



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

Nutritional Sciences & Wellness

Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program

2022-2023 Graduate Student Handbook

**Master of Science (MS) in Nutritional Sciences
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nutritional Sciences**

Disclaimer

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

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

The NSGP team does its best to keep this handbook up to date with University policies. However, if anything in this handbook appears to conflict with the University's campus-level policy, chances are the campus policy will win. Students should contact the NSGP director and/or coordinator they find any such inconsistencies in this handbook.

Program Contact Information

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I. Introduction

The School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness (SNSW, School) at the University of Arizona (University) is a leader in cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research that advances the discovery and translation of nutritional sciences and health. This research strength provides outstanding opportunities for students in graduate programs, leading to a master of science (MS) degree or a doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree in Nutritional Sciences.

This handbook outlines the philosophy of and requirements for the MS/PhD degrees offered by the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program (NSGP). This handbook is intended to be used as a tool to help students understand the requirements for obtaining the MS/PhD degrees as well as associated policies and procedures.

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

Students admitted to the program are expected to adhere to Graduate College and NSGP guidelines, policies, and standards. Graduate College policies are the final authority in the event of any conflicts. It is each student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with the Graduate College policies.

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. These degrees are never granted solely as certification of faithful performance of a prescribed program of study. All degree requirements included in this handbook and/or communicated by the NSGP and Graduate College must be fulfilled in order to graduate.

II. Learning Outcomes, Administration, Facilities/Resources

A primary mission of the NSGP is to graduate outstanding scientists who will make strong contributions to the body of knowledge in nutritional sciences through scientific research. Food, nutrition, and physical activity are essential to human health, and they're at the center of our work. We take a multifaceted approach in our commitment to advancing the discovery and translation of the roles of nutrition and physical activity in optimizing health for people in Arizona and beyond.

The MS option prepares students for work in an academic/educational setting, in the private or nonprofit sectors, or for the pursuit of a PhD. The PhD is a research degree that develops students' research expertise in their chosen area of study, leading to careers in teaching and research-related specialties. As of August 2022, 20 MS/PhD students are active in the program in varying stages of their academic studies.

Expected Learning Outcomes

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

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

Program Administration

Program administration comprises the director of graduate studies, program coordinator, the SNSW business office, and the Graduate Research Degrees Committee (GRDC). The director has full oversight of the program and chairs the GRDC meetings. The program coordinator assists the director in monitoring students' progress, communicates program-related information to students, and supports students with various aspects of their program studies. The SNSW business office maintains students' financial/employment-related documents and information and communicates such information to students as needed.

The Graduate Research Degrees Committee (GRDC) is comprised of the NSGP director, coordinator, graduate and joint-appointed faculty, and a graduate student representative. The GRDC meets regularly to review, discuss, and advise on program policies and activities as well as student outcomes, progress, and support. The committee is also charged with overseeing all curriculum matters. With the exception of the student representative, the committee also is responsible for the overall evaluation of graduate student performance and makes final decisions concerning applicants for admission to the program. The GRDC strives to maintain continuous quality improvement efforts to ensure the viability and competitive stature of the program.

GRDC Members—Graduate Faculty (as of August 2022)

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

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

Scott Going, PhD: Director, School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness; Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured); Professor, Public Health; Professor, Physiology; Professor, Physiological Sciences – GIDP; Professor, BIO5 Institute; Codirector, The Collaboratory for Metabolic Disease, Prevention and Treatment
Melanie Hingle, PhD, MPH, RD: Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured); Associate Professor, Public Health; Associate Professor, BIO5 Institute; Assistant Dean, Strategic Implementation

Laurel Jacobs, DrPh, MPH: Assistant Research Professor, Nutritional Sciences (Career Track)

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

Kirsten Limesand, PhD: Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenured), Professor, Cancer Biology – GIDP, Professor, Physiological Sciences – GIDP, Professor, BIO5 Institute, CALS Assistant Dean, Graduate Education

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

John Paul SanGiovanni, ScD: Associate Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenure eligible); Associate Professor, BIO5 Institute

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

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

Kayle Jeanne Skorupski, PhD, MS, RDN-AP, CNSC, FAND: Associate Professor of Practice, School of Nutritional and Wellness (career track); Director of Professional Programs; Director, Future Education Model Graduate Program (PSM Applied Nutrition - Dietetics)

Ann Skulas-Ray, PhD: Assistant Professor, Nutritional Sciences (tenure eligible); Assistant Professor, Physiological Sciences–GIDP; Assistant Professor, Immunobiology

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

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

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

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

GRDC Members—Joint Appointed Faculty

Refer to the posted list of [Joint Appointees](#) on the SNSW website.

GRDC Member—Graduate Student Representative

NSGP students elect a graduate student representative to serve a one-year term as an official liaison between the students and program faculty. The representative is responsible for organizing graduate student participation in NSGP endeavors as well as serving on program committees in an advisory capacity. All students should seriously consider their choice for this role in order to maintain an effective student voice in programmatic matters.

Program Facilities and Resources

Laboratories and offices for graduate study in Nutritional Sciences are located within the Shantz building as well as throughout the UA campus. The University provides graduate student access to a wide variety of

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

Facilities

NSGP faculty and graduate students occupy office and laboratory space in several locations across the University campus.

Many SNSW offices, including the business office, and labs are located [Shantz Building](#). Many additional offices and labs are located across main campus and 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 interdisciplinary nature of the program.

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 (Windows and Mac platforms), a local multifunctional printer and scanner, separate work desks, a meeting table, white board, microwave, and refrigerator.

Library Resources

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

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

CALS, Graduate College, and Other Resources

Resources for CALS and Graduate College are listed in Section VII Resources.

III. Admissions

The NSGP admits one cohort per year (fall semester). All applicants must apply to the University's Graduate College via the "[GradApp](#)" [system website](#) (instructions and FAQs are provided on this website). Applications open January 4 for the following admissions cycle (example: For fall 2024 admission, applications open January 4, 2023 and close January 3, 2024).

Application Materials

Once applicants are in the GradApp system, they will need to have several documents ready to upload as part of their application, including their statement of purpose, resume, transcripts, and letters of recommendation (the recommenders will receive an email notification with a link to access the system to upload their letters).

Statement of Purpose (SOP)

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

- What are your goals and objectives for pursuing this graduate degree?
- What are your qualifications and indicators of success in this endeavor?
- Why do you want to attend the University of Arizona to achieve these goals?

In addition, the SOP should address career objectives and other information that will be valuable for the applications review committee to know about the applicant.

Letters of Recommendation

All recommenders identified by the applicant receive an automated email with a link to the application system. All recommenders also answer a short list of questions prior to uploading their letter in the GradApp system. For the MS program, two letters of recommendation are required. For the PhD program, three letters of recommendation are required.

Letters should:

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

Recommendors might include:

- Previous employers
- Course instructors
- Faculty members with whom applicants have been involved in research

Questions for Applicants: All applicants must answer a list of questions and upload a current curriculum vitae/resume. In addition, international applications must answer a set of questions related to English language proficiency.

Applications Review Timeline

In January after the application cycle has closed, the GRDC Admissions Task Force reviews and ranks applicants based in the information provided by applicants. Typically, the team creates a short list of candidates who are invited to interview with various faculty affiliated with the program. Interviews usually occur in late January/early February. Following the interviews, the committee selects the final list of

candidates to invite to the campus in late February/early March for two days of meetings with program faculty and students; the two days culminates in a social event that allows the candidates to further engage with current students and faculty. This event is a good time for candidates and NSGP faculty, students, and staff to ask any lingering questions that will help all parties determine if the NSGP is a good fit for candidates and the program and vice versa.

Following the campus visit, the review committee selects the final roster of candidates to recommend to the Graduate College for admission. Candidates approved by the Graduate College are sent letters of invitation from the NSGP to join the program and are also contacted by the Graduate College. Candidates who accept the NSGP offer indicate their intention to matriculate in the GradApp system and also notify the NSGP coordinator (per guidelines in the NSGP letter).

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

Admissions Status

In most cases, students admitted to the NSGP enter as degree-seeking graduate students. Other graduate status types include nondegree-seeking graduate status, and conditional admission status.

Degree-Seeking (Regular) Graduate Status

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

Nondegree-Seeking Graduate Status

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

Conditional Admission (International Students)

Conditional admission is a departmental promise of future admission for international students who have met all Graduate College requirements *except* the English proficiency requirement. Although the NSGP does not generally admit students conditionally, the program 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 one year. The initial 1-20 will be generated by CESL to allow the student to attend CESL classes. Once CESL certifies that the student has achieved English proficiency at the TOEFL minimum, he or she will be admitted as a regular standing student. For full details, refer to the [International Admission Types website](#).

UA Net ID and Email Account

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

Financial Support

Most students enter the NSGP with some level of support; in some cases, funding support depends on the yearly School/College budget. In most cases, sources of financial support for students fall into one of these categories: graduate assistantship/associateship, fellowship, or faculty assistantship). The source of support determines whether students rotate through laboratories during their first semester. Costs and funding information can be found on the Graduate College's [New and Current Students website](#).

