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Introduction

Welcome to the Nutrition Graduate Program! We are pleased that you have chosen our program and look forward to working with you to ensure that your academic goals are met. This handbook was prepared to help you navigate through the program requirements and procedures. Please keep this copy and refer to it often as you plan your graduate career. If you don’t find the information you need, please consult with the chair of your Advisory-Examining Committee or contact the Nutrition Graduate Program Director (information listed at the end of this handbook).

1. Program Description

This program was developed to provide students with a post-baccalaureate education (i.e., a Master of Science) that:

(1) Strengthens and advances core nutrition knowledge so that students are competent in the areas of nutritional biochemistry and physiology, and have an in-depth understanding of clinical and epidemiological applications of this knowledge as it relates to nutrition status assessment, and the prevention and treatment of disease;

(2) Provides opportunities so that students may develop proficiency in a more defined area of specialization that links nutrition with other biological or behavioral sciences (e.g., toxicology, molecular biology, epidemiology, public health, human development). This will be accomplished through elective course work and completion of research/scholarly efforts that culminate in a written document (i.e., thesis or professional paper); and

(3) Results in an in-depth understanding of nutrition research and related scientific methods/techniques such that students are capable of critically evaluating research and engaging in the scientific process themselves.

2. Degree Requirements

Program Plans

The program offers two plans.

Plan A students must complete 32 credits, including 6 credits of thesis (NUTR 797 or equivalent). A thesis is a scientific document that describes the background, methods, results and conclusions of an original research activity.

Plan B students must complete 35 credits, including 3 credits for professional paper (NUTR 796 or equivalent). A professional paper here refers to a critical analysis of existing knowledge of a specified nutrition topic/problem that is written in a style suitable for a nutrition journal.
Core Nutrition Courses

Students enrolled in both Plan A and B, must complete and earn a “B” or better (i.e., 3.0) in each of the following core nutrition courses (total of 13 credits):

- Micronutrients (NUTR 735; 3 credits)
- Macronutrients (NUTR 730; 3 credits)
- Nutrition and Health (NUTR 725; 3 credits)
- Nutrition Assessment Techniques (NUTR 732; 3 credits)
- Seminar in Nutrition (NUTR 726; 1 credit)

Students who fail to earn a “B” or better in one or more of the core nutrition courses have the option of re-enrolling in the course(s) the next time it is offered. There are no substitutions available for required classes.

Other Required Courses

In addition to the Core, students in both Plan A and Plan B are required to complete the following courses:

(1) Graduate-level research methods course (3 credits). Students may select a research course among the following approved courses:
- NUTR 685 Nutrition Research and Contemporary Issues
- CHS 700 Research Methods for Public Health
- CHS 712 Epidemiology in Public Health

(2) Graduate-level statistics course (3 credits). Students may select a statistics course among the following approved courses:
- APST 663, Design and Analysis of Experiments
- CHS 780 Biostatistics in Public Health

(3) Graduate-level seminar course (1 credit). In addition to NUTR 726 (1 credit) listed previously, all students must complete a second graduate seminar course. This requirement may be fulfilled by completing an additional semester of NUTR 726 or by enrolling in a graduate seminar related to their area of specialization/interest.

(4) To fulfill the remaining credit hours, students may complete other elective courses that are directed toward developing proficiency in the students’ selected area of specialization/interest. Note that these courses must be graduate level (i.e., at 600 or 700 level).

Please note that the selection of courses (with the exception of the core nutrition courses) is to be made in consultation with the Advisory – Examining Committee members. Further information about the purpose and composition of this committee can be found below.
Graduate School Academic Requirements:
All graduate students must maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0. If their GPA drops below 3.0 they are either placed on probation or dismissed. Undergraduate courses will not count towards graduate GPA.

**Probation:** All students whose cumulative graduate GPA is between 2.99 and 2.31 are put on probation. Students are placed on academic probation for one semester. If they fail to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.0 by the end of one semester, they are dismissed from their graduate program. Thesis, dissertation, S/U graded credits, and transfer credits have no impact on a student’s GPA.

