



COLLEGE *of*
AGRICULTURE *and*
APPLIED SCIENCES

UtahStateUniversity®

MS/PhD in Nutrition and Food Sciences

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2022-2023

Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food
Sciences

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Welcome!

Dear Students,

Welcome to the Master of Sciences (MS) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nutrition & Food Science at Utah State University. We hope your time here is productive and enjoyable.

One of the many things that makes our program stand out is the wide-ranging research interests of our faculty, and the diverse talented graduate students who come to work with them. We encourage you to take advantage of our uniquely flexible coursework requirements to come up with a plan of study that will help you achieve your research and career goals. Explore campus and take full advantage of the resources available to you during your graduate training at USU.

This handbook is meant to provide you with important policies, program information, and university resources to guide you through the process of completing the MS/PhD program. You are responsible for knowing the information included in this handbook, and you are ultimately responsible for meeting requirements and deadlines. Although we have made every effort to make this handbook accurate and comprehensive, please double check requirements and deadlines, and email carrie.durward@usu.edu if you find any typos, broken links, or inaccuracies. We look forward to working with you and assisting you while you achieve your educational goals. We hope you have a wonderful experience in the MS/PhD program at USU.

Best Regards,

Carrie Durward, PhD, RD
Associate Professor
NDFS MS/PhD Program Director
Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Science

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How to get answers to your questions

One of the most important lessons you will learn in graduate school is how to find answers to questions. Here are the resources you should rely on to help answer different types of questions about graduate school:

Type of Question	Resources to use (in this order):
NDFS program requirements, the annual review form, or the dissertation/thesis defense rubric	1. This handbook 2. The Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) or your Major Professor
USU Graduate School requirements, other forms not mentioned above	1. The graduate school website: https://gradschool.usu.edu/current-students/ 2. The GPC
Questions pertaining specifically to international students	1. International Graduate Student orientation https://www.usu.edu/orientation/international/graduate 2. Office of global engagement https://globalengagement.usu.edu/
What classes to register for, career advice, research advice	1. Your Major Professor 2. Your Supervisory Committee Members
Problems registering for NDFS classes	1. The GPC
Reserving a room in the NFS building	1. The GPC 2. The NDFS business assistant
Questions about payment or other paperwork related to your assistantship	1. The NDFS business assistant 2. The NDFS business manager
Questions about assistantship expectations, hours, etc.	1. Your supervisor

Program Details and Requirements

Admission Requirements

All potential MS/PhD Students need to meet program admission requirements.

Candidates for graduate study in the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences need a background in chemistry, biochemistry, physics, mathematics, statistics, bacteriology and physiology. Prior coursework in food science or nutrition is desirable. Students may be accepted into the NDFS graduate program with deficiencies in these areas; however, their supervisory committee will require that competence equivalent to a BS degree in Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences be obtained as part of the *Program of Study*.

Students must meet some departmental requirements, in addition to requirements of the School of Graduate Studies, as shown at: <http://www.usu.edu/graduateschool/apply/>

Departmental requirements include the following:

1. A student may enroll into a PhD70 program with a BS degree or into a PhD48 program with an MS or equivalent degree pending meeting the other requirements of the department and graduate school. In either case, the student must pass a comprehensive examination to become a candidate for the PhD degree as described later in these degree requirements.
2. Before acceptance into the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences, potential MS and PhD graduate students must be accepted by a faculty member who is willing to add them to his or her research team.
3. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are optional. Potential faculty advisors may choose to require GRE scores before accepting a student.

International students should review the information found at the Office of Global Engagement

Program Costs and Financial Assistance

Program Costs

Students are responsible for tuition based on the schedule posted on the [registrar's website](#). You can find a tuition calculator on the [graduate school website](#).

Tuition Waiver

Students who receive a 0.5 FTE research assistantship are eligible for the [Research Non-Resident Tuition Waiver](#) in their first year. After one year, students should apply for resident status. Students who are unable to apply for residency (international students) can receive the waiver for multiple years if they continue to receive an assistantship.

Teaching and Research Assistantships

[Teaching or research assistantships](#) may be available to help with the cost of your graduate studies. Discuss availability of research or teaching assistant positions with your major professor. The supervising professor for the assistantship will outline the position tasks responsibilities, hours, dates, and compensation. This compensation may include a stipend, funds to cover tuition, funds to cover fees, and/or funds to subsidize health insurance. A formal acceptance letter needs to be kept on file at the department. The major professor may establish additional expectations.

Please note that research activities for your thesis or dissertation may or may not be a part of a compensated research assistantship.

All teaching assistants and graduate instructors are required to participate in a training workshop sponsored by the School of Graduate Studies prior to beginning their assistantships. The workshop helps students gain the techniques and skills to be effective instructors in the University environment. When a teaching assistant workshop has been successfully completed, 1 credit will be added to the student's transcript. However, this credit cannot be applied toward a graduate degree program.

Graduate assistants must be full-time (with the exception of summers), matriculated students. For students employed as graduate assistants, full-time status is based on the full-time equivalent or FTE. A 0.25 to 0.374 FTE requires a student to enroll for at least 9 graduate-level credits; a 0.375 to 0.50 FTE requires a student to enroll for at least 6 graduate-level credits.

Assistantship Policy on Additional Employment

Graduate students in the NDFS department receiving a 0.5 FTE assistantship may not accept additional employment without written permission of their major professor and the department head; this policy is to ensure that graduate students have sufficient time available to complete the academic requirements of their degree in a timely fashion.

Fellowships, Scholarships, and Loans

There are a limited number of fellowships and scholarships available to graduate students at USU. Please see the [School of Graduate Studies website](#) for details and deadlines. The graduate student council also offers a scholarship, the [Graduate Enhancement Award](#). The College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences and the NDFS and ADVS department may have [additional scholarships](#) or assistantships that students can apply for.

Graduate students may apply for Federal Stafford Loans, Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Supplemental Loans for Students (SLS), Emergency Loans, and Federal College Work-Study through the Financial Aid Office. More information can be found in the [Financial Aid and Scholarship Information](#) section of this catalog, or by contacting: Financial Aid Office, Taggart Student Center 106, Utah State University, 1800 Old Main Hill, Logan UT 84322-1800, tel. (435) 797-0173.

For information about GI Bill Benefits, contact: Office of Veterans Services, Taggart Student Center 313, Utah State University, 0185 Old Main Hill, Logan UT 84322-0185, tel. (435) 797-9187.

Registration Requirements

Once admitted, students are required to maintain full-time enrollment by meeting one of the following criteria:

1. Registered for 9 or more graduate credits
or
2. Registered for at least 6 credits per semester if receiving an assistantship or fellowship from Utah State University for 15 hours/week or more.
or
3. Registered for 3 graduate credits with all required coursework completed and only the research component of the degree remaining

or

4. Registered for at least 1 graduate credits during the semester of the final thesis/dissertation defense

Selecting a Major Professor

Initially, students are accepted into the department when at least one faculty member has expressed a willingness to add the student to his or her research team. By doing so, the faculty member guarantees at the time of acceptance that the student may work in his or her research program. However, offers of financial aid must be discussed directly with the faculty member. Students may choose as their major professor any faculty member who can and is willing to accommodate them.

Required Course List

The NDFS department is home to faculty with a wide variety of research interests. Because of this, we attract students with equally diverse research interests and career goals. To make sure students are able to obtain the training required to meet their research and career goals, we have a very flexible set of required courses.

Because of this, preparing your plan of work (see below) is very important. Work carefully with your Major Advisor and Supervisory committee to choose graduate courses that will prepare you with the knowledge and skills you need to succeed.

For the MS degree, 30 total credits are required. For the PhD degree, 70 total credits are required from Bachelor's degree (PhD₇₀) and 48 total credits from Master's degree (PhD₄₈).

The following courses are required.

