



## **Information for Graduate Students in Developmental Psychology**

(Revised October 2013)

Department of Psychology  
The University of Western Ontario

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## 1. Program Description

The Developmental Psychology Area at the University of Western Ontario is research focused. Our primary goal is to train graduate students to conduct high-quality empirical research; this research training mainly follows an apprenticeship model in which students develop research skills through working with their primary advisor and with other members of the area on a number of projects. In addition, students will be trained to develop strong skills in conceptual thinking and in clear scientific writing. Our goal is to prepare students upon graduation for top-level positions in academic and nonacademic settings in which psychological research skills are required.

The Developmental Psychology Area at the University of Western Ontario currently consists of five faculty members with research interests in various areas of developmental psychology. The current faculty members of the Developmental Psychology Area and their research interests are listed below:

*Daniel Ansari, Ph.D* (University College London). Developmental cognitive neuroscience; numerical cognition; behavioral and brain imaging to study typical and atypical development of numerical processing.  
Westminster Hall 325, [daniel.ansari@uwo.ca](mailto:daniel.ansari@uwo.ca), Phone: (519) 661-2111, ext. 80548  
Webpage: <http://www.numericalcognition.org/>

*Lisa Archibald, Ph.D* (Durham University); Interaction between language and memory in typical and atypical development; role of memory in communication disorders.  
Elborn College 2597, [larchiba@uwo.ca](mailto:larchiba@uwo.ca), Phone: 519-661-2111 ext. 82753  
Webpage: <http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/lwm/>

*Adam Cohen, Ph.D* (University of California, Santa Barbara). How theory of mind and attention work, develop, and interface using behavioral and neuroimaging methods  
Westminster Hall 323, [acohen42@uwo.ca](mailto:acohen42@uwo.ca), Phone: 519-661-2111 ext. 84596  
Webpage: <http://psychology.uwo.ca/faculty/cohenlab/>

*J. Bruce Morton, Ph.D* (University of Toronto). Development of higher-order control processes; children's understanding of emotion in speech and music; developmental cognitive neuroscience.  
Westminster Hall 324, [bmorton3@uwo.ca](mailto:bmorton3@uwo.ca), Phone: (519) 661-2111, ext. 84795  
Webpage: <http://www.cdnlwestern.ca/>

*Lynne Zarbatany, Ph.D* (University of Utah). Effects of friends and peer groups on adjustment; friendship and attachment, personality, physical appearance, and gender differences in friendship, peer group influences on development.  
Westminster Hall 322, [lynnez@uwo.ca](mailto:lynnez@uwo.ca), Phone: (519) 661-3664  
Webpage: [http://psychology.uwo.ca/faculty/zarbatany\\_res.htm](http://psychology.uwo.ca/faculty/zarbatany_res.htm)

In addition to course work, research, and teaching assistantships, students are encouraged to participate in the organizational and administrative work of the Developmental Psychology Area. Graduate students are encouraged to be involved in the coordination of the weekly brownbag series, in the updating of the Developmental Area website, and in the organization and maintenance of shared research space.

*Developmental Area Brown Bag Organizers for 2013-14*

Stephanie Bugden  
Celia Goffin

## 2. MSc Requirements

Typically, it takes students two years to complete their MSc in developmental psychology. Students are required to take the equivalent of a full course in research design and statistics, one half course in Developmental Psychology, and one additional half course. Students complete the thesis requirement, typically between May and July of their second year in the program. Students may choose to take additional courses during the MSc program. Courses taken above those required for the MSc can generally be counted toward the PhD requirements for those who progress to the PhD program. In addition to their course work and research, students are expected to attend the brownbag series and the colloquium series, and to lead a brown bag session once a year.