Master's students should expect support for no more than two (2) years. Support during those years is contingent on making satisfactory academic progress and receiving satisfactory evaluations from teaching and research supervisors. (Satisfactory academic progress is addressed in this handbook.)

Doctoral students can expect funding for four (4) academic years. Support during those years is contingent upon making satisfactory academic progress and receiving satisfactory evaluations from teaching and research supervisors. Funding beyond four years is at the faculty's discretion and is based on: (a) successful defense of dissertation proposal; (b) the availability of funds; (c) the department's needs; (d) the status and standing of the applicant'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 the one-year timeframe.

Summer funding is based on teaching summer courses. This may be available and the School will make every effort to provide it. However, this funding is not part of the contractual academic funding for MS and PhD students. Summer funding priorities are based on course enrollments, graduate student ability, graduate student progress, experience in teaching independently, fit between graduate student ability and expertise and available courses, and graduate student tenure in the program. Currently, students are unable to get summer teaching during the summer of their departure from the program—enrollment in the subsequent fall is now a University requirement for TA hiring.

In addition, summer funding is typically not available in the summer after the student's funding term expires (MS: after the second year, unless continuing to the PhD program; PhD: after fourth year). In some cases, the NSGP director, in consultation with the graduate committee and the student's advisor, will require that the student make satisfactory progress in their program (e.g., dissertation proposal) before summer funding is offered.

Graduate Assistantship/Associateship (GA)

The SNSW generally offers GA appointments to accepted candidates during the admissions process. Qualifications for appointment are explained on the [Graduate College Qualifications for Appointment website](#). (Note, however, that the SNSW requires first-year students to be enrolled in a minimum of 9 units for spring and fall semesters and 6 units per semester thereafter.)

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

First-year: The GA appointment is a fiscal-year position, which begins the week before fall semester classes start and ends June 30th the following year. It is typically a teaching assistantship/associateship (TA). However, it could also be a research assistantship/associateship (RA), or some combination of TA/RA. The GA appointment involves SNSW funds and generally provides half-time (20 hours/week) support for the first year. A TA is assigned to one or more undergraduate faculty to help support their courses for the 20 hours per week. Likewise, an RA with a half-time appointment works for 20 hours per week under the supervision of research faculty. The typical model is for all entering (first year) MS/PhD students to be appointed as TAs, which also requires that they rotate through two research laboratories during their first semester (NSC 699). During the lab rotations, students normally identify the faculty advisor (and lab) that they will work with to complete their thesis/dissertation research.

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

Third-year and beyond: Beyond year two, students are typically funded as RAs by their faculty advisor up to three-quarters time (30 hours/week) for their remaining years of study. A student cannot receive more than 30 hours/week in financial support.

Fellowships

Fellowship choices should be made as early as possible after being admitted to the program because they may be linked to a particular research program. Often this decision is made before arrival at the University. The stipend will vary depending on the fellowship award. An example is the [Initiative for Maximizing Student Development \(IMSD\)](#). For more details about graduate fellowships, refer to the [Graduate Center Office of Fellowships website](#).

Individual Faculty Assistantship

These assistantships are funded by grants awarded to individual faculty in the program. Because these funds are provided by a grant, the student is not required to rotate through laboratories but works in the laboratory of the faculty member receiving the grant funds. In rare instances, a faculty member may request that a student complete a rotation.

Tax Information

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

Individual Health Insurance (Campus Health Services)

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

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

NSGP Course Enrollment/Registration Requirements—MS and PhD

Refer to Section V of this handbook for detailed information about other MS & PhD degree requirements and milestones.

Table IV.I: NSGP Course Requirements for MS and PhD

Course	Units [^] each	Typically Offered Full semester unless otherwise noted	Notes	MS Total Units	PhD Total Units
NSC 501 Statistics for Applied Nutritional Sciences I	1	Fall (yearly), 7w1		1	1
NSC 502 Statistics for Applied Nutritional Sciences II	1	Fall (yearly), 7w2		1	1
NSC 561 Communicating Nutrition and Health	1	Spring (yearly)	Must be taken twice (2 total units)	2	2
NSC 595 Emerging Topics in Nutritional Sciences	1	Spring (yearly)	Must be taken twice (2 total units)	2	2
NSC 608 Metabolism and Energetics	3	Fall (even years)		3	3
NSC 610 Nutrition and Disease	3	Fall (even years)		3	3
NSC 624 Micronutrients	3	Fall (odd years)		3	3
NSC 675 Advanced Nutrigenomics	3	Fall (odd years), 7w2		3	3
NSC 699 Independent Study (laboratory rotation [▼])	3	Fall (yearly)	Required year 1	3	3
Seminar courses outside of SNSW (non-NSC courses)	1		Must be taken twice (2 total units)		2
Journal club courses outside of SNSW (non-NSC courses)	1		Must be taken twice (2 total units)		2
Minor courses (specified by minor dept)	9		Minimum 9 units		9
Units Subtotal				21	34
NSC 910 Thesis	6	Every semester		6	
NCS 920 Dissertation	18	Every semester			18
Elective/s*	Degree-specific	Varies per course		≥ 3	≥ 11
Total Minimum Required Units				30	63
[^] Note: For GA (TA, RA) appointments, year 1 students must enroll in 9 units for fall and 9 units for spring semesters. Students in years 2 and beyond must enroll in 6 units each semester.					
[▼] Details about lab rotations appear on the next page in this handbook.					
* Elective/s: Remaining units needed to fulfill Graduate College requirements of 30 total units (maximum of 3 units of house-numbered courses in your elective units). University-wide house-numbered courses comprise two categories of courses using alternative teaching formats: (1) courses offered in small group settings, and (2) courses taught on an individual basis. Examples of university-wide house-numbered courses are 695 or 699.					

Course Requirements and Registration

Refer to Table IV.I (previous page) for the course requirements for NSGP MS and PhD graduate studies.

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

NSGP First-Year Students—Course Enrollment Requirements

Laboratory Rotations (NSC 699): All first-year MS and PhD students must select two research laboratories to rotate through during their first semester. Students enroll in NSC 699 Independent Study, 3 units, with instructor Dr. Richard Simpson. Each rotation is approximately 7-8 weeks. Students are expected to spend a minimum of 9 hours/week (1 unit = 3 hours) in the laboratory in which they are doing their rotation. There are no maximum allowable hours for lab rotation; rather, it is at the discretion of faculty and the individual student to select an appropriate number of hours that allows an optimal learning experience while balancing coursework and TA responsibilities.

Ideally, students will secure their first laboratory rotation before the start of their first (fall) semester, but no later than the first week of the semester. The second laboratory rotation should be confirmed by the second Friday in September.

Students can select a laboratory from any of the tenure-track SNSW graduate faculty, joint appointed faculty, or faculty designated as Graduate Research Faculty in the NSGP. Graduate faculty status and tenure status for most faculty are listed in the [University's faculty directory](#). It is the student's responsibility to contact the laboratories in which they wish to rotate. Students must keep in mind that some laboratories may be fully committed and unable to accommodate a rotation student. Students are advised to contact faculty by email or in person (if feasible) to set up a meeting with the professor. The NSGP director and/or coordinator typically ask students for an update on their selection progress by/before the August orientation session. If necessary, the NSGP director and/or coordinator can assist students in the selection of their first rotation.

Students are reminded that laboratory rotations are valuable experiences that provide opportunities to learn new techniques, to be exposed to different approaches to nutrition research, and to meet faculty and students in the program. Students are expected to exhibit professionalism at all times, 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.

Continuous Enrollment Policy

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

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

Master's Degree Students

1. Students receiving funding such as assistantships, fellowships, loans, grants, scholarships, or traineeships *may be required by their funding source to register for more than one (1) unit* to meet full-time status requirement. Similarly, international students may have different requirements to maintain their visa status. All students should check with their faculty advisor and/or NSGP leadership regarding such requirements to ensure that they remain qualified for funding and/or visa status.*

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

Doctoral Degree Students

1. Students receiving funding such as assistantships, fellowships, loans, grants, scholarships, or traineeships *may be required by their funding source to register for more than one (1) unit* to meet full-time status requirement. Similarly, international students may have different requirements to maintain their visa status. All students should check with their faculty advisor and/or NSGP leadership regarding such requirements to ensure that they remain qualified for funding and/or visa status.*
2. Doctoral students who have maintained continuous enrollment and are taking only comprehensive exams during either summer or winter term do not have to register for graduate credit during that summer or winter session.
3. Doctoral students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements as well as the 18 hours of dissertation, and were enrolled in the prior semester, may defend and file in the summer or winter term without registration. If, however, a student needs library privileges or if they plan to make other use of University facilities or significant faculty time during summer or winter session, enrollment is required.
4. Students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements, and are only completing an incomplete in coursework (a class other than 900 level) are not required to enroll while they complete the incomplete. If, however, students need library privileges or plan to use other University facilities or need significant faculty time while they complete their incomplete, enrollment is required.

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

Full-time Enrollment Status, Advanced Status

Following are the key criteria for graduate full-time status; **check the Enrollment Policies website** for the complete and current information.

