



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

Nutritional Sciences & Wellness

Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program (NSGP)

2026-2027 Student Handbook

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

Disclaimer

Graduate students at the University of Arizona (UA) are subject to all policies and procedures of the UA Graduate College, [Dean of Students Office](#), registrar's office, bursar's office, police department, and so forth. Policies are posted on relevant UA websites. Students should review the relevant campus policies before engaging in such actions/activities as adding classes late in the semester, protesting a campus ordinance, telling a student to appeal a grade, or other actions; failure to do so could have financial consequences for the student or lead to other unforeseen outcomes. When circumstances require, the NSGP may update program policies that override those referenced in this handbook. The NSGP will notify students when such instances occur. The NSGP team does its best to keep this handbook up to date with UA policies. However, if information in this handbook appears to conflict with the UA's campus-level policy, then typically the campus policy will be followed. Students may contact the NSGP director and/or coordinator when they find such inconsistencies in this handbook.

UA Nondiscrimination and Antiharassment Policy

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

Program Contact Information

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¹ NSW: School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness

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Director's Welcome



Dear Students,

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

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

Sincerely,

Jennifer Teske, PhD

Associate Professor

Director, Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program (MS, PhD)

School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness

College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences

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School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness Mission and Values

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

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

Values:

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

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

I. Introduction

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

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

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

Signature research areas include:

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

As of academic year 2026-2027, 17 MS/PhD students are active in the program in varying stages of their academic studies and research.

About this Handbook

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

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

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

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

Notes:

- Throughout this handbook, the terms “faculty advisor” and “mentor” may be used interchangeably.
- Website links appear in **boldface blue**.

II. Learning Outcomes, Administration, Facilities/Resources

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

Expected Learning Outcomes

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

1. Critically evaluate nutritional science and wellness research and integrate core concepts, principles, and data to deepen understanding of the field.
2. Apply critical thinking skills to develop testable hypotheses, design experiments to test these hypotheses, and interpret and apply new findings to the field.
3. Develop effective oral and written communication skills.
4. Complete a PhD fellowship proposal (for PhD students only).

Program Administration

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

Graduate Research Degrees Committee (GRDC)

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

Appendix A lists the current GRDC members. With the exception of the student representative and program coordinator, all members have [Graduate Faculty](#)² status. Students should note that the "Graduate Faculty" designation is required for faculty who will serve on [student committees](#) (thesis, comprehensive exam, dissertation).

Graduate student representative: A current NSGP graduate student serves in this role for one fiscal year (July 1-June 30) following the NSGP student election, which is held during the spring semester:³

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

² Refer to [Graduate Faculty Policy](#); [UA Phonebook](#) identifies Graduate Faculty status.

³ Student representative criteria is subject to GRDC review/approval.

3. *Election process:* Before the end of the spring semester, in response to a call for nominees, NSGP students may self-nominate or nominate their eligible and willing NSGP peers after confirming the nominee's willingness to serve in this role. The three students with the most nominations who meet the eligibility requirements will be included in the election, which may be held by electronic and/or paper ballot and is set up and managed by the sitting student representative. At least half of the NSGP current student population must cast ballots. The student with the highest number of votes is the designated student-representative-elect; the student with the second highest number of votes is the alternate in the representative's absence. In the case of tie, the NSGP director may select the student to serve in the representative role or otherwise the student with the most seniority will be selected.

Program Facilities and Resources

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

Facilities

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

Equipment, Supplies

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

Graduate Student Office

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

Library Resources

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

The [Health Sciences Library](#) is located on the Arizona Health Sciences campus. It is the most comprehensive health sciences library in Arizona.⁴ In addition to its holdings of pertinent health sciences periodicals and monographs, the library provides an excellent array of valuable services including bibliographic searches, librarian consultations, and research support. The Health Sciences Library provides access to essential medical information and specialized databases such as Embase, the world's largest database of drug information. Librarians participate as instructors in the curriculum of the health sciences colleges and work in partnership with researchers and clinicians to advance health information literacy. The library also provides spaces for small-group collaboration and quiet study.

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

⁴ See [University Libraries](#).

III. Program Admissions

The NSGP admits one cohort per year (fall semester). Applicants must apply to the program via the [“GradApp” portal](#). Applications typically open in July and close in December (for the following academic year). Figure III.1 provides the current admissions criteria for the MS and PhD programs; questions pertaining to prerequisites are included in both applications in GradApp.

Figure III.1. [NSGP Admissions Criteria](#)

Master of Science (MS) in Nutritional Sciences	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nutritional Sciences
Application Criteria (see also: Application Procedures) • 3.0 GPA (minimum requirement for Graduate College admissions) • Statement of purpose • Research experience recommended and highlighted in statement of purpose • 2 letters of recommendation (minimum) • Curriculum vitae • English language proficiency: For applicants whose native language is not English, please refer to both of these websites for current requirements: ◦ Graduate College, International Applicants ◦ Graduate College, Graduate Assistant/Associate Appointment Requirements Prior degree requirements and recommended coursework Degree minimum: Bachelor of Science (BS) in life sciences (such as nutritional sciences, health sciences, physiological sciences) or related field, with 3.0/4.0 minimum GPA. Applicants recommended for admission will be required to provide official transcripts to the Graduate College. Prior coursework: Given the research focus of this program, applicants are strongly advised to have successfully completed courses similar to those listed below. Applicants admitted to the program with deficiencies may need to enroll in additional coursework without graduate credit during their first year of graduate study. Refer to the UA Catalog for descriptions of “comparable” courses: • Biochemistry: 6 units of 300-level or higher Comparable to BIOC 384 and BIOC 385 • Biology/Microbiology: 6 units of 100-level or higher Comparable to MCB 170C1 and MCB 181R • Nutrition science: 3 units of 400-level Comparable to NSC 408 • Organic Chemistry: 4 units of 200-level or higher (3 units lecture, 1 unit lab) Comparable to CHEM 241 A, B and CHEM 243 A, B • Physiology: 4-6 units of 200-level or higher Comparable to PSIO 201 and PSIO 202, or PSIO 380 Standardized Tests GRE: Not required; applicants who have GRE scores may submit them with their application documentation Admissions Cycle Fall admission only; application deadline is early December preceding the intended academic year	Application Criteria (see also: Application Procedures) • 3.0 GPA (minimum requirement for Graduate College admissions) • Statement of purpose • Research experience strongly preferred and highlighted in statement of purpose • 3 letters of recommendation (minimum) • Curriculum vitae • English language proficiency: For applicants whose native language is not English, please refer to both of these websites for current requirements: ◦ Graduate College, International Applicants ◦ Graduate College, Graduate Assistant/Associate Appointment Requirements Prior degree requirements and recommended coursework Degree minimum: Bachelor of Science (BS) in life sciences (such as nutritional sciences, health sciences, physiological sciences) or related field, with 3.0/4.0 minimum GPA. Applicants recommended for admission will be required to provide official transcripts to the Graduate College. Prior coursework: Given the research focus of this program, applicants are strongly advised to have successfully completed courses similar to those listed below. Applicants admitted to the program with deficiencies may need to enroll in additional coursework without graduate credit during their first year of graduate study. Refer to the UA Catalog for descriptions of “comparable” courses: • Biochemistry: 6 units of 300-level or higher Comparable to BIOC 384 and BIOC 385 • Biology/Microbiology: 6 units of 100-level or higher Comparable to MCB 170C1 and MCB 181R • Nutrition science: 3 units of 400-level Comparable to NSC 408 • Organic Chemistry: 4 units of 200-level or higher (3 units lecture, 1 unit lab) Comparable to CHEM 241 A, B and CHEM 243 A, B • Physiology: 4-6 units of 200-level or higher Comparable to PSIO 201 and PSIO 202, or PSIO 380 Standardized Tests GRE: Not required; applicants who have GRE scores may submit them with their application documentation Admissions Cycle Fall admission only; application deadline is early December preceding the intended academic year

Application Guidelines

The Graduate College requires all applicants to use the [GradApp portal](#) to complete and submit their application. Prospective NSGP applicants should review the [Graduate College admissions requirements](#) prior to submitting their MS/PhD application.

After establishing their GradApp account and selecting the appropriate program, applicants should carefully review the application questions. Application materials include but are not limited to: statement of purpose, curriculum vitae, transcripts, and letters of recommendation (recommenders receive an email notification with a link to access the system to upload their letters).⁵

Application Statement of Purpose

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

1. Why have you selected the NSGP program?: Briefly explain why you want to pursue graduate studies in the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program.

⁵ See also the Office of [Graduate Admissions](#).

2. Career goals: Briefly describe your career goals and how this degree and program will help you achieve these goals.
3. Research experience: Briefly describe research experience you have had and how you might apply the skills you learned to your doctoral program.
4. Research interests: Briefly describe your research interest as it relates to the [5 NSW Signature Research areas](#), AND be sure to identify specific research faculty and why their research appeals to you.
5. Prior experiences, qualifications, achievements: Briefly explain how your prior learning/research, work/volunteer experiences, qualifications, and achievements have prepared you for successfully pursuing a doctoral degree.
6. NSGP participation: Briefly describe how your participation in the program might have a positive impact on the program as a whole.
7. Other information: Briefly provide any other relevant information that you feel will be valuable for reviewers of your application.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

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

Letters of Recommendation

The MS and PhD program requires at least 2 and 3 letters of recommendation, respectively. Recommenders may be previous employers, faculty with whom applicants have been involved in research, or others who know the applicant in a professional capacity. All recommenders identified by the applicant receive an automated email with a link to the application system. All recommenders also answer a short list of questions prior to uploading their letter in the GradApp system. Letters should:

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

Additional Application Requirements

The application process also requires applicants to respond to supplemental questions that provide additional opportunities for applicants to highlight their skills and experiences and address their English language proficiency. Applicants must pay the current application fee; the [Graduate College](#) does not offer application fee waivers.

Application Review Timeline

After the application submission deadline (December), the NSGP admissions committee reviews and ranks applicants and creates a short list of candidates to invite for interviews with various faculty affiliated with the program. First-round interviews usually occur in late January/early February (videoconference). Following these interviews, the committee selects the final list of candidates who may be invited for a second round of interviews, which may be held on campus or via videoconference.

