



Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work

Doctor of Philosophy in Dietetics and Nutrition Doctoral Program Handbook

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Welcome from the Department Chair



We are delighted that you have chosen the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition for your doctoral studies. Our faculty are dedicated to your education and research pursuits. Also, there are many interesting research projects going on at FIU, so we are excited for you to join one of our faculty mentors to guide you in this process.

Success in graduate school depends on careful planning and hard work. It also depends on the relationships you develop with your mentor, the graduate faculty, and the other doctoral students in the Department. Learning from them will assist you in breaking new intellectual ground in the field of dietetics and nutrition and contributing to both national and international professional conversations in the field.

We truly wish you much success!!

Cristina Palacios, PhD, MS
Professor and Chair

Welcome from the Ph.D. Program Director



The Department of Dietetics and Nutrition is dedicated to advancing the profession of Dietetics by providing our students with a dietetics and nutrition scientific and applied knowledge base in a multidisciplinary environment.

Our goal is to train dietetic professionals who will promote nutrition as a critical part of disease treatment and prevention.

I am excited for you to get to learn more about our dietetics and nutrition program here at Florida International University.

Congratulations on embarking on this new and exciting journey with us. We can't wait to watch you grow and thrive!

Sincerely,

Catherine Coccia, Ph.D., R.D.N., L.D.N.

Associate Professor

Ph.D. Program Director

The Ph.D. Program in Dietetics and Nutrition

The Vision

The vision of the department is to be recognized for excellence in dietetics and applied nutrition research, which serves as the catalyst for quality education and responsive community service.

- Conduct research to advance the profession of dietetics and nutrition, promote nutrition as a critical part of disease treatment/prevention and integrate food and nutrition services in clinical, home, and community-based social and health networks, and
- Train dietetics and nutrition professionals who are sensitive to the needs of the population.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition is to prepare practitioners and applied researchers in dietetics, food, and nutrition to build a healthier society.

Our objectives focus on three synergistic areas:

- Education of dietetics and nutrition majors who are competent, intellectually curious professionals and leaders, and non-majors who value the role of nutrition in overall health.
- Evidenced-based research to advance the profession; to position nutrition in health promotion, disease prevention/treatment, food/foodservice; and to integrate food and nutrition services into the mainstream of health, and home and community-based settings.
- Community/professional service to foster healthy lifestyles through better nutrition over the life course of populations.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the Ph.D. program in Dietetics and Nutrition students will be able to:

1. Dietetics and Nutrition

- a. Understand the scientific basis for nutrient requirements and utilization.
- b. Determine how nutrient metabolism influences human wellness across the lifespan.
- c. Understand how to apply evidence-based research to dietetics practice and the promotion of health.

2. Research

- a. Analyze, interpret and make recommendations based on research evidence.
- b. Understand how to design and conduct original innovative research related to dietetics and nutrition.
- c. Design and experience data collection activities.
- d. Analyze and interpret original research data.

3. Teaching

- a. Develop experience in course design, implementation and evaluation.
- b. Engage in collaborative research, teaching, outreach, and mentoring endeavors to make meaningful contribution to the field of dietetics and nutrition.

4. Communication

- a. Display effective communication strategies when interfacing with all associates.
- b. Effectively disseminate research findings through oral and written communication.
- c. Experience the grant writing and editing process.
- d. Critique and provide constructive feedback on work from colleagues and peers.

5. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

- a. Think critically about problems in their field of study.
- b. Find innovative and creative ways to solve problems.
- c. Accept and receive constructive feedback from colleagues and peers.

6. Ethical Conduct

- a. Conduct research in an ethical and responsible manner.
- b. Conduct practice and interactions with others based on the AND Code of Ethics and FIU Ethical Standards.

7. Professional Development

- a. Demonstrate dedication to professional growth by continuously learning and actively engaging in professional scientific societies

I General Information

The Ph.D. Program in Dietetics and Nutrition prepares graduates to assume leadership roles in research, academia, government, private industry and community-based organization. Our doctoral program allows students to study and work side-by-side with nationally known educators, researchers, and practitioners who serve as mentors. This program affords the students the option of completing the requirements for eligibility to take the national registration exam to become a Registered Dietitian.

Most applicants to the Ph.D. Program are dietitian practitioners, although the Ph.D. Program is not designed to increase or improve clinical practice skills. In courses, seminars, and supervised or individual study and research, collaborative work with faculty, as well as opportunities to teach, students are encouraged to develop and strengthen their skills in the methods of scientific inquiry, to deepen their understanding and analysis of research data, and to contribute to the knowledge base in dietetics and nutrition.

Students pursue a course of study focused on health problems related to nutrition intervention research and research methodology. While in the program, students are expected to disseminate the results of their study and research in appropriate forums. Students are also offered opportunities to teach, as departmental needs allow.

This document, "Doctor of Philosophy in Dietetics and Nutrition Doctoral Program Handbook," serves as a resource for Dietetics and Nutrition PhD students in the Stempel College. The Dietetics and Nutrition PhD operates under the FIU University Graduate School (UGS) and thus adheres to all University Graduate School procedures. Students are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the requirements of both the Stempel College and the University Graduate School. In cases of discrepancies between this handbook and University Graduate School policies, University Graduate School policies will supersede.

- The Policies and Procedures of the University Graduate School are available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#gradpolicies> and in the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.fiu.edu>). Students should read all the material at these links carefully.
- The specific policies and procedures can be found here: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#gradpolicies>.

The Graduate Catalog is the final authority in case of conflicts. Failure to follow University Graduate School guidelines and deadlines could result in a delay in graduation. Furthermore, you should allow ample time for committee members and administrators to complete their role in the review and approval of your work. Additional information is available electronically through several sources.

- The web site for the Stempel College is <https://stempel.fiu.edu> from which you can find a host of documents relating to the Dietetics and Nutrition PhD, including the latest version of this guide.

Graduates of the Ph.D. Program

Founded in 1995, the Ph.D. Program has produced numerous nationally and internationally recognized graduates. Most graduates have obtained positions as faculty members in departments of dietetics and nutrition across the country and the world. Others work as research scientists in research centers, some in government and private practice.

Interdisciplinary Collaborations

Several opportunities exist for interdisciplinary collaborations as a doctoral student. The Department of Dietetics and Nutrition is part of FIU's Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work. Moreover, the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition has longstanding collaborations with the College of Medicine, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the School of Hospitality and Management.

Full Time Program*

The Ph.D. Program is a *full-time* program requiring a significant investment of time and commitment from students. Most students complete the program in 3-5 years.

Part Time Program*

Students who decide to enroll on a part-time basis might complete the program in 5+ years.

* The University Graduate School allows a maximum of nine (9) years to complete a doctoral program regardless of the choice of enrollment.

Summary Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

1. Completion of 55 credit hours of required coursework after MS degree or a minimum of 75 hours beyond the BS degree. The stated minimum credit hours do not include remedial coursework. Coursework will be planned with the advisor and the dissertation committee to support the student's research interest and career goals. A 3.00 GPA must be maintained and all courses needed for graduation must be completed with a "B" or higher.
2. A program of study will be developed with the assistance of a major professor and dissertation committee.
3. More than 13 credits may be required for the student to achieve competency in the research methods and content related to their dissertation research.
4. Graduate courses outside of Dietetics and Nutrition may be required as approved by the Dissertation Committee
5. Successful completion of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination and advancement to candidacy.
6. Successful defense of a Dissertation Proposal before the Dissertation Committee and other faculty and students.
7. A minimum of 15 dissertation credits after advancing to candidacy.

