

# Graduate Student Handbook 2020-2022

## Human Nutrition



*College of*  
Human Environmental  
Sciences

Message from the Chair:

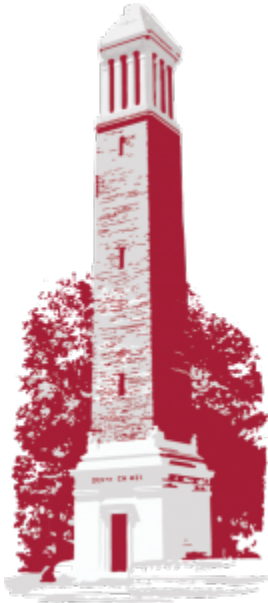
Welcome! We are pleased that you are a part of our Department. We hope that your educational experience will be both productive and exciting. Our goal is to help you gain the skills and knowledge that you will need to be competitive for the next step in your career. And, if you are uncertain what that career path should be, we will introduce you to many exciting opportunities in translational nutrition.

The Nutrition faculty at the University of Alabama have a wide range of research interests and expertise including clinical nutrition, community nutrition, behavioral nutrition, redox biology, cell and molecular biology, food science, genetics, and more! While we want you to have a strong research focus, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of acquiring a breadth as well as a depth of knowledge while you are here. Advances in our field demand nutrition researchers to collaborate with various disciplines now more than ever. To be successful, please immerse yourself in the resources made available to you by distance and on campus as well as the various expertise of our faculty. In short, I encourage you to get to know the faculty and graduate students in the Department.

Ultimately, your education and research training are in your own hands, and you will learn, if you do not know already, that scientific inquiry is a communal affair. Your interactions with other scientists, as much as your hard work and intelligence, are essential for your success at all levels. Whether your future lies in teaching, applied or basic nutrition research, or any of the other career options, we are excited to have the privilege of helping you navigate and mentoring you!

Kristi Crowe-White, PhD, RDN  
Department Chair, Associate Professor  
1/7/2021

# The Capstone Creed of The University of Alabama



The Capstone Creed is a statement of UA student values developed by the Student Leadership Council. The Capstone Creed is the pledge made at convocation by each incoming freshman class at the start of the academic year.

**“As a member of The University of Alabama community, I will pursue knowledge, act with fairness, integrity and respect; promote equity and inclusion; foster individual and civic responsibility; and strive for excellence in all I do.”**

## Graduate Handbook

As a graduate student in the Human Nutrition at The University of Alabama, I affirm that I have read in its entirety and understand the program requirements discussed in this Graduate Handbook. I acknowledge that I am the person responsible for monitoring and adhering to deadlines and requirements set forth within the handbook.

Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_ CWID: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This document must be submitted to the graduate program director within the second week of starting the graduate program. Students should maintain a copy for their records.

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# **Introduction and Overview**

The primary aim of our graduate program is to foster the student's development as either a health care provider or scientist by providing a strong technical background in research methods used in nutrition, a strong grasp of the current state of nutritional science, the analytical skills needed to address gaps in the current research, and the ability to apply research in a variety of settings to a variety of audiences. We also want to instill a desire to become a lifelong learner.

## **MS in Human Nutrition**

The Master of Science in Human Nutrition is a 30 credit hour program designed to prepare students to practice dietetics at an advanced level and/or to pursue doctoral study. The program develops research skills, stimulates independent thought, and provides up-to-date knowledge in food and nutrition. The master's degree is available both on campus and through distance education. The degree requirements and course content are the same regardless of where it is completed. There are three tracks available: Generalist, Clinical, or Community. The program tracks outlined are designed for registered dietitians, dietetic interns, students with a bachelor's degree in nutrition, or students from another discipline who have completed the required prerequisites.

## **PhD in Human Nutrition**

The PhD in Human Nutrition is a three-year, 74 credit hour program designed to align with the goals and objectives of the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. Graduates obtain the skills needed to perform bench-to bedside-to-community research that advances the field of nutrition to improve human health. Included in the curriculum are courses in translational nutrition methodologies, including laboratory analyses, metabolic assessment techniques, statistical research methodologies, and communication.

## **Graduate School**

The rules and regulations governing all UA graduate students can be found at the Graduate School webpage, <https://graduate.ua.edu/>. Additional department specific requirements are outlined within this handbook. Any instance where the Graduate School website and departmental handbook differ the departmental requirements will overrule the Graduate School policy.

## **General Guidelines and Requirements**

The program is constantly changing as the field of nutrition changes. As a result, information and procedures in this handbook may change during your graduate studies. Current students will always have the option of graduating under the course requirements that were in effect when they entered the program. However, students must adhere to all other guidelines outlined in the latest version of this handbook (eg. deadlines, disciplinary actions, methods of progress review, administration of qualifying exams, proposal and defense of thesis or dissertation, etc.)

# Expectations for Graduate Student Training

As a graduate student in the Department of Human Nutrition and Hospitality Management, you are responsible for your overall program of study and progress toward your degree. Progress toward degree includes adherence to all deadlines, milestones, and curriculum requirements. Your primary advisor and thesis/dissertation committee members will advise you throughout your time with us. However, it is incumbent on each student to be familiar with all requirements and take responsibility for your own education. Students should be familiar with the guidelines outlined in this handbook as well as those listed within the graduate catalog.

A graduate student is considered a professional student. Therefore, students should demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of course work and research. In addition, a graduate degree in Human Nutrition builds on foundational knowledge. As a new graduate student, you will notice a significant difference in expectations between undergraduate and graduate studies.

## Academic Expectations

- Graduate students should expect assignments that are complex and challenging. Graduate level courses usually require a research paper with critical analyses of multiple peer-reviewed research articles. Students who are not familiar with research designs should start their education by taking a graduate level research methods course.
- Students should review assignments early so they can schedule an appropriate amount of time to complete each assignment. Students should expect that graduate level assignments should take two to three times longer than undergraduate assignments.
- Graduate students should expect lectures with a greater level of detail than undergraduate courses. Instructors will expect the same level of detail in exam answers and assignments.
- Graduate students should expect that exam questions may ask the student to apply, analyze, or evaluate materials presented in class rather than simply list or describe.
- Students should not assume that every instructor has the same policies (ex. due dates, late assignments, etc.). Students should view the instructor's introduction to the course, syllabus, and any additional materials.
- Most instructors of graduate courses assume that the student has mastered English grammar and punctuation. Students needing additional help or reassurance should complete their writing assignments early and use the [Writing Center](#) to help improve these skills.
- In courses where Turnitin.com is used, students are expected to review matches, edit, and resubmit their edited work to Turnitin prior to submitting the paper for grading. Papers submitted to Turnitin.com should match the paper submitted to the instructor for grading.
- Main campus students are encouraged to participate in research activities.

## Attendance

- Distance learning students should set aside time to virtually attend class each week. Students are responsible for reviewing the course schedule and developing a plan to complete each unit in a timely manner. Additional time is needed to complete assignments and readings.
- Main campus students are expected to attend class and participate in discussion. Students should prepare for class by completing all assigned readings.

## Academic Advising

- Students should consult their academic advisor prior to registering for classes each term. Some graduate level courses may require specific undergraduate pre-requisite courses.
- Students attempting to complete a graduate level course in lieu of an undergraduate course should note that the course may require additional time to master both the undergraduate and advanced materials.
- Graduate courses are designated as either masters (5XX) or doctoral (6XX). Courses designated as 100-400 are undergraduate courses and cannot be counted toward graduate hours.

## Doctoral Student Expectations

Doctoral training is a time to develop the skills needed to be an effective researcher, teacher, and productive academic citizen. This section of the handbook outlines minimum expectations in research, teaching, and service.

### Research

The Department of Human Nutrition and Hospitality Management at The University of Alabama expects our main campus graduate students to actively participate in research projects that allow growth and development of the research skills and knowledge needed for becoming an independent researcher. We value research for its advancement of current knowledge and enhancement of practice. Although students will be working alongside mentors, upon completion of this program, students should possess personal experience in identifying current knowledge gaps, utilizing a variety of translational study designs, adopting appropriate methodology, implementing intervention techniques, analyzing and interpreting data, and communicating findings in written and verbal forms.

Students are always expected to conduct research within ethical standards of the University and individual field of practice.

Prior to graduation, students are required to submit at least two manuscripts to peer-reviewed scientific journals. These papers should be co-authored with a faculty member or mentor. Both the number of publications and quality of journals will be used to evaluate student success.

***Authorship Guidelines.*** Students and their mentors must adhere to the four key guidelines of scholarship, authorship, approval and agreement as well as the protocols of ensuring good publication ethics outlined by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). According to these agencies, an author is an individual who has made substantial intellectual contributions to a scientific investigation. All authors should meet the following four criteria:

- Scholarship:
  - Substantial contributions to the conception of the work or research design of the work, and/or acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work
- Authorship:
  - Drafting or critically revising the manuscript for important content

- Approval:
  - Review of and final approval of the version of the manuscript that will be published
- Agreement
  - Accountable for all aspects of the work including the accuracy and integrity of the work

The guidelines are intended to reserve authorship status to those who deserve credit and can take responsibility for the work.

***Responsibilities of Authors and Coauthors.*** For each manuscript submitted to a journal, the student should seek advice from the mentor on when and how to list authors. Authorship should be discussed prior to the writing of the manuscript and based on substantial contributions to the research and writing. Before undertaking the research, the research team should discuss the type of work that merits authorship. As the research gets underway, team members may change roles. Thus, appearance on the author list or placement on the author list may change. Only the people who have participated sufficiently in the research project should take public responsibility for the research. Students assisting with small aspects of the project such as participant recruitment, data collection, data management, analysis of laboratory data, or manuscript editing should not assume that they are entitled to author credit.

First authorship is important in medical sciences and public health because the first author's name is usually used to cite the paper. Typically the position of the team members' names is related to their contributions to the research and manuscript. The position of the last author may be used to designate the principle investigator in some fields. In other fields, the senior person or principle investigator is the first author listed. Once the research team finalized the authorship list, agreement can be reached on the role of each co-author and the work that they will complete for the paper.

Most research teams discuss who will be the lead author of a specific paper. The lead author assumes overall responsibility for the manuscript, corresponds with coauthors, edits final drafts of the manuscript, serves as the corresponding author with the journal editors, assures accuracy of the final draft and data, and maintains ownership of any research documents per protocol. If a student takes on the role of lead author, then the student agrees to take on these tasks.

Students completing research for their dissertation will assume the role of the principle investigator of the study, and first/lead author on all publications from the project. Members of the dissertation committee will be listed as coauthors of all publications from the dissertation research. If a student fails to submit the results of the dissertation for publication within one year from graduation, the student's faculty advisor may publish those findings as first/lead author and the student as second author.

