



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, LIFE & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Nutritional Sciences & Wellness

Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program

2024-2025 Student Handbook

Master of Science (MS), Nutritional Sciences
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Nutritional Sciences

Disclaimer

Students at the University of Arizona are subject to all policies and procedures of the University of Arizona Graduate College, registrar's office, bursar's office, police department, and so forth. All policies are on the relevant University websites.

Students should always check the relevant campus policies before engaging in such actions/activities as adding classes late in the semester, protesting a campus ordinance, telling a student to appeal a grade, or other actions; failure to do so could have financial consequences for the student or lead to other unforeseen outcomes.

The NSGP team does its best to keep this handbook up to date with University policies. However, if information in this handbook appears to conflict with the University's campus-level policy, then typically the campus policy is followed. Students may contact the NSGP director and/or coordinator when they find such inconsistencies in this handbook.

University of Arizona Nondiscrimination and Antiharassment Policy

The University of Arizona is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination. In support of this commitment, the University prohibits discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, based on a protected classification, including race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information. The University encourages anyone who believes they have been the subject of discrimination to report the matter immediately (as described on the website). All members of the University community are responsible for participating in creating a campus environment free from all forms of prohibited discrimination and for cooperating with University officials who investigate allegations of policy violations.

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Director's Welcome



Dear Students,

Welcome to the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program in the School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness, and congratulations on taking this significant step in your academic and personal journey! Your decision to pursue advanced studies with our vibrant community of leaders in the fields of nutrition, exercise, and wellness demonstrates your dedication to advancing knowledge and improving the well-being of both individuals and society. During your journey, you will conduct pioneering research, work alongside renowned faculty, and network with peers who are equally passionate about advancing health and wellness. We encourage you to explore the wide range of resources and extracurricular activities at your disposal. As your time

in our program is meant to foster both scholarly advancement and personal growth, we encourage you to welcome challenges, explore all viewpoints, and build strong relationships with fellow students and faculty. Your unique contributions are vital to our program's excellence, and we eagerly anticipate the fresh perspectives and innovative ideas you'll introduce to our academic community. Your questions, ideas and suggestions are welcome since your input is essential in tailoring your educational journey to be both rewarding and aligned with your aspirations. Please reach out to us anytime!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Teske, PhD

Associate Professor

Director, Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program (MS, PhD)

School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness

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School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness Mission and Values

The **School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness** (NSW, School) at the **University of Arizona** (UArizona, University) prepares graduate students to be leaders in nutritional sciences, dietetics, food systems, health, and wellness. The School is housed in the **College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences** (CALES).

Mission: To provide outstanding research, graduate programs, undergraduate programs, and outreach education that advances nutrition and physical activity in optimizing health and wellness for all people.

Values:

- Integrity: What we say and do embodies scientific rigor and social responsibility.
- Stewardship: We focus on improving the health of future generations.
- Outreach and Connectedness: We strive to empower communities to think critically about their well-being through nutrition and physical activity.
- Inclusiveness: We embrace diversity and its power.
- Translation: We put discovery and knowledge on a path toward improved human health and wellness.
- Entrepreneurship: We have the drive and courage to boldly pursue new ideas.

Graduates of NSW programs will be imbued with these values and will carry forward the School's vision in their future endeavors. NSW faculty and personnel strive to practice these values in support of graduate students interested in advancing and communicating the discovery and translation of nutritional sciences and wellness to optimize health for people in Arizona and beyond.

I. Introduction

The **Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program** (NSGP) provides exceptional academic, research, and professional development opportunities for students pursuing the master of science (MS) and doctor of philosophy (PhD) degrees in nutritional sciences.

The MS option is a research-focused degree that prepares students for careers in academic/educational settings, private and nonprofit sectors, and for the pursuit of a PhD. The PhD is a robust, terminal research degree designed for students who want to develop and enhance their research expertise in their chosen area of study. Graduates typically pursue careers in academia and research-focused specialties in the public and private sectors.

The program subscribes to a multifaceted approach toward advancing the discovery and translation of the role of nutrition in optimizing health and wellness. The program is committed to graduating outstanding scientists who will make strong contributions to the body of knowledge in nutritional sciences and wellness through interdisciplinary and collaborative scientific research.

Signature research areas include:

- cellular and molecular nutrition
- gene/lifestyle/environment interactions and molecular networks
- inflammation and immune responses
- lifestyle behaviors and human performance
- renal and cardiovascular disease

As of August 2024, 16 MS/PhD students are active in the program in varying stages of their academic studies and research.

About this Handbook

This handbook outlines the philosophy of and requirements for students enrolled in the MS and PhD degree programs. NSGP students are expected to use this handbook as a resource to help guide them in understanding the myriad institutional policies and procedures as well as the requirements for obtaining the MS/PhD degrees.

Students should review this handbook in conjunction with the current **University Graduate College Catalog** and information posted on the **Graduate College website**. The NSGP requirements are under the authority of and consistent with the rules and guidelines set forth by the Graduate College. Some NSGP requirements exceed those stated in the Graduate College Catalog. Students must meet the more stringent requirements contained in this handbook. Certain general University regulations and specific NSGP degree requirements are only outlined in this document; students should consult the current Graduate College website for policies and guidelines set forth by the Graduate College and **Graduate & Professional Student Council**.

Attainment of a graduate degree in nutritional sciences requires outstanding scholarship and demonstration of distinguished research leading to a thesis/dissertation that contributes significantly to the general body of knowledge in the discipline. All degree requirements included in this handbook and/or communicated by the NSGP and Graduate College must be fulfilled in order to graduate.

While the NSGP strives to ensure the accuracy of the content included in this handbook, information is subject to change. Students will be notified of changes to policies/procedures and other content when program personnel learn of such changes.

II. Learning Outcomes, Administration, Facilities/Resources

This section provides information about expected learning outcomes, program administration, and facilities/resources available to NSGP students.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the graduate program, students will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate nutritional science and wellness research and integrate core concepts, principles, and data to deepen understanding of the field.
2. Apply critical thinking skills to develop testable hypotheses, design experiments to test these hypotheses, and interpret and apply new findings to the field.
3. Develop effective oral and written communication skills.

Program Administration

The NSGP relies on many NSW personnel who work collectively to guide and administer program operations. Among these are the director of graduate studies (DGS, director), program coordinator, NSW Business Center and administrative personnel, and the Graduate Research Degrees Committee (GRDC). The NSGP director oversees the formal operations of the program and chairs GRDC meetings. The NSGP coordinator facilitates and maintains the day-to-day administrative tasks, assists the director in monitoring students' progress, communicates program-related information to students, and supports students with various aspects of their graduate-related studies. The NSW Business Center maintains students' financial- and employment-related records and communicates such information to students as needed. NSW administrative personnel communicate School information and assist students with scheduling their thesis and dissertation defense seminars and distributing their defense seminar announcements.

Graduate Research Degrees Committee (GRDC)

GRDC membership comprises the NSGP director, coordinator, NSW graduate and joint-appointed faculty, and a graduate student representative. The committee meets regularly to review, discuss, and advise on program policies, activities, and assessment as well as student learning outcomes, progress, and support. In addition, the committee oversees curriculum-related matters. With the exception of the student representative, the committee also is responsible for the overall evaluation of graduate student performance and makes final decisions concerning applicants for admission to the program. The GRDC strives to maintain continuous quality improvement efforts to ensure the viability and competitive stature of the program.

Appendix A lists the current GRDC members. With the exception of the student representative and program coordinator, all members have [Graduate Faculty](#)¹ status. Students should note that the "Graduate Faculty" designation is required for faculty who will serve on [student committees](#) (thesis, comprehensive exam, dissertation). The [University Phonebook](#) lists the status of all University faculty (requires NetID login).

Graduate student representative: A current NSGP graduate student serves in this role for one fiscal year (July 1-June 30) following the NSGP student election, which is held during the spring semester.²

1. *Responsibility:* The student representative proactively engages with NSGP students on a regular basis to obtain feedback/comments to share with the GRDC during scheduled GRDC meetings.
2. *Eligibility requirements:* Currently enrolled and in good standing, completed at least three (3) full-time and consecutive semesters of NSGP graduate studies with minimum 3.0 GPA, have a confirmed faculty advisor who supports the student serving in the role, be enrolled for a minimum of 6 units for fall and spring semesters during the service-term year, not graduating in December of the service-term year, and not have served in the role the preceding year.
3. *Election process:* Before the end of the spring semester in response to a call for nominees, NSGP

¹ Refer to [Graduate Faculty Policy](#).

² Student representative criteria is subject to GRDC review/approval.

students may nominate their (eligible) NSGP peers (and self) for this role. Any student with at least one nomination and who meets the eligibility requirements (listed in “2” above) may be included in the election, which is completed via Google survey ballot or paper ballot. At least half of the NSGP current student population must cast ballots. The role goes to the student with the highest number of votes; the student with the second highest number of votes will be the alternate (serve in the representative's absence). In the case of tie, the NSGP director may select the student to serve in the representative role or otherwise the student with the most seniority will be selected.

Program Facilities and Resources

The University provides graduate student access to a wide variety of research facilities, tools, and resources to support clinical, animal, basic, and molecular research. Refer to the [Facilities and Units website](#) in the [Office of Research Innovation and Impact](#) to learn more about the University's range of research facilities.

Facilities

NSGP faculty and graduate students occupy office and laboratory space in several locations across the University campus. Several NSGP offices and some labs are located in the [Shantz Building](#). Additional offices and labs are located on main campus and on the [Arizona Health Sciences campus](#), including the [Department of Pediatrics](#), [Steele Children's Research Center](#), [Arizona Cancer Center](#), and [Bio5 Institute](#) (located in Thomas W. Keating Bioresearch Building). Off-campus locations include the [Collaboratory for Metabolic Disease Prevention and Treatment](#). This distribution of labs/offices reflects the program's interdisciplinary nature.

Equipment, Supplies

Availability of modern scientific instruments is crucially important to research and graduate education programs. The School possesses ample instrumentation to conduct research at all levels of scientific research. Each investigator's laboratory is equipped with specialized instrumentation required for research in their field. All laboratories have access to modern computers and data-processing systems.

Graduate Student Office

The NSGP Graduate Student Office is a private and secured room in the Shantz building (room 161) that provides access to computer workstations, printer and scanner, separate work desks, meeting table, white board, microwave, and refrigerator.

Library Resources

The [University Libraries](#) comprises the Main Library, Science-Engineering Library, Fine Arts Library, and Health Sciences Library. Each holds extensive collections of periodicals, monographs, and special and digital collections.

The [Health Sciences Library](#) is located on the Arizona Health Sciences campus. It is the largest and most comprehensive health sciences library in Arizona. In addition to its holdings of pertinent health sciences periodicals and monographs, the library provides an excellent array of valuable services including bibliographic searches, librarian consults, and research support. The Health Sciences Library provides access to essential medical information and specialized databases such as Embase, the world's largest database of drug information. Librarians participate as instructors in the curriculum of the health sciences colleges and work in partnership with researchers and clinicians to advance health information literacy. The library also provides spaces for small-group collaboration and quiet study.

College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences (CALES), Graduate College, and Other Resources
Resources for [CALES](#) and [Graduate College](#) are listed in Section VII Resources.

III. Program Admissions

The NSGP admits one cohort per year (fall semester). All applicants must apply to the University's Graduate College via the "[GradApp](#)" [system website](#) (instructions and FAQs are provided on this website). Applications typically open in June and close in December for the following admissions cycle.

Admissions Requirements

Figure III.1 provides the current admissions criteria for the MS and PhD programs.

Application Materials

Prior to starting their application, applicants should have the required materials ready to upload, including their statement of purpose, résumé/CV, transcripts, and letters of recommendation (the recommenders receive an email notification with a link to access the system to upload their letters).

Application Statement of Purpose (SOP)

In their statement of purpose, students should address why the NSGP is a great fit for them and why they are a great fit for the program. The SOP should answer such questions as:

- Why are you applying to this doctoral program? Briefly explain why you want to pursue graduate studies in the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program.
- What are your current career/professional goals? Briefly describe your career goals and how this degree and program will help you achieve these goals.
- What type of research experience do you have? Briefly describe any research experience you have had and how you might apply the skills you learned in this master's/doctoral program.
- How have your prior experiences prepared for graduate studies? Explain how your prior learning, work/volunteer experiences, and other activities have prepared you for pursuing a graduate degree.
- What contributions might you make to the program? Briefly discuss how your participation in the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program may add value to the program.
- What achievements and qualifications do you want the admissions committee to know about? Briefly identify your qualifications/achievements that indicate your potential for success in the program.
- Other information that you feel will be valuable for reviewers of your application (examples: career objectives, challenges you have overcome, specific skills that you will apply and/or further develop if accepted into the program).

Résumé/CV

Applicants must upload a current résumé or curriculum vitae (CV).

Letters of Recommendation

The PhD program requires at least three letters of recommendation, and the MS program requires at least two letters of recommendation. Recommenders may include previous employers, faculty with whom applicants have been involved in research, or others who know the applicant in a professional capacity. All recommenders identified by the applicant receive an automated email with a link to the application system. All recommenders also answer a short list of questions prior to uploading their letter in the GradApp system. For the MS program, two letters of recommendation are required. For the PhD program, three letters of recommendation are required. Letters should:

- Be submitted on letterhead or otherwise indicate the recommender's contact information, current title
- Provide information related to applicant's aptitude, curiosity, and industriousness
- Demonstrate applicant's level of maturity and seriousness of purpose
- Speak to applicant's character and leadership ability
- Address applicant's scholastic promise and commitment to graduate studies
- Include other pertinent information that may not be readily apparent in such items as transcripts, resume/curriculum vitae, or SOP

Figure III.1. NSGP Admissions Requirements

Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program Admissions Requirements	PhD Admissions Requirements
<p>MS Admissions Requirements</p> <p>Degree Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in life sciences (nutritional sciences, health sciences, physiological sciences) or related field, with 3.0/4.0 minimum GPA.</p> <p>Prior Coursework* (see UA catalog course descriptions for “equivalent courses”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organic Chemistry: 4 units of 200-level or higher (3 units lecture, 1 unit lab) Equivalent to CHEM 241 A, B and CHEM 243 A, B Biochemistry: 6 units of 300-level or higher Equivalent to BIOC 384 and BIOC 385 Biology/Microbiology: 6 units of 100-level or higher Equivalent to MCB 170C1 and MCB 181R Physiology: 4-6 units of 200-level or higher Equivalent to PSIO 201 and PSIO 202, or PSIO 380 Nutrition science: 3 units of 400-level Equivalent to NSC 408 <p>*Note: Applicants admitted with deficiencies will need to make these up without graduate credit during their first year of graduate study.</p> <p>Standardized Tests GRE: Not required; applicants who have GRE scores may submit them with their application documentation.</p> <p>English Language Proficiency For applicants whose native language is not English, please refer to both of these websites for current requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate College, International Applicants Graduate College, Graduate Assistant/Associate Appointment Requirements <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of Purpose Resume/Curriculum Vitae Teaching assistant (TA) experience helpful but not required Research experience preferred 2 letters of recommendation Application Procedures <p>Admissions Cycle Fall admission only—application deadline is December 15</p>	<p>Degree Bachelor of Science (BS) or master’s degree in life sciences (nutritional sciences, health sciences, physiological sciences) or related field, with 3.0/4.0 minimum GPA.</p> <p>Prior Coursework* (see UA catalog course descriptions for “equivalent courses”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organic Chemistry: 4 units of 200-level or higher (3 units lecture, 1 unit lab) Equivalent to CHEM 241 A, B and CHEM 243 A, B Biochemistry: 6 units of 300-level or higher Equivalent to BIOC 384 and BIOC 385 Chemistry lab: ≥2 units (organic, analytical, biochemistry, or food analysis) Biology/Microbiology: 6 units of 100-level or higher Equivalent to MCB 170C1 and MCB 181R Physiology: 4-6 units of 200-level or higher Equivalent to PSIO 201 and PSIO 202, or PSIO 380 Nutrition science: 3 units of 400-level Equivalent to NSC 408 <p>*Note: Applicants admitted with deficiencies will need to make these up without graduate credit during their first year of graduate study.</p> <p>Standardized Tests GRE: Not required; applicants who have GRE scores may submit them with their application documentation.</p> <p>English Language Proficiency For applicants whose native language is not English, please refer to both of these websites for current requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate College, International Applicants Graduate College, Graduate Assistant/Associate Appointment Requirements <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of Purpose Resume/Curriculum Vitae Teaching assistant (TA) experience helpful but not required Research experience preferred 3 letters of recommendation Application Procedures <p>Admissions Cycle Fall admission only—application deadline is December 15</p>

Additional Application Requirements

The application process also requires applicants to respond to supplemental questions that provide additional opportunities for applicants to highlight their skills and experiences and address their English language proficiency.

