

**MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
NUTRITION AND FOOD SYSTEMS**

**GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

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## I. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Welcome to graduate school and to your studies in the Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition. We are located in the School of Human Environmental Sciences, in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environment at the University of Kentucky. We are pleased you have chosen the University of Kentucky for your graduate studies and we and look forward to working with you.

Graduate school offers you the opportunity to plan a focused program of study, to formulate a philosophy about your profession, and to acquire additional professional competencies. Faculty will provide guidance; however, you will assume the primary responsibility for development and execution of your academic program.

Some of the resources available to you at the University of Kentucky are provided in this handbook, as well as information indicating current requirements for your program, and the prescribed steps and procedures to be followed to secure a master's degree. Throughout the course of your study, you will find this handbook a helpful and time-saving reference.

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will serve as your initial contact for the M.S. program. You will select your committee chair, research topic, and committee members by the end of your first semester. The quality of your graduate experience depends, to a great degree, upon the extent of your academic commitment and involvement in the university community. One of the goals of a graduate education is to learn to design your unique approach to our field of study. You should plan to play an active role in the design, implementation, analysis, and completion of your graduate studies. In addition, do not hesitate to ask questions and talk to the graduate faculty in the department. Inquiry is an important part of graduate education!

We wish you well!

Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition  
203 Funkhouser Building  
University of Kentucky  
859-257-3800

## II. GENERAL INFORMATION

### A. GENERAL REGULATIONS

It is the student's responsibility to be informed concerning all regulations and procedures required by the course of study being pursued. Therefore, the student should become familiar with *The Graduate School Bulletin* on matters related to the following:

<b>Registration</b>	<b>Grades</b>
<b>Add/Drop</b>	<b>Repeat Option</b>
<b>Academic Load</b>	<b>Scholastic Probation</b>

### B. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Within the program there are two plans:

- Plan A requires 24 credit hours of course work plus 6 additional hours of thesis research.
- Plan B requires 30 credit hours of course work plus 6 hours of research or special problems hours, which will include work on a special project.

We strongly recommend that you select the thesis option (Plan A) as this will better prepare you for future graduate studies and will allow you to more fully participate in the design of your graduate program.

### C. FILING A PLAN OF COURSEWORK

The Director of Graduate Studies serves as the temporary advisor for each student upon entering the program. Before the end of the first semester or 9 credit hours of course work, students should file a plan of course work with the Director of Graduate Studies (*see Appendix A*).

### D. DIETETICS CREDENTIALING TO BECOME A REGISTERED DIETITIAN (R.D.)

Graduate students interested in completing the dietetic coursework to become a Registered Dietitian (R.D.) should consult with the director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD). Graduate students interested in completing a Supervised Practice Program (dietetic internship) should consult with the Director of the Dietetic Internship.

## **E. SELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

By the end of the first semester, the student should have visited with all graduate faculty members to learn about their research areas. The student should then select a committee chair to serve as his or her thesis or non-thesis advisor. In consultation with the committee chair, the student should select his or her thesis committee (*See Section III – Academic Policies – Composition of the Master’s Committee*). It is expected that at least two members of the committee will be from the Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition (*see Appendix B for graduate faculty listing*). The Director of Graduate Studies must be notified in writing of the make-up of student’s advisory committee using the form entitled “Advisory Committee” (*see Appendix C*).

## **F. THESIS/NON-THESIS OPTION**

The decision to write a thesis should be based on a student’s educational training and goals, in consultation with his/her committee chair. The primary objective of a thesis research component is to expand the existing knowledge base. The thesis must be a well-reasoned and original contribution to knowledge in the field of study, and provide evidence of high scholarly achievement. The selection of a thesis topic, collection of data, and the writing of a thesis typically extend over at least two semesters. The committee chair is the primary source of guidance in the planning and preparation of the thesis. Instructions for preparation of the thesis are available from the Graduate School. A thesis proposal must be submitted to the student’s Thesis Advisory Committee for approval. A final thesis draft must be submitted at least 14 days in advance of the final oral exam.

### Non-Thesis Option

The non-thesis option requires six additional graduate credit hours above and beyond the requirements for the thesis option. In addition, a special project is developed with a research component. The non-thesis option requires completion of 6 hours of research or special problems hours through DHN 591, DHN 768, DHN 782, or DHN 790 and typically extends over at least two semesters. The non-thesis special research project culminates in a research product in written form, typically a manuscript for publication in a professional journal. Any non-thesis product produced must demonstrate application of knowledge in an original manner and demonstrate high scholarly achievement under the rigor of the peer-review process.

## **G. THESIS/NON-THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

By the end of the first year of study or completion of 10-12 semester hours of coursework, the student should work with their committee chair and develop a thesis/non-thesis proposal. The proposal should include an introduction to the problem, research questions and hypotheses, and detailed methods. This proposal should be presented during a proposal committee meeting before the IRB application is submitted and research begins.

## **H. THESIS CHECKLIST**

Each graduate student forms their own thesis committee and schedules a meeting with that committee to approve their research plan before proceeding with their research.

1. Determine research interest by discussing with faculty and conducting a literature search;
2. Form your committee comprised of your committee chair and two other faculty members (three people);
3. Have thesis proposal approved by committee, include a timeline for how the work will progress to meet graduation goal date;
4. Complete the IRB application by working with your chair;  
Be aware of the [IRB Meeting Dates and Deadlines](#)
5. Conduct research;
6. Write thesis, adhere to the [formatting requirements](#) from the Graduate School;
7. Apply for graduation in the semester of your defense, using the Graduate School deadlines and forms;
8. Schedule the date for your thesis defense using the Graduate School procedures and forms;
9. Book a room for your thesis defense;
10. Defend your thesis;
11. Make revisions and recommended changes;
12. Make an appointment with the staff associate in room 203 Funkhouser for assistance in finalizing your thesis and then submit it to the Graduate School. Review the [Submission Guide](#) for details.

The base thesis fee is **\$14.00**. The fee must be paid at Student Account Services, 18 Funkhouser Building or online via myUK. The fee will be added to your student account after the final thesis is accepted by the Graduate School. No diplomas will be released without payment of the applicable thesis fees.

## **III. ACADEMIC POLICIES: MASTER'S DEGREE**

### **A. ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY (Master's Degree)**

Regular admission to a master's degree program constitutes admission to candidacy, unless otherwise stipulated by the program.

### **B. MASTER'S DEGREE COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS**

Coursework requirements for the Master's Degree are detailed in the *Graduate Bulletin*:

Graduate students are eligible to take regular courses which meet as organized classes and independent-study or research courses in which each student conducts investigations independent of class meetings. Independent study or research courses must not duplicate thesis *work*; thesis work must be done in addition to the minimum course requirements. At least two-thirds of the minimum requirements for the Master's degree must be in regular courses, and at least half of the minimum course requirements (excluding thesis, practicum, or internship credit) must be in 600- or 700-level courses.

## 1. TRANSFER OF CREDIT

Requests for transfer of graduate credit are initiated by the Director of Graduate Studies (form available on the Graduate School web page). A total of 9 hours or 25% of regular course degree requirements may be transferred for a Master's degree. These hours include all post-baccalaureate work, graduate work taken at another accredited university, or as a student in another graduate program at the University of Kentucky.

- ◆ Transfer of credit from independent work, research, workshops, practicum or thesis is not permitted.
- ◆ Transfer credit is accepted only from accredited institutions.
- ◆ Short courses lasting fewer weeks than the number of credits may not be transferred.
- ◆ A student must have been in graduate status at the time the courses were taken in order for the courses to be transferable.

## 2. FINAL EXAMINATION FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE

The student must notify the Graduate School regarding the scheduling of the Final Examination of a Master's student at least two weeks prior to the examination date. This is accomplished by submission of the "Final Examination Recommendation" form.

