College of Education

Master's Program in Psychology (International Track)

Primary Academic Discipline (Code): _____Psychology（0402）_____

Secondary Academic Disciplines (Codes): <u>Environmental Psychology (040201）、 Organizational and Social Psychology (040202)、Educational and School Psychology (040203)</u>

I、Discipline Overview

Suzhou University of Science and Technology was established through the merger of two former ministry-affiliated institutions—the Suzhou Railway Teachers College and the Suzhou Institute of Urban Construction and Environmental Protection. The discipline of Psychology originated at the former Suzhou Railway Teachers College and has developed in parallel with China's Reform and Opening-Up period, with a history spanning more than four decades.

In 2021, the University was authorized to confer master's degrees in Psychology as a first-level academic discipline. The Psychology master's program currently comprises three areas of concentration: Environmental Psychology, Organizational and Social Psychology, and Educational and School Psychology. Each area demonstrates distinctive strengths and a clear academic focus, forming a well-structured and balanced disciplinary framework.

Serving as the host institution of the Secretariat of the

Environmental Psychology Professional Committee of the Chinese Psychological Society, the master's program also sponsors the academic book series Environmental Psychology Studies, actively contributing to the advancement of environmental psychology research in China.

This work is further strengthened by support from two Key Research Bases of Philosophy and Social Sciences in Jiangsu Higher Education Institutions—the Urban Development Think Tank and the Center for Psychological and Behavioral Sciences at Suzhou University of Science and Technology — which together provide robust interdisciplinary foundations for research in psychology, urban studies, and behavioral sciences.

In addition, the program is equipped with an open-access Laboratory of Psychological and Behavioral Sciences, covering an area of 1,570 square meters. The laboratory is furnished with advanced research facilities, including transcranial electrical stimulation systems, electroencephalography (EEG) equipment, eye-tracking systems, and virtual reality (VR) platforms, with a total equipment value exceeding RMB 10 million. These facilities offer comprehensive support for experimental research, applied studies, and graduate training.

A faculty team of 18 graduate advisors—including 3 full professors and 11 associate professors—supports the master's program, with 17 members holding doctoral degrees. This composition provides a strong academic foundation for high-quality graduate supervision. One faculty member serves on the Teaching Steering Committee for Psychology of the Ministry of Education. In addition, more than ten faculty members have been selected for major provincial and national talent programs, including the Jiangsu Province Distinguished Young and Middle-Aged Experts Program, the "333 Project", the Qinglan Project, and the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Doctoral Talent Program, demonstrating sustained recognition of faculty excellence in teaching and research.

The program has built a strong and active research portfolio, leading 8 nationally funded projects and more than 30 projects supported at the provincial and ministerial levels, with total research funding exceeding

RMB 18 million. Faculty members have published over 20 academic books and textbooks, and authored more than 200 research articles in leading SCI/SSCI-indexed journals, including *Journal of Environmental Psychology* and *Acta Psychologica Sinica*.

Research and teaching achievements have received wide recognition, including one national-level award for excellence in teaching achievements, one provincial-level teaching achievement award, and nine provincial and ministerial awards for outstanding achievements in philosophy and social sciences.

II. Program Objectives

1. Program Orientation

Guided by the fundamental mission of higher education to foster ethical integrity and academic excellence, the program adheres to the educational philosophy of strong foundational training, interdisciplinary integration, broad academic vision, and social responsibility. It aims to cultivate psychology professionals with solid theoretical foundations, well-developed practical skills, strong self-directed learning abilities, and sharp critical thinking.

Graduates are expected to demonstrate a strong sense of interdisciplinary awareness and disciplinary responsibility, as well as humanistic concern and global perspective. Students are trained to independently engage in teaching, research, and applied practice in psychology, and to provide innovative solutions to national and regional needs.

2. Program Characteristics

With a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary integration and innovation-oriented service, the program fully leverages the cross-disciplinary nature of psychology. Through curriculum design and the formation of interdisciplinary supervisory teams, the program promotes collaboration with fields such as architecture, design, urban and rural planning, landscape architecture, and computer science.

