

Seeking Support in Graduate School

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Graduate school is an exciting and transformative time, but it can also bring unique challenges in academic, professional, financial, and personal areas. Navigating these challenges is easier when you know where to find support. This document brings together a curated list of resources available to Psychology graduate students, both within the university and beyond, to help you locate support both within and outside the department.

This is a 'live' document, which will be updated as new information and resources become available.

Departmental support

If difficulties arise, it is important to know where to turn for help:

1. Your first point of contact should be your graduate advisor, who is most familiar with your academic progress, program requirements, and professional goals. They can therefore offer personalized guidance and connect you with relevant resources.
2. If additional support is needed, you can reach out to your Graduate Program Director (GPD), who can address broader programmatic concerns, mediate challenges with your advisor, and help navigate institutional procedures.
3. If support is needed beyond your graduate advisor and GPD, you are welcome to contact the Department Chair or Associate Chair for an individual conversation. Separate to this, there is a weekly drop-in meeting with the graduate students and the Chair. During Fall 2025, this meeting is scheduled on Fridays from 11am to 12pm on WebEx (<https://umbc.webex.com/meet/lehers1>)

Graduate Program Directors (names and contact information)

Pamela Rakshan Rouhakhtar Director for Clinical Training

John Borrero, Graduate Program Director

Departmental leadership

Leher Singh, Chair (lehers1@umbc.edu)

Laura Rose, Associate Chair (laurose1@umbc.edu)

Graduate Program Coordinator

Ashley Griffin, Graduate Program Coordinator, (ashgriff@umbc.edu)

Graduate Student Representatives

Victoria Manzo, ADP (vmanzo1@umbc.edu)

Erika Mcmillan HSP (emcmill2@umbc.edu)

Additional department support and resources are available for specific areas of concern.

- The Graduate Program Coordinator is very helpful navigating the program including questions about: graduate stipends, internal departmental forms, Graduate School policies, and Graduate School forms.
- The TA coordinator is available to help resolve concerns that arise in the teaching assistantship role.
- Concerns that arise on practicum should be discussed with the relevant area Director (e.g., the Director of Clinical Training; Community Track Director, etc.).
- Finally, all department faculty are strongly encouraged to maintain an "open door" policy to assist students with a wide variety of educational and professional concerns, including consultation on ethics, research design, data analysis, teaching and pedagogy, professional practice training, and career planning.
- [DISJ office hours](#) with faculty members Molly Franz (mfranz@umbc.edu) and Raimi Quiton (rquiton1@umbc.edu), as well as graduate student Amelia Meman (meman1@umbc.edu), are also available for students or faculty who wish to receive support related to concerns about inclusivity in our department.

External support

A broad complement of other support is available within the university beyond the department. The following section provides an overview of these resources, which can assist you with academic, professional, and personal needs throughout your graduate journey.

Graduate School CARE team

The Graduate School CARE (Concern, Assessment, Referral, and Education) Team supports graduate students who are facing significant obstacles to their progress that do not require immediate intervention from the campus behavioral crisis team (Retriever CARE). The CARE Team provides direct advising and advocacy, works with your program or department if requested, and connects you with campus resources that can help. When needed, they coordinate with other offices such as Retriever CARE, International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS/CGE), legal counsel, Equity and Civil Rights (ECR), and Retriever Integrated Health (RIH).

The CARE Team also tracks emerging issues and recommends policy or practice changes to improve graduate student mental health, success, and sense of belonging.

Leads:

- Robin Cresiski, Associate Vice Provost - Graduate Student Development & Postdoctoral Affairs Team

If you would like to refer a graduate student, make a suggestion to the CARE team, or inquire about serving on the CARE team, please email gcteam@umbc.edu

How are graduate students referred to the CARE team?

- Direct contact with one of the CARE team members
- GSA referral to a CARE team member
- Faculty, GPCs or GPD referral to a CARE team member

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Conflict Resolution for Graduate Students

The Associate Dean of the Graduate School offers confidential consultation to graduate students seeking assistance with resolving interpersonal conflicts, navigating difficult situations, or addressing academic or workplace-related challenges within their departments or programs.