Master's students will be eligible to sit for the final examination only if they have completed all coursework requirements for the degree, or if the remaining coursework *is in progress* at the time of the examination. Students with "I" grades or "S" grades in credit-bearing courses are not eligible to sit for the final examination. The overall graduate GPA of the student must be 3.0 or better to sit for the final examination.

The final exam must be conducted no later than eight days before the last day of classes for the degree to be awarded at the end of that term (see University Calendar for exact dates). However, the DHN Graduate Faculty strongly recommend that students schedule their final examination earlier than eight days prior to the end of classes to allow for changes to thesis following the final

examination. Ideally, the final examination is scheduled at least two to three weeks prior to the end of classes.

Final examinations for students selecting the thesis option will consist primarily of a defense of the thesis. For students enrolled in the non-thesis option, the final examination may include any topics covered in the student's coursework and non-thesis special research project. Final examinations for students in the non-thesis option may be written or an oral defense of a research project.

The examining committee consists of a minimum of three faculty members of which at least two must be members of the graduate faculty; one faculty member must be a full member of the graduate faculty. It is expected that at least two members of the committee will be from the student's program/department.

### **3. DEGREE APPLICATION CARDS**

In order to be eligible for a graduate degree, the student must complete the Application for Degree ([myUK.uky.edu/Student Services/myRecords/Apply for Degree](http://myUK.uky.edu/Student%20Services/myRecords/Apply%20for%20Degree)). This must be submitted by the deadline for the semester in which the student plans to graduate. For the exact due date, see the [University Calendar](#).

## **IV. FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The DHN Department offers both graduate teaching assistantships and research assistantships. Students interested in financial aid should make application directly to the department.

The College of Agriculture, Food and Environment offers scholarships that graduate students may apply for and receive. Other types of financial assistance are available from the University, see [http://www.gradschool.uky.edu/studentfunding/other\\_scholarships.html](http://www.gradschool.uky.edu/studentfunding/other_scholarships.html).

## **V. GRADUATE ASSISTANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

Teaching Assistantships (TAs) in the Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition are a privilege and an honor and are available only to students enrolled in the M.S. in Nutrition and Food Systems. They are not guaranteed from one semester to the next. To apply for a Teaching Assistantship, please fill out the application at <http://dhn-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/graduate>. Teaching Assistants provide tutorial, clerical, technical, and teaching support for the assigned class (es) under the direction of their supervising and mentoring faculty member. Teaching Assistants may be asked to field student emails, grade assignments and exams, post grades, manage components of UK's Learning



Management System, proctor exams, assist with student questions, make copies, give guest lectures, supervise students in laboratory settings, teach course content, or other means of support. Mentoring faculty will provide you with the support you need to grow in knowledge and abilities in managing a classroom.

It is estimated that these duties will average a minimum of 10 hours per week throughout the semester for part-time TAs and an average minimum of 20 hours per week per semester for full-time TAs. Since productivity among individuals can vary, additional time may be required to complete assigned duties in a timely and efficient manner. Teaching Assistants should communicate frequently with their supervising faculty member regarding successful completion of assigned responsibilities and, if needed, guidance regarding time management, quality of work, and allocation of specific tasks. Assistantships are awarded on a semester basis for a maximum of four semesters. Assignments may be adjusted as needed by the DHN Department Chair. Teaching Assistants will be evaluated at mid-term and at the end of fall or spring semesters. These performance evaluations will be used, in part, to determine future assistantship assignments.

## **B. RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**

Research Assistantships (RAs) in the Department of Dietetic and Human Nutrition are a privilege and an honor. Research Assistants provide technical, analytical, and clerical help in completing research activities and these activities will vary depending on the current research projects of the supervising and mentoring faculty member. It is estimated that these duties will average a minimum of 10 hours per week throughout the semester for part-time RAs and an average minimum of 20 hours per week per semester for full-time RAs. Hours spent on the individual RA's thesis or course work are not included in the listed RA time allotments.

