Doctoral Student Orientation & Handbook

Welcome to Bilingual Education Programs at Texas A&M University! This handbook will provide new students with information about the doctoral program. Please review this information prior to beginning the doctoral program.

*Note: The content in this handbook is for general information purposes. Faculty meets annually to make recommendations for improvement. For any questions, please contact the program director.*

**The Department of Educational Psychology**
The Department of Educational Psychology is one of four departments in the College of Education & Human Development. These departments include:

- Education Administration & Human Resource Development (EAHR)
- Educational Psychology (EPSY)
- Health & Kinesiology (HLKN)
- Teaching, Learning, & Culture (TLAC)

The heads of the various departments work with the dean of the college on matters of departmental or college interest. Graduate students within the College of Education & Human Development (CEHD) are also subject to the administrative oversight of the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS).

At the graduate level, the department offers the Master of Science, Master of Education, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. Doctoral specializations include school psychology; counseling psychology; bilingual education; learning sciences; and special education. At the master’s level, specializations include bilingual education, educational technology, special education, and learning sciences. EPSY also offers undergraduate degrees in bilingual education and special education for pre-service teachers.

**How to Contact the Bilingual Education Programs**
The Bilingual Education Programs office is open normal business hours.

**Mailing Address:** Department of Educational Psychology
Bilingual Education Programs
Texas A&M University
4225 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-4225

**Physical Address:** 100 Harrington Tower (EDCT)
Email: bilingualed@tamu.edu
Phone: (979) 845-2599
Fax: (979) 458-0192

EPSY Academic Advisor
The student services offices are located in Room 704 EDCT, just inside the main EPSY office. The EPSY graduate academic advisor is Kristie Stramaski.

Kristie Stramaski
Academic Advisor II
Department of Educational Psychology
4225 TAMU
Phone: 979.845.1833
Email: kstramaski@tamu.edu

The following assistance is provided:
• Applications and advising for EPSY graduate programs
• Registration
  o Information
  o Drop/Add forms
  o Q-drop
  o In-absentia registration and information
• Deadlines
  o Written and oral preliminary examinations
  o Final exams
  o Dissertations and theses
  o Graduation
• Procurement of rooms for preliminary exams and dissertation proposal/defense meetings
• Grade sheets for teaching assistants and faculty
• Maintenance of student records
• Grade changes (through instructors)
• Variable credit course sign-up (i.e., 485, 685, 683, 691, etc.)
• Ph.D. qualifying exam information
• Record of addresses and phone numbers of current graduate students
• Campus maps and community information
Program Faculty

Rafael Lara-Alecio, Ph.D.
Professor
Director of Bilingual Programs
107H Harrington Tower
MS 4225
Phone: 979.845.3467
Email: a-lara@tamu.edu

Research Interests
Bilingual assessment and evaluation
Bilingual pedagogy
Theory and validation
Bilingual content areas of instruction
Hispanic parental involvement
Hispanic gifted identification
International bilingual education
Multicultural education

Yolanda N. Padrón, Ed.D.
Professor
Undergraduate Bilingual Coordinator
107E Harrington Tower
MS 4225
Phone: 979.845.5625
Email: vpadron@tamu.edu

Research Interests
Bilingual education
At-risk students
Classroom observations
Classroom instruction for second language students
Reading strategies
Resiliency

Fuhui Tong, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
107I Harrington Tower
MS 4225
Phone: 979.845.7979
Email: fuhuitong@tamu.edu

Research Interests
Program effectiveness for language minority students
Quantitative methodology in bilingual/ESL education
Second language acquisition and linguistic transfer among ELLs
Assessment and testing

Sandra Acosta, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
107F Harrington Tower
MS 4225
Phone: 979.458.4211
Email: sacosta@tamu.edu

Research Interests
Bilingual education leadership
Bilingual education teacher preparation models
Oral language development
Classroom discourse
Second language acquisition
The Doctoral Program
The doctoral program leads to the Ph.D. in educational psychology with an emphasis in language, language assessment, biliteracy acquisition, and issues related to diversity in education. The degree prepares students to address the interdisciplinary nature of challenges related to learning, teaching, and conducting research related to language/assessment/biliteracy acquisition for diverse learners. A combination of coursework, practica, program competencies, and the dissertation ensure both the breadth and depth of training. The program is led by trained and experienced faculty in bilingual assessment, curriculum development, distance teaching formats, and instructional design.

