



# **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



**W**e 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



**T**he 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 and multicultural environment.

Our goal is to train dietetic professional 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 a culturally diverse 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 diverse populations.

# 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 of in the published literature.

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. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he/she not only is in compliance with the requirements of the Stempel College, but is also in compliance with the requirements of 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 dissertation committee
5. Passing a candidacy examination after completing all coursework. Obtain a grade of at least B+ from each of the four members of the dissertation committee
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. 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 (To be considered as a TA/GA, a higher GPA is required).
3. Three letters of recommendations 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, value, 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
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.

The number of Dietetics and Nutrition Department members on each student's committee fluctuates around 4-5, including the major professor. A minimum of 4 faculty need to be on each committee (including the major professor) where 3 members of the committee must be from the student's own department. If a student wishes to have less than 3 members of the committee from the department, the student must write a memo to the Ph.D. Program Director, signed by their major professor justifying this decision. The Ph.D. Program Director will review the request on a case by case basis.

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>

# III Faculty Research Interests

## Faculty Research Interests

Dissertation Advisor Status (DAS) is given to doctoral program faculty members of FIU's Graduate Faculty. DAS 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 DAS faculty members directly to discuss their interests and possibilities of collaboration. The following list includes the research interests of DAS faculty of the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition as of Fall 2020 (complete summaries are available at <http://stempel.fiu.edu/>).

Professor	Position	E-mail	Areas of Interest
<b>Baum, Marianna</b>	Professor	<a href="mailto:Baumm@fiu.edu">Baumm@fiu.edu</a>	Nutrition and Infectious Disease/ HIV/AIDS/ COVID-19
<b>Coccia, Catherine</b>	Ph.D. Program Director, Associate Professor	<a href="mailto:ccoccia@fiu.edu">ccoccia@fiu.edu</a>	Nutrition education programs for children and families. Community-based participatory research; Parent-child relationships; Diverse populations.
<b>Evelyn Enrione</b>	Associate Professor, Dietetic Internship Program Director	<a href="mailto:enrionee@fiu.edu">enrionee@fiu.edu</a>	Medical Nutrition Therapy and Outcomes Related to Quality Care. Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition. Nutrition Care Process/Nutrition Diagnosis.
<b>Hernandez-Boyer, Jacqueline</b>	Assistant Professor	<a href="mailto:jshernan@fiu.edu">jshernan@fiu.edu</a>	Lifestyle factors, gut health, inflammation and prevention of chronic diseases in diverse populations
<b>Henfridsson, Pia</b>	Assistant Professor		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.
<b>Liuzzi, Juan</b>	Associate Professor	<a href="mailto:jliuzzi@fiu.edu">jliuzzi@fiu.edu</a>	Nutrigenomics, Diabetes, Trace Elements. Zinc transporters.
<b>Palacios, Cristina</b>	Associate Professor	<a href="mailto:crpalaci@fiu.edu">crpalaci@fiu.edu</a>	Role of diet and physical activity on weight gain in infants, children, and pregnant women. Novel interventions using SMS, mobile Apps, and mindfulness practices for obesity prevention. Community based participatory research with the WIC Program. Vitamin D, obesity and chronic diseases. Vitamin D supplementation in pregnancy and maternal and infant health outcomes.
<b>Sales-Martinez Sabrina</b>	Assistant Professor	<a href="mailto:saleess@fiu.edu">saleess@fiu.edu</a>	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 vulnerable and underserved populations.

# IV The First Three Semesters of Study

## Initial Advisement

Upon entry into the Ph.D. program the program director will meet with each student to discuss their research interests and initial coursework. The program director will work with the student to select a major professor before the end of the first year in the program. The major professor assists the student to focus on areas of specialization and to constitute his/her Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee. The major professor is also the Chair of the Dissertation Committee.

## 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. A 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).

## Program of Study

The program of study for the Ph.D. in Dietetics and Nutrition is comprised of 40 credit hours. Courses and seminars are taken over four consecutive semesters. Following these courses, and advancement to candidacy, a minimum of 15 credit hours of dissertation work must be completed.