After the second-round interviews, the committee selects the final roster of candidates. Once approved, the NSGP recommends candidates for admission to the Graduate College in GradApp. The Graduate College reviews all such applicants and makes the final decision for admission. Candidates approved for admission are notified by the Graduate College via email communication requesting that the candidate indicate their decision in the GradApp system, along with important and time-sensitive next steps—applicants must monitor their email for such communication to ensure timely responses to Graduate College requests. The next steps typically include information on how to enter their admission decision in GradApp, [creating their UA NET ID](#)

and student email account,⁶ and any “admission is subject to” details (such as official transcripts and/or immunization and visa requirements, if applicable):

To accept, decline, or defer admission, admitted students must log into GradApp to formally accept or decline their admission offer and view their official Certificate of Admission. Applicants have the option to defer their enrollment for up to one year if they are unable to enroll in their intended semester. To initiate the deferral process, students must:

- Contact their department/program: Reach out to the graduate program department to which they applied.
- Review departmental requirements: Understand that admission to a specific term does not guarantee admission to future terms; ongoing departmental review may apply.
- Coordinate with the graduate coordinator or program director: Work closely with the program to complete the deferral process.⁷

Details about these actions can be managed within GradApp, which also allows applicants to monitor any outstanding requirements.

Applicants who accept their offer of admission should expect communication from the NSW and the NSGP, including offer letters (signed by the NSW director) to candidates selected for graduate assistant/associate (GA) appointments. These offer letters include information about financial support, benefits, GA requirements, and UA policies. Candidates must sign/return their offer letters by the stated deadline to confirm their status in the program (response is not required before April 15⁸). New students also receive additional communication from the NSGP prior to the start of the academic year to which they are admitted. The communication typically includes details about new-student orientation, status of TA assignments, course enrollment, and any other pertinent information.

Admissions Status

In most cases, students admitted to the NSGP enter as degree-seeking graduate students. Other admissions types are described on the [Graduate College Admissions](#) website.

Degree-Seeking (Regular) Graduate Status

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

Nondegree-Seeking Graduate Status

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

Conditional Admission (International Students)

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

⁶ Student email accounts are automatically created after the NET ID is created.

⁷ The deferral option can only be used once per admitted application; nondegree-seeking students are not eligible for deferral.

⁸ See [April 15 Resolution](#), Council of Graduate Schools.

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](#).

Financial Support

Nearly all NSGP students receive financial support through NSW [Graduate Assistantships/Associateships \(GA\)](#). Such support is contingent upon availability of funds and the student's status in the program.

Graduate Assistantship/Associateship (GA)—NSW Model

The NSW typically offers GA appointments to most accepted candidates. Qualifications for appointment are explained on the [Graduate College Qualifications for Appointment website](#). (Note, however, that CALES requires first-year GAs to be enrolled in a minimum of 9 units for fall and spring semesters.) The appointments are based on the University's fiscal year, which is July 1-June 30; however, first-year students start their appointments in August, one week before fall-semester classes begin.

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. PhD students with the bachelor's degree are advanced to associate level at year 3, while students entering the PhD program with a master's degree are admitted at the associate level. The primary difference between these two levels is the pay rate. The NSGP offer letters sent to new students prior to enrollment specify the appointment level and pay rates, which are set by CALES and the UA. GA appointments are year-to-year and are subject to funding availability and the student's program status—students must meet satisfactory degree progress policies and expectations, which are based on academic record and GA evaluations.

All NSGP students with GA appointments are expected to review the [Graduate College GA Manual](#) and familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures in the manual.

Year 1: The GA appointment begins the week before fall semester classes start (mid-August) and ends June 30 the following year. The appointment is typically a teaching assistantship/associateship (TA).⁹ The GA appointment generally provides half-time (20 hours/week, also referred to as 0.5 FTE¹⁰) support for this first year. A TA is assigned to one or more undergraduate teaching faculty (faculty supervisor) to help support undergraduate course instruction.

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

Years 3-5: PhD students are typically funded for 0.5 FTE RA appointment by their faculty advisors.¹¹ Funding beyond five years is at the NSW and/or faculty advisor's discretion and is based on: (a) successful progress toward the dissertation; (b) the availability of funds; (c) NSW needs; (d) the status and standing of the student's ongoing research; (e) the student's performance to date in the areas of research, coursework, and teaching; and (f) the potential for successful completion in an agreed-upon timeframe.

⁹ In rare cases, a first-year GA appointment could be a research assistantship/associateship (RA), or some combination of TA/RA.

¹⁰ Refer to [Appointment Periods and FTE Information](#).

¹¹ Exceptions apply, such as if a student is funded by a fellowship award.

In addition to their stipend, students who accept their GA notice of appointment are typically eligible for these benefits:¹² If a nonresident, a tuition reduction to the equivalent of base in-state graduate tuition; 100% payment toward remaining base graduate tuition dependent on the tuition amount associated with the term of contract—note that mandatory registration fees and course fees are not covered (refer to the [Costs & Fees website](#) for tuition and mandatory registration fee details); payment of the individual student health premium (refer to the [Campus Health website](#)); and 10% ASUA Bookstore discount on select items. See also [GA benefits of appointment](#) and [New and Current Students website](#). All students with GA appointments are expected to review the [Resignation or Termination from Appointment](#) policy (GA Manual) so that they understand the financial implications if they leave their GA position before the end of their appointment.

Current GAs may be eligible for winter- and summer-session TA positions. Such roles are considered supplemental to the fiscal year GA appointment and are subject to Graduate College and HR policies. Summer and winter instructional support needs and hiring decisions are based on course enrollments, GA status, and other NSW and Graduate College criteria.¹³

Fellowships

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

Other Funding Options

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

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

Tax Information

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

Individual Health Insurance (Campus Health Services)

The UA covers the single student Campus Health insurance premium charges for GAs during their appointment. The health insurance and health services are provided through the UA Campus Health and are not transferable to outside insurance providers. To receive this benefit, a student must enroll in the student health insurance program during the open enrollment period. Note that GAs who enroll in the plan cannot cancel their coverage after the open enrollment period ends, even if they resign or are terminated. GAs who [resign or are terminated](#) during the period of insurance coverage will be responsible for repayment of the remaining insurance premium. Also, a GA will be automatically re-enrolled in the student health insurance program each semester upon enrollment in classes. For more information on the student health insurance offered, including plan dates and costs, refer to the [Campus Health website](#).

¹² CALES GAs are among the highest paid at the University.

¹³ Refer to [Summer/Winter session](#) GA policies.

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

This section includes essential information regarding NSGP and Graduate College requirements that students must fulfill for graduation. Current MS and PhD course requirements appear in Table IV.1.^{14,15}

Table IV.1. NSGP Course Requirements for MS and PhD (as of August 2026)

Courses	Units ^[1]	Typically Offered (check course schedule for exact days/times)	Notes Major Coursework = Required PhD Minor = Required	MS Total Units	PhD Total Units ^[1]
Fall Semester Courses					
NSC 597D Communicating Nutr Sci	1	Fall (yearly) in-person W 12-12:50pm	Major coursework yearly enrollment required	2	4
NSC 597E Exploring Wellness through Scientific Research (journal club)	1	Fall (yearly) in-person W 11-11:50am	Major coursework (PhD students x2 enrollments)	<i>optional</i>	2
NSC 699 Independent Study ^[2] (laboratory rotation)	3	Fall (yearly) in-person	Major coursework year 1	3	3
NSC 608 Immunometabolism in Nutrition and Exercise	3	Fall (even years) in-person M/W 2-3:15pm	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
NSC 610 Nutrition and Disease	3	Fall (even years) in-person T/Th 11am-12:15pm	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
NSC 624 Micronutrients	3	Fall (odd years) in-person T 9-11:30am	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
BIOS 576A Biostats. in Public Health (<i>also offered spring online</i>)	3	Fall (yearly) in-person T/Th 4-5:15pm	Major coursework year 2	3	3
Spring Semester Courses			Fall courses subtotal	17	21
NSC 575 Nutrigenomics for Study of Dis Prevention and Intervention	3	Spring (yearly) online 7 week session 2	Major coursework year 1 or 2	3	3
NSC 595 Emerging Topics in Nutritional Sciences	2	Spring (yearly) in-person T 11am-1pm	Major coursework years 1 and 2	4	4
NSC 597D Communicating Nutri Sci	1	Spring (yearly) in-person W 12-1pm	Major coursework yearly enrollment required	2	4
HSD 649 Survival Skills & Ethics	3	Spring (yearly) in-person W 2-5pm	Major coursework year 1	3	3
Other required coursework			Spring courses subtotal (total)	12 (29)	14 (35)
Elective units ^[3]	≥ 1	Varies	Major coursework		1
PhD: 36 minimum units of major coursework required MS: 27 minimum units of nonthesis coursework required				29	36
PhD - minor units (specified by minor department)	≥ 9	Varies by department	Complete before comprehensive exam (typically year 3)		9
Units Subtotal				29	45
NSC 910 Thesis	6	Every semester	Thesis units required	6	
NCS 920 Dissertation	18	Every semester	Dissertation units required		18
Total Units^[4]				35	63

[1] GA appointments (TA, RA) appointments: CALES requires first-year (Y1) PhD students to enroll in a minimum of 9 units per semester; Y1 MS students are advised to enroll in at least 9 units/semester. Years 2+ MS & PhD must enroll in a minimum of 6 units per semester; all GA students are advised to enroll in the college teaching certification program (CTCP) courses—for PhD students, these courses may fulfill 7 of 9 units of the nutritional sciences minor: IA 697a, IA 697b, IA 697p. Details about the CTCP are discussed during new-student orientation.

[2] Lab rotation details appear in the NSGP Student Handbook. Students are expected to identify/confirm their lab rotations prior to the NSGP orientation or before the first day of the fall semester.

[3] Electives: PhD students should discuss course options with their faculty advisor/mentor and the NSGP director.

[4] Meets [Graduate College](#) minimum requirements (MS 30, PhD 63). Many students exceed the minimum unit requirements.

¹⁴ Eligible students [register for these and other classes](#) through their [UAccess Student Center](#). Select “student center” to view personal student account information. More information is available on the [How to Register website](#).

¹⁵ The [NSW graduate courses website](#) provides course descriptions for NSW graduate courses.

