

Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences Commonly Asked Questions

Module Video: Booking an Appointment with an Advisor

Hello, thank you for tuning into this module on how to book an appointment with an advisor. We will cover the requirements around arranging an appointment with us, and what information we need from you via email before we will solidify an appointment time.

As a disclaimer, we do not take any and all appointment requests. The reason being is due to our high student to advisor ratio. We have roughly 2500 undergraduate students to two full-time undergraduate advising staff members. This means there are approximately 1250 students per advisor. So we hope you can understand it is not humanly possible for us to take all appointment requests.

There is some good news though- we can answer most student questions easily over email! It is, therefore, important to understand what types of student questions warrant an appointment and which do not. Some common questions we receive that do not need an appointment, but can be efficiently answered over email, include Change of Major paperwork and/or clearance questions. We can also efficiently answer questions over email related to course petitions so pre-approved course credit is added to your degree progress check/audit, or inquires on submitting syllabus in cases where a course is not pre-approved so our faculty can review and determine applicable credit. Additionally, we do not book appointments for students whose questions can be easily answered by searching our website or tuning into our modules, and we especially do not book appointments when students want to argue against our policies. Some of these policies include successfully completing pre-major requirements in order to move into the full major and not allowing double repeats for a class e.g. third attempt of MCDB 1A or 6. Students can view our PBS UGA Policy list on our website by clicking “Undergraduate” then selecting “Overview.” <https://psych.ucsb.edu/undergraduate/course-information>

Still, there are instances where advisors might accept student appointments. If a student drafts their schedule and wants to review this with an advisor and/or the student has a more complex issue, such as reinstatement, academic probation, or fulfilling old degree requirements if a returning non-traditional student (e.g. came back to complete their degree after being away for several years), then an appointment would be appropriate.

Now that you know what types of questions warrant an appointment and which can be easily answered over email, this brings us to the topic on how to request an appointment with a PBS advisor. Students need to email advising@psych.ucsb.edu and include several pieces of information in the body of their email: student name, student perm number, current major and/or desired major they are thinking of switching to (make sure to include double major or minor if this applies to you), provide a detailed description of advising needs, if wanting their schedule to

be reviewed, then attaching a schedule planning worksheet with a minimum of two future quarters filled out, and three 30-minute slots where you are available Monday-Friday 9am-11:45am and/or 1pm-3:45pm. Advisors do not work weekends or holidays. As a final note, please allow up to 3-5 business days for booking confirmation as there are certain times during the quarter where advising is very busy. In fact, no student appointments are taken the first two weeks of a given quarter. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Module Video: Change of Major (CoM) paperwork & Clearances

Hello, and welcome.

As a department, we offer two majors: Psychological & Brain Sciences (or PBS) and Biopsychology. These are broken into pre- and full majors. Students who are looking to obtain a BS degree in either will need to first meet pre-major requirements to advance into the full major. In this video, we will talk about what the process of changing into one of our majors looks like and what students should expect.

Students who wish to switch will need to fill out a few forms. These include the major eligibility form, change of major form, and the sheet for the major they want to switch into. If a student is trying to declare a double major for the first time, they will also need to complete a Memo of Understanding.

In order to access all these forms, students can either visit our website, as shown in the image, or email us at advising@psych.ucsb.edu.

Before the pandemic, students usually came into our main office to fill out and turn in their change of major paperwork. However, due to the shift to online work, we are now only accepting electronic submissions. Students will now have to send all their paperwork as pdf attachments in one email to our main advising account. If students need an example on how to fill out the forms, they can email us, and we can provide one. We will probably stick to online paperwork submissions, even when in-person activities resume, to reduce our carbon footprint in the environment.

So, when exactly should students submit their paperwork? For students looking to switch into one of our pre-majors, they are welcome to turn in their forms at any time. We do not have any entry requirements for our pre-majors. Students looking to switch into one of our full majors will need to complete pre-major requirements before we can approve their paperwork. These requirements are listed in every major sheet. Ideally, students looking to switch into a full major should turn in their paperwork during the quarter in which they are taking their last pre-major class (or classes if more than one). However, students are not required to do this. For any full major requests, we determine eligibility after all pre-major grades are posted. What this means is that we will hold on to any paperwork from students who are taking their last pre-major classes in the same quarter and process it at the end.