Course Category	Number of required credits			Course Options
	MS	PhD ₄₈	PhD ₇₀	
NDFS Graduate courses	5	10	10	See Appendix A
Biochemistry	3	3	3	Biochemistry (CHEM 5700), NDFS 6410 , or any other biochemistry-based course suggested by the committee
Statistics	3	6	6	Statistics (STAT 5100 , STAT 5120 , STAT 5200 , STAT 5600 , PSY 7610 , PSY 7780 , or any other statistics course approved by the student's committee)
NDFS Graduate Seminar*	2	2	4	NDFS 7800
Teaching or Occupational Experience	0	2	2	NDFS 6910 or NDFS 5250
Other Graduate Courses	5-11	13-18	18-27	Any USU courses approved for graduate studies, See Appendix A and B
Research	6-12	12-17	18-27	MS: NDFS 6970 PhD: NDFS 7970

*The first 2 credits of NDFS 7800 should be taken in semester 1 (1 credit) and semester 2 (2 credits). This fulfills the requirements for MS and PhD₄₈. PhD₇₀ students will take an additional 2 credits of seminar courses, that can include any graduate seminar course in or out of the department, as approved by the student's graduate committee.

Establishing a Supervisory Committee

A supervisory committee must be selected by the student in conjunction with his or her major professor **during the student's first semester** as an NDFS graduate student. The major professor serves as the chair of the supervisory committee. A minimum of three members (at least two from the department) including the major professor are required for the MS program. A minimum of five members (at least one from outside the department) including the major professor are required for the PhD program.

The Supervisory Committee Approval Form needs to be submitted **by the end of the second semester** for MS students and **by the end of your third semester** for PhD students. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the proposed committee members to make certain they are able and willing to serve. The Supervisory Committee Approval Form is sent to the GPC to be forwarded to the Graduate School. (Note: The Supervisory Committee Approval Form may be found on the School of Graduate Studies website at: <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>.)

Program of Study

Students should register for their first semester based on advice from their major professor. Students should then prepare a Program of Study in conjunction with their major professor. The Program of Study should ensure fulfillment of the minimum requirements for all NDFS graduate students (shown below) and also include other courses providing the background necessary to conduct their research. All students are required to submit a program of study to the USU School of Graduate Studies. The School of Graduate Studies considers the Program of Study a contract between you, your committee, and the School of Graduate Studies outlining which courses you will take to meet the School of Graduate Studies requirements and complete your degree program.

Students need to schedule a meeting with their supervisory committee to discuss the proposed Program of Study. A document detailing the proposed program of study (i.e. a list of classes to be taken each semester) should be given to each committee member **2 weeks** prior to the committee meeting.

The purpose of the committee meeting is to secure the supervisory committee's approval of the Program of Study. The committee will determine any deficiencies in core BS competencies or academic background. Students in the NDFS graduate program should have already taken undergraduate general chemistry, organic chemistry, biochemistry, algebra, and statistics. Although these courses may be taken as part of the graduate program, they will not be counted as graduate credit in the Program of Study.

The supervisory committee is responsible for ensuring NDFS graduate students have (or obtain during their program of study) the expected core competencies of NDFS bachelor's degree graduates. This can be based upon transcripts of courses from prior studies, passing courses listed in the program of study (with a minimum grade of *B*), or by administering a written or oral examination.

The committee will also determine that the courses included in the Program of Study meet the minimum requirements for obtaining an MS or PhD in Nutrition

and Food Sciences (as shown below). Students will complete a plan in DegreeWorks and email their GPC to notify them that the plan is completed. This plan will be attached to a signature form and signed by you, your graduate committee, the department head, and a representative at the School of Graduate Studies. You should submit the Program of Study by the end of your second (or third for part time students) semester and after your supervisory committee approval form has been submitted and approved.

Registration for all subsequent semesters should be based on the approved Program of Study. Changes to the Program of Study require electronic revision form to be sent to the GPC then forwarded to the Graduate School. The student may register for courses not listed on the Program of Study with approval of his or her major professor (especially if the student is receiving a research assistantship).

Research Proposal

In consultation with the major professor, the student must choose a research area suitable for the MS thesis or PhD dissertation, and then prepare a research proposal. Research proposals should be written and approved **within the first year** for students completing the MS degree and **within the second year** for PhD students.

The content and duration of the proposed research should be appropriate for the degree. It is expected that MS research and coursework (including writing and defense of the thesis) should be completed within 2 years (24 months). The length of research being proposed for the PhD dissertation is dependent on the discovery by the student of a substantial level of new information that can be added to their field of specialization.

The proposal should include the following:

1. Title
2. Description of the problem, based on the most current literature
3. Statement of the purpose of the intended research
4. Research Plan
5. List of references cited, presented in a form acceptable for publication in a scientific journal in the student's field

The student prepares the research proposal under the guidance of the major professor. Once the research proposal is completed, it is the student's responsibility to schedule a meeting with his or her supervisory committee, and to provide each committee member with a copy of the research proposal at least **two weeks** prior to the meeting.

During the committee meeting, the student is expected to provide an oral presentation of the proposed research, and discuss any regulated aspects of the research, such as hazardous materials, experimental animals, or human

subjects. A copy of the approved research proposal should be kept in the Department's student file.

The Dissertation and Defense or Thesis and Defense rubrics may be useful tools to help evaluate if the proposed research will meet expectations.

Annual Review

The annual review is your chance to check in with your committee. It is a time to ask questions, get feedback on your progress, and advice on how to move forward towards your degree. It is essential to have regular check-ins with your committee to make sure everyone is on the same page about your progress in coursework and your research. It is recommended that students provide an update to their committee on their progress, outline any areas where they could use advice, and their plans for the coming year. You may find the Graduate Student Annual Self-Assessment of Progress form posted on the [NDFS resource website](#) useful as you prepare this update, but this form is completely optional. Please bring a copy of the annual review form, titled "Yearly Graduates Student Review" found on the [NDFS resource website](#). Please fill in as much of the form as you are able. The rest of the form will be filled out by a member of the GAC other than the major professor. The form will address student progress toward degree completion and include recommendations given by the committee. The form will be reviewed by the student, the major professor, and all members of the supervisory committee. A copy of the form will be placed in the student's file in the department.

Comprehensive Examination (PhD students only)

Before a student can become a candidate for the PhD degree, he or she must take a comprehensive examination, as required by the School of Graduate Studies. The qualifying/comprehensive exam will consist of 2 parts:

- **Written exam:** the purpose of this exam is to evaluate the students' critical thinking skills. The format of this exam will be established by the major professor and the committee members. Some examples include requesting the student to write a review paper or a literature review on a topic outside his/her area of research, discussion of specific papers, or evaluation of different situations related to their discipline.
- **Oral exam:** The written exam will be closely followed by an oral exam where the student will be questioned on his/her general knowledge of topics related to his/her discipline. This test is designed to assess students' oral communication skills and their ability to think "on the spot". The oral exam can be a follow up of the written exam or can be based on a different topic.

The qualifying/comprehensive exam must be taken during the **second year** of the student's program. If the student does not pass the exam, he/she will not be accepted into the PhD program and could be considered for an MS degree.

Typically, students will be asked questions related to their area of specialization and their field of research. However, the comprehensive exam can also be used to test students' overall knowledge of food science or nutrition, and committee members can ask any questions that will test the student's knowledge and ability to synthesize nutrition and food science information, as well as answer questions. The Application for Candidacy for Doctoral Degree Form should be completed at this time. On the Application for Candidacy for Doctoral Degree Form, School of Graduate Studies website at: <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>. The committee members will list the field in which they examined the student, and then sign the form accordingly.

Thesis or Dissertation Final Examination

Students write the thesis or dissertation under the guidance of their major professor. To schedule a tentative date for the final examination (or defense) of the thesis or dissertation, students should also contact their supervisory committee members. Students need to plan well in advance, so that there will be sufficient time allowed for the student to complete their writing and for the committee members to read the thesis or dissertation. When the thesis or dissertation is ready to be defended, and at least **four weeks** prior to the tentative defense (or final) examination date and time, the student submits a copy to each committee member. The student should also provide all committee members with a copy of the defense rubric and faculty summary form, found on the [NDFS resource website](#).

After the committee members have read the thesis or dissertation and have determined that it is indeed ready to be defended, the student prepares the Appointment for Examination Form School of Graduate Studies website at: <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>. Each of the supervisory committee members is required to sign this form, indicating that they have read and tentatively approve the content and format of the thesis or dissertation, and that they can attend the defense.

The Appointment for Examination Form needs to be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies a minimum of **10 working days** prior to the defense. The School of Graduate Studies will appoint one of the supervisory committee members (other than the major professor) to chair the defense examination.