Since efficiency and productivity among individuals can vary, additional time may be required to complete assigned duties. Research Assistants should communicate frequently with their supervising faculty member regarding successful completion of assigned responsibilities and, if needed, guidance regarding time management, quality of work, and allocation of specific tasks.

Assistantships are awarded on a semester basis. Research Assistants will be evaluated at mid-term and at the end of fall and or spring semesters. These performance evaluations will be used, in part, to determine future assistantship assignments.

## VII. IMPORTANT DEADLINES

<i>Selecting Coursework and Committee Chair</i>	To be selected by the completion of the 1 <sup>st</sup> semester or 9 credit hours of coursework.
<i>Filing a Plan of Coursework with Committee Chair and DGS</i>	To be selected by the completion of the 1 <sup>st</sup> semester or 9 credit hours of coursework.
<i>Selecting Master's Committee</i>	To be selected by the completion of the 1 <sup>st</sup> semester (9 hours coursework) and in consultation with committee chair.
<i>Submitting Thesis or Non-Thesis Research Proposal Draft</i>	By the end of the first year before the 1 <sup>st</sup> meeting of your committee.
<i>Submitting Thesis or Non-Thesis Draft</i>	By the beginning of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year and no later than the mid-point of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> semester.
<i>Submitting Graduate Application for Degree</i>	To be eligible for a degree, complete the Application for Degree online after the beginning of the semester in which student will complete work.
<i>Scheduling Final Examination with Committee Chair</i>	Schedule with committee chair at least 30 days prior to the date of the final examination.
<i>Requesting Final Examination and Thesis Approval Form</i>	Schedule with the Graduate School two weeks prior to the date of the final examination.
<i>Completing Final Examination</i>	Must be taken at least 8 days prior to the last day of classes in the semester in which degree is to be awarded.
<i>Finalizing Revisions and Format Thesis/Non-Thesis Document</i>	Must meet the posted Graduate School deadlines for review of thesis and submission.

**NOTE: Students must consult with the committee chair prior to scheduling committee meetings. Students must submit written work to the committee chair prior to submitting material to the thesis committee. Students must submit written work to the committee members for review at least 14 days before a scheduled meeting, otherwise the meeting may be canceled.**

## Checklist for the Completion of Degree Requirements

1. Submit a Plan of Coursework for your proposed courses to the DGS for preliminary approval.
2. File a copy of your approved Plan of Coursework with the Director of Graduate Studies.
3. Select a Committee Chair to head your Thesis/Non-Thesis Master's Committee.
4. Establish a Committee of at least three members.  
\*Note: Two members must be graduate faculty with a least one person being be a full member. At least two members of the Committee will be from the Department of Dietetics and Human Nutrition. File your Committee selection with the department's Director of Graduate Studies.
5. By the end of the first year of study, have a proposal meeting in which your Thesis Committee approves your research proposal.
6. If the Thesis/Non-Thesis involves human subjects, write for Human Subjects Integrity Certificate, gain IRB approval for the study. Check IRB deadlines for review or, if the Thesis/Non-Thesis involves animals, gain IACUC approval for the study.
7. Format the Thesis/Non-Thesis document with the Graduate School guidelines.
8. Check the following dates in The Graduate School Bulletin:  
\*Filing for graduation; complete an Application for Degree online within 30 days of the start of the semester in which student will complete work.  
\*Final date for paying thesis fee  
\*Deadline for scheduling final oral examination  
\*Deadline for submitting a final thesis copy to the Graduate School
9. At least 30 days prior to the desired date of the final oral examination, schedule a meeting time with your Committee Chair.  
\*Note: Upon approval, schedule the examination with each Committee member. Submit a final copy of your thesis/non-thesis project to your Committee at least one week prior to your exam.
10. Schedule your examination with the Graduate School using the Graduate School published deadlines (Final Examination Recommendation Form).  
\*Note: For the Thesis Option, a second form must be filed stating that the student is ready to defend (Thesis Approval Sheet Form).
11. Reserve a room for your defense. Prepare and review a short Power Point presentation of Thesis/Non-Thesis with your Committee Chair. All faculty, students, and other interested parties are welcome to attend your presentation about the thesis or project, followed by a closed two hour defense with the students' Committee.
12. Successfully complete your Final Examination.

