

# PSYCHOLOGY THESIS APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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Please fill out all fields in the application as described below. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

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## COMMITTEE INFORMATION AND SIGNATURES

**Faculty Supervisor:** Your faculty supervisor must be an assistant, associate, or full professor in the [Psychology Department](#), or an asterisked member of the [Board of Honors Tutors](#). Some departmental lecturers and college fellows are eligible to serve as supervisors pending Departmental review and approval. Your supervisor must sign and date the form itself; e-mailed approvals will not be accepted.

**Co-Supervisor:** In some instances, you may be working directly with a graduate student or post-doctoral researcher who is in your supervisor's lab as your co-supervisor (Note: Research Assistants may not serve as co-supervisors). A co-supervisor is permitted only if you have an approved faculty supervisor. Graduate students may serve as co-supervisors only if they are students in the Department of Psychology or are directly supervised by your faculty supervisor, they have completed all second-year requirements, and have the permission of their advisors. You must provide the e-mail, job title, and institution of your co-supervisor on your application so that the UGO will be able to contact them if necessary. If your co-supervisor is a graduate student, please also list their G-Year (which year of graduate school they are in). Your co-supervisor must sign and date the form itself; e-mailed approvals will not be accepted.

**Petition for Non-Departmental Co-Supervisor:** If your co-supervisor is not a graduate student or post-doctoral researcher within the Psychology Department or a member of the Board of Honors Tutors, you can petition to have them serve as a co-supervisor on your committee. Please attach a brief statement explaining their affiliation with your faculty supervisor and why they are an appropriate co-supervisor for your project. You must note the person's title(s) and institution(s) (e.g., Professor of Neurology, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School), provide contact information, and include a current CV or resume. (Before applying, please review the rules on committee eligibility, and consult the UGO if you have any questions.)

**Reader:** It is strongly recommended that you also include a Reader with your application, but you must first be certain that they have agreed to act in this capacity before listing them as 'Agreed'. If you do not yet have an agreed Reader, you may list some suggestions, but you should continue to actively try to find a Reader and immediately notify the UGO. If you are unable to find a Reader, please notify the Undergraduate Office and we will assign one to you.

**Concentration Advisor Signature:** Discuss your plans to write a thesis and remaining course requirements with your Concentration Advisor, and have them sign your thesis application form. They do not need to review your research proposal.

## REQUIRED FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

**Thesis Application Form:** Please include all required signatures and information on the Thesis Application Form.

**Thesis Cover Form:** Please complete the Thesis Cover Form, which includes a simplified summary of your research proposal.

**Research Proposal:** All applications must include an attached research proposal. Proposals do not have to be final; your project may evolve over time. Proposal should indicate your current plans and be detailed enough to allow the department to evaluate if you have a topic that is appropriate for a thesis, and is feasible given the time and resources of a thesis. Proposals should be brief (often 2-5 pages) but should clearly state your thesis topic and general method. Proposals should be submitted to supervisor(s) in advance for feedback and approval. Proposals should also include a summary of your independent contribution to the project alongside your committee's contributions.

## SUPPLEMENTS & PETITIONS

**Existing Datasets Supplemental Questions:** If your project will use an existing or already collected dataset, complete the supplemental questions on page 4. If you will be collecting new data as part of your thesis, you do not need to fill out these questions.

**Petition for GPA Exemption:** Students with an overall College GPA below 3.5 are generally not eligible to pursue a thesis. Students who wish to pursue a thesis but do not meet this requirement must petition for an exemption by attaching a statement explaining why you feel that you are able to pursue a thesis and your GPA is not an accurate reflection of your ability. In considering your request, we may reach out to your supervisor(s) to discuss your ability to pursue a thesis and their lab's ability to provide any additional support that you may need. We will also pay special attention to your research proposal; students requesting a GPA waiver should produce an exceptional research proposal to demonstrate their ability to complete a thesis.