Application Review Timeline

After the application submission deadline (mid-December), the GRDC reviews and ranks applicants and creates a short list of candidates to invite for interviews with various faculty affiliated with the program. Interviews usually occur in late January/early February. Following the interviews, the committee selects the final list of candidates who may be invited to the campus for a day or two of meetings and activities with program faculty and students. Activities often include research presentations by faculty and a social event.

Following the campus visit, the GRDC selects the final roster of candidates. Once approved, the NSGP recommends candidates for admission to the Graduate College. Candidates approved by the Graduate College are sent letters of invitation from the NSGP to join the program and are also contacted by the Graduate College. Candidates are not obligated to respond to offer letters prior to April 15.³ Candidates who accept the NSGP offer will indicate their intention in the GradApp system (intent to matriculate) and also notify the NSGP coordinator (as stated in the NSGP letter).

In June/July, the NSW Business Center sends the formal contract letters to those candidates who intend to matriculate in the program; these letters include information about graduate assistantship/associateship (GA) requirements, University policies, teaching assistantships/associateships (TA) assignments for the fall semester, required trainings, enrollment information, and new-student orientation requirements. Candidates must sign/return these letters by the date indicated in their letters to confirm their status in the program. Orientation sessions occur the week before fall semester courses begin.

Admissions Status

In most cases, students admitted to the NSGP enter as degree-seeking graduate students. Other admissions types are described on the [Graduate College Admissions](#) website. (Not all types apply to the NSGP.)

Degree-Seeking (Regular) Graduate Status

Students who meet all admissions requirements may be admitted to regular, degree-seeking graduate status to undertake coursework and fulfill requirements leading to an advanced degree.

Nondegree-Seeking Graduate Status

Individuals holding a bachelor's degree or its equivalent from a college or university that grants degrees recognized by the University may apply to the Graduate College for [nondegree-seeking admission](#). Upon admission, they may enroll in graduate-level courses without being admitted to a graduate degree program. Such students may enroll in graduate-level coursework as their qualifications and performance permit. It is advisable to contact the department(s) offering courses of interest to ensure that the courses are available to nondegree students. Up to twelve (12) units of graduate credit earned in nondegree status and/or transferred from other institutions may be petitioned for application toward an advanced degree once the student obtains regular admission to a degree program. International applicants requiring a student visa are not eligible for graduate nondegree admission.

Conditional Admission (International Students)

Conditional admission is a departmental promise of future admission for international students who have met all Graduate College requirements *except* the English proficiency requirement. Although the NSGP does not generally admit students conditionally, the admissions committee may recommend conditional

³ Per the [April 15 Resolution](#), Council of Graduate Schools.

admission on a case-by-case basis. Conditional admission requires that the student apply to and enroll at the UA Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) at their own expense (or their sponsor's) with the expectation of achieving TOEFL-equivalent English proficiency within one year. The initial 1-20 will be generated by CESL to allow the student to attend CESL classes. Once CESL certifies that the student has achieved English proficiency at the TOEFL minimum, he or she will be admitted as a regular standing student. For full details, refer to the [International Admission Types website](#).

UA Net ID and Email Account

Shortly after admission to the Graduate College, all students must set up their UA Net ID and email accounts. Instructions are posted on the [UITS website](#). After completing these steps, students will be able to login to their student information via the [UAccess System](#).

Financial Support

Nearly all admitted students receive some funding via NSW [Graduate Assistantships/Associateships](#).

Graduate Assistantship/Associateship (GA)

The NSW generally offers GA appointments to accepted candidates during the admissions process. Qualifications for appointment are explained on the [Graduate College Qualifications for Appointment website](#). (Note, however, that CALES requires first-year GAs to be enrolled in a minimum of 9 units for spring and fall semesters.)

Students in this category typically enter the program with one of two graduate appointments: graduate assistant or graduate associate. Students entering the MS or PhD program with a bachelor's degree are admitted at the assistant level. Students entering the PhD program with a master's degree are admitted at the associate level. The primary difference between these two levels is the pay rate. The NSGP formal contract letters sent to new students prior to enrollment specify the appointment level and pay rates, which are set by CALES and the University. CALES GAs are among the highest paid in the University. **All NSGP students with GA appointments are expected to review the [Graduate College GA Manual](#) and familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures in the manual.**

Year 1: The GA appointment is a fiscal-year position, which begins the week before fall semester classes start (mid-August) and ends June 30 the following year. The appointment is typically a teaching assistantship/associateship (TA).⁴ The GA appointment involves NSW funds and generally provides half-time (20 hours/week, also referred to as 0.5 FTE⁵) support for the first year. A TA is assigned to one or more undergraduate teaching faculty to help support undergraduate course instruction for the 20 hours per week. Likewise, an RA with a half-time appointment works for 20 hours per week under the supervision of a designated NSGP faculty supervisor who is likely to become the student's faculty advisor. The typical model for all entering (first-year) MS/PhD students is a TA appointment.

Year 2: The GA fiscal-year appointment starts July 1 and ends June 30 the following year. Students typically move to quarter time TA (10 hours/week) and quarter time RA (10 hours/week) status, with the RA portion supported by the student's faculty advisor. However, some students may still be half-time TA (20 hours/week) if they have not identified their faculty advisor. Likewise, some students may be fully covered as a half-time RA (20 hours/week) depending on their identified faculty advisor's funding status. The faculty advisor may support up to but not in excess of half-time (20 hours/week) for the second year.

Year 3 and beyond: PhD students are typically funded as RA by their faculty advisors for 20 hours/week for their remaining years of study⁶.

⁴ In rare cases, a first-year GA appointment could be a research assistantship/associateship (RA), or some combination of TA/RA.

⁵ Refer to [Appointment Periods and FTE Information](#).

⁶ Exceptions apply, such as if a student is funded by an F31 or other fellowship award.

Students accepted into the program and who accept their GA notice of appointment are typically eligible for these [benefits](#): If a nonresident, a tuition reduction to the equivalent of base in-state graduate tuition; 100% payment toward remaining base graduate tuition dependent on the tuition amount associated with the term of contract—note that mandatory registration fees and course fees are not covered (refer to the [Costs & Fees website](#) for tuition and mandatory registration fee details); payment of the individual student health premium (refer to the [Campus Health website](#)); and 10% ASUA Bookstore discount on select items. See also [GA benefits of appointment](#) and [New and Current Students website](#). All students with GA appointments are expected to review the [Resignation or Termination from Appointment policy](#) (GA Manual) so that they understand the financial implications if they leave their GA position before the end of their appointment.

Master's degree students with GA appointments are typically supported for up to two (2) years, with funding contingent on making satisfactory academic progress and receiving satisfactory evaluations from teaching and research supervisors. (Satisfactory academic progress is addressed elsewhere in this handbook.)

Doctoral students with GA appointments are typically funded for up to five (5) academic years. Support is contingent upon making satisfactory academic progress and receiving satisfactory evaluations from teaching and research supervisors. Funding beyond five years is at the NSW and/or faculty advisor's discretion and is based on: (a) successful progress toward the dissertation; (b) the availability of funds; (c) NSW needs; (d) the status and standing of the student's ongoing research; (e) the student's performance to date in the areas of research, coursework, and teaching; and (f) the potential for successful completion in an agreed-upon timeframe.

Current GAs may be eligible for winter- and summer-session TA positions. However, this funding is not part of the fiscal-year contractual academic funding for MS and PhD students. Summer TA funding priorities are based on course enrollments, graduate student ability status and progress, experience in teaching independently, an appropriate fit between graduate student ability, expertise, and available courses, and graduate student tenure in the program⁷.

Fellowships

Newly admitted students who are offered/awarded fellowships should confirm their acceptance as early as possible after being admitted to the program because awards may be linked to a particular research program. The award amount will vary depending on the fellowship award. Refer to the Graduate College's [Graduate Funding Opportunities](#) for more information.

Individual Faculty Grant Funding

In rare instances, faculty may have grant funds available to fund a student as an RA when they enter the program; the faculty member is likely to become the student's faculty advisor.

Tax Information

Students should be aware of current tax laws, which can impact GA salaries/ stipends, fellowships, and other awards. The [IRS website](#) provides information on scholarships, fellowship grants, and other grants or [contact the IRS](#) for more information/assistance.

Individual Health Insurance (Campus Health Services)

The University covers the single student Campus Health insurance premium charges for GAs during their appointment. The health insurance and health services are provided through the University of Arizona Campus Health and are not transferrable to outside insurance providers. To receive this benefit, a student

⁷ Refer to [Summer/Winter session](#) GA policies.

must enroll in the student health insurance program during the open enrollment period. Note that GAs who enroll in the plan cannot cancel their coverage after the open enrollment period ends, even if they resign or are terminated. **GAs who [resign or are terminated](#) during the period of insurance coverage will be responsible for repayment of the remaining insurance premium.** Also, a GA will be automatically re-enrolled in the student health insurance program each semester upon enrollment in classes. For more information on the student health insurance offered, including plan dates and costs, refer to the [Campus Health website](#).

IV. Degree Requirements for Master's (MS) and Doctoral (PhD) Students

This section includes essential information regarding NSGP and Graduate College requirements that students need to fulfill in order to graduate, including milestones for each degree. Most requirements for first-year students are the same for both graduate degrees. Table IV.1 provides key information for both programs. Degree-specific requirements appear later in this section.

Table IV.1. MS and PhD Highlights

Degree	Overview	Time Commitment	Common Post-Degree Employment Opportunities
Master of Science (MS) in Nutritional Sciences	The MS degree offers coursework and applied-skills training in nutritional sciences research that serves as a foundation to help students achieve a variety of career objectives. The program emphasizes theory, research design, problem conceptualization, research methodologies, and the ability to conduct empirical research culminating in the thesis.	The average time to completion is two years (four semesters). Typically, students applying to this program should expect to be full-time students.	Graduates with this degree are equipped to pursue a variety of career opportunities in such fields as health-care, private companies, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and academia/education, among others.
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nutritional Sciences	<p>The PhD degree is designed to impart advanced scientific knowledge through coursework and applied-skills training opportunities in nutritional sciences research, which culminates in a the dissertation. Doctoral students are expected to participate in training opportunities and to conduct and learn about state-of-the-art approaches to nutritional sciences research (and related subdisciplines) under the guidance of their faculty advisors/mentors and their committees.</p> <p>This degree path requires students to demonstrate mastery in their major and minor areas of study. Students are expected to develop a sophisticated understanding of research practices, internalize sound scholarly values, and begin to develop a record of published research and conference presentations. They may receive additional training and experience in teaching, but research is the focus.</p>	The average time to completion is five years. Typically, students applying to this program should expect to be full-time students.	Graduates are prepared for research careers in such areas as academia, private and nonprofit sectors, government agencies, and healthcare, among others.

NSGP Curriculum

Table IV.2 lists current course requirements for the MS and PhD degrees.^{8, 9}

Table IV.2. NSGP Course Requirements for MS and PhD (as of fall 2024)

Courses	Units [^] each	Typically Offered full semester unless otherwise noted	Notes Major Coursework = Required Minor = Required	MS Total Units	PhD Total Units
Fall Semester Courses					
NSC 699 Independent Study (laboratory rotation [▽])	3	Fall (yearly) in-person	Major coursework year 1	3	3
NSC 608 Bioenergetics and Metabolism	3	Fall (even) in-person M/W 3:30-4:45pm	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
NSC 610 Nutrition and Disease	3	Fall (even) in-person T/Th 11am-12:15pm	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
NSC 624 Micronutrients	3	Fall (odd) in-person T/Th 12:30-1:45pm	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
BIOS 576A Biostats. in Public Health	3	Fall (yearly) in-person T/Th 4-5:15pm	Major coursework year 2	3	3
Spring Semester Courses					
NSC 595 Emerging Topics in Nutritional Sciences	2	Spring (yearly) in-person T 11am-1pm	Major coursework years 1 & 2 enrollment	4	4
NSC 575 Nutrigenomics for Study of Disease Prevention and Intervention	3	Spring (yearly) online 7 week 2	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
NSC 597D Communicating Nutritional Sciences	1	Spring (yearly) in-person W 12-1pm	Major coursework yearly enrollment required	2	5
HSD 649 Survival Skills & Ethics	3	Spring (yearly) in-person M 2-4:30pm	Major coursework year 1	3	3
Other Required Courses					
Seminar courses outside of NSW (non-NSC courses)	1-2	Varies per course	Major coursework 2 units, complete by/before end of year 3		2
Journal club courses outside of NSW (non-NSC)	1-2	Varies per course	Major coursework 2 units, complete by/before end of year 3		2
Elective/s*	Varies	Varies per course	Major coursework Student & faculty advisor identify appropriate courses		≥ 2
PhD: 36 minimum units of major coursework required MS: 27 minimum units of nonthesis coursework required				27	36
PhD - minor units (specified by minor department)	≥ 9	Varies by department	Complete before comprehensive exam (typically year 3)		9
Units Subtotal				27	45
NSC 910 Thesis	6	Every semester	Thesis units required	6	
NCS 920 Dissertation	18	Every semester	Dissertation units required		18
Total Units[★]				33	63
[^] PhD Note: For GA appointments (TA, RA), year 1 PhD students must enroll in 9 units minimum for fall and 9 units minimum for spring semesters; years 2 and beyond must enroll in 6 units minimum each semester. MS students are advised to enroll in 9 units their first year if they expect to graduate from the program in two years.					
[▽] Details about lab rotations appear in the NSGP Student Handbook.					
* Elective/s: Remaining units needed to fulfill Graduate College minimum requirements. Recommended 2-unit course – IMB 521 Scientific Writing (F31 proposal)					
★ Meets Graduate College minimum requirements					

⁸ Eligible students [register for these and other classes](#) through their [UAccess Student Center](#). Select “student center” to view personal student account information. More information is available on the [How to Register website](#).