Students need to schedule a room for their defense with the GPC at least **two weeks** before the exam date. (MS and PhD students in NDFS are required to give a presentation on the results of their research during the semester in which they defend their thesis or dissertation, typically this is the first portion of their

dissertation defense.) At this time, the GPC will add the defense to the calendar, send an announcement of the defense to the faculty, and check to make sure the Appointment for Examination Form has been submitted.

Completing the Thesis or Dissertation

After a successful defense of the thesis or dissertation, the student is required to make any changes to the thesis or dissertation that are required as a consequence of the final examination. At this time, the student can schedule with the School of Graduate Studies a date by which he or she expects to have the thesis or dissertation available for review. If the thesis or dissertation is not submitted to the School of Graduate Studies prior to this date, it will be reviewed at the next available date.

When the thesis or dissertation has been revised to the satisfaction of the committee member(s) assigned the responsibility of ensuring such changes are completed to the satisfaction of the supervisory committee (usually the major professor), the front page of the thesis or dissertation can be signed. The student then completes the Thesis/Dissertation Format and Style Form School of Graduate Studies website at: <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>. and obtains the major professor's signature (in the NDFS Department the major professor also acts as the departmental format/style reviewer) and submits the thesis or dissertation to the School of Graduate Studies.

Following review by the School of Graduate Studies, the thesis or dissertation is collected by the NDFS Department and returned to the major professor, along with a list of corrections. The major professor then has the responsibility of ensuring that the thesis or dissertation is revised (if necessary), and of signing a release indicating that the thesis or dissertation is ready for binding. The student may then make the needed copies of the thesis or dissertation and submit them for binding. It is also the student's responsibility to ensure that all other forms and fees related to the thesis or dissertation and to the completion of his or her degree are finalized.

Academic Calendar, Vacations, and Holidays

Students with teaching or research assistants must check with their supervisors before planning vacation time. Tasks required for these assistantships may fall outside of the academic calendar, during final exam week, and possibly University holidays. Any vacation time off outside of University holiday dates should be approved first with the student's major professor/advisor.

Graduate School Requirements and Policies

The MS/PhD program adheres to all of the requirements and policies of the USU School of Graduate Studies. Please be familiar with these policies, especially GPA requirements, good standing with the School of Graduate Studies, degree deadlines and timelines, and required forms. You can find all required forms on the graduate school website <https://gradschool.usu.edu/forms/>.

It is your responsibility to ensure all graduation requirements are met. Please meet with your major professor or the GPC if you have any questions. At the end of this document we have provided a template for a check-off form. You are encouraged to fill out important dates, forms, etc. from the graduate school website.

Time Limit

A master's degree must be completed within six years of entering the degree program and a PhD must be completed within eight years.

Leave of Absence/Continuous Registration/ Withdrawal

If for any reason you will not be registered for *any* courses in either the spring or fall semester, submit the leave of absence form/continuous registration form.

Graduation

A graduate student must complete a Graduation Information Checklist before a graduate degree will be awarded. Please see the degree completion page on the graduate school website for details for your degree.

USU Policies

Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. USU Policy 403 further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity - "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to establish the honest conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students.

To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity." A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community,
- understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution, and
- is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Grievance Process

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated [in matters other than discipline, admission, residency, employment, traffic, and parking - which are addressed by procedures separate and independent from the Student Code] may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII Grievances

Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes knowingly "representing by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the AA/EEO Office at (435) 797-1266.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act states: "Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure equal participation within the program." If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center (435) 797-2444, preferably during the first week of the course. Any request for special consideration related to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examinations, etc., must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials will be provided in alternative format (e.g. large print, audio, diskette, or Braille) upon request.

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Academic and Professional Resources

Travel funds

NDFS has travel funds available for students to present at conferences. Funds will be spent on a first come first served basis. Unspent funds will be carried over the next fiscal year. The student requesting funds must be a co-author of the presentation and must identify matching funds. These funds may come from CAAS, UAES, RGS, Major Professors, or other sources. Students are only allowed to request funding once per fiscal year. Preference will be given to those students that have not received funding in the previous year.

To request funds, please email the Graduate Program Director with your letter of acceptance from the conference and fill out this Qualtrics survey: https://usu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4HlRHXSj5QuL3V4

To apply for matching funds from the graduate school follow the directions found here: <https://gradschool.usu.edu/travel-award/>

To apply for matching funds from CAAS, please complete the CAAS Graduate student travel support form and submit it as directed on the form. (You can find this form in Appendix B of this handbook.)

The following material must be submitted to the Graduate Program Director 30 days after the student returns from the conference:

- Expense report, including the TA and TR.
- Copy of the presentation/poster (in PDF format)

Graduate School Opportunities

Graduate Student Council: The Graduate Student Council is made up of graduate students from each college on campus, the Graduate Studies Senator and the Graduate Student Director. The council meets monthly throughout the school year to discuss any questions, concerns and obstacles graduate students face at USU, to increase the sense of community among graduate students at USU and to help graduate students learn about the resources available to them on campus and in the community.

In addition, the Graduate Student Council funds two [scholarships](#) throughout the year and plans all of the Mental Health Week activities. The Graduate Studies Senator is also a voting member representing all USU graduate students on both the USUSA Academic Senate and Executive Council

If you'd like to get involved in volunteering please email the Graduate Senator or Graduate Director, or get in touch with your college representative.

You are encouraged to contact your college representative, the senator or the director if you have any questions, concerns or ideas regarding events, programs, requirements, etc.

[Live More Blog](#): Students can stay connected with other graduate students and the USU School of Graduate Studies, and learn of events and opportunities through the [graduate student blog](#).

Information Technology Assistance

Utah State University Information Technology provides quality, timely, secure, appropriate, innovative, and reliable information technology services to support the University's mission of learning, discovery, and engagement. For assistance. The [IT Service Desk](#) offers technology support for most enterprise systems at Utah State University. Services are provided to students, staff and faculty. In addition to support services, the Service Desk provides; full-time desktop support; campus software licensing, and certified hardware repair services. Contact us at (435) 797-HELP, servicedesk@usu.edu, on-line [Live Chat](#) or through [MyTech](#).

Library Resources

You can access all of the library databases, e-journals, and e-books from home or anywhere with an Internet connection. To access library resources from the USU Library website, a research guide, or your Canvas course, you will be prompted to enter your A number and Access (banner) password.

There are [multiple library resources](#) available and an appointed librarian to offer further assistance for students if needed. Our appointed librarian is Ms. [Sandra Weingart](#). The library website also has great how-to articles about essential tools for graduate school like [citation organizers](#) and [interlibrary loan](#) or ILLiad.

Statistics

[Xin Dai](#) is a consulting statistician at Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, Utah State University. She provides support in design, analysis and interpretation of research for faculty and students in agricultural sciences. I highly recommend reaching out to her for her input at the beginning of your work, rather than waiting until the end.

Career Services

[USU career services](#) offers a wealth of services for both current USU students and alumni. Some of these services include career coaching, resume and cover letter assistance, salary negotiations, career fairs, social media presence, and networking strategies.

Grant Writing Workshop

The Office of research offers a [graduate student grant writing seminar](#) which is a modification of the faculty grant writing seminar and is tailored to the needs of graduate students and those who have little to no grant writing experience. Attendees will leave the seminar understanding the why as well as the how of grant writing. This seminar will help demystify the process and emphasize how the approaches taught can also be applied to planning and writing a thesis project or paper for publication.

<https://research.usu.edu/rd/workshops/>

Academic Success Center

The learning specialists within the [Academic Success Center](#) have developed programs and services to support Utah State students in exploring their intellectual potential and achieving academic success. Our Web site offers excellent resources for students, faculty, parents of students, and others interested in discovering new ways to study effectively, learn efficiently, and achieve academically.

Mental Health Resources

Mental health is critically important for the success of USU students. The dean of the School of Graduate Studies [wrote to graduate students](#) and asked them to make mental and emotional health a priority in their lives. Knowing how to address mental health concerns and what resources are available to you make prioritizing mental health care possible. [Contact your GPC](#) if you have questions about your options.