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

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

Table IV.2 Year 1 Requirements

Student Responsibilities	Semester 1	Semester 2
Onboarding – orientations, required online & TA trainings, initial course enrollment	✓	
Lab rotations (NSC 699, 3 units): 2 rotations, 7.5 weeks each, approximately 9-10 hours/week	✓	
Faculty advisor selection	✓	✓
Coursework (9 units minimum per semester for GA appointments)	✓	✓
TA assignment - 20 hours/week (or as specified in GA offer letter)	✓	✓
Documentation: GradPath, GA/NSGP evaluations (TA & RA), IDP, lab rotation evaluation (semester 1), annual review	✓	✓
	✓	✓
NSGP meetings (as requested)	✓	✓

New-Student Onboarding

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

Transfer Credit Requests

Admitted students seeking to transfer credit from graduate-level courses completed prior to starting the NSGP into their NSGP graduate program should speak with the NSGP director as early as possible to discuss whether or not the credits can be used toward their NSGP degree. Students submit transfer credit requests via the NSGP form¹⁶ and wait for NSGP director approval prior to submitting a request in GradPath. The specific courses to be counted toward a graduate degree are subject to approval by the NSGP director and/or GRDC consensus, with the Graduate College making the final determination. Refer also to the Graduate College [master's degree transfer credit policy](#) and the [doctor of philosophy transfer credit policy](#).

Laboratory Rotations—NSC 699, Independent Study, 3 units

Prior to the program orientation, and with few exceptions, all first-year MS and PhD students must find two research laboratories to rotate through during their first semester by reviewing the published research conducted in the faculty member's laboratory and meeting/speaking with the faculty member.¹⁷ The primary purpose of these rotations is to help students identify a faculty advisor¹⁸ for support and mentorship. Students are expected to identify their faculty advisor by the end of their second lab rotation.

In addition to securing a faculty advisor, these rotations also provide valuable opportunities to learn new techniques, experience different approaches to nutritional sciences research, and to meet faculty and students in the NSGP and other graduate programs. Students are expected to exhibit professionalism at all times, adhere to the lab's policies/procedures and faculty expectations, immerse themselves in each rotation experience, and maximize the amount of time they spend in each laboratory and with the people in it, including evenings and weekends as appropriate.

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

- What work/research schedule expectations do you have for your students?
- In what fields are some of your past students employed?

¹⁶ Students should request the form from the NSGP coordinator.

¹⁷ Students struggling to identify lab rotations should contact the NSGP director/coordinator before mid-July (before orientation).

¹⁸ Faculty advisors must hold [Graduate Faculty status](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other Common MS and PhD Requirements

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

Program Meetings

NSGP students are expected to attend group and individual meetings when scheduled.

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Group meetings: All students are expected to attend group meetings (Aug-May) when scheduled. Such meetings are typically held in-person¹⁹ and serve to enhance students' experiences in the program through open dialogue. Various topics are addressed during these meetings as determined by student and/or program leadership recommendations.

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

Graduate College and NSGP Forms (subject to change)²⁰

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

*GradPath*²¹ *Forms (Graduate College):* **GradPath** is the Graduate College's degree-audit system designed to track and monitor graduate students' progress toward their degree.²² Students access GradPath through their **UAccess Student** account. Nearly all submitted GradPath forms are routed through an approval process, with the Graduate College as final approver. See the **GradPath website** for more information about the process.

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

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

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

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

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

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

IDP Guidelines (refer to figures IV.1-IV.3, below):

- Step 1: Create an IDP account, review the "Overview" information.

¹⁹ Students unable to attend these meetings in-person due to extenuating circumstances must notify the NSGP director and/or coordinator well in advance of the meeting date.

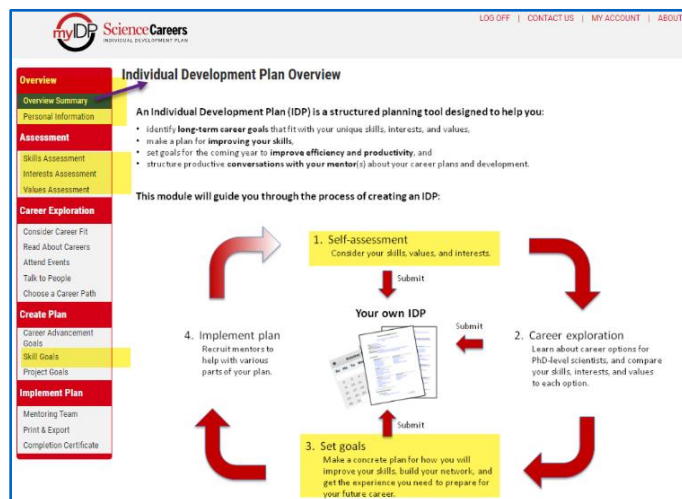
²⁰ Students may contact the NSGP coordinator for the current versions of NSGP forms included in this section.

²¹ Information about degree-specific GradPath forms appears in the MS and PhD sections of this handbook. Students are expected to bookmark and refer to the **Graduate College GradPath User Guides** resources.

²² See **Graduate College – Degree Services**.

- Step 2: Complete the 3 assessments under the “Assessments” category.
- Step 3: Complete “Skills Goals” under “Create a Plan,” and follow the “SMART GOALS” process.²³
- Step 4 (optional): Transfer SMART Goals to a worksheet or print from IDP account prior to scheduled meetings with faculty advisor or NSGP director.

Figure IV.1. Individual Development Plan Overview



Note: These screenshots from [MyIDP.ScienceCareers.org](https://myIDP.ScienceCareers.org) are provided as a visual to help guide students through the steps listed above.

Figure IV.2. Skills Assessment Tab

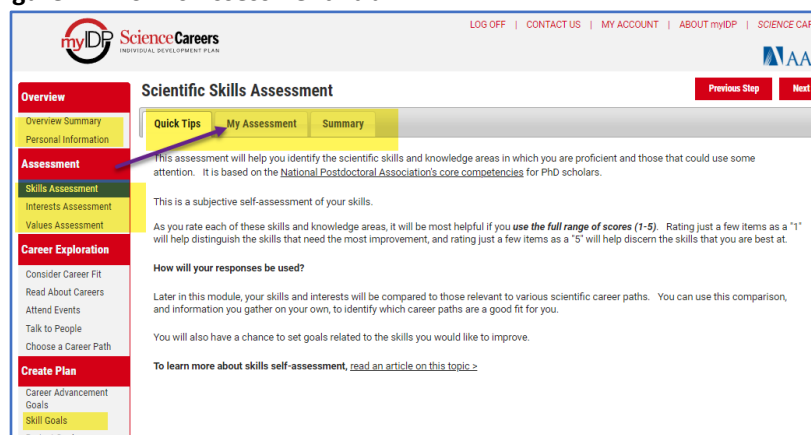
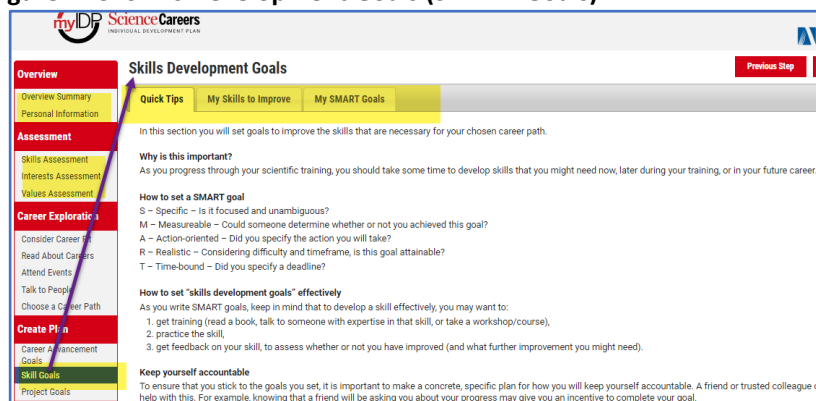


Figure IV.3. Skills Development Goals (SMART Goals)



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

²³ See **SMART goals** for more details.

Travel Funds Request (NSGP form): Subject to availability of funds, the NSGP may award travel-support funds to students who are presenting their research at scientific conferences. Students must meet the eligibility criteria listed in the form to be considered for travel funds. The NSGP director or coordinator informs students when funds are available.

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

RA Conversations/Assessment (RA evaluation): All NSGP students, regardless of their funding-support status, must meet with their faculty advisors to complete this form each semester. For those with GA appointments, the form is required to maintain their GA status (similar to the TA evaluation)—it includes mandated Graduate College GA assessment criteria and provides opportunities for student and advisor comments. This form also features a mentoring agreement section that identifies best-practice criteria that align with the UA's [Mentor Institute](#). Students are expected to schedule time to review/complete the form with their faculty advisor well in advance of the completion deadline (Dec 1 fall semester, May 1 spring semester). During the student's biannual review process each December and May, the NSGP director references the RA evaluation form to determine whether the student is making adequate progress toward their degree. Upon completion of the review process, students may be placed in 1 of 3 categories: (a) making adequate progress toward the degree; (b) probationary status; (c) terminated from the graduate program. The final decision on a student's status may be determined by the program director and/or subject to GRDC discussion/vote and relevant Graduate College policies.

NSGP Exit Survey: Students are asked to complete this survey during their final semester in the program.

Other Forms

In addition to the common NSGP and GradPath forms, graduate students may need to use other forms posted on the Graduate College's [Degree Services website](#). MS and PhD students should explore these forms periodically while enrolled in the program (figure IV.4²⁴).

Figure IV.4. Graduate College–Degree Services Forms/Documents for Students (see footnote 24)



Degree Services also posts [formatting guides for thesis and dissertation](#)—NSGP students are strongly encouraged to explore these guides early in their program so that they are familiar with the thesis and dissertation requirements.

²⁴ Figure IV.4 screenshot is for reference only; students are encouraged to explore the [Degree Services Website](#) to access up-to-date forms and information.

Graduation

When it's time to graduate, NSGP students may choose to attend the [CALES convocation](#) for the formal hooding ceremony (May and December). The UA hosts an institution-wide graduation ceremony as well. Attendance at either is optional. Those who opt to attend a ceremony and would like their faculty advisor and/or the NSGP and School directors to be present must let those individuals know as early as possible to avoid scheduling conflicts. CALES notifies graduating students with details about convocation, which requires RSVP to attend.

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

1. **CALES convocation:** Respond to email communication about the CALES convocation, which requires RSVP by specified deadlines.
2. **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.
3. **Diploma Delivery:** Diplomas are mailed approximately 2 weeks *after the degree is posted* by the Graduate College. Inquiries concerning the ordering or mailing of diplomas may be directed to the [Office of the Registrar](#). Diplomas are not mailed to campus addresses.
4. **Completion Date:** If the "expected grad term" listed in a student's GradPath account changes, the student must notify Graduate College at least 10 weeks (approximately 2.5 months) BEFORE commencement to ensure their name will appear in the appropriate graduation ceremony program.
5. **Hood:** Students should confirm the faculty member who will attend the graduation ceremony and "hood" them at least 3 months in advance of the ceremony and obtain the graduation regalia, which can be ordered and rented from the UA bookstore (Information is included in CALES convocation communication).

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

MS-Specific Requirements²⁵

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

This section addresses NSGP and [Graduate College](#) requirements for the MS degree. MS students must adhere to [Graduate College policies/procedures](#) and are strongly advised to review the policies on a regular basis. Students should also explore and be familiar with the [Master's Degree requirements website](#) to ensure they meet all requirements for graduation (figure IV.5). Table IV.3 identifies yearly essential expectations to help students maintain adequate degree progress.

MS GradPath Requirements

The [Degree Requirements website](#) lists the required MS GradPath forms. Figure IV.6 is a screenshot of the MS GradPath forms before they are activated by the student. GradPath forms are completed in succession—students must complete the RCR form first to activate the Plan of Study form, and so on. All MS students are expected to regularly check the status of their GradPath forms to ensure they have completed all Graduate College requirements (in addition to NSGP requirements) prior to graduation. Refer to the [Timeline for master's degree students website](#) for complete details. Table IV.4 provides more detail, including recommended submission timelines.

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

Thesis Committee

This degree requires students to complete a thesis; as such, students are expected to work with their faculty advisor to identify thesis committee members to help guide them in their thesis research. Committee members should be confirmed by/before the end of the first year in the program (by June 30).

²⁵ Section V of this handbook addresses academic and enrollment policies.

Committee composition: Thesis **committees** must have three members:

1. At least two members must be designated as Graduate Faculty, and at least one must be NSW Graduate Faculty. Note that all tenured/tenure-track faculty are members of the Graduate Faculty, but not all Graduate Faculty are tenured/tenure track (they may be career track or other designation who have been approved to be members of the Graduate Faculty).
2. The third member, if not a member of the Graduate Faculty, must be an approved Special Member.²⁶
3. At least one member must have prior (successful) experience as a thesis committee chair.
4. Committees must have a chair who is a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair.
5. For committees with co-chairs, one must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair. The other may be Graduate Faculty or an approved special member.

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

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

Thesis

The thesis is a rigorous research project that addresses an important question in nutritional sciences and wellness. Central to thesis research is the premise that students will learn new skills in research methods and scientific writing. Most students complete and defend their thesis research by the end of the second year of the program.²⁷ Two committee members must approve the thesis; one dissenting vote is allowed (see also **Graduate College thesis requirements**).

Preparation: During fall semester of year 2, if not before, students typically schedule one or more thesis committee meetings to discuss the proposed research and timeline. With advice from their faculty advisor and/or committee, students identify an appropriate project and prepare an outline for committee review/approval. The outline normally includes an introduction, literature review, hypotheses, and method/analysis plan, results, discussion as well as complete references and full appendices of materials (questionnaires, etc.).²⁸ Students should refer to **section IV of Grad College thesis formatting document to ensure the thesis includes the required pages for the Graduate College**. With the mentor's consultation, students usually follow the Manuscript/Article-Based Thesis Option in which the formatting style (abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, figures/tables, and references) will be determined by the mentor. Any thesis proposal involving humans or animals must first be approved through the UA's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), respectively, before data collection occurs. Students should review information on the **HSPP website** as well as the **Compliance website**.

Thesis Defense²⁹

After students secure thesis approval from their faculty advisor/committee, they work with their committee to schedule their oral (defense) presentation (date, time, and location—refer to **Graduate College Dates & Deadlines** for important deadlines that may impact scheduling). Note: Unlike the dissertation defense, the thesis defense is not part of GradPath.

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

²⁷ Refer also to **Time Limitation** for master's degree.

²⁸ Refer to Graduate College: **Thesis Formatting Guide** and **Steps to Archiving Your Thesis** and **Thesis Archiving Requirements**

²⁹ See **Graduate College/MS requirements website**—the basic procedural rules for **dissertation defenses** apply to the procedures for a master's thesis defense.

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

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

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

Defense day: MS thesis committee members must attend the final defense. The thesis committee chair presides over the proceedings. The seminar portion of the defense—where the student presents their thesis and responds to questions—is open to the public. The examination portion is closed; only the student and committee members are present. The entire proceedings may not exceed 3 hours (refer to footnote #29, below).

Results: The thesis defense (final exam)³⁰ results in 3 possible outcomes: (1) Pass with no revisions or minor revisions to be supervised and approved by the advisor; (2) Pass with major revisions, requiring the committee to evaluate the revisions; and (3) Fail. (IMPORTANT note: GradPath does not include a "Results" form for MS students.). A student who fails a final examination may, upon the recommendation of the NSW, be granted a second examination. The committee chair is encouraged to communicate the results of the thesis defense to the NSGP director/coordinator, but it is not a required record it for the MS degree; GradPath does not include any defense-related forms for the MS degree.

NSGP Defense Assessment form: This form includes criteria to assess the extent to which a student has met the NSGP MS program learning outcomes. Data gathered from this evaluation serve as a direct measure for the UA's annual program learning outcomes assessment report. Program administrators also review responses to help determine strengths and weaknesses of the program as a whole. The NSGP coordinator typically emails this form to the student's committee members 1-2 days before the scheduled oral defense. Committee members are asked to complete/return the form within 2 weeks post-defense.

*Next steps—Final Thesis Submission:*³¹ The [Graduate College deadline for final thesis submission](#) changes annually based on the term of expected graduation (fall, spring, summer). Therefore, students must review the Graduate College website for current deadlines well ahead of time. During fall semester the deadline is typically within a few days of the final day of regular classes, while the spring and summer submission deadlines are typically weeks before the final day of regular classes (spring semester is the busier term for theses submissions). Students who wait until these deadlines to submit their final thesis must be sure to provide electronic copies of their final MS thesis to their advisor and committee members, along with the Thesis Approval Page for committee signatures, well before the submission deadline ([approval signature page templates are available on the Graduate College's Sample Pages website](#)). Students also should review the information provided on the [Archiving the Master's Thesis website](#).

After the MS student submits their final thesis, the Graduate College student support specialist assigned to the NSGP communicates with the student regarding the status of their thesis submission. Students are expected to follow the guidance they receive from the Graduate College to ensure their thesis meets the Graduate College's archiving requirements.

Master's Completion Confirmation (GradPath—completed by program coordinator): After final grades for the student's final semester are posted, and having completed all degree requirements, the NSGP coordinator

³⁰ See [Master's degrees—final exam](#).

³¹ See [Master's Graduation Checklist](#)

submits the MS completion confirmation in GradPath, which initiates the Graduate College's final audit of the student's program and ultimately leads to the award of the student's degree following resolution of any outstanding issues. Again, students must follow the guidelines they receive from the Graduate College student support specialist to [format and archive their thesis](#).

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

Figure IV.5. Master's Degree Requirements³²

Master's Degrees	
Content	
• Overview	
• Credit Requirements	
• Transfer Credit	
• Credit for Prior Learning	
• Time Limitation	
• Pathway to Degree Completion for Returning Master's Students	
• Continuous Enrollment	
• Second and Duplicate Master's Degrees	
• Dual Degrees	
• Faculty or Professional Graduate Advisor	
• Plan of Study	
• Qualifying Examinations	
• Final Examination	
• Thesis or Synthesizing Experience	
• Master's Thesis Committee Requirements	
• Thesis Archiving	
• Completion of Requirements	

Figure IV.6. MS GradPath Requirements

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

Table IV.3. NSGP: MS Student - Yearly Essential Expectations

Program Year	Expectations (see also Time to Degree)
Year 1	• Before NSGP orientation: lab-rotation selection, course enrollment • Complete required orientations, trainings, NSGP & Graduate College documentation • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • TA assignment responsibilities • MS coursework, including lab rotations (NSC 699, 3 units, fall semester) • Select faculty advisor • Complete TA & RA evaluations (fall, spring) • Begin MS research • Select thesis committee members (spring/summer) • Sign GA letter for year 2 • Enroll year 2 coursework

³² See [Graduate College - Master's degree requirements](#) and [Navigating your Degree](#).

Table IV.3, continued

Program Year	Expectations (see also Time to Degree)
Year 2	● TA and RA assignment responsibilities (including TA & GA evaluations fall, spring) ● Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) ● Attend NSW seminars ● Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation ● Review Degree Services forms ● MS coursework ● Thesis research, committee meetings ● Schedule oral thesis defense ● Provide defense announcement flyer information to NSGP coordinator ● Defend thesis, submit final thesis ● Convocation preparation ● Graduate

Table IV.4. MS GradPath Requirements

GradPath Steps — MS Student	Recommended Submission Timeline
1. Responsible Conduct of Research Statement	August of semester 1 (before/during NSGP orientation)
2. Plan of Study	Semesters 2 or 3 (after confirming faculty advisor)
3. Master's Committee Appointment <i>See also Graduate Student Committee Service for Grad College policies, and Dates and Deadlines for defense deadlines for each semester/term</i>	Semester 3 (before the end of the semester)
4. Master's Completion Confirmation	NSGP coordinator completes this step post-commencement
5. Commencement Verification Form	Semester 4 (or final semester in the program)
Thesis - Graduate College Requirements ● Thesis submission: Review important dates/deadlines for the master's thesis submission. ● For information on what is needed prior to awarding of the degree, refer to: ○ Thesis Formatting Guide ○ Steps to Archiving Your Thesis and Thesis Archiving Requirements	
NSGP Requirements (NOT included in GradPath)	
6. Thesis Defense <i>See also Dates and Deadlines for thesis defense deadlines for each semester/term</i>	At least 1 month before defense date: 1. Reserve room for defense (time/date/location) with NSW executive assistant 2. Announcement flyer details to NSGP coordinator and/or NSW executive assistant
7. Thesis Defense Assessment Form	Within 2 weeks of defense date: Committee members complete/return form

PhD-Specific Requirements

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

This section focuses on PhD requirements for years 3-5. Refer to Section IV, Requirements for Master's (MS) and Doctoral (PhD) Students, for the PhD requirements for years 1-2. PhD students must adhere to [Graduate College policies/procedures](#) and are strongly advised to review the policies on a regular basis. They should also regularly review and be familiar with the [Doctor of Philosophy Degree requirements](#) to ensure they meet all requirements for graduation (figure IV.7). Table IV.5 identifies yearly progress expectations.

