DEPARTMENT OF EXERCISE AND NUTRITION SCIENCES

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
This handbook is designed to assist faculty and students in the process of handling policies and procedures and to supplement the Graduate School policies. For more information, please consult with your advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences offers MS and PhD degrees in Exercise Science. Both degrees offer an emphasis in Applied Physiology. The PhD program also offers an emphasis in nutrition.
Graduate programs in Exercise Science are research oriented. The PhD program requires completion of a dissertation whereas the MS program can be completed with either a thesis or a comprehensive exam. Students choosing the exam option are required to obtain research experience (see degree requirements below).

STUDENT ADVISEMENT

Students in the PhD program or MS program with thesis option must have identified an advisor before being admitted. Students in the MS exam option are not required to select an advisor before admission.

Your advisor functions to guide you through your academic program. Your advisor will be your primary contact for guidance in:

1. planning your academic program
2. selecting faculty to serve on your committee
3. course selection
4. completing your thesis or exam
5. administrative procedures

You should consult with your advisor before registering for classes each semester.
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

There are several sources of financial aid available to students at the University at Buffalo. They vary in source and amount of funds as well as by income and residence eligibility. Most are intended to support students enrolled full-time in their educational programs. The application process may be lengthy and the student who intends to apply for financial assistance should not wait for formal acceptance into the MS or PhD program. Application dates, forms and eligibility requirements are provided at the Student Response Center website (http://src.buffalo.edu). Click on Financial Aid for more information.

I. CAMPUS-BASED AID

1. National Direct Student Loan (Perkins Loan)
2. College Work-Study Program (CWSP)

II. FEDERAL/NEW YORK STATE AID

1. Guaranteed Student Loan
   The student must file a Financial Aid Form (FAF) in order to determine eligibility for this program. Subsequent to the determination of eligibility, the student files a loan application. Only students who are U.S. citizens or legal residents are eligible. Demonstration of satisfactory progress in the program is required for continued funding, and applicants must be matriculated students enrolled for a minimum of six credit hours.
2. **New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)**

This program is available only to New York State residents who are registered for at least 12 credit hours of study. Awards to eligible students vary in size, based on financial need as determined by New York State net taxable income. Students must demonstrate satisfactory academic performance for continuation of eligibility.

III. **TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Teaching assistantships are available within the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences. Teaching assistantships are awarded on the basis of competition. Inquires regarding the availability of Teaching Assistantships should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences.

Students holding teaching assistantships will be expected to help in ongoing teaching for up to 20 hours/week. Only full-time students are eligible for teaching assistantships. As a TA, full-time status mandates registration in only 9.0 credit hours of study per semester, except during your last semester when you have been admitted to candidacy (ATC submitted and approved), when you can register for less than 9.0 credits per semester and be considered full-time (request will need to be submitted to the Graduate School for approval).

**CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
Every student is required to register in the Graduate School at the beginning of each semester in which he/she plans to pursue course work, write a thesis or take the comprehensive examination. No credit will be allowed for work undertaken without proper registration.

1. A graduate student must register (and pay all unwaived tuition and fees) each fall and spring semester until all requirements for the degree are completed. If such registration is for some reason not possible, you must obtain a leave of absence or withdraw from the Graduate School.

2. Requests for a leave of absence should be negotiated through your advisor, approved by the Director of Graduate Studies in ENS and the Health Sciences Divisional Committee. Normally, a leave of absence is approved for one semester; however, it would be possible for the leave to be extended should the circumstances warrant. Petition forms may be obtained from the Graduate School. You must complete this petition form, submit it to your advisor, and return it to the Director of Graduate Studies. It is your responsibility to notify the Graduate School when you are returning from a leave of absence.

3. In the event that a student voluntarily terminates registration, such action should not prejudice a subsequent review for readmission.

**TIME LIMIT FOR THE COMPLETION OF A MASTER'S DEGREE**

A time limit of five semesters as a full-time student (12 credit hours or more per
semester), or eight semesters as a part-time student has been established for completion of the requirements for the Master's degree. The period of time allowed is measured from the first registration as a matriculated student. Students who do not complete their programs within the time allowed must petition the Health Sciences Divisional Committee of the Graduate School. A recommendation from the Director of Graduate Studies for an extension must accompany the petition.