Fall/spring semesters:

- 6 units of graduate credit—For students with GA appointments (graduate assistant/associate), full-time status consists of a minimum enrollment in 6 units of graduate credit.
- 3 units of graduate credit, 900 level—A graduate student working on a thesis or dissertation who is only enrolled in 900-level units and not employed as a GA must be enrolled in 3 units.
- 1 unit of graduate credit, 900 level—A student who has completed all coursework, the thesis/dissertation unit requirements, has advanced to candidacy, is working on the thesis/dissertation, and is not employed

as a GA may apply for [advanced status \(form\)](#), which allows 1 unit of 900-level credit for full-time status. In all other cases, full-time status consists of a minimum enrollment in 9 units of graduate credit.

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

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

Continuous Enrollment and Financial Aid

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

Academic Policies

To be eligible for a graduate degree, students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.00 or higher on all coursework taken for graduate credit. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters will be dismissed from the program but may reapply for nondegree-seeking status. Programs may allow students to take additional coursework while in nondegree status. In order to graduate, a student may apply for readmission to the Graduate College through their graduate department. Readmission is not guaranteed. For complete and current academic policies, see the [Academic Policies website](#) (figure IV.1)

Figure IV.1 Graduate College Academic Policies

UA Graduate College [Request Information](#)

[Essential Information](#) [Outreach and Initiatives](#) [Resources For](#)

[Home](#) » [Policies & Procedures](#) » [Academic Policies](#)

Academic Policies

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

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

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

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

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress to remain in the program. Students should review the Graduate College requirements on the [Satisfactory Academic Progress policies website](#).

Continued School funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress. If a student does not meet these requirements (barring extenuating circumstances):

- A warning letter will be issued by the GRDC.
- Loss of School funding and *dismissal from the program* (“academic disqualification”) will occur if sufficient progress has not been achieved after one semester, or earlier if quicker action is deemed appropriate by the graduate student’s committee acting in consultation with the NSGP and SNSW directors.

Appeals

As outlined above, students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress are subject to dismissal from the program. The student will be notified of this decision in writing, typically at the end of the academic year (May or June). Students will be given the opportunity to internally appeal dismissal decisions by doing the following:

1. Submit a written appeal to the NSGP Director their faculty advisor. This must be done within 30 days of the written notification of dismissal. If, after reviewing the appeal, the NSGP director and advisor are in agreement, they can decide to reverse the dismissal decision upon the satisfactory completion of appropriate conditions.
2. In cases in which the NSGP director and advisor are not in agreement or seek further consultation, a meeting between the student, advisor, NSGP director, and GRDC will be scheduled at a time that is feasible for all parties. 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.

Academic Probation

Students who have a cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of less than 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. The student will come off probation when they bring their GPA back up to a 3.0 average. Students on probation are required to meet with their graduate advisor, discuss the steps to be taken to rectify the problems that led to the probationary status, and devise a written plan of action to be submitted to the Graduate College and NSGP Director.

Graduate students who are on probation for two consecutive semesters will be academically disqualified by the Graduate College. To obtain nondegree status, these students are required to apply for nondegree status at the Graduate College. To be readmitted to the graduate program, these students have to achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 through additional graduate coursework before applying for readmission. Readmission is not guaranteed and requires recommendation by the School director, GRDC, and the Dean of the Graduate College. No more than 12 credit units taken as nondegree will apply to the degree.

The GRDC believes that early identification and counseling for students having academic difficulty are in the best interests of students and the School. The committee stresses that there is no intent to be punitive to students having difficulty, but to encourage immediate intervention and closer mentoring of students that would enhance retention and probability of graduation. Students currently enrolled who are on academic probation will be contacted and encouraged to follow recommendations so that they might take advantage of intervention and closer mentoring. Contact persons on this topic are the Associate Deans in the Graduate College.

V. MS and PhD Degree Requirements

This section provides essential information regarding NSGP and Graduate College requirements that MS and PhD students need to fulfill in order to graduate, including milestones for each degree. Note that the requirements for first-year students are the same for both graduate degrees. Refer to Table IV.I in Section IV of this handbook for the full complement of course requirements for the MS and PhD degrees.

Master of Science (MS) Degree in Nutritional Sciences—Overview

The MS program offers training in nutritional sciences research that can serve as a foundation to achieve a variety of career objectives. The program emphasizes theory, research design, problem conceptualization, research methodologies, and the ability to conduct empirical research culminating in the MS thesis. Graduates of this program of study are well prepared to pursue careers in healthcare, industry, government, or academia/education. The average time to completion is two years (four semesters). Typically, students applying to this program should expect to be full-time students. Students seeking to enroll in the MS program for part-time study may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Full MS requirements are provided later in this section.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree in Nutritional Sciences—Overview

The PhD program is designed to impart advanced scientific knowledge in various and focused areas of nutritional sciences research. Students are expected to participate in training opportunities and to conduct and learn about state-of-the-art approaches to nutritional sciences research under the guidance of faculty researchers as well as closely related sub-disciplines, culminating in the dissertation. Full MS requirements are provided later in this section.

Students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter in at least two substantive areas (their major and minor areas). Students are also expected to develop a sophisticated understanding of research practices, internalize sound scholarly values, and begin to develop a record of published research and conference presentations. Students may receive additional training and experience in teaching, but research is the focus. Graduates are prepared for careers in independent research or related careers in academia, industry, or government. The average time to graduation is approximately five years. Students seeking to enroll for part-time study may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Full PhD requirements are provided later in this section.

Requirements (beyond course requirements)

In addition to coursework, students must meet other programmatic and Graduate College requirements.

Program Meetings: MS & PhD Students (subject to modifications)

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

First-year (MS & PhD): Two required individual meetings during first and second semesters (2 per semester, approximately mid-semester and end-of-semester) and monthly group meetings with all students (Aug-May). Individual meetings will be with the NSGP director and/or coordinator and will focus on students' progress in their courses and in selecting a faculty advisor/mentor for their duration in the program. For these meetings, students may be asked to complete programmatic forms, including individual development plan and goal worksheet, progress and annual reports, as well as other forms. By the end of the first year, students should be close to completing their Plan of Study in GradPath (Graduate College tracking system), which will be reviewed during individual meetings.

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

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

NSGP Forms: MS and PhD Students (subject to modifications)

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

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

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

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

2. *Goals Worksheet* — Students can transfer their SMART Goals within their electronic IDP account to this MS Word form or print their electronic version when they are scheduled to meet with the NSGP director and/or coordinator as well as with their faculty advisor/mentor. (Update guideline: Annually, August/September.)

3. *Lab Rotation Evaluation** — Students complete this form after each lab rotation that they complete during their first semester in the program. Faculty also complete similar evaluations of students who rotate through their labs. Responses on both forms are used to help determine which labs will be suitable for students to pursue their research.

4. *Progress Report* — Per the program's [current Progress Report policy](#), students must complete the Progress Report form each semester to document their progress toward their degree. (This form is also needed for University-required data reporting.)

5. *Annual Review* — Per the program's [Annual Review policy](#), students must complete the Annual Review form each year (typically May/June depending on student's status). Students complete this form with their faculty advisor/mentor. Evaluations are expected to give an accurate analysis of students' successes and to

identify areas for improvement. (This form is also needed for University-required data reporting.) Evaluation criteria are designed to elicit responses that will:

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

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

6. *TA Career Conversations/Evaluation* — Students and their assigned course faculty supervisor/s complete this form each semester that a student is a TA. (This form is also Graduate College requirement.)

7. *RA Conversations* — Similar to the TA conversations form, students who are RAs and their faculty advisors complete this form each semester and/or in conjunction with their annual reviews. (This form is also Graduate College requirement.)

8. *Thesis Defense Announcement (MS only)* — Students should create their thesis defense announcement as soon as they and their thesis committee have selected a date, time, and location for the oral presentation, but no later than one (1) month before the defense date. The announcement typically includes the student's name, defense date/time/location, thesis title, Zoom link (if applicable), and student photo. Students may request a sample announcement from the NSGP coordinator. The announcement flyer is distributed to the SNSW faculty and other University entities by the SNSW administrative offices. (This is also a GradPath requirement.)

9. *Thesis Defense Assessment (MS only; completed by student's committee members)* — Students' committee members complete this assessment immediately following the oral defense presentation. The NSGP coordinator emails the form to the students to distribute to their committee members.

10. *Fellowship Grant Application Evaluation (PhD only; completed by student's committee members)* — Students must complete and submit one fellowship grant application. (Note: Applications for scholarships do not satisfy this requirement.) The purpose of this exercise is to enhance students' career opportunities by learning and practicing the steps involved in writing and submitting research grant applications to obtain funding. Students are advised to follow the guidelines in the *Fellowship Grant Application Guidelines* document to ensure that they stay on track to complete this requirement (the NSGP coordinator sends the guidelines to the students in year 2). Ideally, proposals should be ready for submission during the 3rd semester of graduate study. The actual submission date will depend on the timeline of the fellowship award to which a student applies. Note that this requirement is not part of a course; rather, students work with their faculty advisors/mentors to identify an appropriate fellowship grant. If the submitted application is successful, then the funding will be used to offset the student's salary paid by the School or by student's faculty advisor.

The students' committee members use the NSGP Fellowship Grant Application Evaluation form to assess students' performance in carrying out the steps in their proposal application. The assessment serves as a direct and indirect measure of this NSGP student learning outcome: *Apply critical thinking skills to develop testable hypotheses, design experiments to test these hypotheses, and interpret and apply new findings to the field.* Information from this assessment may be used by the NSGP GRDC to determine NSGP strengths and weaknesses; individual comments remain anonymous.

11. *Prospectus/Proposal Approval (PhD only; year 3/4)* — Students route this form to all of their committee members for their signatures after presenting their proposal to their committee, which is done after they complete their comprehensive examination. After obtaining the signatures, students return the form to the NSGP coordinator, who then approves this step in GradPath. (This approval is a GradPath requirement.)

12. *Dissertation Defense Announcement (PhD only)* — Students should create their dissertation defense announcement as soon as they and their dissertation committee have selected a date, time, and location for the oral presentation, but no later than one (1) month before the defense date. The announcement typically includes the student's name, defense date/time/location, dissertation title, Zoom link (if applicable), and student photo. Students may request a sample announcement from the NSGP coordinator. The announcement flyer is distributed to the SNSW faculty and other University entities by the SNSW administrative offices. (This is also a GradPath requirement.)

13. *Dissertation and Defense Assessment (PhD only – completed by student's committee members)* — This assessment serves as a direct and indirect measure of the program's three student learning outcomes. Students route this form to their committee members just before their oral defense. Each committee member returns their completed form to the NSGP coordinator. (This form is also needed for University-required data reporting.)

Figure V.1: Individual Development Plan Overview

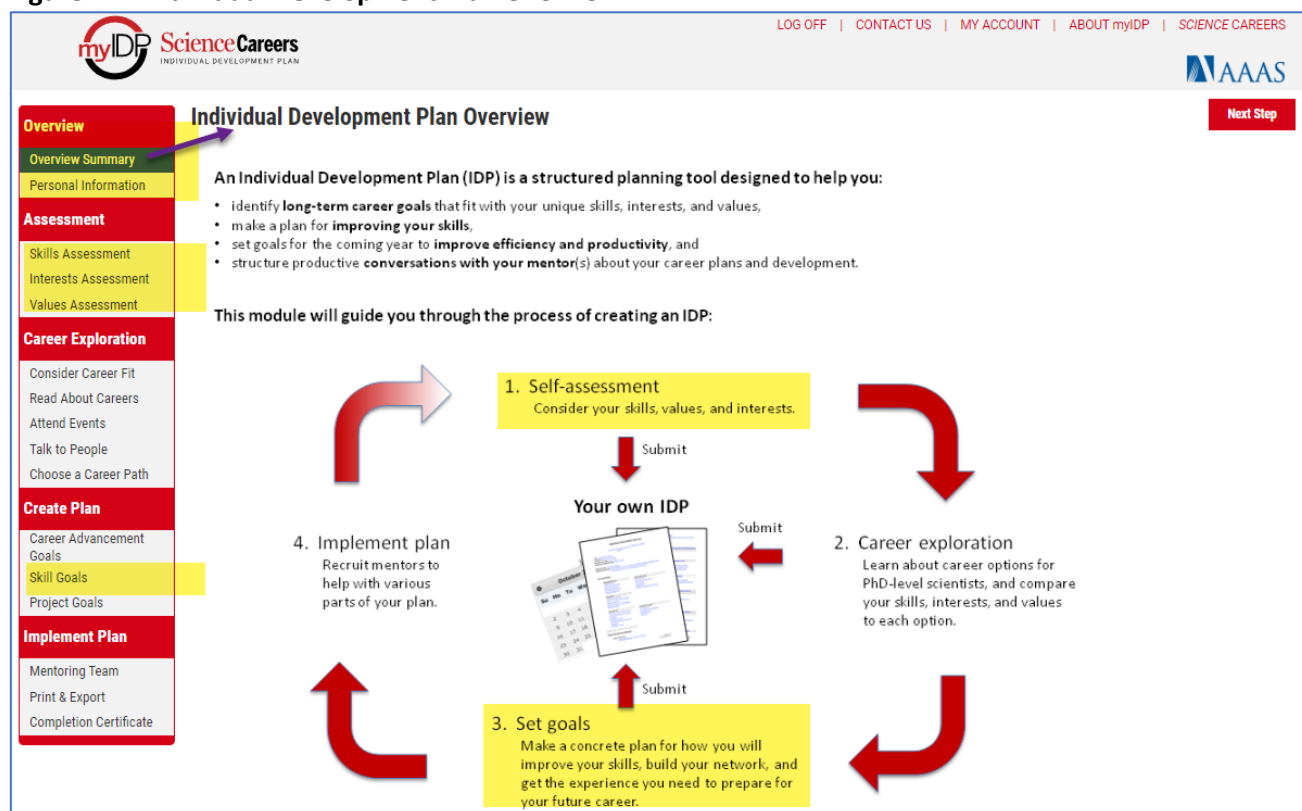


Figure V.2: Skills Assessment Tab

[LOG OFF](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [MY ACCOUNT](#) | [ABOUT myIDP](#) | [SCIENCE CAREERS](#)

Overview

[Overview Summary](#)
[Personal Information](#)

Assessment

[Skills Assessment](#)
[Interests Assessment](#)
[Values Assessment](#)

Career Exploration

[Consider Career Fit](#)
[Read About Careers](#)
[Attend Events](#)
[Talk to People](#)
[Choose a Career Path](#)

Create Plan

[Career Advancement Goals](#)
[Skill Goals](#)
[Project Goals](#)

Implement Plan

[Mentoring Team](#)
[Print & Export](#)
[Completion Certificate](#)

Scientific Skills Assessment

[Previous Step](#)
[Next Step](#)

[Quick Tips](#)
[My Assessment](#)
[Summary](#)

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

This is a subjective self-assessment of your skills.

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

How will your responses be used?

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

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

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

Figure V.3: Skills Development Goals (SMART Goals)

[LOG OFF](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [MY ACCOUNT](#) | [ABOUT myIDP](#) | [SCIENCE CAREERS](#)

Overview

[Overview Summary](#)
[Personal Information](#)

Assessment

[Skills Assessment](#)
[Interests Assessment](#)
[Values Assessment](#)

Career Exploration

[Consider Career Fit](#)
[Read About Careers](#)
[Attend Events](#)
[Talk to People](#)
[Choose a Career Path](#)

Create Plan

[Career Advancement Goals](#)
[Skill Goals](#)
[Project Goals](#)

Implement Plan

[Mentoring Team](#)
[Print & Export](#)
[Completion Certificate](#)

Skills Development Goals

[Previous Step](#)

[Quick Tips](#)
[My Skills to Improve](#)
[My SMART Goals](#)

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

Why is this important?

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

How to set a SMART goal

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

How to set "skills development goals" effectively

As you write SMART goals, keep in mind that to develop a skill effectively, you may want to:

1. get training (read a book, talk to someone with expertise in that skill, or take a workshop/course),
2. practice the skill,
3. get feedback on your skill, to assess whether or not you have improved (and what further improvement you might need).

Keep yourself accountable

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

Example

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

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

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GradPath System Forms (Graduate College)

GradPath is the Graduate College's degree audit system that facilitates designed to track and monitor graduate students' academic progress. The system enables students, their programs, and the Graduate College to see where students are in their academic journey. Students complete and submit forms online through their **UAccess Student** account.

When students submit each GradPath form, the automated system routes the forms to everyone who needs to see or approve them and sends an automated email to each each approver; emails include a link in the to the form awaiting approval. See the **GradPath website** for more information about the process.

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

1. **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Statement:** Students are encouraged to complete the RCR statement before the middle of the first semester so that the Plan of Study form can be activated by/before the start of the second semester.
2. **Plan of Study (POS):** The Graduate College uses the POS to track students' progress toward their degree. MS students should submit their POS by the end of their second semester, and PhD students before the end of their third semester. The POS identifies:
 - a. Courses the student intends to transfer from other institutions;
 - b. Courses already completed at the University that the student intends to apply toward the graduate degree; and
 - c. Additional coursework to be completed to fulfill degree requirements;
 - d. Other milestones and documentation required to fulfill degree degree requirements for graduation.

The NSGP coordinator provides the NSGP Plan of Study (POS) Coursework Guide to students during their first year in the program. The form is designed to help students develop their POS, which must be approved by the student's faculty advisor prior to GradPath submission—students identify their faculty advisors as part of the POS process in GradPath, and the faculty advisors are then included as one of the approvers for students' GradPath submissions thereafter. For more details about GradPath, including helpful guides, refer to the **GradPath User Guides website**.