8. Completion of a dissertation under the guidance of the major professor and the Dissertation Committee
9. Defense of the dissertation before the Dissertation Committee and the University community
10. The Ph.D. degree must be obtained within nine (9) years of admission into the Ph.D. program.

II Admissions

Admission Deadline

Newly admitted students begin classes during the Fall Semester. Interested applicants are urged to consult the FIU Graduate School and the Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work web sites for differing deadlines for fellowship and assistantship applications.

Admission Requirements

The Ph.D. degree is first and foremost a research degree, certifying that the holder has demonstrated advanced knowledge of theory and practice in dietetics, nutrition and biochemistry, as well as the autonomous capacity to plan, conduct, and report on research. Thus, although dietetics, nutrition, or foods background is highly desirable, it is not the primary means to ascertain whether applicants will be successful as doctoral students and future researchers.

The following are admission requirements of the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition and/or the University Graduate School:

1. A Master's degree in dietetics and nutrition, (M.S.) or in a closely related field (e.g., biochemistry, food science, molecular biology) from an accredited institution is recommended. Prior dietetics and nutrition experience is highly desired.
2. Evidence of superior academic achievement in undergraduate and previous graduate education, including at least a 3.00 (upper division) undergraduate GPA and at least a 3.00 or higher graduate GPA.
3. Three letters of recommendation from academics and professionals who are familiar with your work.
4. Curriculum Vitae that includes any research experience, research presentations, papers, abstracts, conference attendance, professional memberships, volunteer and work experience.

5. A personal statement describing the applicant's purpose to pursue doctoral studies at this time and at this institution. This written statement will be evaluated for organization, content, individuality, spelling/grammar, connection to the profession of dietetics. In the personal statement students should:
 - a. Demonstrate background and experience (include examples) and how your attitude, values, skills and character demonstrate your ability to pursue a Ph.D. in Dietetics and Nutrition and how it relates to your overarching goals
 - b. Describe your research and specialization interests
 - c. Describe your career goals following receipt of your Dietetics and Nutrition Ph.D. at Florida International University
 - d. Identify at least 3 Florida International University Dietetics and Nutrition professors that you may be interested in working with along with a rationale for why you are interested in working with those professors
 - e. Indicate and explain the reason for selecting the Ph.D. program in Dietetics and Nutrition at Florida International University

Please note: The starting point for writing personal statements and admissions essays should be applicant-generated. While the use of AI may be useful for structuring and editing writing, it should primarily be the voice of the applicant. Any use of AI must be cited clearly.
6. Applicants who do not meet all admission requirements but demonstrate outstanding abilities or accomplishments may also be considered; however, exemption from particular requirements may need to be requested from the University Graduate School by the Dept of D&N.
7. An admissions interview may be requested

Applicants are responsible to ensure that required documents are received at the Office of Graduate Admissions at FIU by the stated deadlines. Please refer to the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition website for instructions on where to send each document: <http://stempel.fiu.edu/>. The Admissions Committee reviews only completed applications.

Transfer of Credits from Previous Course Work

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program cannot substitute or obtain waivers for required courses. The Ph.D. Program Director, or major professor may consider the transfer of doctoral and graduate level courses toward the completion of a maximum of six elective credit hours; additional credits require the approval of the major professor and Ph.D. Program Director. Students must explain in writing and provide evidence of how the previous course(s) is/are directly related to the current area of doctoral study or provide a syllabus for each additional course in order to evaluate equivalency.

Dietetic Internship Policy

Please note that FIU Dietetics and Nutrition Ph.D. students **are not eligible** to begin the FIU dietetic internship program until **after** they have graduated from the FIU Dietetics and Nutrition Ph.D. program.

Doctoral Policy Committee

The Doctoral Policies Committee (composed of Dissertation Advisor Status (DAS) faculty) has the responsibility for the overall direction of the Doctoral Program.

III Faculty Research Interests

Faculty Research Interests

Research advisors must have graduate faculty status to serve as dissertation advisors. Graduate faculty are actively engaged in research and scholarship. These faculty members review applications for the doctoral program, make joint decisions to admit doctoral students, teach doctoral-level courses and seminars, supervise students' major papers, and implement the policies and procedures of the program.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact faculty members directly to discuss their interests and possibilities of collaboration. The following list includes the research interests of research faculty of the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition as of Fall 2025 (complete summaries are available at <http://stempel.fiu.edu/>).

Professor	Position	E-mail	Areas of Interest
Baum, Marianna	Professor	Baumm@fiu.edu	Nutrition and Infectious Disease/ HIV/AIDS/ COVID-19
Coccia, Catherine	Ph.D. Program Director, Associate Professor	ccoccia@fiu.edu	Nutrition education programs for children and families. Community-based participatory research; Parent-child relationships
Martinez, Janet Diaz	Assistant Professor	jdimarti@fiu.edu	Chronic kidney disease (CKD), community-based nutrition programs
Hernandez-Boyer, Jacqueline	Assistant Professor	jshernan@fiu.edu	Lifestyle factors, gut health, inflammation and prevention of chronic diseases in various populations
Henfridsson, Pia	Assistant Professor	phendfrid@fiu.edu	Long-term changes in dietary intake, nutritional status, body

			composition, and energy metabolism in adolescents following gastric bypass surgery; Supplementation adherence and biochemistry in adolescents following gastric bypass surgery; Eating behavior and mental health, and the relationship between dietary intake and eating-related problems in adolescents following gastric bypass surgery.
Liuzzi, Juan	Associate Professor	jliuzzi@fiu.edu	Nutrigenomics, Diabetes, Trace Elements. Zinc transporters.
Lovan, Padideh	Assistant Professor	plovan@fiu.edu	Cancer prevention and survivorship; nutrition and health behaviors among youth and families; psychosocial and family influences on health behaviors; built environment and health; health disparities.
Palacios, Cristina	Professor	crpalaci@fiu.edu	Role of diet and physical activity on weight gain in infants, children, and pregnancy. Novel interventions using SMS, mobile Apps, and mindfulness practices for obesity prevention. Vitamin D, obesity and chronic diseases. Vitamin D supplementation in pregnancy and maternal and infant health outcomes.
Sales Martinez, Sabrina	Associate Professor	saless@fiu.edu	Life-style factors including diet and substance abuse, obesity, inflammation and gut microbiota along with how they affect HIV disease progression and overall health in varied populations.

IV Pre-Candidacy (Semesters 1-4)

Initial Advisement

Upon entry into the Ph.D. program, the Ph.D. Program Director will meet with each student to discuss the student's research interests and initial coursework. The Ph.D. Program Director will assist the student in identifying potential faculty mentors whose research expertise aligns with the student's interests.

Students are expected to select a Major Professor by the end of their second semester in the program. The Major Professor assists the student in refining their area of specialization, developing their research direction, and identifying appropriate members of the Dissertation Committee. The Major Professor serves as Chair of the Dissertation Committee

Program of Study

The pre-candidacy program of study for the Ph.D. in Dietetics and Nutrition generally comprises a minimum of 40 credit hours of coursework. Following completion of required coursework and advancement to candidacy, students must complete a minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours. Students entering the program with an appropriate master's degree must complete a minimum of 55 graduate credit hours in the approved program of study. See pages 17–19 for details.

Grades

Doctoral students are required to maintain a cumulative 3.00 GPA for all their courses. At the doctoral level, a grade of “A” indicates outstanding performance; an “A-” indicates excellent performance. Grade of “B+” indicates very good performance. Grade of “B” is considered a passing grade. Courses in which a student earns a grade of “C” or lower must be taken again (must consult with advisor or major professor at all times).