**Other petitions for exemptions to thesis rules or prerequisites:** If you are requesting any other exemptions to the rules and prerequisites for a Psychology thesis, please attach a statement explaining the request and the reason. Please also reach out to the Thesis Instructor and/or UGO about the exemption as soon as possible for guidance on your petition.

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**\*\* MAKE SURE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE APPLICATION & HAVE ALL REQUIRED SIGNATURES BEFORE SUBMITTING \*\***  
Completed applications are due to the UGO - either in-person at William James Hall 218, or via e-mail at [psychology@wjh.harvard.edu](mailto:psychology@wjh.harvard.edu) by 4 PM on the [primary consideration deadline](#).

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# Harvard University • Department of Psychology

## Thesis Application Form

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ House: \_\_\_\_\_

Concentration Advisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**THESIS TITLE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**THESIS COMMITTEE:** [See more about thesis committees here.](#)

Faculty Supervisor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title & Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

***I have read this proposal and believe it to be a sound and feasible thesis project. I agree to serve as faculty supervisor for this student's project.***

Faculty Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Co-Supervisor Name** (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ G-Year (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title & Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreed Reader Name** (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title & Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reader Suggestions** (if you do not have an agreed Reader): \_\_\_\_\_

### **COLLEGE GPA:**

Please check this box if your current College Grade Point Average is above 3.5: \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACHMENTS:** *Please check box if included.*

Research Proposal (*required*)

Nondepartmental Committee Member Petition

Nondepartmental Committee Member CV

Existing Datasets Supplemental Questions

Other Petition (e.g., GPA exemption, Research Methods deferral)

(*please specify*) \_\_\_\_\_

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## Thesis Cover Form *(required)*

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Please complete the following form summarizing your research project as completely as possible. Information on the Cover Form may be duplicated in the research proposal but should succinctly highlight the key information of your project. Please limit each section to no more than 200 words.

### Research Question

Please explain the research question your thesis will address.

### Scientific Motivation

Please briefly explain the scientific, literature-based motivation for your research question. This is not the same as personal motivation.

### Hypothesis

Please specify the primary a priori and/or exploratory hypotheses your thesis will examine.

### Independent Variable(s)

Briefly list each of your IVs and specify what psychological construct it assesses, how you define this construct, and, if known, how you will measure or manipulate it concretely and what levels it will be measured across (e.g., Studying will be defined as time devoted to reviewing relevant course material before an exam. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of three conditions [0, 15, or 30 minutes] to review the provided study guides for the course they just viewed before a memory test).

### Dependent Variable(s)

Briefly list each of your DVs and specify what psychological construct it assesses, how you define this construct, and, if known, how you will measure or manipulate it concretely

### Other Variables

Briefly list any additional relevant variables you will measure (e.g., demographics, control variables, exploratory variables).

### Key Methods

Briefly outline the key methods you will be using, including: Recruitment procedure (particularly for non-control populations), Sample size, Data collection method (Remotely online vs. Live Zoom sessions vs. In lab or field; Questionnaires vs. Tasks vs. MRI; etc.), and a Timeline for IRB and Data collection.

**Harvard University • Department of Psychology**  
**Existing Datasets Supplemental Questions**  
*(required for use of pre-collected datasets)*

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If you are using an existing dataset, please complete the following questions. There may be some minor repetition with your research proposal, but please make sure each question is thoroughly answered to help with efficient processing of your application.

Please describe the key features of the existing dataset (e.g., sample size, measures, structure (cross-sectional, longitudinal), etc.):

Because the study design and measures are already in place and cannot be changed, the unique intellectual contribution for thesis projects using existing datasets usually comes in the form of learning new, sophisticated statistical methods to process and analyze data. Please describe the analyses you plan to use in your thesis:

Why is it important to use this existing dataset to answer your research question(s), as opposed to collecting new data? (e.g., cost, special populations, feasibility within thesis timeline, etc.):

Please explain the contribution you made to developing the research question(s) and how this is unique from your co-supervisor's (if applicable) and your faculty advisor's contributions:

Please explain the potential value your thesis will contribute to the broader literature: