



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

Nutritional Sciences & Wellness

Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program (NSGP)

2025-2026 Student Handbook

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

Disclaimer

Students at the University of Arizona (UA) are subject to all policies and procedures of the UA Graduate College, registrar’s office, bursar’s office, police department, and so forth. Policies are posted on relevant UA websites. Students should 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. When circumstances require, the NSGP may update program policies that override those referenced in this handbook. The NSGP will notify students when such instances occur. The NSGP team does its best to keep this handbook up to date with UA policies. However, if information in this handbook appears to conflict with the UA’s campus-level policy, then typically the campus policy will be followed. Students may contact the NSGP director and/or coordinator when they find such inconsistencies in this handbook.

UA 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.

Program Contact Information

<u>Name, Role</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Office</u>
Jennifer Teske, PhD Director of Graduate Studies (NSGP Director)	teskeja@arizona.edu	Shantz 332
Peggy Rupert, MA, MPH, RDN Graduate Programs Coordinator	prupert@arizona.edu	Shantz 320
Nate Eakman Manager, Finance and Administration	njeakman@arizona.edu	

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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

College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences

Shantz Bldg., Room 332 | Tucson, AZ 85721 | Office: 520-621-3081 | teskeja@arizona.edu

School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness Mission and Values

The **School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness** (NSW, School) at the **UA** 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 refining 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 2025, 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 **UA 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 UA 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 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.
4. PhD fellowship (for PhD students only).

Program Administration

The NSGP relies on many NSW and CALES 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 assessments as well as student learning outcomes, progress, and support. In addition, the committee oversees curriculum-related matters. Apart from the student representative, the committee 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).

Graduate student representative: A current NSGP graduate student serves in this role for 1 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 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 students may nominate their (eligible) NSGP peers (and self) for this role. A student with at least 1 nomination who meets the eligibility requirements will 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.

¹ Refer to [Graduate Faculty Policy](#); [UA Phonebook](#) identifies Graduate Faculty status.

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

Program Facilities and Resources

The UA provides graduate students 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 & Partnerships](#) to learn more about the UA's range of research facilities.

Facilities

NSGP faculty and graduate students occupy office and laboratory space in several locations across the UA campus. Several NSW 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 [UA 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 most comprehensive health sciences library in Arizona.³ 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 consultations, 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.

³ See [University Libraries](#).

III. Program Admissions

The NSGP admits 1 cohort per year (fall semester). All applicants must apply to the UA's Graduate College via the ["GradApp" system website](#). Applications typically open in July and close in December (for the following academic year). Figure III.1 provides the current admissions criteria for the MS and PhD programs.

Figure III.1. NSGP Admissions Requirements

Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program Admissions Requirements	
MS Admissions Requirements	PhD Admissions Requirements
<p>Degree Requirements</p> <p>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</p> <p>GRE: Not required; applicants who have GRE scores may submit them with their application documentation.</p> <p>English Language Proficiency</p> <p>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 Curriculum Vitae Teaching assistant (TA) experience helpful but not required Research experience preferred 2 letters of recommendation Application Procedures <p>Admissions Cycle</p> <p>Fall admission only</p> <p>Application deadline is December 15</p>	<p>Degree Requirements</p> <p>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 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</p> <p>GRE: Not required; applicants who have GRE scores may submit them with their application documentation.</p> <p>English Language Proficiency</p> <p>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 Curriculum Vitae Teaching assistant (TA) experience helpful but not required Research experience preferred 3 letters of recommendation Application Procedures <p>Admissions Cycle</p> <p>Fall admission only</p> <p>Application deadline is December 15</p>

Application Materials

Application materials include but are not limited to: statement of purpose, curriculum vitae, transcripts, and letters of recommendation (recommenders receive an email notification with a link to access the system to upload their letters).⁴

Application Statement of Purpose

In their statement of purpose, students should address how the NSGP aligns with their career goals and how they expect to add value to the program as a student. The statement should address:

- Briefly explain why you want to pursue graduate studies in the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program for the MS or PhD program.
- Briefly describe your career/professional goals and how this degree and program will help you achieve these goals.
- Briefly describe any research experience you have had and how you might apply the skills you learned in this MS/PhD program.
- Briefly explain how your prior learning, work/volunteer experiences, and other activities have prepared you for pursuing an MS or PhD degree.
- Briefly discuss how your participation in the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program may add value to the program.
- 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).

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Applicants must upload a current CV (PDF format is preferred).

Letters of Recommendation

The MS and PhD program requires at least 2 and 3 letters of recommendation, respectively. Recommenders may be 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. Letters should:

- Be signed and submitted on letterhead or otherwise indicate the recommender's contact information and current professional 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 statement of purpose

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. Applicants must pay the current application fee; the [Graduate College](#) does not offer application fee waivers.

Application Review Timeline

After the application submission deadline (December), a committee of NSGP faculty 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 (videoconference). Following the interviews, the committee selects the final list of candidates who may be invited for a second round of interviews, which may be held in on campus or via videoconference.

⁴ See also [Office of Graduate Admissions](#).

Following second interviews, 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 typically sent offer letters from the NSGP to join the program. These offer letters usually include information about graduate assistantship/associateship (GA) requirements (if applicable), UA policies, required trainings, enrollment information, and new-student orientation requirements. Orientation sessions occur the week before fall semester courses begin.

Candidates must sign/return their offer letters by the stated deadline to confirm their status in the program (not before April 15⁵). Candidates who accept the NSGP offer will indicate their acceptance in the GradApp system (intent to matriculate) and notify the NSGP coordinator.

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.

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 UA that grants degrees recognized by the UA 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 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 the School's 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 NSGP admissions committee may recommend conditional 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 1 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 is confirmed, 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](#). Such funding support is contingent upon availability of funds and the student's status in the program.

Graduate Assistantship/Associateship (GA)—NSW Model

The NSW generally offers GA appointments to accepted candidates. 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 fall and spring semesters.)

⁵ See [April 15 Resolution](#), Council of Graduate Schools.
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Students in this category typically enter the program with 1 of 2 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 2 levels is the pay rate. The NSGP offer letters sent to new students prior to enrollment specify the appointment level and pay rates, which are set by CALES and the UA. GA appointments are year-to-year and are subject to funding availability and the student's program status—students must meet satisfactory degree progress policies and expectations, which are based on academic record and GA evaluations.

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).⁶ The GA appointment involves NSW funds and generally provides half-time (20 hours/week, also referred to as 0.5 FTE⁷) support for the first year. A TA is assigned to 1 or more undergraduate teaching faculty to help support undergraduate course instruction.