You can maintain your mental and emotional health whether you have a pressing concern or not. Be pro-active about your health and seek opportunities to be social or to talk to a professional anytime. You can access supportive campus resources including:

- Sexual assault resources that assist with reporting, medical care and counseling.
- The Access and Diversity Center, which organizes LGBTQA, multi-cultural and non-traditional student resources, events and clubs.
- International student groups that help students away from home meet others in similar circumstances.
- The Disability Resource Center, which assists students at all campuses with academic accommodations.

If you believe someone needs help:

1. **Express concern.** Empathetically point out the behaviors that are causing you concern. It's important to address a person's need to seek help. However, it is equally important to reassure them that everyone goes through hard times and you understand and care.
2. **Destigmatize.** Discuss mental health professional support in a friendly, welcoming way. Point out that you have confidence in the office or in its therapists, or that you've known others who have had positive interactions with that resource.
3. **Talk about options.** There are many resources available. Talk about options that may best serve the person you're talking to and the particular difficulties they are experiencing.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a mental health issue, it's important to recognize the limits of your ability to personally assist and to know when other resources can be more helpful. Seek help if you or the person you're talking to:

- Is no longer able to function in their normal capacity within class or experiences a significant drop in grades or academic performance.
- Appears unable to cope with their day-to-day activities and responsibilities.
- Expresses depressive symptoms such as sleep disturbance, sudden weight loss or gain, crying spells, fatigue, loss of interest or pleasure in previously enjoyed activities, or inability to concentrate or complete tasks.
- Expresses severe anxiety symptoms such as feelings of panic, shortness of breath, headaches, sweaty palms, dry mouth, or racing thoughts.
- Has suicidal thoughts or feelings.
- Has few friends or family they can talk to about pressing concerns. They may benefit from a support group more than counseling.

USU students, faculty, staff and others can report students who are struggling with academic, personal or emotional difficulties, or who may be exhibiting threatening, worrisome or other concerning behavior using the [Student of Concern form](#).

Notice of Non-Discrimination

In its programs and activities, including in admissions and employment, Utah State University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by University policy, Title IX, or any other federal, state, or local law. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations and/or USU's non-discrimination policies:

Executive Director of the Office of Equity

Alison Adams-Perlac
alison.adams-perlac@usu.edu
Old Main Rm. 161
435-797-1266

Title IX Coordinator

Hilary Renshaw
titleix@usu.edu
Old Main Rm. 161
435-797-1266

For further information regarding non-discrimination, please visit <https://equity.usu.edu/>, or contact:

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
800-421-3481
OCR@ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education
Denver Regional Office
303-844-5695
OCR.Denver@ed.gov

Appendices

Appendix A: NDFS Graduate Courses

NDFS Graduate Students are required to take a certain number of graduate credits from the NDFS department (5 MS and 10 for PhD). NDFS graduate courses can also be used to fulfill the other graduate courses requirement.

	Credits	Delivery method(s)	Semester(s) Taught
NDFS 6000--Epidemiological Methods in Public Health	3	Online	
NDFS 6010/5010 Hunger Issues and Solutions	3	Online	Spring
NDFS 6020/5020 Meat Technology and Processing	4		
NDFS 6030/5030 Dairy Technology and Processing	3	Online	Spring
NDFS 6040/5040 Dairy Foods Processing Laboratory	1		
NDFS 6100/5100 Sensory Evaluation of Food	3		
NDFS 6110/5110 Food Microbiology	3	Online	Spring
NDFS 6111/5111 Food Microbiology Laboratory	1		
NDFS 6120 – Acidified Food Safety	1		
NDFS 6150/5150--Principles of Food Sanitation	3	Online	Spring
NDFS 6160/5160--Principles of Food Toxicology	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6170/5170—Food Safety and Quality: Food Safety Management	1	Online	Spring
NDFS 6171—Food Safety and Quality: Current Good Manufacturing Practice	1	Online	Fall

NDFS 6172—Food Safety and Quality: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points	1	Online	Fall
NDFS 6173—Food Safety and Quality: Preventative Controls	1	Online	Spring
NDFS 6174—Food Safety and Quality: Standards for Produce Safety	1	Online	Fall
NDFS 6175—Food Safety and Quality: Acidified Foods	1	Online	Fall
NDFS 6180—Food Safety Inspection and Auditing	1-2	Online	Fall
NDFS 6200/5200—Nutritional Epidemiology	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6210/5210—Advanced Public Health Nutrition	3	Online	Spring
NDFS 6220/5220—Endocrine Aspects of Nutrition	3		
NDFS 6230/5230 – Communication of Current Topics in Nutrition	3	Online	Spring
NDFS 6250/5250 – Clinical Nutrition Internship	2-12		
NDFS 6310/5310 – Fundamentals of Nutrition Research	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6320/5320—Advanced Sports Nutrition	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6350—Food Service Management Internship	2-12	Online	Fall
NDFS 6370/5370 – Nutrition and Immunology	2		
NDFS 6400/5400—Nutritional Neuroscience	3	In Person	Fall
NDFS 6410/5410 – Nutrient Gene Interactions	3	Online	Spring
NDFS 6420/5420 – Molecular Nutrition Laboratory	2		
NDFS 6440—Food Composition and Analysis	2	Online	Spring
NDFS 6500/5500—Food Analysis	4		
NDFS 6510/5510 – Food Laws and Regulations	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6520/5520 – Current Issues in Food Regulatory Affairs	3	Online	Spring

NDFS 6530 – Food Packaging and Labeling	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6560 – Food Chemistry	3		
NDFS 6600/5600—Current Topics in Obesity	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6610/5610—Food and Bioprocess Engineering	3	Online	Spring
NDFS 6620—Microbiology of Fermented Dairy Foods	1		
NDFS 6640 – Food Proteins and Enzymes	3		
NDFS 6650—Meat Science	2		
NDFS 6660—Cheese Science	2	Online	Spring
NDFS 6670—Food Biosecurity and Crisis Management	1		
NDFS 6690—Genetics of Lactic Acid Bacteria	1		
NDFS 6700--Dairy Chemistry	2	Online	Spring
NDFS 6720--Lipid Analysis and Metabolism	1		
NDFS 6730-- Understanding Crystallization in Food Systems	2		
NDFS 6740—Waste and Energy Management	1		
NDFS 6750/5750--Advanced Dietetics Practicum	1-6	Online	Fall
NDFS 6760—Special Topics in Nutrition and Food Science	1-3		
NDFS 6770—Advanced Management in Dietetics I	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6780—Advanced Management in Dietetics II	3		
NDFS 6790—Current Issues in Dietetics	3		
NDFS 6800/5800--Counseling and Motivational Interviewing for Health Professionals	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6830/5830—International Nutrition: Macronutrients	3		
NDFS 6840—Global Field Studies in Public Health Nutrition	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6850—Local Field Studies in Public Health Nutrition	3	Online	Fall
NDFS 6900—Special Problems	1-4	Online	Spring

NDFS 6910—Teaching Experiences in Nutrition and Food Sciences	1-3		
NDFS 6950—MFSQ Special Problems	1-4	Online	Fall
NDFS 6960—MFSQ Capstone	1-4	Online	Fall
NDFS 6970—Thesis Research	1-12	Online	Fall
NDFS 6990—Continuing Graduate Advisement	1-12		
NDFS 7800 --Seminar	1	Online	Fall
NDFS 7810—Public Health Graduate Seminar	1		
NDFS 7970—Dissertation Research			
NDFS 7990—Continuing Graduate Advisement	1-12		

Appendix B: Example Other Graduate Courses

The list below provides examples of common courses taken by MS/PhD students to fulfill the requirement to take other graduate courses (5-11 for MS, 13-18 for PhD₄₈, and 18-27 for PhD₇₀). See previous list of NDFS graduate courses, which can also be used to fulfill these credits. This list is not exhaustive. Please work with your faculty advisor to determine which courses are best to be included in your program of study.