### *MSc Thesis Proposal and Defense*

Students typically work on the development of their MSc thesis research project during their first year in the program and conduct the main body of research in the second year. However, students are generally encouraged to become involved in empirical data collection in their first year (which may or may not be thesis-related). A formal proposal meeting is required for students in the Developmental Psychology Area. For the proposal meeting, students select 1-2 members of the faculty in addition to their chief advisor to serve as an advisory committee. The committee will read the proposal, provide feedback, and when ready, give approval in principal to the project. Students typically defend their MSc thesis in the second half of Year II in the program. The examining committee will consist of 2 members from the Department of Psychology (excluding the chief advisor) and 1 member from outside the Department.

### *Benchmarks of “normal” progression within the MSc program*

- September, Year I: Enter program
- September to April, Year I: Literature review
- May, Year I: Evaluation meeting
- May to June, Year I: Successful defense of thesis proposal
- June to Feb, Year II: Data collection
- May, Year II: May evaluation meeting (data collection should be completed)
- March to June, Year II: Data analysis and thesis write-up
- June 30, Year II: Successful defense of thesis

## 3. PhD Requirements

Typically, it takes students enrolled in the PhD program in developmental psychology four years to complete their studies. Students are required to complete comprehensive examinations in their first year, as well as take four half courses during their Ph.D years, including an additional research methods or statistic course, and a course in Developmental Psychology. Additional courses may be taken to meet training needs. Selection of courses to fulfill the requirements should be done carefully in consultation with the student’s chief advisor. Courses that complement the student’s program of study are available within the Department of Psychology and in other departments or faculties. Students complete their doctoral dissertation requirement typically during their third or fourth year in the PhD program. In addition to their course work and research, students are expected to attend the brownbag series and the colloquium series, and to present their work in a brownbag every year.

### *PhD Thesis Proposal and Defense*

Students typically work on the development of their PhD thesis research project in their second year in the program. Ideally, they should be prepared to present a formal proposal to their advisory committee by the end of Year II. Acceptance of the proposal by a committee made up of the chief advisor and two additional members is required. The committee will read the proposal, provide feedback and, when ready, give approval in principal to the project.

### *Benchmarks of “normal” progression within the PhD program*

- September, Year I: Enter program
- September to May, Year I: Preparation for and complete comprehensive examinations.
- May, Year I to May, Year II: Review literature and prepare proposal
- May Year II: Evaluation meeting (literature review near completion)
- May Year II-Aug. Year II: Successful defense of thesis proposal
- May, Year III: Evaluation meeting (proposal defense completed; research in progress)
- May, Year IV: Evaluation meeting (data collection complete; write-up in progress)
- May, Year IV-Aug. Year IV Successful defense of dissertation (department and senate)

## **4. Comprehensive Examination**

Graduate students in Psychology must complete a comprehensive examination (Comps) during the first Ph.D year. The purpose of Comps is to provide students with foundational knowledge of their discipline. For students in the Developmental Area, this knowledge can be expressed in one of two formats of the student’s choice—an integrative review and critique of extant research, *or* a take-home examination based on a reading list supplied by the student’s *Comps* committee. Details regarding each of these assignments and completion schedules are provided below.

### ***Option 1: Integrative Review***

This option is a major paper written by a student in his/her developmental area of research interest. It is expected that this paper will make a substantive and original contribution to knowledge in this area. The paper should take the form of those published in journals such as *Psychological Bulletin* or *Psychological Review*. To elaborate, *Psychological Bulletin* publishes evaluative and integrative reviews and interpretations of substantive and methodological issues. Substantive contributions are defined as,

"Integrative reviews that summarize a literature and set forth major developments within a particular research area or provide a bridge between related specialized fields within psychology or between psychology and related fields."

*Psychological Review* publishes articles that make important theoretical contributions. This journal gives preference to papers that "advance theory rather than review it, and to statements that are specifically theoretical rather than programmatic. This journal will also consider papers that "point out critical flaws in existing theory or demonstrate the superiority of one theory over another".

In preparing the Comps paper, a student should ensure that the completed paper provides an original and substantive contribution in the domain of interest.