Year 2: The GA fiscal-year appointment starts July 1 and ends June 30 the following year. Students typically move to 0.25 FTE TA (10 hours/week) and 0.25 FTE RA (10 hours/week) status, with the RA portion supported by the student's faculty advisor. However, in cases where faculty advisor funding is unavailable, the TA appointment will likely be 0.5 FTE. Likewise, some students may be fully supported for a 0.5 FTE RA appointment depending on their faculty advisor's funding status. The faculty advisor support may not exceed the 0.5 FTE appointment.

Years 3-5: PhD students are typically funded for 0.5 FTE RA appointment by their faculty advisors.⁸ 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.

In addition to their stipend, students who accept their GA notice of appointment are typically eligible for these benefits⁹: 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.

Current GAs may be eligible for winter- and summer-session TA positions. Such roles are considered supplemental to the fiscal year GA appointment and are subject to Graduate College and HR policies. Summer and winter instructional support needs and hiring decisions are based on course enrollments, GA status, and other NSW and Graduate College criteria.¹⁰

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

⁶ In rare cases, a first-year GA appointment could be a research assistantship/associateship (RA), or some combination of TA/RA.

⁷ Refer to [Appointment Periods and FTE Information](#).

⁸ Exceptions apply, such as if a student is funded by a fellowship award.

⁹ CALES GAs are among the highest paid at the University.

¹⁰ Refer to [Summer/Winter session](#) GA policies.

will vary depending on the fellowship award. Refer to the Graduate College's [Graduate Funding Opportunities](#) for more information.

Other Funding Options

Depending on a student's circumstances, additional sources of funding may be available through scholarships, financial aid, qualified tuition reduction (QTR), and personal means. Some of this information may be found on these websites:

- [Graduate Center](#)
- [QTR](#)
- [Scholarships and Financial Aid](#)

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 UA covers the single student Campus Health insurance premium charges for GAs during their appointment. The health insurance and health services are provided through the UA Campus Health and are not transferable to outside insurance providers. To receive this benefit, a student 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. Requirements for Master's (MS) and Doctoral (PhD) Students

This section includes essential information regarding NSGP and Graduate College requirements that students must fulfill for graduation. Current MS and PhD course requirements appear in Table IV.1.^{11,12}

Table IV.1. NSGP Course Requirements for MS and PhD (as of July 2025)

2025-2026 Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program Curriculum (MS, PhD/Main Campus)					
Note: NSC course days/times may change to accommodate department needs.					
Courses	Units ¹	Typically Offered	Notes Major Coursework = Required Minor = Required	MS Total Units	PhD Total Units ¹
Fall Semester Courses - Major Coursework					
NSC 597E Exploring Wellness through Scientific Research (journal club)	1	Fall (yearly) in-person W 9-9:50am	Major coursework (PhD students x2 enrollments)	<i>optional</i>	2
NSC 699 Independent Study ² (laboratory rotation)	3	Fall (yearly) in-person	Major coursework year 1	3	3
NSC 608 Immunometabolism in Nutrition and Exercise	3	Fall (even years) in-person M/W 3:30-4:45pm	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
NSC 610 Nutrition and Disease	3	Fall (even years) in-person T/Th 11am-12:15pm	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
NSC 624 Micronutrients	3	Fall (odd years) in-person T 9-11:30am	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
BIOS 576A Biostats. in Public Health (also offered spring online delivery)	3	Fall (yearly) in-person T/Th 4-5:15pm	Major coursework year 2	3	3
Subtotal				15	17
Spring Semester Courses - Major Coursework					
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 595 Emerging Topics in Nutritional Sciences	2	Spring (yearly) in-person T 12pm-2pm	Major coursework years 1 & 2	4	4
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 W 2-5pm	Major coursework year 1	3	3
Subtotal				12 (27)	15 (32)
Other - Major Coursework					
Electives ³ and non-NSC seminar/journal club ≥ 4 units	Varies	Varies per course	Major coursework (see footnote 3)	<i>optional</i>	4
Subtotal				12 (27)	4 (36)
Grad College PhD: 36 minimum units of major coursework required				27	36
Grad College MS: 24 minimum units of nonthesis coursework required					
PhD – MINOR units (specified by minor department)	≥ 9	Varies by department	Complete before comprehensive exam (typically year 3)		9
Subtotal				27	45
NSC 910 Thesis	6	Every semester	Thesis units required	6	
NCS 920 Dissertation	18	Every semester	Dissertation units required		18
AY 25-26 total units⁴				33	63
¹ PhD notes: CALES GA appointments (TA, RA) appointments require first-year (Y1) students to enroll in a minimum of 9 units per semester; years 2+ enroll in a minimum of 6 units per semester. Students who graduate in 4 years must still meet the required minimum 36 units of major coursework through elective units, seminars, or other NSGP-approved courses. Refer to PhD requirements . ² New students are expected to identify/confirm their lab rotations prior to the NSGP orientation or before the first day of the fall semester. ³ Electives: Includes fall 2025 1 unit course with Dr. Ashley Snider. Course details TBD. ⁴ Meets Graduate College minimum requirements (MS 30, PhD 63). Many students exceed the minimum unit requirement.					

¹¹ 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](#).

¹² The [NSW graduate courses website](#) provides course descriptions for NSW graduate courses.

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

Most requirements for first-year students are the same for both graduate degrees. Degree-specific requirements appear later in this section. Table IV.2 lists requirements that students are expected to complete during their first year in the program.

Table IV.2 Year 1 Requirements

Student Responsibilities	Semester 1	Semester 2
Onboarding – orientations, required online & TA trainings, initial course enrollment	✓	
Lab rotations (NSC 699): 2 rotations, 7.5 weeks each, approximately 9-10 hours/week	✓	
Faculty advisor selection	✓	✓
Coursework (9 units minimum per semester for GA appointments)	✓	✓
TA assignment - 20 hours/week (or as specified in GA offer letter)	✓	✓
Documentation: GradPath, GA/NSGP evaluations (TA & RA), IDP, lab rotation evaluation (semester 1), annual review	✓	✓
	✓	✓
NSGP meetings (as requested)	✓	✓

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 NSGP, Graduate College, and TA orientations/trainings.

Transfer Credit Requests

Admitted students seeking to transfer credit from graduate-level courses completed prior to starting the NSGP into their NSGP graduate program should speak with the NSGP director/coordinator as early as possible. Students submit transfer credit requests via the NSGP form¹³ and wait for approval prior to submitting a request in GradPath. The specific courses to be counted toward a graduate degree are subject to approval by the NSGP director and/or GRDC consensus, with the Graduate College making the final determination. 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

Prior to the program orientation, and with few exceptions, all first-year MS and PhD students must find 2 research laboratories to rotate through during their first semester.¹⁴ The primary purpose of these rotations is to help students identify a faculty advisor¹⁵ for support and mentorship. Students are expected to identify their faculty advisor by the end of their second lab rotation.