## 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.



**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](http://www.eatright.org) • For all Course Registration: <http://onestop.fiu.edu>

NAME:	PS#:	ADMITTED:
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**Distribution of credits: Research & Method Courses (15 credits) – Seminar (3 credits) – Nutrition Science (0-9 credits *do not need if equivalent was previously taken at graduate level*) – Dietetics Required Coursework (13 credits) – Dissertation (15 credits) – Total: Minimum of 55 graduate credits.**

**I. RESEARCH AND METHODS COURSES – Must earn a grade of B or better.**  
**(15) Credits of Required Coursework.**

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PRE-REQUISITES/COMMENTS/APPROVAL
PHC 6091	Biostatistics II	3			Needs PHC 6052 – Biostatistics I
PHC 7198	Advanced Qualitative Methods in PH	3			PHC 6706 – Research Methods, PHC 6710 – Qual Research Methods, PHC 6715 – Survey Rsch in Public Health, or Equivalent Advanced Research Methods
PHC 6703	Epidemiological Methods Experimental Design OR Approved Experimental Research OR Approved Clinical Research	3 <b>OR</b> 3			Needs PHC 6015 – Epidemiologic Methods
DIE 7566	Research Concepts and Proposal Development	3			Needs DIE 6568 – Research I, STA 6166 – Statistical Methods in Research I, and STA 6167 – Statistical Methods in Research II or (PHC 6052 – Biostatistics I)
HUN 6266	Nutritional Assessment	3			

**II. SEMINAR – Must earn a grade of B or better - (3) Credits of Required Coursework.**

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	COMMENTS/APPROVAL
DIE 6937	Graduate Seminar in Dietetics & Nutrition	1			
DIE 6937	Graduate Seminar in Dietetics & Nutrition	1			
DIE 6937	Graduate Seminar in Dietetics & Nutrition	1			

**III. NUTRITION SCIENCE – Must earn a grade of B or better.**

**(0-9) Credits of Required Coursework - Do not need if equivalent was previously taken at the graduate level.**

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PREREQUISITES	COMMENTS/APPROVAL
HUN 6285 OR HUN 6307	Nutrition & Metabolism I OR Carbohydrates & Lipids	3			Advanced Nutrition, Physiology, AND Biochemistry	
HUN 6286 OR HUN 6327	Nutrition & Metabolism II OR Proteins	3			Advanced Nutrition, Physiology, AND Biochemistry	
HUN 6287 OR HUN 6355	Nutrition & Metabolism III OR Minerals in Human Nutrition	3			Advanced Nutrition, Physiology, AND Biochemistry	
HUN 6335	Functions of Vitamins	3			Same Pre-Reqs as above	

**IV. DIETETICS – Must earn a grade of B or better - (13) Credits of Required Coursework.**

\*\*\* A Program of Study will be developed with the assistance of a major professor and dissertation committee. More than 13 credits may be required for the student to achieve competency in Research Methods AND Content Related to their Dissertation Research. Graduate Courses outside of Dietetics & Nutrition may be taken as approved by dissertation committee\*\*\*

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEEMESTER	GRADE	PREREQUISITES	COMMENTS/APPROVAL
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HUN 7408	Nutrition Across the Lifespan OR Designated Substitute	3			HUN 4403, HUN 4241, DIE 5247	
HUN 7523	Community Nutrition OR Designated Substitute	3			HUN 4410, HUN 6522, PHC 6500	
HUN 7524	Nutrition Science & Implications for Community Health OR Designated Substitute	3			HUN 4240 or HUN 5245 and Pathophysiology	

## V. DISSERTATION

### (15) Credits of Required Coursework

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	PREREQUISITES	COMMENTS/APPROVAL
DIE 7980	Dissertation					