As a very general guide, the paper may address the following issues:

- a. Theoretical approaches to the content domain (historical and contemporary).
- b. Identification of major theoretical issues in the content domain.
- c. Strengths and limitations of various research methods used in the content domain.
- d. Assessment/measurement issues.

- e. Future directions in theory and research.

Please remember that the major criterion for evaluating the paper will be the extent to which it provides an original and substantive contribution to our theoretical understanding of the domain of interest. This means that the above types of issues should be addressed only when they facilitate this goal. It further means that some of the above issues may not be appropriate in a given paper, if they detract from this goal.

Finally, it should be noted that, in addition to a written paper, students may have an oral examination on the content area covered by the paper. The purpose of the oral examination is to give the committee members an opportunity to seek clarification of points and issues contained in the paper.

The student's Comps committee is responsible for evaluating both the written and oral components of the assignment. The Comps committee will consist of three faculty members, the student's advisor, and two other faculty members, one of whom *must* be from the developmental area. The requirement for an oral examination is at the discretion of the Comps committee (majority vote). At the discretion of the developmental area, students who do not pass their written (i.e., major paper) and/or oral examination on the first round maybe allowed one and only one re-examination on the failed component(s). A failure on *either* component at the second round will result in withdrawal of the student from the Ph.D. program.

At the first round of the examination, the Comps committee will determine whether a student has obtained a PASS, CONDITIONAL PASS, or FAILURE. For a component to be considered passed, at least two committee members must have assigned Passes with the third assigning, at minimum, a Conditional Pass. A component will be considered failed if at least two committee members have assigned a Fail. Anything else will be considered a Conditional Pass. The outcome of the first round examinations will be communicated to the Associate Chair, Graduate Affairs. If the student has obtained a Conditional Pass or a Failure in either component in the first round, the Comps committee will communicate the nature of the remedial measures required, or the nature of the second examination, to the Associate Chair, Graduate Affairs within one week of the decision. The Associate Chair, Graduate Affairs will then notify the student in writing of the decision and where required, either the remedial measures required or the nature of the second examination(s).

The second round examinations (if they are administered) will be graded as either PASSED or FAILED. As noted earlier, a failure on *either* component at the second round will result in the student's withdrawal from the Ph.D. program in the department.

The schedule for completing components of the Comprehensive Examination is delineated below. The schedule applies for students entering the Ph.D. program in any of the three academic terms (i.e., Fall, Winter, or Summer).

#### *Timing of the Comprehensive Examination Requirement*

1. Developmental area informs students in writing of the format, nature, and timing of the comprehensive examination requirement. *Due Date:* One month and two weeks into *first term* of Ph.D. program.
2. An outline of the major areas to be covered in the paper and a proposed reference list is reviewed and approved by the student's advisor and second reader. *Due Date:* Two weeks into the *second term* of the Ph.D. program.
3. First draft of paper submitted to the student's advisor and second reader. *Due Date:* Three months, two weeks into the *second term* of the Ph.D. program.
4. First Round Written Examination - Final draft of paper submitted to all three members of the Comps committee. *Due Date:* Five months into the *second term* of the Ph.D. program.
5. First Round Oral examination (if required by the Comps committee). *Due Date:* Five months, two weeks into the *second term* of the Ph.D. program.
6. The student is informed of the outcome of both the written and oral examinations. If the

student has obtained a Conditional Pass or Failure on either component, remedial measures, if any, will be specified. *Due Date*: Six months from the onset of the Ph.D. program.

7. Second round written and oral examinations (i.e., re-examination on component(s) not passed at first round.) *Deadline*: The last day for paying fees for the first term of the student's Ph.D. II year.

### ***Option 2: Reading List/Examination***

This option is a take-home examination to be based on a set of readings provided by the student's Comps committee. Students also may have an oral examination on the content area covered by the exam. The purpose of the oral examination is to give the committee members an opportunity to seek clarification of points and issues contained in the examination responses. Composition of the committee is described in Option 1 above.