Incomplete Grades: An Incomplete (IN) is a temporary grade assigned in accordance with University policy when a student has not completed a limited portion of required coursework and otherwise meets the University's requirements for receiving an Incomplete. Students are responsible for completing outstanding work within the timeframe established by the instructor and University policy. An Incomplete that is not resolved within two consecutive terms, including Summer, will automatically convert to an F. Students may not graduate with an unresolved Incomplete grade. Students should consult the current FIU Graduate Catalog for complete requirements governing Incomplete grades.

Other

Ph.D. students are expected to participate in department and college level events and sessions throughout the year including Colloquium Series presentations, research days etc.

Forms Required by the University Graduate School

Throughout the program, several MILESTONE forms need to be signed by the appropriate faculty chairs and committee members at appropriate times. Students are responsible to ensure that the forms are filled out by certain deadlines, signed, and sent to the Director of the Ph.D. Program for proper distribution. Forms are available from the University Graduate School office (PC-230), or may be downloaded from the University Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/student-forms.shtml>). A student may be dismissed for failure to make satisfactory progress toward degree completion or failure to complete all the requirements, including appropriate progress on milestone forms, for a graduate degree within the time limits for degree completion.

Appointment of Dissertation Committee

Students are expected to select their Major Professor and proposed Dissertation Committee by the end of their second semester in the program. The **Appointment of Dissertation Committee** milestone must be completed and submitted no later than the end of the student's **third semester** in the program.

The Appointment of Dissertation Committee establishes the Dissertation Committee by mutual agreement among the student, Major Professor, and proposed committee members.

Responsibilities of the Committee include:

- Respond to correspondence with students in a timely manner
- Meet with student and other committee members as needed but at least on an annual basis.
 - Participate in the University Graduate School Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan and any additional College or Department progress evaluations required during the academic year.
- Respond and provide feedback to student work. Committee members are expected to respond to written drafts within three weeks after receiving documents.

The Dissertation Committee serves as both the student's Dissertation Committee and Candidacy Examination Committee. A minimum of four members, including the Major Professor, must serve on the committee.

The Major Professor serves as Chair of the Dissertation Committee and must be a member of the FIU Department of Dietetics and Nutrition with the appropriate Graduate Faculty status required by the University Graduate School to chair a doctoral dissertation committee (see <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/>).

The Department of Dietetics and Nutrition ordinarily requires the Dissertation Committee to include **at least three faculty members from the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition and at least one Graduate Faculty member from another academic department at FIU.**

When the interdisciplinary nature of a student's dissertation research would be better supported by a different committee composition, the student may request an exception to the Department's three-member requirement. Any approved committee must continue to meet University Graduate School requirements, including **at least two members from the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition and at least one member from another academic department at FIU.**

Additional committee members may be appointed when their expertise would contribute to the student's dissertation research. Individuals from outside FIU may serve on the committee subject to applicable Department, College, and University Graduate School approval requirements.

Requests for exceptions to Departmental committee composition requirements must include a written justification, be supported by the Major Professor, and be approved by the Ph.D. Program Director. All committee appointments are subject to applicable University Graduate School policies and approval requirements. Please refer to the University Graduate School for information regarding committee member selection by visiting the section for Policies and Procedures at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu>

A Dissertation Committee is formally constituted by completing the “Appointment of Dissertation Committee” online milestone form (<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/#toggle-id-2>).

As part of the Appointment of Dissertation Committee Milestone form you need to submit the following:

- A 250-Word abstract of your proposed research project (Approximately a one-page, double-spaced document in a Word or PDF format attachment).
- The expertise of your proposed dissertation committee and how it relates to your proposed research project (in the “Enter Expertise” fields you must state how their expertise will contribute to your proposed research project).

Changes to the Major Professor or Dissertation Committee

Students may request a change in Major Professor or Dissertation Committee membership when necessary to support their academic progress, research direction, or mentoring needs. Students considering a change should consult with the Ph.D. Program Director as early as possible. When appropriate, the Program Director will assist the student in identifying a new Major Professor or committee member and developing a transition plan that supports continued progress toward the degree.

Changes to the Major Professor or Dissertation Committee must be approved and documented in accordance with current Department, College, and University Graduate School procedures. Students are responsible for completing the applicable University Graduate School dissertation

committee milestone or revision process. Changes to the Dissertation Committee will not normally be approved while a student is actively completing the candidacy examination. Any exception must be approved by the Ph.D. Program Director.

A change in Major Professor or committee membership does not alter the student's responsibility to meet program milestones, satisfactory-progress expectations, and University time limits. When a change occurs, the student and new Major Professor should review the student's program of study, research plan, committee composition, and timeline for degree completion.

Student Tasks Prior to Candidacy

- Set up at least 1 meeting with the Ph.D. program director to discuss coursework EACH semester for the first 2 semesters or until the “Appointment of Dissertation Committee” milestone is reached.
- Maintain a cumulative 3.00 GPA for all courses
- Participate in department/college/university events and sessions
By the end of the second semester, select a Major Professor and begin establishing the Dissertation Committee and dissertation research area. The Appointment of Dissertation Committee milestone must be completed and submitted to the University Graduate School no later than the end of the third semester.



Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Philosophy in Dietetics and Nutrition

<http://stempel.fiu.edu> • Careers in Public Health: www.eatright.org • For all Course Registration: <http://onestop.fiu.edu>

NAME:	PS#:	ADMITTED:
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Distribution of credits: Research Method Core (9 credits) – Data Analysis Core (9 credits) – Dietetics Core (12 credits) – Nutrition Science Core (0-12 credits) – Seminar (1 credit) – Electives (0-6 credits) – Dissertation (15 credits) – Total: Minimum of 55 graduate credits.

I. RESEARCH METHOD CORE – 9 Credits

Complete ALL of the following courses.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDI	SEMESTER	GRADE	PRE-REQUISITES/COMMENTS/APPROVA
PHC 6703	Epidemiological Methods Exper Design	3			Needs PHC 6015 – Epidemiologic Methods
DIE 7566 OR PHC 7981	Research Concept Developmen and Nutrition Research Concepts and Propos Development (designed for (Des Public Health Students)	3			
HUN 6266	Nutritional Assessment	3			

II DATA ANALYSIS CORE – 9 Credits Minimum

Courses in this core must be approved by advisor/Program Director

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PRE-REQUISITES/COMMENTS/APPROVAL
PHC 6091	Biostatistics 2	3			SUGGESTED
PHC 7198	Advanced Qualitative Methods	3			SUGGESTED
		3			

III DIETETICS CORE – 12 Credits Minimum

Complete ALL of the following courses.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PRE-REQUISITES/COMMENTS/APPROVAL
HUN 7408	Nutrition Across the Lifespan	3			
HUN 7523	Community Nutrition	3			
HUN 7524	Nutrition Science and Implications for Community Health	3			
HUN 6535	Health Disparities and Nutrition	3			

IV NUTRITION SCIENCE CORE – 0-12 Credits

Complete ALL of the following courses.

*Do not need if equivalent previously taken at the graduate level

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PRE-REQUISITES/COMMENTS/APPROVAL
HUN 6307	Carbs and Lipids	3			
HUN 6327	Proteins	3			
HUN 6355	Minerals in Human Nutrition	3			
HUN 6335	Functions of Vitamins	3			

V SEMINAR – 1 Credit

Complete ALL of the following courses.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PRE-REQUISITES/COMMENTS/APPROVAL
DIE 6937	Graduate Seminar in Dietetics and Nutrition	1			

VI ELECTIVES – 0-6 Credits Minimum

*Do not need if equivalent previously taken at the graduate level

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PRE-REQUISITES/COMMENTS/APPROVAL

VII DISSERTATION – 15 Credits Minimum

Complete ALL of the following courses.

