has its own set of study numbers, so you may need to request a continuation each semester, for each study.

[Download a cover sheet](#) from the department website then send the completed cover sheet with a copy of your IRB approval letter and any consent documents/debriefing documents to the Subject Pool Coordinator at tamusubjectpool@gmail.com. You will then be issued a study number for that semester within 1-2 business days.

Once you have a study number, you can create your study in SONA. Make sure the name is your study number, and you fill out the time and credits appropriately. Remember, 30 minutes = 1 credit, and you must always round up (e.g., a 35 minute study = 2 credits).

Note: Each lab is allotted ~10% of the pool max per semester. Usually this is a very large number that most labs do not hit, and the Subject Pool Coordinator will let you know if your lab is requesting close to the per-lab max. You can always ask the Subject Pool Coordinator what the semester’s approximate cap will be via email (tamusubjectpool@gmail.com) if you are concerned.

When you are ready for your study go live, make sure to make your study active by clicking “Yes” under “Active Study?” option. Next, click “Send an Approval Request” (under the “Change Study Information” submenu) to have SONA generate an email requesting approval to the Subject Pool Coordinator. You should receive study approval in 1-2 business days max.

[Check the department webpage](#) or the research sign-up website directly ([SONA](#)) for dates for each semester. Generally, in Fall and Spring semesters, the first week of school is to get accounts set up. The second week is for prescreening. The subject pool opens for studies ~third week of class, and closes at 5 pm on the last day of class. **MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT POST TIMESLOTS AFTER THE SUBJECT POOL CLOSES.** Your studies will not be approved before the subject pool opens, but you can request study numbers whenever. In Summer semesters, there is no prescreen, and the subject pool opens the first day of classes.

If you want to prescreen, you MUST HAVE IRB APPROVAL to do so. About 1 month before classes start, watch for an email regarding a call for prescreen materials. All materials must be submitted at least ~1 week before classes start to be re-approved by the IRB for that semester’s prescreen.

Questions regarding SONA, contact the Subject Pool Coordinator at tamusubjectpool@gmail.com. See also the [general information page for participating in research studies](#).

IRB

The Internal Review Board (IRB) at Texas A&M is the official ethics and safety committee for the university. If you would like to gather data using human subjects, gather data from an existing database, or otherwise run a study, you need to complete an IRB application for your study. [Access and complete IRB applications through their online portal.](#)

There are many resources available to help you successfully complete IRB applications. We recommend you talk to a fellow graduate student, or a faculty member for concerns regarding your type of research, and each IRB application can vary greatly depending on area and type of investigation. However, you may also obtain information from the official IRB office website. Which contains templates for forms, contact information for concerns regarding the IRB, and general guidelines on [how best to ensure compliance.](#)

TIP: make sure you include any research assistants on your application if they are proctoring or handling data! This means they also must have completed CITI training.

Research Assistants (RA's)

Research assistants can be amazingly helpful if you know how to use them. Often, undergraduate research assistants are relegated to proctoring studies, and data entry, but they can provide a wealth of benefits that you may not have previously imagined. For example, I often ask my research assistants to read through portions of my academic writing, applications, or study materials to help identify mistakes and unclear writing. Such a request benefits the graduate student, but it also gives RA's an opportunity to critically read through high-level writing, a prospect that can be invaluable for those aiming to become graduate students as well.

Be sure to talk with your advisor and labmates about how your lab's specific procedures for recruiting RAs and the types of work they perform as labs vary widely on how RAs are recruited, how many RAs are recruited in a semester, and what is specifically required by their RAs

Obtaining RAs

RAs are often recruited during the last two months of an academic semester, for the following semester, but you can obtain RA's as late as 1-week into the semester you want them for.

You can recruit RA's by:

- Posting an advert with the advising office (Send an email to one of the advisors)
- Talking to a class you or your advisor teaches
- Sending out a recruitment email to all psychology undergraduates (contact the advising office)
- Sending out a student-wide email through the [TAMU bulk mail service](#)

RA forms

RA's gain university credit by enrolling in a [485 or a 491 course](#). Most RA's will be 485's, as 491 is a more involved position. Talk to your advisor for the differences they require for 491's, or honors students.

Keys for RAs

Most psychology rooms that you may need to give your RA's access to will have key lockboxes available. Otherwise, you may use the [key request form](#), and have them turn it in to Jeannine Scambray.