This interdisciplinary approach is designed to enhance students' innovative thinking, problem-solving capacity, and applied research competence, enabling them to address complex real-world challenges through integrated psychological perspectives.

3. Comprehensive Competencies

Upon completion of the program, graduates are expected to:

- Acquire a systematic understanding of core theoretical knowledge in their area of specialization, remain informed about current research frontiers and disciplinary trends, and demonstrate broad academic vision and critical thinking.

- Apply psychological research methods and techniques effectively, with the capacity for preliminary independent research.

- Demonstrate competence in the systematic analysis of academic literature in both Chinese and English, along with cross-cultural understanding and interpretation.

- Exhibit effective academic communication, including the clear and logical presentation of ideas and research findings, and, with appropriate guidance, participation in academic writing and scholarly exchange.

- Upon successful completion of the program, graduates are prepared for academic and research roles in psychology, with the capacity to apply disciplinary expertise across related professional contexts.

III. Areas of Concentration

01. Environmental Psychology (040201)

This concentration examines person–environment relationships, focusing on interactions between individuals and their natural, social, built, and informational environments, with the aim of promoting optimal human-environment fit. Core topics include environmental perception and spatial cognition; personal space and territoriality; crowding and

density; noise and environmental stress; place attachment and identity; restorative environments and mental health; and pro-environmental behavior and sustainability. The concentration emphasizes interdisciplinary integration with architecture, urban and rural planning, and landscape architecture, and supports applications in human-centered environmental design and livable city development.

02. Organizational and Social Psychology (040202)

This concentration focuses on individual-organization-society dynamics, examining psychological processes and behavioral patterns of individuals and groups in social and organizational contexts. Core topics include social perception and attribution; self-concept and social identity; attitude formation and change; interpersonal attraction and relationships; prosocial and aggressive behavior; conformity and obedience; group dynamics and cooperation–competition; as well as personnel selection and assessment, leadership and decision-making, occupational health, and organizational change. Integrating both basic and applied research, the concentration supports applications in social governance and human resource development.

03. Educational and School Psychology (040203)

Focusing on learning, development, and education, this concentration explores the psychological mechanisms underlying teachers' and students' learning, development, and behavior within educational settings. Core topics include learning processes of knowledge and skills; motivation and engagement; instructional design and assessment; diagnosis and intervention for behavioral and learning difficulties among children and adolescents; positive psychological development and resilience; psychological assessment and counseling. Integrating learning psychology, instructional psychology, and school psychology, the concentration supports applications in educational quality improvement and the promotion of student mental health and well-being.

IV. Program Duration

The master's program is designed as a full-time, on-campus course

of study with a typical completion timeline of three years. Students are expected to complete all degree requirements within an approved period of enrollment, which normally does not extend beyond six academic years from initial matriculation to degree conferral.

Students who demonstrate exceptional academic progress and complete program requirements ahead of schedule may be considered for early completion, subject to institutional review and approval. In such cases, the period of enrollment is ordinarily no shorter than two years. Detailed eligibility criteria for early completion are specified in the program's academic guidelines.

V. Program Structure and Mentoring

1. Advisor-Led Group Mentoring

Graduate students are guided by a primary faculty advisor and supported by a small advisory committee whose complementary expertise supports both academic training and research development.

Advisory groups are formed to reflect the interdisciplinary character of the program and may include faculty from related fields as well as external professionals aligned with the student's research interests. In some cases, an additional internal faculty member serves in a coordinating advisory role to support collaboration within the group.

2. Graduate Progress Review and Milestones

Graduate progress is monitored through a structured set of program milestones and academic reviews, coordinated at the school level by a designated oversight body composed of senior faculty and academic administrators. This body ensures the quality, consistency, and timely completion of all required stages of graduate education.