⁹ The [NSW graduate courses website](#) provides course descriptions for NSW graduate courses.

Year 1 Requirements (subject to change)—MS, PhD

Students are expected to complete several requirements during their first year in the program—Table IV.3 lists usual progress markers that students should expect to experience/complete. Refer to degree-specific content elsewhere in this section for years 2 and beyond markers.

Table IV.3 Typical Progress Markers—Year 1

Marker	Semester 1	Semester 2
Onboarding – orientations, required online & TA trainings, initial course enrollment	✓	
Lab rotations (x2; NSC 699), 7.5 weeks each, approximately 9-10 hours/week	✓	
Faculty advisor selection	✓	✓
Coursework (9 units minimum per semester for GA appointment)	✓	✓
TA assignment @ 20 hours/week	✓	✓
Graduate College documentation: GradPath, TA evaluations	✓	✓
NSGP documentation: IDP & goals, lab rotation evaluation (semester 1), TA evaluations x2, annual report and/or meeting (May)	✓	✓
NSGP meetings (individual x 1-2 /semester, group meetings as scheduled)	✓	✓

Onboarding

Students must complete the required online trainings outlined in their GA appointment letters prior to the start of fall-semester classes; additional trainings will be required by their research labs. Students must also attend several orientations/trainings during the week that their GA appointment begins (the week before fall classes start), including the NSGP, Graduate College, and TA orientations/trainings.

Transfer Credit Requests

Admitted students who want to transfer credit completed prior to starting the NSGP should speak with the NSGP director/coordinator as early as possible regarding their questions about transferring prior graduate-level courses into their NSGP graduate program (no later than orientation day). Transfer credit requests are completed in GradPath. The specific courses to be counted toward a graduate degree are subject to approval by the NSGP director and/or GRDC consensus. Refer also to the Graduate College [master's degree transfer credit policy](#) and the [doctor of philosophy transfer credit policy](#).

Laboratory Rotations—NSC 699, Independent Study, 3 units

All first-year MS and PhD students select two research laboratories to rotate through during their first semester. The purpose of these rotations is to help students identify a faculty advisor/mentor who will support and mentor them in their research and also gain valuable lab skills.

Faculty list: Before the start of the fall semester, the NSGP coordinator sends incoming students a list of potential faculty who may be accepting students for lab rotations. The list is by no means complete; students are advised to use the list as a guide to help them start their search.

Faculty eligibility: Faculty with Graduate Faculty designation. See the [University faculty directory](#).

Rotation length: Each rotation is approximately 7-8 weeks. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 9 hours/week (minimum 45 contact hours per unit, 135 total minimum hours) in the laboratory in which they are doing their rotation. There are no maximum allowable hours for lab rotation; rather, it is at the discretion of faculty and the individual student to select an appropriate number of hours that allows an optimal learning experience while balancing coursework and TA responsibilities. Following are questions students are encouraged to ask potential faculty advisors/mentors:

- What are your primary areas of research?
- What work/research schedule expectations do you have for your students?

- In what fields are some of your past students employed?
- What's your preferred method of communication? (email, text, in-person, etc.)
- What motivates and drives you in your research?
- What additional trainings do you require and recommend for students in your lab?
- How many students are you currently advising (as the faculty advisor of record)?
- What types of collaborations do you and your students have with other faculty/depts/labs?
- To what extent do you expect your research to change/grow in the next five years?
- How is your research funded?
- Do you need more information about the School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness RA funding model before you can agree to be my faculty advisor/mentor?

Students are responsible for contacting the faculty in whose labs they wish to rotate prior to the first semester start date. Students must keep in mind that some labs may be fully committed and unable to accommodate a rotation student. Students are advised to contact faculty by email or in person (if feasible) to set up a meeting to discuss the student's interests to ensure the lab is an appropriate fit.

Students are typically asked to provide an update on their selection progress during the August orientation session (if not before). If necessary, the NSGP director and/or coordinator can assist students in the selection of their first rotation. Ideally, students will secure their first laboratory rotation before the start of their first (fall) semester, but no later than the first week of the semester. The second laboratory rotation should be confirmed by mid-September.

Students are reminded that the rotations are valuable experiences that provide opportunities to learn new techniques, to be exposed to different approaches to nutrition research, and to meet faculty and students in the NSGP and other graduate programs. Students are expected to exhibit professionalism at all times, adhere to the lab's policies/procedures and faculty expectations, immerse themselves in each rotation experience, and maximize the amount of time they spend in each laboratory and with the people in it, including evenings and weekends as appropriate.

Faculty Advisor Selection

Students are expected to identify their faculty advisor by the end of semester 2 (May) if they have not done so following the semester 1 lab rotations. Students who are struggling to find an advisor must inform the NSGP director/coordinator before the end of semester 2.

Other Common MS and PhD Requirements

In addition to coursework, lab rotations, and faculty advisor selection, as well as the graduate assistantship/associateship requirements described in section III of this handbook, NSGP students must meet other programmatic and Graduate College requirements.

Program Meetings (subject to modifications)

Monthly student meetings: All students are expected to attend monthly student meetings hosted by the NSGP director. These meetings are typically scheduled for in-person attendance¹⁰ and serve to enhance students' experiences in the program through open dialogue. Various topics are addressed during each meeting as determined by student and/or program leadership recommendations.

Year 1 (MS & PhD): Students are expected to attend two individual meetings during first and second semesters (2 per semester, approximately mid-semester and end-of-semester) and monthly group meetings with all students (Aug-May). Individual meetings will be with the NSGP coordinator and/or

¹⁰ Students unable to attend these meetings in-person due to extenuating circumstances must notify the NSGP coordinator well in advance of the meeting date. Students should exercise sensible judgment regarding their reasons for not attending these meetings.

director and will focus on students' progress in their courses and in selecting a faculty advisor for their duration in the program. For these meetings, students may be asked to complete programmatic forms, including individual development plan (IDP) and goal worksheet, progress and annual reports, as well as other forms. By the end of the first year, students should be documenting their course progress their Plan of Study in [GradPath](#) (Graduate College degree-tracking system), which will be reviewed during individual meetings. Note that MS students are expected to submit their Plan of Study by June 30 of their first year in the program. PhD students are expected to submit their Plan of Study by the end of semester 3 in the program.

Year 2 (MS & PhD): At least one required individual meeting during first and second semesters (1 per semester), with NSGP coordinator and/or director. For these meetings, students may be asked to complete/update programmatic forms, including individual development plan (IDP) and goal worksheet, progress and annual reports, as well as other forms. By the end of the second year, students should be making progress with their GradPath requirements and research, which will be discussed during individual meetings. Monthly group meetings with all students (Aug-May) will continue.

Years 3 and beyond (PhD): Students are expected to meet at least annually with the NSGP director and/or coordinator as well as attend scheduled student meetings. Students at this stage are typically guided and funded by their faculty advisor.

NSGP Forms (subject to modifications)¹¹

Students are expected to complete and/or update several NSGP programmatic forms while enrolled in the MS and PhD programs. Some of these forms are required for certain GradPath submissions approvals (see next section for GradPath forms). Students submit their completed NSGP forms to the NSGP coordinator as part of their student record. Students should monitor their emails on a regular basis for NSGP emails related to NSGP form deadlines. All completed/submitted forms may be shared with the NSGP director, the NSW director, students' faculty advisors and advisory committees, and the Graduate College Dean's office.

Following is a list of NSGP forms. Unless otherwise indicated (*), forms are typically included with the NSGP coordinator's notification emails to individual students, and students are expected to return their completed forms to the coordinator by the due dates listed in the notification emails.

Individual Development Plan (IDP):* The IDP concept is commonly used in business to help individuals define and pursue their career goals. The NSGP follows a similar approach, as do most other University graduate programs. During the first year of graduate studies, students are expected to create an account with [MyIDP.ScienceCareers.org](https://myidp.sciencecareers.org) where they can develop their own IDP that they should review several times a year, and with their faculty advisor at least once per year.

After creating their IDP account, students should review the "Overview" information and then complete the three assessments under the "Assessments" category (figures IV.1, IV.2 below). Once these assessments are completed, the next step is to complete the "Skills Goals" under the "Create a Plan" category (figure IV.3), and follow the "SMART GOALS" process. Read [this article](#) to learn more about SMART goals. These goals should be revisited/updated at least annually.

Students can transfer their SMART Goals within their electronic IDP account to a worksheet or print their electronic version when they are scheduled to meet with the NSGP director and/or coordinator as well as with their faculty advisor/mentor. The NSGP coordinator can send students a goals worksheet template upon request.

¹¹ Students may contact the NSGP coordinator for the current versions of NSGP forms included in this section.

Figure IV.1. Individual Development Plan Overview

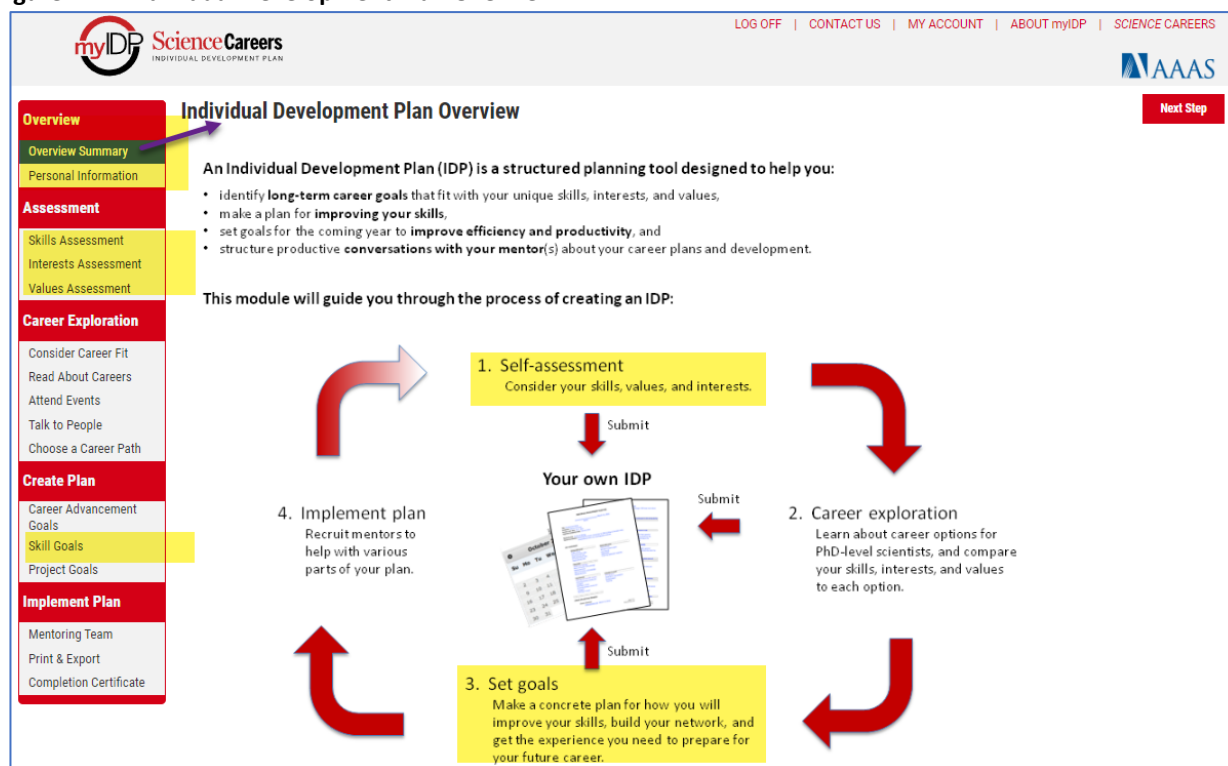


Figure IV.2. Skills Assessment Tab

myIDP Science Careers INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN [LOG OFF](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [MY ACCOUNT](#) | [ABOUT myIDP](#) | [SCIENCE CAREERS](#) **AAAS**

Overview **Scientific Skills Assessment** [Previous Step](#) [Next Step](#)

Overview Summary
Personal Information

Assessment
Skills Assessment
Interests Assessment
Values Assessment

Career Exploration
Consider Career Fit
Read About Careers
Attend Events
Talk to People
Choose a Career Path

Create Plan
Career Advancement Goals
Skill Goals
Project Goals

Implement Plan
Mentoring Team
Print & Export
Completion Certificate

Quick Tips **My Assessment** **Summary**

This assessment will help you identify the scientific skills and knowledge areas in which you are proficient and those that could use some attention. It is based on the [National Postdoctoral Association's core competencies](#) for PhD scholars.

This is a subjective self-assessment of your skills.

As you rate each of these skills and knowledge areas, it will be most helpful if you **use the full range of scores (1-5)**. Rating just a few items as a "1" will help distinguish the skills that need the most improvement, and rating just a few items as a "5" will help discern the skills that you are best at.

How will your responses be used?

Later in this module, your skills and interests will be compared to those relevant to various scientific career paths. You can use this comparison, and information you gather on your own, to identify which career paths are a good fit for you.

You will also have a chance to set goals related to the skills you would like to improve.

To learn more about skills self-assessment, [read an article on this topic >](#)

Figure IV.3. Skills Development Goals (SMART Goals)

myIDP Science Careers
INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Overview

- Overview Summary
- Personal Information

Assessment

- Skills Assessment
- Interests Assessment
- Values Assessment

Career Exploration

- Consider Career Fit
- Read About Careers
- Attend Events
- Talk to People
- Choose a Career Path

Create Plan

- Career Advancement Goals
- Skill Goals**
- Project Goals

Implement Plan

- Mentoring Team
- Print & Export
- Completion Certificate

Skills Development Goals

Quick Tips | **My Skills to Improve** | **My SMART Goals** | [Previous Step](#)

In this section you will set goals to improve the skills that are necessary for your chosen career path.

Why is this important?
As you progress through your scientific training, you should take some time to develop skills that you might need now, later during your training, or in your future career.

How to set a SMART goal
S – Specific – Is it focused and unambiguous?
M – Measurable – Could someone determine whether or not you achieved this goal?
A – Action-oriented – Did you specify the action you will take?
R – Realistic – Considering difficulty and timeframe, is this goal attainable?
T – Time-bound – Did you specify a deadline?

How to set “skills development goals” effectively
As you write SMART goals, keep in mind that to develop a skill effectively, you may want to:
1. get training (read a book, talk to someone with expertise in that skill, or take a workshop/course),
2. practice the skill,
3. get feedback on your skill, to assess whether or not you have improved (and what further improvement you might need).

Keep yourself accountable
To ensure that you stick to the goals you set, it is important to make a concrete, specific plan for how you will keep yourself accountable. A friend or trusted colleague can help with this. For example, knowing that a friend will be asking you about your progress may give you an incentive to complete your goal.

Example

Skill area	Developing/managing budgets
SMART goal	Get training*: Ask lab manager if she will discuss the lab budget and finances with me.
Is this a recurring activity?	No
Start date	November 10, 2012
Target completion date	November 15, 2012
How will you be accountable?	Tell my friend Elizabeth my plan, and on Nov. 15 tell her what I learned.

