

UVA Psychology PhD in S&BN Milestones

(includes students in IDF track)

- A short presentation based on 1st year research at the area lunch in the spring of Year 1.
- An NSF-style research proposal by the beginning of Year 2. This can be the output of the 1st year spring grantsmanship/prof development class or the VPR's training program. It is meant for you to receive feedback from the area faculty to have a strong NSF application (which is due in Oct of Year 2). Here is the link to the NSF fellowship - https://www.nsfgrfp.org/applicants/application_components. Note that only "Graduate Research Plan Statement" is required for the area milestone. "The maximum length of the Graduate Research Plan Statement is two (2) pages. These page limits include all references, citations, charts, figures, images, and lists of publications and presentations." We strongly recommend that you apply for this fellowship if you are eligible.
- Predissertation submitted by April 15 of Year 2. This is a research article based on your project in Years 1-2, to be approved by the advisor and a second reader by August 15 of the same year (i.e., no committee meeting for an oral defense). Students present their papers at the area lunch talk. We hope that this will result in one or more journal publications, like for many past students in our Area.
- Qualifying exam. a. An NIH-style proposal followed by a comprehensive oral exam. This proposal can be an extension of the proposal in #2, and on the dissertation project. Proposal must be submitted by January 2nd of Year 3, for a January oral exam date by the latest. An earlier Fall date is recommended in order to get feedback for submission to the NIH. Here is the link to NIH NRSA fellowship: <https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/fellowships/F31> Note that for the qualifying exam, only Specific Aims (1 page), Research Strategy (6 pages), and References (no page limit) are required. We strongly recommend that you apply for this fellowship if you are eligible.
- b. The oral exam will be based on the written proposal, and also a test of your general knowledge of Neuroscience and Psychobiology that has been covered in your course works. The exam committee, chaired by the primary advisor, will consist of a minimum of four tenured or tenure-track members of the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. One member of the committee must hold a primary appointment outside of Psychology department.
- If the student fails to pass the Qualifying exam, a second oral exam must be scheduled and passed no later than August 1st of Year 3. Students who fail both will leave the program.
- Annual thesis committee meetings. You should form thesis committee right after advancement of candidacy, with at least 4 members (1 outside the department). The thesis committee can be identical to the qualifying exam committee. You should have at least one committee meeting per academic year, to discuss research and academic progress and setbacks.