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

GradPath³³

GradPath is the Graduate College's degree-audit system. The [Degree Requirements website](#) lists the required PhD GradPath forms. Figure IV.8 is a screenshot of the PhD GradPath forms before they are activated by the student. Table IV.6 provides documentation requirements and recommended submission timelines. By year 3, students need to make sure that all courses listed in their approved Plan of Study appear in their course history to avoid degree-completion delays. Students must regularly check the status of their GradPath forms to ensure they have completed all Graduate College requirements (in addition to NSGP requirements) prior to graduation. Refer to the [Timeline for Doctoral Candidates website](#).

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

Fellowship Proposal (NSGP requirement)

PhD students must complete and have their faculty advisor's approval for a fellowship proposal PRIOR to scheduling and sitting for their comprehensive exam—the program advises students to complete this requirement before the end of their third year in the program. Note that this requirement is NOT included in GradPath. Ideally, students will be able to submit their proposal to the funding agency, but submission to an agency is not required. The purpose of this exercise is to enhance students' career opportunities by learning and practicing the steps involved in writing and submitting research proposals to obtain funding. Students are advised to review and discuss the *Fellowship Proposal Guidelines* (Appendix B of this handbook) with their faculty advisor when they begin their second year in the program to ensure that they stay on track to complete this requirement in a timely manner. The proposal submission date will depend on the timeline of the fellowship award to which a student applies and/or their faculty advisor's recommendations. Students may want to enroll in an elective course that focuses on fellowship proposal writing. The [Graduate Center](#) can also be a valuable resource for students during this process. Funding obtained through awarded proposals will be used to offset the student's GA stipend from the School or from student's faculty advisor.³⁴

Comprehensive Examination (comps)

PhD students must pass a written and oral examination, known as the comprehensive exam or "comps," before the Graduate College will advance them to PhD candidacy.³⁵ The purpose of comps is to confirm that the student has developed comprehensive knowledge in their field of study/specialization and has developed a thorough plan for their doctoral dissertation research. As mentioned above, students must have their completed fellowship proposal approved by their faculty advisor/committee BEFORE comps.

*Comprehensive examination committee composition:*³⁶ Students are responsible for forming a comprehensive examination committee comprised of faculty who represent both the major and minor programs:

1. The committee must include a minimum of four members, including at least three members of the Graduate Faculty,³⁷ at least one of whom must be NSW Graduate Faculty.
2. A Special Member³⁸ may serve as the fourth (or fifth) member of the committee.
3. Each committee must have a chair who is a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair.

³³ In addition to GradPath requirements, students are expected to complete/meet all NSGP expectations and requirements, fulfill the requirements of their GA appointment, and complete a dissertation under the direction of their faculty advisor/mentor.

³⁴ Students who receive fellowship funding generally may no longer qualify for GA status. Depending on NSW funding availability, students may receive NSW support funds to offset the difference between their fellowship award and the typical GA funds.

³⁵ The [Graduate College](#) also requires students to have completed all courses listed in their Plan of Study, with the exception of dissertation units.

³⁶ See also [comprehensive examination committee](#) on the doctor of philosophy degree requirements website.

³⁷ Important Graduate College policies: For graduate student committees, faculty and students should review these policies: [Graduate Student Committee Service Policy](#) and [Graduate Faculty Policy](#).

³⁸ **Special members:** People who possess the knowledge/expertise to evaluate student graduate work but do not meet Graduate Faculty criteria.

(For Graduate Faculty who are not tenured/tenure-eligible, such as career-track faculty, the NSGP coordinator initiates the endorsement requests in UAccess.)

4. If the committee has co-chairs, one must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair, while the second can be a member of the Graduate Faculty or Special Member.
5. The committee should include at least one member representing the minor area of study.

Comprehensive Exam ***Committee Appointment Form*** (*GradPath*): Students should submit this form as soon as possible after the Plan of Study has been approved to allow ample time for the approval routing process. It must be submitted **before the written exam date**. Students are expected to schedule and facilitate several committee meetings prior to the scheduled written exam and also plan a tentative date for the oral exam. Committee members usually discuss general content areas from which they will develop their questions and also identify who will write the questions for each area. The student may speak with committee members to discuss the general topic areas.

Comprehensive exam timeline/schedule: With the exception of NSC 597D and dissertation units, students should be finished with all or nearly all of their coursework before the comprehensive exam:

1. **Expected completion deadline**: The NSGP expects students to complete comps between semesters 5 and 7. Students who expect to take the exam after the 7th semester must petition the GRDC in writing, with their faculty advisor's acknowledgment, and wait for the committee's response before scheduling the exam.³⁹ In this case, students are strongly advised to meet with their committee to ensure their petition includes sound rationale for taking comps after the 7th semester.
2. **Elapsed-time expectation between comps and dissertation defense**: The NSGP requires students to complete the written and oral sections of the exam at least 6 months prior to the final oral dissertation defense. This policy supersedes the Graduate College timeline of 3 months. Students (and their committees) should plan accordingly and refer to the **Dates/Deadlines/Timeline for Doctoral Candidates**, follow the **Steps to Your Degree** guidelines, and review relevant **GradPath User Guides** posted on the Graduate College website.

Announcement of (oral) Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Form (*GradPath*): Once the date, time, and location for the oral comprehensive exam are set by the student and their committee, the student submits the announcement of the exam in GradPath **before the oral exam date**. Students and committees are strongly advised to select a date for the oral exam before the written exam commences so that the student can submit the oral exam announcement in GradPath. This is because the committee chair must post the written results in the same GradPath form as the oral results (refer to figure IV.9); the student's submission of the comprehensive (oral) exam announcement triggers an automated email to the committee chair for the results form in GradPath (the automated email includes the link to the results form).

Comprehensive exam content/format: According to **Graduate College policy**: "A student will pass the written portion before sitting for the oral portion. Programs will have written policies regarding whether or not students may retake failed written exams as well as specific policies regarding second attempts of the oral. The time between the written and oral portion is determined by individual programs." Following are details for the written and oral exams:

1. **Written exam format**: The Graduate College allows programs to determine the **format and administration of the written portion**; for the NSGP, the written-exam format, and the number of written-exam attempts, is flexible and left to the discretion of the student's committee. The written exam should be scheduled 3 weeks prior to the oral exam. Students and their committees must remember to plan ahead to schedule an appropriate location and time for the written exam. The minor department controls the minor portion of the written exam and may waive it at their discretion. Often, committees may wish to use the student's fellowship proposal as part of the written exam. Note that the Graduate College states that a fellowship proposal can be used as *part* of the written portion for the comprehensive exam; the student must still be tested on their core competencies in their major and minor.⁴⁰

³⁹ Students should submit this petition/letter to the NSGP director.

⁴⁰ Email communication with the Graduate College, 7.26.23.

Typically, each committee member writes 2 questions, or a total of 8 questions from 4 committee members, from which the student selects 4 questions to answer. The exam can be closed or open book or a combination of both as determined by the committee. For each writing session, the student is presented with 2 of the questions and selects 1 question for their written response. For closed-book exams, the student has 3 hours to write their answers for each question. A common scenario is for the student to write responses to 2 questions on the first day, followed by 2 questions the following day. Example:

Day 1: question 1, 9-noon; question 2, 1-4pm

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

2. Written exam results procedure (NSGP guidelines): Committee members have 1 week to assess the written exam using an agreed-upon rubric to score their own questions. A pass/fail score is given for each question:
 - a. The committee chair tallies the scores for the written exam within an agreed-upon timeline.
 - b. The student must pass at least 2 questions to progress to the oral exam.
 - c. The committee chair shares results with the committee, and then shares them with the student:
 - Pass, next steps: If not already decided, the student and committee schedule the date for the oral exam, and the student completes/submits the announcement for the (oral) comprehensive exam in GradPath. The committee chair may wait until the oral exam is completed before posting the written exam results as both results are included in the same GradPath form (and submitted after the oral exam results are posted; refer to figure IV.9).
 - Fail, next steps: The committee decides whether or not to permit the student a second attempt, along with the parameters for a second attempt. If no second attempt is permitted, the committee decides whether to dismiss the student from the program or offer the MS-degree option. If the student has not yet submitted the announcement of the (oral) comprehensive exam in GradPath, then the committee chair may need to contact the Graduate College to determine if and/or how failed written exam results are recorded when no oral exam will be administered.
3. Oral exam administration format (Graduate College instructions for committees and students):⁴¹ The oral exam provides students the opportunity and obligation to display a broad knowledge of their chosen field of study and sufficient depth of understanding in areas of specialization. Discussion of proposed dissertation research may be included, as well as follow-up questions from the written exam, general questions on the classes/seminars included in the student's Plan of Study, recent literature in the student's field, and/or questions on the student's fellowship proposal. The exam must include questions from both the major and minor areas of study and should be at least 1 hour but no more than 3 hours in length.

All committee members must participate in the entire oral examination and may attend remotely (video or phone) provided that the student and all committee members can communicate effectively. **The chair should review the Graduate College and NSGP procedures with the committee** before the examination commences and ensure that the committee will attest that the student has demonstrated the professional level of knowledge expected of a junior academic colleague to receive a passing score.

4. Oral exam results procedure (NSGP guidelines): At the conclusion of the oral comprehensive exam—and after the student has left the exam room—the committee members discuss the student's performance and cast their secret votes⁴² (ballot format not specified by Graduate College). Each committee member is expected to evaluate the student's performance on the basis of the exam as a whole, not just on a specific area of questioning or solely on their field of specialization.⁴³

Post-exam secret-voting procedure (after student has left the room and after committee discussion):

In compliance with **Graduate College policies**, following are the NSGP procedures to guide comprehensive committees through the oral exam results process—pass and fail.

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⁴¹ The NSGP requires students to complete their oral comprehensive exam at least 6 months before the final oral dissertation defense. Students and committees should keep this in mind when planning the comprehensive and dissertation timelines.

⁴² Refer to **Graduate College's Policies and Procedures for Oral Comprehensive Examination for Doctoral Candidacy, bullet point 5**.

⁴³ Refer to **Graduate College's Policies and Procedures for Oral Comprehensive Examination for Doctoral Candidacy bullet point 4**.