Students who are not authors on the publication but have contributed to some aspect, large or small, of the research project may be listed in the acknowledgements section of the manuscript.

Please note that the department does not condone the following publication practices:

- Simultaneous submissions (sending the same manuscript to two journals simultaneously with the intent of withdrawing a manuscript as soon as one journal accepts the manuscript)



- Redundant publications (labeling previously published data as new findings in submitted manuscripts)
- Plagiarism in the publication process including self-plagiarism
- Ghost, guest, or gift authorship
  - Ghost authorship is the failure to identify someone who made substantial contributions to the research or writing of a manuscript that merited authorship. Ghost authors may include authors for hire. Ghost authorship may also include mentors/dissertation committee members who do not know that papers from the dissertation were submitted for publication.
  - Guest authorship is offering authorship out of appreciation or respect for an individual, or offering authorship with the hope that their name will increase the likelihood of publication or credibility of the work.
  - Gift authorship is credit offered as a tribute or in exchange for an anticipated benefit.

Students are not allowed to use university and departmental resources for their own research without their mentor's and the department chair's approval or guidance. Students seeking IRB, IACUC, or IBC approval must include a faculty mentor in their application. Faculty mentors should have been involved in the development of the protocol. Lastly, students should conform to standards set by their faculty mentor in the completion of all tasks related to an approved research protocol. Students who fail to conform to these standards or follow approved research protocols will be removed from the project.

## **Presentations**

The Department of Human Nutrition and Hospitality Management at The University of Alabama expects students to actively seek opportunities to present research findings at regional, national, and international conferences to become effective presenters. Professional research presentations provide students the opportunity to meet potential collaborators, attract future employers, and increase experience in communicating individual research. A minimum of two national or international presentation(s) are required as part of this program. Examples of presentation opportunities include:

- Departmental Level
  - Presenting research projects to peers and faculty members in current graduate courses (NHM 690, NHM 648, etc)
  - Presenting original research as part of the dissertation proposal and defense
- University Level
  - Submitting and presenting research at campus-wide symposiums such as:
    - Annual Graduate Research Symposium of the Department of Educational Study in Psychology, Research Methodology, and Counseling (ESPRMC)
    - Rural Health Conference
- Professional Level
  - Submitting and presenting an abstract to national conferences that pertain to individual interests (FNCE, SNEB, GSA, ASN, ASPEN, IFT, ACS, Neuroscience, Experimental Biology, etc.) The student will be responsible for knowing the submission dates and guidelines, submitting their abstract, and preparing a presentation accordingly.

For national presentations or presentations that include a publication, students should use the authorship guidelines in this document to determine authorship.

## **Travel Support**

The Graduate School at The University of Alabama provides financial support for students to travel and present their research at one national conference per year. Students must be accepted to present their original research at the event in order for funds to be awarded. Requests are to be submitted to the Graduate School by the student's faculty advisor and endorsed by the department chair. Additional information can be found at the [Graduate School's website](#).

\*Requests must be submitted prior to the event (by August 31st for Fall travel, January 31st for Spring travel, and April 30th for Summer travel). Travel support funds are awarded on a competitive basis.

Grant funded projects may include monies for travel to conferences where data from that project are presented. Students are encouraged to talk with their mentor about how to use these funds.

## **Grants and Fellowships**

The Department of Human Nutrition and Hospitality Management at The University of Alabama encourages students to seek funding opportunities for their projects. Students are also encouraged to apply for fellowships for graduate students, such as the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Heart Association, NIH Predoctoral Fellowships (Ruth L. Kirschstein Individual Predoctoral Fellowship), or American Society of Nutrition. Students are encouraged to discuss funding opportunities with their research mentors and advisor prior to submitting an application.

## **Teaching**

The Department of Human Nutrition at the University of Alabama expects doctoral students to engage in teaching activities in order to develop professional skills for becoming an effective instructor. If students are assigned to be "instructor of record," they must be responsible for ensuring the course meets all departmental, university, and national accreditation requirements.

Students must take NHM 635: Advanced Practicum in Post-Secondary Dietetics Education during the second or third year of the program. Teaching activities will be assigned only after completing the mandatory Graduate Teaching Assistantship Workshop offered by the Graduate School in August before classes begin in the fall. The department chair will schedule students for this workshop.

Students who are non-native speakers of English must also successfully complete the [International Teaching Assistant Program \(ITAP\)](#), conducted by the University's English Language Institute, before they will be allowed to teach. Non-native speakers will need to complete an initial evaluation. The number of courses needed will depend on the initial evaluation. More information is available at the [Capstone International Center's website](#).

## Service

The Department of Human Nutrition at The University of Alabama expects our students to actively engage in service activities, which can build leadership skills, enhance your curriculum vitae, and promote networking opportunities. Service is important because it can provide networking opportunities. Examples of service activities include:

- Departmental Level
  - Assisting new doctoral students in their orientation to the department such as finding housing, etc
  - Participating in faculty job interviews
  - Attending thesis/dissertation presentations
  - Representing the department in 3-minute thesis/dissertation contest
- College Level
  - Serving as a judge for Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Conference (URCA)
- University Level
  - Serving in a leadership role in a student organization such a Graduate Student Association (GSA)
- Professional Level
  - Serving in a leadership role in a professional organization
  - Serving as a reviewer for a peer-reviewed research journal
- Community Level
  - Participating in nutrition-related community outreach or community-based participatory research

# Academic Guidelines

## Course Load Restrictions

The maximum course load for a semester is 15 credit hours. Students may register for a maximum of 6 semester hours in a summer term or 12 hours during an entire summer dual session. No more than 3 semester hours may be taken during the Interim session. Taking more than 12 semester hours in a summer dual term requires a petition from the department regarding the extraordinary circumstances for approval by the Graduate School. A student who is employed part-time should consider taking a reduced load. It is recommended that fully employed students should register in no more than one course.

## Withdrawal

***Withdrawal from a Course.*** Graduate students who desire to withdraw from a course may do so during the period allowed for dropping a class. However, it is strongly recommended that they consult with their academic advisor or department head prior to doing so, as such an action may have ramifications related to their course progression, assistantship status, or other considerations. Such potential repercussions are the responsibility of the student to ascertain prior to making such a decision.

No notation of courses attempted will be made on the permanent record of a student who withdraws from the University by the last day to add classes in a particular semester. After that, the withdrawal from a course will be noted on the student's permanent record. It is the student's responsibility to consult the [Academic Calendar](#) for the specific date by which one may withdraw without receiving a grade notation. In extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control, a student may petition the department chair to drop a course after the date listed on the Academic Calendar. If the department chair agrees that there are extraordinary circumstances and supports the petition, it is forwarded to the college dean. If the college dean supports the petition, it is sent to the Graduate School for approval. After the tenth week, the student's academic status at the time of the withdrawal will be noted on the record ("W" for courses passing, "F" for courses failing).

Withdrawal from a course may affect several elements linked to registration and class loads, including (but not limited to) graduate fellowships, assistantships, tuition awards, financial aid, withholding taxes, etc. Before dropping a course, the student should contact all aspects of enrollment that may be affected.

***Withdrawal from All Courses.*** A graduate student may withdraw from the University (i.e., withdraw from all courses in the semester), either for non-medical or medical reasons, as long as this is done prior to the last day of classes. The first thing a student considering withdrawal should do is to consult an academic advisor. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a withdrawal through myBama and provide the information necessary to complete the withdrawal process. Academic Bankruptcy (described in the Undergraduate Catalog) is not available to graduate students. Withdrawal from the University requires approval from the Office of the University Registrar (206 Student Services Center) and dean of the Graduate School. Please visit The Division of Finance and Operations [Student Account Services](#) for more information

about the financial effects of withdrawing, including information on how federal financial aid, loans, and scholarships may be affected.

***Leave of Absence.*** Under compelling circumstances beyond the student's control, a graduate student may request that the department petition the Graduate School with the rationale for granting a leave of absence. If granted by the Graduate School, a leave of absence will cover one or more upcoming semesters rather than any prior semester(s). A leave of absence is not a method of avoiding continuous registration requirements, and it *does not* lengthen the time limit. When a student returns from a leave of absence, the Graduate School must be notified and will work with the department and student to determine the number of semesters remaining on the time limit and the degree requirements that remain.

***Military Leave.*** The University complies with laws concerning readmission of service members. A student who has been admitted to or enrolled in The University of Alabama Graduate School may ask for a military leave to fulfill a U.S. military obligation. The student should notify the dean of the Graduate School of a call to military service and provide documentation. Upon return from military service, the student also should notify the dean of the Graduate School of the intent to return to graduate school and provide documentation of honorable discharge. A student called to active military duty, unless dishonorably discharged, and eligible for readmission as defined by law, will receive an extension of the degree time limit equal to the term of eligible service, with a cap on the number of years in the extension. The extension is subject to the 5-year limit as applicable to readmission provisions in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (Section 484C of the HEA) and implementing regulations in 34 CFR Section 668.18.

### **Failure to Register for Classes**

If a student fails to register for three consecutive years, the student must reapply for admission. If readmission is granted, previous credit earned may be out of date and therefore not applicable toward a degree.

### **Time Limits for Degree**

***Master's Degree.*** All requirements for the master's degree must be completed during the six years (18 fall, spring, and summer semesters) immediately preceding the date on which the degree is to be awarded. There is no provision for an extension of the time limit beyond six years for master's students.

***Doctoral Degree.*** All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within nine years (27 fall, spring, and summer semesters) following admission to the doctoral program. Previous graduate credit may be applied to the doctoral degree if the credit was earned during the six-year period (not seven years) prior to admission to the doctoral program or accepted by the Graduate School. Such credit must be identified clearly on the [Outline of PhD Program \(Plan of Study\)](#) and requires Graduate School approval. Only those students graduating within the time limit for their doctoral program may apply previously approved graduate credit to the doctoral degree. Revalidation (recertification) of any expired course credit is not an option.

## **Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements for Federal Financial Aid Recipients**

All students at The University of Alabama who receive federal financial aid must make satisfactory academic progress toward completion of their degrees within a reasonable period of time. Satisfactory academic progress criteria may be obtained by contacting the Office of Student Financial Aid at 106 Student Services Center or calling 205-348-6756.

### **Transfer Credit**

MS students can request the transfer of up to 12 credit hours of graduate courses taken at other institutions. PhD students can request the transfer of up to 24 credit hours of graduate courses taken at other institutions.

Courses completed at other post-secondary institutions and accepted for UA graduate credit are given a grade of “P” and are not calculated in the overall GPA.