In addition to securing a faculty advisor, these rotations also provide valuable opportunities to learn new techniques, experience different approaches to nutritional sciences 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.

Following are questions students are encouraged to ask faculty to help them identify lab rotation opportunities:

- 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?

¹³ Students should request the form from the NSGP coordinator.

¹⁴ Students struggling to identify lab rotations should contact the NSGP director/coordinator before mid July (before orientation).

¹⁵ Faculty advisors must hold [Graduate Faculty status](#).

- 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?
- How do you approach mentoring (what is your mentoring style)?
- Do you need more information about the NSW RA funding model before you can agree to be my faculty advisor/mentor?

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 selected labs. 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.

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

Professionalism and respect are key expectations for all NSW graduate students and personnel. The NSW 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 faculty, staff, faculty, or other students. Students are expected to behave respectfully and professionally toward faculty, staff, and other students, and to respond promptly to official requests for information when circumstances dictate such actions are needed. Students are also advised to review [UA policies](#), particularly those listed in the [ethics and conduct section](#).

Students must also realize that faculty work styles vary—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.
- 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 multiple drafts. It will almost certainly be weeks to months between the completion of a first draft and readiness for defense, and sometimes it might be a semester-long process. Completing a dissertation is a multi-year 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 faculty advisors and 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.

Other Common MS and PhD Requirements

In addition to coursework, lab rotations, faculty advisor selection, professional behavior expectations, and GA requirements described in section III of this handbook, NSGP students must adhere to other programmatic and Graduate College requirements and policies.

Program Meetings

NSGP students are expected to attend group and individual meetings.

Group meetings: All students are expected to attend group meetings (Aug-May) when scheduled. Such meetings are typically held in-person¹⁶ and serve to enhance students' experiences in the program through open dialogue. Various topics are addressed during these meetings as determined by student and/or program leadership recommendations.

Progress meetings: All NSGP students are expected to attend individual progress meetings with the NSGP director and/or coordinator. Such meetings help the program determine whether students are meeting **satisfactory academic progress** requirements.

Graduate College and NSGP Forms (subject to change)¹⁷

The Graduate College and NSGP require students to complete various forms while pursuing their graduate degrees.

*GradPath*¹⁸ *Forms (Graduate College):* **GradPath** is the Graduate College's degree-audit system designed to track and monitor graduate students' progress toward their degree.¹⁹ Students access GradPath through their **UAccess Student** account. Nearly all submitted GradPath forms are routed through an approval process, with the Graduate College as final approver. See the **GradPath website** for more information about the process.

GradPath forms common to MS and PhD are the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and Plan of Study (POS).

1. **Responsible Conduct of Research RCR Statement:** The UA requires all graduate students to acknowledge that they are aware of the RCR compliance regulations and academic integrity and will adhere to these regulations while pursuing their graduate degrees. Students are expected to complete this acknowledgment during the NSGP orientation or prior to the first day of classes.
2. **POS:** The POS identifies:
 - Faculty advisor
 - Minor advisor (PhD only)
 - Completed courses that count toward the graduate degree (major coursework, thesis and dissertation units, PhD minor coursework)
 - Transfer units from other institutions (when approved by Graduate College and NSGP).

Students meet periodically with the NSGP coordinator to discuss their POS prior to submitting for approval. MS and PhD students are expected to submit their POS by the end of their second and third semester, respectively. Students may modify and resubmit their POS when necessary.

NSGP Forms: Students are expected to complete and/or update several NSGP forms (listed below) as part of their student record. All completed/submitted forms may be shared with the NSGP director, the NSW director, students' faculty advisors and committees, and the Graduate College Dean's office.

NSGP forms common to both MS and PhD students include the individual development plan (IDP), lab rotation evaluation, travel funds request, and TA & RA evaluations.

Individual Development Plan (IDP): The IDP is designed to help students define and pursue their career goals. During the first year of graduate studies, students are expected to create an account with **MyIDP.ScienceCareers.org** where they can develop their own IDP, which they should review on a regular basis and share with their faculty advisor at least once per year.

¹⁶ Students unable to attend these meetings in-person due to extenuating circumstances must notify the NSGP director and/or coordinator well in advance of the meeting date.

¹⁷ Students may contact the NSGP coordinator for the current versions of NSGP forms included in this section.

¹⁸ Information about degree-specific GradPath forms appears in the MS and PhD sections of this handbook. Students are expected to bookmark and refer to the **Graduate College GradPath User Guides** resources.

¹⁹ See **Graduate College – Degree Services**.

IDP Guidelines:

- Step 1: Create IDP account, review the “Overview” information.
- Step 2: Complete the 3 assessments under the “Assessments” category (figures IV.1, IV.2 below).
- Step 3: Complete the “Skills Goals” under the “Create a Plan” category (figure IV.3), and follow the “SMART GOALS” process.²⁰
- Step 4 (optional): Transfer SMART Goals to a worksheet or print from IDP account prior to scheduled meetings with faculty advisor or NSGP director.