The Ph.D. program focuses on four areas of specialization. These areas are supported by faculty interests and areas of expertise:

- Language, literacy, and diversity
- Biliteracy acquisition
- Mathematics and science education
- Teacher leadership and/or development

For more information about the program, faculty, and their work, see [http://ldn.tamu.edu/](http://ldn.tamu.edu/).
This program is designed to:

- Improve knowledge and skills related to language acquisition and development in diverse educational settings
- Improve knowledge and skills related to biliteracy acquisition and development
- Improve the ability to analyze current issues as they relate to learning and language
- Develop skills for evaluating instructional strategies and program models
- Develop research skills in the areas of practitioner research, qualitative, and quantitative research paradigms

The Ph.D. program can be individualized so that students can pursue their interests. Students, with the guidance of faculty advisers, plan their own programs to meet their educational goals. To accomplish these goals, students engage in a variety of courses such as independent studies, seminars, and teaching internships. In the completion of coursework, students must develop competencies in the five following areas:

- College teaching (mentored and supervised)
- Field supervision (of bilingual education practitioners)
- Research (planning, executing, writing, presenting, and submitting two studies for publication prior to dissertation)
- Program assessment/evaluation (planning, executing, and writing)
- Grant writing (co-writing and submitting)

Graduates are prepared for a variety of positions, including leadership roles in university, school, and community settings. Some of these positions include:

- University faculty positions as researchers and bilingual education/literacy teacher educators
- District-level administrators for preK-12 bilingual education/literacy programs
- Curriculum specialists
- Administrative positions

**Temporary Advisor's Role**

Upon admission to the program, each Ph.D. student is assigned a temporary advisor. The temporary advisor is usually identified in the student’s admission letter. The temporary advisor will provide advisement for student course registration for the first year or two, at which time a permanent advisor or chair/co-chairs will be
selected. Throughout the first year, it is recommended that students meet with their temporary advisor on a regular basis, and particularly if the student is encountering any difficulty. By the end of the first year or in fall of the second year, the student and temporary advisor will discuss the designation of a permanent advisor or chair/co-chairs for the student’s doctoral committee. The temporary advisor does not have to be the permanent chair/advisor. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate this conversation and ask faculty to serve on their committee with the input of the selected permanent advisor/chair/co-chairs.

**Role of Student's Doctoral Chair/Advisor and Committee**

The chair/co-chairs of the student’s committee and the student will select the remainder of the committee. The student’s committee will consist of not fewer than four members (including the chair/co-chairs) of the graduate faculty of the student’s field of study and research; one of the members must be from a department other than the student’s major department (i.e., outside of EPSY).

When co-chairs are in place, it is important for the student to communicate with both of these individuals on all aspects of program completion, as well as the dissertation research project. To the extent feasible, it is recommended that there be clear roles for each of the co-chairs. For more information, see [http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/select-your-graduate-committee/](http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/select-your-graduate-committee/).

The student’s doctoral committee has the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating or addressing all academic actions concerning the student. The chair/co-chairs of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student’s research and dissertation, has the responsibility for calling required meetings of the committee and for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable. The chair/co-chairs is responsible for supervising the annual evaluation of the student. The duties of the committee include responsibility for the degree program, research proposal, the preliminary examinations (written and oral), the dissertation, and the final examination. In addition, the committee as a group and as individual members are responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and, in the case of academic deficiency, with review by the program faculty, making recommendations to OGS.

**The Degree Plan**

Students should contact their temporary advisor during their first semester to begin developing a degree plan. The degree plan includes the appointment of the doctoral committee. The degree plan outlines the courses the student plans to take during the doctoral program. It should include the required courses for the Bilingual Education Program. The degree plan must be submitted before the student has taken **36 credit hours**, or the student will be blocked from registering for any courses.
To submit a degree plan to OGS, visit https://ogsdpss.tamu.edu/default.aspx. If the degree plan is approved, a student may later need to make a change in terms of coursework or committee members. This can be done via petition. The appropriate forms can be found here: http://ogs.tamu.edu/incoming-students/student-forms-and-information/.