Students attempting to transfer graduate work completed at another university must complete this degree within 6 years from the date of the first course transferred.

Thesis work, practicum hours, pass/fail courses and internship hours do not count towards the graduate credit hours that can be transferred into the program.

To have transfer credit evaluated, students should complete the form entitled [Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit](#). Graduate transfer work is reviewed after enrollment in the graduate program. Please complete this form in the first semester of course work so that classes may be selected accordingly. Send the completed form directly to Mr. Eric Harris in the Graduate School at [eharris@ua.edu](mailto:eharris@ua.edu).

# Scholastic Requirements

## Academic Requirements

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** Each student must have an overall graduate grade point average of 3.0 or better for all graduate courses undertaken at The University of Alabama. Grades below “C” count in computing the GPA but do not carry credit toward a degree. Grade point averages are computed on the following grades: “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” “F,” “N,” and “I.” Grades of “P,” “W,” “NA,” “NC,” and “NG” do not count toward the GPA. In computing the GPA, an “I” or “N” counts as an “F” until replaced by the earned grade. All “I” and “N” grades must be removed within the first four weeks of the next term of enrollment if the overall GPA drops below a 3.0 as a result of the “I” or “N” grade(s).

Students must earn a B or better in a required course. Students earning a C or lower in a required course will be allowed one chance to repeat the course. Students must receive a B or better when repeating a required course. The first attempt will not be counted toward the degree but will be counted in the overall GPA. Additionally, students must earn a B or higher in a minimum of 18 credit hours taken within the nutrition department.

**Seventy-five Percent Rule:** At least 75 percent of the hours taken must have been completed with grades of “A” or B” at The University of Alabama. In applying this 75 percent rule, a maximum of 6 hours of thesis research may be counted, if appropriate.

**Repeating Courses:** Regular courses (courses other than IDGR assistantship, thesis, dissertation, etc) typically may not be repeated for graduate credit; this includes courses initially taken on an audit basis. However, a course that is required in a student’s curriculum in which the student earned a “D” or “F” may be repeated once. Both grades contribute to the computation of the GPA. Only required courses where the student has received a B or better will be counted toward the degree requirements. Federal regulations limit the number of times a student may repeat a course and receive financial aid for that course. Questions about these regulations should be addressed to the [Student Financial Aid Office](#).

## Academic Warning and Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from this program for failure to meet the scholastic requirements listed above. Departmental suspension (dismissal) from a degree program also results in suspension from the Graduate School.

**Unconditional Admission (Regular Admission):** A graduate student with good academic standing whose GPA drops below 3.0 at any time after earning 12 semester hours will have earned **Academic Warning**.

**Academic Warning:** A student placed on Academic Warning has the next 12 hours of graduate work to raise the overall GPA to 3.0 or better. The overall GPA after the next 12 hours following academic warning must be at least 3.0 to avoid **Academic Suspension** (dismissal) from the Graduate School.

The department may dismiss a student from a degree program if there is unsatisfactory

academic or other progress toward completion of the degree. Departmental dismissal also results in suspension from the Graduate School. **Students who are suspended may not attend class or enroll in any form of distance learning courses.**

Students are encouraged to use the time of the suspension in ways that assist their academic progress. Students may study in order to finish courses in which they have earned an incomplete (I) or no grade (N) and may work with faculty members in this process. Students may also address other non-academic problems that have impeded their progress.

While on academic warning, the student is not eligible to apply for candidacy for a degree or hold a Graduate Assistantship. Warning status must be removed by raising the overall GPA to 3.0 or better and/or retaking all required courses with grades below “B” to achieve a grade of “B” or better, during the next 12 hours of graduate course work. Failure to remove either a warning or conditional status within the first attempted 12 hours of graduate course work will result in Academic Suspension (dismissal) from the Graduate School.

***Permission to Continue Admissions:*** Some students are admitted with the understanding that they must meet certain requirements. Their acceptance letter (sent as an email or letter) will specify the conditions of their admission. These students must meet the conditions listed in their acceptance letter and the following policy listed in the graduate catalog. If such an applicant is admitted, they will need to obtain **permission to continue** in the program after the first 12 semester hours of graduate-level work have been completed. Permission to continue is by achieving a GPA of "B" or better (3.0) in the first 12 semester hours of graduate-level work completed and by satisfying any other conditions specified by the department or the Graduate School at the time of admission. If the 12 hours are completed in a term in which the total credits exceed 12, the evaluation is made on the basis of all graduate-level work completed at the end of that term of enrollment. Students admitted under this circumstance who do not meet the 3.0 requirement after their first 12 hours of graduate-level work will not receive permission to continue in their graduate program, and will be dropped from the program. A student who meets the requirements will assume automatically the status of a regularly admitted graduate student.

***Conditional Admission (English Language requirements met after admission):*** Students receiving conditional admission (English language requirements met after admission) should review the University’s [International Admissions requirements](#). Students will need to discuss enrollment in Intensive English Program courses with their advisor.



# Changing Programs

## MS to PhD

Students may apply to enter the PhD program while currently enrolled in the MS program without completing the MS if:

1. they entered under a regular admission, and
2. they are in good standing.

Students must complete an online expedited application form via the [Graduate School's website](#). The application must include:

- Statement of Purpose. This document should include:
  1. Intention and motivation toward the pursuit of a PhD in Human Nutrition with an emphasis in translational nutrition
  2. Research qualifications
  3. Teaching experience and expertise. Please discuss ability to teach specific courses in our undergraduate curriculum. Visit the [Major & Minor Course Checklist site](#) and scroll to "Food and Nutrition Major."
  4. Selected research area and potential faculty research mentor. This program is a mentored research degree. As such, potential applicants will want to select a research mentor early in the program. Research goals and objectives should be discussed in the applicant's statement of purpose so the admissions committee may determine whether this degree program fits well with the student's area of interest.
- Current resume or curriculum vitae

## Conditional MS or Admitted as Permission to Continue to PhD

All students that are conditionally admitted to the MS program must complete the requirements to become a regularly admitted student before they can apply to the PhD program.

## MS for Students Unable to Fulfill Requirements for the PhD Degree

Students in good standing who do not pass the PhD comprehensive exam after two attempts, are dismissed by their mentor and cannot identify a new mentor, or decide to leave the PhD program after passing the comprehensive exam but prior to completing the PhD dissertation can apply for a MS degree on a non-thesis track. These students will need to complete the requirements of the MS degree.

## Tracks within the MS Program

During the application process, students select a track in the MS program: Generalist, Clinical, or Community. Students with good scholastic standing who would like to change tracks should discuss this change with an advisor. MS students are only allowed to change their track once. Students who are officially on academic warning are not allowed to change tracks until the warning has been resolved.

# Description of Graduate Programs

There are two graduate programs in Human Nutrition within the Department of Human Nutrition and Hospitality Management. These programs include:

- Master of Science in Human Nutrition
- Doctor of Philosophy in Human Nutrition

## Master of Science in Human Nutrition

### Program Overview

The Master of Science in Human Nutrition is a **30 credit-hour program** designed to prepare nutrition professionals to practice dietetics at an advanced level and/or to pursue doctoral study. The program develops research skills, stimulates independent thought, and provides up-to-date knowledge in food and nutrition. There are three tracks available: Generalist, Clinical, or Community. The program tracks outlined below are designed for the registered dietitian, dietetic intern, student with a bachelor's degree in nutrition, or student from another discipline who has completed the required prerequisites.

The Accelerated Master's Program (AMP) is closely integrated with the undergraduate and graduate programs in which highly qualified undergraduate students begin graduate study in their senior year and simultaneously work toward both an undergraduate degree in Food and Nutrition (any track) and a master's degree in Human Nutrition (any track).

The MS degree can be completed by enrolling in either Plan I (thesis) or Plan 2 (non-thesis). The master's degree can also be completed by enrolling in either Plan I or Plan II through the AMP or the MS + DPD Program. The AMP integrates undergraduate and graduate program requirements. Undergraduate students who qualify for the AMP begin graduate study after 90 credit hours and may take both undergraduate and graduate courses simultaneously. Both the AMP and MS + DPD programs are designed for highly motivated students.

### Program Requirements

Graduate students in Human Nutrition will have selected one of three tracks on their application. The required course work will differ by track. Students should start their program by completing the required courses and should consider taking NHM 509 (Research Methods in Nutrition) and CHS 525 (Biostatistics) early in the program.

Graduate students may develop their own plan of study unless they are coordinating their master's degree in Human Nutrition with a DPD verification statement for the MS + DPD program. Students should consult their advisor for a specific plan of study that includes both graduate and undergraduate courses. When selecting graduate electives, please seek advice from your advisor. Some courses require a pre-requisite undergraduate course while others do not.

To complete the MS in Human Nutrition, students will need to complete the required courses designated in their track, a minimum of 18 hours in NHM designated courses (may include non-thesis and thesis research hours), a minimum of 30 credit hours at the graduate level (500 or greater), and a culminating project or exam entitled the Capstone Experience. Additionally,

students need to earn a grade of B or better in all required coursework and any NHM designated course, and at least a 3.0 overall GPA to graduate.

### Required Courses

Catalog descriptions of all of the 500 or 600 level graduate courses in Human Nutrition can be found in the online graduate catalog. Courses numbered 5XX or 6XX can be counted toward degree requirements. The table below outlines the requirements for each track in the MS in Human Nutrition.