* This is one SMART goal for this user’s plan. Other SMART goals might delineate ways to practice the skill or get feedback. See article below for additional examples.

Lab Rotation Evaluation: Students complete this form (via Google survey link from NSGP coordinator) after each lab rotation that they complete during their first semester in the program. Faculty also complete similar evaluations of students who rotate through their labs. Responses on both forms are used to help determine which labs will be suitable for students to pursue their research.

Mentoring Agreement: After students identify their faculty advisor, they are strongly advised to meet with their advisor to review and complete the program’s mentoring agreement form, which is designed to help students establish a plan with their advisor that outlines the mentoring expectations of both parties.

Progress Report: Students may be asked to complete a progress report form each semester to document their progress toward their degree. For students with RA appointments, students provide their progress information in the RA evaluation form (described below).

Annual Review: Students may be asked to complete an annual review form (typically May/June depending on student’s status) with their faculty advisor, which they will submit to the NSGP director and coordinator¹². These evaluations are intended to give an accurate picture of students’ successes and to identify areas for improvement. Evaluation criteria are designed to elicit responses that will:

- Promote optimal student performance
- Provide constructive feedback on student performance
- Determine students’ progress toward their degree (accountability)
- Identify an individual student’s performance in their research training
- Support the highest standard of performance

¹² First-year students typically meet with the NSGP director & coordinator upon completion of their first year.

Annual reviews may be shared with the GRDC. Upon completion of the annual review process, students may be placed in one of three categories: (a) making adequate progress toward the degree; (b) probationary status; (c) terminated from the graduate program. Faculty advisors are partially responsible for determining whether their students are making adequate progress. The final decision on a student's status is subject to GRDC discussion and vote (and relevant Graduate College policies).

TA Career Conversations/Assessment: Students with TA appointments and their assigned faculty supervisor/s complete this form each semester (also Graduate College requirement). The form combines the Graduate College assessment and the NSW/NSGP assessment requirements.

RA Conversations/Assessment: Similar to the TA conversations form, students with RA appointments and their faculty advisors complete this form each semester; the spring-semester evaluation may be used for annual review purposes. (This form is a Graduate College requirement.)

Thesis Defense Announcement Flyer (MS only):* Students should create their thesis defense announcement as soon as they and their thesis committee have selected a date, time, and location for the oral presentation, but no later than one month before the defense date¹³. The announcement typically includes the student's name, defense date/time/location, thesis title, abstract, current NSW logo, Zoom link (if applicable), and student photo. Students may request a sample announcement from the NSGP coordinator. Alternatively, students may send the information to Trudy Morrow (morrow1@arizona.edu), executive assistant to the NSW director. Please note that Trudy needs the information at least two weeks before the defense date. Trudy will distribute the announcement flyer to NSW faculty and other University entities.

Thesis Defense Assessment (MS only; completed by student's committee members): Students' committee members complete this assessment immediately following the oral thesis defense presentation. The NSGP coordinator typically emails the form to the committee members prior to the defense date).

Fellowship Proposal (PhD only; a student's faculty advisor and/or committee members will review/evaluate the proposal with the student): Students must complete one fellowship proposal PRIOR to scheduling and sitting for their comprehensive exam. Scholarship applications do not satisfy this requirement. Ideally, students will be able to submit their proposal to the funding agency, but it is not a requirement for the degree. The purpose of this exercise is to enhance students' career opportunities by learning and practicing the steps involved in writing and submitting research proposals to obtain funding. Students are advised to follow the guidelines in the *Fellowship Proposal Guidelines* document, available from the NSGP coordinator, to ensure that they stay on track to complete this requirement. Ideally, proposals should be ready for committee review during year 3 of graduate study—but *before* the comprehensive exam. The proposal submission date will depend on the timeline of the fellowship award to which a student applies. Note that this requirement is not part of an NSGP-required course¹⁴; rather, students work with their faculty advisor to identify an appropriate fellowship (such as [NIH F31](#)). If the submitted proposal is successful, then the funding will be used to offset the student's salary paid by the School or by student's faculty advisor¹⁵. The [Graduate Center](#) can also be a valuable resource for students during this process.

Dissertation Prospectus/Proposal Verification (PhD only; typically year 4; GradPath requirement): Available from the NSGP coordinator, students route this form to all of their committee members for their signatures after presenting their dissertation proposal to their committee, which is done after they complete their

¹³ Students should contact the NSW executive administrative assistant to help them secure the location for their selected date/time.

¹⁴ Students are strongly encouraged to enroll in IMB 521 Scientific Writing, as an elective, which focuses on F31 proposals.

¹⁵ Students who receive fellowship funding generally may no longer qualify for GA/RA status. Depending on NSW funding availability, students may receive NSW support funds to offset the difference between their fellowship award and the typical GA funds.

comprehensive examination. After obtaining the signatures, students return the form to the NSGP coordinator, who then approves this step in GradPath. Students are asked to send a copy of their dissertation proposal to the NSGP coordinator.

Dissertation Defense Announcement and Flyer (PhD only):* Students should submit their dissertation defense announcement in GradPath (and create their flyer) as soon as they and their dissertation committee have selected a date, time, and location for the oral presentation, but no later than one month before the defense date. The announcement typically includes the student's name, defense date/time/location, dissertation title, abstract, current NSW logo, Zoom link (if applicable), and student photo. Students may request a sample announcement from the NSGP coordinator. Alternatively, students may send the information to Trudy Morrow (morrow1@arizona.edu), executive assistant to the NSW director, who will create the flyer—Trudy needs the information at least two weeks before the defense date. Trudy distributes the announcement flyer to NSW faculty and other University entities.

Dissertation and Defense Assessment (PhD only – completed by student's committee members): The NSGP coordinator typically sends this form to committee members before the scheduled defense date. Each committee member returns their completed form to the NSGP coordinator.

GradPath System Forms (Graduate College)

GradPath is the Graduate College's degree-audit system designed to track and monitor graduate students' academic progress¹⁶ toward their degree. Members of the **Graduate Student Academic Services (GSAS)** team monitor the system. GradPath enables students, their programs, and the Graduate College to see where students are in their academic journey. Students complete and submit forms online through their **UAccess Student** account.

When students submit each GradPath form, the automated system routes the forms to everyone who needs to approve them; notification emails include a link to the form awaiting approval. See the **GradPath website** for more information about the process. (Note: See also the MS- and PhD-specific requirements listed elsewhere/below in this section.)

Common GradPath Requirements (MS and PhD): The Responsible Conduct of Research and Plan of Study are common to both MS and PhD degrees:

1. **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Statement:** Students are required to complete the RCR statement before the middle of the first semester so that the Plan of Study form can be activated by/before the start of the second semester. The NSGP recommends students complete this step before/during their NSGP orientation.
2. **Plan of Study (POS):** The Graduate College uses the POS to track students' progress toward their degree. MS students should submit their POS by the end of their second semester, and PhD students before the end of their third semester. The POS identifies:
 - Courses the student intends to transfer from other institutions.
 - Completed courses that count toward the graduate degree.
 - Additional courses to be completed to fulfill degree requirements.
 - Other milestones and documentation required to fulfill degree requirements for graduation.

Students meet periodically with the NSGP coordinator to discuss their Plan prior to submitting it for approval. Students identify their faculty advisors as part of the POS process in GradPath.

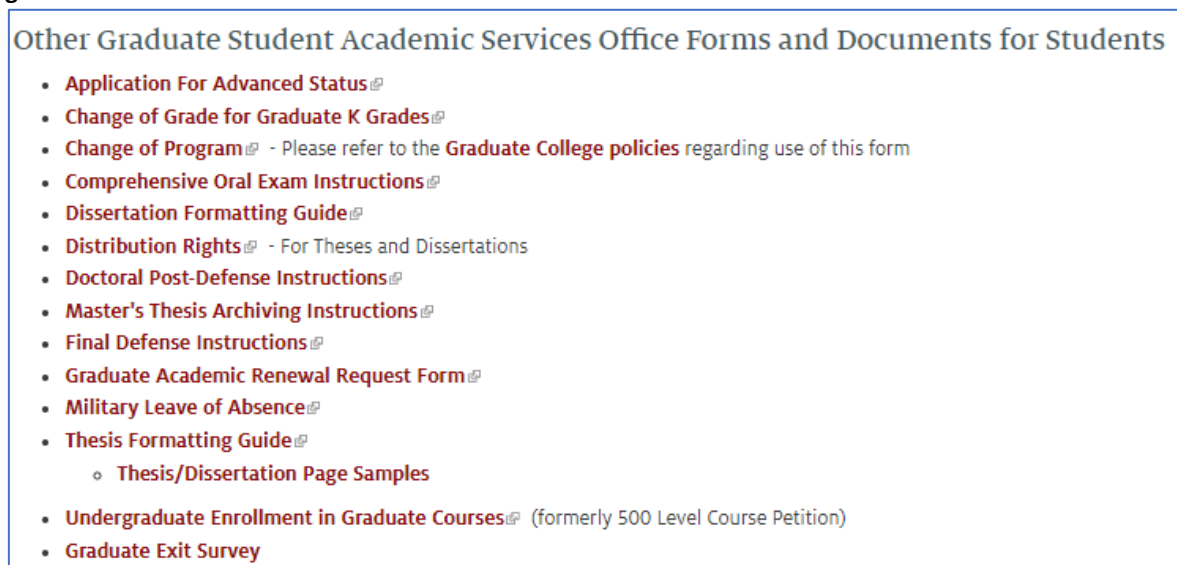
The degree-specific sections below provide more details about GradPath; students should also bookmark and refer to the **Graduate College GradPath User Guides** resources.

¹⁶ See **Graduate Student and Academic Services/GSAS**.

Other GSAS Forms

In addition to the NSGP and GradPath forms, graduate students may need to use forms posted on the [GSAS website](#) (Figure IV.4). MS and PhD students should review these forms.

Figure IV.4. GSAS Forms



Faculty Advisors and Committees

As mentioned in the Lab Rotations section (above), students are expected to identify a list of potential faculty advisors with whom they can complete the lab rotation requirement during their first semester in the program (NSC 699). Typically, the lab rotations culminate in students being able to identify their faculty advisor who will help guide them toward completion of their thesis or dissertation.

Students should identify and confirm their faculty advisors by/before the end of semester 2; students and selected faculty members may be asked to confirm their agreement via email communication with the NSGP director/coordinator. Advisors may be changed based on discussions between the student, the current advisor, and the potential future advisor; in such cases, the NSGP director/coordinator must be notified. Students unable to identify/confirm a replacement advisor may be terminated from the program for failing to fulfill satisfactory academic progress requirements.

Students must work closely with their faculty advisors to help them identify appropriate and qualified faculty to serve on their committees. The NSGP director/coordinator may be able to assist in this process.

Expectations for Working with Faculty, Committees, Personnel, and Students

Professionalism and respect are key expectations for all NSW graduate students and personnel. The NSW as a whole values a collegial School environment, and basic standards of professional behavior apply to all academic and research activities regardless of whether students are interacting with other students, staff, or faculty. NSGP students are advised to behave respectfully and professionally toward staff, faculty, and students, and to respond promptly to official requests for information when circumstances dictate such actions are needed. Students are also advised to review [University policies](#), particularly those listed in the [ethics and conduct section](#).

Students must also realize that faculty members work in different ways—no two are alike. Some may review a thesis or dissertation proposal in a few days while others may take a week or more. Some may require several drafts of a document while others require a few. Some may have stringent expectations for their students while others are more lenient. Students should assume that:

- Faculty advisors are busy people with many responsibilities; student documents may not be their first priority at any given time.
- Carefully reading and providing feedback on a long and complex document is not a quick task.
- A proposal for a thesis or dissertation is unlikely to be finalized after one or two drafts. It will almost certainly be weeks between the completion of a first draft and readiness for defense, and sometimes it might be a semester-long process.

While developing timelines for a thesis or dissertation, students must factor in times when they will be waiting for feedback from their committees, and then plan to use those times to work on other aspects of the project or to work on other projects. The student-advisor-committee relationship is a reciprocal one—students who turn things around quickly, efficiently, and with high quality are more likely to receive the same treatment from their faculty advisors and committees.

Students should consult early and often with their committee members about their availability, especially if they expect to schedule a committee meeting during an exam week, vacation period, or holiday time. Other considerations include members who may be on sabbatical during a period of time when a student is planning a defense—this situation requires the student to work around the member’s sabbatical schedule. Generally, students should not make assumptions about faculty availability; it’s best to avoid situations where a student “has to” defend in a constrained period of time.

Graduation

Most NSGP graduates attend the [CALES convocation](#) for the formal hooding ceremony. The University hosts an institution-wide graduation ceremony as well. Students do not have to attend any ceremony. Those who opt to attend a ceremony and would like their faculty advisor and/or the NSGP and School directors to be present should let those individuals know as early as possible.

Graduation Procedures For MS and PhD Degrees: Following are the basic procedures for graduation (pending completion of all degree requirements):

1. **Diploma Name:** The name that is on the student record is the name on the diploma unless the student files a name change with the [Registrar’s Office](#). International students must use their passport name on the diploma.
2. **Diploma Delivery:** Diplomas are mailed approximately two weeks *after the degree is posted* by GSAS. Inquiries concerning the ordering or mailing of diplomas must be directed to [GSAS](#). Diplomas are not mailed to campus addresses.
3. **Completion Date:** If the “expected grad term” listed in a student’s GradPath account changes, the student must notify GSAS at least 10 weeks (approximately 2.5 months) BEFORE commencement to ensure their name will appear in the graduation ceremony program.
4. **Hood:** Students who want a specific faculty member to come to graduation and “hood” them should make that request of the faculty member well in advance of the ceremony.

Commencement dates and procedures and deadlines for the submission of documentation pertaining to graduate degrees are available on the [Graduate College Commencement website](#).

MS-Specific Requirements¹⁷

This section includes information about NSGP and Graduate College requirements for the MS degree. MS students must adhere to [Graduate College policies/procedures](#) and are strongly advised to review the policies on a regular basis. They should also regularly review and be familiar with the [Master’s Degree requirements website](#) to ensure they meet all requirements for graduation (Figure IV.5). Note that the

¹⁷ Section V addresses academic and enrollment policies.

qualifying/final examinations are not NSGP requirements for the MS degree. Table IV.4 identifies yearly progress markers.

GradPath

GradPath is the Graduate College's degree-audit system. The [Degree Requirements website](#) lists the required MS GradPath forms. Figure IV.5 is a screenshot of the MS GradPath forms before they are activated by the student. Table IV.5 provides more detail, including recommended submission timelines. The forms are completed in succession—students should complete the first form, Responsible Conduct of Research, early in their first semester. Once approved, the Plan of Study form is activated. All MS students need to regularly check the status of their GradPath forms to ensure they have completed all Graduate College requirements (in addition to NSGP requirements) prior to graduation. Refer to the [Timeline for master's degree students website](#) for complete details.

In addition to GradPath requirements, students are expected to complete NSGP requirements, participate in NSGP meetings, fulfill the requirements of their GA contracts, and complete a thesis under the direction of their faculty advisor.