When appropriate, the Associate Dean may convene a special Mediation Committee, composed of faculty members and graduate students, to help facilitate resolution. The Associate Dean may also draw upon the expertise of other Graduate School and campus administrators to ensure a well-informed response. The goal of this process is to provide fair, unbiased, and constructive guidance that supports all parties involved and helps restore a productive working environment. In addition, the [GA handbook](#) provides information about mediating disputes via formal and informal means.

Support for International Students

Center for Global Engagement (CGE)

The Center for Global Engagement houses International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS), which is the primary resource for international students at UMBC. ISSS advisors can assist you with a wide range of immigration-related matters, including visa status, travel documentation, work authorization (CPT/OPT), and compliance with federal regulations.

In addition to immigration advising, CGE and ISSS coordinate programs and initiatives designed to support the academic success, professional development, and cultural adjustment of

international students. This includes orientation programs, workshops, and social events that help you connect with peers and the broader UMBC community.

Why contact ISSS?

- To address questions about your visa or immigration status
- To request travel signatures or documentation
- To apply for work authorization (CPT/OPT)
- To learn about campus and community resources for international students

Well-being and Social Support

UMBC offers a variety of services and communities dedicated to supporting your mental health, sense of belonging, and overall well-being. These offices can help you navigate challenges, connect with others, and build a supportive network during your time in graduate school.

- **Retriever CARE - Retriever Support Services (RSS)** is the primary referral and access point for all undergraduate and graduate students facing social, basic needs, or emotional challenges that may hinder their personal or academic goals. Working in partnership with campus collaborators, RSS is dedicated to creating an accessible, supportive, and enriching educational experience with a strong focus on student care and well-being. If you are worried about someone else or need help, please visit <https://retrieversupport.umbc.edu/retriever-care/>
- **Counseling Center** – Provides confidential counseling and mental health support for students who may be experiencing stress, difficulty adjusting, or other life challenges. Services include individual counseling, group workshops, and crisis intervention. [🌐 counseling.umbc.edu](https://counseling.umbc.edu)
- **Initiatives for Identity, Inclusion & Belonging (i3b)** – Offers programs, workshops, and events that foster understanding of diverse identities, cultures, and belief systems. Provides spaces to engage in meaningful dialogue and build inclusive community connections. [🌐 i3b.umbc.edu](https://i3b.umbc.edu)
- **Office of Student Disability Services (SDS)** – Supports students with disabilities and those with temporary conditions or injuries by coordinating academic accommodations and providing access to resources that ensure equal opportunity. [🌐 sds.umbc.edu](https://sds.umbc.edu)
- **Women's, Gender & Equity Center** – Creates space for community members to explore and advance gender equity, intersectional feminism, and social justice through programming, advocacy, and support. Open to people of all genders. [🌐 womenscenter.umbc.edu](https://womenscenter.umbc.edu)

Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR)

UMBC's Office of Equity and Civil Rights (ECR) promotes and coordinates the university's core values of inclusive excellence, equity, and diversity. The office leads UMBC's efforts related to Title IX as well as other civil rights matters, including discrimination, harassment, and incidents of hate or bias. ECR ensures compliance with sexual misconduct and non-discrimination laws, regulations, and policies through prompt, fair investigations, comprehensive education and training, and active outreach. Working in partnership with other campus units, ECR also fosters an inclusive, respectful, and accessible environment for all members of the university community.

Since its establishment in 2019, ECR has implemented a [confidential online reporting](https://ecr.umbc.edu/) and referral form for sexual misconduct, discrimination, and hate or bias incidents, allowing students, faculty, and staff to report concerns anonymously or confidentially. The office has also ensured that nearly all UMBC community members have completed mandatory training on sexual misconduct through online and in-person formats. Moving forward, ECR will continue to expand training on discrimination and sexual misconduct to all students, faculty, and staff, reinforcing the university's commitment to equity and civil rights.