Computers for RAs

All psychology undergraduates should have access to psychology computers, but if you need them to have access to the shared lab servers, or to be able to print, you must email liberlartsit@tamu.edu a completed [onboarding form](#)

Department Webpage

All graduate students are listed on the department website. If you would like your own webpage (highly recommended as this is a place for you to put your CV, links to your Google Scholar/ResearchGate accounts, and increase your visibility as you approach the job market), consider making your own page through Wordpress or similar services and contracting ???? to have your link added to your name.

Getting Ahead in Academia

There are many many resources available to graduate students, especially those in the psychology department. For example, the department often hold 2-4 Professional Development Seminars per semester. These are held by the department and discuss a variety of topics such as research writing, job talks, applying for jobs, grievances, and grant-writing.

Grants & Fellowships

Awards such as grants and fellowships can be an amazing boon to your career in academia. Most if not all research focused individuals will seek to apply for grants and fellowships at some point in their career. In essence, grants and fellowships are monetary awards that a person wins based on an application and approval from a selection committee. These awards can have a variety of criteria, but most often reflect the feasibility and quality of the application. The Department of Psychology offers a number of helpful resources on how to produce a good application, such as professional development seminars that occur.

Common Awards

One common form of fellowship is a dissertation fellowship, which is offered by many national and international organizations. Dissertation fellowships aim to pay for your last year as a graduate student, so that you may write your dissertation potentially without any additional requirements such as TA'ing positions. These applications are usual

Common grant organizations

- GRFP (NSF) - awarded 1st or 2nd year of grad school ONLY, 3 years of full funding.
- NRSA - awarded during years 4-5 of grad school
- NIH
- We suggest you search online for fellowships, grants, and scholarships that fit your area of research!

Awards, contests, and events

Awards and contests are an excellent way to improve your academic profile, and grow your CV. At A&M, there are a sizable number of organizations itching to distribute awards to promising graduate students. Below we list some of the better known events and awards you may be interested in. Remember that including participation in a poster session or talk can be a valuable addition to your CV, even if you don't win anything.

TAMU Student Research Week

This is a yearly event that features graduate and undergraduate student research. One can present their research as a poster or paper and get feedback for the presentation. Awards are distributed by subject area.

[GPSC Travel Awards](#)

[Click for details](#) \$100-500 depending on type of travel. Psychology students FREQUENTLY win these, so don't hold back and apply if you need funds! Particularly useful if you plan to attend 2+ conferences in one year, since your department travel funding can only be applied to one per year.

OGAPS Research and Presentation Travel Awards:

[See website for details](#). These include up to \$1000 depending on type of travel (domestic, international, transformative...). These awards can only be awarded ONCE per DEGREE, this means clinical students (or anyone who gets both a masters and phd here) can actually submit TWICE.

Many societies and conferences offer student research awards for excellent research presented at meetings.

CV writing

There is a wealth of resources available for people wishing to improve their CV both online and locally (for example, [G.R.A.D Aggies](#) offers CV workshops). One of the best methods is to consider a number of existing faculty CV's, especially those of newer hires. Some pointers for graduate students CV's specifically include:

Consider the ordering of your sections! Many graduate students are low on publications, but your awards, teaching experience, presentations, or ongoing/under review projects may be much larger. It's a good idea to order your CV's sections by the amount of impact they can have.

Constantly update your CV! Often graduate students feel as though their participation or work in some event, class, or mentorship opportunity is not worth mentioning on their CV. However, anything that would boost your academic profile should be featured. For example, you may wish to include a small section detailing your vast experience mentoring undergraduate research assistants.

Expand your publication list! Because graduate students haven't had much time to publish a library of papers, it's important to show that you have a bounty of projects at various steps in the research ladder. Consider including "ongoing studies" and/or "under review" sections after your publications list. Any posters or talks help here too!

Additional training

There are a variety of options, both at Texas A&M and across the country, to develop additional training and skills that may be of use to you. Keep an eye out on your specific sub-area's listserv, and sign up for your area's common society's listservs for additional opportunities.