The student's Comps committee is responsible for evaluating both the written and oral components of the examination. The Comps committee will consist of three faculty members, the student's advisor, and two other faculty members, one of whom *must* be from the developmental area. The requirement for an oral examination is at the discretion of the Comps committee (majority vote). At the discretion of the Comps committee, students who do not pass their written and/or oral examination on the first round may be allowed one and only one re-examination on the failed component(s). A failure on *either* component at the second round will result in withdrawal of the student from the Ph.D. program.

At the first round of the examination, the Comps committee will determine whether a student has obtained a PASS, CONDITIONAL PASS, or FAILURE. For a component to be considered passed, at least two committee members must have assigned Passes with the third assigning, at minimum, a Conditional Pass. A component will be considered failed if at least two committee members have assigned a Fail. Anything else will be considered a Conditional Pass. The outcome of the first round examinations will be communicated to the Associate Chair, Graduate Affairs. If the student has obtained a Conditional Pass or a Failure in either component in the first round, the Comps committee will communicate the nature of the remedial measures required, or the nature of the second examination, to the Associate Chair, Graduate Affairs within one week of the decision. The Associate Chair, Graduate Affairs will then notify the student in writing of the decision and where required, either the remedial measures required or the nature of the second examination(s).

The second round examinations (if they are administered) will be graded as either PASSED or FAILED. As noted earlier, a failure on *either* component at the second round will result in the student's withdrawal from the Ph.D. program in the department.

#### ***Timing of the Comprehensive Examination Requirement***

1. Developmental area informs students in writing of the format, nature, and timing of the Comprehensive Examination requirement. *Deadline*: One month and two weeks into *first term* of Ph.D. program.
2. The student selects three committee members and receives a reading list of approximately 15 papers from *each* member. *Due Date*: Two weeks into the *second term* of the Ph.D. program.
3. The student receives a set of 6 take-home exam questions, two from each Comps committee member. The student must prepare answers to *three* of these questions over a two-week period. Answers must be no longer than 10 double-spaced pages each, plus references. Pages limits will be strictly enforced. *Due Date*: Four months into the *second term* of the Ph.D. program. Copies of the reading list and examination questions are to be filed with the Associate Chair, Graduate Affairs by the above dates.
4. First Round Oral examination (if required by the Comps committee). *Due Date*: Four months, two weeks into the *second term* of the Ph.D. program.

5. The student is informed of the outcome of the written and oral exam. If the student has obtained a Conditional Pass or Failure on either component, remedial measures, if any, will be specified. *Due Date:* Five months into the *second term* of the Ph.D program.
6. Second round written and oral examinations (i.e., reexamination on component(s) not passed at first round.) *Deadline:* The last day for paying fees for the first term of the student's Ph.D. II year.

## 5. Brownbags and Colloquia

*Brownbags:* The Developmental Area holds weekly brownbag meetings in which graduate students, faculty, and external speakers present completed research, research ideas, research plans, and/or papers for discussion. Brownbag meetings are held on Fridays from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm in WC 36. Students are expected to attend the brownbag series. It is expected that students will give a brownbag presentation at least once a year. Aside from research presentations, the brownbags will be devoted to discussion of professional career development issues at least once a year. If the number of individuals who wish to give a presentation exceeds the number of slots available, additional brownbag meetings will be scheduled. The schedule of the brownbag series will typically be administered by two graduate students. The brownbag coordinators for 2013-2014 year are Stephanie Bugden [sbugden2@uwo.ca](mailto:sbugden2@uwo.ca) and Celia Goffin, [cgoffin@uwo.ca](mailto:cgoffin@uwo.ca)

*Colloquia:* In addition to the Developmental Area brownbags, the Department holds a colloquium series in which external scholars from different areas present their research. Colloquia are typically held Fridays from 3:00 to 4:00 pm in SSC 2028. As with the brownbag series, students are expected to regularly attend the colloquium series.