 <https://ecr.umbc.edu/>

Graduate Student Governance and Community

Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) serves as the voice of UMBC's graduate student community. It works to support, promote, and represent graduate students across all programs by advocating on their behalf, funding graduate student organizations and events, and creating opportunities for professional development, networking, and community building. The GSA also serves as a central hub for information about campus resources, student rights, and policies affecting graduate education.

For 2025–26, the newly elected and appointed GSA leadership begins their term on July 1, 2025. They are committed to ensuring that graduate students are heard, supported, and connected to the resources they need to thrive.

***Diane Placide, our very own graduate student, is a GSA representative*!**

GSA Discord Channel

The GSA now hosts a dedicated Discord server to help UMBC graduate students stay connected. By joining, you can:

- Receive updates from GSA representatives
- Communicate directly with your senators

- Join Town Hall meetings
- Participate in virtual community events

Join the GSA Discord here: <https://gsa.umbc.edu/discord/> or directly via invite link: <https://discord.gg/MYR7FDPsdM>.



Library of Resources

Library of Resources for UMBC Psychology Department Graduate Students

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Career/Professional Development Resources

Title	Description	Link/File
Doctoral Education: Research-Based Strategies for Doctoral Students, Supervisors and Administrators	An evidence-informed overview of doctoral training that examines students' experiences, academic identity development, supervision, and institutional practices.	PDF file
A Guide to Academia: Getting Into and Surviving Grad School, Postdocs, and a Research Job	A practical guide that walks through each stage of the academic career path—from applying to graduate school to navigating postdocs and faculty jobs—with concrete advice and examples.	PDF file
Imagine PhD	ImaginePhD is a free online career exploration and planning tool for PhD students and postdoctoral scholars in the humanities and social sciences. ImaginePhD is designed to meet this need by allowing users to: 1) assess their career-related skills, interests, and values explore careers paths appropriate to their disciplines; 2) create self-defined goals; 3) map out next steps for career and professional development success	https://www.imaginephd.com/

Title	Description	Link/File
Life After Graduate School in Psychology	A collection of first-hand perspectives from early-career psychologists that explores diverse career paths in academia, practice, industry, and public service, with candid advice on the transition out of graduate school.	PDF file
Stanford PhD & Postdoc Career Guide (2015-2016)	A comprehensive career planning resource for PhD students and postdocs covering academic and non-academic pathways, application materials, interviews, networking, and career decision-making.	PDF file
Survival Guide for Early Career Researchers	A modern, skills-focused handbook for early career researchers that addresses grant writing, publishing, networking, career advancement, rejection, and work-life balance, with an emphasis on thriving—not just surviving—in research careers.	PDF file

Research/Thesis & Dissertation Resources

Title	Description	Link/File
Project Management for Research: A Guide for Graduate Students	A practical, step-by-step guide that treats graduate research as a managed project, offering concrete tools for planning, scheduling, organizing, communicating, and completing theses and dissertations efficiently.	PDF file
The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research	An accessible, candid guide to the tacit norms of doctoral training, helping students understand what a PhD is really about, how to work effectively with supervisors, and how to design, write, and defend research while avoiding common pitfalls.	PDF file

Clinical/HSP-focused Resources

Title	Description	Link/File
The Biopsychosocial Formulation Manual: A Guide for Mental Health Professionals	A structured, clinician-friendly guide to developing comprehensive biopsychosocial case formulations, integrating biological, psychological, and social factors to inform diagnosis, risk assessment, treatment planning, and prognosis. **This may be useful for HSP comps!	PDF file
Internships in Psychology: The APAGS Workbook for Writing Successful Applications and Finding the Right Fit	A step-by-step, highly practical guide to the psychology internship application process, covering site selection, APPIC applications, essays, CVs, interviews, and the Match, with concrete examples and checklists to reduce stress and improve fit.	PDF file