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PRE-REQUISITES/COMMENTS/APPROVAL
DIE 7980	Dissertation				

Graduation Requirements:

1. Satisfy all requirements for Doctor of Philosophy in Dietetics and Nutrition.
2. Complete a minimum of 55 credit hours of graduate level coursework after M.S. degree or 75 credit hour beyond the B.S. degree in approved program.
3. Students who did not complete PHC6500 Fnd Public Hld Prac to admission to the PhD program must complete it as part of the program of studies.
4. Earn a minimum overall GPA of 3.00 in all coursework completed.
5. Be enrolled in at least 3 graduate credits of dissertation during the semester you are seeking to graduate.
6. Complete All Forms through the Online Dissertation Milestones <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/> (Dissertation Approval Forms) – Final ETD Approval Form – Survey of Earned Doctorates, as per University Graduate School guidelines and deadlines. Forms can be accessed at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/> / <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>
7. Meet with Faculty Advisor to receive Graduation Check prior to final semester.
8. Apply for graduation online at <http://onestop.fiu.edu>. (See University Catalog for most current deadlines)

V The Doctoral Candidacy Examination and Proposal Defense

Purpose of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination

The Doctoral Candidacy Examination is designed to assess whether a student has developed the knowledge, research competencies, critical-thinking skills, and scholarly readiness necessary to advance to doctoral candidacy and undertake independent dissertation research.

Students are expected to demonstrate competency in three broad areas:

1. **Nutrition Science** – knowledge and application of nutrition science relevant to the student's area of study;
2. **Specialized Research Content** – substantive knowledge of the literature, theories, and concepts relevant to the student's proposed area of research; and
3. **Research Methodology and Data Analysis** – knowledge and application of research design, methodology, statistics, and other analytic approaches appropriate to the student's area of research.

These areas are intended to provide an integrated foundation for the student's dissertation research.

Doctoral Candidacy Examination

The Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee is the same as the student's Dissertation Committee. Changes in an appointed committee must be approved by the Doctoral Program Director. Changes will not be approved while student is taking his/her examinations.

The Doctoral Candidacy Examination consists of a written examination and an oral examination designed to evaluate the student's readiness to advance to candidacy.

- **Written Examination.** The written examination assesses the student's ability to integrate and apply knowledge across nutrition science, the student's specialized research area, and research methodology and data analysis. Students are expected to demonstrate doctoral-level critical thinking, synthesis of scientific literature, application of research concepts, and scholarly writing.
- **Oral Examination.** Following completion of the written examination, the student will participate in an oral examination. The oral examination provides an opportunity for the student to clarify, defend, and expand upon their written responses and scholarly work and to demonstrate their readiness to undertake independent doctoral research.

Administration and Evaluation of the Candidacy Examinations

The Ph.D. Program administers the candidacy examination according to standardized procedures established by the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition. Examination procedures, timelines, evaluation criteria, and instructions will be provided to students in advance of the examination.

The student's approved Dissertation Committee participates in the evaluation of the student's readiness for advancement to candidacy in accordance with Departmental procedures. The Dissertation Committee must meet the committee composition requirements described in Section IV of this Handbook.

Student performance will be evaluated using criteria that include:

1. Ability to analyze, conceptualize, and think critically;
2. Ability to synthesize scientific literature and communicate scholarly ideas clearly;
3. Demonstration of current and substantive knowledge in nutrition science and the student's specialized area of research;
4. Ability to apply nutrition science and relevant theoretical or conceptual knowledge to significant research questions;
5. Demonstration of knowledge and appropriate application of research methodology, study design, statistics, and/or other analytic methods relevant to the student's research area;
6. Ability to integrate content knowledge and research methodology in developing and evaluating research questions; and
7. Demonstration of the scholarly readiness necessary to undertake independent dissertation research.

The Doctoral Candidacy Examination is evaluated as **Pass or Fail** in accordance with Departmental evaluation criteria. Students will be informed of the outcome of the candidacy examination within 30 days of completion of the examination process.

A student who does not successfully pass the candidacy examination may be permitted to complete a second examination in accordance with a remediation plan and timeline established by the Ph.D. Program. The remediation plan will identify the areas requiring additional preparation and the requirements that must be completed before reexamination.

Passing the Doctoral Candidacy Examination is required for advancement to candidacy and continuation in the doctoral program. In accordance with University Graduate School policy, a student who fails the candidacy examination twice will be dismissed from the doctoral program.

Advancement to Candidacy

Students who pass all written and oral examinations will be advanced to candidacy. Students should note that they and their committee chair must complete the form Online Dissertation Milestone "Program for Doctoral Degree and Application to Candidacy" for the University Graduate School with appropriate signatures. The form is available at:

<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>

Dissertation Proposal

Doctoral students must submit and defend a dissertation proposal, which embodies the results of scholarly research giving evidence of originality and how it will contribute to nutrition and dietetics knowledge. The Dissertation Proposal follows the usual guidelines of a research proposal, including statement of the problem, preliminary review of the literature and hypothesis with specific aims, design, sampling plan, measures, data collection strategies, and data analysis methods, ethical issues, time frame (follow the Graduate School's *Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual*, available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>). The Dissertation Committee has the opportunity to raise questions, give input, request revisions, and evaluate these revisions before approving the Dissertation Proposal. **Students are expected to submit the final written draft of the proposal at least three (3) weeks prior to the defense. Committee members are expected to respond to written drafts of the proposal within three (3) weeks.**

Students will also be required to prepare an abbreviated proposal for the University Graduate School. Proposal guidelines for the University Graduate School are available at: http://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/Proposal_Guidelines.pdf.

Sample proposals can be found here: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/>.

Approval of the Dissertation Proposal is a formal process. The Committee meets with the doctoral candidate for an oral presentation and defense of the Dissertation Proposal.

Students typically defend Oral Examinations and the Dissertation Proposal in the SAME meeting.

Following successful defense and approval of the Dissertation Proposal by the Dissertation Committee, the student must complete the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal online milestone in accordance with University Graduate School requirements. The UGS submission includes information regarding the proposed research and a timeline for completion. Any required IRB, IACUC, and/or IBC approval documentation and Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) certification must be submitted in accordance with current UGS requirements.

Research Involving Human Subjects/Animals

All research projects involving human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at FIU and also other involved institutions (see www.osra.fiu.edu/human/index.htm). To receive approval, candidates must submit an Application for Research with Human Subjects to the appropriate IRB committee, following the deadlines and procedures outline in the web site. For human research, see <http://research.fiu.edu/irb/index.html>.

Failure to apply for and receive IRB approval can have severe consequences. Instructions for completing the application should be followed. Special attention should be given to the sections dealing with informed consent. These sections require the preparation of a statement concerning the protection of prospective research participants. The information required in an Informed Consent Form includes study dates, purpose, assurances that failure to participate will result in no penalties, right to withdraw and intended uses of the data, etc.

All research projects involving laboratory animals must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for ethical care and use of animals. The following link outlines the procedures to follow in order to receive approvals. For animal research, see <http://research.fiu.edu/iacuc/pages/policies-procedures.html>

If applicable, required IRB, IACUC, and/or IBC approval documentation must be obtained and submitted in accordance with University Graduate School requirements for the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal milestone. Students must not begin research involving human participants, animals, or regulated biological materials before receiving all required approvals.

Deadlines for Advancement to Candidacy and Dissertation Proposal Approval

Full-time students entering the Ph.D. program with a master's degree are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of their 6th semester. Full-time students entering the Ph.D. program without a master's degree are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of their 9th semester.