1. Committee chair distributes ballots.
2. Voting options: Pass, Fail, and Abstain; Fail and Abstain are negative votes.
3. Committee chair tallies the votes.
4. Pass: All votes Pass or all but 1 vote Pass (1 negative vote is allowed).
5. Fail: **More than 1 negative vote** (i.e., 2 or more negative votes) results in failure of the oral exam. (Item 6 in this list includes procedures for failed oral exam attempts).
6. Committee chair informs the committee of the outcome (pass or fail), which determines whether or not the student passes the oral comprehensive exam.
 - a. Pass: If the student passes (first or second attempt), then the committee chair informs the student (not divulging the votes of the committee members), and then posts the results in GradPath (refer to figure IV.9).
 - b. Fail: If the student fails the first oral-exam attempt:
 - i. The committee discusses the timeframe for the student's second attempt (the **Graduate College permits only two attempts** for the oral exam).
 - ii. Committee chair informs the student of committee's decision.
 - iii. Committee chair posts the oral results (and written results) in GradPath (using the link to the form in the automated email they receive from the GradPath) and notes in the Results "comments" box if the committee recommends a second oral exam option for the student (in accordance with **Graduate College** policy) and the expected timeline for the retake.
 - iv. Within the following day or two, the student (re)submits the comprehensive exam announcement form in GradPath (the student or NSGP coordinator may need to contact the Graduate College student support specialist to activate the form for the resubmission).
 - v. After the student resubmits the announcement form, the NSGP coordinator receives an automated email notification with the link to the form, where the coordinator notes in the comments that this is a second attempt, then approves the form, which then routes to the Graduate College. Note: The student must use the same committee for the second attempt unless the Graduate College approves a change in the committee members.
7. After a second oral exam attempt and committee discussion and vote (following same steps as above), the committee chair informs student of committee's decision, and then repeats the Results entry in GradPath. If the student passes the second attempt, then the student completes and submits the Dissertation Committee Appointment form (after Graduate College approval of Results). If the student fails the second attempt, then the student's committee decides whether to dismiss the student from the program or offer the MS degree option.

Upon Graduate College approval, and if the student has passed their comps and has completed their courses in the Plan of Study, the student is notified of "advancement to candidacy" (**fees apply**). The student then submits the *Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form* in GradPath.

Dissertation

All students pursuing a doctoral degree must complete a dissertation that demonstrates their ability to conduct original research and meets required standards of scholarship. Students and their faculty advisors must be familiar with the **Graduate College requirements**. Several steps comprise the dissertation process. During year 4, students should be focused on their dissertation research and meeting regularly with their dissertation committee to review progress and finalize their dissertation defense timeline.

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

1. A minimum⁴⁴ of four members, three of whom must be members of the Graduate Faculty. The fourth and any additional members may be Graduate Faculty or an approved Special Member.⁴⁵ At least three members must be NSW faculty who are qualified to serve on dissertation committees.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ The NSGP requires 4 members, which meets **Graduate College** minimum requirement of 3 members.

⁴⁵ Special member requests are submitted by the NSGP coordinator via UAccess.

⁴⁶ The GRDC may waive this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

2. Each committee must have a Committee Chair who must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair. (The NSGP coordinator typically initiates endorsement requests in UAccess for Graduate Faculty who are not tenured/tenure-eligible, such as career-track faculty.)
3. If the committee has co-chairs, one must be a member of the Graduate Faculty with endorsement to chair a doctoral committee, while the other can be either a member of the Graduate Faculty or Special Member. Faculty with “endorsement to chair” status must uphold the rules outlined in the [Graduate Faculty Policy, especially sections 1.1.5 and 4.2](#).
4. At least one member must have successfully chaired a dissertation committee in the past.
5. Three members must approve the dissertation; one dissenting vote is allowed.
6. All committee members are expected to attend the entire final defense.

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

Students and their committee members should regularly review the [Degree Requirements, Doctor of Philosophy](#), and [Important Dates/Deadlines](#) websites to make sure they are on track with the timing of their dissertation defense and documentation. In addition, committee chairs, committee members, and students must review the [Graduate College’s Final Oral Examination Instructions](#) well before the final examination date to ensure they all are on the same page with regard to the final oral exam format and expectations. Questions about these instructions may be directed to the Graduate College.

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

1. [NSGP Prospectus Verification Form](#): Students must obtain this form from the NSGP coordinator to distribute to their committee members for their signatures; either the student or the student’s committee chair should return the fully signed form to the NSGP coordinator. The deadline is at least one month before Dissertation Oral Defense. Students are asked to [upload their approved prospectus to the link provided in the Verification form](#).
2. [Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation form \(GradPath requirement\)](#): The NSGP coordinator submits this GradPath form upon receipt of the signed Verification form and student’s uploaded prospectus.

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

Defense announcement flyer for NSW distribution: Students must send their announcement flyer to the NSW Executive Assistant (or NSGP coordinator) for distribution [no less than two weeks prior to the oral defense](#). Details must include: the student’s name and photo; date/time/location for the oral defense; dissertation title & abstract; Zoom link if applicable. The announcement and/or flyer is shared with CALES and NSW email lists.

Final Oral Defense: At least two weeks before the final oral defense (or as directed by their committee), students must provide their final version of their dissertation to their committee to allow adequate review time. Any required revisions must be done in a timely manner to facilitate submission to the Graduate College and graduation for the desired graduation term.⁴⁷

The dissertation committee chair presides over the final oral defense examination. The initial seminar portion

⁴⁷ Refer to [Graduate College’s Dates and Deadlines](#).

(student presentation) is open to the public. The examination portion, which follows the seminar, is closed to the public. There is no minimum time limit for the final oral defense, but the entire proceedings may not exceed three hours. As mentioned above, committees and students must review the [Graduate College guidelines](#) and the [Graduate College's Final Oral Examination instructions](#).

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

Results of Final Oral Defense (GradPath): The committee chair submits the results in GradPath as soon as possible after the oral defense is completed. According to the [Graduate College website](#): "If the committee requires revisions, those must be done in a timely manner, not to exceed one year. If the 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 comprehensive examinations to demonstrate currency of knowledge."⁴⁸

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

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

1. Refer to the [Doctoral Dissertation Formatting Guide](#) for guidance on formatting the dissertation to ensure the required pages for the Graduate College have been included in the dissertation and the dissertation complies with the formatting requirements from the Graduate College. With the mentor's consultation, students typically follow the Manuscript/Article-Based Dissertation Option, in which the formatting style (abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, figures/tables, and references) will be determined by the mentor and separate manuscripts constitute separate chapters in the dissertation.
2. The format check process begins after dissertation submission to [UMI Electronic Submissions Site](#). Formats are assessed with this site's information; follow instructions carefully. Dissertations with published papers or papers accepted for publication require an alternate format.
3. Use the [sample pages](#) to help prepare the Approval Page.
4. Submit the 'Survey of Earned Doctorates' online survey.

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

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⁴⁸ Refer to the [Graduate College's information for doctoral degree requirements](#) and the [Final Oral Examination Instructions](#). Per Graduate College email communication July 16, 2026: The Graduate College does not specify a limit on the number of repeat defense attempts. Students approved by their committees to repeat the oral defense must repeat both the public presentation and the closed-door exam, and each defense attempt must be recorded in GradPath.

Figure IV.7. Graduate College PhD Degree Requirements⁴⁹

Doctor of Philosophy

Contents

- [Overview](#)
- [Credit Requirements and Transfer Credit](#)
- [Doctoral Minor Requirements](#)
- [Courses Shared Between Degrees](#)
- [Graduate Non-Degree Coursework](#)
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- [Continuous Enrollment and Incompletes](#)
- [Time Limitation](#)
- [Qualifying Examination](#) Not required for NSGP students
- [Faculty Advisor](#)
- [Plan of Study](#)
- [Comprehensive Examination for Advancement to Candidacy](#)
- [Comprehensive Examination Committee](#)
- [Dissertation Prospectus/Proposal](#)
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- [Storage and Publication of Dissertation](#)
- [Completion of Requirements](#)
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Figure IV.8. PhD GradPath Requirements

▼ PHD - Nutritional Sciences (Active in Program)

Responsible Conduct (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Plan of Study (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Comp Exam Committee Appointment Form (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Announcement of Doctoral Comprehensive Exam (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Results of Comprehensive Exam (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Announcement of Final Oral Defense (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Results of Final Oral Defense (NUSCPHD)	View Current
Commencement Verification (NUSCPHD)	View Current

Figure IV.9. GradPath Comprehensive Exam Results Entered by Committee Chair

Confirm that the Written Comprehensive Exam requirement has been met (including exam for the minor, if required).

Results of Written Comprehensive Exam(s)

Requirement Met

☐ Yes ☐ No

Exam Info

Exam Date: Exam Time:

Click on the 'Search for Building' button to select a building. (Official names of buildings can be found on the Campus Map available from www.arizona.edu.) Typing in the building name will result in an error. (30018,49)

Building: [Search for Building](#)

Room:

Result of Oral Comprehensive Exam

Result:

Vote Count

Fail and Abstain votes are considered negative votes.

2 negative votes constitute a failure.

Pass: Fail: Abstain (counts as fail):

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⁴⁹ Screenshot is for reference only; students should refer to the [Graduate College website](#) to access the actual webpages for the Doctor of Philosophy requirements.