To view the required steps towards graduation, visit http://ogs.tamu.edu/incoming-students/student-forms-and-information/getting-a-degree/doctoral-degree-requirements/.

**Required Courses**
The Ph.D. in educational psychology in bilingual education is designed with considerable flexibility within the core requirements and areas of specializations outlined. A total of 75 hours of approved coursework, practica, professional internship, independent study, seminars and research credit beyond the master’s degree is required. Alternative courses or proficiency may be substituted with committee approval for the five required components listed below.

**Bilingual Education Core - 24 Hours**
- BIED 610  Bilingual Assessment & Monitoring Students  3
- BIED 611  Dual Language Program Methodologies  3
- BIED 612  Content Area Instruction for Bilingual Programs  3
- BIED 613  Spanish/English Biliteracy  3
- BIED 614  Bilingual Education Curriculum Development  3
- BIED 616  Spanish for Bilingual and Dual Language Classrooms  3
- BIED 620  Current Issues in Bilingual Education  3
- BIED 632  Research in Second Language Education  3

**Research and Evaluation - 15 Hours**
- BIED 617  Program Evaluation  3
- EPSY 630  Single-Case Research  3
- EPSY 640  Experimental Design in Education I (Prerequisite: EPSY 636)  3
- EPSY 641  Experimental Design in Education II (Prerequisite: EPSY 640)  3
- EPSY 690  Theory of Hispanic Populations  3

**Practica and Internship - 15 Hours**
Choose from among the following:
- BIED 683  Field Practicum Bilingual Research  3
- BIED 683  Field Practicum in Grant Writing  3
- BIED 683  Field Practicum in College Teaching  3
- BIED 683  Field Practicum in Supervision  3
BIED 684  Professional Internship in Bilingual Education  6

Specialization/Cognate Electives - 9 Hours
The following are sample courses:
SPED 620  Bilingual Special Education  3
SPED 628  Consultation Theory and Techniques  3
SPED 630  Reading for At-Risk and Disabled Learners  3
EDTC 608  Foundations of Distance Learning  3
EDCT 613  Integrating Technology in Learning Environments  3
EHRD 673  Introduction to Distance Learning  3
EHRD 671  Management of Distance Learning Systems  3

Dissertation - 12 Hours Minimum
Dissertation credit hours are taken under EPSY 691.

Any other coursework requires permission from the student’s committee.

Preliminary Examinations
The preliminary examinations are administered no earlier than a date when the student is within six credit hours of completion of formal coursework and no later than the end of the semester following the completion of all formal coursework on the degree plan. Taking the preliminary exams sooner requires the approval of the department head.

Prior to initiating and scheduling the preliminary examinations, the student and the committee chair/co-chairs will review the Preliminary Examination Checklist to ensure that the student has met all eligibility criteria for the examination.

The preliminary exams are designed to evaluate the student’s knowledge and skills, and include oral and written components. The committee chair/co-chairs and members will determine the format of the preliminary examinations. It is the student’s responsibility, in coordination with the chair/co-chairs, to determine each committee member’s requirements for the examination.

The oral portion of the preliminary examinations must be scheduled so that all members of the committee can be present. The substitution of one committee member may be allowed when absolutely necessary. Unless emergency circumstances exist, the committee member who will be absent should make arrangements for a substitution.

Note: If a committee chair/co-chair cannot attend the scheduled examination, the examination must be rescheduled.
The committee chair/co-chairs will report the results of the examinations using the Report of Preliminary Examination form (which will include the signatures of all committee members) and the Preliminary Examination Checklist. These forms may be downloaded from http://ogs.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Preliminary-Exam-Checklist-Report1.pdf. These forms must be submitted to OGS within 10 working days of the scheduled oral examination date and at least 14 weeks prior to the date of the final examination (i.e., dissertation defense).

After passing the required preliminary examinations, the student must complete all remaining requirements for the degree within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student must repeat the examinations. If the student fails the preliminary examinations, there is no obligation for a re-examination. At their discretion, the committee and OGS may allow one re-examination when adequate time has passed to allow the student to address inadequacies emerging from the first examination.