At TAMU, there are a variety of certifications that students have taken in the past, including:

- [Educational Psychology Stats Certificate](#) (Advanced Research Method)
- [Statistics Department Applied Statistics Certificate](#)
- [Africana Studies Certificate](#)
- [Women and Genders Studies certificate](#)

Outside A&M, students have taken additional trainings, including:

- **Stats Camp.** Week-long camps during the summer. Topics include: SEM, MLM/HLM, Mixture Modeling, Data Mining, Meta-Analysis, Bayesian Stats, Mediation, Psychometrics

Join Key Professional Societies

There are many professional societies in psychology, many of which host the conferences you are likely to attend. Talk with senior graduate students in your area and lab to see which societies are the ones worth joining particularly for your area! Not only will you be able to expand your professional network and present your research at national conferences by joining, but often you will also qualify for additional training opportunities, summer camps, travel funding, research funding, physical journal copies delivered by mail or electronic versions by email, society listservs and job posting websites, and more!

Examples of some societies graduate students are members of are: [Society for Social and Personality Psychology \(SPSP\)](#), [Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology \(SIOP\)](#), [Psychonomic Society](#), [Society for Neuroscience \(SfN\)](#), [Association for Psychological Science \(APS\)](#), [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#). There may also be specialty societies your lab specifically is a member of, so don't be shy in asking your fellow labmates and advisor on what society(s) to join!

Alternative Career Paths

There are of course other things beyond academia that you can do with your degree. While the department's explicit goal is to train graduate students for future academic placements and is therefore set up to primarily benefit people who want that career trajectory, there are ways in which you can set yourself up for success if you wish to pursue a different career path. Note that non-academic jobs are also hyper-competitive, so don't expect these types of jobs to be an "easy" plan B after graduation. Below are some resources that you may find helpful if you want to consider a job in industry, government, etc.

Internships

Internships are a great way to experience what life as a psychological scientist outside of academia is like, and such experiences will also set you up for success on the non-academic job market. Below are just a few places to look for possible internships, there are plenty more out there that you can find through a quick Google search!

- **Facebook: due February** Data Scientist, Analytics, Intern/Co-op (requires programming language skills); UX Researcher, Intern/Co-op (no required programming, hires social psychologists)
- **Data Science for Social Good Fellowship (due February annually)**. Data Scientists, transitioning from all fields (requires Python and/or R familiarity). Paid fellowship to work on a data science problem that makes a difference. A good way to get ready for this is to take STAT courses with R, SAS, and JMP. Requires relocating to Chicago for late May through mid-late August. Salary for this time is anywhere from \$11,000 to 16,000 based

on ability. <http://dssg.io>. Tom Tibbett, graduate of the social and personality area, 2015 Fellow.

- **Google: due January.** People Ops. Quantitative Analyst (I think this one requires programming skills)
- **APA internships:** Cover a range of areas, including policy internships. Elyse Mowle, clinical area student, 2017 intern.

Additional Resources

There are resources on campus to help with finding and preparing for jobs, which are very helpful if you are considering non-academic jobs as your faculty mentor(s) are unlikely to have much experience with those types of job searches. The [Career Center](#) is a great place to start.

There are also lots of places online to find advice and information about non-academic careers. A few places to start include:

- APA: <http://www.apa.org/careers/resources/profiles/non-academic.aspx>
- Versatile PhD: <https://versatilephd.com/>
- Chronicle of Higher Education: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Where-to-Find-Information-on/45379>

Also, talk to your fellow grad students to learn who has graduated recently and is now working outside of academia and get in contact with those people. They are a great resource for information about what their job is like, how they got where they are now, and can help you begin to network with people outside of academia.

Available Services and Systems

Work orders & Maintenance Requests

Whenever a light bulb goes out, a door starts jamming, or any other building-related repair is needed, contact Jeannine (jscambray@tamu.edu) for a work order!

Grievances, Personal, or Confidential concerns

Personal issues with fellow students, faculty, or staff are often best handled by talking to the people around you. However, certain topics that require discretion can be difficult to deal with. Topics such as interest in changing advisors or concerns about how a class is taught may be best suited for a talk with your advisor, your area head, the associate head, or the head of the psychology department depending on severity. These administrative figures are always happy to field concerns, especially in an informal manner. Formal concerns are much more difficult to deal with, and involve formally presenting issues to certain committees.

The ombuds representative (currently George Cunningham) can also serve as a confidante and informative resource to discuss potential ethics or conduct violations.

Tamu Library

The TAMU library system is extensive and comprehensively services almost anything a budding academic [may need to borrow](#) (laptops, projectors, cd players etc!) The main Library (Evans) is located at the center of campus, and include 7 (?) floors of books and public working space. Books are of course available, but can be difficult to find manually given their large quantity. Try [first searching for the book in the library database](#), or asking one of the librarians for help finding a certain book. TIP: the library loans rooms in if you would like some quite solitary workspace, or need to hold a meeting outside of the psychology buildings!