But if paperwork is processed until after all pre-major grades are posted, then why should students turn in their full-major paperwork while taking their last classes? The reason involves a student's ability to take PSY 110+ courses the following quarter. Students who submit their paperwork during the quarter in which they are taking their last pre-major classes will have the best chance to take some of these classes the following quarter—if they wish to do so. Since most PSY classes are in high demand, students who submit their paperwork the quarter after they

finish all their pre-major requirements will likely not be able to get a seat in most of these classes. For the students who submit their paperwork at the ideal time, however, they will have a better chance to get seats because we can give them clearances for PSY 110+ courses right after we determine their full-major eligibility, which is usually in the beginning of Pass 3—a time where more seats are available. What are clearances? These are manual inputs by us to give students access to enroll in courses on GOLD that they would otherwise be blocked from adding. Clearing a student for classes does not guarantee spots, but the sooner we can clear, the better chances the student has to get seats. If a student is not interested in PSY 110+ courses in the quarter after finishing all pre-major requirements, should they still submit their paperwork early? Although we always recommend our students to submit their paperwork at the ideal time, students who are not looking to take PSY 110+ classes immediately after will not be affected by turning their paperwork in later. On top of submitting paperwork, students who are transitioning into full major status will also need to do a few more things if they wish to take PSY 110+ courses the following quarter.

We send out a Clearance Form every quarter. If a student who is looking to take some PSY 110+ courses the following quarter has turned in their full major paperwork, they will also need to complete this form. This is how we determine which classes to clear each student for. As a reminder, we will only clear students once we see that they qualify for the full major (all pre-major grades have been posted). In addition, if a class has prerequisites, we will check to see whether students who requested it meet these. Students in this situation will also want to add themselves to their requested courses' waitlists (once available). Our waitlists are first-come, first-served, so it is better to waitlist sooner rather than later. Students who are cleared for these courses and are on the waitlists will then have the chance to enroll if space becomes available again (which many times is the case for those at the top of the waitlists).

As always, any lingering questions can, and should, be addressed to advising@psych.ucsb.edu.

Module Video: Course Scheduling, Prerequisites, and Running a Degree Audit

Hello, thank you for tuning into this module. We will cover resources for schedule planning, how to check required prerequisites, and how to run a degree audit on GOLD.

The PBS website is equipped with many tools to help you plan your schedules. Under the “Undergraduates” tab, there is a section for “Academic Planning.” If you scroll down to documents, you will find a helpful document titled “How to Plan Your Schedule”. When planning your schedule, it is important to refer to the major sheet for the academic year that you began the major. For example, if you started the full PBS major in the fall of 2019, you should refer to the 2019-2020 full major sheet when planning your schedule. This will be your guide to what classes are required to complete the major. If you go to the “Course Information” page, under the “Undergraduate” tab, you will find the PBS Projected Course Schedule for the current school year. This is extremely useful when looking ahead to plan your schedule. Keep in mind that these courses may be subject to change, but this should give you a good idea of what will be offered this academic year. There is also the STEM quarterly teaching schedule, which will give you an idea of when chem, bio, and physics courses will be offered. Additionally, if you are looking to get credit for courses at another UC or at a CSU, there is information on which of these courses are pre approved as being equivalent to courses we offer at UCSB, and how to petition for credit for these courses.

Below the “Undergraduate” tab on both the Biopsych and the PBS pages, there are documents with planning guides. These include 4 year guides for students that start at UCSB as first-year freshman, as well as transfer guides. Schedules will vary on a case by case basis, but this will give you a general idea of how to stay on track in both of the majors.