Students who fail to meet the applicable deadline may apply to the Doctoral Program Director for an extension of no more than one additional year. Students applying for such an extension may forfeit any financial assistance they are receiving. An extension will be granted only on the basis of a well-justified plan for successful completion of the candidacy examination requirements. **Students who fail to advance to candidacy by the end of the approved extension period may be terminated from the Ph.D. Program.**

Candidates are expected to have their Dissertation Proposal approved by the end of the semester following the semester in which they advance to candidacy. A Dissertation Proposal must be approved by the University Graduate School at least three semesters prior to the anticipated semester of graduation. Failure to successfully defend and obtain approval of the Dissertation Proposal within the expected timeframe will be considered **unsatisfactory progress toward degree completion**.

- A candidate who has not successfully defended and obtained approval of the Dissertation Proposal by the end of the semester following advancement to candidacy will receive an unsatisfactory progress evaluation and will be required to develop a Performance Improvement Plan in consultation with the Major Professor and Doctoral Program Director. The Performance Improvement Plan will identify specific requirements and a timeline for successful completion of the Dissertation Proposal.

- Continued failure to successfully defend and obtain approval of the Dissertation Proposal may result in additional unsatisfactory progress evaluations and may ultimately result in dismissal from the Ph.D. Program in accordance with University Graduate School policies governing satisfactory academic progress and doctoral student evaluations.

Student Tasks to Become a Doctoral Candidate and Successfully Defend Proposal

- Complete all required coursework and maintain a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA
- Clear any incomplete grade(s).
- Meet with program director to determine if any transfer of credits need to be completed and reflected in the FIU transcript prior to submission of this dissertation milestone form.
- Meet with major professor and committee members annually to review progress towards candidacy
- Submit complete dissertation proposal to committee for review. *Please note that the committee needs at least 3 weeks to review and provide feedback*
- Complete and pass written examinations
- Schedule and request room for the oral defense of examinations
- Complete and pass oral defense of examinations
- Submit the “Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy” dissertation milestone form. *Note that the completed and signed form is due to UGS by no later than 5 business days before classes begin in the term in which dissertation credit enrollment with commence*
- Make any changes to Dissertation Proposal based on committee feedback
- Complete all applicable research compliance requirements, including required Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training and, as applicable, obtain IRB, IACUC, and/or IBC approval or documentation. Required approvals must be obtained before beginning the applicable research activities.
- Sign and complete the “Dissertation Proposal” Online Milestone Form

VI The Doctoral Dissertation

A minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours are required, taken with the Chair of the Dissertation Committee while working on the dissertation research.

Dissertation

The Dissertation Committee is responsible for approving the dissertation, supervising the candidate’s dissertation, and approving (or not approving) the dissertation in a public, oral dissertation defense. The Dissertation Committee assumes the responsibility of helping the candidate to complete and successfully defend a quality dissertation. The candidate’s open and

frequent collaboration with all committee members is essential. The Chair provides direct oversight of the student's dissertation research, and serves as the coordinator and leader of all committee activities. Each committee member is expected to actively contribute to student's dissertation research and may elect to provide direct supervision of specific components of the dissertation related to the committee members area(s) of expertise. The Chair and the committee are expected to provide sufficient guidance and support to allow the student to develop the highest quality dissertation research. The ultimate goal is a successful dissertation defense with publication(s).

To ensure that dissertations meet the appropriate standards of originality, UGS now requests that Major Professors create an originality report in iThenticate of the dissertation documents that are sent along with the "Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense" form. Different than Turnitin, iThenticate compares documents to the published literature. We encourage faculty to use iThenticate to check similarity of proposals, manuscripts and graduate student dissertation and thesis. Graduate faculty are asked to investigate the iThenticate similarity results for:

- Blocks of similar text, such as entire paragraphs and/or multiple paragraphs that are not cited, nor co-authored by the graduate student
- Sections of tables or entire tables that are similar to published works without citation, nor co-authored by the graduate student
- Figure captions that are similar to published works without citation, nor co-authored by the graduate student

UGS understands that some programs encourage graduate students to publish their research before graduation. As such there may be strong similarity of chapters or sections of graduate student's dissertation or thesis to their published work. In cases where students have published their work, faculty mentors are asked to include a written statement that Chapters X, Y, and Z of the Dissertation or Thesis were previously published and include the citations of those publications. That written statement should be attached to the beginning of the iThenticate report.

The submitted dissertation must conform to the presentation rules described in the *Regulations for Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Manual* of the University Graduate School (UGS). The task of evaluating a doctoral dissertation falls upon the members of the candidate's Doctoral Dissertation Committee.

After the candidate has submitted a complete draft of the dissertation to the members of the Committee, each member evaluates the dissertation independently and determines whether in his or her opinion the candidate may proceed to the Dissertation Defense.

The following criteria should normally be used to evaluate the dissertation:

1. Original and significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge.
2. Demonstration of the candidate's ability to conduct autonomous research.

3. Validity of design and methodology, quality of logic and reasoning, critical evaluation of sources used, and quality of references.
4. Clarity of written expression.
5. Quality of abstract and pertinence and utility of title for indexing purposes.

The “Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense” Online Milestone form should be signed by each member of the Dissertation Committee and then forwarded by the Chair to the Doctoral Program Director, the Chair of the Department, the Dean of the College, and the Dean of the University Graduate School for final approval/signatures. Candidates and their committee members are cautioned to follow the University Graduate School Deadlines for filing various forms. Deadline dates change each year and are available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>

It is expected that the “Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense” Online Milestone form be forwarded when all Committee members agree that the candidate is ready for the defense. Until such agreement is reached, it is the candidate’s responsibility, with the help and direct oversight of his/her Dissertation Committee Chair, to produce a final dissertation draft acceptable to the committee.

Dissertation Defense

Before the final acceptance of the dissertation, the Dissertation Committee, with approval from UGS, schedules an oral examination at which time the candidate must satisfactorily defend his/her dissertation. The University Graduate School sets specific deadlines each semester for applying for graduation and for the holding a defense. Candidates should verify these deadlines well in advance at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>

Before any Defense, the candidate submits a review copy of the dissertation to the Chair of the Dissertation Committee and the other Committee members. Review copies of the dissertation should be complete and well-edited final products: consult the Regulations for Thesis/Dissertation Preparation Manual (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>) of the University Graduate School for format requirements.

It is important to note that a proposed dissertation must be approved by the Graduate Program Director, the Chair of the Department, and the Dean of the College prior to submission for approval of the Dean of the University Graduate School. In order for this requirement to be met, additional time may be required. The Department requires candidates to submit their complete application for a dissertation defense to the Ph.D. Program Director at least six (6) weeks before the anticipated defense date. This internal deadline provides sufficient time for Department and College review before the applicable University Graduate School submission deadline. Students must also comply with all current UGS defense deadlines. Candidates should note that until the Dean of the University Graduate School has approved their application, *the defense date is only proposed.*

The University Graduate School requires that candidates file an abstract of the dissertation which is publicized for the defense announcement. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee notifies the Doctoral Program Director of the date, time, and place of the dissertation defense. The Director informs faculty members of the dissertation defense and encourages their presence as representatives of the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition.

The oral Dissertation Defense represents the last public opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate the merit of his or her entire dissertation project. The spirit of the defense is expected to be one of debate and critical inquiry. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee serves as Chair of the Dissertation Defense. The student and Major Professor must be present at an FIU location for the dissertation defense. All other Dissertation Committee members must attend the defense either in person or remotely, in accordance with current University Graduate School requirements.