*Meetings with External Speakers:* When external speakers are invited by the developmental area, students are encouraged to meet with these speakers either individually or in group sessions. Such meetings are typically the best opportunity to discuss research findings with prominent scholars in the field and to get feedback on one's ideas. Even if there is no overlap in the particular research interests, external speakers are an excellent resource for questions regarding career development, such as expectations for job candidates or recommendations regarding the development of one's CV.

## 6. Professional Organizations

Students in the program are encouraged to become members of the Society for Research in Child Development. The membership fee for graduate students is currently US \$75 and includes a subscription to *Child Development and the SRCD Monographs*. Students may additionally consult their chief advisor regarding membership in other professional organizations. A list of professional organizations relevant for developmental psychologists include:

American Psychological Association (APA)

<http://www.apa.org/>

Association for Psychological Science (APS)

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/>

Canadian Psychological Association (CPA)

<http://www.cpa.ca/>

International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development (ISSBD)

<http://www.issbd.org/>



Society for Research on Adolescents (SRA)

<http://www.s-r-a.org/>

## 7. Child Participant Pool

The Department of Psychology maintains a Child Participant Pool that consists of over two thousand children recruited from the London area. We welcome new users of the Psychology Child Participant Pool and hope this database will assist you in your research. Please read the following rules and adhere to these guidelines when using the database. The form for requisitioning participants is appended to this handbook. Please submit this form to the Child Participant Pool administrator, Pam Roccatagliata, [proccata@uwo.ca](mailto:proccata@uwo.ca), or WH 60A, and address any questions to Pam.

### **Receiving the List**

You will be emailed a database list in the form of a Microsoft Excel file. A password will be provided in order to open the file. The list will contain contact information for families with a child who is eligible to participate in your study.

### **\*Updating the List \***

It is VERY important to update the list as you use it. You may make changes in all of the columns EXCEPT the **Family Number** column and the **Telephone Number** column. To ensure that the updates are recorded in the database, please itemize the changes you have made in the email when the list is returned. This will facilitate checking to see if changes were incorporated into the participant pool.

**Street Address, City, Postal Code** columns: Make changes in these three columns as needed.

**Telephone Number** column: Do NOT make any changes in this column. The telephone number is tied to all levels of data. If it is changed in the returned list, the rest of the family will not be updated.

**Updated Telephone Number** column: Use this column to enter updated telephone numbers ONLY. If the number is no longer in service and you are unable to locate an updated number through Canada 411, alternate contact numbers, email or reverse directory, please indicate this in the email when returning the list so that the family can be removed from the developmental pool list. Any other relevant information regarding the telephone number should be entered under **parents notes**.

**Email Address** column: Add an email address or update an old email address.

**Most Recent Study Date** column: Use this column to enter the date (DD-MON-YR) when the child participated in your study OR when the family was contacted but declined or was ineligible to participate. This column provides information about the last contact made with the family and ensures that the family will not be called again for at least one month.

**Children Notes** column: Record any information in this column that would be helpful to other researchers, such as handedness, developmental/neurological/physical/learning disabilities, candidacy for fMRI

***Studies Participated In*** column: Record the last name of the faculty member associated with your study along with some short form descriptor of your study (ie. fMRI). If your study is a longitudinal one, record this with an (L), along with the child's estimated completion date and provide your contact information so that the next researcher can contact you PRIOR to contacting the family. This ensures that other researchers do not interfere with the protocol of your longitudinal study.

***Parents Notes*** column: Use this column to make any notes pertinent to the parents, for example, if the parent mentions that they will only participate if they will not be separated from the child, record that information. Also, if the family asks not to be contacted again, record this information and indicate this in the accompanying email so that the family can be removed. If the family does not show up for their appointment or cancels and does not reschedule, record this information in this column. Additional notes can be added, preceded by a semi-colon.

**\*No additional columns are to be added to the list.\***

**\* Returning the List \***

When you are finished with the list, e-mail the updated list to the developmental pool administrator, keeping the same file name. Please itemize the changes you have made in the email when the list is returned. We ask for the timely return of all lists.