Tamu post office

MSC

The MSC (Memorial Student Center) is conveniently located only a short walk away from the psychology building, and offers an extensive number of services, with a shortlist included below.

Dining: There are many meal options available at the msc, including burritos, Panda Express, Starbucks/Barnes & Noble cafe (does not take Starbucks gift cards), and a number of other small eateries and stores. Find these in the basement, or on the first floor next to the Flag Room. Note that on holidays and during the summer, hours can become erratic. Check out [Dine on Campus](#) to make sure things are open before you go!

Bookstore: A Barnes and Noble Bookstore is on the first floor, along with a Starbucks.

Arts and Entertainment: Sometimes free movies play here on Fridays (see announcements along walkways). There are also multiple art galleries that host exhibits on the first floor. There are also a number of eateries and other activities available here. Many student organizations set up shops at the MSC, and there are often bands, or temporary shops open at the pavillion beside the MSC.

Rudder Complex: Rudder is located next to the MSC. Lectures, movies, plays, and other types of events are held here.

Passport Services

The Study abroad office (Pavillion, first floor) offers photo and passport application services to the general public.

Poster printing

Typically, you pay for this service yourself; however, you can submit a receipt for reimbursement if you are using your travel funds for the conference that you'll be bringing this

poster to. Your advisor may also cover the cost of your poster printing, so be sure to talk to your labmates about what your lab does! You can print posters cheaply at two locations on campus:

- the Student Computing Center (~\$20 or less, small size posters)
- the Architecture Dept. Printing Center (~\$20 or less, larger conference posters)

Scanning

Documents can be scanned at the copiers in the mailroom in the Psychology Building; you then email scanned documents to yourself. There are many scanning services available across campus as well, such as in the library, the library annex, or the SCC. Scanning for scantrons is also available through [TAMU's scanning services](#) center.

Transport, buses, and parking

Buses: Texas A&M offers free bus transport to all students and faculty, see [this bus route list](#) to find which may be helpful to you! These busses run most school days, with reduced schedules after 7, and non-school days such as weekends and holidays. HINT: HEB is on route 26/Rudder. There is an A&M App that you can download on your phone to access the bus schedule at all times!

Parking: [Parking](#) can be difficult for the inexperienced Aggie. There are a number of [hour-paid parking garages](#) across campus. Otherwise, open air parking lots almost always require passes bought by semester, except for some which allow [night and weekend parking](#) with certain rules. See the [transport website](#) for more information!

Office supplies, & printing

We recommend talking to your advisor for their preferred way of obtaining office supplies. Office supplies can be obtained at the Psychology Main Office, but these are billed to your advisor's funds, and so they may wish to obtain them some other way. Graduate students are generally not required to bring supplies of their own, but feel free to bring a favorite stapler or any other personally desired supplies.

For printing, as TAMU students we are allocated \$30/semester in Fall and Spring and \$15/Summer for color and black & white printing. There is a printer on the first floor of the Psychology Building. You can email documents to aggieprint@tamu.edu from your own computer, which will later inform you when your documents are ready for printing. You would then swipe your student ID at the printer. There are also [other places](#) where you can print, such as Evans Library and the Student Computing Center.

IT services

Troyce Wilson and Hugh McCann are our wonderful IT staff. If you need technical support or software installed onto your computer, you can contact them at LiberalArtsIT@tamu.edu.

Furniture and Storage

Jeannine and Peggy can help you access surplus furniture or store furniture you don't want. Often, if you see furniture in the hallway, it may be available for anyone interested (talk to Jeannine or the nearby office folks for information). Talk to your advisor about any furniture needs for the lab - they will let you know if they have funds to order new items or if you need to access surplus.

Mental Health & Wellness

The life of a graduate student can be harsh and stressful. The university offers a number of wellness services free of charge, including the [psychology clinic for counseling](#), and an [anonymous hotline for someone to talk to immediately](#). There is also a wellness program offered by the University for A&M employees that offer self-care classes or events (i.e. lunchtime yoga) at the MSC.