In the event a student has failed the preliminary examinations, the student may either 1) continue at the master’s level and complete a master’s degree; or 2) be dismissed from the department and seek another department in which to enroll as a doctoral student.

**Research Proposal Presentation**

The student should work closely with the committee chair/co-chairs and consult with members of the committee to develop a research proposal for the dissertation. Once the research project is fully outlined and has been reviewed by the chair/co-chairs, the student will submit a dissertation proposal to the committee.

A written copy of the completed dissertation proposal should be provided to the committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled proposal meeting. It is the student’s responsibility to consult with committee members to identify and discuss issues that may need to be resolved prior to the proposal meeting. The student will then schedule a dissertation proposal meeting where the committee reviews the appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed research and adequacy of available facilities.

The approved proposal should be signed by all the members of the dissertation committee and the department head. Then it is submitted to OGS for final approval. The Proposal for Dissertation form may be downloaded here: http://ogs.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Proposal-Title-Page.pdf.

**Research with Human Participants**

Anyone intending to conduct research with human subjects must become familiar with the policies regarding such research and complete the required training to
obtain a certificate to work with human participants. All research involving human subjects must have the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Texas A&M University. This means the student will complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program, which provides an online ethics training course on working with human subjects: http://rcb.tamu.edu/humansubjects/training. The student will also need to obtain approval for the intended research from the IRB: http://rcb.tamu.edu/humansubjects/approvals. Keep in mind that the IRB approval process can take a couple months, so it is a good idea to start the process early.

Candidacy

Admission to Candidacy
To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, the student must have a cumulative GPR and a degree plan GPR of at least 3.0, satisfy the residency requirement (be enrolled fulltime for two consecutive semesters — a waiver is possible for students employed fulltime), pass the preliminary examinations, complete all formal course work on the degree plan, and have an approved dissertation proposal on file with OGS. The student should also have a copy of the IRB approval for his or her proposed dissertation research. The student must be admitted to candidacy well before the date of the final examination. OGS will not authorize a final examination (defense) for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy.

After being admitted to candidacy, the remaining procedural requirements to earn a Ph.D. include completing the residency requirement, applying for the degree, scheduling and passing a final exam, and submitting a signed approval page and PDF file of the completed dissertation to the Thesis Office.

Time Limits
All requirements for the degree must be completed within 10 consecutive calendar years. Further, after passing the required preliminary oral and written examinations for the doctoral degree, the student must complete all remaining requirements for the degree within four calendar years. Otherwise, the preliminary examination must be completed again. Coursework that is more than 10 calendar years old at the time of the final examination may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

The student must submit the final corrected dissertation to the Thesis Office no later than one year after the final examination or within the 10-year time limit, whichever occurs first. The degree will not be awarded if these deadlines are not met.

In 1997, the State of Texas passed legislation that limits the number of credit hours beyond the master’s degree that the state will financially support. A doctoral student at Texas A&M has seven years to complete his or her degree before being
charged out-of-state tuition. After seven years of study, a student who has accumulated 100 or more doctoral hours will be charged tuition at a rate equivalent to out-of-state tuition. Please note that the tuition increases will apply to Texas residents as well as students from other states and countries that currently are charged tuition at the resident rate.

Dissertation

Oral Defense of the Dissertation
The student, under the supervision of the committee chair/co-chairs, should produce an early "polished" draft of the dissertation. Pending chair/co-chair approval, the student will then schedule a defense date and provide a copy to each committee member at least four weeks prior to the tentative defense date. Committee members should review the draft within two weeks and recommend whether the defense should be held.

Committee members may provide feedback requiring changes to be made prior to the defense and recommend whether the defense should occur as planned or be rescheduled. The student will make any necessary changes based on feedback received in advance of the defense and present a final draft of the dissertation to the committee two weeks prior to the scheduled dissertation defense.

In addition, the student will work with the EPSY academic advisor to notify OGS at least two weeks before the date of the defense.

When the student schedules a room for the defense with the academic advisor, he or she will need to provide the advisor with a current vita.

Dissertation Submission
The student will need to make any additional changes to the dissertation that may result from the defense and get approval from the committee chair/co-chairs before it is submitted to the thesis clerk at the library.