Figure IV.1. Individual Development Plan Overview

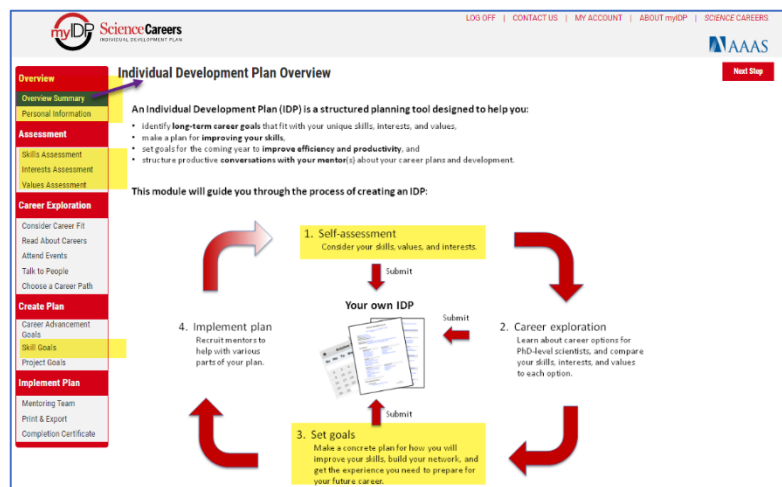


Figure IV.2. Skills Assessment Tab

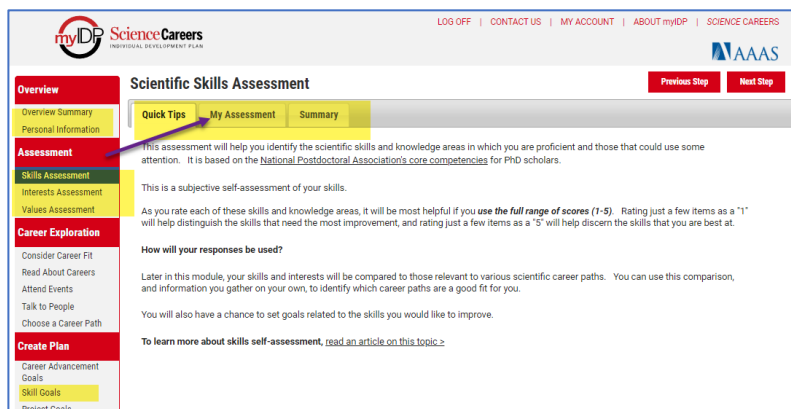
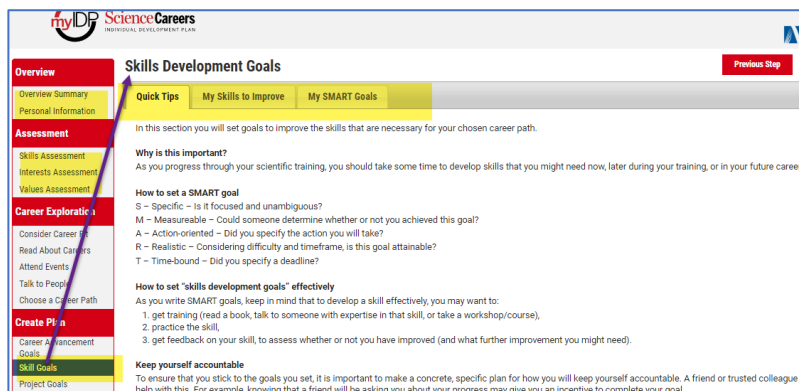


Figure IV.3. Skills Development Goals (SMART Goals)



²⁰ See **SMART goals** for more details.

Lab Rotation Evaluation (Google form): Students complete this evaluation after completing each lab rotation during their first semester in the NSGP. Faculty also complete similar evaluations of students who rotate through their labs.

Travel Funds Request: Subject to availability of funds, the NSGP may award travel support funds to students who are presenting their research at professional conferences. Students must meet the eligibility criteria listed in the form to be considered for travel funds.

TA Career Conversations/Assessment (TA evaluation): Students with TA appointments must meet with their faculty supervisors to complete this form each semester to maintain their GA status. The form addresses NSGP and required Graduate College GA assessment criteria and provides opportunities for student and advisor comments. Students are expected to schedule time to review/complete the form with their faculty supervisor well in advance of the completion deadline (Dec 1 fall semester, May 1 spring semester).

RA Conversations/Assessment (RA evaluation): All NSGP students, regardless of their funding-support status, must meet with their faculty advisors to complete this form each semester. For those with GA appointments, the form is required to maintain their GA status—it includes mandated Graduate College GA assessment criteria and provides opportunities for student and advisor comments. This form also features a mentoring agreement section that identifies best-practice criteria that align with the UA's [Mentor Institute](#). Students are expected to schedule time to review/complete the form with their faculty advisor well in advance of the completion deadline (Dec 1 fall semester, May 1 spring semester).

During the student's annual review process each May, the NSGP director references the RA evaluation form to determine whether the student is making adequate progress toward their degree. Upon completion of the annual review process, students may be placed in 1 of 3 categories: (a) making adequate progress toward the degree; (b) probationary status; (c) terminated from the graduate program. The final decision on a student's status may be determined by the program director and/or subject to GRDC discussion/vote and relevant Graduate College policies.

Other Forms

In addition to the common NSGP and GradPath forms, graduate students may need to use other forms posted on the [Degree Services website](#) (Figure IV.4). MS and PhD students should explore these forms periodically while enrolled in the program.

Figure IV.4. Graduate College – Degree Services Forms

Other Degree Services Forms and Documents for Students

- [Application For Advanced Status](#)
- [Change of Grade for Graduate K Grades](#)
- [Program Additions and Changes Form](#) - Please refer to the [Graduate College policies](#) regarding use of this form
- [Comprehensive Oral Exam Instructions](#)
- [Dissertation Formatting Guide](#)
- [Distribution Rights](#) - For Theses and Dissertations
- [Doctoral Post-Defense Instructions](#)
- [Master's Thesis Archiving Instructions](#)
- [Final Defense Instructions](#)
- [Graduate Academic Renewal Request Form](#)
- [Military Leave of Absence](#)
- [Thesis Formatting Guide](#)
 - [Thesis/Dissertation Page Samples](#)
- [Undergraduate Enrollment in Graduate Courses](#) (formerly 500 Level Course Petition)
- [Graduate Exit Survey](#)

Graduation

NSGP graduates may choose to attend the [CALES convocation](#) for the formal hooding ceremony. The UA hosts an institution-wide graduation ceremony as well. Attendance at either is optional. Those who opt to attend a ceremony and would like their faculty advisor and/or the NSGP and School directors to be present must let those individuals know as early as possible to avoid scheduling conflicts.

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 2 weeks *after the degree is posted* by the Graduate College. Inquiries concerning the ordering or mailing of diplomas must be directed to [Graduate College](#). 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 Graduate College at least 10 weeks (approximately 2.5 months) BEFORE commencement to ensure their name will appear in the graduation ceremony program.
4. **Hood:** Students should confirm which faculty member will attend the graduation ceremony and “hood” them at least 3 months in advance of the ceremony and obtain the graduation regalia, which can be ordered and rented from the UA bookstore and includes the “hood” .

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 Requirements²¹

Note: Referenced figures and tables appear at the end of this section.

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 explore and be familiar with the [Master's Degree requirements website](#) to ensure they meet all requirements for graduation (figure IV.5). Note that the qualifying/final examinations are not NSGP requirements for the MS degree. Table IV.3 identifies yearly essential expectations to help students maintain adequate degree progress.

MS GradPath Requirements

The [Degree Requirements website](#) lists the required MS GradPath forms. Figure IV.6 is a screenshot of the MS GradPath forms before they are activated by the student. GradPath forms are completed in succession—students must complete the RCR form first to activate the Plan of Study form, and so on. All MS students are expected 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. Table IV.4 provides more detail, including recommended submission timelines.

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 3 members:

1. At least 2 members must be designated as Graduate Faculty, and at least 1 must be NSW Graduate Faculty. Note that

²¹ Section V addresses academic and enrollment policies.
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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.²²
3. At least 1 member must have prior (successful) experience as a thesis committee chair.
4. Committees must have a chair who is a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair.
5. For committees with co-chairs, 1 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 and/or 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.