## VI. Additional Graduate Courses Taken as Electives or as Approved Plan of Study

PREFIX	COURSE DESCRIPTION	CREDIT	SEMESTER	GRADE	COMMENTS/APPROVAL

## 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. Earn a minimum overall GPA of 3.00 in all coursework completed.
4. Complete Forms 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>
5. Meet with Faculty Advisor to receive Graduation Check prior to final semester.
6. Apply for graduation online at <http://onestop.fiu.edu>. (See University Catalog for most current deadlines)



# V The Doctoral Candidacy Examination

## Core Areas of Study

Each student is expected to be competent in three areas:

1. Nutrition science core
2. Collaterals to support research area
3. Research methodology area including statistics

These areas are expected to be linked to form a foundation for dissertation work.

## Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee

The Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee is composed of four faculty members who are members of FIU's Graduate Faculty. The Chair of the Committee has to be a DAS faculty member. Three are from the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition, and one is from another academic unit at FIU. Usually Candidacy Examination Committee and Dissertation Committee are the same.

**All members of a Dissertation Committee must be members** of the Graduate School Faculty or if from other institutions must hold equivalent appointments. (When choosing dissertation committee members, please note that all members must be present during all oral examinations (candidacy oral exam, proposal defense and dissertation defense) held on campus. FIU does not pay for travel or lodging expenses for any outside members to attend the defense. 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>). The Appointment of Dissertation Committee should be filed by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year in the program (3<sup>rd</sup> semester).

**The Chair of a Dissertation Committee must be a member of the FIU Department of Dietetics and Nutrition and have achieved Dissertation Advisor Status prior to being appointed as a chair** (see <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/>). Changes in the Dissertation Committee appointments require filing a Form D-1r "Appointment of a Revised Dissertation Committee" (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>)

Typically, each member of this committee works with the student in one of the three core areas of study: nutrition science, collaterals to support research area, and research methodology. The Chair and the members of the committee assist the student in preliminary written and oral examinations for the successful advancement to candidacy. The Chair and the student will keep other members abreast of ongoing work and progress, by means of copies of correspondence, evaluations, etc. This committee will meet at least once to review the student's progress

towards candidacy. 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.

## Evaluation of the Candidacy Examinations

The passing grade for the Doctoral candidacy Examination is B+ or higher. The following criteria are normally used by members of the Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee to evaluate student's performance:

1. Ability to analyze, conceptualize, and think critically
2. Ability to synthesize information and present it in a readable form
3. Demonstration of substantive knowledge of up-to-date information in the field
4. Application of nutrition science knowledge to a significant problem/issue
5. Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of research methodology pertinent to pursue a dissertation in the student's chosen area of study; potential to turn the research concept into a formal Dissertation Proposal
6. Potential to turn papers into publications in peer-reviewed outlets

Students must be informed the results of their performance on the examinations within 30 days of the written examination date. If the student fails the candidacy examination the committee, at its discretion, may provide for reexamination at a mutually satisfactory time for that part of the examination. Passing the candidacy examination is requisite to continuing in the graduate program. Students who fail 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>

## Deadline for Advancement to Candidacy

**Students are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of their second year of study – 6<sup>th</sup> semester.** Those who fail to meet this deadline can 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 may be receiving. The extension is granted only on the basis of a well-justified plan for successful completion of the candidacy exams. *Students who*

*fail to meet this second deadline (that is, who fail to advance to candidacy by the end of their 6th semester of study) may be terminated from the Ph.D. Program.*

## Review of Steps Leading to Advancement to Candidacy

(The first 3 steps are simultaneous)

1. Complete all coursework satisfactorily
2. Meet and discuss research interests with major professor and as many members of the Candidacy and Dissertation Committees
3. File *Appointment for Dissertation Committee* Online Milestone
4. Obtain the Doctoral Program Director's approval for the composition of the committees
5. Pass written and oral Doctoral Candidacy Examinations
6. File *Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy* Online Milestone

# VI The Doctoral Dissertation

Following advancement to candidacy, doctoral candidates 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. A minimum of 15 dissertation credit hours are required, taken with the Chair of the Dissertation Committee while working on the dissertation research.