Normally, the candidate first presents a PowerPoint presentation overview of the study, major findings, and implications. Members of the audience are then invited to ask questions or offer any comments. Members of the audience are asked to leave the room. The candidate is then questioned by each member of the Dissertation Committee. The questions asked of the candidate are expected to elicit, literally, a defense of the dissertation by the candidate. Any aspect of the dissertation research (context, values, theory, method, analysis, conclusions, implications, applications, etc.) is open for question and debate. After the question period is over, the Dissertation Committee asks candidate to step outside while they deliberate and make a decision. After reaching its decision to accept the dissertation, the **Final Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (ETD) Form** Approval must be completed.

A candidate may have dissertation revisions to make that arise prior to the defense or as the result of the defense. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that these revisions are made prior to the submission of the publishable copy of the dissertation. The Chairperson (Major Professor) attest to the completeness of the dissertation by initiating the **ETD form**. The student will be responsible for completing the **Survey of Earned Doctorates** located on <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>

Student Tasks to Complete Dissertation

1. Conduct the dissertation research
2. Continue to work with committee on dissertation drafts. Work closely with Major Professor and keep all Committee Members apprised of progress. Share drafts and solicit comments and suggestions. Use Committee Members as consultants and advisors.
3. Prepare for dissertation defense by keeping the Committee actively involved. File Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan each year (annual review).
4. Upon approval of the Chair and all Committee Members, schedule tentative date for a Dissertation Defense.
5. Submit "Preliminary Approval of Online Dissertation and Request for Defense" Dissertation Milestone form signed by the committee Chairperson and other members of the committee. The application must be filed in sufficient time to allow the Dean of University Graduate School to publish the notice in a monthly calendar of dissertation and thesis defenses for the University community.
6. 3 weeks before defense, distribute any updated changes of dissertation to Chair and Committee Members.
7. Defend dissertation. Dissertation Committee approves (or not) the dissertation
8. Revise dissertation on the basis of final comments from committee members received during defense.
9. Complete the "Survey of Earned Doctorates",
<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>
10. Submit the "Final ETD Approval" form. Refer to the last day to submit on the UGS website

Publication of Dissertations

Following final approval, the dissertation must be submitted electronically in accordance with current University Graduate School ETD requirements. Students are responsible for completing the Final ETD Approval milestone and submitting the approved dissertation to FIU's designated electronic repository in accordance with UGS deadlines and procedures.

Students are expected to write manuscripts and publish their work while working on their dissertation research and before dissertation defense.

UGS Deadlines Chart

Milestone	Due at UGS
Dissertation Committee	FOUR semesters before the anticipated graduation term
Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy	Five (5) business days before the first day of classes in the term in which dissertation credit enrollment will commence.
Dissertation Proposal	THREE semesters before the anticipated graduation term
Preliminary Approval and Request for Oral Defense	THREE weeks before the proposed defense date or by the deadline (whichever is earlier)

Final Electronic Dissertation Approval	Refer to the last day to submit on UGS website deadlines
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*UGS deadlines are subject to change. Students must consult the current UGS deadlines and milestones calendar.

VII Authorship

The success of a research study depends largely on the number and quality of its scientific publications and presentations. The purpose of the policy established herein is to encourage and facilitate the presentation of the analyses gathered as part of the dissertation or other research while providing guidelines that ensure appropriate use of the data, timely completion of manuscripts, abstracts and presentations, equitable access to authorship, and adherence to established principles of authorship. The following guidelines covers writing projects (manuscripts, abstracts, oral presentations, posters, grant applications) and other reports that involve data collected as a part of the research. Authorship will be overseen by the Principal Investigator (PI) or Major professor and Co-investigators (Co-I), if applicable.

Definitions

- Abstracts and presentations – oral or poster: categorized in parallel to the types of articles (primary, secondary and tertiary).
- Primary Articles – a manuscript for a peer-reviewed journal of the main findings of the study and study design.
- Secondary Articles – a manuscript for a peer-reviewed journal using data collected as a part of the primary research. The manuscript does not necessarily report on the main study design and study findings. Examples include manuscripts on study methodology, a report on sub-sets of the study population, among others.
- Tertiary Articles – a manuscript of an independent idea unrelated to the objectives of the main study but use data or methods from the study or an approved ancillary study.

General Publication Authorship

The authorship guidelines are written to reflect the collaborative nature of each project. All investigators, staff and students are eligible and encouraged to initiate and contribute to writing projects.

To be an “author” on a paper (primary, secondary, or tertiary), the general principle is “significant contribution”, such that the individual can publicly defend the work. All authors must meet at least one of the following guidelines for authorship”, which include:

- 1) Substantial contributions;
- 2) Drafting or revising the writing project critically for important intellectual content;
- 3) Reviewing and approving the final version.

The order of the authors will follow the guidelines below:

1. The first author should be the person who contributed most to the work, including writing the manuscript.
2. The sequence of authors should be determined by the relative overall contributions to the manuscript.
3. The PI or Major Professor will generally be the senior author and will appear last.

An additional resource to determine authorship is the following:

General Guidelines for Authorship Contributions

Contributions		Authorship? (■ yes; ■ no)	Comments
Design & interpretation of results	original idea, planning & input		An idea alone may not warrant authorship, unless highly original & unique
	other intellectual contribution		Yes, but assuming active involvement
Supervisory role	supervision of the project		Yes, but assuming active involvement
	training, education		
	mentoring of 1st author		No, unless substantive contribution made to study
Administrative & technical support	resources: \$		Acknowledgements yes, authorship no
	resources: animals, reagents		No if already published; yes if novel
	resources: patients		Maybe, depending on circumstances
Data acquisition	original experimental work		
	technical experimental work		No if routine; yes if novel methods added, or specific role, e.g., statistics, imaging etc.
	data analysis (assays)		Yes, unless only very basic
	data analysis (statistics)		Yes, unless only very basic (t-tests e.g.)
Writing & other	drafting of manuscript		Warrants first authorship
	reading/ commenting on manuscript		Substantial feedback can be acknowledged
	none		Includes honorary authorship for lab chiefs, celebrities etc.

https://oir.nih.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/sourcebook/documents/ethical_conduct/guidelines-authorship_contributions.pdf

The role of the authors should be as follows:

	1 st Author (Name here)	2 nd Author (Name here)	3 rd Author (Name hereIn this example, a statistician)	Senior / Anchor Author (Name Here)
	Writing			
Introduction	Author of first draft	3 rd review	4 th review	2 nd review
Results	1 st author of subsections where this author led the analysis 2 nd review of all other results subsections	1 st author of subsections where this author led the analysis	Works closely with other authors to ensure text adequately reflects statistical results Writes statistical methods section Reviews all sections for accuracy	3 rd review entire results section
Tables	Creates basic table, coordinates completion, and contributes data	Contributes data for table	Contributes data for table Rechecks accuracy of numbers	2 nd review of table Contributes data for table
Discussion	2 nd review and works closely with the senior author	3 rd review	4 th review	Author of first draft in conjunction with the primary author
Formatting	Formats document in journal's style	-----	-----	Reviews formatting of journal's style
References	Establishes shared database of citations using citation software Adds references as needed for authors	Provides references to 1 st author	Provides references to 1 st author	Reviews paper to ensure references and text citations are in order

Other authorship rules:

1. The lead (first) author for all manuscripts should lead the development of the manuscript (concepts, analysis, and interpretation).
2. The study acronym will be identified in manuscript titles of work from the main study aims.
3. For manuscripts that are aimed at one of the primary outcomes of the study's objectives, all Co-Is (if applicable) are invited to be included. Manuscripts aimed at primary outcomes of the study objectives will have the PI named last.
4. Authorship for manuscripts that involve a secondary or tertiary outcome of one of the study objectives should invite authorship following conventions outlined above.
5. If a project has 'Ancillary Investigators', they have the opportunity to lead and be co-authors on publications resulting from analyses made possible through their collaboration. Early in the planning of ancillary studies, the Co-Is of the main study should be asked if they have a desire to be significant contributors.
6. Outside of the conventions outlined above, authorship order will be based on contribution.