Projected course offerings are subject to change, but we have a guide to when certain courses are typically offered. PSY 1, MATH 34A, PSTAT 5A, PSY 10A, PSY 10B are offered every quarter. However, MCDB 1A and/or 6 is typically taught in the Fall Quarter and during Summer Session A, while EEMB 2 and/or 7 is typically taught in the Winter Quarter and during Summer Session B. It is important to note that students must complete CHEM 1A and 1B prior to enrolling in MCDB 6 (with concurrent enrollment in CHEM 1C being acceptable for MCDB 1A). It is also important to note that students must take PSY 1, MATH 34A, PSTAT 5A, and CHEM 1A and 1B, prior to enrolling in PSY 10A.

In regards to PSY breadth courses: PSY 102 and 105 are typically offered fall and winter, PSY 106 is usually winter and spring, and PSY 108 is usually offered in the fall and spring. PSY 111, which is a requirement for the Biopsych major, is usually offered in fall and spring quarters. On top of that, there are usually at least 3, if not more, biopsychology courses offered per quarter. There are usually 1-2 biopsychology labs, and 2-3 PBS labs, per quarter. Additionally, there are MANY PSY 110+ courses offered every quarter.

If you are wondering what prerequisites are required for a specific course, you can find this information on GOLD. If you click on course info next to a specific course, you can then click on the prerequisites tab. Here it will list what is required before taking a course. Keep in mind that sometimes it will list multiple courses and say AND, meaning all of these courses are required, or it will say OR meaning you only need to have taken one of these prerequisites.

To run a degree audit on GOLD, click the “Progress” tab at the top, and then select “Major and GE Progress Check.” If you want to include the courses you are currently enrolled in on your progress check, click the box labeled “use in progress courses on my major check”. If you are a double major, the first drop down menu can be used to select a different major to run your progress check on.

If you have any other scheduling questions, please email us at advising@psych.ucsb.edu . Keep in mind, due to the large volume of students in the department, PBS does not create schedules for students. However, we would be happy to look over your schedule or graduation plan and give you any feedback needed. We also do not book appointments for schedule planning with students unless students provide a tentative schedule with at least two quarters planned out (unless graduating that next quarter).

Module Video: Honors in PBS

Hi there.

In this video, we will detail our department's honors program. This is not to be confused with the program at the College of Letters and Science. We will discuss some of the benefits of joining along with what the requirements are. Information on our honors program can also be found on our undergraduate website.

There are several benefits students can gain if accepted into the program. One of the biggest ones is the availability of more opportunities for students to participate in research that our PBS faculty are currently conducting. In addition, although the process of running a study is typically a difficult and time-consuming one, we find that many honors students find the experience very rewarding and worthy. Not only will these students be able to engage in more research, but they will also manage their own research project and write a final thesis. It gives participants more liberty and control on what they want to research. In terms of official recognitions, students who successfully complete the program will gain *Distinction in the Major* on their official degree. In addition, the experience will look great on a participant's profile, whether it be for a resume, CV, or application. Last but definitely not least, participating in the honors program will allow those selected to be able to form strong bonds with their faculty advisors and research teams like graduate students.

In order to get accepted into the honors program, students will need to meet the following requirements when applying: The completion of AT LEAST 3 PSY UD courses (or 12 units) by the time of applying, at least a 3.5 PSY UD GPA, full-major status, and an agreement with a PBS faculty member who will supervise and advise on the project. In addition, although it is NOT a requirement, we always recommend our students who are interested in applying to take part in research prior to get acquainted with how it is like. If a student is ever unsure of whether they qualify, they can email us at advising@psych.ucsb.edu for verification.

Students are welcome to apply during any quarter throughout the academic year. If selected, students will receive an add code for PSY 197A during the quarter in which they applied for. To officially receive the *Distinction in the Major* recognition, honors students will need to complete the PSY 197ABC series consecutively and turn in a final thesis about their work towards the end of PSY 197C. To receive add codes for 197B and C, participants will need to turn in a PSY 197 Cover Sheet every quarter. These guidelines are further detailed on the honors program's application which can be found on our website. For students who start PSY 197A in winter or spring, they will not be required to complete part of the series in the summer, although they can if they wish.