Elective courses	Credits	Delivery	Semester(s) Taught
SOC 6450 --Sociology of Health and Medicine	3	Online	Spring
HEP 6000 --Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation	3	Online	Summer/Spring
HEP 6120 --Foundations of Global Health	3	Online OR Study Abroad	Fall—Online Summer—Study Abroad
ADVS 6000 --Ecology and Health	3	Online	Summer
HEP 5400 --Prevention Strategies for Obesity and Disordered Eating	3	Online	Fall/Spring
KIN 6400 —Advanced Exercise Physiology	4		
KIN 4100 —Exercise Physiology	4		
ADVS 6650 —Science Communication	3		
ADVS 6800 —Graduate Student Seminar	1		
EDUC 7700 —Grant Writing	3		
ASTE 6100/7100 —Research and Academic Writing	3		
ASTE 7200 —Qualitative Methods	3		
ASTE 7300 —Mixed Methods Research	3		

ITLS 6769 —Grant and Proposal Writing	3		
LANG 7010 —Academic Writing for Graduate Students	3		
LAEP 7920 —Writing for Publication	2		
LAEP 7930 —Grant Writing	2		
EDUC 6050 —Applied Statistical Analysis	3		

Note to faculty and students: Please suggest other courses to add to this list! Have you taken a course outside of NDFS that was excellent? Do you advise all your students to take certain courses? Email suggestions to: carrie.durward@usu.edu

Appendix C: Required forms

All student forms can be found at the School of Graduate Studies website: <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>.

Additional department-specific forms can be found on the [NDFS resources website](https://caas.usu.edu/ndfs/resources): <https://caas.usu.edu/ndfs/resources> These include the annual review form, rubric for defense, and faculty summary form of the rubric for defense. Copies of these are included here for your review and reference.



YEARLY GRADUATE STUDENT REVIEW

Name:	MS	MPH	PhD48	PhD70
Date:				
Began program: Semester/Year				
Expected Completion: Semester/Year				
Student's Progress is Satisfactory	Yes	No		
Plan of Study approved (Date)				
Research Proposal approved:	Date:			
Research Completed:	Date:			
Research is showing satisfactory progress	Yes	No		

Comprehensive Exam (PhD only)

Written examination

Date scheduled	Date:
Passed	Date:

Oral examination

Date scheduled	Date:
Passed	Date:

Defense of thesis/dissertation scheduled:	Date:	
Unsatisfactory progress		
Research proposal inadequate	Yes	No
Lack of evidence of progress on research	Yes	No
Unable to pass comprehensive exam	Yes	No
Corrective action is required	Yes	No
Comments/Notes:		

Signatures

Student name:
Signature:
Major Professor Name:
Signature:
Committee Member Name:
Signature:
Committee Member Name:
Signature:
Committee Member Name:
Signature:
Committee Member Name:
Signature:



Rubric for Dissertation and Defense

This evaluation tool is designed to assist faculty evaluate whether the graduate student has successfully completed a body of original research in his/her discipline, under the guidance of all members of the supervisory committee. This rubric is also a useful tool for students in preparing for their dissertation review and the oral defense, as students should aim to meet the benchmarks outlined below at least at the level of “strong” for all criteria. Faculty will use a condensed version of this document during the defense that indicates whether a student met expectations (strong), exceeded expectations (exceptional) or did not meet expectations (marginal and unacceptable). Students should note that this rubric is not used to “score” their performance.

Considerations for review of Dissertation Document

Assessment criteria	Exceptional (Exceeds expectations)	Strong (Meets expectations)	Marginal (Does not meet expectations)	Unacceptable (Does not meet expectations)
Quality of the Scholarly Work				
Mastery of fundamental knowledge in the field	Consistently applies fundamental and advanced concepts to topics in the subject area	Frequently applies fundamental and advanced concepts to topics in the subject area	Somewhat applies fundamental and advanced concepts to topics in the subject area	Does not apply fundamental and advanced concepts to topics in the subject area
Ability to access and integrate information into a cohesive overview of current knowledge. Ability to critically evaluate the meaning, value and contribution of published literature in the field.	Shows command and understanding of the current scholarly literature in the field, as well as essential seminal works foundational to the field.	Relates and understands the current scholarly literature in the field, as well as essential seminal works foundational to the field	Shows awareness of the current scholarly literature in the field, as well as essential seminal works foundational to the field.	Knowledge is unrelated to the current scholarly literature or foundational literature in the field.
Imagination and originality of thought	Problem and purpose of study very creative or original with new and innovative ideas; explored original topic and discovered new outcomes.	Problem/purpose of study original or creative; design/approach appropriate or innovative.	Problem/purpose of study moderately original or creative; design/approach moderately appropriate or innovative.	Problem/purpose of study lacked creativity or not new; duplication or only incremental advancement of previous work.
Ability to design and implement an appropriate collection and analysis of data.	Data interpretation is appropriate and creatively uses correct methodologies; identifies weaknesses or limitations in interpretation.	Data interpretation is appropriate and uses mostly correct methodologies; identifies some weaknesses or limitations in interpretation	Data interpretation is appropriate and uses limited correct methodologies; identifies no weaknesses or limitations in interpretation.	Data interpretation is inappropriate or uses incorrect methodologies; identifies no weaknesses or limitations in interpretation.

Ability to draw reasoned conclusions from a body of knowledge	Discussion was superior, accurate and engaging; conclusions/summaries and recommendations appropriate and clearly based on outcomes.	Discussion sufficient with few errors; greater foundation needed from past work in area; conclusions/summary based on outcomes and appropriate; included some recommendations.	Major topics or concepts inaccurately described; considerable relevant discussion missing; conclusions/summary not entirely supported by findings/outcomes	Little discussion of project findings/outcome; displayed poor grasp of material; conclusion/summary not supported by findings/outcomes.
Contribution to Discipline				
Impact of research on the field	Dissertation is very relevant or has high significance and will make an important contribution to the field.	Dissertation has fair relevance or significance and will make a good contribution to the field.	Dissertation has only moderate relevance or significance and will make a nominal contribution to the field.	Dissertation has little significance and little relevance and will make little contribution to the field.
Publication potential	Work from the dissertation has high potential to be published in high impact (top quartile) journals; work is expected to result in multiple research articles.	Work from the dissertation has high potential to be published in moderate impact (top 50%) journals; work is expected to result in multiple research articles.	Work from the dissertation has moderate potential to be published in a scholarly journal; work is expected to result in limited number of articles.	Work from the dissertation has low potential to be published in a scholarly journal; work is expected to result in no publications.
Quality of Writing				
Skilled at scientific/technical writing	Author demonstrates excellent ability to write clearly and convincingly at a high professional level.	Author demonstrates good ability to write clearly and convincingly at a high professional level.	Author demonstrates fair ability to write clearly and convincingly at a high professional level.	Author demonstrates no or little ability to write clearly and convincingly at a high professional level.
Organization, sentence structure, grammar, mechanics and spelling	The author demonstrates highly logical organization of information; sentences are well constructed and have varied structure and length; the author makes no errors in grammar, mechanics and/or spelling.	The author demonstrates logical organization of information; most sentences are well constructed and have varied structure and length; makes a few errors in grammar, mechanics and/or spelling, but they do not interfere with understanding.	Some sections are not well-organized; most sentences are well constructed, but they are similar in structure with little variation; the author makes several errors in grammar, mechanics and/or spelling that interfere with understanding.	Most information is not well-organized; sentences sound awkward, are distractingly repetitive or are difficult to understand; the author makes numerous errors in grammar, mechanics and/or spelling that interfere with understanding.