13. Complete final mandated revisions to the thesis or non-thesis project.
14. Submit changes to the Graduate School.
15. Get signatures from Committee Chair and DGS on graduation form.

**APPENDIX A**

**Nutrition and Food Systems  
PLAN OF COURSE WORK**

**Option A (Thesis) - 24 Hours + Thesis**

**Department Core Requirements: Plan A \_\_\_\_\_ 17 Hours**

Course Prefix	Name	Credit Hours	Date	Grade
<b>Pre-requisite undergrad course</b>	<b>STA 570 Basic Statistical Analysis</b>	<b>4</b>		
DHN 600	Research Methods in Human Environmental Sciences	3		
DHN 603	Advanced Community Program Development	3		
DHN 605	Food Systems and Society	3		
DHN 608	Chronic Disease Management and Process	3		
DHN 774	Seminar in Nutrition and Food Systems	3		
STA 671	Regression and Correlation	2		

**Elective Courses \* \_\_\_\_\_ 7 Hours**

Course Prefix	Name	Credit Hours	Date	Grade

**Thesis Requirement: Plan A \_\_\_\_\_ 6 Hours**

Course Prefix	Name	Credit Hours	Date	Grade
DHN 768	Residence Credit for Master Degree	6		

Graduate Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Studies \_\_\_\_\_

**Option B (Non-Thesis) - 36 Hours**

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**Department Core Requirements: Plan B \_\_\_\_\_ 17 Hours**

Course Prefix	Name	Credit Hours	Date	Grade
Pre-requisite undergrad course	STA 570 Basic Statistical Analysis	4		
DHN 600	Research Methods in Human Environmental Sciences	3		
DHN 603	Advanced Community Program Development	3		
DHN 605	Food Systems and Society	3		
DHN 608	Chronic Disease Management and Process	3		
DHN 774	Seminar in Nutrition and Food Systems	3		
STA 671	Regression and Correlation	2		

**Elective Courses \* \_\_\_\_\_ 13 Hours**

Course Prefix	Name	Credit Hours	Date	Grade

**Non-Thesis Requirement: Plan B \_\_\_\_\_ 6 Hours**

Course Prefix	Name	Credit Hours	Date	Grade
DHN 591, 768, 782, or 790		6		

Graduate Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Graduate Studies \_\_\_\_\_

## **CORE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

### **DHN 600 Research Methods in Nutrition and Food Systems (3)**

Students will study accepted research methodologies and scientific approaches in human nutrition and food systems. Emphasis is placed on understanding the research methods, study design, data collection, and evaluation of various nutrition related studies. Discussions include development of research aims and hypothesis, internal review board, collecting of primary and secondary data, measurement approaches, study designs, and key considerations in developing a thesis for publication.

Prerequisite: Admission to graduate program and selection of graduate faculty mentor with approved research topic.

### **DHN 603 Advanced Community Program Development (3)**

The course focuses on the theory, practice, and evaluation of community programs to improve quality of life. We will learn much from each other, please come to class ready to be an engaged participant. Some of the key concepts in this course are relatively new to our field. Some concepts, like logic models and social marketing, may appear to be simple and straightforward, but are actually quite complex. The course will employ a variety of teaching strategies; we will use experience and reflection to enhance the learning process. Students are expected to participate fully in class meetings and projects. Discussions, lectures, projects, electronic communication and resources, and visual media will be used to communicate the content. Assignments are designed to help students learn how to effectively plan, develop, and evaluate community programs and strategies to promote healthy eating, active living, and a sustainable environment.

Prerequisite: Admission to graduate program.