Thesis

The thesis is a rigorous research project that addresses an important question in nutritional sciences and wellness. Central to thesis research is the premise that students will learn new skills in research methods and scientific writing. Most students complete and defend their thesis research by the end of the second year of the program.²³ Two committee members must approve the thesis; 1 dissenting vote is allowed (see also [Graduate College thesis requirements](#)).

Preparation: During fall semester of year 2, if not before, students typically schedule 1 or more thesis committee meetings to discuss the proposed research and timeline. With advice from their faculty advisor and/or committee, students identify an appropriate project and prepare an outline for committee review/approval. The outline normally includes an introduction, literature review, hypotheses, and method/analysis plan as well as complete references and full appendices of materials (questionnaires, etc.).²⁴ Any thesis proposal involving humans or animals must first be approved through the UA's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), respectively, 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, they work with their committee to schedule their oral (defense) presentation (date, time, and location—refer to [Graduate College Dates & Deadlines](#) for important deadlines that may impact scheduling).

Scheduling: At least 1 month before the intended defense date, students are expected to contact the NSW unit director's executive assistant to schedule a room for the desired date/time. NSW tech support should also be copied on email communication to ensure they are available to assist on the selected date.

Announcement/flyer: At least 1 month before the defense date, students submit their thesis defense announcement to the NSW executive assistant who will distribute flyers to various UA communication channels. Details required: Student photo; thesis title and abstract; date, time, and location for oral defense; a Zoom link (if applicable). The duration of the public oral defense is typically 1 hour, followed by a closed session for the student and committee members only.

²² Special member requests are submitted by the NSGP coordinator via UAccess.

²³ Refer also to [Time Limitation](#) for master's degree.

²⁴ Refer to Graduate College [Thesis Formatting Guide](#) and [Steps to Archiving Your Thesis](#) and [Thesis Archiving Requirements](#)

Preparation: Students consult with their faculty advisor/committee to help them prepare for the oral defense. Students must provide a copy of the advisor-approved thesis to all committee members well in advance of the defense date (i.e., 2 weeks prior) to allow committee members ample time to review and provide comments.

Defense day: MS thesis committee members must attend the final defense. The thesis committee 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 3 hours.

Results: The thesis defense results in 3 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: GradPath does not include a “Results” form.)

NSGP Defense Assessment form: This form includes criteria to assesses the extent to which a student has met the NSGP MS program learning outcomes. Data gathered from this evaluation serve as a direct measure for the UA's annual program learning outcomes assessment report. Program administrators also review responses to help determine strengths and weaknesses of the program as a whole. The NSGP coordinator typically emails this form to the student's committee members 1-2 days before the scheduled oral defense. Committee members are asked to complete/return the form within 2 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 graduate counselor 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/convocation via email (usually April for May/August graduates and November for December graduates). Students should inform their faculty advisors of the 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 UA program assessment reporting requirements.

Figure IV.5 Graduate College Master's Degree Requirements²⁵

Master's Degrees	
Content	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview • Credit Requirements • Transfer Credit • Credit for Prior Learning • Time Limitation • Pathway to Degree Completion for Returning Master's Students • Continuous Enrollment • Second and Duplicate Master's Degrees • Dual Degrees • Faculty or Professional Graduate Advisor • Plan of Study • Qualifying Examinations • Final Examination • Thesis or Synthesizing Experience • Master's Thesis Committee Requirements • Thesis Archiving • Completion of Requirements 	

Figure IV.6. MS GradPath Requirements

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

²⁵ See [Master's degree requirements](#) and [Navigating your Degree](#).

Table IV.3. MS Yearly Essential Expectations

Program Year	Expectations (see also Time to Degree)
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before NSGP orientation: lab selection, course enrollment • Complete required orientations, trainings, NSGP & Graduate College documentation • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • TA assignment responsibilities • MS coursework, including lab rotations (NSC 699, 3 units, fall semester) • Select faculty advisor • Begin MS research • Select thesis committee members (spring/summer) • Sign GA letter for year 2 • Enroll year 2 coursework
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA and RA assignment responsibilities • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation • Review Degree Services forms • MS coursework • Thesis research, committee meetings • Schedule oral thesis defense • Provide defense announcement flyer information to NSGP coordinator • Defend thesis, submit final thesis • Convocation preparation • Graduate

Table IV.4. MS GradPath Requirements

GradPath Steps — MS Student	Recommended Submission Timeline
1. Responsible Conduct of Research Statement	August of semester 1 (before NSGP orientation)
2. Plan of Study	Semesters 2 or 3 (after confirming faculty advisor)
3. Master's Committee Appointment <i>See also Graduate Student Committee Service for Grad College policies, and Dates and Deadlines for defense deadlines for each semester/term</i>	Semester 3 (before the end of the semester)
4. Master's Completion Confirmation	NSGP coordinator completes this step post-commencement
5. Commencement Verification Form	Semester 4
Thesis - Graduate College Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review 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 	
NSGP Requirements (not in GradPath)	
6. Thesis Defense <i>See also Dates and Deadlines for thesis defense deadlines for each semester/term</i>	At least 1 month before defense date: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reserve room for defense (time/date/location) with NSW executive assistant 2. Announcement flyer details to NSGP coordinator
7. Thesis Defense Assessment Form	Within 2 weeks of defense date: Committee members complete/return form

PhD-Specific Requirements

Note: Referenced figures and tables appear at the end of this section.

This section focuses on PhD requirements for years 3-5. Refer to Section IV, Requirements for Master's (MS) and Doctoral (PhD) Students, for the PhD requirements for years 1-2. 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.7). Table IV.5 identifies yearly progress expectations.

During year 3, students should expect to complete the required fellowship proposal, schedule and complete their comprehensive exam, and have a timeline in place for their dissertation defense. By years 4 and 5, students should have passed their comprehensive exam and be well into their dissertation research.

GradPath²⁶

GradPath is the Graduate College's degree-audit system. The [Degree Requirements website](#) lists the required PhD GradPath forms. Figure IV.8 is a screenshot of the PhD GradPath forms before they are activated by the student. Table IV.6 provides more detail, including recommended submission timelines. By year 3, students need to make sure that all courses listed in their approved Plan of Study appear in their course history to avoid degree-completion delays. Students must 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](#).

Plan of Study: In addition to major coursework, PhD students must declare a minor and select a minor faculty advisor. The Graduate College requires a minimum of 9 units for the minor. Refer to the [Doctoral Minor Requirements](#) for more details. NSGP students who plan to minor in Nutritional Sciences should speak with their faculty advisor to identify appropriate coursework prior to seeking NSGP approval.