Considerations for review of Oral Defense

Assessment criteria	Exceptional (Exceeds expectations)	Strong (Meets expectations)	Marginal (Does not meet expectations)	Unacceptable (Does not meet expectations)
Quality of Presentation				
Presentation design	The design is polished with a very professional appearance; slides/ sections are visually pleasing and aid the viewer in comprehension of presented material; figures, tables and other diagrams are quickly interpreted and appropriate to the topic discussed.	The design is polished; slides/ sections are visually pleasing and aid the viewer in comprehension of presented material; figures and other diagrams are included.	The design is not offensive, but does not look polished or professional; use of figures, diagrams and tables does not facilitate understanding of the material presented.	The design detracts greatly from the presentation content and/ or is not visually pleasing; use of figures, tables and/ or diagrams is poorly executed and does not facilitate understanding of the material presented.
Content and organization	Presentation is highly organized and logical, with appropriate time devoted to sections (introduction, main findings, conclusions); content is informative and conveys key information from dissertation; content is carefully tailored to the audience.	Presentation is organized, with appropriate time devoted to sections (introduction, main findings, conclusions); content is mostly informative and conveys key information from dissertation; content is appropriate for the audience.	Presentation is somewhat organized, but imbalanced with respect to time spent on certain sections; content is somewhat informative and occasionally conveys useful information from dissertation; content is somewhat appropriate for the audience.	Presentation is not organized and poorly balanced with respect to time spent on certain sections; content is not informative and does not convey useful information from dissertation; content is not appropriate for the audience.
Presenter skills	Speaks easily with confidence, enthusiasm and authority on the topic; shows high engagement with the audience through frequent eye contact; keeps on topic and spends an appropriate amount of time on each slide/figure; the presenter appears very comfortable with the technology.	Speaks easily on the topic; presenter spends an appropriate amount of time discussing each slide/section; shows appropriate eye contact with audience; presenter is comfortable with technology.	Unfamiliar with some presentation content; spends too much time on some sections of the presentation; does not show much engagement with audience through eye contact; presentation too short or too long for expected duration; presenter has difficulty working with the technology.	Becomes flustered or agitated during presentation; unfamiliar with presentation content, tends to read text directly from the slide/sections; fails to engage with audience; presentation much too short or much too long for expected duration; clear difficulty working with the technology.
Breadth and Depth of Knowledge				
Defends, clarifies, and expands upon written dissertation with further evidence and argument	Demonstrates a very high level of confidence and competence indicative of an expert in the discipline; uses presentation resources as a guide; gives detailed explanations; is easily understandable.	Shows a high level of confidence and competence; uses presentation resources as a guide, gives moderately detailed explanations; is understandable.	Lacks confidence and/ or competence; uses presentation resources too extensively; occasionally gives unclear explanations; is sometimes not easily understood.	No evidence of confidence and/ or competence; relies excessively on presentation content, often gives unclear explanations; is often not easily understood.

<p>Demonstrates knowledge of dissertation subject, primary sources, and background scholarship; demonstrates ability to synthesize dissertation topic with broader topics in the discipline</p>	<p>Demonstrates a high-level understanding of past and current literature and brings together concepts to think deeply about the research topic.</p>	<p>Appropriately puts the work in perspective of past and present studies in the literature and is capable of introducing and explaining necessary scientific principles.</p>	<p>Neglects some key perspectives and only partially places work in perspective of past and present studies; inadequately explains some key scientific principles.</p>	<p>Failure to adequately understand/explain necessary scientific principles and/or background information and/or failure to put the work in appropriate perspective.</p>
<p>Quality of Responses to Questions</p>				
<p>Directly and correctly answers the examiner's questions</p>	<p>Masterfully defends research by providing accurate, clear and insightful answers to questions.</p>	<p>Competently defense research by providing very helpful answers to questions.</p>	<p>Adequately defends research; answers questions, but often with little insight or inaccuracies; frequently shows a need for deeper reflection on minor points; may respond defensively to probing questions.</p>	<p>Does not adequately defend research; does not answer key questions or inaccurately answers questions; frequently shows a need for deeper reflection on key points; often responds defensively to questions.</p>
<p>Shows evidence of critical thinking and an awareness of the limits of his or her knowledge</p>	<p>Responses to questions reflect deep understanding of field and implications of his/her work; shows critical thinking by linking concepts with evidence; clearly articulates limits of the methodologies and/or his/her interpretations of the findings.</p>	<p>Responses to questions reflect understanding of field and implications of his/her work; shows critical thinking by linking concepts; is aware of the limits of the methodologies and/or his/her interpretations of the findings.</p>	<p>Responses to questions suggest a shallow understanding of the field and limited understanding of the implications of his/her work; does not clearly link concepts; lacks awareness of the limits of the methodologies or his/her interpretations of the findings.</p>	<p>Responses to questions are obtuse or confused; limited evidence of understanding of the field; no ability to link concepts; no apparent awareness of the limitations of the methodologies or his/her interpretations of the findings.</p>

Faculty Form – Rubric for Dissertation and Oral Defense:

<https://caas.usu.edu/ndfs/resources>



Faculty Form – Rubric for Dissertation and Oral Defense

Please review the complete rubric for the PhD student dissertation and defense prior to reading the draft dissertation or attending the oral defense.

Student name	
Date	
Major advisor	
Committee member name	

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Dissertation Document

Assessment criteria	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
Quality of the Scholarly Work			
Mastery of fundamental knowledge in the field			
Ability to access and integrate information into a cohesive overview of current knowledge. Ability to critically evaluate the meaning, value and contribution of published literature in the field.			
Imagination and originality of thought			
Ability to design and implement an appropriate collection and analysis of data.			
Ability to draw reasoned conclusions from a body of knowledge			
Contribution to Discipline			
Impact of research on the field			
Publication potential			
Quality of Writing			
Skilled at scientific/technical writing			
Organization, sentence structure, grammar, mechanics and spelling			
Overall assessment			

Oral Defense

Assessment criteria	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
Quality of Presentation			
Presentation design			
Content and organization			
Presenter skills			
Breadth and Depth of Knowledge			
Defends, clarifies, and expands upon written dissertation with further evidence and argument			
Demonstrates knowledge of dissertation subject, primary sources, and background scholarship; demonstrates ability to synthesize dissertation topic with broader topics in the discipline			
Quality of Responses to Questions			
Directly and correctly answers the examiner's questions			
Shows evidence of critical thinking and an awareness of the limits of his or her knowledge			
Overall assessment			

Use the next page to provide a brief explanation regarding any deficiencies. Please bring this form with you to the post-defense supervisory committee meeting.



Rubric for M.S. Thesis plan A and Presentation

This evaluation tool is designed to assist faculty evaluate whether the graduate student has successfully completed a body of research in his/her discipline, under the guidance of all members of the supervisory committee. This rubric is also a useful tool for students in preparing for their thesis review and the oral presentation, as students should aim to meet the benchmarks outlined below at least at the level of “strong” for all criteria. However, students and faculty using this rubric should note that the student’s supervisory committee ultimately determines the benchmarks for successful completion of the thesis and defense; a “strong” or greater ranking for all itemized criteria below is not necessarily required. Faculty will use a condensed version of this document during the presentation and question and answer session that indicates whether a student met expectations (strong), exceeded expectations (exceptional), or did not meet expectations (marginal and unacceptable). Students should note that this rubric is not used to numerically “score” their performance.

Considerations for review of Thesis Document

Assessment criteria	Exceptional (Exceeds expectations)	Strong (Meets expectations)	Marginal (Does not meet expectations)	Unacceptable (Does not meet expectations)
Quality of the Scholarly Work				
Mastery of fundamental knowledge in the field	Consistently applies fundamental concepts to topics in the subject area	Frequently applies fundamental concepts to topics in the subject area	Somewhat applies fundamental concepts to topics in the subject area	Does not apply fundamental concepts to topics in the subject area
Ability to access and integrate information into a cohesive overview of current knowledge	Shows command and understanding of the current scholarly literature in the field, as well as essential seminal works foundational to the field.	Relates and understands the current scholarly literature in the field, as well as essential seminal works foundational to the field	Shows awareness of the current scholarly literature in the field, as well as essential seminal works foundational to the field.	Knowledge is unrelated to the current scholarly literature or foundational literature in the field.
Ability to articulate clear research problem, objectives and/or hypothesis	Addresses a clear research problem with the purpose of study clearly defined; able to articulate testable hypothesis (if applicable).	Research problem and purpose of study articulated with accompanying testable hypothesis (if applicable).	Problem/purpose of study moderately not clear; hypothesis stated but not testable (if applicable).	Problem/purpose of study not clear; no hypothesis articulated (if applicable).
Ability to implement an appropriate collection and analysis of data	Uses correct methodologies for data collection and analysis; identifies weaknesses or limitations in data interpretation.	Uses mostly correct methodologies for data collection and analysis; identifies some weaknesses or limitations in data interpretation.	Limited correct methodologies are used for data collection and analysis; identifies no weaknesses or limitations in data interpretation.	Uses incorrect or inappropriate methods for data collection and analysis; identifies no weaknesses or limitations in data interpretation.