Acknowledgement

The following table describes tasks that do not necessarily lead to be an author but that could be acknowledge:

Collected data
Provided Technical help
Assisted in writing (e.g., comments on manuscript)
Provided general support and scientific advisement
Obtained financial support (e.g., obtained funding)
Provided and cared for study participants

The following acknowledgement should be included in any presentation or publication:

1. All funding sources (NIH agency and grant number);
2. Participants (if applicable);
3. All team members (contributor list) to which the data relates.

Authors should identify contributors to be acknowledged, with their specific contribution identified, and permission obtained.

Specific Requirements Regarding Dissertation Authorship

- All proposed writing projects must be reviewed and approved by the PI or Major Professor before submission. At least 3 weeks must be allowed for this.
- Authorship for publication (s) – All Ph.D. candidates conducting their own research assume primary authorship (first author) with major professor as the corresponding author. For Co-I, the lead author will inform the PI and other co-authors of acceptance or rejection. If accepted, a final version (in pdf format) after publication, needs to be circulated.
- The PI will give the student up to 1 year after the dissertation is completed to submit the manuscript with their name as 1st author. If the student does not deliver, the PI or Major Professor may then complete the paper and put her or his own name first with the Ph.D. candidate as a secondary author.
- If using already collected data and if the Ph.D. candidate develops the hypothesis and tests them for a publication as part of their dissertation which he/she writes, he/she assumes primary authorship with the owner of the data set, choosing the spot they wish to assume (secondary or corresponding author)
- Committee member authorship can be divided on the basis of the contributions of each member. Major professor can help in deciding, including or excluding members of the Dissertation Committee in each publication.

VIII AI Policy

All doctoral students must comply with the University Graduate School's current Guidelines for the Use of AI in Graduate Research, Theses, and Dissertations, as well as any additional Department, faculty advisor, research sponsor, journal, or funding-agency requirements.

Generative AI and Large Language Models like ChatGPT, Microsoft Co-Pilot and Google Gemini are rapidly becoming available. Any use of AI for research and writing purposes MUST be discussed with supervisors, advisors, committee members and other associated individuals. Please be aware that use of AI might lead to data leakage and proliferation, permanence and widespread availability for unverified data. Using AI to write a portion of a dissertation or paper may constitute as plagiarism.

Suggestions for topics of discussion between students and advisors regarding the use of AI include but are not limited to:

- Order of writing and editing and using these tools, and how to incorporate its use and permissions for publishing purposes
- Discussion of appropriate journal policies and granting agency policies relevant to the field of study regarding AI use and publication practices
- Discuss considerations and challenges for intellectual property
- Discuss methods/development of research design, drafts and writing generation and editing, analysis of data generated through AI, use of AI to develop any media associated with the work or any presentation materials.

IX Administration Requirements

Doctoral Student Evaluations

Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan

An **Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan** is required of all PhD students throughout their studies, until they successfully complete their program. Each academic year (at the end of Spring semester), the University Graduate School requires that each student develop SMART (Specific, Measurable, Agreed-upon, Results-focused and Timed) goals with the guidance from the Major Professor and the dissertation committee (or the Doctoral Program Director if an “Appointment of Dissertation Committee” online milestone form has not been completed).

Students are evaluated based on the proposed SMART goals, progress in the program and any accomplishments including publications, professional presentations, awards/recognitions, and timely progress with respect to field, laboratory, and dissertation work. Student evaluations are conducted by the Major Professor and dissertation committee (or the Doctoral Program Director if an “Appointment of Dissertation Committee” online milestone form has not been completed).

If the student is not making satisfactory progress, a **Performance Improvement Plan** will be developed by the student with the guidance of the Major Professor or the Director of the Doctoral Program. In accordance with University Graduate School policy, a doctoral student who receives an unsatisfactory Annual Student Evaluation will be placed on academic warning. A second unsatisfactory Annual Student Evaluation will result in academic probation, and a third unsatisfactory Annual Student Evaluation will result in dismissal from the doctoral program.

Students who do not complete an evaluation and mentoring plan will be blocked from enrolling the following semester.

The Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan will be available via my.fiu.edu Student Portal, under your To Do List. UGS will notify students when they can begin their Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan and the deadline for completion. Students who have an approved “Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense” form on file and are expected to graduate during the spring term prior to the May 30 deadline are exempted from

filing an Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan. Students with 17 or less graduate credits at the end of spring term are also exempt from completing the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan. More details about the UGS Doctoral Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan can be found here: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/doctoral-student-annual-evaluation/>

Semi-Annual Evaluation

In addition to the UGS Doctoral Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan, Stempel College requires that progress towards the SMART goals be evaluated by the Major Professor and the dissertation committee (or the Doctoral Program Director if an “Appointment of Dissertation Committee” online milestone form has not been completed) at the end of the Fall semester. However, this evaluation will not be submitted to UGS. This internal process is an additional measure to assess, and if necessary, to adjust student's performance (timeline to graduation) in addition to the university-wide Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan. If the student is not making satisfactory progress, a **Performance Improvement Plan** will be developed by the student along with the guidance of the Major Professor or the Director of the Doctoral Program.

X Registration Requirements

Minimum Continuous Registration

Doctoral students must maintain enrollment consistent with University Graduate School requirements throughout the program unless an Official Leave of Absence or other approved exception has been granted. Prior to advancement to candidacy, students enroll in coursework or other approved graduate credits consistent with their program of study. Students may not enroll in dissertation credits until they have formally advanced to candidacy. Following advancement to candidacy, doctoral candidates must maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of three (3) dissertation credit hours each term as required by University Graduate School policy until completion of the degree. Students are responsible for consulting current UGS registration requirements because enrollment requirements may vary based on candidacy status, assistantship or fellowship support, immigration status, and other circumstances.

Leave of Absence

A doctoral student who needs to interrupt enrollment may request an official Leave of Absence in accordance with University Graduate School policy. Leave of Absence requests must be submitted before the beginning of the semester for which the leave is requested and are reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.

Students requesting a Leave of Absence must consult with the Ph.D. Program Director and submit the required documentation through the University's Electronic Petition for Exception to Graduate Requirements process. The request must clearly state the reason for the leave and include any documentation required by the University Graduate School. Approval is required through the applicable Department, College, and University Graduate School processes.

A Leave of Absence may generally be considered in circumstances involving personal hardship, medical concerns, or family need. Academic standing alone is not considered a basis for granting a Leave of Absence. Students should discuss with the Ph.D. Program Director and Major Professor how the leave may affect their program timeline, research activities, dissertation committee, funding, assistantship, immigration status, and other degree requirements.

Simply not registering for courses does not constitute an approved Leave of Absence. Students who do not enroll without obtaining an approved Leave of Absence remain subject to University policies governing continuous enrollment and student status. Students may become inactive after three consecutive terms of non-enrollment, and doctoral students seeking to return following inactive status are subject to University Graduate School approval and applicable readmission requirements. Therefore, students who anticipate interrupting their enrollment should consult with the Ph.D. Program Director before discontinuing registration.

Students who have advanced to candidacy are normally required to maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of three (3) dissertation credit hours each semester, including Summer. An approved Leave of Absence provides an exception to applicable continuous enrollment requirements during the approved leave period. Students should not discontinue enrollment without receiving formal approval of the Leave of Absence.