Generalist Track	Clinical Concentration	Community Concentration
<b>Research Core</b>	<b>Research Core</b>	<b>Research Core</b>
NHM 509: Research Methods in Nutrition (or HES 509)	NHM 509: Research Methods in Nutrition (or HES 509)	NHM 509: Research Methods in Nutrition (or HES 509)
CHS 525: Biostatistics	CHS 525: Biostatistics	CHS 525: Biostatistics
		CHS 520 or HHE 521: Basic Epidemiology
<b>Nutrition Core</b>	<b>Nutrition Core</b>	<b>Nutrition Core</b>
NHM 561: Advanced Vitamin and Mineral Metabolism	NHM 561: Advanced Vitamin and Mineral Metabolism	NHM 550: Community Nutrition I
NHM 562: Metabolism of Energy Nutrients	NHM 562: Metabolism of Energy Nutrients	NHM 551: Community Nutrition II
NHM 555: Maternal and Infant Nutrition <i>OR</i> NHM 567: Nutrition Support for the Critically Ill	NHM 557: Childhood Obesity <i>OR</i> NHM 558: Nutrition in the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Disease	NHM 557: Childhood Obesity <i>OR</i> NHM 558: Nutrition in the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Disease
	NHM 567: Nutrition Support for the Critically Ill	NHM 555: Maternal and Infant Nutrition
	NHM 568: Nutrition for the Older Adult	NHM 556: Child and Adolescent Nutrition
<b>Electives</b>	<b>Electives</b>	<b>Electives</b>
5 electives (3 must be designated as NHM)	3 electives (1 must be designated as NHM)	2 electives (1 must be designated as NHM)
<b>Additional Requirements</b>	<b>Additional Requirements</b>	<b>Additional Requirements</b>
Capstone Experience	Capstone Experience	Capstone Experience

## Required Course Offerings and Pre-requisites

Course	Pre-Req	Fall	Spring	Summer
NHM 509: Research Methods in Nutrition (or HES 509)		x	x	x
CHS 525: Biostatistics		x		
CHS 520: Basic Epidemiology			x	
HHE 521: Basic Epidemiology		x	x	x
NHM 550: Advanced Community Nutrition I		x		
NHM 551: Advanced Community Nutrition II	NHM 550		x	
NHM 555: Maternal and Infant Nutrition		x		
NHM 556: Child and Adolescent Nutrition	NHM 555		x	
NHM 557: Childhood Obesity				x
NHM 558: Nutrition in the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Disease*		x	x	
NHM 561: Advanced Vitamin and Mineral Metabolism		x		x
NHM 562: Metabolism of Energy Nutrients*		x	x	x
NHM 567: Nutrition Support for the Critically Ill*		x	x	x
NHM 568: Clinical Nutrition for the Older Adult		x		x

-Offerings subject to change. Please check course schedule in myBama to confirm when courses are offered.

\*Course availability differs for distance and main campus students. Seek guidance from advisor.

## Nutrition Electives

Regardless of the selected track, all students must take at least 18 hours in their content area or NHM designated courses. However, the number of required nutrition electives will vary depending on which track the student selects.

- Generalist track = at least 9 credit hours of electives in nutrition.
- Community track = at least 3 credit hours of electives in nutrition.
- Clinical track = at least 3 credit hours of electives in nutrition.

Students may choose any NHM course not required in their selected track as an NHM elective. Aside from NHM courses offered in other tracks, the following are possible NHM electives:

Course	Pre-Requisites*	Fall	Spring	Summer
NHM 530: Advanced Nutrition Counseling	NHM/HES 509	x	x	
NHM 585: Clinical Nutrition Management		x	x	
NHM 587: Integrated Food Systems Management		x		x
NHM 588: Advanced Food Systems Management		x	x	
NHM 625: Nutritional Epidemiology		x		

## Electives Outside of Nutrition

Students may opt to take all electives within nutrition or take some courses outside of the department. Students may take up to 3-6 hours of courses outside of nutrition, depending on their selected track. A student should check the online syllabus to determine if the course will meet his/her learning needs. Students should seek approval from their advisor before taking an outside elective. Some options for electives outside the department that can be taken by distance include:

Course	When Offered?*
HHE 515: Advances in Health Promotion (prerequisite to HHE 520 and HHE 530)	Fall, Spring
HHE 520: Health Behavior	Fall, Spring
HHE 530: Health Promotion Techniques	Fall, Spring
HHE 589: Women and Health	Spring
CHS 520: Basic Epidemiology	Spring
CSM 537: Developing the Leader Within	Fall, Spring
CSM 547: Digital Resources	Fall, Spring
CSM 564: Digital Tools	Fall, Spring
CSM 575: Entrepreneurship in HES	Fall, Spring
NUR 510: Basic Concepts of Teaching Diabetes Self-Management Techniques	Winter interim (between fall and spring semesters)
NUR 516: Advanced Diabetes Management	Spring Interim (between spring and summer semesters)

\*Note: Course offerings are subject to change. **Many of the above electives may also be offered in the summer semester.** Please check the course schedule in your myBama to confirm when the course is being offered.

## Required Capstone Experience

All students must complete a capstone experience toward the end of their degree program. The Capstone Experience is a culminating project (thesis or non-thesis research project) or comprehensive exam that integrates prior learning. Main campus students can select either the thesis option (Plan I) or one of the non-thesis options (Plan II). Distance students can select from the available options in the non-thesis track (Plan II). Students need to contact their graduate advisor, and convey their decision regarding their capstone experience at least two semesters prior to the semester they wish to graduate. Students selecting the thesis track need to contact their advisor earlier.

**Plan I - Thesis Option:** Students interested in a thesis track should contact their advisor early in their studies. Thesis projects usually take two to three semesters to complete. Students completing a thesis will need to sign up for a total of six hours of NHM 599. These hours can count toward the required 18 hours in NHM designated courses needed for the degree. The thesis should focus on current nutritional concerns in which the student has a special interest. To complete the thesis option, students will need to:

- select a designated mentor (Chair) from the UA Nutrition faculty who is willing to serve as your chair

- select a thesis committee of at least three members including their mentor (one member must be from outside of the nutrition department)
- write a proposal that includes an extensive review of the literature and proposed methods that will be used in the study
- receive approval of the proposal from the designated mentor
- seek guidance from committee members prior to collecting data
- formally propose the research plan to the committee and respond to feedback
- receive IRB approval for the project in their own institution and UA
- collect data
- analyze data
- interpret the data and write up the results
- discuss implications of the study
- seek final approval from committee members and formally present the research to the committee members and other faculty
- and electronically publish the thesis according to The University of Alabama's guide for "[Electronic Theses and Dissertations.](#)"

Students completing a thesis should ensure that they can meet the Graduate School's [deadlines for students](#).

**Plan II - Non-Thesis Option:** Students, who select the non-thesis option, will complete either a non-thesis research project (NHM 598) or the comprehensive exam. The majority of students prefer the comprehensive exams.

**Non-thesis Research Project.** The non-thesis research project will take at least two semesters to complete. The student should take NHM 598 (Non-Thesis Research) with a designated mentor (UA Nutrition faculty) as the instructor in the semester the student plans to complete the project and graduate. The course is worth 3 hours and can be applied to the 30 hours required for graduation and the required 18 hours in nutrition. Students will need to write a proposal and seek approval by a designated mentor, seek and obtain IRB approval in their own institution and UA, collect data, analyze the data, and write up results using the brief manuscript style used by the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. If the student plans to complete research in their hospital or health care facility, then the project may require review by the medical IRB at UA. This group meets to review IRB proposals only once per month. Students must follow HIPPA guidelines when conducting medical research. Students should plan their project and seek IRB approval in the semester prior to registering for NHM 598.

**Comprehensive Exam.** The master's program in Human Nutrition requires students who do not complete a thesis (6 hours of NHM 599) or a non-thesis research project (3 hours of NHM 598) to pass a written comprehensive exam prior to graduation. The comprehensive examination is a culminating experience in which the student is expected to integrate prior learning. Students must inform the master's program Director of their intent to complete the comprehensive exam at least 1 semester prior to taking the exam. The comprehensive exam is taken in the student's last semester. The material covered in the exam will vary depending on the track the student selected. Students must be enrolled in at least one hour of graduate coursework in the semester they take the comprehensive exam. Students do not enroll in a comprehensive exam course. Students taking the exams will receive a study guide for the exam early in the semester they plan to take the exam. **This is typically the best option for distance learners**, as coordinating research projects by distance is difficult.

The master's comprehensive will be administered three times per year: once each fall, spring, and summer semester. The exact dates will be specified in the comprehensive exam guide. This exam guide will be provided to each student prior to the start of their final semester.

The exam will be divided into 3 parts.

- Students following the Generalist Track will answer questions from the following courses:
  1. General Research Methods
  2. Maternal and Infant Nutrition

*OR*

  - Clinical Applications
  3. Nutrient Metabolism
- Students following the Clinical Concentration will complete:
  1. General Research Methods
  2. Nutrient Metabolism
  3. Clinical Applications
- Students following the Community Concentration will complete:
  1. General Research Methods
  2. Community Nutrition
  3. Maternal and Infant Nutrition

Students should independently prepare for the master's comprehensive exam. Students may not solicit any advice or request an instructor provide further details regarding any question on the exam. The best answers are those in which the student demonstrates in-depth understanding of the topic. To do so, students should incorporate course material and scientific literature into the foundation of each answer. Sufficient justification for each answer will be expected. Insufficient depth or detail or incorrect content will not result in a passing grade.

***Evaluation:*** Two NHM graduate faculty members will independently read and evaluate the answers to each exam section. A four point scale will be used to record each evaluation of student responses (1=Emerging, 2=Progressing, 3=Proficient, 4=Mastery). Students must earn Proficient or Mastery on each section to pass. If a student fails 1 of the 3 parts (earning Emerging or Progressing), they may retake that part of the exam during the current semester. Students who fail 2 or more parts of the exam must wait until the following semester to retake the exam. The student must also register for another graduate course during the following semester.

***Notification of Passing/Failing:*** The master's program Director will email each student the results of the examination within 3-4 weeks after the end of the exam period.

***Retake Policy:*** Only 1 retake is allowed. All retakes are proctored. Failure to successfully pass any part(s) of the examination retake will result in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School without confirmation of the degree.

### **Applying to Graduate**

Each candidate for a master's degree must apply for graduation through [myBama](#) no later than the last day to add a class for the semester or the first session of the summer term in which

requirements for the degree are to be completed. For the specific date, see the Graduate School's [deadlines for students](#).



## PhD in Human Nutrition

### Overview

The PhD in Human Nutrition is a three-year, 74 credit hour program designed to align with the goals and objectives of the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. Graduates obtain the skills needed to perform bench-to-bedside-to-community research that advances the field of nutrition to improve human health.

### Degree Requirements

To complete the PhD in Human Nutrition, students will need to complete the required courses, obtain at least 74 credit hours (including non-dissertation and dissertation courses), pass both the written and oral preliminary exams, and complete the dissertation. Additionally, students need to earn a grade of B or better in all required coursework and any NHM designated course, and at least a 3.0 overall GPA to graduate.

### Plan of Study

As per the Graduate School Catalog, all doctoral students must have a completed [Outline of PhD Program \(Plan of Study\)](#) approved by the Graduate School no later than the semester during which the student will complete 30 semester hours of UA and/or transfer credit toward the doctoral degree. Otherwise a "hold" may be placed on future course registrations.

### Transfer Credits

With the approval of the student's PhD Advisor and the Dean of the Graduate School, up to 24 of the required course hours may be transferred from another institution. Submit the form, [Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit](#) to the Graduate Office who will submit it to the Graduate School during the first semester enrolled at the University of Alabama.