Thesis Committee

After confirming their faculty advisor, students are expected to work with their mentor to identify committee members to help guide them in their thesis research. Committee members should be confirmed by/before the end of the first year in the program (by June 30).

Committee composition: Thesis **committees** must have three (3) members:

1. At least two members must be designated as Graduate Faculty, and at least one must be NSW Graduate Faculty. Note that all tenured/tenure-track faculty are members of the Graduate Faculty, but not all Graduate Faculty are tenured/tenure track (they may be career track or other designation who have been approved to be members of the Graduate Faculty).
2. The third member, if not a member of the Graduate Faculty, must be an approved special member.¹⁸
3. At least one member must have prior (successful) experience as a thesis committee chair.
4. Committees must have a chair who must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair.
5. For committees with co-chairs, one must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair. The other may be Graduate Faculty or an approved special member.

Master's committee appointment form (GradPath): Once the committee is in place, students must complete and submit the "Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form" in GradPath for approval. Any change in the committee after full approvals are completed requires the approval of the student's faculty advisor and the involved faculty, or a majority of the master's committee and the NSGP director, and then resubmission of the form in GradPath. Students should consult with the NSGP director/coordinator if they want to change their committee composition.

Committee meetings: Ideally, the first committee meeting should take place before the end of the second semester in the program (year 1) or early in the summer between years 1 and 2. After the first meeting, students should plan to meet with their committee several times to review/evaluate their progress in coursework, research, and thesis writing.

¹⁸ Special member requests are submitted by the NSGP coordinator via UAccess.

Figure IV.5 Graduate College Master's Degree Requirements

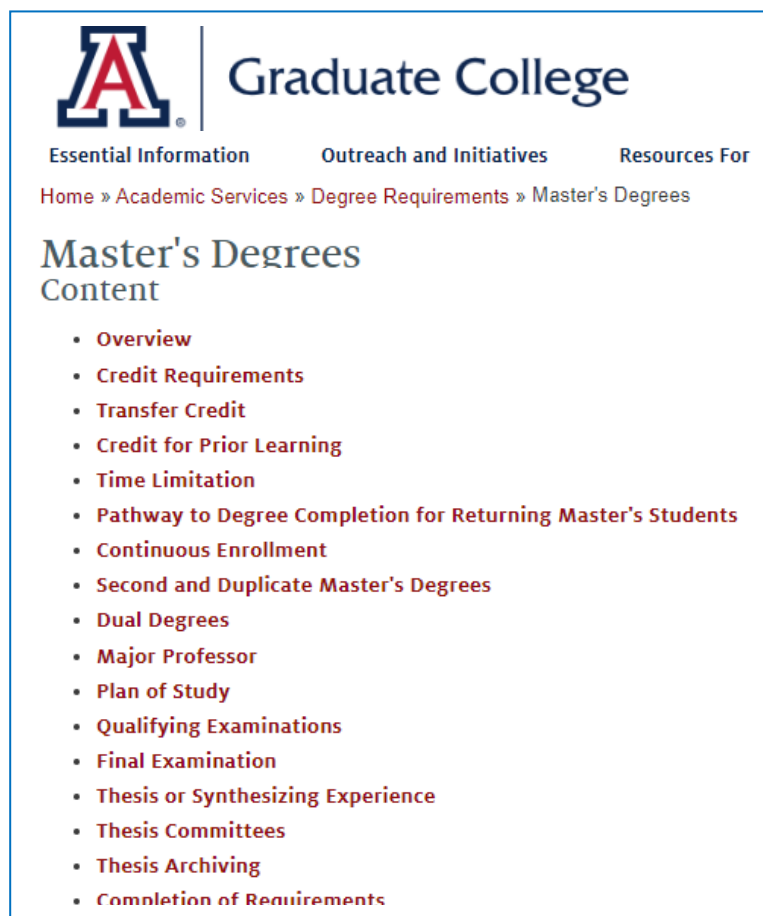


Table IV.4. Yearly MS Progress Markers

Program Year	Markers (see also Time to Degree)
YEAR 1 (fall/spring/summer) (mid-Aug-June 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP orientation, meetings • Complete required trainings, NSGP documentation • Begin MS coursework, electives • Complete 2 laboratory rotations (NSC 699 fall semester) • Complete IDP & goals, other NSGP documents • Select of faculty advisor (spring semester) • NSGP mentor agreement form with faculty advisor (recommended) • Select thesis committee members (spring/summer) • Begin MS research • Complete designated GradPath forms • TA assignments & evaluations
YEAR 2 (fall/spring/summer) (Jul 1- June 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings • Complete required NSGP documentation • Review GSAS forms • Thesis research • Complete NSC coursework, electives • Schedule oral thesis defense, create announcement flyer • Defend thesis, submit final thesis • Complete required GradPath forms • Graduate

Figure IV.5. MS GradPath Requirements in Student UAccess Record (pre-approved)

▼ MS - Nutritional Sciences (Active in Program)		
Responsible Conduct of Research Statement (NUSCMS)	View Current	i
Plan of Study (NUSCMS)	View Current	i
Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form (NUSCMS)	View Current	i
Master's/Specialist Completion Confirmation (NUSCMS)	View Current	i

Table IV.5. MS GradPath Requirements

GradPath Steps — MS Student	Recommended Submission Timeline
1. Responsible Conduct of Research Statement	Semester 1 (preferably before or during August orientation)
2. Plan of Study	Semester 2, 3 (after confirming faculty advisor)
3. Master's Committee Appointment See also Graduate Student Committee Service for Grad College policies, and Dates and Deadlines for defense deadlines for each semester/term	Semester 3 (before the end of the semester)
4. Master's Completion Confirmation	NSGP coordinator completes this step.
Thesis - Graduate College Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should familiarize themselves with important dates/deadlines for the master's thesis. For information on what is needed prior to awarding of the degree, refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Formatting Guide Steps to Archiving Your Thesis and Thesis Archiving Requirements 	
Additional NSGP requirements	
5. Thesis Defense Announcement/Flyer See also Dates and Deadlines for thesis defense deadlines for each semester/term	<p>For location/time/date information: Students contact the NSW executive administrative assistant to the NSW director for assistance in locating a room for the oral defense.</p> <p>At least one month before the defense date: Students submit their thesis defense announcement to the NSW executive assistant to distribute to various University communication channels. The flyer should include: student photo, thesis title and abstract, date, time, and location for the oral presentation, current NSW logo, and a Zoom link (if applicable).</p> <p>The duration of the public oral defense is typically one hour, followed by a closed session for the student and committee members only.</p>
6. Thesis Defense Assessment Form	Within 2 weeks of defense date: Committee members complete this form and return to NSGP coordinator (coordinator sends form to committee members & student before defense date).

Thesis

The thesis is a rigorous, empirical research project that addresses an important question in nutritional sciences and wellness; the thesis should be successfully completed and defended by the end of the second year of the program¹⁹. Two committee members must approve the thesis; one dissenting vote is allowed (see also [Graduate College thesis requirements](#)).

Preparation: Central to thesis research is the premise that students will master new skills in research methods and begin to master scientific writing. Students typically schedule at least one advisory committee meeting to discuss the proposed research. With advice from their committee, students should identify an appropriate project and prepare a 1-2 page outline of the research methods. The outline normally includes an introduction, literature review, hypotheses, and method/analysis plan as well as complete references

¹⁹ Refer also to [Time Limitation](#) for master's degree.

and full appendices of materials (questionnaires, stimuli, etc.). Any thesis proposal involving human subjects must first be approved through the University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) before data collection occurs. Students should review information on the [HSPP website](#) as well as the [Compliance website](#).

Thesis Defense

After students secure thesis approval from their faculty advisor/committee, students work with their committee to schedule their oral (defense) presentation and defense date, time, and location—refer to [Graduate College Dates & Deadlines](#).

Scheduling: At least one month before the intended defense date, students should contact the NSW unit director's executive administrative assistant to schedule a room for the desired date/time.

Announcement/flyer: Students should contact the NSGP coordinator for guidelines on creating their thesis-defense announcement, which the School distributes electronically to several University email lists at least 10 days before the defense date.

Preparation: Students should consult with their faculty advisor/committee about how to prepare for the defense. Students must provide a copy of the advisor-approved thesis to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the defense.

Defense day: MS thesis committee members are expected to attend the final defense. The thesis committee advisor/chair presides over the proceedings. The seminar portion of the defense—where the student presents their thesis and responds to questions—is open to the public. The examination portion is closed; only the student and committee are present. The entire proceedings may not exceed three (3) hours.

Results: The thesis defense results in three possible outcomes: (1) Pass with no revisions or minor revisions to be supervised and approved by the advisor; (2) Pass with major revisions, requiring the committee to evaluate the revisions; and (3) Fail. (Note: Results are not posted in GradPath.)

NSGP Thesis Defense Assessment form: The NSGP coordinator typically emails the form to the student's committee members a day or two before the scheduled oral defense. Committee members are asked to complete/return the form within two weeks post-defense.

Next steps: Students provide electronic copies of their final MS thesis to their advisor and committee members. Once the GradPath (Graduate) counselor confirms "completion of degree," the NSGP coordinator submits the MS completion confirmation in GradPath, which initiates the Graduate College's final audit of the student's program and ultimately leads to the award of the student's degree following resolution of any outstanding issues. Students must follow the guidelines they receive from the GradPath counselor (via email) to format and archive their thesis. Students also should review the information provided on the [Archiving the Master's Thesis website](#).

Graduation & exit surveys: The NSW and CALES send information about graduation via email (usually April for May/August graduates and November for December graduates). Students should inform their faculty advisors of these dates/times for the graduation-related events. The NSGP coordinator also notifies graduating students to complete the NSGP exit survey, while the Graduate College sends students its own exit survey. Students' anonymous responses to the NSGP exit survey inform the program's leadership about possible areas for improvement and also comprise a portion of annual University program assessment reporting requirements.

PhD-Specific Requirements

This section includes information about NSGP and Graduate College requirements for the PhD degree. PhD students must adhere to [Graduate College policies/procedures](#) and are strongly advised to review the policies on a regular basis. They should also regularly review and be familiar with the [Doctor of Philosophy Degree requirements](#) to ensure they meet all requirements for graduation (Figure IV.6). Note that the qualifying/final examinations are not NSGP requirements for the PhD degree. Table IV.6 identifies yearly progress markers.

GradPath

GradPath is the Graduate College's degree-audit system. The [Degree Requirements website](#) lists the required PhD GradPath forms. Figure IV.7 is a screenshot of the PhD GradPath forms before they are activated by the student. Table IV.7 provides more detail, including recommended submission timelines. The forms are completed in succession—students should complete the first form, Responsible Conduct of Research, early in their first semester. Once approved, the Plan of Study form is activated. All PhD students need to regularly check the status of their GradPath forms to ensure they have completed all Graduate College requirements (in addition to NSGP requirements) prior to graduation. Refer to the [Timeline for doctoral candidates website](#).

In addition to GradPath requirements, students are expected to complete NSGP requirements, participate in NSGP meetings, fulfill the requirements of their GA contracts, and complete a dissertation under the direction of their faculty advisor/mentor.

Fellowship Proposal

As listed in Table IV.7, PhD students must develop a fellowship proposal (typically F31)—prior to their comprehensive exam—to be reviewed by their faculty advisor and comprehensive exam committee as part of their NSGP requirements. Note that the proposal requirement is not included in GradPath. Students may wish to enroll in IMB 521 Scientific Writing (or similar course), which focuses on F31 proposal development, as an elective.

Years 2 and 3: Students are expected to meet with their faculty advisor to discuss possible topics, funding sources, timeline, and specific aims for their proposal. Students continue to meet with their faculty advisor throughout the proposal development process. Students may follow the guidelines in Appendix B, NSGP Fellowship Proposal Guidelines, to ensure that they stay on track to complete this requirement.

Fellowship proposal submission: Ideally, proposals should be ready for submission by the 4th or 5th semester of graduate study. The actual submission date will depend on the timeline of the fellowship award to which a student applies. Students whose proposals are funded will use the award to offset their GA salary/stipend (whether paid by the School or by student's faculty advisor, or both). Students unable submit their proposal to a sponsor before their comprehensive exam (e.g. due to sponsor-restricted submission opportunities), should submit it to their comprehensive committee prior to scheduling their exam.

Figure IV.6 Graduate College PhD Degree Requirements

Doctor of Philosophy

Contents

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- [Credit Requirements and Transfer Credit](#)
- [Continuous Enrollment](#)
- [Time Limitation](#)
- [Qualifying Examination](#)
- [Major Professor](#)
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- [Comprehensive Examination for Advancement to Candidacy](#)
- [Comprehensive Examination Committee](#)
- [Dissertation Prospectus/Proposal](#)
- [Committee Appointment Form](#)
- [Dissertation](#)
- [Dissertation Committee](#)
- [Final Oral Defense Examination](#)
- [Submission of the Dissertation](#)
- [Storage and Publication of Dissertation](#)
- [Completion of Requirements](#)
- [Second Doctoral Degrees](#)

Table IV.6. Yearly PhD Progress Markers

Program Year	Markers (see also, Time to Degree)
YEAR 1 (fall/spring/summer) (mid-Aug-June 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP orientation and meetings • Complete required trainings, documentation • Begin coursework (see curriculum, Table IV.2); enroll in 9 units minimum for GA appointment eligibility (fall & spring semesters) • Complete 2 laboratory rotations (NSC 699 fall semester) • Complete IDP & goals, other NSGP documents • Select of faculty advisor (spring/summer) • NSGP mentor agreement form with faculty advisor (recommended) Complete designated GradPath forms • TA assignments & evaluations • Sign GA/return GA appointment letter for year 2
YEAR 2 (fall/spring/summer) (Jul 1-June 30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings • Complete required NSGP & GradPath documentation • Identify minor program of study • Select PhD committee members (spring/summer) • Begin PhD research • Select PhD comprehensive/dissertation committee members (summer) • Select minor area of study (and minor committee member) • Continue PhD coursework • TA & RA assignments, evaluations • Complete/submit GradPath Plan of Study (summer) • Sign GA/return GA appointment letter for year 3