As mentioned before, students who are interested can visit our website or email us at advising@psych.ucsb.edu for an application.

Module Video: Major Requirements

Hello, thank you for tuning into this module. We will be discussing our department's requirements in regards to GPA and grading policies.

First we want to emphasize that in order to maintain the integrity of our majors, PBS holds very strict GPA requirements for pre major courses. There are NO exceptions made to these requirements. For Area I of the major, which includes PSY1, MATH 34A, PSTAT 5A, PSY 10A, AND PSY 10B, a 2.7 overall GPA is required. This equates to roughly a B- average. For Area II, which includes CHEM 1A, CHEM 1B, MCDB 1A or 6, and EEMB 2 or 7, a 2.0 GPA is required, which is a C average. No course in Areas I and II can have a grade lower than a C- and there may not be more than one C- in Area I and II combined. Because of our strict GPA policy, students will not be approved to enter the full major and take PSY 110+ courses until ALL of their pre major grades are received.

Only courses completed at UCSB or another UC will be counted towards your pre-major GPA, meaning that AP scores or City/Community College credit will not be factored into calculating this GPA. Additionally, PSY 10A and PSY 10B MUST be taken at UCSB, as these courses are unique to our university. All major courses (both lower and upper division) taken at UCSB or another UC MUST be taken for a letter grade, and not pass/no pass. Students are allowed ONE legal repeat of a course if they receive a no pass or a C- and below. We will not accept second repeat requests. Students will need to talk to The College of Letters and Science about their options.

Module Video: Navigating Our Undergraduate Website

Hello, and thank you for tuning in.

In this video we will talk about what the PBS Undergraduate Website has to offer for our students. We find that the answers to many of the advising questions we receive can, in fact, be found on the various pages we have set up covering multiple PBS topics. We hope this guide makes it quicker and easier for students to explore and navigate our website—which contains many useful and important details and documents.

So first, let us start by addressing how to access the Undergraduate portal within the PBS website. Once you go to our main site, psych.ucsb.edu, you will want to go over to the “Undergraduate” tab as shown in the image. Once clicked, the tab will present you with a series of pages that you can click on to get more information. Before we review the pages, we just want to mention a small disclaimer about our site. There may be times, as there have been in the past, where some of the details presented on some of the pages may be slightly outdated. Examples can include outdated documents or policies surrounding some of the topics like honors or major information. If ever a student suspects this may be the case, they are more than welcome to email our main advising account at advising@psych.ucsb.edu to get the most up-to-date information. Now to the review...

The Overview page provides our students with a brief introduction to our Undergraduate Division and what it has to offer. In addition, it also introduces students to the Undergraduate Advisors and provides general advising information. This can be especially useful if a student is looking for our contact information or just wants a quick breakdown of PBS (maybe for those who are interested in switching into one of our majors for example). Lastly, this page contains some documents that every PBS student should get familiar with. The Campus Undergrad Resources compiles many of UCSB’s valuable resources that students can use throughout their undergraduate careers. It can make it easier for students to keep track of resources that may be particularly useful to them. CAPS, CLAS, EAP, and Financial Aid are just some of the many listed. The Reference Calendar breaks down the academic year and includes important dates and deadlines (like course registration deadlines and time periods in which the PBS office will be closed). The PBS UGA Policy document details all our undergraduate policies enforced by our Undergraduate Affairs team. All students should review this document as it details policies ranging from pre-major requirements to research and honors. It may answer many questions and clear up doubts.

Both the PBS and Biopsych major pages run down the requirements and policies for each major as seen in the images. In addition, they present students with instructions on how to declare majors and helpful insight for transfer students. Under these pages, students will be able to find all the required paperwork needed to switch into one of our majors. We have packets for both pre- and full major switches for each major. Major sheets can be found within each packet.

Lastly, students will be able to find scheduling tools like planning guides and checklists for each major that may serve valuable to many trying to plan their schedule.