Rubric for Thesis and Defense:
<https://caas.usu.edu/ndfs/resources>

Ability to draw reasoned conclusions from a body of knowledge	Discussion was robust, accurate and engaging; conclusions/ summaries and recommendations appropriate and clearly based on outcomes.	Discussion sufficient with few errors; conclusions/summary based on outcomes and appropriate; included some recommendations.	Major topics or concepts inaccurately described; considerable relevant discussion missing; conclusions/summary not entirely supported by findings/outcomes	Little discussion of project findings/outcomes; displayed poor grasp of material; conclusion/summary not supported by findings/outcomes.
Contribution to Discipline				
Impact of research on the field	Thesis is relevant or has significance and will make an important contribution to the field.	Thesis has fair relevance or significance and will contribute to the field.	Thesis has only moderate relevance or significance and will make a nominal contribution to the field.	Thesis has little significance and little relevance and will make little contribution to the field.
Potential for research dissemination via publication or presentation	Work from the thesis has high potential to be published in high quality journals, either as a stand-alone manuscript or as part of a research paper. Or, as appropriate to the discipline, work has high potential to be selected for presentation at scholarly regional, national, international conference or research meeting.	Work from the thesis has good potential to be published in moderate quality journals, either as a stand-alone manuscript or as part of a research paper. Or, as appropriate to the discipline, work has good potential to be selected for presentation at scholarly regional, national, international conference or research meeting.	Work from the thesis has only moderate potential to be published in a scholarly journal, either as a stand-alone manuscript or as part of a research paper. Or, as appropriate to the discipline, work has moderate potential to be selected for presentation at scholarly regional, national, international conference or research meeting.	Work from the thesis has low potential to be published in a scholarly journal or presented at a scholarly meeting.
Quality of Writing				
Skilled at scientific/technical writing	Author demonstrates exceptional ability to write clearly and convincingly at a high professional level.	Author demonstrates effective ability to write clearly and convincingly at a high professional level.	Author demonstrates fair ability to write clearly and convincingly at a high professional level.	Author demonstrates no or little ability to write clearly and convincingly at a high professional level.
Organization, sentence structure, grammar, mechanics, and spelling	The author demonstrates highly logical organization of information; sentences are well constructed and have varied structure and length; the author makes no errors in grammar, mechanics and/or spelling.	The author demonstrates logical organization of information; most sentences are well constructed and have varied structure and length; makes a few errors in grammar, mechanics and/or spelling, but they do not interfere with understanding.	Some sections are not well-organized; most sentences are well constructed, but they are similar in structure with little variation; the author makes several errors in grammar, mechanics and/or spelling that interfere with understanding.	Most information is not well-organized; sentences sound awkward; are distractingly repetitive or are difficult to understand; the author makes numerous errors in grammar, mechanics and/or spelling that interfere with understanding.

Considerations for review of presentation and defense

Assessment criteria	Exceptional (Exceeds expectations)	Strong (Meets expectations)	Marginal (Does not meet expectations)	Unacceptable (Does not meet expectations)
Quality of Presentation	The design is polished with a very professional appearance; slides/sections are visually pleasing and aid the viewer in comprehension of presented material; figures, tables and other diagrams are quickly interpreted and appropriate to the topic discussed.	The design is polished; slides/sections are visually pleasing and aid the viewer in comprehension of presented material; figures and other diagrams are included.	The design is not offensive but does not look polished or professional; use of figures, diagrams and tables does not facilitate understanding of the material presented.	The design detracts greatly from the presentation content and/or is not visually pleasing; use of figures, tables and/or diagrams is poorly executed and does not facilitate understanding of the material presented.
Content and organization	Presentation is highly organized and logical, with appropriate time devoted to sections (introduction, main findings, conclusions); content is informative and conveys key information from Thesis; content is carefully tailored to the audience.	Presentation is organized, with appropriate time devoted to sections (introduction, main findings, conclusions); content is mostly informative and conveys key information from Thesis; content is appropriate for the audience.	Presentation is somewhat organized, but imbalanced with respect to time spent on certain sections; content is somewhat informative and occasionally conveys useful information from Thesis; content is somewhat appropriate for the audience.	Presentation is not organized and poorly balanced with respect to time spent on certain sections; content is not informative and does not convey useful information from Thesis; content is not appropriate for the audience.
Presenter skills	Speaks easily with confidence, enthusiasm, and authority on the topic; shows high engagement with the audience through frequent eye contact; keeps on topic and spends an appropriate amount of time on each slide/figure; the presenter appears very comfortable with the technology.	Speaks easily on the topic; presenter spends an appropriate amount of time discussing each slide/section; shows appropriate eye contact with audience; presenter is comfortable with technology.	Appears un rehearsed and unfamiliar with some presentation content; spends too much time on some sections of the presentation; does not show much engagement with audience through eye contact; presentation too short or too long for expected duration; presenter has difficulty working with the technology.	Becomes flustered or agitated during presentation; unfamiliar with presentation content, tends to read text directly from the slide/sections; fails to engage with audience; presentation much too short or much too long for expected duration; clear difficulty working with the technology.
Breadth and Depth of Knowledge				
Defends, clarifies, and expands upon written thesis with further evidence and argument	Demonstrates confidence and competence indicative of a specialist in the discipline; uses presentation resources as a guide, gives detailed explanations, is easily understandable.	Shows confidence and competence; uses presentation resources as a guide, gives moderately detailed explanations, is understandable.	Lacks confidence and/or competence; uses presentation resources too extensively, occasionally gives unclear explanations, is sometimes not easily understood.	No evidence of confidence and/or competence; relies excessively on presentation content, often gives unclear explanations, is often not easily understood.

Quality of Responses to Questions				
Directly and correctly answers the examiner's questions	Skilfully defends research by providing accurate and clear answers to questions.	Competently defends research by providing helpful answers to questions.	Adequately defends research; answers questions, but often with little insight or inaccuracies; frequently shows a need for deeper reflection on minor points; may respond defensively to probing questions.	Does not adequately defend research; does not answer key questions or inaccurately answers questions; frequently shows a need for deeper reflection on key points; often responds defensively to questions.
Shows evidence of critical thinking and an awareness of the limits of his or her knowledge	Responses to questions reflect thorough knowledge of the field and implications of his/her work; shows critical thinking by linking concepts with evidence; clearly articulates limits of the methodologies and/or his/her interpretations of the findings.	Responses to questions reflect professional understanding of the field and implications of his/her work; some evidence of critical thinking by linking concepts; is aware of the limits of the methodologies and/or his/her interpretations of the findings.	Responses to questions suggest a limited understanding of the field and the implications of his/her work; does not clearly link concepts; lacks awareness of the limits of the methodologies or his/her interpretations of the findings.	Responses to questions are obtuse or confused; limited evidence of understanding of the field; no ability to link concepts; no apparent awareness of the limitations of the methodologies or his/her interpretations of the findings.

Faculty Form – Rubric for Thesis and Oral Defense:

<https://caas.usu.edu/ndfs/resources>



Faculty Form – Rubric for Thesis, Presentation, and Defense

Please review the complete rubric for the **MS plan A student** thesis and defense prior to reading the draft dissertation or attending the oral defense.

Student name	
Date	
Major advisor	
Committee member name	

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Thesis Document

Assessment criteria	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
Quality of the Scholarly Work			
Mastery of fundamental knowledge in the field			
Ability to access and integrate information into a cohesive overview of current knowledge			
Ability to articulate clear research problem, objectives and/or hypothesis			
Ability to implement an appropriate collection and analysis of data			
Ability to draw reasoned conclusions from a body of knowledge			
Contribution to Discipline			
Impact of research on the field			
Potential for research dissemination via publication or presentation			
Quality of Writing			
Skilled at scientific/technical writing			
Organization, sentence structure, grammar, mechanics and spelling			
Overall assessment			

Presentation & Defense

Assessment criteria	Does not meet expectations	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
Quality of Presentation			
Presentation design			
Content and organization			
Presenter skills			
Breadth and Depth of Knowledge			
Defends, clarifies, and expands upon written thesis with further evidence and argument			
Quality of Responses to Questions			
Directly and correctly answers the examiner's questions			
Shows evidence of critical thinking and an awareness of the limits of his or her knowledge			
Overall assessment			

Use the next page to provide a brief explanation regarding any deficiencies. Please bring this form with you to the post-defense supervisory committee meeting.