For students who have earned a masters degree at The University of Alabama, all applicable hours (i.e., course hours for which graduate credit has been received in the same department or in a closely affiliated department, but not including NHM 598 or NHM 599) may transfer to the PhD program. The number of hours that qualify for transfer is at the discretion of the Department, as recommended by the student's PhD Advisor and as approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Subject to the approval of the student's PhD Advisor, graduate courses in allied departments may be taken to meet the remainder of the requirements. Transfer credits are considered Pass/Fail for calculation of grade point average, but are included in the course hours, provided they are from graded courses.

## Course Requirements

Only courses numbered 500 or above will count toward the doctoral degree. At least 74 credit hours of graduate coursework are required including:

Class	Credit Hours	When Offered
<b>Nutrition Core (21 hours)</b>		
NHM 601: Contemporary Research in Translational Nutrition Science	3	Fall
NHM 602: Methods in Integrative Nutrition Assessment	3	Fall
NHM 603: Nutrition Intervention	3	Spring
NHM 625: Nutritional Epidemiology	3	Fall
NHM 691: Grant Writing for Translational Nutrition Research	3	Spring
NHM 695: Interpretation of Nutrition Research	3	Spring
NHM 635: Advanced Practicum in Post-Secondary Dietetics Education	3	Fall
<b>Statistics Courses: (12 hours at the 600 level)</b>		
BER 540: Statistical Methods in Education (Does not count toward the 12 hours)	3	Fall
Applied Regression Analysis	3	Spring
NHM 648: Secondary Analysis of Survey Data	3	Fall
Additional Stats: See stats sequence	6	
<b>Electives (Up to 17 hours)*</b>		
NHM 550: Advanced Community Nutrition I	3	Fall
NHM 551: Advanced Community Nutrition II	3	Spring
NHM 555: Maternal and Infant Nutrition	3	Fall
NHM 556: Child and Adolescent Nutrition	3	Spring
NHM 557: Childhood Obesity	3	Summer
NHM 558: Nutrition in the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Disease	3	Spring
NHM 561: Advanced Vitamins and Minerals	3	Fall
NHM 562: Metabolism of Energy Nutrients	3	Spring
NHM 567: Nutrition Support for the Critically Ill	3	Spring
NHM 568: Nutrition for the Older Adult	3	Fall
NHM 610: Nutrition and Health Disparities	3	
NHM 611: Nutritional Neuroscience	3	
NHM 692 Food and Nutrition Product Development	3	
NHM 698: Non-dissertation Research	Variable (1-12)	
<b>Research Core (24 hours)</b>		
NHM 699: Dissertation Research**	24	

\*All students must pass the Preliminary Examination and gain degree candidacy before enrolling in NHM 699. Once a student has enrolled in NHM 699, they must continue enroll in at least 3 hours each semester until they graduate.

### Plan of Study Option 1: Students with MS in Human Nutrition

<b>Year 1: Fall (12 hours)</b>	<b>Year 1: Spring (12 hours)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BER 540: Statistical Methods in Education</li> <li>• NHM 602: Methods in Integrative Nutrition Assessment</li> <li>• NHM 625: Nutritional Epidemiology</li> <li>• Elective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BER 695 Applied Regression Analysis or PY 603: Advanced Statistics II</li> <li>• NHM 603: Nutrition Intervention</li> <li>• NHM 695: Interpretation of Nutrition Research</li> <li>• Elective</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2: Fall (12 hours)</b>	<b>Year 2: Spring (14 hours)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stats elective</li> <li>• NHM 601: Contemporary Research in Translational Nutrition Science</li> <li>• NHM 648: Secondary Analysis of Survey Data</li> <li>• NHM 635: Advanced Practicum in Post-Secondary Dietetics Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHM 691: Grant Writing for Nutrition Research</li> <li>• Stats Elective</li> <li>• Elective</li> <li>• Non-dissertation research hours (5 hrs)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3: Fall (12 hours)</b>	<b>Year 3: Spring (12 hours)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation</li> </ul>

### Plan of Study Option 2: Needs Pre-Requisite MS and Undergraduate Courses\*

<b>Year 1: Fall (15 hours)</b>	<b>Year 1: Spring (15 hours)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BER 540: Statistical Methods in Education</li> <li>• <b>NHM 509: Research Methods in Nutrition</b></li> <li>• <b>NHM 561: Advanced Vitamins and Minerals</b></li> <li>• NHM 625: Nutritional Epidemiology</li> <li>• NHM 602: Methods in Integrative Nutrition Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BER 695 Applied Regression Analysis or PY 603: Advanced Statistics II</li> <li>• <b>NHM 562: Metabolism of Energy Nutrients</b></li> <li>• <b>NHM 558: Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Disease</b></li> <li>• NHM 695: Interpretation of Nutrition Research</li> <li>• NHM 603: Nutrition Intervention</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2: Fall (12 hours)</b>	<b>Year 2: Spring (12 hours)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stats elective</li> <li>• NHM 601: Contemporary Research in Translational Nutrition Science</li> <li>• NHM 648: Secondary Analysis of Survey Data</li> <li>• NHM 635: Advanced Practicum in Post-Secondary Dietetics Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHM 691: Grant Writing for Nutrition Research</li> <li>• Stats Elective</li> <li>• Non-dissertation research hours (6 hrs)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3: Fall (12 hours)</b>	<b>Year 3: Spring (12 hours)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation</li> </ul>

\*Students who have not completed any clinical nutrition courses will need to take NHM 363 (Applied Nutrition) and NHM 365 (Medical Nutrition Therapy) prior to NHM 558. Only courses numbered 500 or above will count toward the doctoral degree.

## Degree Time Line

The minimum period in which the doctoral degree can be earned is three full academic years of graduate study after completion of a baccalaureate degree. Students must meet the following milestones by the times indicated in order to maintain the highest priority for financial assistance and achieve an acceptable evaluation score at annual performance reviews.

Year	Semester	Objective
1	Fall	Start Research Projects with Major Professor
1	Spring	Retention Review Continue Classes and Research with Major Professor Complete Plan of Study
2	Fall	Retention Review Continue Classes and Research with Major Professor
2	Spring/ Summer	Retention Review Continue Classes and Research with Major Professor Take Preliminary Exams Complete Appointment or Change of Doctoral Dissertation Committee Form Write Dissertation Proposal and Defend to Committee
3	Fall	Take Dissertation Credits Complete dissertation research
3	Spring	Take dissertation credits Write results of dissertation research Apply for Graduation Oral defense of the dissertation Final edits of the written document for the graduate school Submit dissertation electronically with the <a href="#">Committee Acceptance Form for Electronic Thesis or Dissertation and Publication form for Electronic Thesis or Dissertation</a>

## Attendance at Departmental Seminars

Students will have the opportunity to view presentations from other students, research faculty, and visiting scholars. Students complete research presentations during courses, thesis or dissertation proposals, and thesis or dissertation defense. These presentations are an important part of the educational experience. Therefore, students in the PhD in Human Nutrition program are required to attend peer presentations, which do not conflict with their schedule. Students who cannot attend need to inform and get approval from their mentors.

## Residency

The University of Alabama recognizes that doctoral students should be immersed in advanced study and inquiry, interact extensively and meaningfully with faculty and peers, engage with the academic community in their field, and have access to the educational resources of the University. To achieve these goals, a minimum of 50 percent of coursework hours to be counted in a student's doctoral program must be from The University of Alabama (exclusive of

dissertation research hours and subject to the Graduate Catalog's Transfer of Credit policies). Additionally, 100 percent of dissertation credit hours must be from The University of Alabama. Diverse academic traditions, rapidly changing instructional modalities, and new student populations are acknowledged and accommodated with this policy.

The student must spend an academic year (two semesters) in continuous residence on the campus of The University of Alabama as a full-time student in the Graduate School. However, the student can meet the requirement with any one of the following four enrollment options:

1. a full-time fall semester plus full-time enrollment the next spring;
2. a full-time summer (consisting of 2 full-time summer terms) plus the following full-time fall semester;
3. a full-time spring semester plus the next full-time summer semester (consisting of 2 full-time summer terms); or
4. a full-time spring semester plus the following full-time fall semester.

To meet this requirement, only non-dissertation coursework can be applied. Dissertation or thesis research (NHM 698 or NHM 699) cannot be used. Distance-learning courses delivered online or by any other distance-learning format may not be used to satisfy the doctoral residency requirement.

### **Advisory Committees**

***Selection of a Mentor:*** It is critically important to find a research mentor who conducts research projects that interests you. It is highly recommended that students identify a potential research mentor during the application process. Please see [faculty websites](#) for specific research interests. Please note that admission to the program is based on availability within the selected mentor's lab. Thus, the selection of the mentor is very important.

***After Admission:*** Students are assigned a mentor based on interests expressed within the statement of purpose during the application period. Upon arrival to campus, it is the student's responsibility to set up weekly or biweekly mentor meetings. The selected mentor should serve as the chair of the dissertation committee.

***Changing Mentors:*** Although this is uncommon, students may need to change their research mentor. This request can only be made in the first year of study. Otherwise, the request may delay progress in the program. In addition, students can only make this request once. Students in good standing who wish to change their research mentor should directly contact the Director of the PhD Program in Human Nutrition. The Director may be able to resolve the problem. If the Director is unable to resolve the problem, then the Director will attempt to provide an alternative mentor. However, the Director may not be able to accommodate your request. If a faculty member agrees to serve as the new mentor, the student must inform the Department Chair, the Director of the PhD Program in Human Nutrition and both the old and new research mentors of the change.

***Dismissal by a Mentor:*** A performance evaluation (See Appendix) will be completed for each student by the research mentor. Faculty members who feel a student is not making appropriate progress or meeting their academic or research requirements appropriately must document the problems with the student and request the student respond with appropriate changes within a specific timeframe *prior* to considering initiating official dismissal procedures. However, if the

student fails to show evidence of improvement and adherence to the discussed changes, the faculty mentor can submit documentation to the Department Chair and the Director of the PhD Program in Human Nutrition for consideration for dismissal. Performance evaluations are reviewed by both the Director of the PhD program and Department Chair. If dismissed, the Director will not attempt to provide an alternative mentor.

**PhD Dissertation Committee:** Once a PhD student has passed the preliminary written examinations (see comprehensive exams section), the study will select a committee with no less than five members, including the research mentor, who will guide the student in developing the dissertation proposal, completing the dissertation research, and writing of the dissertation document. This committee is responsible for evaluating the defense of the proposal and final dissertation. **At least one member** of the committee must be from outside the major department. This external member may be from another institution. Thus, the dissertation must consist of at least five members including the external member. At least **three** of the committee members should be graduate faculty within the Department of Human Nutrition. All of these members are voting members in regards to the candidate's progress toward degree.