Key academic and research milestones in the graduate training process include the following:

Timeline for Graduate Milestones

Semester / Milestone	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mid-Program Review	Course-work	Course-work	√（Oct.）			
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review			√（Nov.）			
Thesis Proposal			√（Nov.）			
Thesis Progress Review				√（Jun.）		
Pre-Defense Review						√（Mar.）
Thesis Review						√（Apr.）
Final Thesis Defense						√（Jun.）

Notes：①The timeline presented above reflects institutional guidelines and prior practice. Specific dates are subject to confirmation by the Graduate School for the relevant academic year; ②In exceptional circumstances, such as early completion, extended enrollment, or approved leave of absence-the timeline may be adjusted in accordance with university policies.

VI. Credit Requirements

The program requires completion of a total of 32 credits, including 22 credits of required degree coursework and 12 credits of elective (non-degree) coursework. A detailed breakdown of credit allocation is provided in Section VII(1), "Curriculum Structure."

VII. Curriculum Structure and Requirements

1. Curriculum Structure

Category		Course Code		Course Name	Contact Hours	Credits	Offered Term			Grading	Notes
							1	2	3		
Required Coursework	General Courses	1001		Chinese for Beginners (I)	64	4	√			Exam	8 credits hours
		1002		Chinese for Beginners (II)	32	2		√		-	
		1003		Understanding China	32	2	√			-	
	Disciplin-ary Core Courses	2001		Advances in Psychological Science	32	2	√			-	no less than 6 credits hours
		2002		Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology	32	2	√			-	
		2003		Academic Writing and Research Ethics	32	2		√		-	
	Program Core Courses	3001		Special Topics on Environmental Psychology[1]	32	2	√			-	No less than 8 credits hours
		Concentration 01	3002	Research Innovation Training in Environmental Psychology (I)	48	3	√			-	
			3003	Research Innovation Training in Environmental Psychology (II)	48	3		√		-	
		Concentration 02	3004	Research Innovation Training in Management and Social Psychology (I)	48	3	√			-	
			3005	Research Innovation Training in Management and Social Psychology (II)	48	3		√		-	
		Concentration 03	3006	Research Innovation Training in Educational and School Psychology (I)	48	3	√			-	
			3007	Research Innovation Training in Educational and School Psychology (II)	48	3		√		-	
Non-Degree Courses	Elective Courses	4001		Philosophical Perspectives on Psychological Science	32	2	√			Coursework	No less than 6

[1] This course serves as a core course for all three program tracks and is required for students in each track.

		Code	Course Name						-Based Assessment	hours
		4002	Contemporary Theories in Psychological Science	32	2	√			-	
		4003	Empirical Methods in Organizational and Management Research	32	2		√		-	
		4004	Text Data Analysis and Mining	32	2		√		-	
		4005	Applied Machine Learning	32	2		√		-	
		4006	User Experience (UX) and Usability Testing Research	32	2		√		-	
		4007	Cultural and Social Cognition	32	2		√		-	
		4008	Advanced Experimental Programming Techniques	32	2		√		-	
		4009	Cognitive Psychology	32	2		√		-	
		4010	Methods and Techniques in Cognitive Neuroscience	32	2		√		-	
		4011	Educational and School Psychology	32	2		√		-	
		4012	Family Psychology	32	2		√		-	
		4013	Mental Health Education: Curriculum Design and Instruction	32	2		√		-	
		4014	Theories and Techniques of Child and Adolescent Counseling	32	2		√		-	
		4015	Horticultural Therapy and Healing Environments	32	2		√		-	
	Required Components	5001	Academic Activities		1				-	2 credits hours
		5002	Practicum		1				-	

2. Course Requirements

(1)　Students are expected to complete the required coursework in accordance with the program's course plan.

(2)　A set of discipline-specific courses—Research and Innovation

Training in Environmental Psychology (I–II), Research and Innovation Training in Organizational and Social Psychology (I–II), and Research and Innovation Training in Educational and School Psychology (I–II)— form a central component of graduate training. These courses are designed to strengthen students' abilities in scholarly literature review and analysis, research methods and technical skills, academic presentation, and proposal writing. The courses are guided by faculty advisors and advisory groups, allowing instruction and training to be closely integrated with students' ongoing research development.