GRADING AND EVALUATION OF MS AND PhD STUDENTS

In keeping with the policy of the Graduate School, students are expected to maintain an overall "B" average. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate competence in their areas of specialization by obtaining grades of at least "B-" in courses designated as "required" in their area of concentration.

Probationary status will be assigned for any of the following reasons:

a. The student obtains a "C" grade in any exercise science or required course
b. The student obtains a "D" grade in any graduate level course
c. The student has a GPA of less than 3.0
d. PhD students lacking ability may undergo academic review and be placed on probation by the graduate program faculty.

Probationary status resulting from a, b or c above will be removed from the student's record if, after nine credit hours of further study, his/her GPA is at least 3.0 and no additional deficiencies have been recorded.
In the case of (d) above, terms of probation and its removal will be made in writing and communicated to the student. Students not meeting the terms of probation will be dismissed from the program.

**THESIS AND COMPREHENSIVE EXAM FOR MS STUDENTS**

The MS degree in Exercise Science can be obtained with a thesis or comprehensive examination option. Your advisor will guide you through this process. Students completing a thesis should read the material entitled, "Beginning Independent Inquiry" in this handbook. It is never too early to begin to think about potential topics for inquiry, however, the final topic typically evolves from the educational process experience by the student once enrolled in the program.

**SELECTED READINGS COURSE (ES676)**

Students choosing the Comprehensive exam option may register for up to 2.0 credits of ES 676 as part of their program of study. Students should consult with their advisor and faculty members to determine availability in selected readings courses.
INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES

Several independent study courses are available to MS students as electives. You must obtain your advisor’s approval before registering for these informal courses. No more than 6 credits will be allowed in informal classes for all MS students in the thesis option and 9 credits for MS students in the exam option. Informal classes include Independent Study (NTR690, ES599), Directed Readings (ES 589) and Supervised Teaching (NTR 699). Students must obtain prior approval from the course instructor and will need to be “forced” registered into these courses. Students should seek approval for these courses well in advance of the registration deadline.

FORMS AND DEADLINES

Masters and doctoral students must file the following forms which can be obtained either online or the ENS Graduate Office in 211A Kimball Tower.

1. Application to Candidacy (ATC) found online. You should complete this form under the direction of your advisor.
   a. Each candidate must submit a program statement in advance of the anticipated date (one semester for MS students and two semesters for Ph.D. students) of graduation. The statement lists all coursework undertaken by the student, including a description of coursework taken while enrolled in informal classes.
   b. The proposed title for the thesis (if applicable) must be given.
   c. The ATC must be signed by the student’s advisor, all committee members, and the Director of Graduate Studies.
   d. The ATC form is then reviewed by the Dean of the School of Public Health and Health Professions and forwarded to the Graduate School for final approval.
e. Any change in an approved ATC form must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies in ENS.

2. **M-Form**

The M-form, which is obtained in the ENS Graduate Office, must be typed and submitted after all requirements for the degree have been met (including thesis defense), with all appropriate signatures obtained.

3. **Deadlines**

It is the responsibility of the student to complete forms by the specified dates and to check with the Graduate School (645-2939) or the ENS Graduate Office (829-6793) prior to the deadline date to ascertain whether all the requirements and filing of forms for the degree have been completed and submitted.

**BEGINNING INDEPENDENT INQUIRY**

**FORMING A GRADUATE COMMITTEE**

The function of your graduate committee is twofold. Its principal function is to guide you through your independent inquiry experience. The committee also functions to advise the university when it assesses that you have completed your course requirements for your thesis. Your interests will be best served by forming a committee whose members possess the specialized skills involved in your particular topic of inquiry.

You can select the other members of your committee at any time after the completion of your first full semester as a matriculating student programs. Your major professor and another committee member must be faculty members in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences. Your chair must have graduate faculty status.

In selecting your committee members you may consult with your major professor concerning the most appropriate choices. It is then your responsibility to contact these persons and request that they serve on your committee. However, a particular faculty member may be heavily committed to other projects and feel unable to assist you. If this should happen to you, don’t feel rejected. You benefit by having committee members who are able to offer you the support that you need at the time that you need it.