Table IV.5. PhD Yearly Progress Expectations

Program Year	Essentials (see also Time to Degree)
Year 1	• Before NSGP orientation: lab selection, course enrollment • Complete required orientations, trainings, NSGP & Graduate College documentation • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • TA/GA assignment responsibilities, evaluations • PhD coursework, including lab rotations (NSC 699, 3 units, fall semester) • Select faculty advisor • Discuss PhD research with faculty advisor • Biannual progress review with NSGP director (December and May) • Select thesis committee members (spring/summer) • Sign GA letter for year 2 • Enroll year 2 coursework
Year 2	• TA and RA assignment responsibilities • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation (submit Plan of Study) • Review Degree Services forms • PhD major coursework, identify minor/coursework • PhD research discussions • Fellowship proposal discussions with faculty advisor • Comprehensive committee selection & meetings • Complete/submit GradPath Plan of Study • Biannual progress review with NSGP director (December and May) • Sign GA letter for year 3 • Enroll year 3 coursework (including dissertation hours)
Year 3	• RA assignment responsibilities (also TA if applicable) • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • Schedule and facilitate comprehensive committee meetings • Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation • PhD major coursework, complete minor coursework • PhD research • Complete/submit fellowship proposal • Schedule comprehensive exam after fellowship proposal is approved by committee • Complete/pass comprehensive exam (by spring/summer) • Sign GA letter for year 4 • Enroll year 4 coursework (including dissertation hours) • Submit doctoral dissertation committee appointment (GradPath) after successful completion of comprehensive exam • Continue dissertation research, schedule/facilitate committee meetings • RA/GA assignments, evaluations • Biannual progress review with NSGP director (December and May) • Sign GA letter for year 4 • Enroll year 4 coursework (including dissertation hours)
Year 4	• RA assignment responsibilities (also TA if applicable) • Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) • Attend NSW seminars • Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation • Complete remaining PhD major coursework • Schedule and facilitate dissertation committee meetings • Dissertation research/writing • If graduating during year 4, complete/route NSGP prospectus/proposal to committee, followed by committee prospectus/proposal approval form (from NSGP coordinator) • Biannual progress review with NSGP director (December and May) • Sign GA letter for year 5 • Enroll year 5 coursework (including dissertation hours)

Table IV.5, continued

Program Year	Essentials (see also Time to Degree)
Year 5	● RA assignment responsibilities (also TA if applicable) ● Attend NSGP meetings (individual and group) ● Attend NSW seminars ● Complete NSGP and Graduate College/GradPath documentation ● Complete remaining PhD major coursework ● Dissertation research/writing ● Schedule and facilitate dissertation committee meetings and identify defense date/time/location ● Contact NSW executive assistant to unit director to schedule defense ● Complete/route NSGP prospectus/proposal to committee, followed by committee prospectus/proposal approval form (from NSGP coordinator) ● Submit dissertation defense announcement in GradPath at least 10 business days before final defense date ● Provide NSW Executive Assistant (or NSGP coordinator) with defense announcement flyer details at least 2 weeks before defense date ● Defend dissertation (committee chair posts results in GradPath) ● Finalize and submit dissertation following Graduate College instructions and deadlines ● Complete NSGP exit survey ● Graduate

Table IV.6. PhD Documentation Timelines

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

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V. Academic and Enrollment Requirements

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

Academic Policies

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

Satisfactory Academic Progress

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

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

1. *Grade-point average (GPA)*: Maintain 3.0 minimum every semester (and cumulatively) for graduate-level coursework. Students who fall below 3.0 in a given semester are placed on [academic probation](#) by the Graduate College. Students on probation are required to meet with their major advisor and NSGP director/coordinator to discuss the steps necessary to remediate the problems that led to probation, and devise a written action plan to submit to the NSGP and Graduate College within identified time frames and milestones. Students whose cumulative GPA is below 3.0 for 2 consecutive semesters will be disqualified from their degree program and blocked from registration. The NSGP may petition for a one-semester extension of probation if the NSGP faculty and student's faculty advisor believe that the student has a high probability of returning to good academic standing in 1 semester. Disqualified students may apply for either [Non-degree status](#), which allows them to continue taking graduate courses as nondegree-seeking students, or [Academic renewal](#), if they wish to apply to a different degree program. Students may apply for readmission to a degree program as early as the semester following their disqualification, if they achieve a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 through additional graduate coursework obtained as a nondegree-seeking student. A readmission request must be supported by the NSW director and approved by the dean of the Graduate College. There is no guarantee of readmission. Students with [incomplete \("I"\) grades](#) must notify the NSGP coordinator. Incomplete grades should be completed in a timely manner and are awarded at the discretion of the course instructor. Refer to the [incomplete policy](#).
2. *Faculty (major) advisor (also referred to as mentor)*: NSGP students must identify a faculty advisor by the end of their first year in the program (by/before June 30). Students must notify the NSGP director or coordinator well before the June 30 deadline if they are struggling to secure a faculty advisor. This professor typically serves as chair on a student's committee/s and also guides the student on coursework choices, research, and the thesis/dissertation. When warranted, students may change their advisor after discussing with the current advisor and the NSGP director/coordinator.
3. *Semester reviews and meetings*: Biannual reviews typically occur during December and May/June and may include the NSGP director, coordinator, and the student's faculty advisor. Semester meetings typically occur mid- to late-semester and typically with just the NSGP coordinator unless circumstances warrant including other administrators. In addition to GPA and faculty advisor status, consideration is given to TA and RA evaluations (i.e., evaluated by the student's faculty advisor as below satisfactory academic progress), committee status, and applicable NSGP/Graduate College requirements. Students will be advised regarding deficiencies and/or concerns during the review process.

Students failing to meet satisfactory academic progress requirements should anticipate any or all of these actions:

- A warning letter issued by the GRDC/NSGP
- Academic probation
- Remediation plan
- Loss of NSW and other funding
- Dismissal from the program if the student fails to meet remediation plan requirements after 1 semester (or earlier if deemed appropriate by the student's advisor/committee acting in consultation with the NSGP and NSW directors).

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Early identification of academic difficulty is in the best interests of students and the School. The NSGP stresses that there is no intent to be punitive to students having difficulty or with extenuating circumstances but to encourage immediate intervention and closer mentoring to enhance retention and probability of graduation. Students placed on academic probation will be required to follow NSGP and Graduate College guidelines and policies to ensure timely removal of probationary status.

Appeals

As outlined above, students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress are subject to dismissal from the program. Students will be given the opportunity to internally appeal dismissal decisions as follows:⁵⁰

1. Submit a written appeal to their faculty advisor, NSGP director, and NSW unit director. This appeal must be submitted within 30 days of the written notification of dismissal. The NSGP may share the appeal with the GRDC for review. After reviewing the appeal, and if the NSGP director, NSW unit director, and student's advisor agree, a decision may be made to reverse the dismissal decision upon the satisfactory completion of appropriate conditions.
2. In cases in which the NSGP director, NSW unit director, and the student's faculty advisor disagree or must seek further consultation from the UA, a meeting between the student, advisor, NSGP director, GRDC, and NSW director will be scheduled at a time that is feasible for all parties.⁵¹ The student's dismissal will be reconsidered in light of the student's written appeal and follow-up questioning during the meeting as appropriate.
3. In the event that the dismissal decision is upheld, the Graduate College will be notified as soon as the decision is made. Any further petition, appeal, or rebuttal will need to be routed to the Graduate College.

Students have the right to submit a grievance to the Graduate College directly. Students should also review the [Graduate College Grievance Policy](#).

Enrollment—Continuous Enrollment Policy

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

Full-time Enrollment Status, Advanced Status⁵²

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

Fall/spring semesters:

- Minimum units of graduate credit—For first-year NSGP students with GA appointments (graduate assistant/associate), full-time status consists of a minimum enrollment in 9 units of graduate credit each semester. After year 1, students with GA appointments must enroll in a minimum of 6 units each semester. The Graduate College has no maximum number of units a student may enroll in each term (except dissertation units).⁵³
- 3 units of graduate credit, 900 level—A graduate student working on a thesis or dissertation who is only enrolled in 900-level units and not employed as a GA must be enrolled in 3 units.
- 1 unit of graduate credit, 900 level—A student who has completed all coursework, the thesis/dissertation unit requirements, has advanced to candidacy, is working on the thesis/dissertation, and is not employed as a GA may apply for [advanced status \(form\)](#), which allows 1 unit of 900-level credit for full-time status. In all other cases, full-time status consists of a minimum enrollment in 9 units of graduate credit.

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

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⁵⁰ Decisions may be contingent upon Graduate College review/approval.

⁵¹ Students are expected to complete the NSGP mentoring agreement form with their faculty advisor as soon as their advisor is confirmed. This form is designed to benefit both student and faculty advisor by outlining specific expectations of both parties throughout the course of the mentor/mentee relationship.

⁵² Also refer to the [University Catalog](#).

⁵³ Dissertation units are capped at 9 units per term; Graduate College email communication, May 3, 2023.

students should refer to the various enrollment (and employment) policies posted on UA websites to ensure compliance for their particular situation.

NSGP students receiving funding such as assistantships/associateships, fellowships, loans, grants, scholarships, or traineeships may be required by their funding source to enroll in a specific number of units each semester to meet full-time status requirement. International students may have different requirements to maintain their visa status. All students should check with their faculty advisor and/or NSGP leadership regarding such requirements to ensure that they remain qualified for funding and/or visa status.⁵⁴

Master's Degree Enrollment:

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

Doctoral Degree Enrollment:

- Students may enroll in dissertation units before their comprehensive exam.
- Students who have maintained continuous enrollment and are taking only comprehensive exams during summer or winter term do not have to register for graduate credit during summer or winter session.
- Students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements as well as the 18 hours of dissertation, and were enrolled in the prior semester, may defend and file in the summer or winter term without registration. Students must enroll if they need library privileges or plan to make other use of UA facilities or significant faculty time during summer or winter session.
- Students who have maintained continuous enrollment, fulfilled all their other degree requirements, and are only completing an incomplete in coursework (a class other than 900 level) are not required to enroll while they complete the incomplete. Students must enroll if they need library privileges, plan to use other UA facilities, or need significant faculty time while they complete their incomplete.

Unless excused by an official [Leave of Absence](#) (which may not exceed 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. Students who fail to obtain a Leave of Absence or maintain continuous enrollment will be required to apply for readmission, to pay the Graduate College application fee, and pay all overdue tuition and fees, including cumulative late penalties. There is no guarantee of readmission. Tuition or registration waivers cannot be applied retroactively. Any student considering reapplication should first check with the [Graduate Student Academic Services Office](#) to see whether additional work or updated forms will be necessary.

Continuous Enrollment and Financial Aid

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

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⁵⁴ First-year NSGP MS students with GA appointments must enroll in at least 9 units each semester, and then at least 6 units each semester thereafter. In addition, international students should review the information posted on the [Graduate College's International Students website](#) as well as the [University's International Student Services website](#).

VI. Student Responsibilities

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

Graduate College Policies/Procedures

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

Academic Integrity and Generative AI (GenAI)

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

Orientations

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

NSGP

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

CALES TA 101

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

Graduate College

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

GA (TA/RA) Appointments and Policies⁵⁵

GA appointments are budget dependent and require students to adhere to many guidelines. Students must be enrolled in 9 units per semester their first year⁵⁶ and 6 units per semester thereafter until all required coursework/units are completed. Students with TA appointments typically receive their fall- and spring-semester assignments via email a few weeks before the start of the semester. The Graduate College requires all TAs and RAs to complete evaluations each semester and NSGP evaluation requirements. Students should review the Graduate College's [Qualifications for Appointment website](#) and also be familiar with the policies and information provided in the [GA Manual](#).

Summer and winter session TA assignments may be available. For summer assignments, students must be enrolled in 6 hours for the upcoming fall semester. For additional requirements, refer to the [Summer/Winter Session website](#) and the [Supplemental Compensation website](#). These additional teaching opportunities are contingent upon teaching performance, needs of the School, GA status, and support from the student's faculty advisor.