Prior to inviting committee members to serve on the dissertation, students should discuss the composition of the dissertation committee with their mentor(s.) Students should develop a one page abstract of the project that can be used to help solicit committee members. Prior to submitting the names of the dissertation committee into the electronic "Thesis/Dissertation Committee" form, students should:

- invite the faculty member to serve on the committee,
- meet with the committee member (in person or by phone, skype, etc),
- provide the member an abstract of the project, and
- discuss the project with the potential member.

After this initial meeting, the student should confirm whether the faculty member wants to serve on the committee. Students should not assume that a faculty member wants to be on their committee. Once the committee is formed, the student should complete the electronic "Thesis/Dissertation Committee" form. After completion of the form, the Graduate Program Office will forward this nomination to the Dean of the Graduate School who will make formal appointments. If committee changes are made, the student is responsible for edits to the "Thesis/Dissertation Committee" form.

**Qualifications of Committee Members.** Committee members must have graduate faculty status. These members are listed on the Graduate Faculty database. The chair of the committee must have full graduate faculty status. Nominations of outside members from other institutions require the nominee's CV, a letter of support explaining the need for affiliate graduate faculty status submitted by the student's major professor and a formal request for the affiliate graduate faculty appointment from the Department Chair. Nominations should be submitted to the Graduate Program Office who will direct the form to the Department Chair, who will then relay the formal request to the Graduate School. In accordance with Graduate School policy, this external committee member **must be nominated and in place within one year of the projected dissertation defense date.**

### **Evaluation of Research Progress**

PhD students are encouraged to engage in research as soon as practical and may explore short-term projects before solidifying a dissertation project. All students must make continuous

satisfactory research progress while enrolled in the PhD program. Student performance will be evaluated each semester by their mentor starting in their second semester of their first year. Each student will be evaluated for their continuation in the program and their eligibility of receiving financial support.

Each student is asked to complete the PhD Student in Human Nutrition Progress Report (see Appendix) and submit this form to the mentor. At the beginning of each semester, the student will meet with the mentor to outline goals and objectives for the semester. The research mentor will meet with the student to evaluate progress toward meeting the stated goals and objectives at the end of each semester. The student will be rated by the mentor as either exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or fails to meet expectations. The major professor must complete the evaluation page of the Progress Report (see Appendix) and discuss the findings with the student. A copy of this report shall be sent to the Department Chair, the Director and the student.

Students who fail to meet expectations will be placed on probation and have one semester to improve their evaluation to a meets/exceeds expectations rating. All evaluations are reviewed by the Director and the Department Chair. If the student fails to improve his/her rating, the student may be dismissed from the program. Decisions regarding dismissal will be made by the mentor, Director, and Department Chair.

#### Evaluation Criteria.

- **Exceeds Expectations:** The student has an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher, met stated goals and objectives for the semester, made satisfactory research progress commensurate with time in the program, completes all research tasks in an ethical manner, follows standard and established research protocols, and has accomplished two or more of the following:
  - a. Presentation of research at a national or international meeting or submission of an abstract for a presentation.
  - b. Submission of a research proposal for funding external to the University.
  - c. Any honor or award reflecting outstanding achievement.
  - d. Submission/acceptance/publication of a research manuscript as a junior author.
- **Meets Expectations:** The student has an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher, met stated goals and objectives for the semester, made satisfactory research progress commensurate with time in the program, completes all research tasks in an ethical manner, follows standard and established research protocols, and has accomplished one or more of the following:
  - a. Presentation of research at a national or international meeting or submission of an abstract for a presentation.
  - b. Submission of a research proposal for funding external to the University.
  - c. Any honor or award reflecting outstanding achievement.
  - d. Submission/acceptance/publication of a research manuscript as a junior author.
- **Fails to Meet Expectations:** The student has an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher, and is **NOT** meeting one of the following expectations:
  - a. Stated goals and objectives for the semester,
  - b. Satisfactory research progress commensurate with time in the program,
  - c. Completion of all research tasks in an ethical manner, or
  - d. Following standard and established research protocols.

**Students who are not making appropriate progress toward the degree based on the Degree Time Line or students with an overall GPA below 3.0 must be rated fails to meet expectations.**

Students on assistantships will receive a review of their progress from their supervisor. The student's progress toward degree completion, mentor's review, and the supervisor's review will be considered when making decisions for continuation of assistantship funding.

### **Comprehensive (Preliminary/Qualifying) Exams and Advancing to Candidacy**

**Overview:** The requirements for advancing to candidacy include:

- passing the qualifying examination;
- completion of all coursework as listed on the approved program of study;
- receiving approval of the dissertation subject;
- successfully defending the dissertation proposal, which includes the written proposal; and
- having the designated dissertation committee recommend the student for [Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree](#). The completed candidacy form must be submitted to the Graduate School well in advance of the final semester.

Only students admitted to candidacy may register for dissertation hours.

**Written Exam:** The comprehensive or preliminary qualifying examination is required of all doctoral candidates. This examination is administered after:

- foreign language/research skill requirements are met,
- completion of the required core nutrition courses, and
- the comprehensive exam committee deems the student to have adequate preparation in the major and minor fields of study.

To take the qualifying exam, students must be in good standing based on graduate school guidelines.

- Students may not have any incompletes "I."
- Students must have a current overall GPA of 3.0 or above.

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to determine the student's research competence to begin work on a dissertation. The written examination should be successfully completed at least nine months before the degree is to be awarded. The examination is completed in two phases.

- Phase 1: Application of Translational Nutrition Principles (written)
- Phase 2: Research Competence (oral)

**Students will not be able to move to Phase 2 of the examination until successful completion of Phase 1.**

#### ***Phase 1: Application of Translational Nutrition Principles***

This section of the qualifying examination involves application of content from the following required courses:

1. NHM 601: Contemporary Research in Nutrition Science



2. NHM 602: Methods in Integrative Nutrition Assessment
3. NHM 603: Nutrition Intervention
4. NHM 625: Nutrition Epidemiology
5. NHM 648: Secondary Data Analysis

**Offerings:** Students should consult their academic advisor regarding the timing of the exam in the context of their academic plan.

**Procedures for Phase 1:** Four weeks prior to the scheduled exam, students will randomly select their nutrition topic from a list of clinical nutrition topics and receive the questions. The student will be asked to develop a translational research agenda for the topic and develop three study protocols with the following designs:

- Section 1: Bench or Basic/Mechanistic Study
- Section 2: Epidemiological/Cross-Sectional Study
- Section 3: Efficacy and Pragmatic Studies

For each section, students will be asked to develop a research protocol including:

- a hypothesis with at least two objectives, and
- an appropriate methods section based on the selected topic and type of study.

Each section will be limited to 6 total pages, double spaced, 12 font, and one inch margins. Tables may be single spaced and included as Appendices. Only two tables are allowed.

**Submitting the exam:** Students will create three separate files or one for each section. They will also submit one master list of references in alphabetical order. Copies of all references will be placed in a folder in box. Students should name each reference file in the following way: last name of author and year. Example: Knol 2019.

**Turnitin.com:** The University of Alabama is committed to helping students to uphold the ethical standards of academic integrity in all areas of study. Therefore, all work will be evaluated for originality by submitting each section of the exam to turnitin.com as a separate assignment. The reference list does not need to be submitted to turnitin.com. The paper submitted to turnitin.com will be graded by the comprehensive exams committee. Graders will review matches and may deduct **one point for every point over a 12% match**. The committee will have access to all the references while grading.

**Academic Misconduct:** All students in attendance at the University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student. The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

**Situations involving any suspected violation of the Academic Honor Code on the comprehensive exams for the doctoral degree will be sent to the Academic Misconduct Monitor (in HES: Assistant Dean). Any student found in violation of the Academic Honor Code will be subject to penalties imposed by the Academic Misconduct Monitor and may be as severe as dismissal from the University.**

**Grading:** Each section of the exam will be graded by three nutrition professors for content, grammar, and organization of thought. Graders will be blinded to reduce bias. Answers within each section will be graded separately. Students may receive one of the following grades: pass (80% or better), contingency (78-80%), and fail. Insufficient depth or detail or incorrect content will not result in a passing grade.

- Students who pass all three sections of the written exam may move to Phase 2.
- Students who receive a contingency grade on any section of the exam will be allowed to rework that section of the exam for a better grade. Contingency grades will need to be resolved within one week after initial exam feedback. Once any contingency grades are removed, the student may move to Phase 2.
- Student who fail one or more sections will be allowed to retake those sections during the next available testing opportunity. **Only 1 retake is allowed.**

Failure to successfully pass any part(s) of the examination retake will result in dismissal from the degree program and the Graduate School without confirmation of the degree. Students retaking a section of the exam will randomly receive a new topic to base their answer upon from the set of topics distributed during that testing period.

### ***Phase 2: Research Competence (Oral Exam)***

The oral exam will be completed at the dissertation proposal defense. In this phase, the student will:

- Select a chair (or 2 co-chairs) as primary mentor(s) (see information on advisory committees),
- Select a total of 5 professors that will serve on the dissertation committee according to graduate school guidelines (see Advisory Committees),
- Complete the electronic “Thesis/Dissertation Committee” form,
- Complete the Dissertation Research Proposal (See Guidelines for Writing the Dissertation Proposal) and the IRB/IACUC/IBC protocol,
- Revise the proposal document to the chair’s satisfaction (a student cannot set a proposal meeting until the chair is satisfied with the document),
- Gain approval of the chair (co-chairs) to distribute the proposal to all committee members,
- Schedule a formal proposal defense with an open invitation to all faculty and graduate students,
- Post flyers regarding the defense in public venues,
- Formally present the proposed project including background, research questions and hypotheses, methods, and projected timeline to the committee and other audience members, and
- Answer questions from both the general audience and the dissertation committee.

All doctoral candidates must give members of the dissertation committee a minimum of two weeks to read the proposal before the date of the required oral examination.

Successful defense of the oral exam resulting in at least 80% favorable vote from the committee is required for students to be recommended for **admission to candidacy**. Committee members will sign the **Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree** form. At this point, the student will be considered a doctoral candidate and may register for dissertation hours.

***Changes to Approved Dissertation Proposals.*** In some rare instances, students may not be able to complete the proposed research approved by their committee. Examples of such instances include but are not limited to:

- changes in University policies that restrict or limit the proposed research,
- newly published research that may change the significance, scope or methods of the proposed work,
- early results that suggest the research should be discontinued due to adverse effects or severe adverse effects,
- recruiting problems that cannot be resolved,
- change in the health status of the student that limits their ability to complete the proposed work, and
- early results that suggest no therapeutic effect to be derived.