(3) Academic Activities (Course Description) — Academic Activities is a required course designed to engage graduate students with current developments in the discipline, including emerging research areas, new theories, and methodological advances. The course encompasses a range of scholarly events such as research presentations, academic lectures, seminars, and workshops that are attended or organized by graduate students. Over the course of enrollment, students are expected to participate in more than ten approved academic activities and to document their participation by submitting an Academic Activity Report to the School. Records of participation are reviewed in accordance with university procedures. Student performance in this course is evaluated by the faculty advisor on a pass/fail basis. Upon satisfactory completion of the course requirements, students receive the designated course credit. The course is intended to span the graduate training period and is normally completed by the end of the fifth semester.

(4) Practical Activities (Course Description)—Practical Activities is a required course designed to provide graduate students with hands-on experience in applying disciplinary knowledge in both academic and real-world contexts. The course consists of two core components: research-based practice and social practice, reflecting the integration of scholarly inquiry and professional engagement. Students are required to complete one approved research practice activity and one approved social practice activity, with a total duration of no fewer than 30 working days. Research practice may include activities such as serving as the principal investigator of a graduate research innovation project, or participating in municipal-level or higher research projects led by faculty members, with

defined research responsibilities.

Social practice may involve teaching-related activities in undergraduate courses, assisting with academic or administrative operations, participating in field surveys, data collection, policy consultation, technical services, or management-related projects, engaging in engineering or applied practice related to the thesis topic, or taking part in innovation and entrepreneurship practice and competitions.

All practical activities are conducted under faculty supervision and require the development of a structured practice plan prior to implementation. Upon completion, students submit a Practical Activity Report to the School for review.

Student performance in this course is evaluated by the faculty advisor on a pass/fail basis. Upon satisfactory completion of all course requirements, students are awarded the designated course credit. The course is intended to span the graduate training period and is normally completed by the end of the fifth semester, at which point the required documentation must be submitted.

（5）Assessment and Evaluation—Student learning is evaluated using multiple forms of assessment, selected to align with course objectives and instructional approaches. Required degree coursework typically includes a formal examination component, while elective and remedial courses may be assessed through examinations and alternative evaluative activities.

Assessment may take a variety of forms, such as written or oral examinations, a combination of written and oral assessment, research papers, or other substantive academic work. Depending on the nature of the course, examinations may be open-book or closed-book.

The program emphasizes continuous and developmental evaluation. Instructors are encouraged to consider ongoing coursework, assignments, and research-related work as part of the overall course grade, rather than relying solely on a single final assessment.

（6）Grading—Courses are graded on a 100-point scale. Credit is awarded upon satisfactory completion of the course. For degree-required coursework, satisfactory completion corresponds to a final score of 70 or above, while non-degree coursework requires a final score of 60 or above to earn credit.

3. Coursework Timeline

With the exception of required components, coursework is typically completed within the first year of study.

VIII. Mid-Program Review

The Mid-Program Review is a key milestone in graduate training and serves as a comprehensive evaluation of students' readiness to proceed to the thesis stage. The review assesses students' academic progress, research competence, professional conduct, and overall ability to sustain graduate-level study.

Evaluation areas include academic performance and development potential, research engagement and adherence to scholarly standards, professional ethics and academic integrity, and general well-being as it relates to the capacity for continued study. Students who successfully complete the Mid-Program Review are permitted to advance to the master's thesis phase.

The review is conducted in accordance with the University's policies on graduate mid-program evaluation and is guided by the following expectations:

1. The Mid-Program Review is normally scheduled at the beginning of the third semester and completed by the end of that semester.

2. The review is carried out by a school-level graduate review committee, which oversees the evaluation process and ensures consistency and academic rigor.

3. Review outcomes are recorded on a pass/fail basis.

4. A student may receive an unsatisfactory outcome under any of the following circumstances:

(1) Serious concerns regarding professional conduct or ethical behavior, including violations of university regulations that remain unresolved;

(2) Breaches of academic integrity or research ethics;

(3) Failure to earn credit for two or more required courses;

(4) Failure to participate in the Mid-Program Review without prior approval;

(5) Health-related conditions that significantly impede normal academic participation.