When submitting signature pages for the department head's signature, the student should also include a final copy of the dissertation. Allow at least a 48-hour turn around for the department head to review and sign off on the signature pages. It is also the student’s responsibility to provide a bound copy of the dissertation to the chair/co-chairs.

Graduation
Once the student is close to fulfilling all degree requirements, he or she should meet with the EPSY graduate advisor and work with her to complete all required paperwork as well as verify that he or she is eligible to take the final exam. The student will file for the degree online in the Howdy Portal and pay the graduation
fee for the diploma. This is done during the first week of the student’s final semester. The student will also officially file the final examination date with OGS at least 10 days before the exam date. See http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/graduation/steps-to-graduation/.

**Academic Honesty**

All Texas A&M students are expected to follow the Aggie Honor Code: “An Aggie does not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.”

This code also applies to student academic work. All students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity, including — but not limited to — avoiding plagiarism, cheating, complicity, etc. Academic dishonesty will be reported to the Aggie Honor System Office for possible further action. For more information, see http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

More information is also available in the Graduate Student Catalog: http://catalog.tamu.edu/.

For information on how to avoid plagiarism, see http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/2010/consultant-resources/level-2-projects-spring-2010/todoavoiding-plagiarism/.

**Student Evaluation**

Throughout the doctoral program, the Bilingual Education faculty continually evaluates student progress. Students are expected to maintain high levels of performance in the following areas:

**Academic Performance**

To remain in good academic standing, doctoral students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average and maintain continuous enrollment as specified by the Graduate Catalog. The program requires that coursework be completed with an A or B letter grade. In addition to formal coursework, students must also progress toward completion of the Bilingual Education Competencies:

- College teaching (mentored and supervised)
- Field supervision (of bilingual education practitioners)
- Research (planning, executing, writing, presenting and submitting two studies for publication prior to dissertation)
- Program assessment/evaluation (planning, executing, and writing)
- Grant Writing (co-writing and submitting)

All required competencies must be completed prior to the dissertation defense.
Ethical Behavior
Students will behave in accordance with the ethical standards of the appropriate professional organizations. As doctoral students prepare to become educational researchers, adherence to the American Educational Research Association’s (AERA) Ethical Standards (http://www.aera.net/Portals/38/docs/About_AERA/CodeOfEthics(1).pdf) is of particular importance. Students are also expected to adhere to the Aggie Honor Code (http://student-rules.tamu.edu/aggiecode), as promulgated by the university.

Professional Behavior
Doctoral students have an obligation to behave in a professional manner, both on- and off-campus. Such professional behavior is exemplified by forming respectful relationships with faculty, staff, other students, school personnel, and other professionals within the community. This expectation extends to students’ use of cell phones, instant messaging, email, and social media outlets (including, but not limited to internet communications using message boards, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter).

Annual Review of Student Progress
During each spring semester, the Bilingual Education faculty systematically reviews the progress of each doctoral student in the program. The purpose of this formative assessment is to provide feedback on student progress, identify student strengths and weaknesses, and determine remedial activities or procedures that may be considered with students who are not performing up to program standards. The review focuses on general academic status, core competencies, research, teaching, and service. Students will be prompted by the EPSY academic advisor to submit annual evaluation materials through the myCEHD Portal at https://myrecord.cehd.tamu.edu/portal/docreview/.

Maintaining Adequate Progress
Students must make adequate progress to remain in good standing in the doctoral program. The program offers the following guidelines for maintaining adequate progress. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will be asked to meet with program faculty to determine a remediation plan as described below.

Students should be engaged in fulltime graduate studies during the academic year (i.e., register for a minimum of nine credit hours in both fall and spring semesters). Should extenuating circumstances arise, this should be conveyed in advance to the student’s advisor/chair/co-chairs and committee members for approval.

Students are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their advisor/chair/co-chairs and should seek advisement prior to registering for courses and planning research activities each semester. In general, contact with the advisor/chair/co-chairs will be more frequent than once per semester, especially as a student progresses through the program.
The program requires that coursework be completed with an A or B letter grade. Coursework resulting in a C grade or lower will need to be retaken.

Students must maintain a cumulative GPR of 3.0. In the event that a student’s GPR drops below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. The student must raise his or her GPR to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the next nine hours of coursework. More information can be found in the Graduate Catalog (http://catalog.tamu.edu/).