If any of these situations were to occur, the student should contact the committee chair. The committee chair will then contact the Director of the MS or PhD program and the department chair. The Committee chair, director, and department chair will meet to review the original proposal, description of the problem, and potential solutions. This group will decide to either continue the research as proposed, make significant changes to the proposed methods (example: change from a clinical trial to an online survey, change from a clinical trial with humans to a rodent model, etc), or propose an alternative dissertation. If changes are approved, these changes may lead to a delay of graduation. Students should refer to their offer letters for the term of their assistantship, if applicable.

If a student is allowed to make minor alterations to the methods only without changing the composition of the committee, then the student should:

- propose those changes in writing and submit to the committee members,
- schedule a meeting to discuss the proposed changes with the committee members,
- develop an alternative timeline approved by the committee, and
- obtain IRB/IACUC/IBC approval of modifications.

Once the committee and IRB/IACUC/IBC approve the new plan, the student can continue the research utilizing the new methods. The committee chair should notify their program director that the committee has approved the desired changes.

If a student is allowed to propose an alternative thesis or dissertation or substantially altered thesis or dissertation, then the student will need to:

- Work with the chair of the committee to alter the research plan.
- Create a project abstract that can be distributed to committee members.
- Assess the composition of the existing committee and add or eliminate committee members.
  - For existing committee members, the student should provide each committee member with a copy of the revised abstract, meet with the members to discuss changes in research questions and hypotheses, methods, and projected timelines, and discuss the member's willingness to continue to serve on the committee.
  - For new committee members, the student should invite the new member to serve on the committee, provide the potential member with the abstract, meet with the potential committee member and the Committee Chair (in person or by phone, skype, etc), discuss the project with the potential member, and confirm whether the faculty member wants to serve on the committee.

- Committee members, whose expertise is no longer needed, should be contacted by the student to discuss the changes in the plan and committee.
- If committee member changes are made, the student is responsible for edits to the “Thesis/Dissertation Committee” form.
- Complete or modify the Thesis or Dissertation Research Proposal (See Guidelines for Writing the Dissertation Proposal) and the IRB/IACUC/IBC protocol.
- Revise the proposal document to the chair’s satisfaction (a student cannot set a proposal meeting until the chair is satisfied with the document).
- Gain approval of the chair (co-chairs) to distribute the proposal to all committee members.
- Schedule a formal meeting to discuss the changes to the plan with the committee members only.
- Formally present the proposed revised or significantly altered project including rationale, any additional background needed, research questions and hypotheses, methods, and projected timeline to the committee.
- Answer questions from the dissertation committee.

Once the committee and IRB/IACUC/IBC approve the new plan, the student can continue the research utilizing the new methods. The committee chair will notify their program director that the committee has accepted the revised plan.

Note: While changes in the proposed research plan may extend time to graduation, they will NOT extend the time limit for the degree. Although a change in plan may be granted, the student should not expect to receive additional financial assistantship from the department. Please review your offer letter, if applicable.

### **Dissertation Research Proposal: Guidelines for Writing the Dissertation Proposal**

A formal research proposal is required. The proposal should be defended no later than the start of the third year. A new proposal will be required if the dissertation research changes significantly.

Before proceeding to phase 2 of the comprehensive exam, which is orally defending the dissertation proposal, students must complete and submit a written proposal.

In general, the proposal is a document that demonstrates the following:

- The ability to identify a substantive proposal topic. All students should discuss with their research mentor(s) how to determine the specific topic of the proposal. The topics may be completely distinct from ongoing research in the student’s lab, may build upon current or previous work in the lab, or may be related to the topic of the student’s doctoral research, *as long as the proposed research demonstrates scientific independence and does not simply reproduce an experimental plan already proposed in the doctoral adviser’s research grants.*
- The ability to formulate valid and testable hypotheses.
- The ability to identify the importance of and justification for the proposed research.
- The ability to prepare a sound research plan that includes both appropriate techniques and approaches suitable for the testing of the hypotheses and alternative strategies and hypotheses.

## General Instructions

Students should refer to the instructions on completing a dissertation titled “[A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Thesis and Dissertation](#).” The graduate school provides educational sessions on writing thesis and dissertation. Students can opt to complete a traditional dissertation, outlined in the guide, or article-style dissertation.

All parts of both traditional and article-style dissertations must conform to the provisions set forth in [A Student Guide to Preparing Electronic Theses and Dissertations](#). Students considering the article-style approach should contact the Graduate School before beginning their work if they have questions concerning specific problems or deviations from traditional procedure. Students should number the pages in the proposal according to the guide.

Students should make the proposal easy to read and follow. The proposal must be well-written using proper English grammar, but it also must be well-organized and presented in an easy to read manner. Students should embed figures and tables within the document, next to the relevant section where they are first mentioned. Use bold, italics, boxes, etc. to highlight particular sections.

### Traditional Dissertation

If the traditional dissertation format is used, students should use the guidance on writing the first three chapters of the dissertation to prepare their proposal.

### Article-style Dissertation

If the article style format is used, then the final dissertation should contain a minimum of two manuscripts ready for submission with all required pages for the dissertation and a full review of the literature. Article-style dissertations must be based upon research completed while the student is enrolled at The University of Alabama. For each article used, the student must be the first author, or equivalent, as defined by the discipline.

As with traditional dissertations, the article-style dissertation must be the student's original idea. It must be a unified work and include a sequence of articles of publishable quality around a cohesive theme, with a comprehensive review of literature demonstrating an in-depth understanding of the unifying framework.

In article-style dissertations there will be:

- introductory material to describe the studies, show how they are related, and explain their significance;
- connecting language to bridge each study to the next; and
- a summary making clear the importance of the studies, integrating the major findings, and discussing the implications for the overall topic.

### Specific Directions

Regardless of format, the proposal should follow the guide and include the following:

- **Title Page**
  - Include the following information:

- Title of Research Project: Choose a title that is specifically descriptive, rather than general. Note requirements for the title in the guide.
  - Your Name
  - Date
  - List of PhD Dissertation Committee Members (indicate primary research mentor).
- **Abstract** (must not exceed 350 words)
  - The proposal must contain a summary of the proposed research activities not more than 350 words. Use a structured abstract form. The summary should be written in the third person and include a statement of objectives, methods to be employed, and the significance of the proposed activity to the advancement of knowledge. It should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields and understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader.
- **List of abbreviations or symbols**
- **Table of Contents** including title of each section
- **List of tables**
- **List of figures**
- **List of illustrations**
- **Review of the Literature**
  - Complete an extensive review of the literature and gap analysis. At the end of this chapter provide at least two specific aims with hypotheses for each manuscript based on the stated gaps in the literature. This section should include:
    - **Background** Describe in detail the background leading to the present proposal, critically evaluate existing knowledge, and specifically identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill.
    - **Significance** State concisely the importance and scientific relevance of the research described in this application.
    - **Innovation** Why and/or how will it lead to a significant advancement of the field? Briefly state whether the proposed research has any innovation in terms of approaches or methodologies.
    - **Preliminary Studies/Data** Describe or present results of all preliminary studies that suggested hypotheses presented in the specific aims or that support the feasibility of the proposed research.
    - **Specific Aims** List the broad, long-term objectives and what the proposed research is intended to accomplish. State the hypotheses to be tested.
- **Methods or Project Description Section**
  - **Research Design and Methods.** Describe the research design and the procedures to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Discuss the potential difficulties and limitations of the proposed procedures and alternative approaches to achieve the specific aims. Discuss the validity of all measures used and appropriate method for deriving measures.
  - **Timeline:** Provide a tentative timeline for the project.
  - **Publication Plan:** Discuss publication plan. Contents of each proposed manuscript.
- **Reference list.**

- List all references. Each reference must include the title, names of all authors, book or journal, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. They should conform to a single standard format. This format should be used for in-text citations. The references should be limited to relevant and current literature. **NOTE:** You should read every paper that is cited in this section. It is not ethical to simply cite what other people have cited.
- **IRB, IAUCC, or IBC Application**

## Evaluation of the Proposal

The PhD Dissertation Advisory Committee will assess the quality of the proposal. Evaluation of the proposal will be based on the following considerations:

1. Scope of the proposal (10%). Is the research topic novel and important? Is the proposed project appropriate for the timeline?
2. Background (30%). Is the literature review comprehensive and appropriate? Does the literature review identify a problem or series of problems that justifies the direction of the proposal?
3. Experimental plan (40%). Are there clearly stated hypotheses for each section, or at least clearly stated expectations of experimental outcomes? Are the proposed experiments/methods appropriate tests of the hypotheses? Does the author have realistic expectations of the experimental methods? Are alternate hypotheses and experimental approaches proposed to cover the possibilities that: (i) the primary approaches prove to be inappropriate, (ii) the primary approaches disprove the hypotheses?
4. Presentation (20%). Is the proposal well organized and clearly written?

Each of the above evaluation criteria will be assigned a score of 1-5 as follows:

- 1 – Outstanding
- 2 – Excellent
- 3 – Good/Average
- 4 – Fair
- 5 – Poor

An *average weighted cumulative score* of no greater than 3.0 must be earned in order to pass the proposal-based written exam.

Successful defense during the oral exam resulting in at least 80% favorable votes from the committee is required for students to be recommended for candidacy. Committee members will sign the Admission to Candidacy for the Doctoral Degree form. At this point, the student will be considered a doctoral candidate and may register for dissertation hours.

## Completing the Dissertation Research

Once a student has met the requirements for admission to candidacy, received approval for the dissertation research proposal, or initiated enrollment in 699 (dissertation research for a doctoral degree), the student must pursue completion of the dissertation without interruption by enrolling each fall and spring semester of the academic year for at least 3 hours of dissertation research.

Summer enrollment for 699 Dissertation Research is *expected* if the student is working on the dissertation and using any University facilities or resources, including faculty time, but the only

time summer registration is **required** for dissertation research (3 hours minimum) is when a doctoral student is graduating in August or defending the dissertation during the summer semester. This is true whether or not the student has formally submitted an [Application for Admission to Candidacy](#) and [Plan of Study](#).

To assist faculty and students in determining the appropriate registration for doctoral research, the following guidelines are recommended:

- **Three semester hours.** Little or no progress will be made on the dissertation, only minimal use of University facilities will be involved, and/or there will be only slight faculty contact with the student; the work and writing of the dissertation are complete and only final grammatical corrections and the oral examination on the dissertation remain to be accomplished.
- **Six semester hours.** The student will be devoting approximately one-half of a full-time academic load to the dissertation. Moderate progress on the dissertation is expected of the candidate, only limited use of University facilities will be involved, and/or faculty contact with the student will be limited.
- **Nine semester hours.** The student will be devoting approximately three-fourths of a full-time load to the dissertation. Substantial progress on the dissertation is expected of the student, there will be major use of University facilities, and/or considerable faculty contact with the candidate is anticipated.
- **Twelve semester hours.** The student will be working full-time on the dissertation. Extensive progress on the dissertation is expected, there will be considerable use of University facilities, and/or faculty contact with the student will be extensive.