Upon return from an approved Leave of Absence, students should meet with the Ph.D. Program Director and Major Professor to review their program of study, research plan, dissertation committee, and timeline for degree completion and determine whether any modifications are necessary.

Readmission Following Inactive Status

A student who becomes inactive due to non-enrollment must apply for readmission in accordance with current University requirements. Readmission is not automatic. Doctoral readmission requires University Graduate School approval, and students may be subject to the program and University requirements in effect at the time of readmission. Students seeking readmission should consult with the Ph.D. Program Director before submitting an application so that their academic standing, dissertation committee, research plan, and remaining degree requirements can be reviewed.

Time Limit for Completion of Ph.D. Degree

The time limit for completing and awarding of the Ph.D. degree is nine years from admission into the Ph.D. Program.

Conferral of the Doctoral Degree

The University will confer the doctoral degree when the following minimum conditions are met:

1. Submission of the required application for graduation.
2. Certification by the academic dean that all requirements of the degree being sought have been completed.
3. Achievement of grade and other minimum requirements.
4. Satisfactory completion and defense of a doctoral dissertation.
5. Completion of all University Graduate School Final ETD requirements and electronic submission of the approved dissertation in accordance with current UGS procedures.

Professionalism and Student Conduct

Doctoral students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, respectful, and collegial manner in their interactions with fellow students, faculty, staff, research participants, community partners, and other members of the University community. Students are expected to contribute to an academic environment that supports respectful dialogue, collaboration, scholarly inquiry, and the exchange of differing perspectives.

Professional conduct includes appropriate communication with students, faculty, and staff; respect for professional and academic boundaries; responsible participation in research, teaching, and service activities; appropriate handling of confidential or sensitive information; and adherence to applicable University policies related to academic integrity, research integrity, nondiscrimination, harassment, and student conduct. Concerns regarding student conduct will be addressed in accordance with applicable University policies and procedures.

Social Media and Public Communication. Doctoral students should recognize that social media posts and other public communications may affect their professional reputation and may also have implications for research activities, teaching responsibilities, community partnerships, research participants, the Department, and the University. Students should exercise appropriate professional judgment when communicating publicly and must protect confidential, proprietary, or research-related information. Students should not post identifiable information about research participants or confidential research activities without appropriate authorization.

Students are encouraged to distinguish personal views from official statements made on behalf of the Department, College, University, research team, or affiliated organizations. Unless specifically authorized, students should not represent themselves as speaking on behalf of Florida International University, the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition, their research laboratory, or their faculty mentor.

These expectations are intended to support professional development and responsible participation in the academic and research community. They do not restrict students' rights to personal expression or lawful speech. All matters involving alleged violations of University conduct policies will be handled through the applicable FIU policies and procedures.

Student Grievances and Concerns

Students are encouraged to address academic or program concerns at the appropriate level whenever possible. Depending on the nature of the concern, students may consult with their Major Professor, Ph.D. Program Director, Department Chair, or appropriate College or University office. Students are not required to resolve concerns directly with an individual when doing so would be inappropriate or uncomfortable.

Formal grievances and appeals are governed by applicable University policies and procedures. Students should consult the current University Graduate School, FIU Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, and other applicable University resources for procedures related to academic grievances, grade appeals, student conduct, discrimination or harassment concerns, and other formal complaints.

The University Graduate School has a specific procedure regarding student grievances. Details about the grievance procedures can be found here: <http://integrity.fiu.edu/grievances.html>

XI Funding and Graduate Assistantships

Funding and Graduate Assistantships

All students requesting research or teaching assistantships must complete a GA/TA application for Dietetics and Nutrition located at our website: <http://stempel.fiu.edu>

Eligibility for graduate assistantships is governed by current University Graduate School requirements. Graduate assistants must maintain the enrollment, academic standing, and other eligibility requirements established by UGS. Enrollment requirements may vary based on semester and candidacy status.

Most Graduate Teaching and Research Assistantships include a stipend and tuition waivers. Eligible students must meet all admissions requirements and maintain good progress in their course work. In return for this financial support, students are expected to work for approximately 20 hours per week per semester with selected faculty members or teach in the Department as assigned.

Fellowships and Other Funding

The University Graduate School offers competitive fellowships and other funding opportunities for qualified doctoral students. The Presidential Fellowship is a department-nominated award designed to recruit outstanding students to FIU doctoral programs. Eligibility criteria, award amounts, benefits, and nomination procedures are established by the University Graduate School and may change from year to year.

Additional fellowships, scholarships, research funding, travel support, and other financial support opportunities may be available through the University Graduate School, the Robert Stempel College of Public Health & Social Work, the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition, faculty research grants, and other University or external sources.

Students should consult the <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/current-students-graduate-funding.shtml> and the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition for current information regarding funding opportunities, eligibility requirements, and application procedures.

XII Important University Websites

Important University Websites

For topics related to Policies and Procedures, Student Academic Conduct, Grading System, Course Descriptions and any other academic and program information please refer to the University Graduate School's Official Graduate Catalog at: <http://catalog.fiu.edu/>

Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution: <http://conduct.fiu.edu/>

For additional University and Student Services, departmental main numbers and a quick glance to all University Services, please refer to the Official University Student Handbook website: <http://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/about/student-handbook/index.php>

Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics: <http://stempel.fiu.edu>

For Graduate Dietetics Student Association and other Organizations: <http://stempel.fiu.edu>

Dietetics Career Opportunities: <http://stempel.fiu.edu/academics/dietetics-and-nutrition/resources/>

Official Dietetics Website: www.eatright.org

Dietetics Student Resources: <http://stempel.fiu.edu>

Student Contract

Student Contract

I, _____, (printed name) do hereby acknowledge by signing and dating this form that I received a copy of the 2026-2027 Dietetics and Nutrition Ph.D. Handbook for the Dietetics and Nutrition Department at Florida International University and have reviewed it with the Doctoral Program Director. I understand that I will be expected to abide by the contents of this document as it pertains to my graduate degree.

I also acknowledge that I understand the Florida International University policy number 380.044 which states the following:

Academic Dismissal:

- Failure to maintain good academic standing will result in placement on academic warning, probation or dismissal.

Warning:

- A graduate student whose cumulative graduate GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on warning, indicating academic difficulty.

Probation:

- A graduate student on warning whose cumulative graduate GPA remains below 3.0 in the following semester will be placed on probation, indicating serious academic difficulty. The College or School of the student on probation may indicate the conditions which must be met in order to continue enrollment.

Dismissal:

1. A graduate student on probation whose cumulative and semester GPA's fall below a 3.0 will be automatically dismissed from his or her program and the University. A graduate student will not be dismissed prior to attempting a minimum of 12 hours of coursework as a graduate student. The student has ten working days to appeal the dismissal decision.
2. A student may be dismissed for failure to make satisfactory progress toward degree completion or failure to complete all the requirements for a graduate degree within the time limits for degree completion.
3. A student may be dismissed for non-compliance with the continuous enrollment policy for doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy.

Examples of unsatisfactory progress may include failure to complete required student evaluations; failure to make satisfactory progress toward established SMART goals; failure to meet approved candidacy or dissertation proposal timelines; failure to make satisfactory progress on dissertation research; or failure to meet requirements established in a Performance Improvement Plan. Please note that letters of dismissal originate with the Department Chair.

Please answer the following two questions:

1. Yes/No (circle one): I am interested in completing the Dietetic Internship at Florida International University.
2. I am aware that I cannot enroll in or complete the Dietetic Internship at Florida International University until after I graduate from the Ph.D. program in Dietetics and Nutrition. _____ (initial).

Graduate Student Signature

Date

Advisor Signature

Date