Students must attend to all doctoral program requirements. In addition to successful credit hour production, students must work with their advisor/Chair/co-chairs to ensure that their degree plan (a) adheres to the program requirements and (b) complies with committee recommendations.

In addition to formal coursework, a doctoral program entails a range of experiences and tasks to equip students with essential competencies required for post-graduation success. It is the student’s responsibility to establish a timeline in collaboration with the chair/co-chairs and committee that ensures all coursework and other academic requirements are completed prior to the dissertation defense.

Students must pass all components of their preliminary examinations. Per university policy, if a student fails the preliminary examinations, there is no obligation for a re-examination. However, at their discretion, the student’s committee and OGS may allow one re-examination when adequate time has passed to address the inadequacies emerging from the first examination.

**Remediation Process for Failure to Make Adequate Progress**

It is critical that students make adequate progress consistent with program guidelines. Grades of “incomplete” are the rare exception and are given only under extraordinary circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to maintain expectations in one or more of these areas (academic, ethical, and/or professional behavior) will require the student to meet with program faculty. Students will be given an opportunity to explain their circumstances to the faculty. The purpose of this meeting is to identify barriers to progress and to generate a remediation plan and corresponding timeline.

Potential outcomes of this meeting may include a plan for remediation of the problem that is discussed by the faculty and student; a formal reprimand from the program — with or without a remediation plan or sanctions; and/or probationary status. Such probation will include a written list of behaviors that must be performed by the student during the probationary period and a description of sanctions to occur if the requirements of the probationary period are not met. Such a probation plan will include a specific time frame in which these behaviors must occur.
The sanctions listed above do not have to be applied in any particular order; however, fairness in determining sanction(s) appropriate to the student problem is the goal. Additional departmental expectations and procedures serve as a general guide as well.

**Academic Probation**
In the event that a student’s cumulative GPR drops below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. Students are required to inform their advisors if they receive a grade of C or below in any course. The student must raise his or her GPR to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the next nine hours of coursework. More information can be found in the Graduate Catalog ([http://catalog.tamu.edu/](http://catalog.tamu.edu/)).

**Dismissal from the Program**

**Leave of Absence**
Under unusual circumstances, a student may petition for a leave of absence from the doctoral program. For information regarding leave of absence, see the Graduate Catalog ([http://catalog.tamu.edu/](http://catalog.tamu.edu/)).

**Student Grievance Process**
In addition to the grievance procedures established by the university (see [http://student-rules.tamu.edu/studentgrievanceprocedures](http://student-rules.tamu.edu/studentgrievanceprocedures)), the department has developed, after extensive student and faculty input, the following process. It is known as the Student Advocate Office. An EPSY faculty member selected by the department head serves as the ombudsperson. Currently, Dr. Laura Stough serves in this capacity.

In the event of a conflict of interest between a student and the current ombudsperson, an alternate faculty member may fill this role. There is also an ombudsperson at the college level (Dr. George Cunningham), as well as one at OGS (see [http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/ombudsperson/](http://ogs.tamu.edu/current-students/ombudsperson/)). The following policies were derived by EPSY faculty, students, and the department head:

**Pre-condition to Student's Initiation of the Grievance Process**
Students are encouraged to meet with and attempt to resolve problems with the faculty member. If the student has met with the faculty member and the problem has not been resolved, he or she should contact the ombudsperson. If a student does not choose to meet with the faculty member due to the nature of the problem, he or she may directly contact the ombudsperson and initiate the grievance process.
Overview of Grievance Process
A student who has a faculty-student concern and who has addressed the preconditions for initiation of the grievance process is encouraged to meet with the ombudsperson; however, a student may choose to meet first with other EPSY faculty member(s). Depending upon the nature of the student’s concern, the ombudsperson may consult with the identified faculty member, the program coordinator or the department head.

At the discretion of the department head, the student’s concern may be communicated to the CEHD Dean’s Office. When there is a discussion of a particular faculty-student concern, maintaining anonymity of the student may not be possible. Similarly, all activities will be consistent with the requirements and limits set under FERPA with regard to student records.