MS GradPath Requirements: The **Degree Requirements website** lists the required MS GradPath forms. Figure V.4 (below) shows how the MS GradPath forms appear before they are activated by the student and when they are due. The forms are completed in succession—students should complete the first form, Responsible Conduct of Research, early in their first semester. Once approved, the Plan of Study form is activated. All MS students need to regularly check the status of their GradPath forms to ensure they have completed all Graduate College requirements (in addition to NSGP requirements) prior to graduation. Refer to the **Timeline for master's degree students website** for complete details.

PhD GradPath Requirements: The **Degree Requirements website** lists the required PhD GradPath forms. Figure V.5 (below) shows how the PhD GradPath forms appear before they are activated by the student and when they are due. The forms are completed in succession—students should complete the first form, Responsible Conduct of Research, early in their first semester. Once approved, the Plan of Study form is activated. All PhD students need to regularly check the status of their GradPath forms to ensure they have completed all Graduate College requirements (in addition to NSGP requirements) prior to graduation. Refer to the **Timeline for doctoral candidates website** for complete details.

Figure V.4: MS GradPath Requirements in Student UAccess Record

Welcome to your GradPath forms! The forms listed under your degree or certificate are required forms. Other forms are available for your use if needed.

IMPORTANT: You do NOT need to re-do any forms in GradPath that you already completed on paper. GradPath does not contain any paper forms you have submitted, but they are on file with the Graduate College. Later forms are made available based on the steps you have already completed in GradPath or on paper. (Note that you must first submit the Responsible Conduct of Research form before other required forms will be available.)

If you have questions about your GradPath forms, please contact your degree counselor. To identify your counselor, see <http://grad.arizona.edu/academics/degree-certification/find-auditor>. (30018,57)

▼ MS - Nutritional Sciences (Active in Program)			
Responsible Conduct of Research Statement (NUSCMS)	Complete RCR semester 1	View Current	i
Plan of Study (NUSCMS)	Complete Plan of Study by end of year 1 (mid-May)	View Current	i
Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form (NUSCMS)	Complete committee soon after Plan of Study is approved	View Current	i
Master's/Specialist Completion Confirmation (NUSCMS)	Completed by NSGP coordinator after student's oral defense of thesis	View Current	i
▼ Other forms			
Transfer Credit Form		View Current	i
▼ Petition Forms			
Petition Form		View Current	Create New

Figure V.5: PhD GradPath Requirements in Student UAccess Record

Welcome to your GradPath forms! The forms listed under your degree or certificate are required forms. Other forms are available for your use if needed.

IMPORTANT: You do NOT need to re-do any forms in GradPath that you already completed on paper. GradPath does not contain any paper forms you have submitted, but they are on file with the Graduate College. Later forms are made available based on the steps you have already completed in GradPath or on paper. (Note that you must first submit the Responsible Conduct of Research form before other required forms will be available.)

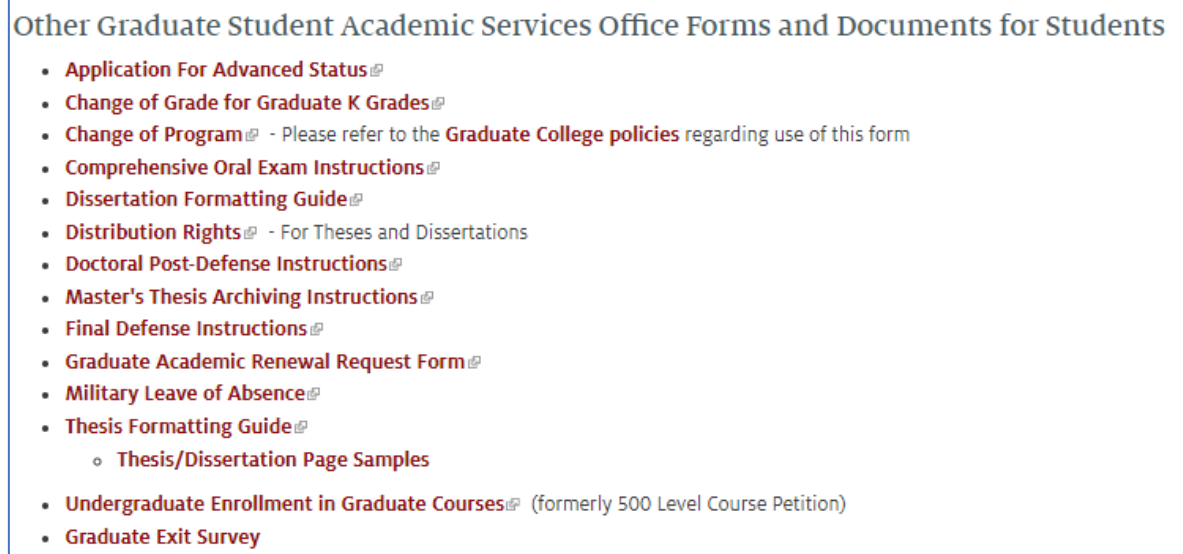
If you have questions about your GradPath forms, please contact your degree counselor. To identify your counselor, see <http://grad.arizona.edu/academics/degree-certification/find-auditor>. (30018,57)

▼ PHD - Nutritional Sciences (Active in Program)			
Responsible Conduct of Research Statement (NUSCPHD)	Complete RCR semester 1	View Current	i
Plan of Study (NUSCPHD)	Complete Plan of Study before end of semester 3	View Current	i
Comp Exam Committee Appointment Form (NUSCPHD)	Complete when all members known; before written comps	View Current	i
Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam (NUSCPHD)	Complete when date/time/location are decided	View Current	i
Results of Comprehensive Exam (NUSCPHD)	Completed by committee chair	View Current	i
Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment (NUSCPHD)	Complete after comps exam	View Current	i
Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation (NUSCPHD)	Complete after committee signs NSGP prospectus form	View Current	i
Announcement of Final Oral Defense (NUSCPHD)	Complete when date/time/location are decided; at least 10 days before oral defense	View Current	i
Results of Final Oral Defense (NUSCPHD)	Completed by committee chair	View Current	i
▼ Other forms			
Transfer Credit Form		View Current	i
▼ Petition Forms			
Petition Form		View Current	Create New

Other Graduate Student Academic Services Forms

In addition to the NSGP and GradPath forms, graduate students may need to use forms posted on the [Graduate Student Academic Services \(GSAS\) website](#) (Figure V.6). MS and PhD students should review these forms; in particular, the Application for Advanced Status form and when it is used.

Figure V.6: PhD GradPath Requirements in Student UAccess Record



Faculty Advisor Selection—MS and PhD students

After new students receive their GA letters, they should closely review the research faculty biographies posted on the [SNSW website](#) to help them identify a list of potential faculty advisors/mentors with whom they can complete the lab rotation requirement during their first semester in the program (NSC 699). During the new student orientation, students will learn more about the lab rotation experiences. Typically, students are expected to contact the faculty members that they have selected and confirmed are accepting students to rotate in their labs (see Section IV of this handbook for lab rotation information). Typically, the lab rotations culminate in students being able to identify their faculty advisor for the duration of their program participation.

Students should identify and confirm their faculty advisors by/before the end of semester 2; students and selected faculty members may be asked to confirm their agreement via email communication with the NSGP director/coordinator. Advisors may be changed based on discussion between the student, the current advisor, and the potential future advisor. The GRDC must be notified before the change occurs. In instances where no other faculty members agree to serve as the (new) advisor, the student will be terminated from the program. Faculty members of the Thesis Committee are selected on the basis of their ability to provide useful advice about the research problem, to assist in selection of appropriate coursework, and to help guide the student to successful completion of degree requirements.

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

Professionalism and respect are key expectations for all SNSW graduate students and personnel. The SNSW as a whole values a collegial and pleasant School environment, and basic standards of professional behavior apply to all academic activities regardless of whether students are interacting with other students, staff, or faculty. Interpersonal behavior not conducive to upholding these values is not appropriate. NSGP students are advised to behave respectfully and professionally toward staff, faculty, and students, and to respond promptly to official requests for information.

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

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

While developing timelines for a dissertation/thesis, students must factor in times when they will be waiting for feedback, and plan to use those times to work on other aspects of the project or to work on other projects. Students who feel that their advisor is taking an excessive amount of time to provide feedback on a document may want to consult with the advisor, committee members, or other faculty members to get an idea of what reasonable expectations might be for a specific document. The advisor-advisee 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.

Committees have one month to read your thesis, comps, and dissertation (plus Graduate College processing time for the latter). Students are advised not to ask them to do it in less time. Students should consult early and often with their committee members about their availability, especially if they expect to schedule a committee meeting during an exam week, vacation period, or holiday time. Other considerations include members who may be on sabbatical during a period of time when a student is planning a defense—this situation requires the student to work around the member's sabbatical schedule. Generally, students should not make assumptions about faculty availability; it's best to avoid situations where a student "has to" defend in a constrained period of time—a student's crisis is not the committee's emergency.

Graduation

Most grads attend the CALS graduation because that is where the formal hooding occurs; however, there is a whole-University graduation ceremony as well. Students do not have to attend any ceremony. Those who do plan to attend a ceremony and would like their faculty advisor and/or the NSGP and School directors to be there should let those individuals and the NSGP coordinator know as early as possible.