If students are interested in academic planning, they should refer to the Academic Planning and Course Information pages in addition to their major's page to access our planning tools. These range from instructions on how to effectively create plans and how to run degree audits to projected course schedules. If a student needs help with schedule planning, they should refer to these resources first. If still unsure about something, inquiries can be sent to advising@psych.ucsb.edu as previously mentioned. We will not, however, create schedules for students. If a student is done creating a potential schedule using these tools and wants feedback, they will be able to send it to us and we will provide our thoughts on it.

Now, if a student is interested in learning more about engaging in departmental research and potentially writing an honors thesis with a PBS faculty member, they should refer to the Research Assistant and/or Honors Program pages. In these, students will find all the information they need to sign up for these opportunities. These can both serve as excellent experiences that can help when applying to graduate programs and/or jobs. We always encourage students who are interested in research to check these pages and learn more. Something important to point out is that we do not keep tabs as to which labs and faculty are available to offer these opportunities. It is the responsibility of the student to take the initiative to inquire about these positions.

And for those who are interested in studying abroad at some point, they should check out our Study Abroad page. A few things detailed include pointers on when to study abroad, our PBS EAP equivalency log, and how to petition EAP classes to count for major credit. If you plan to study abroad and take PSY courses abroad, please make sure to read up on this page to know exactly what to expect in terms of departmental policies concerning EAP classes. Our equivalency log details all pre-approved PSY EAP courses and what they equate to in our department. If a class you might take is not listed, you will have to follow the instructions in order to determine whether a class will count for major credit. Students can use this log to look at what programs best suit their PSY needs. In addition to our page, we encourage students to also visit the UCSB EAP and UCEAP websites to get more information.

As always, if there are any lingering questions after viewing any of these pages, students are more than welcome to email the undergraduate advisors at advising@psych.ucsb.edu.

Module Video: Pre-Approved vs Non Pre-Approved Courses

Hello, thank you for tuning into this module pertaining to pre-approved vs non pre-approved major credit. I will talk about where to locate our pre-approved course listings so a petition can be created by one of our advisors, as well as what information needs to be sent to us if a course you are interested in taking is not pre-approved.

As a general note, students should use [Assist.org](#) to see which city or community college credit transfers over to UCSB. Please be aware only lower division courses can be taken at a CC, so students will not be awarded credit for upper division courses numbered 100 and above (e.g. PSY 102, 105, 106, 108). Students should also be aware that they cannot take pre-major courses at the CC level if they earned units for the class/series at UCSB (D- or better). Students can also not take classes at UCSB if they already earned credit for the course elsewhere (e.g. passed PSY 1 at their CC). With all of that said, please make sure to send official transcripts to the Admissions office so major course articulations appear on your degree audit (this typically takes a few months).

To find out whether PBS Area III or INT, UC or CSU, or EAP courses are pre-approved for major credit, you will need to refer to your major sheet and view our website <https://psych.ucsb.edu> for more information. Once at our website, students will need to select “Undergraduate” then navigate to the applicable tab. To determine which Area III or INT courses are pre-approved for PBS major credit, students can click on the “[Psychological & Brain Sciences Major](#)” tab to view accepted courses under the Major Course Requirements drop down menu. Additionally, to find out which UC and CSU PSY courses are pre-approved, students can select the “[Course Information](#)” tab and view accepted courses under the UC & CSU Courses drop down menu. Finally, to determine EAP major credit, students can click on the “[Study Abroad](#)” tab and review the [PBS EAP Equivalency link](#).

This is a visual image of what the UCEAP PSY Pre-Approved Course Database looks like. As you can see, students can filter by country, then partner institution, to view UCSB PSY course equivalencies. For example, I searched schools in the Netherlands then clicked on University College Maastricht. The Partner Course Title and UCEAP Subject/Course Number is what will appear in your course history on GOLD. You can also see to the far right the UCEAP course has been reviewed by our faculty and received either No Psych Major Credit (not approved), specific Psy credit (e.g. PSY 123), or general Psy elective credit (e.g. PSY UD Elective Above 110). For more information on advising tips related to study abroad, please view our website and [Study Abroad](#) tab.