<p>YEAR 3 (fall/spring/summer) (Jul 1- June 30)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings, faculty advisor/committee meetings • Complete required NSGP & GradPath documentation • Continue PhD coursework • Write/submit fellowship proposal (ie, F31 or similar) • Review GSAS forms • Submit comprehensive exam committee appointment form (GradPath) – must be after fellowship proposal is approved by faculty advisor • Study for comprehensive exam • Submit announcement of comprehensive examination (GradPath) • Complete comprehensive exam between semesters 5 and 7 • Submit doctoral dissertation committee appointment (GradPath) after successful defense of comprehensive exams • Complete NSGP prospectus/proposal approval form and route to committee members (GradPath requirement; NSGP coordinator approves after forms returned) • Continue dissertation research • RA assignments, evaluations • Sign GA/return GA appointment letter for year 4
<p>YEAR 4 (fall/spring/summer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings, faculty advisor/committee meetings • Complete required NSGP & GradPath documentation • Complete PhD coursework • Fall semester - complete comprehensive exam and doctoral dissertation committee appointment form (if not completed during year 3) • Continue/complete dissertation research • Sign GA/return GA appointment letter for year 5 (unless funded by another source, such as fellowship) • Submit dissertation proposal/prospectus to committee & NSGP coordinator <p><u>If completing the degree in 4 years:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with committee to schedule dissertation oral defense date/time/location and create announcement flyer for NSW distribution 3-4 weeks before defense date • Submit advisor-approved dissertation to committee before expected defense date along with the NSGP dissertation evaluation form • Submit announcement of final defense (GradPath) at least 10 business days before final defense date • Complete RA responsibilities, evaluations • Submit dissertation, follow Grad College guidelines • Complete NSGP & Graduate College exit surveys • Graduate
<p>YEAR 5 (fall/spring/summer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings, faculty advisor/committee meetings • Complete required NSGP & GradPath documentation • Continue/complete PhD coursework • Submit dissertation proposal/prospectus to committee & NSGP coordinator • Meet with committee to schedule dissertation oral defense date/time/location and create announcement flyer for NSW distribution 3-4 weeks before defense date • Submit advisor-approved dissertation to committee before expected defense date along with the NSGP dissertation evaluation form • Submit announcement of final defense (GradPath) at least 10 business days before final defense date • Complete RA responsibilities, evaluations • Submit dissertation, follow Grad College guidelines • Complete NSGP & Graduate College exit surveys • Graduate

Figure IV.7. PhD GradPath Requirements in Student UAccess Record (pre-approved)

▼ PHD - Nutritional Sciences (Active in Program)		
Responsible Conduct of Research Statement (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i
Plan of Study (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i
Comp Exam Committee Appointment Form (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i
Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i
Results of Comprehensive Exam (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i
Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i
Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i
Announcement of Final Oral Defense (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i
Results of Final Oral Defense (NUSCPHD)	View Current	i

Table IV.7. PhD GradPath Requirements

GradPath Steps — PhD Student	Recommended Submission Timeline
1. Responsible Conduct of Research Statement	Year 1, semester 1 (preferably before August orientation)
2. Plan of Study (see Figure 1 for sample of completed Plan of Study)	Year 2, semester 3 (after major professor/faculty advisor & minor advisor are confirmed). <i>Minor:</i> Students must declare a minor. The requirements for these are specified by the minor department. The Graduate College's minimum requirement is that 9 credits be taken in the minor department. If the department does not have a specified minor track, the person(s) serving on the committee from the minor department will specify the required coursework. NSGP students may minor in nutritional sciences and should speak the NSGP director/coordinator and their faculty advisor to identify appropriate coursework.
3. Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment See also Graduate Student Committee Service policies .	Within 1 month after Plan of Study is approved.
4. Comprehensive Exam Announcement	Student & committee decision, but PRIOR to the exam; see also Grad College policies & procedures . Students should plan to complete their comps between semesters 5 and 7 (no later than semester 7) and schedule/confirm their exam date/location/time with the NSW executive admin assistant at least 3 weeks prior. See also Comp Exam policies & procedures .
5. Comprehensive Exam Results	Faculty advisor/committee chair completes this step in GradPath as soon as results are compiled.
6. Dissertation Committee Appointment See also Graduate Student Committee Service and Dates and Deadlines .	Typically immediately after comp exam results are posted, but at least 6 months before dissertation oral defense
7. Dissertation Prospectus Confirmation	NSGP coordinator completes this step after student returns NSGP prospectus approval form signed by committee members. Must be completed before final oral defense announcement. Students should send a copy of their full prospectus to NSGP coordinator.
8. Dissertation Final Oral Defense Announcement	At least 10 days before the final defense date. Important reminder: Those listed as approvers in GradPath must be sure to approve this step in a timely manner so that the form reaches the Graduate College at least one week prior to the defense date.
9. Dissertation Final Oral Defense Results	Committee chair submits results as soon as they are finalized.
Additional NSGP Requirements	
10. Fellowship Proposal	Semesters 4, 5 – BEFORE comprehensive exam. Student works with faculty advisor/committee to identify and complete a fellowship proposal, which should be submitted to the

	sponsoring agency, if feasible. After completing the proposal and sharing with committee members for review, the student must inform the NSGP coordinator that the proposal requirement has been completed. Students who submit for and are awarded an F31 must inform NSGP coordinator and NSW business office upon receipt of award.
11. Dissertation Defense Announcement/Flyer See also Dates and Deadlines for dissertation defense deadlines for each semester/term	For location/time/date information – at least 5 weeks before defense date: Students contact the NSW executive administrative assistant to the NSW director for assistance in locating a room (and date) for the oral defense. At least 1 month before the defense date: Students submit their doctoral dissertation defense flyer to the NSW executive assistant to distribute to various University communication channels. The flyer should include: student photo, dissertation title, abstract, date, time, and location for the oral presentation, current NSW logo, and a Zoom link (if applicable). The duration of the public oral defense is typically one hour, followed by a closed session for the student and committee members only.
12. Dissertation Defense Assessment Form	Within 2 weeks of completing defense: Committee members complete this form and return to NSGP coordinator (coordinator sends form to committee & student 1-2 days before defense.

Comprehensive Examination (comps)

PhD students must pass a written and oral examination before the Graduate College will advance them to PhD candidacy. The purpose of these exams is to confirm that the student has developed comprehensive knowledge in their field of study/specialization and has developed a thorough plan for their doctoral dissertation research. (Note: As mentioned above, students must complete and submit their fellowship proposal BEFORE comps—this is an NSGP requirement that is not included GradPath.)

Comprehensive examination committee: Students are responsible for forming a comprehensive examination committee with faculty who represent both the major and minor programs.

Committee composition²⁰

1. The committee must include a minimum of four members, including at least three members of the Graduate Faculty²¹, at least one of whom must be NSW Graduate Faculty.
2. A Special Member²² may serve as the fourth (or fifth) member of the committee.
3. Each committee must have a chair, who must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair. (The NSGP coordinator typically initiates these endorsement requests in UAccess for Graduate Faculty who are not tenured/tenure-eligible, such as career-track faculty).
4. If the committee has co-chairs, one must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair, while the second can be either a member of the Graduate Faculty or Special Member.
5. The committee should include at least one member representing the minor area of study.

Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment Form (GradPath): Students should submit this form as soon as possible after the Plan of Study has been approved to allow ample time for the approval routing process. It must be submitted before the written exam date. Students should meet with their committee at least two months prior to the scheduled written exam and also plan a tentative date for the oral exam. Committee members should discuss general subject/content areas from which they will develop their

²⁰ See also [comprehensive examination committee](#) on the doctor of philosophy degree requirements website)

²¹ Important Graduate College policies: For graduate student committees, faculty and students should review these policies: [Graduate Student Committee Service Policy](#) and [Graduate Faculty Policy](#).

²² **Special members:** People who possess the knowledge and expertise to evaluate a student's graduate work, but who do not meet the criteria to be added to the Graduate Faculty.

questions and identify who will write the questions for each area. The student may speak with committee members to discuss the general topic areas.

Comps timeline/schedule: Students should be finished with all or nearly all of their coursework before the comprehensive exams.

1. The GRDC strongly advises students to complete comps by/before the end of the 5th semester (typically fall of year 3), but no later than the 7th semester (fall year 4). Students who expect to take the exam after the 7th semester must petition the GRDC (in writing, with their faculty advisor's acknowledgment), and wait for the committee's response before scheduling the exams²³. In this case, students are strongly advised to meet with their committee to ensure their petition includes sound rationale for taking comps after the 7th semester.
2. The Graduate College advises students to complete their comps at least three months before the oral dissertation defense. Students should refer to the [Dates/Deadlines/Timeline for Doctoral Candidates](#), follow the [Steps to Your Degree](#) guidelines, and review relevant [GradPath User Guides](#) posted on the Graduate College website.

Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Form (GradPath): Students should submit as soon as the date, time, and location are confirmed and before the written exam date.

Comprehensive exams content/format: Comps includes written and oral exams:

1. Written exam: The Graduate College allows programs to determine the format and administration of the written portion; therefore, the format is flexible and left to the discretion of the student's committee. The written exam should be scheduled three weeks prior to the oral exam. The minor department controls the minor portion of the written exam and may waive it at their discretion. Often, committees may wish to use the student's fellowship proposal as part of the written exam. Note that Graduate College states that a grant proposal can be used as a *part* of the written portion for the comprehensive exam; note that the student must still be tested on their core competencies in their major and minor as well.²⁴

Students must pass the written portion before sitting for the oral portion. Typically, each committee member will write two questions (total of eight questions), and the student will select four to answer. It can be either closed book, open book, or a combination of both as determined by the committee. For each of the four writing sessions, the student is presented with two of the questions and will select one of the questions for their written response. For closed-book exams, the student will have three hours to write their answers for each question. A common scenario is for the student to write responses to two questions on one day, followed by two questions the following day.

Example:

Day 1: question 1 – 9am to noon; question 2 – 1pm to 4pm

Day 2: question 3 – 9am to noon; question 4 – 1pm to 4pm

Committee members have one week to assess the written exam; members create a rubric to score their own questions. A pass/fail score is given for each question—students must pass at least two questions to progress to the oral exam. Students who fail the written exam are permitted one additional attempt to pass; the committee decides the format of the second attempt. The committee chair notifies the student of the exam results before posting in GradPath. Students must pass the written exam before taking the oral exam. Committee members may provide feedback (about their scores) to the student prior to the oral exam.

2. Oral exam ([Graduate College instructions](#)): The NSGP requires students to complete their oral exam at least six months prior to the final oral dissertation defense. The oral examination is the occasion when committee members have both the opportunity and obligation to require students to display a broad knowledge of their chosen field of study and sufficient depth of understanding in areas of

²³ Students may submit this letter to the NSGP coordinator, who will share it with the GRDC committee members.

²⁴ Email communication with Graduate College, 7.26.23.

specialization. Discussion of proposed dissertation research may be included, as well as follow-up questions from the written exam, general questions on the classes/seminars included in the student's Plan of Study, recent literature in the student's field, and/or questions on the student's fellowship proposal. However, the oral exam must include questions from both the major and minor areas of study. The oral exam should be at least one hour but no more than three hours.

All committee members must participate in the entire oral examination and may attend remotely (video or phone conference) provided that the student and all committee members can communicate effectively. The committee must attest that the student has demonstrated the professional level of knowledge expected of a junior academic colleague.

Students who fail the oral exam are permitted one additional attempt to pass. If a second attempt is necessary, it should be rescheduled within three months of the first attempt and must have the same committee members unless a change is approved by the Graduate College.

Results of comprehensive exams: The committee chair posts the *Results of Comprehensive Exam* in GradPath for Graduate College review/approval. Upon Graduate College approval, and if the student has passed their comps and has completed their courses in the Plan of Study, the student is notified of "advancement to candidacy" (**fees apply**). The student should then be able to submit the *Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form* in GradPath.

Students who fail comps on their second attempt—either written or oral—are dismissed from the doctoral program. Students who fail the exam may be considered for the MS degree with approval of their advisor and the GRDC.

Dissertation

All students pursuing a doctoral degree must complete a dissertation that demonstrates their ability to conduct original research and meets required standards of scholarship. Students and their faculty advisors/mentors must be familiar with the **Graduate College requirements**. Several steps comprise the dissertation process.

Dissertation committee: Typically, the dissertation committee includes the same members as the comprehensive exam committee. **Committee composition:**

1. A minimum of four members,²⁵ three (3) of whom must be members of the Graduate Faculty. The 4th and any additional members may be Graduate Faculty or an approved Special Member.²⁶ At least three members must be NSW faculty who are qualified to serve on dissertation committees.²⁷
2. Each committee must have a chair, who must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair. (The NSGP coordinator typically initiates endorsement requests in UAccess for Graduate Faculty who are not tenured/tenure-eligible, such as career-track faculty).
3. If the committee has co-chairs, one must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair, while the other can be either a member of the Graduate Faculty or Special Member. Faculty with "endorsement to chair" dissertation committees must uphold the rules outlined in the **Graduate Faculty Policy, especially sections 1.1.5 and 4.2**.
4. At least one member must have successfully chaired a dissertation committee in the past.
5. Three members must approve the dissertation; one dissenting vote is allowed.
6. All committee members are expected to attend the entire final defense.

Students and their committee members should regularly review the **Degree Requirements**, **Doctor of Philosophy**, and **Important Dates/Deadlines** websites to make sure they are on track with the timing of their dissertation defense and documentation.

²⁵ The **Graduate College** requires a minimum of 3 members.

²⁶ Special member requests are submitted by the NSGP coordinator via UAccess.

²⁷ The GRDC may waive this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment form (GradPath): Students must submit this form as soon as requirements are met but **no later than six (6) months before the final oral defense is scheduled**.

Dissertation prospectus/proposal: Students are required to develop their dissertation proposal and present it to their dissertation committee well in advance of their oral defense. Proposals should be written in NIH-style format (or an equivalent national/international funding mechanism) and should not exceed 12 pages (11-font), single-spaced, excluding the Specific Aims and Literature Cited sections.

1. NSGP Prospectus Verification Form: Students obtain this form from the NSGP coordinator to distribute to their committee members for their signatures; either the student or the student's committee chair should return the fully signed form to the NSGP coordinator. The **deadline is at least 1 month before Dissertation Oral Defense**. Students should also send their approved prospectus to the NSGP coordinator.
2. Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation form (GradPath requirement): The NSGP coordinator submits this form upon receipt of the verification form and the prospectus.

Oral Defense Announcement (GradPath): Upon approval of the prospectus/proposal in GradPath, Students must contact the NSW administration office to schedule the date, location, and time for their defense. Once this is confirmed, students must submit their *Announcement of Final Oral Defense* in GradPath **at least 10 business days** prior to the date of the final oral defense to be routed for approval. (See also **Registrar's Office – Graduation Services** information.) The oral defense should be scheduled for days/times when the University is in session, during normal business hours.

Defense announcement flyer for NSW distribution: Students must send details for their announcement flyer to the NSW administration **at least two weeks prior to the oral defense**. The flyer must include: the student's name and photo; date/time/location for the oral defense; dissertation title & abstract; Zoom link if applicable. The announcement is shared with the College and School email lists and posted to the various University calendars.

Final Oral Defense: Students must provide their dissertation to their committee two weeks prior to the defense date so they can read the dissertation. If the committee requires revisions, those must be done in a timely manner, not to exceed one year.

The dissertation director presides over the final oral defense examination. The initial seminar portion, during which the student presents the dissertation and entertains questions, is open to the public. The examination portion, which follows the seminar, is closed to the public. There is no minimum time limit for the final oral defense, but the entire proceedings may not exceed three hours. See also **Graduate College guidelines**.

Results of Final Oral Defense: The committee chair submits the results in GradPath as soon as possible after the defense is completed. The Graduate College notifies the student of the approval and provides additional information to the student regarding the dissertation deadlines.

NSGP Dissertation Defense Assessment form: The student's committee members complete/sign this form and return it to the NSGP coordinator within two weeks after the oral defense is completed.