Resolution of Student Concerns
Resolution of a student’s concern may occur as a result of:
1. Student’s dialogue with the faculty member or the ombudsperson.
2. Ombudsperson holds discussions with the faculty member.
3. Ombudsperson’s discussion of the student’s concern with the program coordinator or the department head. As a result of these discussions, the ombudsperson, and/or the department head may confer with the faculty member.
4. Pending the outcome of the above mentioned, or the nature of the student’s concern, the department head, and/or student may enter into discussion with the CEHD Dean’s Office and appropriate university committees and administrators.

Online Courses & Expectations
Many of the doctoral courses are either completely online or a hybrid of online and traditional components. Online coursework is presented in eCampus (http://ecampus.tamu.edu/) and eLearning (http://elearning.tamu.edu/). The university is in the process of transitioning from eLearning to eCampus, which is why both learning management systems are addressed here. Both systems are online applications, also known as Blackboard or Vista, that contain the readings, presentations, discussions, chats, email system, and other items students will need to successfully complete the program.

The coursework is designed to be interactive and completed in a timely fashion over the course of the semester. The following guideline should be considered when taking online courses:

1. Within the first week of school, visit the course site (or attend orientation).
2. Read the course syllabus and any other documents related to the course to be sure you are aware of any and all instructor policies.
3. Adhere to course schedules and deadlines. Distance learning courses are not designed to be self-paced.
4. Participate in weekly online activities, including discussions.
5. Log into the course one or more times per week (preferably daily) to view announcements, participate in class activities, assignments, online discussions, quizzes, and tests.
6. Use the communication procedures established by the instructor for submission of assignments and for completing course requirements.
7. Students should confirm that they have the necessary equipment and technical skills to undertake online courses.
8. Students should familiarize themselves with the information and policies contained in the Graduate Catalog (see http://catalog.tamu.edu/) and program-specific student handbook.
9. Assignments submitted to an online course or contributions to threaded discussions must observe the same prohibitions against plagiarism that apply to assignments in classroom courses, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct procedures that are described in the Graduate Catalog.
10. Students should notify their instructor in advance if they are unable to complete an assignment by the published submission deadline.
11. Students should contact their instructor with course-related questions by course email well in advance of due dates, as they may need to wait 48 hours for a response to their questions.
12. If home computer issues occur, students must find time to access a functional computer on campus or in another location. Late policies will not be waived due to home computer issues.
13. Assignments are due at the date and time established by the instructor. These guidelines are strictly enforced.
14. Plan to turn assignments in on time and in the format stipulated by instructors, to participate in class discussions, and to prepare for quizzes and exams.
15. Discussions are part of class participation and must be completed during the week they are assigned.
16. Plagiarism is taken very seriously in the online environment. A first occurrence of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for that assignment. A second offense will be brought to the department head for further disciplinary action that may result in failing the course. It is the student’s responsibility to cite his or her sources and complete coursework in a professional and academically honest manner.
How to Access eLearning

eLearning may be accessed through the Howdy Portal as a button on the upper right. You may also go directly to the eLearning site at [http://elearning.tamu.edu/](http://elearning.tamu.edu/). You will be prompted to provide your Net ID and password.

![eLearning Homepage and Logon Window](image)

eLearning has an online orientation here: [http://its.tamu.edu/elearning-orientation/](http://its.tamu.edu/elearning-orientation/).

![Courses Page in eLearning](image)
Inside a Course in eLearning

System Requirements for eLearning

eLearning will run on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS platforms and in a variety of popular browsers. To view the specific operating systems versions and browsers, visit http://kb.blackboard.com/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=76087304.

eLearning has a feature that will allow the user to test the compatibility of the browser with eLearning. To test a browser, see http://elearning.tamu.edu/ and click on the Check Browser button on the left.

How to Access eCampus

eCampus can be accessed through http://ecampus.tamu.edu/. You will be prompted for your Net ID and password.
eCampus Homepage and Logon Window

eCampus has online documentation here: [https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_10_and_SP_11/Student](https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_10_and_SP_11/Student).

Courses Page in eCampus
Inside a Course in eCampus

System Requirements for eCampus
eCampus will run on Microsoft Windows and Mac OS platforms and in a variety of popular browsers. To view the specific operating systems versions and browsers, visit https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_10_and_SP_11/Student/002_Browser_Support_SP_11.