### **Formal Departmental Dissertation Defense and Oral Examination**

Once the proposal and IRB/IUCC/IBC are approved, the student may begin research. The student should not be allowed to complete the research until they receive these approvals. The student should work closely with the mentor on the research, statistics, and conclusions.

The student cannot propose a dissertation and have its final defense in the same semester. The following procedures should be completed prior to submitting the final dissertation to the committee:

- Complete the research under the guidance of the chair,
- Revise the proposal document to the chair's satisfaction,
- Ensure the document conforms to the guide for thesis and dissertation,
- Gain approval of the chair (co-chairs) to distribute the dissertation to all committee members allowing committee members two weeks to read the dissertation,
- Schedule a formal dissertation defense with an open invitation (including title, name, date, time and location) to all faculty and graduate students,
- Post flyers regarding the defense in public areas,
- Ensure all committee members can attend the defense,
- Formally present the final dissertation including background, gaps in the literature, research questions and hypotheses, methods, results, conclusions, and publication plan to the committee and other audience members on the scheduled day and time of the defense, and



- Answer questions from both the general audience and the dissertation committee.

All doctoral candidates must give members of the dissertation committee a minimum of two weeks to read the final dissertation before the date of the required oral examination. A publicly announced formal departmental dissertation defense (or seminar) of the student's research is required. All students must pass a final oral examination related to their dissertation. Final oral examination questions may also include other subjects beyond the student's research that the PhD Dissertation Committee or other faculty deem relevant. Final oral examinations and defense of the dissertation for the PhD must be taken not less than six weeks prior to the proposed graduation date. Each semester the graduate school posts dissertation due dates.

The outside member of the student's committee must attend and participate in the final defense; this may be a virtual presence if the member can see and hear the presentation and actively participate in questioning of the candidate. All departmental faculty have the right to attend the oral defense, and have the right to ask questions of the student that are relevant to the goals of the examination.

Only faculty on the student's committee may vote on whether the student has passed or failed the examination. Evaluation of the final defense will be completed using the procedures described in the proposal section of this document.

Upon successful defense of the dissertation, file the [PhD Final Defense Form](#) with the Director and submit this form to the Graduate School. At the conclusion of the defense, it is common practice that committee members ask for changes in the final dissertation document. Substantive changes may require an additional committee meeting. Minor changes may require revisions to the document only. Prior to submission of the final dissertation to the online thesis/dissertation portal, students should have received approval to submit by all committee members.

Each candidate for a doctoral degree must apply for graduation through the Office of the Graduate School no later than the registration period for the semester or the first session of the summer term in which requirements for the degree are to be completed. The Application for Degree can be accessed via your myBama portal and instructions are available on the University's [Graduate School webpage](#).

It is the student's responsibility to submit the dissertation to the online thesis/dissertation portal. The student should be aware of all deadlines regarding the dissertation defense and adjust his/her timeline to meet these deadlines.

### **Applying to Graduate**

Each candidate for a master's degree must apply for graduation through [myBama](#) no later than the last day to add a class for the semester or the first session of the summer term in which requirements for the degree are to be completed. For the specific date, see the Graduate School's [deadlines for students](#).

## Resources

This page provides links to resources based on topic.

<b>Assistantships and Finances</b>	
Assistantships	<a href="http://www.GoGrad.org">www.GoGrad.org</a> <a href="https://nutrition.org/fellows/">https://nutrition.org/fellows/</a> <a href="http://uastudentjobs.ua.edu">http://uastudentjobs.ua.edu</a> <a href="http://ccbp.ua.edu/graduate-fellowship-funds/">http://ccbp.ua.edu/graduate-fellowship-funds/</a> <a href="https://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/american-fellowships/">https://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/educational-funding-and-awards/american-fellowships/</a> <a href="https://woodrow.org/fellowships/">https://woodrow.org/fellowships/</a> <a href="https://www.gwis.org/page/fellowship_program">https://www.gwis.org/page/fellowship_program</a> <a href="https://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/">https://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/</a>
Criteria for holding/ maintaining an assistantship	<a href="https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/about/general-information/financial-assistance/index.html">https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/about/general-information/financial-assistance/index.html</a>
GTA workshop materials	<a href="https://graduate.ua.edu/events/gta/">https://graduate.ua.edu/events/gta/</a>
Financial assistance	<a href="https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/about/general-information/financial-assistance/index.html">https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/about/general-information/financial-assistance/index.html</a>
Graduate School conference & research funds	<a href="https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/about/general-information/financial-assistance/index.html">https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/about/general-information/financial-assistance/index.html</a>
Jobs on campus	<a href="http://uastudentjobs.ua.edu">http://uastudentjobs.ua.edu</a>
Student health insurance	<a href="https://shc.sa.ua.edu/billing/university-sponsored-health-insurance/">https://shc.sa.ua.edu/billing/university-sponsored-health-insurance/</a>
<b>Graduate School Policies</b>	
Capstone International Center	<a href="http://international.ua.edu/">http://international.ua.edu/</a>
Academic misconduct	<a href="https://provost.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2019/07/academicmisconductpolicy-acc-final.pdf">https://provost.ua.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2019/07/academicmisconductpolicy-acc-final.pdf</a>
Graduate catalog	<a href="https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/">https://catalog.ua.edu/graduate/</a>
Graduate School website/resources	<a href="https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/">https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/</a>
Graduate School deadlines	<a href="https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/student-deadlines/">https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/student-deadlines/</a>
Graduate School forms	<a href="https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/forms-students/">https://graduate.ua.edu/current-students/forms-students/</a>
Electronic thesis and dissertation	<a href="http://services.graduate.ua.edu/etd/">http://services.graduate.ua.edu/etd/</a>
Thesis and dissertation guide	<a href="http://services.graduate.ua.edu/etd/manual/">http://services.graduate.ua.edu/etd/manual/</a>

<b>Professional Development</b>	
Capstone International Center	<a href="http://international.ua.edu/">http://international.ua.edu/</a>
Career Center and other job resources/guidance	<a href="https://career.sa.ua.edu/">https://career.sa.ua.edu/</a>
Speaking studio	<a href="https://speakingstudio.ua.edu/">https://speakingstudio.ua.edu/</a>
Writing center	<a href="https://writingcenter.ua.edu/">https://writingcenter.ua.edu/</a>
<b>Other Services</b>	
Student care and wellbeing	<a href="https://bamacares.sa.ua.edu/">https://bamacares.sa.ua.edu/</a>
Office of Disability Services (ADA accommodations etc.)	<a href="http://ods.ua.edu/">http://ods.ua.edu/</a>

## Appendix

## Ph.D. Student Progress Report

The Progress Report is to be completed by doctoral students every semester and submitted to their research mentors. After discussing progress, goals, and objectives with their mentor, the student will submit the form to the Director of the PhD Program and the Department Chair by the second week of the semester. Each student must develop a clear plan for the semester.

**Student Name:** Enter Student Name **CWID:** Enter CWID **Report Year:** Enter academic year

### Part 1: Academic Standing

Date of entrance into program: Enter a date.                      Expected date of completion: Enter a date.

Date or expected date of comprehensive exam: Enter a date or “N/A”.                      Passed: Yes No

Date or expected date of dissertation defense: Enter a date or “N/A”.

Current GPA: Current GPA

### Part 2: Course Performance

(List your courses taken and grades during the past academic year)

Course	Semester	Grade	Course	Semester	Grade
NHM 000 - XXX	Select	Select	Enter course 7	Select	Select
Enter course 2	Select	Select	Enter course 8	Select	Select
Enter course 3	Select	Select	Enter course 9	Select	Select
Enter course 4	Select	Select	Enter course 10	Select	Select
Enter course 5	Select	Select	Enter course 11	Select	Select
Enter course 6	Select	Select	Enter course 12	Select	Select

### Part 3: Research Progress

(List your research activities and achievements during the past academic year)

**3.1. List peer-reviewed journal publications, and manuscripts submitted or accepted.**

Enter “None” if no activity to report. Do not report manuscripts in preparation.

**3.2. List other types of scholarly publications, such as books, book chapters, and patents.**

Enter “None” if no activity to report. Do not report manuscripts in preparation.

**3.3. List poster or oral presentations at all levels of conferences or meetings.**

Enter “None” if no activity to report.

**3.4. List honors, awards, scholarships, fellowships, and grants received, and amount, if applicable.**

Enter “None” if no activity to report.

**3.5. List undergraduate researchers and interns mentored.**

Enter “None” if no activity to report.



## Ph.D. Student Progress Report – Evaluation Page

At the end of each semester, the doctoral student will meet with their mentor to complete the evaluation report. After discussing progress toward stated goals and objectives with their mentor, the mentor will evaluate the student based on criteria stated in the departmental graduate handbook. The student will be rated by the mentor as either exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or fails to meet expectations. The major professor must complete the evaluation page of the Progress Report and discuss the findings with the student. A copy of this report shall be sent to the Department Chair, the Director and the student.

Students who fail to meet expectations will be placed on probation and have one semester to improve their evaluation to a meets/exceeds expectations rating. All evaluations are reviewed by the Director and the Department Chair. If the student fails to improve his/her rating, the student may be dismissed from the program. Decisions regarding dismissal will be made by the mentor, Director, and Department Chair.

**Student Name:** Enter Student Name

**CWID:** Enter CWID

**Semester and Year:** Enter academic year

**Research mentor Name:** Enter Mentor Name

**Please describe research accomplishments for this semester.**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Research mentor evaluation:**

- Exceeds expectations
- Meets expectations
- Fails to meet expectations

**Research mentor Recommendation:**

- Recommend for continuation
- Do not recommend for continuation

**Mentor’s rationale for rating. Please provide additional comments and advice:**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**If the student is rated “fails to meet expectations,” then the student and mentor must develop an improvement plan.**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Student’s comments or rebuttal. Please provide additional comments and advice:**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Confirmation and Signature**

By signing below, I have received this performance review and agree or disagree (circle one) with its contents.

X

You may double click and sign

**Students who disagree with the mentor’s evaluation will need to provide rebuttal below with specific documentation of progress toward goals and objectives.**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Research Mentor Signature:**

X  
You may double click and sign

Date: Enter a

**PhD program director:** Your signature below indicates that you agree on the research mentor’s evaluation and recommendation.

Name: Enter your name  
date.

Signature:

Date: Enter a

**Department chair:** Your signature below indicates that you agree on the research mentor’s evaluation and recommendation.

Name: Enter your name

Signature:

Date: Enter a date.