Dissertation Submission: Upon successful completion of the oral defense, and having gained final approval from the dissertation committee after completing any revisions needed following the defense, the PhD candidate submits the dissertation electronically via the **submission website** maintained by ProQuest/UMI. This submission must be made by the **submission deadline** for the desired graduation term. The Graduate College will check the formatting of the submitted dissertation and may request changes before accepting the submission. When the dissertation has been accepted by the Graduate College, **completion of requirements** have been fulfilled, and all other **final items** are accounted for, the degree will be awarded, provided the degree conferral date for the graduation term has been reached. Refer to the **Academic Calendar** for the relevant semester for the conferral date.

Additional Information—Graduate College Dissertation Format Check Process: The dissertation acceptance process consists of the following steps. Students should follow these steps after they have defended their dissertation and have final approval from their committee. The process consists of two parts: an auditing of the PDF file to verify that it meets archiving standards as listed in step 1, and the collection of documentation as listed in steps 2 through 4:

1. Refer to the [Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Guide](#) for guidance on formatting your dissertation.
2. The format check process begins after dissertation submission to [UMI Electronic Submissions Site](#).
Formats are assessed with this site's information; follow instructions carefully. Dissertations with published papers or papers accepted for publication require an alternate format.
3. Use the [sample/template](#) to prepare the Approval Page.
4. Submit the 'Survey of Earned Doctorates' online survey.

Graduation & exit surveys: The NSW and CALES send information about graduation via email (usually April for May/August graduates and November for December graduates). Students should inform their faculty advisors of these dates/times for the graduation-related events. The NSGP coordinator also notifies graduating students to complete the NSGP exit survey, while the Graduate College sends students its own exit survey. Students' anonymous responses to the NSGP exit survey inform the program's leadership about possible areas for improvement and also comprise a portion of annual University program assessment reporting requirements.

V. Academic and Enrollment Requirements

All NSGP students are expected to familiarize themselves with [Graduate College policies and procedures](#), including [academic](#) and [enrollment](#) policies.

Academic Policies

This section emphasizes satisfactory academic progress policies. However, NSGP students are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all Graduate College and NSGP academic policies. Figure V.1 provides a screenshot of the [Graduate College's academic policies website](#).

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress to remain in the program and to receive School funding (such as GA appointments). Students should review the Graduate College requirements on the [Satisfactory Academic Progress policies website](#) and the [Graduate Academic Standing, Progress, and Probation policies](#).

Components of NSGP and Graduate College satisfactory academic progress include, but are not limited to:

1. *Grade-point average (GPA)*: Maintain 3.0 minimum every semester (and cumulatively) for graduate-level coursework. Students who fall below 3.0 in a given semester are placed on [academic probation](#) by the Graduate College. Students on probation are required to meet with their major advisor and NSGP director/coordinator to discuss the steps necessary to remediate the problems that led to probation, and devise a written action plan to submit to the NSGP and Graduate College within identified timeframes.

Students whose cumulative GPA is below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters will be disqualified from their degree program. Disqualification results in the student being blocked from registration. The NSGP may petition for a one-semester extension of probation if the NSGP faculty and student's faculty advisor believe that the student has a high probability of returning to good academic standing in one semester.

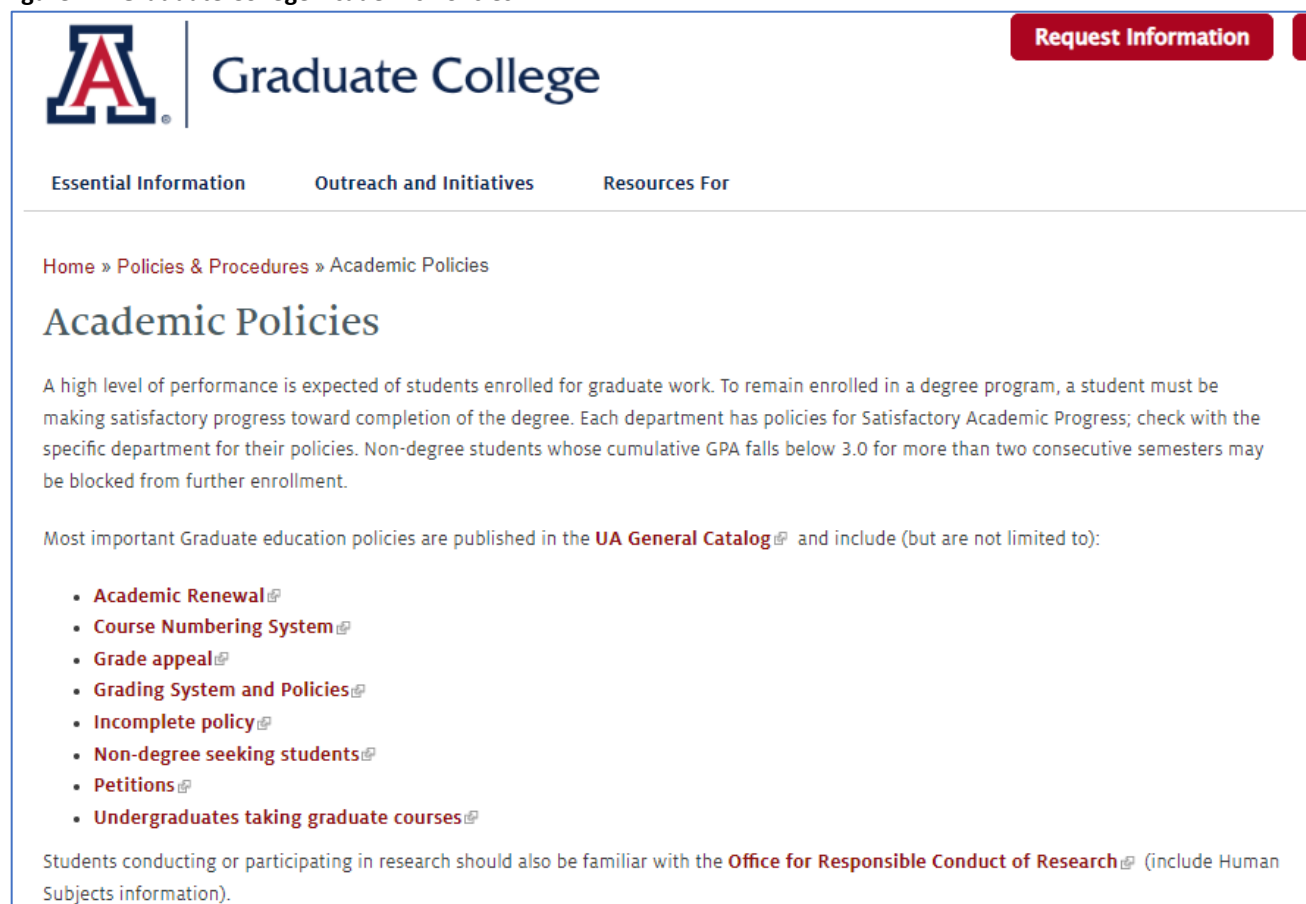
Disqualified students may apply for one of the following:

- [Non-degree status](#), which allows them to continue taking graduate courses as nondegree-seeking students, or
- [Academic renewal](#), if they wish to apply to a different degree program.

Students may apply for readmission to a degree program as early as the semester following their disqualification, if they achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 through additional graduate coursework obtained as a nondegree-seeking student. A readmission request must be supported by the NSW director and approved by the dean of the Graduate College. There is no guarantee of readmission.

- a. *Incomplete Policy*: Students earning a grade of incomplete ("I") for a course should submit a completed [Report of Incomplete Grade form](#) to the NSGP coordinator for inclusion in their academic record. Incomplete grades should be completed in a timely manner and are submitted at the discretion of the course instructor. Refer to the [incomplete policy](#).
2. *Faculty (major) advisor (also referred to as major professor)*: NSGP students must identify a faculty advisor by the end of their first year in the program (by/before June 30). Students must notify the NSGP director/coordinator well before the June 30 deadline if they are struggling to secure a faculty advisor. This professor typically serves as chair on a student's committee/s and also guides the student on coursework choices, research, and the thesis/dissertation. When warranted, students may change their advisor after discussing with the current advisor and the NSGP director/coordinator.
 3. *Annual reviews*: NSGP students' annual reviews typically occur during May/June and may include the NSGP director, coordinator, and faculty advisor. In addition to GPA and faculty advisor status, consideration is given to TA and RA evaluations, committee status, and applicable NSGP/Graduate College requirements. Students will be advised regarding deficiencies and/or concerns during the review process.

Figure V.1 Graduate College Academic Policies



Graduate College

Request Information

Essential Information Outreach and Initiatives Resources For

Home » Policies & Procedures » Academic Policies

Academic Policies

A high level of performance is expected of students enrolled for graduate work. To remain enrolled in a degree program, a student must be making satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree. Each department has policies for Satisfactory Academic Progress; check with the specific department for their policies. Non-degree students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 for more than two consecutive semesters may be blocked from further enrollment.

Most important Graduate education policies are published in the [UA General Catalog](#) and include (but are not limited to):

- [Academic Renewal](#)
- [Course Numbering System](#)
- [Grade appeal](#)
- [Grading System and Policies](#)
- [Incomplete policy](#)
- [Non-degree seeking students](#)
- [Petitions](#)
- [Undergraduates taking graduate courses](#)

Students conducting or participating in research should also be familiar with the [Office for Responsible Conduct of Research](#) (include Human Subjects information).

Barring extenuating circumstances, students failing to meet the satisfactory academic progress requirements should anticipate any or all of these actions:

- A warning letter issued by the GRDC/NSGP
- Loss of NSW (and other) funding
- Dismissal from the program if student fails to meet remediation plan requirements after one semester (or earlier if deemed appropriate by the student's advisor/committee acting in consultation with the NSGP and NSW directors).

Early identification of academic difficulty is in the best interests of students and the School. The NSGP stresses that there is no intent to be punitive to students having difficulty but to encourage immediate intervention and closer mentoring to enhance retention and probability of graduation. Students on academic probation will be contacted and required to follow recommendations so that they might take advantage of intervention and closer mentoring.

Appeals

As outlined above, students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress are subject to dismissal from the program. Students will be given the opportunity to internally appeal dismissal decisions as follows²⁸:

1. Submit a written appeal to the NSGP director and their faculty advisor. This must be done within 30 days of the written notification of dismissal. The NSGP may share the appeal with the GRDC for review. After reviewing the appeal, and if the NSGP director and student's advisor are in agreement, a decision may be made to reverse the dismissal decision upon the satisfactory completion of appropriate conditions.

²⁸ Decisions may be contingent upon Graduate College review/approval.

2. In cases in which the NSGP director and the student's faculty advisor are not in agreement or seek further consultation, a meeting between the student, advisor, NSGP director, and GRDC will be scheduled at a time that is feasible for all parties.²⁹ The student's dismissal will be reconsidered in light of the student's written appeal and follow-up questioning during the meeting as appropriate.
3. In the event that the dismissal decision is upheld, the Graduate College will be notified as soon as the decision is made. Any further petition, appeal, or rebuttal will need to be routed to the Graduate College.

Students should also review the [Graduate College Grievance Policy](#).

Enrollment—Continuous Enrollment Policy

Following are criteria included in the Graduate College policy for continuous enrollment for master's and doctoral students. Student's should refer to the [Graduate College Enrollment Policy website](#) for full details. See Figure V.2 for a screenshot of the website.

*Note for item 1 in the master's & doctoral degree lists below: This item pertains to the NSGP students supported by graduate assistantships/associateships (GA - TA and RA status); that is, first-year students must enroll for nine (9) units each semester, and then six (6) units each semester thereafter. In addition, international students should review the information posted on the [Graduate College's International Students website](#) as well as the [University's International Student Services website](#).

Master's Degree Enrollment

1. Students receiving funding such as assistantships/associateships, fellowships, loans, grants, scholarships, or traineeships may be required by their funding source to register a specific number of units each semester to meet full-time status requirement. Similarly, international students may have different requirements to maintain their visa status. All students should check with their faculty advisor and/or NSGP leadership regarding such requirements to ensure that they remain qualified for funding and/or visa status.*
2. Students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements, and were enrolled in the prior semester may defend and file in the summer or winter term without registration. If, however, a student needs library privileges or if they plan to make other use of University facilities or significant faculty time during summer or winter session, enrollment is required.
3. Students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements, and are only completing an incomplete in coursework (a class other than 900 level) are not required to enroll while they complete the incomplete. If, however, students need library privileges or plan to use other University facilities or need significant faculty time while they complete their incomplete, enrollment is required.

Doctoral Degree Enrollment

1. Students receiving funding such as assistantships/associateships, fellowships, loans, grants, scholarships, or traineeships may be required by their funding source to register a specific number of units each semester to meet full-time status requirement. Similarly, international students may have different requirements to maintain their visa status. All students should check with their faculty advisor and/or NSGP leadership regarding such requirements to ensure that they remain qualified for funding and/or visa status.*
2. Doctoral students who have maintained continuous enrollment and are taking only comprehensive exams during either summer or winter term do not have to register for graduate credit during that summer or winter session.

²⁹ Students are expected to complete the NSGP mentoring agreement form with their faculty advisor as soon as their advisor is confirmed. This form is designed to benefit both student and faculty advisor by outlining specific expectations of both parties throughout the course of the mentor/mentee relationship.

3. Doctoral students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements as well as the 18 hours of dissertation, and were enrolled in the prior semester, may defend and file in the summer or winter term without registration. If, however, a student needs library privileges or if they plan to make other use of University facilities or significant faculty time during summer or winter session, enrollment is required.
4. Students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements, and are only completing an incomplete in coursework (a class other than 900 level) are not required to enroll while they complete the incomplete. If, however, students need library privileges or plan to use other University facilities or need significant faculty time while they complete their incomplete, enrollment is required.

Unless excused by an official [Leave of Absence](#) (which may not exceed one year throughout the student's degree program), all graduate students are subject to the [Continuous Enrollment Policy](#) and must pay in-state and out-of-state tuition and fees in order to remain in the program. Student who fail to obtain a Leave of Absence or maintain continuous enrollment will be required to apply for readmission, to pay the Graduate College application fee, and pay all overdue tuition and fees, including cumulative late penalties. There is no guarantee of readmission. Tuition or registration waivers cannot be applied retroactively. Any student considering reapplication should first check with the [Graduate Student Academic Services Office](#) to see whether additional work or updated forms will be necessary.

Figure V.2 Graduate College Enrollment Policies

Graduate College

Home Essential Information Outreach & Initiatives Information For

Home > Policies > Enrollment Policies

Policies & Procedures

Enrollment Policies

The University and the Graduate College have specific policies in place that deal with enrollment issues related to graduate students and courses.

- [Continuous Enrollment](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Program Changes](#)
- [Schedule Changes](#)

Other relevant policies published in the [UA Catalog](#):

- [Full-Time Status](#)
- [Undergrad Enrollment in Grad Courses](#)

Full-time Enrollment Status, Advanced Status

Following are the key criteria for graduate full-time status; review the [Enrollment Policies website](#) for the complete and current information.