If you have finished recruiting from a list, and are waiting for the families to come in for their appointments to finish updating the list, you can request a second list to continue recruiting. Each researcher can request a maximum of 2 lists per study with 20 names each, at any one time.

You are not eligible to receive more lists until the complete list is returned.

**To respect the privacy of the families in the database, and to adhere to guidelines laid out by the UWO Ethics Review Board, you must delete your own copy of the lists after returning them to me.**

## **8. Shared Research Space at Westminster**

Westminster College contains several research rooms that can be signed out for research or clinical training purposes on a short or long-term basis. A list of these rooms, the equipment contained therein, and the type of key required to access them, will be forthcoming shortly.

### *Procedures for the Use of Shared Research Space at Westminster*

Try to avoid signing out rooms with equipment that you do not need. For example, if you are not using computers in your research, try to sign out rooms that do not contain computers. Priority is given to developmental and clinical psychology faculty and students.

1. You can log on to the lab computers with your personal account.
2. All lab and personal accounts will be "restricted user accounts" that do not have administrator rights. Thus, you will be unable to install any software or to access personal folders from other individuals or

labs. If you need to install additional software that is not available on the lab computers, please contact Anthony Dobravec.

3. To avoid chaos on the hard-drives, please copy your experiments to your “My Documents” folder of your personal account or your shared lab account. Please do not save any data or documents in other folders or on the desktop. Any such documents may be deleted without notice.

#### *Rules for Sign-Up of Research Rooms:*

1. Sign ups for research space must be done through Faith Hennessy.
2. Rooms should be booked only as needed, *after* appointments are made rather than by blocking space for an extended period of time.
3. Only book rooms for times that you absolutely need. Be respectful of the number of other individuals needing the research rooms. Have a look at previous weeks to get a sense of the demand for the rooms.
4. If you cancel research times please notify Faith so that others may use the space.
5. Priority is given to Developmental and Clinical psychology faculty and students. However, if time is available, others may use the rooms with permission (contact).
6. If you need certain rooms or no times are available, you may wish to contact the researchers who have signed out the rooms and ask if they would be willing to share some time.

#### *Psychology Department Participant Pool*

The Department of Psychology has a very large participant pool ensuring that researchers have access to diverse populations. Ethics information and forms can be found on the Psychology Department website. The pool website can be found at <https://uwo-psychology.sona-systems.com/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl/>

## **9. Other Useful Information**

#### *Major Journals and Email Alerts*

To stay informed about the latest developments in the field, students are encouraged to keep track of the latest publications in major psychological journals such as *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Psychological Science*, *Psychological Review*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *Social Development*, and *Cognitive Development*. Some of these journals may offer free email alerts that include information about the contents of their latest issues. Subscriptions to free email alerts can be submitted at the journal websites.

#### *Conferences*

Students are strongly encouraged to present their research at scientific conferences. Detailed information regarding conferences is available online at the websites of the professional organizations listed above. As these conferences target different kinds of audiences, students should contact their supervisor to determine which conference would be most suitable for them. If students give a conference presentation, the department provides some financial support for travel expenses (typically around \$300).

#### *Scholarships and Funding*

All students are expected to apply for scholarships from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Ontario Graduate Scholarship Program (OGS), and other granting agencies applicable to their field of study. More detailed information (including requirements, deadlines) will be sent out early in the fall by our graduate program coordinator, Val Van Domelen.

*Professional Websites*

Students are encouraged to create a professional (not “personal”) website that includes information regarding their research interests, published papers, contact information, and other useful information. These will be linked to the Developmental Area website.

## Appendix

### Request for a List of Potential Developmental Research Participants from the Child Participant Pool

<b>Name of requestor:</b>
<b>Name of study:</b>
<b>Previous lists have been used:</b>
<b>Previous lists have been returned:</b>
<b>Number of names requested (max. 20):</b>
<b>Study approved by UWO REB (Non-Medical):</b>
<b>Ethics Review Number:</b>
<b>Age range of potential participants:</b>
<b>Requestor's signature code:</b>