### **DHN 605 Food Systems and Society (3)**

Food Systems and Society tracks food from farm to table, including growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consumption, and disposal. Policy and culture determine who eats what and who benefits and loses in any given food system. As a result food systems vary considerably across the world with each evolving to affect overall health. The course will assess sustainability of food systems and explore the ethical, economical, socio-ecological, and environmental factors that affect local, regional, national, and global food system development. Content includes case study evaluations and current research in the field.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

### **DHN 608 Chronic Disease Management and Process (3)**

This course focuses on the etiology and pathophysiology of nutrition-related chronic diseases and conditions including obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, heart disease, diabetes, and



cancer. Emphasis is placed on the biochemical and physiological mechanisms involved by which nutrients impact the prevention, nutrition care process–diagnosis, assessment, implementation of care, monitoring and evaluation, and progression of chronic diseases and conditions.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing and minimum 3 credit hours of upper level advanced nutrition or DHN 510.

### **DHN 774 Seminar in Nutrition and Food Systems (3)**

This advanced participatory seminar focuses on the latest in nutrition and food systems research. Students will be expected to apply their knowledge of effective scientific communication, responsible conduct of research, and methods and technologies in nutrition and food systems through weekly readings, presentations, and class discussions.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing and upper level graduate statistics.

### **Suggested Course Sequence for Thesis Option**

<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>		<b>Fall</b>		<b>Spring</b>	
<i>STA 570</i> (if needed)	4	<i>STA 671</i>	2	DHN 774	3	DHN 608	3
DHN 603 or DHN 605 (whichever is offered)	3	DHN 600	3	DHN 603 or DHN 605 (whichever is offered)	3	DHN 768	2
Elective	3	DHN 768	2	DHN 768	2	Electives	4

### **SUGGESTED ELECTIVES**

Courses in the College of Public Health (CPH), the Departments of Kinesiology and Health Promotion (KHP), Community and Leadership Development (CLD), and Communications (CJT) are all recommended based on student interest.

**APPENDIX B**  
**GRADUATE FACULTY**

Ingrid Adams, Ph.D., Associate Extension Professor (118 Funkhouser Building; 257 7480;  
[Ingrid.adams@uky.edu](mailto:Ingrid.adams@uky.edu))

Sandra Bastin, Ph.D., RD, Chair and Extension Professor (203A Funkhouser Building;  
257 3800; [sbastin@uky.edu](mailto:sbastin@uky.edu))

Dawn Brewer, Ph.D., RD, LD, Assistant Professor (209C Funkhouser Building; 257 2353;  
[dawn.brewer@uky.edu](mailto:dawn.brewer@uky.edu))

Alison Gustafson, Assistant Professor (206G Funkhouser Building; 257 1309;  
[Alison.gustafson@uky.edu](mailto:Alison.gustafson@uky.edu))

Janet Kurzynske, Ph.D., RD, Extension Professor (206F Funkhouser Building; 257 9047;  
[jkurzyns@email.uky.edu](mailto:jkurzyns@email.uky.edu))

Julie Placencia, PhD, RD, Assistant Professor (Funkhouser Building; 257-3800;  
[Julie.placencia@uky.edu](mailto:Julie.placencia@uky.edu))

Janet Tietzen Mullins, Ph.D., RD, Extension Professor (206J Funkhouser Building; 257 3800;  
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Tammy Stephenson, Ph.D, Assistant Professor (121 Funkhouser Building; 257 2353;  
[tjhann00@uky.edu](mailto:tjhann00@uky.edu))

Kelly Webber, Ph.D., RD, LD, Associate Professor (206E Funkhouser Building; 257 4351;  
[khwebb2@uky.edu](mailto:khwebb2@uky.edu))

**APPENDIX C**

**THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE FORM**

Must be submitted upon completion of 9 credits hours or beginning of second semester

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Semester that Program Completion is expected \_\_\_\_\_

Master's Committee

FACULTY MEMBER

DEPARTMENT

1.

CHAIR

2.

3.

4.