The minimum number of committee members is three for a master’s thesis and four
for a dissertation. You can expand your committee structure to add expertise in specialized areas, but a large committee can be cumbersome and will require the student to fulfill the expectations of these additional persons. A faculty member does not have to be on your committee to provide you with occasional advice. If you are in continual need of advice from that person, it would probably be best to invite him/her to be on your advisory committee.

Once your advisory committee is formed, you are able to proceed to writing your proposal.

**FINDING A TOPIC**

Finding a topic for independent inquiry is a process you undertake with your advisor. Faculty members generally have ongoing research projects that may provide opportunities for student inquiry. Contact all faculty members and determine if their research interests coincide with your interest. Alternatively, you may pursue a topic of your own selection if your advisor can provide the resources needed to undertake this research.

**DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

**MS Program**

Thirty (30) credit hours are required for completion of the ES masters program.

*Common Courses for thesis and exam options:*

- ES 502 Neuromuscular and Metabolic Responses to Exercise (3 credits)
- ES 503 Cardiopulmonary Responses to Exercise (3 credits)
- NTR 505 Exercise Nutrition (2 credits)
- STA 527 or ES 532 Statistics (3-4 credits) (or equivalent)
- ES 539 Research Seminar (2 credits total) - 1 credit per semester for 2 semesters
- ES 589 Directed Readings (1+ credits)

*Thesis Option*

- ES 597 Thesis (6 credits)

**Total: 20 + elective credits**

*Exam Option*
- ES 592 Practicum (3 credits)
- ES 596 or ES 676 (2 credits)

**Total: 19 + elective credits**

Students doing the thesis MS must engage in an independent research study by developing and defending a thesis (ES 597). Students doing an exam MS must participate in research (ES 596 or ES 676) and a practicum (ES 592). It is possible to change between the tracks (track Petition). In addition, each student must have a course in statistics, which includes a minimum of exposure to univariate analysis of variance.

**Departmental Electives**

A minimum of 3 credit hours must be taken in formal course work (ES or NTR) within the department or in areas outside the core courses. Courses that do not meet the departmental elective requirements include Statistics (ES 532), Research Seminar (ES 539), Directed Readings (ES 589) Thesis (ES 597) and Independent Study (ES 599).

**External Electives**

Supporting graduate courses may be taken in related disciplines outside the Department. These are chosen under the direction of the student’s major professor.
PhD PROGRAM

The Ph.D. program requires the completion of a minimum of 72 credit hours of coursework, including dissertation, beyond the baccalaureate degree. Transfer credits from the Masters degree may not exceed 36 credit hours.

Two areas of emphasis (Applied Physiology and Nutrition) are available for the Ph.D. in exercise science.

In addition to the degree requirements listed above, students in all areas of specialization will be expected to demonstrate knowledge and competency in the following areas: teaching, technical writing and presentation, computer and word processing literacy, logic and ethics. Such competencies may be demonstrated with previous course work or an exhibition of the skill (acquired through other means). Any deficiencies may be met through informal tutorial or designated course work as specified by the major advisor.

Required Courses

- **ES 502 (F) Neuromuscular and Metabolic Responses to Exercise** (3 credits)
- **ES 503 (S) Cardiopulmonary Responses to Exercise** (3 credits)
- **ES 539 (F&S) Research Seminar** (1 credit)*
  *(students are required to complete 4 semesters)*
- **BMS 503 (F) Principles of biochemistry** (4 credits)
- **PGY 551 & PGY 552 (F&S) Human Physiology** (6 credits)
- **NTR 503 (F) Nutrition and Health** (3 credits)
- **NTR 505 (F) Exercise Nutrition** (2 credits)
- **PHI 640 (S) Research Ethics** (2 credits)
- **ES 620 (S) Scientific and Grant Writing** (2 credits)
- Statistics & Experimental Designs (7 credits)
  *(STA 526 and STA 527 respectively, or equivalent)*
Candidacy:

The Application to Candidacy (ATC) summarizes courses to be applied toward a degree. The filing of this form with the Graduate School of the University indicates that the student is entering the final stages of degree completion. That is, the student has completed all major field experiences, successfully passed the preliminary examination and presented the dissertation proposal in a Department seminar. Primary responsibility for the development of the student’s program rests with the major advisor; however, it is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure that the Application is filed in sufficient time to allow review at all levels. Notification of acceptance to candidacy comes from the Graduate School of the University.

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