Fellowship Proposal

PhD students must complete 1 fellowship proposal PRIOR to scheduling and sitting for their comprehensive exam—the program advises students to complete this requirement before the end of their third year in the program. 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 review and discuss the *Fellowship Proposal Guidelines* (Appendix B of this handbook) with their faculty advisor and comprehensive committee members when they begin their second year in the program to ensure that they stay on track to complete this requirement. The proposal submission date will depend on the timeline of the fellowship award to which a student applies and/or their comprehensive committee's recommendations. Students may want to enroll in an elective course that focuses on fellowship proposal writing. The [Graduate Center](#) can also be a valuable resource for students during this process. Funding obtained through awarded proposals will be used to offset the student's GA stipend (by the School or by student's faculty advisor²⁷).

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.)

²⁶ In addition to GradPath requirements, students are expected to complete/meet all NSGP expectations and requirements, fulfill the requirements of their GA contracts, and complete a dissertation under the direction of their faculty advisor/mentor.

²⁷ Students who receive fellowship funding generally may no longer qualify for GA 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 committee: Students are responsible for forming a comprehensive examination committee with faculty who represent both the major and minor programs. **Committee composition**²⁸:

1. The committee must include a minimum of 4 members, including at least 3 members of the Graduate Faculty²⁹, at least 1 of whom must be NSW Graduate Faculty.
2. A Special Member³⁰ may serve as the fourth (or fifth) member of the committee.
3. Each committee must have a chair who is a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair. (For Graduate Faculty who are not tenured/tenure-eligible, such as career-track faculty, the NSGP coordinator initiates the endorsement requests in UAccess.)
4. If the committee has co-chairs, 1 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 1 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 are expected to schedule and facilitate several committee meetings prior to the scheduled written exam and also plan a tentative date for the oral exam. Committee members usually discuss general content areas from which they will develop their 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: With the exception of NSC 597D, students should be finished with all or nearly all of their coursework before the comprehensive exams:

1. The NSGP expects students to complete comps between semesters 5 and 7. 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 exam³¹. 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 NSGP requires students to complete the written and oral sections of the exam at least 6 months prior to the final oral dissertation defense. This policy supersedes the Graduate College timeline of 3 months. 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): At least 1 week before the actual written exam date, students must submit this form.

Comprehensive exam 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 3 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 fellowship proposal can be used as a *part* of the written portion for the comprehensive exam; the student must still be tested on their core competencies in their major and minor.³²

Typically, each committee member will write 2 questions (total of 8 questions), and the student will select 4 to answer. It can be either closed book or open book or a combination of both as determined by the committee. For each of the writing sessions, the student is presented with 2 of the questions and will select 1 of the questions for their written response. For closed-book exams, the student will have 3 hours to write their answers for each question. A common scenario is for the student to write responses to 2 questions on 1 day, followed by 2 questions the following day.

Example: *Day 1:* question 1: 9-noon; question 2: 1-4pm *Day 2:* question 3: 9-noon; question 4: 1- 4pm

²⁸ See also **comprehensive examination committee** on the doctor of philosophy degree requirements website.

²⁹ Important Graduate College policies: For graduate student committees, faculty and students should review these policies: **Graduate Student Committee Service Policy** and **Graduate Faculty Policy**.

³⁰ **Special members:** People who possess the knowledge/expertise to evaluate student graduate work but do not meet Graduate Faculty criteria.

³¹ Students may submit this letter to the NSGP coordinator, who will share it with the GRDC committee members.

³² Email communication with Graduate College, 7.26.23.

Committee members have 1 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 2 questions to progress to the oral exam. Students who fail the written exam are permitted 1 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. Committee members may provide feedback (about their scores) to the student prior to the oral exam. Students must pass the written exam before taking the oral exam.

2. **Oral exam (Graduate College instructions)**³³: This exam provides students the opportunity and obligation to display a broad knowledge of their chosen field of study and sufficient depth of understanding in areas of 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. The exam must include questions from both the major and minor areas of study and should be at least 1 hour but no more than 3 hours in length.

All committee members must participate in the entire oral examination and may attend remotely (video or phone) 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 1 additional attempt to pass. If a second attempt is necessary, it should be rescheduled within 3 months of the first attempt and must have the same committee members unless a change is approved by the Graduate College.

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.

Results of comprehensive exams (GradPath): 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 then submits the *Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form* in GradPath.

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 must be familiar with the **Graduate College requirements**. Several steps comprise the dissertation process. During year 4, students should be focused on their dissertation research and meeting regularly with their dissertation committee to review progress and finalize their dissertation defense timeline.

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

1. **A minimum of 4 members**³⁴, 3 of whom must be members of the Graduate Faculty. The fourth and any additional members may be Graduate Faculty or an approved Special Member.³⁵ At least 3 members must be NSW faculty who are qualified to serve on dissertation committees.³⁶
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, 1 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” must uphold the rules outlined in the **Graduate Faculty Policy, especially sections 1.1.5 and 4.2**.
4. At least 1 member must have successfully chaired a dissertation committee in the past.
5. 3 members must approve the dissertation; 1 dissenting vote is allowed.
6. All committee members are expected to attend the entire final defense.

³³ The NSGP requires students to complete their oral comprehensive exam at least 6 months before the final oral dissertation defense. Students and committees should keep this in mind when planning the comprehensive and dissertation timelines.

³⁴ The NSTP requires 4 members, which meets **Graduate College** minimum requirement of 3 members.

³⁵ Special member requests are submitted by the NSGP coordinator via UAccess.

³⁶ The GRDC may waive this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

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.

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

Dissertation prospectus/proposal and forms: Students are required to develop their dissertation proposal and present it to their dissertation committee well in advance of their oral defense—as soon as possible after passing their comprehensive exam. Proposals should be written in NIH-style format (or an equivalent national/international funding mechanism) and should not exceed 12 pages (11-point font), single-spaced, excluding the specific aims and literature cited sections.

1. NSGP Prospectus Verification Form: Students must 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 are asked to **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 signed verification form.

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 when the UA is in session, during normal business hours.

Defense announcement flyer for NSW distribution: Students must send their announcement flyer to the NSW Executive Assistant for distribution at least 2 weeks prior to the oral defense. Details must include: the student's name and photo; date/time/location for the oral defense; dissertation title & abstract; Zoom link if applicable. The announcement and/or flyer is shared with CALES and NSW email lists.

Final Oral Defense: At least 2 weeks before the oral defense (or as directed by their committee), students must provide their final version of their dissertation to their committee to allow adequate review time. Any required revisions must be done in a timely manner to facilitate submission to the Graduate College and graduation for the desired graduation term.

The dissertation committee chair presides over the final oral defense examination. The initial seminar portion (student presentation) 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 3 hours. See also [Graduate College guidelines](#).