⁵⁵ Additional [student-employment](#) policies may apply.

⁵⁶ CALES and NSGP requirement.

Time Commitments for TA and RA Appointments⁵⁷

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

1. For funded TA and RA appointments, half-time (0.50 FTE) appointments carry expectations of 20 hours of work per week on average, and one-quarter time (0.25 FTE) appointments carry expectations of 10 hours of work per week on average. Actual hours per week will vary with assignment load.
2. Appointments at the same level and pay should require approximately equal levels of work, regardless of the distribution of duties and funding sources. However, there is natural variation in TA appointments both within semesters and across courses/instructors.
3. Students whose RA duties significantly overlap with their own research may be expected to work on their research beyond their assigned/compensated hours per week.

Additional TA Information

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

Teaching improvement: Many resources are available to assist TAs in developing their teaching skills. Refer to the [Office of Instruction and Assessment](#), supervising faculty, CALES and the [Graduate Center's](#) teaching and mentoring resources. Students are highly encouraged to explore the courses offered through the [Certificate in College Teaching program](#). Students may consult with the NSGP director and their faculty advisor to determine if such courses may count toward a Nutritional Sciences minor.

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

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

⁵⁷ Refer to the [GA Manual](#) for more details, including the [workload policy](#).

VII. Resources

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

College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences (CALES)

- CALES graduate students – information for graduate students, including a [robust list of resources](#).

Graduate College

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

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

Other

- [About the University of Arizona](#) - links to information about the University, including leadership and facts & figures.
- [Compliance Office](#) – links to emergency and safety information, [UA policies](#), records management, and financial services.
- [Compliance \(Office\) Partners](#) – links to various laws and policies pertaining to higher education.
- [Counseling and Psych Services \(CAPS\)](#) – provides mental health support and counseling.
- [Current Students](#) – links to various resources, including transportation, parking, etc.
- [Emergency Management](#) – includes emergency response information, [UAlert services sign-up](#), building/campus emergency plans.
- [Ethics & Conduct policies](#) – links to UA policies associated with ethics/conduct.
- [General Catalog](#) – UA catalog.
- [Institutional Equity](#) – information regarding inclusivity and the learning/work environment.
- [International Student Services](#) – Resources for international students.
- [Life & Work Support for Students](#) – links to childcare subsidy information, sick and back-up childcare, parenting & childcare consultations, adult & eldercare consultations, and family resource map.
- [Life in Tucson](#) – Information about Tucson.
- [Office of Public Safety](#) - Links to University safety teams, including UA Police Department and Parking & Transportation.
- [Research & Partnerships](#) – includes [opportunities/information for graduate students](#).

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

Appendix A—Graduate Research Degrees Committee

As of August 2026

NSW Members

Shea Austin Cantu, EdD

Floyd "Ski" Chilton, PhD

Melanie Hingle, PhD, MPH, RD

Stephanie Grutzmacher, PhD

Laurel Jacobs, DrPh, MPH

Sridevi Krishnan, PhD

Kirsten Limesand, PhD

Donato Romagnolo, MSc, PhD

Richard Simpson, PhD

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

Ashley Snider, PhD

Justin Snider, PhD

Jennifer Teske, PhD

Kenneth Wilund, PhD

Ningning Zhao, PhD

Student representative 2026-2027: Carmen Fleming (Milad Hasankhani alternate)

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

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Appendix B—PhD Students: Fellowship Proposal Guidelines

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

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

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

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

Typical/Suggested Steps in Your Fellowship Proposal Development Plan

Work diligently with your faculty advisor to find a good fit for your research topic. Successful proposals start with finding the appropriate funding opportunities that align with your research topic/interest. Suggested steps:

1. Meet with your faculty advisor to identify/discuss your fellowship topic.
2. Identify possible sources of funding; contact agencies' point people, if feasible, to discuss your questions. Follow up with your faculty advisor.
3. Obtain examples of funded proposals to get an idea for format, style, etc. In addition, attend grant-writing workshops on campus (or at conferences).
4. After you identify your funding source/s, read instructions several times. Identify due date and eligibility guidelines.
5. Determine whether additional expertise is needed to support the proposal.
6. Establish timeline and plan for writing each part of the proposal to remain on track.
7. Identify the specific aims of your proposal.
8. Develop your draft/s with your faculty advisor's guidance.
9. Ask trusted individuals to review/critique your proposal. Allow reviewers at least 1 week to complete their review to enhance your chances of receiving valuable feedback.
10. Present your proposal to 2-3 faculty, independent of your faculty advisor; revise the proposal.
11. Contact the [CALES Research team](#) to learn about the proposal submission process. Be sure you and your faculty advisor know the current [CALES policies for research proposals](#).
12. Review your final draft to make sure you have followed the application instructions; errors will halt and/or delay the process.
13. Committee evaluation: Your faculty advisor and committee will evaluate your proposal.

Proposal Writing Resources

Following is a short-list of resources to help students launch their proposal writing.

- [UA Research & Partnerships](#)
 - [Early investigators](#)
 - [Find funding](#)
 - [Seminars and workshops](#)
- [UA Libraries – Support for researchers](#)
- [UA Graduate Center – Writing Lab](#)
- [Organizing Academic Research Papers: Writing a Research Proposal](#)
- [How to Write a Research Proposal: Structure, Examples & Common Mistakes](#)
- [Grant Writers' Seminars & Workshops](#)
- Funding possibilities (not a comprehensive list):
 - [National Science Foundation](#)
 - [Cancer Research Institute](#)
 - [American Cancer Society](#)
 - [American Heart Association Predoctoral fellowship](#) (must be enrolled in a PhD program)
 - [American College of Sports Medicine doctoral research fellowship](#) (requires ACSM student membership)
 - [American Federation for Aging Research funding opportunities](#)

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Appendix C—Requirements at a Glance

- Notes:
- Information presented below are subject to changes in Graduate College, CALES, SNSW, and/or NSGP policies/procedures
 - URLs included for reference.
 - All GradPath requirements are also NSGP requirements.

Abbreviation / Symbol	Definition	Abbreviation / Symbol	Definition
CALES	College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences	POS	Plan of Study
GA	Graduate Assistant, Graduate Associate	SNSW	School of Nutritional Sciences and Wellness
- TA (or GTA)	(Graduate) Teaching Assistant/Associate	X	Yes, required or applicable
- RA (or GRA)	(Graduate) Research Assistant/Associate	---	Not required or not applicable
NSGP	Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program		

Required Form or Activity	GradPath Requirement	MS NSGP Requirement	PhD NSGP Requirement	Student should complete activity and/or submit form by:	When applicable: The review and/or approval process is completed by:						
					NSGP Coordinator	NSGP Director	SNSW Director, Business Office and/or CALES	Student’s Faculty Advisor (Mentor)	Student’s Committee	Student’s TA Faculty Supervisor	Grad College
Graduate Assistant/Associate (GA) Appointment Letter from SNSW Director	---	X	X	As stated in GA appointment letter	---	---	X	---	---	---	---
NSGP Orientation	---	X	X	On scheduled day (August / 1 week before Fall classes begin)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
CALES TA orientation for new students with GA appointments	---	X	X	On scheduled day (August / 1 week before Fall classes begin)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Other required GA-related trainings	---	X	X	As stated in GA appointment letter and GA Manual	---	---	X	---	---	---	X
TA evaluation – every semester	---	if assigned TA role	if assigned TA role	Dec 1 & May 1	Reviewer	Reviewer	---	---	---	X	X
RA evaluation & mentoring partnership agreement, every semester	---	X	X	Dec 1 & May 1 (all students regardless of GA/RA status)	Collector & Reviewer	X	---	X	---	---	X
Annual progress review – RA evaluation form is partially used for this review process	---	X	X	May 1 (meeting with NSGP director during May)	---	X	---	X	---	---	---
Responsible Conduct of Research Statement	X	X	X	NSGP orientation	---	---	---	---	---	---	X
Plan of Study (POS) Note: Students start this process during program orientation (see also Graduate College Dates/Deadlines)	X	X	X	MS: by end of 2 nd semester (May) PhD: by end of 3 rd semester (Dec); PhD POS includes a minor requirement	X Presubmission review; postsubmission approve	X	X	X PhD only: minor advisor also approves	---	---	X
Master’s Committee Appointment Form	X	X	---	After POS approval; before 3 rd semester	X	---	---	---	---	---	X
Master’s Thesis	---	X	---	Refer to Graduate College Dates/Deadlines	---	---	---	X	X	---	X
Thesis Defense Committee Evaluation Form	---	X	---	---	Collector & Reviewer	Reviewer	---	X	X	---	---
Master’s Completion Report	X	X	---	---	X	---	---	---	---	---	X
Minor PhD only; included with POS submission	X	---	X	Included with PhD POS submission	Reviewer	X	---	X	X	---	X
Fellowship proposal	---	---	X	During year 3 (semesters 5, 6)	---	---	---	X	X comprehensive exam committee	---	---
Comprehensive exam committee appointment	X	---	X	As soon as possible after POS approval	X	X	---	X	X	---	X

Comprehensive exam announcement <i>Refer to Grad College policies & NSGP student handbook for NSGP requirements</i>	X	---	X	Semesters 5, 6, 7; send extension request to NSGP Director if later than semester 7	X	X	—	X	—	—	X
Results of comprehensive exam	X	---	X	---	—	—	—	X	—	—	X
Dissertation Committee Appointment Form	X	---	X	At least 6 months before final oral defense	X	X (and minor DGS if applicable)	—	X	X (agreement only; not in GradPath)	—	X
NSGP Dissertation Prospectus Approval Form	---	---	X	At least 1 month before oral defense, submit to NSGP coordinator	X	—	—	X	X dissertation committee	—	X
Dissertation Prospectus/Proposal Confirmation	X	---	X	---	X Submits form in GradPath	—	—	—	—	—	X
Dissertation oral defense announcement	X	---	X	At least 10 business days before the defense date	X	X	—	X	—	—	X
Dissertation oral defense results	X	---	X	---	—	—	—	X	X	—	X
Dissertation Defense Committee Eval. Form	---	---	X	---	Collector & Reviewer	Reviewer	---	X	X	---	---
Dissertation	---	---	X	Refer to Graduate College Dates/Deadlines	---	---	---	X	X	---	X
Commencement verification (for diploma mailing address)	X	---	---	Final semester; when prompted by Graduate College	—	—	—	—	—	—	X

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