Appendix D: Optional forms

NDFS MS/PhD Checklists

These checklists of suggested timeline and benchmarks is provided as a starting place for your planning purposes only. **Official deadlines should be double checked on the graduate school website.** Blank spaces are left for you to fill in details about forms and deadlines from the graduate school website and other research, coursework, and professional development goals. The Individual Development Plan found on the [NDFS resources](#) page may be useful to you as you develop your individual goals for graduate school.

USU NDFS PhD Program Suggested Timeline and Benchmarks

Please see graduate school website for official deadlines and forms:
<https://gradschool.usu.edu/doctoral-forms-guide/>

Year 1:

- Register for classes based on the advice of your Major Professor.
- Discuss expectations with your Major professor, potential topics of interest include: work hours, compensation, preferred modes, style, and frequency of communication, performance evaluation, mentorship, and authorship.
- Review rubric for Dissertation and Defense, discuss with your Major Professor
- Form your Supervisory Committee by the end of your first semester, turn in the supervisory committee form to the graduate school
- First Annual Review with your Supervisory Committee, discuss:
 - Course options for your program of study
 - Plan of work for next year or more (professional development, coursework, and research)
 - Discuss rubric for Dissertation and Defense, identify plans to meet expectations in the rubric
 - Turn in annual review form to GPC
- Work with your Major Professor and Committee members to develop a program of study*
- Complete program of study in [DegreeWorks](#)*
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*Required by the end of your third semester, if feasible, it is recommended to complete in your second semester, after forming your supervisory committee.

Year 2:

- Work with your Major Professor and Committee members to develop a program of study*
- Complete program of study in DegreeWorks* by the end of your third semester
- Develop and defend your research proposal by the end of your third semester.
 - Work with your major professor to develop your research proposal, you can also ask your committee members for advice about their areas of expertise.
 - Email your proposal to your committee members **at least two weeks** before your proposal defense.
- Annual review with supervisory committee
 - Provide your committee members with a short summary of your progress in coursework, professional development, and research then discuss
 - Plan of work for next year or more (professional development, coursework, and research)
 - Discuss how you plan of work will help you meet expectations found in the rubric for Dissertation and Defense
 - Discuss format and expectations for comprehensive exam
 - Discuss ideas and initial plans for research proposal
 - Turn in annual review form to GPC
- Comprehensive exam
 - You may want to meet with your committee members individually to discuss format and expectations, or this can be done during the annual review meeting and over email.
 - See details in graduate handbook about format and expectations.
 - Complete Application for Candidacy for Doctoral Degree Form, School of Graduate Studies website at: <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>.
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*If not completed in your second semester.

Years 3-final year:

- Annual review with supervisory committee.
 - Provide your committee members with a short summary of your progress in coursework, professional development, and research then discuss
 - Discuss your plan of work for next year or more (professional development, coursework, and research)
 - Discuss how you plan of work will help you meet expectations found in the rubric for Dissertation and Defense
 - Turn in annual review form to GPC
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Final Year:

- Review the graduate school's degree completion deadlines and final semester information: <https://gradschool.usu.edu/degree-completion/> Write down important deadlines below, set calendar reminders, or etc.
 - Schedule defense, note the defense deadline for the date you want to graduate (see link above)
-
- Provide your dissertation, rubric, and summary form to your committee members **at least 4 weeks before** your defense
 - Reserve a room for your defense **at least two weeks before** the date, with the GPC. They will advertise your defense to the department and double check to make you're your Appointment for Exam form is complete
 - Complete your Appointment for Exam form at least 10 days before the defense
 - Your GPC will submit the Record of Exam form after your exam. You must not handle the Record of Exam form once it is completed.
 - Submit the Format and Style form and Authorship and Copyright after your defense, before you are ready to begin the review process.
 - Complete revisions requested by your committee.
 - Make sure you have followed the Dissertation Requirements: <https://gradschool.usu.edu/thesis-dissertation-requirements/>
 - Ask the GPC to submit your revised dissertation to the graduate school for review.
 - Check to make sure you have completed all items on the Degree Completion Checklist <https://gradschool.usu.edu/degree-completion/>
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USU NDFS MS Program Suggested Timeline and Benchmarks

Please see graduate school website for official deadlines and forms:

<https://gradschool.usu.edu/masters-plan-a-forms-guide/>

Year 1:

- Register for classes based on the advice of your Major Professor.
- Discuss expectations with your Major professor, potential topics of interest include: work hours, compensation, preferred modes, style, and frequency of communication, performance evaluation, mentorship, and authorship.
- Form your Supervisory Committee by the end of your first semester, turn in the supervisory committee form to the graduate school
- First Annual Review with your Supervisory Committee, discuss:
 - Course options for your program of study
 - Plan of work for next year or more (professional development, coursework, and research)
 - Discuss rubric for Thesis and Defense, identify plans to meet expectations in the rubric
 - Discuss ideas and initial plans for research proposal
 - Turn in annual review form to GPC
- Work with your Major Professor and Committee members to develop a program of study by the end of your second semester.
- Complete program of study in DegreeWorks
- Develop and defend your research proposal by the end of your second semester.
 - Work with your major professor to develop your research proposal, you can also ask your committee members for advice about their areas of expertise.
 - Email your proposal to your committee members **at least two weeks** before your proposal defense.
 - Submit the Thesis Proposal Approval form after your successful defense
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Year 2:

- Annual review with supervisory committee
 - Provide your committee members with a short summary of your progress in coursework, professional development, and research then discuss
 - Plan of work for next year or more (professional development, coursework, and research)

- Discuss how your plan of work will help you meet expectations found in the rubric for Thesis and Defense
- Discuss ideas and initial plans for research proposal
- Turn in annual review form to GPC

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Final Year (often this is year 2):

- Review the graduate school's degree completion deadlines and final semester information: <https://gradschool.usu.edu/degree-completion/> Write down important deadlines below, set calendar reminders, or etc.
 - Schedule defense, note the defense deadline for the date you want to graduate (see link above)
-
- Provide your thesis, rubric, and summary form to your committee members **at least 4 weeks before** your defense
 - Reserve a room for your defense **at least two weeks before** the date, with the GPC. They will advertise your defense to the department and double check to make you're your Appointment for Exam form is complete
 - Submit the Appointment for Exam form **at least 10 business days** before your final defense.
 - Your GPC will submit the Record of Exam form after your exam. You must not handle the Record of Exam form once it is completed.
 - Submit the Format and Style form and Authorship and Copyright after your defense, before you are ready to begin the review process.
 - Complete revisions requested by your committee.
 - Make sure you have followed the thesis requirements,
 - Ask the GPC to submit your revised dissertation to the graduate school for review.
 - Check to make sure you have completed all items on the Degree Completion Checklist <https://gradschool.usu.edu/degree-completion/>

CAAS Graduate student travel support form



Request for Graduate Student Travel Funds

All information and required signatures are to be completed by the traveler requesting funds. Request must be submitted before travel commences and funds are not guaranteed.

Part 1: General Information

Traveler Information

Name: _____ Department: _____
Major Professor: _____

Meeting Information

Meeting Title: _____
Location: _____ Conference Size: _____
Dates: _____
Title of presentation and/or poster: _____

Estimated Travel Costs

Airfare: _____
Number of days lodging: _____ Lodging Rate: _____
Registration: _____ Total estimated cost: _____

Part 2: Approval - Student traveler is responsible for obtaining the following signatures:

Department Head & Date

Major Professor & Date

Part 3: Turn in form

Student traveler turns in form to AGRS 425 or emails to: dora.brunson@usu.edu

Amount Awarded: _____ Index # _____

Business Manager Date

MS/PhD in Nutrition and Food Sciences Student Handbook Signature Form

This page is to be signed by the student after receiving and reading the Utah State University, NDFS MS/PhD Student Handbook. This handbook includes information pertaining to USU student policies, program specific requirements, and expectations.

I realize it is my responsibility to read the NDFS MS/PhD Student Handbook and clarify any questions or concerns with my major professor or the program director.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the requirements as stated in the NDFS MS/PhD Student Handbook.

Name of Student (Print)

Signature of Student

Date

Please return completed form to Carrie Durward in person, to her mailbox in the main office, or email to carrie.durward@usu.edu