Graduation Procedures For MS and PhD Degrees: Following are the basic procedures for graduation:

1. **Diploma Name:** The name that is on the student record is the name on the diploma unless the student files a name change with the [Registrar's Office](#). International students must use their passport name on the diploma.
2. **Diploma Delivery:** Diplomas are mailed approximately two weeks after degree is posted by Graduate Student Academic Services. Inquiries concerning the ordering or mailing of diplomas must be directed to Graduate Student Academic Services, 621-3484. Diplomas are not mailed to campus addresses.
3. **Completion Date:** Students' whose completion date that appears on their Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment GradPath form changes, they must notify the Graduate Student Academic Services Office at least 2.5 months before commencement to ensure their name will appear in the graduation ceremony program.
4. **Hood:** Students who want a specific faculty member to come to graduation and "hood" them should make that request of the faculty member well in advance of the ceremony.

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

MS-Specific Requirements

Students should regularly review the [Master's Degree requirements website](#), including the websites mentioned on this site, to ensure they meet the Graduate College's requirements for graduation. Refer to Figure V.6 for a list of items included on the website. Note that the qualifying/final examinations are not NSGP requirements.

Figure V.6 Graduate College Master's Degree Requirements



MS Credit Requirements and Transfer Credit: MS students must successfully complete a minimum of 30 units, of which at least 24 credits must be in nonthesis credits, to achieve their degree. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required. All coursework must be approved by the faculty advisor by the end of the second semester (in GradPath).

Students should review the [current transfer credit information](#) posted on the Graduate College website. Note the deadlines for submitting transfer credit requests. Transfer credit requests are completed in GradPath. The specific courses to be counted toward a master's degree are subject to approval by a students' faculty advisor and the NSGP director.

MS Benchmarks and Satisfactory Academic Progress: As stated in section IV of this handbook, students must maintain satisfactory academic progress to remain in the program. Table V.1 lists the key benchmarks for the MS program. Students should review the [Time to Degree website](#) for MS allowances. For NSGP MS students, coursework should be completed no later than the end of 7th semester, final defense should occur no later than the end of the 10th semester, and students will maintain appropriate standards of professional and collegial behavior.

Continued School funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress. If a student does not meet these benchmarks (barring extenuating circumstances), a warning letter will be issued by the GRDC, loss of School funding, and *dismissal from the program* (“academic disqualification”) will occur if sufficient progress has not been achieved after one semester, or earlier if quicker action is deemed appropriate by the graduate student’s committee acting in consultation with the NSGP and SNSW directors.

Table V.1 Key MS Benchmarks (Sample Timeline)

Program Year	Key Benchmarks
YEAR 1 (fall/spring/summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP orientation & meetings • Complete required trainings, NSGP documentation • Begin NSC coursework, electives • Complete 2 laboratory rotations (NSC 699 fall semester) • Complete IDP & goals, other NSGP documents • Select of faculty advisor/mentor (spring semester) • Select thesis committee members (spring/summer) • Begin MS research • Complete designated GradPath forms
YEAR 2 (fall/spring/summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings • Complete required NSGP documentation • Review GSAS forms (esp. Application for Advanced Status) • Thesis research • Complete NSC coursework, electives • Schedule & defend thesis, submit final thesis • Complete required GradPath forms • Graduate
EACH SEMESTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete NSGP progress report • Attend NSGP meetings (individual, student)
YEARLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete annual review with faculty advisor or NSGP leadership (on or before June 1)

Thesis—Advisor, Committee: After confirming their faculty advisor, students should select their thesis committee by/before the end of the second semester. All SNSW graduate faculty in Nutritional Sciences are approved to chair MS thesis committees. Students are expected to work with their faculty/research advisor to identify committee members to help guide them in their research (also refer to [current Graduate College thesis committee requirements](#)).

Once the committee is in place, students must complete and submit the “Master’s/Specialist Committee Appointment Form,” in GradPath for routing/approvals. Any change in the committee after full approvals are completed requires the approval of the faculty advisor and the involved faculty, or a majority of the committee and the NSGP director, and then resubmission of the form in GradPath. Students should consult with the NSGP director/coordinator if they are experiencing problems or are seeking an alternative faculty advisor. Changes in committee composition will require the student to resubmit the committee appointment form in GradPath.

Ideally, the first committee meeting should take place before the end of the student’s second semester (year 1). After this first meeting, the student should plan to meet with their committee at least once a semester to review/evaluate their progress in coursework and research.

Thesis: The thesis is a rigorous, empirical research project that addresses an important question in nutritional sciences. Central to MS research is the premise that students will master new skills in research methods and begin to master scientific writing. A recommended procedure is for students, with advice from their faculty advisors, to identify an appropriate project and prepare a 1-2-page summary/outline of the research methods. Following discussion, students typically schedule an advisory committee meeting to discuss the

proposed research and obtain committee approval. The summary outline normally includes an introduction/literature review, hypotheses, and method/analysis plan.

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

After students secure thesis approval from their faculty advisor, students work with their committee to schedule their oral presentation and defense date/time/location. They should also contact the NSGP coordinator for guidelines on creating their thesis-defense announcement, which the School distributes electronically to several lists at least 10 days before the defense date.

The student must provide a copy of the advisor-approved thesis to all committee members at least *two weeks* prior to the defense. This is a good time to also send the committee the NSGP Thesis Defense Assessment form, which they will complete post-defense and return to the NSGP coordinator. Students should consult with their faculty advisors about how to prepare for the defense. The thesis defense results in three possible outcomes: (1) Pass with no/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. The thesis should be successfully completed and defended by the end of the second year of the program. Students should provide electronic copies of the final MS thesis to their advisor and committee members.

Upon successful defense of thesis and completion of all degree requirements (including any major thesis revisions indicated and all required courses), the NSGP coordinator submits MS completion confirmation in GradPath, which initiates the Graduate College's final audit of the student's program and ultimately leads to the award of the student's degree following resolution of any outstanding issues. Students must follow the guidelines they receive from the GradPath counselor (via email) to format and archive their thesis. Students also should review the information provided on the [Archiving the Master's Thesis website](#).

The SNSW sends information about graduation via email. Students should make sure their faculty advisors are aware of the dates/times for their graduation ceremony. The NSGP coordinator also notifies graduating students to complete the NSGP exit survey. Students' responses inform the program's leadership on ways to improve the program.

Procedure for Advancement from MS to PhD: Admission into the SNSW/NSGP PhD program is not automatic upon successful completion of the MS degree. MS students wishing to pursue the NSGP PhD must apply for admission into the PhD program. Typically, review of these applications will coincide with the School's established deadline for receipt of graduate application materials. The appropriate time for MS students to apply for admission into the School's PhD program is by the application deadline of January 3rd of their second year in the MS program. Master's students applying for the PhD program follow the same application procedures as applicants outside of the School and must pay the application fee. However, some of the materials and information required for the application are already on file in the School and need not be resubmitted. The NSGP director/coordinator can help determine the application submission requirements.

The program's application review subcommittee will evaluate these documents and may consult with the student's faculty advisor prior to rendering a decision. In making determinations regarding admission to the PhD program, the committee has the right to: (1) designate a date by which all requirements for the MS degree must be completed, and/or (2) postpone a decision until the successful completion of the MS degree. The decision to admit an applicant into the PhD program will be based on the merits of the application and the applicant's ranking relative to other applicants.

PhD-Specific Requirements

Students should regularly review the [Doctor of Philosophy Degree requirements website](#), including the websites listed on and linked to this site, to ensure they meet the Graduate College's requirements for graduation. Refer to Figure V.7 for a list of items included on the website.

Figure V.7 Graduate College Master's Degree Requirements



PhD students are expected to fulfill degree requirements in a full-time manner, which means: (1) enrollment in full graduate course-load until completion of requirements; (2) half-time teaching and/or research assistantship/associateship; and (3) active research team participation. The majority of students' time is devoted to coursework, advanced scholarship, instruction, research, and dissertation preparation.

Credit Requirements and Transfer Credit: PhD students must successfully complete a minimum of 63 units of core coursework, minor coursework, electives, and research to achieve their degree. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required. All coursework must be approved by the faculty advisor prior to graduation (in GradPath). The equivalent of at least six semesters of full-time graduate study is required for the PhD—a minimum of 36 units of coursework in the area of the major subject, 9 units in the minor subject, and 18 units of dissertation must be completed. All required units counted toward the degree must be taken for graduate credit, including any courses transferred from another institution.

Students should review the (doctoral) [current transfer credit information](#) posted on the Graduate College website. Note the deadlines for submitting transfer credit requests, which are completed in GradPath. The

specific courses to be counted toward a doctoral degree are subject to approval by a students' faculty advisor and the NSGP director.

Minor: Students must declare a minor. The requirements for these are specified by the minor department. The Graduate College's minimum requirement is that 9 credits be taken in the minor department. If the department does not have a specified minor track, the person(s) serving on the committee from the minor department will specify the required coursework.

PhD Benchmarks and Satisfactory Academic Progress: As stated in section IV of this handbook, students must maintain satisfactory academic progress to remain in the program. Table V.2 lists the key benchmarks for the PhD program. Students should review the [Time to Degree website](#) for PhD allowances.