Fall/spring semesters:

- Minimum units of graduate credit—For first-year NSGP students with GA appointments (graduate assistant/associate), full-time status consists of a minimum enrollment in 9 units of graduate credit each semester. After year 1, students with GA appointments must enroll in a minimum of 6 units each semester.
- 3 units of graduate credit, 900 level—A graduate student working on a thesis or dissertation who is only enrolled in 900-level units and not employed as a GA must be enrolled in 3 units.
- 1 unit of graduate credit, 900 level—A student who has completed all coursework, the thesis/dissertation unit requirements, has advanced to candidacy, is working on the thesis/dissertation, and is not employed as a GA may apply for [advanced status \(form\)](#), which allows 1 unit of 900-level credit for full-time status. In all other cases, full-time status consists of a minimum enrollment in 9 units of graduate credit.

The full-time status enrollment minimums apply to students who want to defer federal loan repayments, to international students with F or J visa status, and/or to students receiving University funding other than wages.

Full-time enrollment may or may not keep the student from falling outside the threshold of the [Affordable Care Act](#) and/or [Arizona State Retirement System](#) requirements. Graduate students should refer to these policies to ensure compliance. Note that full-time and minimum enrollment policies are different to maintain [continuous enrollment](#).

Continuous Enrollment and Financial Aid

Continuous enrollment is not the same as "full-time enrollment" for financial aid and international visa purposes. Refer to the [UA Academic Catalog—Graduate College Policies](#) for information.

VI. Student Responsibilities

NSGP students are expected to exhibit professional behavior at all times, to participate in all required program meetings and activities, and to complete required courses and documentation within specified timelines.

Graduate College Policies/Procedures

Students are expected to review and be familiar with the [Graduate College policies and procedures](#).

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to fully comply with the [University's Code of Academic Integrity](#). Students who engage in academic dishonesty diminish their education and bring discredit to the academic community. Students shall not violate the Code and shall avoid situations likely to compromise academic integrity. Students shall observe the generally applicable provisions of this Code whether or not faculty members establish special rules of academic integrity for particular classes. Students are not excused from complying with this Code because of faculty members' failure to prevent cheating. Students must also be aware of Graduate College requirements and policies as well as general University policies and deadlines.

Orientations: NSGP and TA

All entering students with GA appointments are required to attend the NSGP and teaching assistant/associate (TA) orientations held the week before fall semester classes begin. The purpose of the NSGP orientation is to meet with NSGP administrators and current students, help new students set themselves up for graduate school success and familiarize them with various policies, procedures, and expectations of the program, and address their concerns and questions.

The mandatory CALES TA 101 (teaching assistant/associate) orientation is also held the week before classes begin. All first-year NSGP students with GA appointments are assigned TA roles at half time (0.50% FTE). Details about this orientation are typically emailed to students several weeks prior to the orientation date.

GA (TA/RA) Assignments and Policies

TA appointments are budget dependent and require students to adhere to many guidelines. Students must be enrolled in nine (9) units/credits per semester their first year and six (6) units/credits per semester thereafter until all required coursework/credits are completed. All students TA appointments typically receive their assignments from the NSGP coordinator via email. Assignments are made in consultation with the chairs of the NSW undergraduate program and other factors. All TAs are evaluated by their assigned faculty supervisor/s each semester following Graduate College and NSGP evaluation requirements. TA assignments should reflect students' level of experience and expertise. Students should review the Graduate College's [Qualifications for Appointment website](#) and also be familiar with the policies and information provided in the [GA Manual](#).

Summer and winter session TA assignments may be available. For summer assignments, students must be enrolled in six hours *in the upcoming fall*. For additional requirements, refer to the [Summer/Winter Session website](#). These additional teaching opportunities are contingent upon teaching performance, needs of the School, GA status, and support from the student's faculty advisor.

Time Commitments for TA and RA Appointments

Time commitments inevitably vary according to the nature of the assignment, but the following should serve as a general guide to expectations:

1. For funded TA and RA appointments, half-time (0.50 FTE) appointments carry expectations of 20 hours of work per week on average, and one-quarter time (0.25 FTE) appointments carry expectations of 10 hours of work per week on average. A TA's actual hours per week will vary with assignment load.

2. Appointments at the same level and pay should require approximately equal levels of work, regardless of the distribution of duties and funding sources. However, there is natural variation in TA appointments both within semesters and across courses/instructors.

Additional TA Information

Grading & other tasks: Providing feedback to students in a reasonable amount of time is an important part of the TA role. TAs should aim to complete grading promptly; the expected grading time period should be clearly outlined between the supervising faculty and the TA, as should overall expectations for both TA and the supervising faculty. Open communication is key a successful TA-faculty supervisor relationship.

Teaching improvement: Many resources are available to assist TAs in developing their teaching skills. Refer to the [Office of Instruction and Assessment](#) as well as supervising faculty and CALES. The Graduate College also lists [teaching and mentoring resources](#).

Loss of TA appointment: Repeated unsatisfactory TA evaluations are grounds for loss of a TA position (and possibly GA appointment/funding). The NSW will work with students to improve their teaching skills before taking this step. Unprofessional behavior will result in immediate loss of the TA assignment and possibly the GA appointment and/or dismissal from the program.

Change of status—transitioning from assistant to associate status: Graduates with an “assistantship” appointment are either MS students or PhD students who enter the program with a bachelor’s degree. Those with an “associateship” appointment are PhD students who enter the program with a master’s degree or are starting their third year in the program (and entered with the bachelor’s degree). It is Graduate College policy that the change in status from assistant to associate will only occur at semester end/beginning. No changes in status will be made mid-semester.

VII. Resources

Students may access the myriad resources available to them via the University website. This section lists several resources that students may need and/or want to explore.

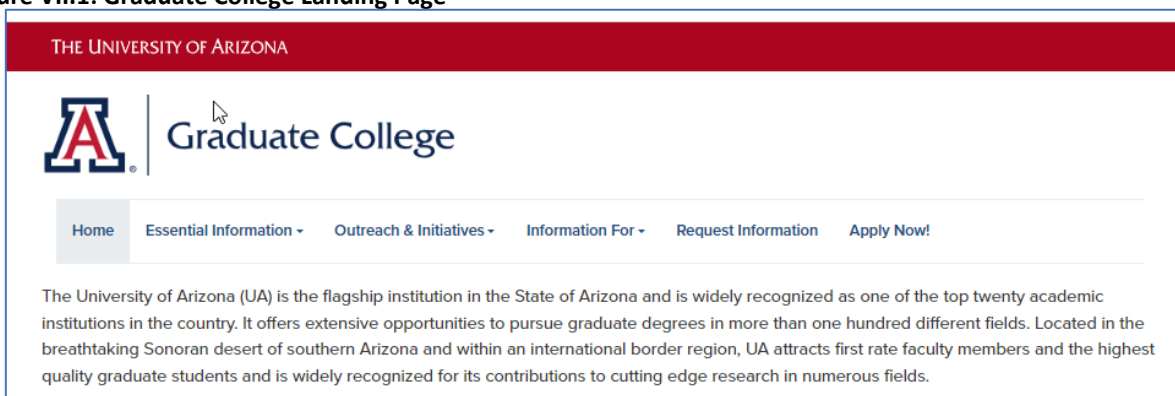
College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences (CALES)

- [CALES graduate students](#) – information for graduate students, including a [robust list of resources](#).
- [CALES/ALVSCE Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#) – information and learning opportunities.

Graduate College

Refer to Figure VII.1 for an overview of the Graduate College [website](#) categories. The site also includes links to news/announcements and important dates (Figure VII.1).

Figure VII.1: Graduate College Landing Page



- [Funding and Financial Information](#) – funding opportunities for graduate college.
- [Graduate and Professional Student Council](#) – a great resource for graduate students.
- [Information for new and current students](#) – links to academic services, policies & procedures, costs & funding, child care subsidies and family-friendly information, health/wellness/safety, other UA resources & information, third-party information & resources, new & current student FAQs.
- [Petitions](#) – types of graduate petitions and user guides.

Other

- [Compliance Office](#) – links to emergency and safety information, [University policies](#), records management, and financial services.
- [Compliance \(Office\) Partners](#) – links to various laws and policies pertaining to higher education.
- [Current Students](#) – links to various types of information, including transportation, parking, etc.
- [Emergency Management](#) – includes emergency response information, UAlert services sign-up, building/campus emergency plans.
- [Ethics & Conduct policies](#) – links to University policies associated with ethics/conduct.
- [General Catalog](#) – University catalog.
- [Institutional Equity](#) – information regarding inclusivity and the learning/work environment.
- [International Student Services](#) – Resources for international students.
- [Life & Work Support for Students](#) - links to childcare subsidy information, sick and back-up childcare, parenting & childcare consultations, adult & eldercare consultations, and family resource map.
- [Life in Tucson](#) – Information about Tucson.
- [Research, Impact & Innovation](#) – includes [opportunities/information for graduate students](#).

Many more resources are available on the University website. Students are encouraged to explore the site on a regular basis.

Appendix A—Graduate Research Degrees Committee

As of August 2024

School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness (NSW) Members

Forrest Baker, PhD: Assistant Research Professor, Nutritional Sciences (career track)

Shea Austin Cantu, EdD: Director, SNAP-Education & Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program; Associate Specialist/Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences (continuing eligible); State Extension Specialist (NSW/CALES)

Floyd "Ski" Chilton, PhD: Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured); Professor and Associate Director, The BIO5 Institute; Professor, Cancer Biology-GIDP; Director, The Precision Wellness Initiative

Melanie Hingle, PhD, MPH, RD: Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured); Associate Professor, Public Health; Associate Professor, BIO5 Institute; Assistant Dean, Strategic Implementation

Laurel Jacobs, DrPh, MPH: Assistant Research Professor, Nutritional Sciences (career track)

Sridevi Krishnan, PhD: Assistant Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenure-eligible)

Kirsten Limesand, PhD: Vice Provost/Dean, Graduate Education; Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured); Professor, Cancer Biology – GIDP; Professor, Physiological Sciences–GIDP; Professor, BIO5 Institute

Donato Romagnolo, MSc, PhD: Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured); Associate, Center for Toxicology; Professor, Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences; Professor, BIO5 Institute; Professor, Cancer Biology–GIDP; Program Director, Mediterranean Diet and Health Study Abroad Program

Ornella Selmin, PhD: Associate Research Professor, Nutritional Sciences (career track); Associate, Center for Toxicology; Research Associate Professor, The Arizona Cancer Center

Richard Simpson, PhD: Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured); Director, Graduate Studies/Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program; Professor, Physiological Sciences – GIDP; Professor, Pediatrics; Professor, Immunobiology; Professor, Cancer Biology–GIDP; Professor, BIO5 Institute

Kayle Jeanne Skorupski, PhD, MS, RDN-AP, CNSC, FAND: Associate Professor of Practice, Nutritional Sciences (career track); Director, NSW Professional Programs

Ashley Snider, PhD: Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenure eligible); Associate Professor, Cancer Biology–GIDP

Justin Snider, PhD: Assistant Research Professor, Nutritional Sciences (career track)

Jennifer Teske, PhD: Associate Professor (tenured); Associate Professor, Neuroscience–GIDP; Associate Professor, Physiological Sciences–GIDP

Kenneth Wilund, PhD: Director, School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness; Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured)

Ningning Zhao, PhD: Assistant Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured); Assistant Professor, Physiological Sciences-GIDP

Student representative, 2024-2025: Grace McKenzie, PhD student

Joint-Appointed Members - Refer to the posted list of [Joint Appointees](#) on the NSW website.

Appendix B—Fellowship Proposal Guidelines

Following is a general overview for fellowship proposal development. Students, with guidance from their faculty advisors, are expected to select a fellowship that provides them with an appropriate opportunity to gain experience in writing a fellowship proposal.

Students enrolled in the NSGP PhD program must complete a fellowship proposal (F31 or similar) prior to sitting for their comprehensive exams. The purpose of this requirement is to enhance students' career opportunities by learning and practicing the steps involved in writing and submitting research proposals to obtain funding.

Students are advised to follow the guidelines in this document to ensure that they stay on track to complete this requirement. (Applications for scholarships do not satisfy this requirement.) Proposals should be ready for submission during year 3 of graduate study. The actual submission date will depend on the timeline of the fellowship award.

Note that this requirement is not part of a course; rather, students work with their faculty advisor/mentor to identify an appropriate fellowship (typically F31). Students whose proposals are funded will be able to offset the salary paid by the School or by student's research advisor; often, fellowship award recipients must relinquish their graduate associate appointment based on the award stipulations.

Typical/Suggested Steps in Your Fellowship Proposal Development Plan

Work diligently with your faculty advisor/mentor to find a good fit for your research topic. Successful proposals start with finding the appropriate funding opportunities that align with your research topic/interest. Refer to the resources on page 2 of this document for possible funding sources for your application. Suggested steps:

1. Meet with your faculty advisor/mentor to identify/discuss your fellowship topic.
2. Identify possible sources of funding; contact agencies' point people, if feasible, to discuss your questions. Follow-up with your advisor/mentor.
3. Obtain examples of funded proposals to get an idea for format, style, etc. In addition, attend grant-writing workshops on campus (or at conferences).
4. After you identify your funding source/s, read and re-read the instructions. Identify the due date and eligibility guidelines.
5. Determine whether additional expertise is needed to support the proposal.
6. Establish a timeline and plan for writing each part of the proposal—this step is important to ensure you remain on track.
7. Identify the specific aims of your proposal.
8. Develop your draft/s with your advisor's guidance.
9. Ask others you trust to read your proposal; choose individuals who will truly critique it. Allow reviewers at least one week to complete their review to enhance your chances of receiving valuable feedback.
10. Present your proposal to two or three faculty, independent of your mentor. Revise the proposal based on their feedback.
11. Contact Theresa Spicer, the School's manager of grants and contracts, to learn about the proposal submission process. Be sure you and your faculty advisor know the current [CALES policies for research proposals](#). Notify Theresa about your intentions to submit, along with information about where she can find more details. She has many grant proposals awaiting her review year-round, so the earlier you contact her, the more likely you will benefit from her support and expertise.
12. Meet with designated NSW business center administrators to review the budget well ahead of the deadline.

13. Review your final draft to make sure you have followed the application instructions.
Most applications must go through an electronic screening process. Any errors will halt and/or delay the process.
14. Committee evaluation: Your advisor and committee will evaluate your proposal.

Resources

Following is a short-list of resources to help students launch their proposal writing. Note that some resources are from sources outside of the University of Arizona.

1. [UA Research Development Services](#)
 - [Early investigators](#)
 - [Find funding](#)
 - [Seminars and workshops](#)
2. [UA Libraries – Support for researchers](#)
3. [UA Graduate Center – Writing Lab](#)
4. [Organizing Academic Research Papers: Writing a Research Proposal](#)
5. [How to Write a Research Proposal: Structure, Examples & Common Mistakes](#)
6. [Grant Writers’ Seminars & Workshops](#)
7. Funding possibilities (not an exhaustive list):
 - [NIH: F31](#) (Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards for Individual Predoctoral Fellows)
 - [National Science Foundation](#) and [NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program](#)
 - [Cancer Research Institute](#)
 - [American Cancer Society](#)
 - [American Heart Association Predoctoral fellowship](#) (must be enrolled in a PhD program)
 - [American College of Sports Medicine doctoral research fellowship](#) (requires ACSM student membership)
 - [American Federation for Aging Research funding opportunities](#)