**Dismissal:** All students whose cumulative graduate GPA is 2.30 or lower are dismissed from graduate standing. Dismissed students are no longer in a graduate program but may take graduate-level courses as a Grad Special. Students wishing to complete their degree must obtain approval to take graduate-level courses, raise their graduate GPA to at least 3.0 and then re-apply to a graduate program. Any courses taken to raise their GPA will be included in the graduate special/transfer credit limitation (9 credits for master’s degrees).

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3. Transfer Credits

These are credits transferred from another institution. Credits completed at UNR in another program or as a graduate special do not need to be transferred. Transfer credit is requested on the Graduate Credit Transfer Evaluation Request form available on the Graduate School website http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/GraduateCreditTransferEvaluationRequest.pdf and must be signed by the student, major advisor, and graduate director. Transfer credits applied to a master’s program must comply with the time limitation on master’s work (6 years). Thus, if a student took a course five years prior to admission, they would have to complete the degree within one year for the course to apply to the degree. Credits from a completed master’s degree will be exempt from the 8-year time limitation for those students earning a doctoral degree.

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4. Degree Completion Timeline

The general timeline of events shown next may be useful as you plan your graduate program. Although the total amount of time needed to complete the requirements varies among students, the general progression is very similar.

**Year One**

1. **Begin course work.**

   In planning your course schedule, please note that most core nutrition classes are not available every year and substitutions are rarely allowed. Therefore, it is important to enroll in these classes when they are offered. Courses that are offered every other year are noted below:
   
   Micronutrients (NUTR 735)
2. Identify the Chair of your Advisory-Examining Committee.

As noted previously, all Nutrition Graduate Program faculty are eligible to fill this role. It is your responsibility to identify someone who is willing to serve as your Committee Chair/Advisor and has expertise in the specific area nutrition that you wish to explore. In the interim, the Nutrition Graduate Program Director will act as your advisor should you have questions or need assistance.

3. In consultation with the Chair of your Advisory-Examining Committee, identify and invite other faculty members to serve on your committee.

Identify and invite a minimum of two additional faculty members to serve on your committee. At least one must be a member of the Graduate Nutrition Faculty and one must be identified as a Graduate School Representative. The latter should have no affiliation with the Nutrition Graduate Program. In addition, at least one member of the committee must be from the Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences.

4. Submit the signed “Advisory-Examining Committee/Program of Study” form to the Graduate Program Director.

The Chair of your Advisory-Examining Committee can help you identify courses that correspond to your academic goals. You will also need to meet with the other members of your committee to discuss your program of study and to obtain their signatures. This may be accomplished during a meeting of your entire committee. Once completed, submit the signed form to the Graduate Program Director. It will then be forwarded to the Graduate School for final signature. This and other forms required by the Graduate School can be downloaded from http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/. The Graduate School will not accept hand written forms.

5. Develop your research plan (i.e., thesis or professional paper).

Work closely with the Chair of your Advisory/Examining Committee to develop your proposed research plan (Plan A) or the purpose and outline of your professional paper (Plan B). Your Chair may require that you write and present a proposal to your entire Advisory-Examining Committee. Approval from the UNR Office of Human Research Protection or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee may also be needed. Your Chair can provide guidance and assistance with this matter.

Year Two (and Year Three for some students)

1. Complete your course work.
Per the Graduate School, all students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 or greater. In addition, the program requires that students earn a 3.0 or greater in each of the Core Nutrition Courses.

2. Complete your research.
As you conduct your research, enroll in the appropriate number of thesis credits (NUTR 797 or equivalent) or professional paper credits (NUTR 796 or equivalent). A minimum of six credits of thesis are required for Plan A and a minimum of three credits of professional paper credits are required for Plan B. These courses are not graded. At the close of each semester of registration for credit, an “X” is indicated instead of a letter grade on the student’s permanent record. These courses are not counted in grade-point average computations. After the thesis/professional paper is completed, defended and accepted by the student’s committee and by the graduate dean, credit is posted to the student’s academic record.