5. Students who receive an unsatisfactory outcome may be eligible for a subsequent review after a minimum period of six months, subject to academic approval. If the outcome of the subsequent review remains unsatisfactory, the student may be placed on extended enrollment. In cases where the review committee determines, based on a comprehensive evaluation, that a student is not suited to continue graduate study, including instances of significant deficiencies in research capability, the committee may recommend termination of enrollment in accordance with university policies.

IX. Research and Innovation Outcomes

Prior to the final thesis defense, graduate students are encouraged to publish one research article as first author in an English-language peer-reviewed journal within their field of study. An official acceptance letter may be submitted in lieu of the published article. Relevant documentation, including the article or acceptance letter, must be submitted to the School.

All research and innovation outcomes must also comply with the University's Basic Requirements for Innovative Scholarly Outputs in Degree Applications (SUST Policy〔2025〕42).

X. Thesis Requirements

The master's thesis is a central component of graduate education, providing comprehensive training in independent research and in the application of disciplinary knowledge to problem analysis and solution development. It also serves as a key basis for evaluating a student's eligibility for degree conferral.

Depending on its focus, the thesis may take the form of basic research, applied basic research, or application-oriented research, including work conducted in connection with funded research projects or applied development initiatives. In all cases, the work is expected to demonstrate original insight, scholarly rigor, and a distinctive contribution.

The thesis process consists of a series of required milestones, including research ethics review, thesis proposal, mid-thesis progress review, pre-defense, thesis review, and final thesis defense. In addition to university-wide regulations governing thesis management and degree conferral[2], the program establishes discipline-specific expectations for each stage of the thesis process in alignment with its graduate training objectives, as outlined below：

1. Research Ethics Review

Prior to initiating thesis research, students must submit a research ethics application detailing participant selection and recruitment, research design and methods, privacy and data protection measures, informed consent procedures, and relevant prior literature. Approval must be obtained from both the School Academic Ethics Committee and the University Research Ethics Committee before the student may proceed to the thesis proposal stage. Research projects that do not meet ethical standards must be revised and resubmitted until approval is obtained.

This stage is administered by the School Academic Ethics Committee.

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[2] In accordance with the University's established policies governing thesis topic selection and proposal approval, mid-program thesis review, pre-defense procedures, and the conferral of the master's degree.

2. Thesis Proposal

Students are expected to undertake substantial preliminary research, including an extensive review of relevant literature, to develop a clear understanding of the historical background, current state, and emerging trends of the research area. Based on this foundation, they define a thesis topic that demonstrates scholarly value, theoretical or practical significance, and originality grounded in prior work.

A comprehensive thesis proposal is required. The proposal typically addresses research significance, a review of relevant domestic and international literature, the formulation of research questions, the conceptual and methodological approach, the proposed structure and work plan, core arguments and innovative elements, potential challenges, and key references.

Review is conducted by a discipline-based evaluation panel convened by the relevant research group. The panel comprises three or five qualified faculty members, including at least one member from outside the student's specialization, and is led by a designated panel chair. Members of the student's advisory team may participate, with no more than one advisor serving, and advisors do not chair the panel for their own students.

Assessment takes place primarily through an oral presentation and discussion. Each student delivers a 15-minute presentation, followed by 15 minutes of panel questions and feedback. Evaluation considers the quality of the proposal, the clarity and coherence of the presentation, and the student's responses to questions. A review decision is rendered at the conclusion of the session.

3. Thesis Progress Review

The thesis progress review is intended to ensure the quality of the master's thesis, assess research progress, and identify and address issues arising during the research and writing process. During research design, data collection and analysis, and thesis drafting, students are expected to provide periodic progress reports to their faculty advisor and advisory

group, and to refine the structure, approach, and arguments of the thesis under faculty guidance.

The review focuses on the following aspects:

(1) Consistency between the thesis title and research content and the approved proposal, including any changes completed through the appropriate approval process;

(2) Necessary revisions or adjustments to the research content in response to recent developments in relevant domestic and international research;

(3) Completion status of thesis-related work in accordance with the approved research plan and expected academic standards;

(4) The proposed plan for the next stage of thesis development.