Continued School funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress. If a student does not meet these benchmarks (barring extenuating circumstances), a warning letter will be issued by the GRDC, loss of School funding, and dismissal from the program ("academic disqualification") will occur if sufficient progress has not been achieved after one semester, or earlier if quicker action is deemed appropriate by the graduate student's committee acting in consultation with the NSGP and SNSW directors.

The NSGP requires all PhD students write a dissertation, present a seminar of their research findings, and complete a final oral defense administered by the student's PhD dissertation committee. A student must be in good academic standing to schedule the defense. The oral defense focuses on the dissertation, itself but it can include general questioning related to the field of study within the scope of the dissertation. The dissertation must meet required standards of scholarship and demonstrate the candidate's ability to conduct original research. It is anticipated that students will submit three manuscripts for publication during their doctoral study program. These manuscripts are generally a result of dissertation-specific research.

Fellowship Grant Application (NSGP requirement): All PhD students must learn grant-writing processes to be able to apply for research and other types of funding. To help with this learning objective, students write and submit a fellowship grant application; if awarded, the grant is used to offset a student's salary paid by the School or the student's faculty advisor. The NSGP coordinator provides students with the submission guidelines during their first year in the program.

After confirming their faculty advisors, students work with their faculty advisors to identify potential committee members for their comprehensive exams and dissertation (often the same members for both committees). Once confirmed, students must notify the NSGP director/coordinator and also submit the designated GradPath forms. Ideally, these steps should be well underway by the end of the third semester in the program. SNSW graduate faculty (tenured, tenure-track, or approved as tenure equivalent) in Nutritional Sciences are approved to chair doctoral committees. Refer to the current [Graduate College doctoral requirements](#) for committees, exams, and other pertinent information.

Comprehensive Examination Committee (NSGP & GradPath requirement): This GradPath form is used to report the committee for the oral comprehensive exam. When the committee has been determined, students submit this form for program and Graduate College approval. This step should occur during the first three weeks of the fall semester in the student's third year in the PhD program. This form must be approved before submission of the Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam form. Refer to the [Graduate College requirements website](#) for rules regarding the committee.

Table V.2 Key PhD Benchmarks (Sample Timeline)

Program Year	Key Benchmarks
YEAR 1 (fall/spring/summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP orientation and meetings • Complete required trainings, documentation • Begin core coursework, electives • Complete 2 laboratory rotations (NSC 699 fall semester) • Complete IDP & goals, other NSGP documents • Select of faculty advisor/mentor (spring/summer) • Complete designated GradPath forms
YEAR 2 (fall/spring/summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings • Complete required NSGP documentation • Select PhD committee members (spring/summer) • Begin PhD research • Select PhD comprehensive/dissertation committee members (summer) • Select minor area of study (and minor committee member) • Continue PhD coursework • Complete/submit GradPath Plan of Study (summer)
YEAR 3 (fall/spring/summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings, faculty advisor/committee meetings • Complete required NSGP documentation • Continue/complete PhD coursework • Write/submit fellowship grant application • Review GSAS forms (esp. Application for Advanced Status) • Submit comprehensive exam committee appointment (GradPath) • Study for comprehensive exam • Submit announcement of comprehensive examination (GradPath) • Complete comprehensive exam between semesters 5 and 7 • Submit doctoral dissertation committee appointment (GradPath) after successful defense of comprehensive exams • Complete NSGP prospectus/proposal approval form and route to committee members (GradPath requirement; NSGP coordinator approves after forms returned) • Continue dissertation research
YEAR 4 (fall/spring/summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NSGP meetings, faculty advisor/committee meetings • Complete required NSGP documentation • Complete comprehensive exam and doctoral dissertation committee appointment (if not completed during year 3) • Complete dissertation research • Meet with committee to schedule dissertation oral defense date/time/location and create announcement flyer for SNSW distribution a month before defense date • Submit advisor-approved dissertation to committee before expected defense date along with the NSGP dissertation evaluation form • Submit announcement of final defense (GradPath) at least 10 business days before final defense date • Complete dissertation defense
YEAR 5 (fall/spring/summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed dissertation/defense if not completed year 4
EACH SEMESTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete NSGP progress report • Attend NSGP meetings (individual, student)
YEARLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete annual review with faculty advisor or NSGP leadership (on or before June 1)

Students are responsible for forming a committee that will assess them on the major and minor fields to confirm competency in those areas. In the NSGP, this committee is typically the same faculty as those on the dissertation committee. The comprehensive exam committee must consist of a minimum of four members. The major advisor/chair and two additional members must be current tenured or tenure track faculty and/or graduate faculty in the NSGP (approved by the GRDC). The fourth member may be tenured, tenure-track, or an approved special member. Special members must be pre-approved by the dean of the Graduate College. Additional committee members can be current tenured or tenure-track faculty members, graduate faculty in the NSGP, or approved special members.

Once the committee has been submitted and approved, any change in the committee requires the approval of the student's advisor/chair and the involved faculty, or a majority of the committee and the NSGP director. Students should consult with the NSGP director if they are experiencing problems, or if they are seeking an alternative advisor. If committee changes occur after GradPath approval, then the form needs to be resubmitted.

Comprehensive Written and Oral Exam—Announcement, Exam, Results (GradPath requirement): After the comprehensive examination committee appointment obtains all approvals in GradPath, students must meet at least a few times with their comprehensive exam committee to plan for the comprehensive exam.

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to demonstrate competency in the core nutritional sciences courses and the identified competencies of the chosen minor. Students must be in good academic standing and are advised to complete all or nearly all of their coursework before attempting the exam, which will cover the breadth of knowledge expected of students with graduate training in Nutritional Sciences along with the student's analytic ability, creativity, and potential for successful completion of the PhD program.

The examination consists of a written section and an oral section. Typically, each committee member writes two questions. For each writing session, the student will be presented with two of the written questions and will select one of the questions for a written response. This is repeated for the next three writing sessions, which are to occur over two consecutive days. The student will have three hours to write their answer for each question, and this will be conducted as a closed-book session. The minor department controls the minor portion of the written examination and may waive it at their discretion.

Students must pass the written portion before sitting for the oral portion, which cannot exceed three (3) hours. The oral section can involve follow-up questions from the written exam, general questions on the classes/seminars that a student has included in their Plan of Study, recent literature in the student's field, and questioning from the chosen minor area of study.

During planning meetings, students and their committee members discuss general areas from which questions will be drawn and the person responsible for writing the questions for each area. They also identify the dates/times/locations for the written and oral sections (and submit to GradPath)—the written section should be scheduled three weeks prior to the oral examination. Committee members have one week to grade the written examination, and the committee chair will notify the student of the result. For scoring purposes, committee members typically create a rubric for their own question. A pass or fail grade is given for each question; at least two questions must be passed in order to progress to the oral section. Faculty members may provide feedback to students based on their written responses prior to the oral session. The oral session may be used to ask the unanswered questions and/or may focus on follow-up to the answered question. Students should be evaluated on accuracy of information provided and any gaps in knowledge.

The NSGP GRDC recommends students take their comprehensive exam during the fifth (5th) semester, but no later than the seventh (7th) semester. Requests to take the comprehensive examination later than the seventh semester must be made in writing (petition) to the NSGP GRDC and receive approval prior to

scheduling. Note that the written and oral sections of the exam must take place at least six (6) months prior to the final oral (dissertation) defense. Students must pass their comprehensive exams before being formally admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree. After students complete their comprehensive exams, their committee chair must enter the exam scores in GradPath for approval.

When students pass the comprehensive examination, their bursar account will be billed the fee for candidacy and dissertation processing. This is a one-time fee; students are not billed again if they change their anticipated graduation date.

Failure of the Comprehensive Examination: Students who fail their comprehensive exam will be allowed to retake the oral section of the examination one time for unsatisfactory performance on the initial examination. If a second oral examination is necessary, it should be rescheduled within three (3) months of the first examination. Students will either pass or fail the second examination (i.e., the oral examination cannot be taken three times). Failure of the comprehensive examination on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the NSGP. However, with the approval from the NSGP director, GRDC, and the student's faculty advisor/committee, the student may be considered for the MS degree.

Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment (GradPath requirement): Students submit this form as soon as previous GradPath requirements are met, but no later than six (6) months before the final oral defense examination is scheduled. Students are advised to explore and periodically review the [Graduate College's Important Dates and Deadlines website](#) (scroll down the page for the doctoral requirements).

The NSGP requires four members on the doctoral dissertation committee. The Graduate College allows one dissenting vote. Committees must include a minimum of three members who are current University faculty who are tenured, tenure-track, or approved as tenure equivalent. The fourth member may be tenured, tenure-track, or an approved special member. Special members must be preapproved by the dean of the Graduate College. Additional members can be tenured, tenure-track, or approved special members. All dissertation committee members are expected to attend the entire final defense. Individual faculty members may decline membership on committees for academic reasons.

Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation (GradPath requirement): After the dissertation committee is approved in GradPath, students are required to present their proposal to their committee members. The proposal should provide a compelling rationale and a research plan for the dissertation topic. The proposal provides a valuable opportunity for students to develop writing skills and to receive feedback from their knowledgeable committee members. The goal is to develop a rigorous and feasible research plan that will serve as a guide for the dissertation research. Typically, proposals should be written in NIH-style format or equivalent funding mechanism and should not exceed 12 pages (11 point font), single-spaced (not including specific aims or literature cited). Students should follow the guidance of their faculty advisor and committee when composing their proposal.

Research involving human subjects or vertebrate animals requires permission from relevant University committees. Students must consult with their faculty advisors, committee regarding which University entities must be contacted. Students should also review and explore the [Research, Innovation, & Impact website](#) for information on compliance, responsible conduct of research, human subjects, animal welfare, and other areas of concern related to rules, regulations, and policies/procedures for conducting research at the University. Students should also explore the [Graduate Research Opportunities website](#).

After presenting their proposal to their committee members, students must complete and route the NSGP proposal approval form to their committee members for signatures. The signed form must be returned to the NSGP coordinator, who will then approve the step in GradPath.

Announcement of Final Oral Defense (GradPath requirement): Students must consult with their committee to identify the date/time/location for their oral defense. They must create a flyer with this information (request sample from NSGP coordinator) and send it to the SNSW administration office for distribution to the School and other entities. Students must submit the GradPath announcement form at least 10 business days before the date for the final defense to meet approval deadlines. Students must provide a copy of their dissertation to their committee two weeks prior to the defense date so they can read the dissertation; allow an additional copy for the Graduate College to process the defense documentation.

In addition, the exact time and place of the oral defense must be scheduled with the Graduate Student Academic Services Office at least 7 working days in advance and announced publicly in the University's publication, *Lo Que Pasa*, at least one week in advance. Final oral examinations should be scheduled during days when the University is in session and during normal business hours. Students should review the [Important Dates and Deadlines website](#) for more information.

Final Oral Defense and Results (GradPath requirement): Prior to or on the day of the oral defense, the student must route the NSGP Dissertation and Defense Assessment form to their committee members. The members should be instructed to send their completed/signed forms to the NSGP coordinator after the oral defense is completed.

The dissertation advisor/chair presides over the final oral defense. The examination is closed to the public, except for the initial seminar portion during which the student presents the dissertation and entertains questions. There is no minimum time limit, but the entire proceedings may not exceed three hours. The committee chair must submit the results in GradPath; once approved, the Graduate College notifies the student regarding final steps for their dissertation submission.

Any required revisions to the dissertation must be done in a timely manner, not to exceed one year. If revisions are not completed by the dissertation submission deadline for the term when the student defends, the student will be required to register for the next semester and will graduate in the semester when the revisions are complete and approved. If revisions are not done by the end of the time to degree period, the student will have to re-take the comprehensive examination to demonstrate currency of knowledge.

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

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

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

VI. Student Responsibilities

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

Graduate College Policies/Procedures

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

Academic Integrity

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

Orientations: NSGP and TA

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

The mandatory CALS TA (teaching assistant/associate) orientation is also held the week before classes begin. All first-year NSGP students are assigned TA roles at half time (0.50% FTE). Details about this orientation are emailed to students by the faculty who facilitate this orientation.

GA (TA/RA) Assignments and Policies

Students must be enrolled in nine (9) units/credits per semester their first year and six (6) units/credits per semester thereafter until all required coursework/credits are completed. All students with teaching assistantships/associateships (TA) receive their assignments from the NSGP coordinator via email. Assignments are made in consultation with the chairs of the SNSW undergraduate program and based upon input from the faculty and students regarding availability and fit. All TAs are evaluated by their assigned faculty supervisor/s each semester following Graduate College and NSGP evaluation requirements. TA assignments should reflect students' level of experience and expertise. Students should review the Graduate College's [Qualifications for Appointment website](#) for additional information.

Summer and winter session TA assignments may be available. For summer assignments, students must be enrolled in six (6) hours *in the upcoming fall*. For additional requirements, refer to the [Summer/Winter Session website](#). These additional teaching opportunities are contingent upon teaching performance, needs of the School, and support from the student's research advisor. As a general policy, summer/winter assistantship/associateship appointments will be considered according to the following priorities: 1) Second-year doctoral and master's students 2) First-year doctoral and master's students, and 3) Continuing graduate students in good standing.

Time Commitments for TA and RA Appointments

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

1. For funded TA and RA appointments, one-quarter time (0.25 FTE) appointments carry expectations of 10 hours of work per week, and half-time (0.50 FTE) of 20 hours of work per week.

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 teaching appointments both within semesters and between courses.

Additional TA Information

Grading: Getting feedback to students in a reasonable amount of time is an important part of the TA role as a teacher. TAs should aim to complete grading promptly; the expected grading time period should be clearly outlined between the supervising faculty and the TA.

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

TA: Loss of Teaching Position: Repeated unsatisfactory teaching evaluations are grounds for loss of a TA position. The SNSW will work with students to improve their teaching skills before taking this step. Unprofessional behavior (e.g., inappropriate relationships with students, engaging in teaching activities [including grading] while intoxicated, etc.) will result in immediate loss of the teaching position. Teaching positions are budget contingent. In a catastrophic budget situation, anybody could lose a teaching appointment, but this is not likely.

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

VII. Resources

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

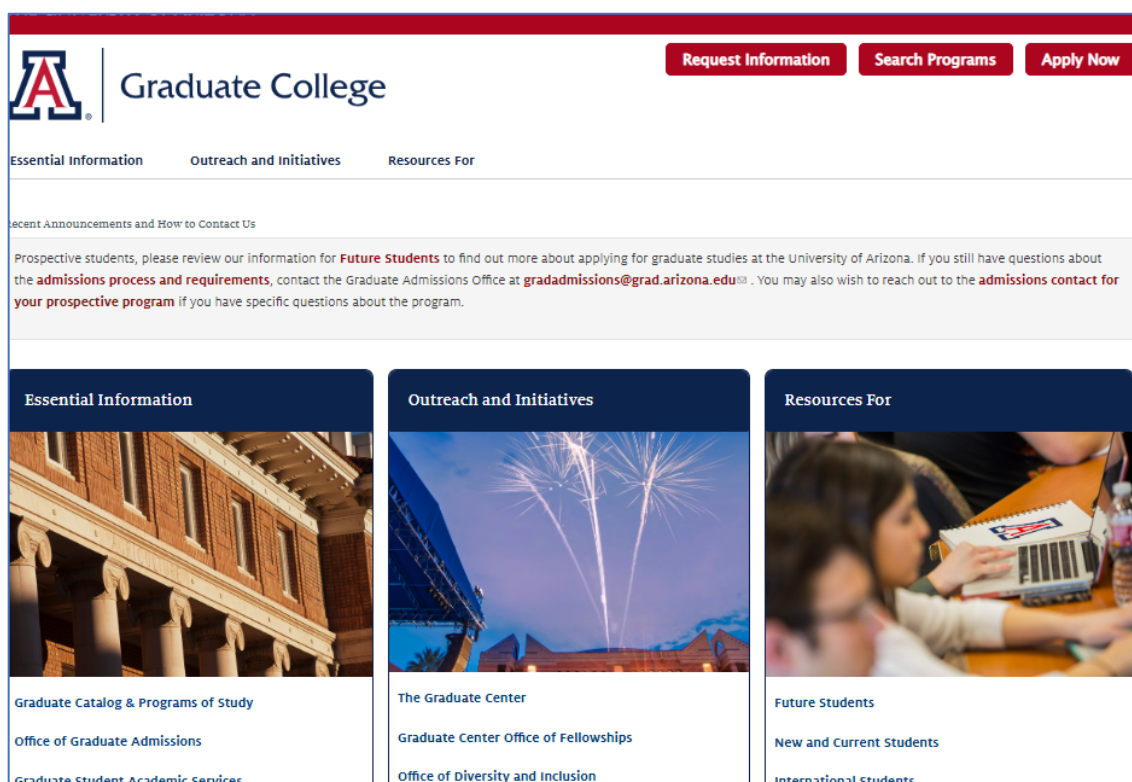
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)

CALS graduate students – information for graduate students, including a **robust list of resources**.

Graduate College

The **website** is divided into categories – Essential information, outreach & initiatives, and resources. The site also includes links to news/announcements and important dates (Figure VII.1)

Figure VII.1: Graduate College Landing Page



Information for new and current students – links to academic services, policies & procedures, costs & funding, child care subsidies and family-friendly information, health/wellness/safety, other UA resources & information, third-party information & resources, new & current student FAQs.

Petitions – Lists types of graduate petitions and user guides.

Other

Current Students – University website for current students with many links to various types of information, including transportation, parking, etc.

International Student Services – Resources for international students.

Life & Work Support for Students - links to childcare subsidy information, sick and back-up childcare, parenting & childcare consultations, adult & eldercare consultations, and family resource map.

Life in Tucson – Information about Tucson.

Research, Impact & Innovation – includes **opportunities/information for graduate students**.