3. Submit and present your thesis or professional paper to members of your Advisory-Examining Committee.
All members of the Advisory-Examining Committee should be provided a copy of the thesis or professional paper at least one week prior to the scheduled committee meeting (aka: “final defense”) as agreed upon by the committee. In general, the purpose of the meeting is to provide a forum for students to present their findings to the committee and the academic community at-large. Once the presentation is completed and members of the audience have been given the opportunity to ask questions, the defense is then closed to all but the committee for the purpose of asking the student further questions. Often the student is asked to leave the room so that the committee can discuss the defense and make a decision regarding the quality of the student’s work. Generally, the committee determines at this time if the defense was satisfactory or unsatisfactory; and signs the form, “Master’s Degree – Notice of Completion.” This form is also signed by the Nutrition Graduate Program Director and forwarded for final signature to the Graduate School.

4. Submit thesis to the Graduate School.
Plan A students must submit a final copy of their thesis (with all requested revisions completed) to the Graduate School. Guidelines may be found at [http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/dissertation-and-thesis-submission-requirements.pdf](http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/dissertation-and-thesis-submission-requirements.pdf). Students must also provide a final copy to the Chair of your committee and the Nutrition Graduate Program Director. These can be digital copies.

As you plan your schedule, please be aware of the Graduate School deadlines for submitting your thesis.

Note: Plan B students are not required to provide a copy of their professional paper to the Graduate School. However, a copy of the final paper must be provided to the Chair of your committee and to the Nutrition Graduate Program Director. These can be digital copies.
5. Graduation!

An “Application for Graduation” must be purchased and completed online (http://www.unr.edu/grad/forms/graduation-application). Graduation application deadlines are:

- March 1 for May graduation,
- June 1 for August graduation, and
- October 1 for December graduation.

An applicant, who does not complete all degree requirements by the specified deadline for the semester they applied, must purchase and complete a new graduation application online.

5. Committee Selection

Every graduate student is responsible for organizing an Advisory-Examining Committee. The purpose of this committee is to approve your program of study, and provide guidance regarding your thesis or professional paper. At the master’s level, the committee must include at least three members of the UNR Graduate Faculty; two of which are considered content experts and therefore must be members of the Nutrition Program Graduate Faculty (please see listing at the end of this document). At least one of these two members must also be from the Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences. The third member represents the Graduate School, assuring compliance with UNR regulations and procedures and reporting any deviation from prescribed standards to the Graduate School. While this faculty member may have expertise that is related to the thesis or professional paper topic, they may not be a member of the Nutrition Program Graduate Faculty.

The Chair of the Advisory-Examining Committee serves as the primary advisor. It is the responsibility of this faculty member to guide the student in identifying appropriate courses, developing the thesis/professional paper proposal, providing expertise and assistance in completion of the thesis/professional paper, and serving as a resource for information related to program and graduate school requirements. You MUST complete the ‘Declaration of Advisor’ form no later than your second semester.

It is the student’s responsibility to form this committee. It is strongly recommended that you begin by determining who will serve as the Chair of your Advisory – Examining Committee. All Nutrition Graduate Program faculty are eligible to fill this role, but that person must be willing to assume the role and have expertise in the specific area nutrition that you wish to explore. Getting familiar with the Nutrition Graduate Faculty is a good way to begin this process. Please note that there are faculty members from departments other than Nutrition who can serve as the Chair of your committee. This is consistent with the inter-disciplinary nature of nutrition.

Please keep in mind that your Advisory-Examining Committee should be formed during your first or second semester. The Graduate School strongly recommends that the committee be formed prior to completion of 12 graduate credits.
**Master's Programs:** The MS in Nutrition requires at least three advisory committee members. All must be graduate faculty members. At least one member should be from the Department of Agriculture, Nutrition & Veterinary Sciences. At least one (the graduate school representative or “outside” member) must be from a department or program different from the department or program from which the student is graduating.

Formal approval of all student advisory committees is made by the Graduate Dean.