Diversity Resources

Organizations on campus offer opportunities to meet broad groups of graduate students, including:

- DIVE-IN
- AGPCC - Aggie Graduate & Professional Community
- YPA - Young Professionals Association
- BGSA
- Latinx Graduate Student Association
- ISA - Indian Student Association
- GLBT Resource Center
- [Aggie-Allies](#) - LGBT friendly community & resources ([brochure](#))

Appendices

Contact information

- IT: Troyce/Hugh: LiberalArtsIT@tamu.edu
 - Contact these folks for any IT related concerns. If your office computer stops working, if your teaching projector wont turn on, if you need help with any other form of IT related subjects.
- TAMU Subject Pool Coordinator: tamusubjectpool@gmail.com
- Charlie Samuelson: Associate Head of Graduate studies
 - Charlie is the go-to person for a large part of the questions you may have about the graduate program. You may wish to contact Charlie for:
 - Concerns about degree plans and funding

- Concerns about travel funds and reimbursement
- Concerns about graduating
- Interactions with OGAPS
- Useful websites!
 - Maps
 - [Parking](#)
 - [Busses](#)
 - [Campus & Buildings](#)
 - psych website, etc.
 - Psychology Department website: psychology.tamu.edu
 - See the resources-> Graduate/Faculty page for a variety of useful forms, information, and checklists (e.g. RA information, Course Catalogue, and Registration forms)
 - Graduate and Professional Studies: ogaps.tamu.edu
 - *Submitting IRB applications(?)*: iris.tamu.edu
 - SONA: <https://tamupsychology.sona-systems.com>
 - Aggie Spirit Bus Routes: <http://transport.tamu.edu/busroutes/>
 - TAMU Map: <http://aggiemap.tamu.edu>

Information regarding fellowships:

- Diversity/Merit Fellowships
 - Professional Development Certificates -
 - Fellows are required to attend workshops through the university that lead to the achievement of a professional development certificate. Options include:
 - G.R.A.D. Aggies - <http://ogaps.tamu.edu/Buttons/Professional-Development-Opportunities/G-R-A-D-Aggies/Certificate>
 - Academy for Future Faculty - <http://cte.tamu.edu/Graduate-Student-Support/Academy-of-Future-Faculty>
 - Socials & Events -
 - You are also required to attend the fellowship socials and events that OGAPS will send out periodic emails about. There is typically one social in the Fall and one in the Spring.
 - Teaching/Funding -
 - Your funding comes 75% from OGAPS and 25% from the psychology department. Therefore, you are required to work for the department for 10 hours a week. Typically, first year fellows are given a grader position and should get an email during their first few weeks.
 - Tuition and fees are paid directly by OGAPS to the University, and these transactions are visible in Howdy's Finance Portal (howdy.tamu.edu)

- Your fees are disbursed for the entire year at once (they may have changed this) so be sure to keep aside enough for your fees for the Spring if you receive a refund in September or October (~\$1.5K).
 - Your funding is paid out during the Fall and Spring semesters but is technically supposed to cover the whole year. I have heard you can choose/opt to receive your funding over 12 months or 10 months, however I was automatically enrolled in a 10 month schedule and therefore set aside some funds monthly to save for the summer (summer rent, living costs, tuition, etc).
 - Health Insurance -
 - You will fill out the payroll information with Brooklynn Smith as everyone does after orientation. However, mention that you are a fellow because some of the paperwork is different.
 - Following this, you can enroll for health insurance as either a student or an employee of the University. I was told that the “Grad Student Insurance Plan” through BlueCross BlueShield was the most beneficial plan for the price, and so far I have been very happy with it. To enroll, you can speak to Linda Thurman at OGAPS or Lisa Williams at the Benefits Office and they will help you set up. You will have to pay for your insurance out of pocket and OGAPS will reimburse you. You have the option to pay monthly, bi-annually, or annually. The reimbursement does take about 3-5 weeks. Lisa Williams understands the fellowship/insurance process very well and is very helpful!
- NSF (GRFP) Fellowships
 - Requirements: <https://www.nsfgrfp.org/>
 - You may apply in your 1st or 2nd year of graduate school, and only once
 - Your research must be basic science research in healthy populations, NOT clinical research
 - Talk to your advisor if you are interested
 - Resources:
 - NSF GRF: <https://www.nsfgrfp.org/>
 - NSF GRFP Blogs: <https://www.nsfgrfp.org/fellows/blog>
 - Alex Lang’s Website on the NSF Fellowship: <http://www.alexhunterlang.com/nsf-fellowship>
 - Awesome google sheet with linked winning PDFs: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1xoezGhbtcpg3BvNdag2F5dTQM-XI2EELUgAfG1eUg0s/edit?ts=5aa7ffe#gid=0>