NSGP Dissertation Defense Assessment form: 1-2 days before the oral defense, the NSGP sends this form to student's committee members. Committee members are asked to complete, sign, and return this form to the NSGP coordinator within 1 week after the oral defense is completed.

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

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 2 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 2-4:

1. Refer to the [Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Guide](#) for guidance on formatting the 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 pages](#) to help 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 if they choose to participate in the formal hooding ceremony at graduation. 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 UA program assessment reporting requirements.

Figure IV.7. Graduate College PhD Degree Requirements

<h2>Doctor of Philosophy</h2>	
<h3>Contents</h3>	
• Overview	
• Credit Requirements and Transfer Credit	
• Doctoral Minor Requirements	
• Courses Shared Between Degrees	
• Graduate Non-Degree Coursework	
• Continuous Enrollment	
• Continuous Enrollment and Incompletes	
• Time Limitation	
• Qualifying Examination	Not required for NSGP students
• Faculty Advisor	
• Plan of Study	
• 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	

Figure IV.8. PhD GradPath Requirements

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

Table IV.5. PhD Yearly Progress Expectations

Program Year	Essentials (see also Time to Degree)
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before NSGP orientation: lab selection, course enrollment • Complete required orientations, trainings, NSGP & Graduate College documentation • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • TA/GA assignment responsibilities • PhD coursework, including lab rotations (NSC 699, 3 units, fall semester) • Select faculty advisor • Begin PhD research • Select thesis committee members (spring/summer) • Sign GA letter for year 2 • Enroll year 2 coursework
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA and RA assignment responsibilities • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation (submit Plan of Study) • Review Degree Services forms • PhD major coursework, identify minor/coursework • PhD research • Fellowship proposal discussions with faculty advisor • Comprehensive committee selection & meetings • Complete/submit GradPath Plan of Study • Sign GA letter for year 3 • Enroll year 3 coursework (including dissertation hours)
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA assignment responsibilities (also TA if applicable) • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • Schedule and facilitate comprehensive committee meetings • Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation • PhD major coursework, complete minor coursework • PhD research • Complete/submit fellowship proposal • Schedule comprehensive exam after fellowship proposal is approved by committee • Complete/pass comprehensive exam (by spring/summer) • Sign GA letter for year 4 • Enroll year 4 coursework (including dissertation hours) • Submit doctoral dissertation committee appointment (GradPath) after successful completion of comprehensive exam • Complete/route NSGP prospectus/proposal to committee, followed by committee prospectus/proposal approval form (from NSGP coordinator) • Continue dissertation research, schedule/facilitate committee meetings • RA/GA assignments, evaluations • Sign GA letter for year 4 • Enroll year 4 coursework (including dissertation hours)
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA assignment responsibilities (also TA if applicable) • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation • Complete remaining PhD major coursework • Schedule and facilitate dissertation committee meetings • Dissertation research/writing • Sign GA letter for year 5 • Enroll year 5 coursework (including dissertation hours)

Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA assignment responsibilities (also TA if applicable) • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation • Complete remaining PhD major coursework • Dissertation research/writing • Schedule and facilitate dissertation committee meetings and identify defense date/time/location • Contact NSW executive assistant to unit director to schedule defense • Submit dissertation defense announcement in GradPath at least 10 business days before final defense date • Provide NSGP coordinator with defense announcement flyer details at least 2 weeks before defense date • Defend dissertation (committee chair posts results in GradPath) • Finalize and submit dissertation following Graduate College instructions • Complete NSGP exit survey • Graduate
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Table IV.6. PhD Documentation Timelines

GradPath Steps—PhD Student	Recommended Submission Timeline
1. Responsible Conduct of Research Statement	Year 1, before NSGP orientation
2. Plan of Study	Year 2, semester 3 (after major professor/faculty advisor & minor advisor are confirmed). <i>Minor: Students must declare a minor. See Doctoral Minor Requirements.</i>
3. Comprehensive Exam Committee Appointment <i>See also Graduate Student Committee Service policies.</i>	Within 1 month after Plan of Study is approved.
4. Comprehensive Exam Announcement <i>See also Grad College policies & procedures.</i>	Semesters 5, 6, or 7 (no later than semester 7). The announcement must be submitted before the written exam date.
5. Comprehensive Exam Results	Faculty advisor/committee chair completes this step in GradPath as soon as results are recorded.
6. Dissertation Committee Appointment <i>See also Graduate Student Committee Service and Dates and Deadlines.</i>	At least 6 months before dissertation oral defense
7. Dissertation Prospectus Confirmation	At least 1 month before oral dissertation defense (submitted by NSGP coordinator)
8. Dissertation Final Oral Defense Announcement	At least 10 business days before the final defense date.
9. Dissertation Final Oral Defense Results	Committee chair submits results within 24 hours of defense completion.
Additional NSGP Requirements	
10. Fellowship Proposal	Semesters 4, 5, 6 (years 2-3): Completed BEFORE comprehensive exam.
11. Dissertation Defense Announcement/Flyer	At least 2 weeks before oral defense, student sends details to NSW Executive Assistant.
12. Dissertation Defense Assessment Form	Within 1 week of completing defense

V. Academic and Enrollment Requirements

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

Academic Policies

This section emphasizes satisfactory academic progress policies. NSGP students are responsible for reviewing and adhering to all Graduate College and NSGP academic policies.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by the Graduate College [Satisfactory Academic Progress policies](#) to remain in the NSGP and to receive School funding (e.g., GA appointments, travel awards). .

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 time frames and milestones.

Students whose cumulative GPA is below 3.0 for 2 consecutive semesters will be disqualified from their degree program and 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 1 semester.

Disqualified students may apply for 1 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.

Students with [incomplete \("I"\) grades](#) must notify the NSGP coordinator. Incomplete grades should be completed in a timely manner and are awarded at the discretion of the course instructor. Refer to the [incomplete policy](#).

2. *Faculty (major) advisor (also referred to as mentor)*: 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 and semester meetings*: NSGP students' annual reviews typically occur during May/June and may include the NSGP director, coordinator, and faculty advisor. Semester meetings typically occur mid- to late semester and typically with just the NSGP coordinator unless circumstances warrant including other administrators. 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.

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
- Academic probation
- Remediation plan
- Loss of NSW and other funding

- Dismissal from the program if the student fails to meet remediation plan requirements after 1 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 placed on academic probation will be required to follow NSGP and Graduate College guidelines and policies to ensure timely removal of probationary status.