This brings us to the petition process. Around week four of every quarter, we send out a general listserv email with the petition survey. Students must make sure the course in question is appearing under their course history on GOLD and that the course is pre-approved for major credit. If both statements apply, then students can request a petition be created by advisors using

the survey, so advisors can award course credit to the student's degree audit. As a note, make sure to allow a few weeks for the advisor's petition to be approved by the college so the credit is appearing on your progress check.

Okay so now that we know how the process works for pre-approved courses, what about courses that aren't pre-approved for major credit? Students will need to gather syllabus (make sure the text is in English) and email this to advising@psych.ucsb.edu so we can forward it to our faculty to review and determine any applicable major credit. A syllabus includes more than just a course description; it must comprise a list of required textbook(s) for the class, a grading scale, and calendar with due dates for assignments/required reading/tests/papers/etc.

Consequently, if a course is not approved for PBS Area III or INT credit, then students will need to send syllabus BEFORE taking the class or within the first week of the class start date.

As general advice, we recommend syllabus be sent PRIOR to taking a class if it is not pre-approved for major credit anyways! This way students know within a few weeks whether a course will be approved for major credit or not.

Module Video: Research in PBS

Hello, thank you for tuning into this module. I will go over how to become an RA and earn research units within the PBS department. Our department numbers our research classes as PSY 99P, 99, 199P, and 199.

So how does one become a research assistant? First and foremost, students should know that in order to earn PBS or Biopsych major credit using RA units, they need to have a PBS faculty advisor; they cannot earn major credit by working in a lab outside the PBS department. In order to locate and establish a faculty advisor, students should go to our website, click on “Research,” then select the area of research they are interested in (Cognitive, Developmental, Neuroscience, or Social Psychology). Once you select the area of research you are interested in, you can scroll to the bottom of the page and view the faculty advisors who specialize in this particular field of study. Moreover, students can earn units by taking PSY 99P, 99, 199P, or 199, but major credit is earned in PSY 199P or 199 (which is limited to full PSY major students). Please refer to your major sheet. For more information on how to become an RA, students can refer to our diagram by simply navigating to our website, clicking on the “Undergraduate” tab, selecting “Research Assistant (99/199),” and viewing the document “How to Become a Research Assistant.” As a reminder, 1 unit is equivalent to 3 lab hours, and students can take up to five units of research per quarter, with a max of four research units per lab.

If this is your first quarter earning research units in our department, then you must take PSY 99P or 199P (limited to full major students). In order to receive an add code from an advisor, several pieces of paperwork need to be submitted/mailed to advising@psych.ucsb.edu including PSY 99P or 199P Application (filled out & signed), proof of trainings (Safety Rights & Responsibilities, as well as Human Subjects), and a copy of your Unofficial Transcript (printed from GOLD). Instructions for RA training can be found on our website by scrolling to the “Research Assistant” tab. As a reminder, students wishing to enroll in PSY 99P or 199P must achieve at least a cumulative 3.0 UC GPA in the last three quarters (two UC quarters for transfers).

Students **MUST** take PSY 99P or 199P for units PRIOR to enrolling in PSY 99 or 199 (letter grade). Again, PSY 199P and 199 are limited to those in the full PBS or Biopsych major. If you are continuing as an RA, then you must still meet the 3.0 UC GPA requirement (advisors check this). If you are switching labs, then you must submit RA paperwork which includes your new faculty advisor’s signature.

That said, we typically email a continuing RA Google Form (survey) to the PBS/Biopsych Listserv towards the end of the prior quarter for the next upcoming quarter (e.g. continuing RAs fill out the survey at the end of fall quarter so they can add research units during the first few weeks of winter quarter). Of course, before Undergrad Advisors distribute add codes to continuing RAs, we **MUST** receive your Faculty Advisor’s confirmation to continue in their lab.

If you are a prospective continuing RA and are wondering about your approval status from your faculty advisor, feel free to reach out to advising.