4. Thesis Pre-Defense

Students intending to proceed to the final thesis defense are required to complete a thesis pre-defense organized by the relevant discipline-based research group. During this stage, the review panel hears a comprehensive presentation of the student's thesis progress and research outcomes, provides feedback for further revision and refinement, and determines whether the student is prepared to proceed to the final defense as scheduled.

This stage is organized and administered by the discipline-based research group. The pre-defense panel consists of three or five qualified faculty members, including at least one member from outside the student's specialization area, and includes a panel chair and a panel secretary. Members of the student's advisory team may participate, with no more than one advisor serving on the panel, and advisors do not serve as panel chair for their own students.

The pre-defense is conducted primarily through an oral presentation and discussion. Each student delivers a 15-minute presentation, followed by 15 minutes of questions from the panel. The pre-defense procedure

includes the following steps:

(1) The student presents the thesis, with particular emphasis on its original contributions and key findings.

(2) The faculty advisor (or advisory group) provides an overview of the student's research activities and academic progress during the course of graduate study.

Members of the pre-defense panel engage the student in discussion through questions addressing the scholarly rigor, originality, academic quality, scope of work, thesis structure, experimental or research design, data analysis, results and conclusions, and overall quality of writing. The panel then provides specific recommendations for revision and refinement, along with a pre-defense outcome.

The outcome of the thesis pre-defense is recorded as pass or fail. Based on the pre-defense outcome, students either revise the thesis in preparation for the final defense or proceed to the defense eligibility review stage.

(1) Students who receive a pass may continue revising and refining the thesis in accordance with the panel's recommendations and, upon approval by the faculty advisor or advisory group, submit an application for the final thesis defense.

(2) Students who receive a fail are required to revise the thesis based on the panel's feedback and participate in a subsequent pre-defense.

(3) Students who are unable to attend the pre-defense as scheduled must submit a request for postponement. Extensions may not exceed two weeks and require approval from the faculty advisor and the School Degree Committee, followed by review and record-keeping by the Graduate School.

Following completion of the pre-defense, the School maintains the Pre-Defense Record Form and submits a summary of pre-defense outcomes to the Graduate School in accordance with university

procedures.

5. Thesis Review

Prior to formal submission for review, students must provide the final version of the thesis to their faculty advisor, all members of the advisory group, and designated reviewers at least one week in advance. Progression to the thesis review stage requires the collective approval of the advisory group.

The thesis is reviewed by no fewer than two senior experts in the field, at least one of whom must be an external reviewer. Reviewers are appointed at both the university level and the school level, in accordance with institutional procedures. All theses are submitted for blind review in the approved master's thesis format. Reviewers' identities are kept strictly confidential, and faculty advisors may not serve as reviewers. Reviewers are expected to complete their evaluations within 15 days of receiving the thesis.

Students whose theses receive satisfactory evaluations may proceed to the final thesis defense. If two reviewers determine that the thesis does not meet the required academic standard, the student is not eligible to proceed to defense. If one reviewer finds the thesis unsatisfactory while the other provides a positive evaluation, the student may, upon request and with the approval of the faculty advisor and the School Degree Committee, be assigned an additional external reviewer. If the additional review is also unsatisfactory, the student may not proceed to defense.

Students who are not approved for defense may reapply after six months, provided they remain within the maximum period of enrollment.

6. Final Thesis Defense

The thesis defense committee consists of five or seven members, appointed from senior experts in the field. The committee includes external members, normally no fewer than two, as well as at least one member from the School Degree Committee and at least one member from the School Graduate Training Committee. Membership in these

groups may overlap.

Committee members are appointed jointly by the School Graduate Training Committee and the School Degree Committee and are submitted to the Graduate School for review one week prior to the defense. The student's advisor and co-advisor may not serve as members of the defense committee.

The committee includes a chair, selected from senior external members holding the rank of professor or an equivalent professional title, who presides over the defense. A committee secretary is appointed to assist with the organization and administration of the defense. The student's advisor and co-advisor may not serve as committee secretary.

Students participating in the thesis defense may not be involved in the organization or administration of the defense proceedings.