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 follows³⁷:

1. Submit a written appeal to their faculty advisor, NSGP director, and NSW unit director. This appeal must be submitted 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, NSW unit director, and student's advisor agree, a decision may be made to reverse the dismissal decision upon the satisfactory completion of appropriate conditions.
2. In cases in which the NSGP director, NSW unit director, and the student's faculty advisor disagree or must seek further consultation from the UA, a meeting between the student, advisor, NSGP director, GRDC, and NSW director will be scheduled at a time that is feasible for all parties.³⁸ 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

Students should be familiar with the criteria in the Graduate College policy for continuous enrollment for master's and doctoral students. Refer to the [Graduate College Enrollment Policy website](#) for full details.

Full-time Enrollment Status, Advanced Status

Following are the key criteria for graduate full-time status; review the [Enrollment Policies](#) 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. The Graduate College has no maximum number of units a student may enroll in each term (except dissertation units).³⁹
- 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, international students with F or J visa status, and/or students receiving UA funding other than wages. Graduate students should refer to the various enrollment (and employment) policies posted on UA websites to ensure compliance for their particular situation.

³⁷ Decisions may be contingent upon Graduate College review/approval.

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ Dissertation units are capped at 9 units per term; Graduate College email communication, May 3, 2023.

NSGP students receiving funding such as assistantships/associateships, fellowships, loans, grants, scholarships, or traineeships may be required by their funding source to enroll in a specific number of units each semester to meet full-time status requirement. 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.⁴⁰

Master's Degree Enrollment:

- 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. Students must enroll if they need library privileges or if they plan to make other use of UA facilities or significant faculty time during summer or winter session.
- 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. Students must enroll if they need library privileges or plan to use other UA facilities or need significant faculty time while they complete their incomplete.

Doctoral Degree Enrollment:

- Students may enroll in dissertation units before their comprehensive exam.
- Students who have maintained continuous enrollment and are taking only comprehensive exams during summer or winter term do not have to register for graduate credit during summer or winter session.
- 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. Students must enroll if they need library privileges or plan to make other use of UA facilities or significant faculty time during summer or winter session.
- 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. Students must enroll if they need library privileges, plan to use other UA facilities, or need significant faculty time while they complete their incomplete.

Unless excused by an official [Leave of Absence](#) (which may not exceed 1 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. Students 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.

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.

⁴⁰ First-year NSGP MS students with GA appointments must enroll in at least 9 units each semester, and then at least 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](#).

VI. Student Responsibilities

NSGP students are expected to behave professionally 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 [UA'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 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 UA policies and deadlines.

Orientations

Several orientations are held the week before fall classes begin, including NSGP, CALES TA 101, and Graduate College.

NSGP

All new NSGP students are required to attend the NSGP orientation, which is intended to help new students become familiar with various policies, procedures, and expectations of the program and address their concerns and questions.

CALES TA 101

This orientation, hosted by CALES, is typically scheduled for Wednesday or Thursday of orientation week. All first-year or first-time NSGP students with TA roles must attend. Details about this orientation are typically emailed to students several weeks prior to the orientation date.

Graduate College

The Graduate College invites all new graduate students to attend this annual orientation. Details are shared a few weeks prior to the event.

GA (TA/RA) Appointments and Policies⁴¹

GA appointments are budget dependent and require students to adhere to many guidelines. Students must be enrolled in 9 units per semester their first year⁴² and 6 units per semester thereafter until all required coursework/units are completed. Students with TA appointments typically receive their fall- and spring-semester assignments via email a few weeks before the start of the semester. The Graduate College requires all TAs and RAs to complete evaluations each semester and NSGP evaluation requirements. 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 6 hours for the upcoming fall semester. For additional requirements, refer to the [Summer/Winter Session website](#) and the [Supplemental Compensation 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 Appointments⁴³

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

⁴¹ Additional [student-employment](#) policies may apply.

⁴² CALES and NSGP requirement.

⁴³ Refer to the [GA Manual](#) for more details, including the [workload policy](#).

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. 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.
3. Students whose RA duties significantly overlap with their own research may be expected to work on their research beyond their assigned/compensated hours per week.

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 to 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](#), supervising faculty, CALES and the [Graduate Center's](#) teaching and mentoring resources. Students are highly encouraged to explore the courses offered through the [Certificate in College Teaching program](#). Students may consult with the NSGP director and their faculty advisor to determine if such courses may count toward a Nutritional Sciences minor.

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 UA 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](#).

Graduate College

The Graduate College provides a wealth of information for graduate students, including:

- [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, childcare 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, [UA policies](#), records management, and financial services.
- [Compliance \(Office\) Partners](#) – links to various laws and policies pertaining to higher education.
- [Counseling and Psych Services \(CAPS\)](#) – provides mental health support and counseling.
- [Current Students](#) – links to various resources, including transportation, parking, etc.
- [Emergency Management](#) – includes emergency response information, [UAlert services sign-up](#), building/campus emergency plans.
- [Ethics & Conduct policies](#) – links to UA policies associated with ethics/conduct.
- [General Catalog](#) – UA 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 & Partnerships](#) – includes [opportunities/information for graduate students](#).

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

Appendix A—Graduate Research Degrees Committee

As of August 2025

NSW Members

Shea Austin Cantu, EdD

Floyd "Ski" Chilton, PhD

Melanie Hingle, PhD, MPH, RD

Stephanie Grutzmacher, PhD

Laurel Jacobs, DrPh, MPH

Sridevi Krishnan, PhD

Kirsten Limesand, PhD

Donato Romagnolo, MSc, PhD

Richard Simpson, PhD

Kayle Jeanne Skorupski, PhD, MS, RDN-AP, CNSC, FAND

Ashley Snider, PhD

Justin Snider, PhD

Jennifer Teske, PhD

Kenneth Wilund, PhD

Ningning Zhao, PhD

Student representative and Alternate, 2025-2026: Mary Ahern, PhD student. Emily Diana, 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 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 these guidelines 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 to identify an appropriate fellowship. 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. 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 1 week to complete their review to enhance your chances of receiving valuable feedback.
10. Present your proposal to 2-3 faculty, independent of your mentor. Revise the proposal based on their feedback.
11. Contact the [ALVSCE Research team](#) to learn about the proposal submission process. Be sure you and your faculty advisor know the current [CALES policies for research proposals](#).
12. 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.
13. Committee evaluation: Your advisor and committee will evaluate your proposal.

Proposal Writing 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 UA.

- [UA Research & Partnerships](#)
 - [Early investigators](#)
 - [Find funding](#)
 - [Seminars and workshops](#)
- [UA Libraries – Support for researchers](#)
- [UA Graduate Center – Writing Lab](#)
- [Organizing Academic Research Papers: Writing a Research Proposal](#)
- [How to Write a Research Proposal: Structure, Examples & Common Mistakes](#)

- **Grant Writers' Seminars & Workshops**
- Funding possibilities (not a comprehensive list):
 - **National Science Foundation**
 - **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**