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6. **Thesis Requirements**

   Students will submit their thesis to their committee at least one week prior to the scheduled committee meeting (aka: “final defense”) as agreed upon by the committee. Instructions regarding formatting can be found at [http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/dissertation-and-thesis-submission-requirements.pdf](http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/dissertation-and-thesis-submission-requirements.pdf). Students must also provide a final copy to the Chair of your committee and the Nutrition Graduate Program Director.

Examples of past student theses in Nutrition can be found at:


Graduate School forms and resources related to thesis and dissertations:


Once all requirements have been met, students need to submit a Final Review Approval and Notice of Completion form in order to graduate.

- Final Review Approval – Obtain sign-off from advisory committee chair

- Notice of completion – completed form should be submitted after all requirements have been met.

7. **Assistantships**

   The Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences awards both teaching and research assistantships on a competitive basis. If you are awarded an assistantship to help defray the cost of your education, please note that you must register for at least six graduate level credits each semester (excluding summer). Failing to maintain this enrollment or earning less than a 3.0 GPA will jeopardize this financial assistance. The Graduate Dean's approval, with a
note of explanation from the student's major advisor, is required to register for more than 12 credits in a given semester. For additional details regarding assistantships, please see http://www.unr.edu/Documents/administration-finance/hr/hr-graduate/Grad_Assistantship_Handbook.pdf.

All graduate students holding an assistantship (teaching GTA or GRA) are considered Nevada residents for tuition purposes. Non-resident tuition is only waived for the duration of the assistantship. To be eligible for an assistantship, students must be admitted to a degree-granting program and be in good academic standing. The student must have an overall GPA of at least 3.0 and must be continuously enrolled in at least 6 graduate level credits (600-700) throughout the duration of the assistantship.

State-funded assistantships (GTA/GRA) may be held for a maximum of: three (3) years for master’s degree students.

8. Health Insurance

All domestic degree seeking graduate students, who are enrolled in six or more credits (regardless of the course level) in a semester, will be automatically enrolled and billed for the University sponsored health insurance for each term they are eligible (fall & spring/summer). If a student has other comparable coverage and would like to waive out of the student health insurance, it is the student’s responsibility to complete the University online waiver form prior to the deadline. If approved, a health insurance waiver is good for the current academic year only. A new waiver must be submitted each academic year. All international graduate students are required to carry student health insurance, and the cost will be automatically added to your student account. Any international graduate students with insurance questions must contact the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS) directly. http://www.unr.edu/grad/health-insurance

9. Leave of Absence

Continuous Enrollment: To maintain “good standing” all graduate students are required to enroll in a minimum of three (3) graduate credits each fall and spring semester until they graduate. International students may be required to enroll in nine graduate credits each fall and spring semester depending on the requirements of their visa. All students holding assistantships (whether teaching or research assistantships) are required to enroll in a minimum of six (6) graduate credits each semester they hold the assistantship. A graduate student, who is not a Graduate Assistant, may register for up to 16 graduate credits in any one semester, or up to six graduate credits in any six-week summer session.

Leave of Absence: Students in good standing may request a leave of absence by completing a leave of absence form available on the Graduate School website (http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/leaveofabsencer_9.23.pdf) during which time they are not required to maintain continuous registration. Usually, a leave of absence is approved for one or two semesters. The leave of absence request may be extended by the student filing an additional leave of absence form. Students applying for a leave of absence should not have any “incomplete” grades which could be changed to “F” and have a detrimental impact on their
cumulative GPA. Requests for leave of absences must be received by the Graduate School no later than the last day of enrollment for the semester the leave is to begin.

**Reinstatement:** When a student has been absent for one semester or more without an approved leave of absence, he or she may request reinstatement via the Reinstatement form (available on the Graduate School website [http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/noticere reinstatementgraduatestanding_9.23.pdf](http://www.unr.edu/Documents/graduate-school/noticere reinstatementgraduatestanding_9.23.pdf)). This form allows the program the option to recommend the student be re-admitted to their graduate program based on their previous admission OR require the student to re-apply for admission which would require students to submit a new application for admission and pay the application fee. The Notice of Reinstatement to Graduate Standing must be received by the Graduate School no later than the last day of enrollment for the semester the reinstatement is to begin.

10. **Time Limitations**

All work toward a master's degree (transfer credits, credits completed at UNR prior to admission, course work credits, thesis credits, if applicable, and all examinations) must be completed within six calendar years immediately preceding the granting of the degree. The Graduate School may consider an extension, normally not to exceed one year or one-third of the course credit required for the degree. Requests for extensions must come from the Chair of your Advisory-Examining Committee with the concurrence of the Director of Nutrition Graduate Program and be based on an academic or humanitarian rationale for the delay in degree completion.

11. **Conflict**

While it is not expected, if you should find yourself in conflict with a faculty member including your Chair, a member of your committee or an instructor, please do not hesitate to speak with the Nutrition Graduate Program Director. If it cannot be resolved at that level, we encourage you to speak with the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. David Zeh.

12. **Graduate Student Association (GSA)**

The GSA is the student government for graduate students at UNR. As a graduate student, you are automatically a member of this organization. Elected representatives and an executive council run GSA. Meetings are held every other Tuesday at 7:00 pm in the Rita Laden Senate Chambers of the Joe Crowley Student Union. As a graduate student, you may attend these meetings as a member of the public. For more information, see [http://www.unr.edu/gsa/](http://www.unr.edu/gsa/).

13. **Nutrition Graduate Faculty**

The following faculty may Chair or serve as a member of student’s Advisory-Examining Committee. Their respective research interests are briefly described below.
Jamie Benedict, Ph.D., R.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences
Environmental characteristics that impact nutritional health; nutritional health of low-income persons; nutrition education methodology

Bill Evans, Ph.D.
Professor and State Extension Specialist
Human Development and Family Studies
Adolescent risk, resiliency and developmental issues in general with specific focus on youth development and youth worker issues; resilience to adolescent violence; suicide prevention; and youth program evaluation

Bradley Ferguson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences
FA 225
Voice: 784-6278
bferguson@unr.edu

Michelle Granner, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Community Health Science
Physical activity, sedentary behavior, dietary intake, and the interaction of these behaviors. Healthy weight management, obesity, eating disorders, community-based participatory research, and evaluation.

Heidi A. Kratsch, Ph.D., C.H.
Associate Professor/Horticulture Specialist
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Northern Area
Urban and other local food systems for addressing food security issues among low-income, youth and aging populations; alternative horticultural crop production strategies to meet the unique needs of urban systems, including indoor and protected culture for nutrient enhancement, water conservation and season extension

Stanley Omaye, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences
The role of micronutrients and antioxidants in health; effective pharmacological and nutritional intervention in chronic diseases and aging; development of nutrient biomarkers and methodologies; environmental issues, such as, air pollutants, tobacco smoke, and heavy metal contamination effects on human health

Chris Pritsos, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences
The impact of free radical generated damage on biological systems and the role of antioxidants in the prevention of this damage; mechanisms of action and therapeutic efficacy of anticancer agents; the health impact of environmental tobacco smoke exposure including biological damage, antioxidant protection, and genetic factors which may make persons more susceptible to its harmful effects

**Mike Teglas, Ph.D., D.V.M**
Associate Professor
Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences
Microbial ecology and evolution and its role in animal and human health; vaccine development and preventative medicine

**Wei Yang, Ph.D., M.D.**
Professor
School of Community Health Sciences, Center for Health Informatics
Health informatics; Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System; cancer epidemiology; injury prevention; children with special needs

14. **Nutrition Graduate Program Director**

**Bradley Ferguson, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor
Department of Agriculture, Nutrition and Veterinary Sciences
FA 225
Voice: 784-6278
bferguson@unr.edu

15. **Additional Resources**

**UNR Graduate School**
Mailstop 0326
Phone: (775)784-6869
Student Service Building, Room 225
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm
http://www.unr.edu/grad/