## Dissertation Proposal

The Dissertation Proposal typically grows out of the research concept submitted at the Oral Examination for the Doctoral Candidacy Examination. Actual 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. 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](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. When successful the Committee indicates its approval by signing and completing the *Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense* Online Milestone Form, the full proposal and a five-page summary, as well as an IRB/Human Subjects approval or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) memorandum if necessary, are forwarded for final approval/signatures to the Doctoral Program Director, the Chair of the Department, the Academic Dean, and the Dean of the University Graduate School for final approvals. Candidates are expected to have a Dissertation Proposal approved by the end of the semester following the semester in which they have advanced to candidacy. A dissertation proposal must be approved by the University Graduate School at least three semesters prior to the date of graduation.

## 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).

In order to ensure that dissertations meet the appropriate standards of originality, UGS now requests that Major Professors create an originality report in Turnitin of the dissertation documents that are sent along with the "Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense" form. Major Professors that do not have a Turnitin account can visit the following website that contains the appropriate information: <http://ecampus.fiu.edu/faculty-turnitin-plagiarism-framework.html>. The first page of the report with the name of the professor (when submitting the document to Turnitin, professors need to use their names as authors) and the page indicating the similarity index need to be submitted with the "Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense" form. UGS will not accept a "Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense" form without these two pages from the report. The originality report is now part of the checklist on these forms.

The Major Professor and dissertation committee will also review the dissertation for content and style before submitting it to the Stempel College Office of Dean. The student should plan on both the Major Professor, dissertation committee, and the designated official at the dean's office needing up to 14 business days to review the dissertation. A dissertation that does not meet Stempel College standards of research excellence or one with a significant number of uncorrected errors will be returned without approval for scheduling the defense. It is the responsibility of the dissertation committee to approve the entire content of the dissertation. By their signatures on "Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense", the committee members certify that the dissertation is ready for defense.

### **UGS Guidelines and Formatting Requirements**

The FIU Graduate School has specific guidelines on the preparation of the dissertation as well as its format that the student is required to follow. The UGS guidelines and formatting requirements can be found here: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/>

### **Dissertation Defense**

The dissertation defense is a public seminar that describes the dissertation research, which is followed by an oral examination of the student by the dissertation committee on the content of the dissertation. The dissertation defense cannot be scheduled until after the dissertation has been reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee and the Stempel College Office of Dean ("Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense" form). The date of the dissertation defense must be approved by all members of the dissertation committee and the University Graduate School. The instructions about the defense announcement are on the "Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense" form. All of the University community including students and faculty will be invited to the presentation portion of the dissertation defense. Additionally, the student may invite members of the public to attend. Following the public presentation and question-and-answer session, all non-committee members will be asked to leave the room. After the guests have left the room, the student will be examined by the dissertation committee and required to defend his/her analysis and interpretation of the research findings.

The student should refer to the University Graduate School for deadlines for submission of Dissertation in order to graduate (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>). After all the changes are made and approved by the dissertation committee, the final corrected version should be submitted to Stempel College Office of Dean for approval.

### **Final Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Approval**

After the dissertation defense the student must submit a Final Electronic Thesis/Dissertation (ETD) Approval form the can be found here: [http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Final\\_ETD\\_Approval\\_Form01022019.pdf](http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Final_ETD_Approval_Form01022019.pdf)

## Authorship

- Authorship for publication (s) – All Ph.D. candidates conducting their own research assume primary authorship (first author) with major professor as the corresponding 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

## 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](http://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>

## Doctoral Dissertations

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. The responsibilities of the Committee are as follows:

- Committee members are expected to respond to written drafts within three weeks after receiving the proposal.
- At the end of each year of candidacy the Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee must file a formal evaluation of a candidate's **progress Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan** available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>.

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 which is 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. Candidates are urged to submit their complete application for a dissertation defense to the Program Director six (6) weeks in advance of their anticipated oral defense date. 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.

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>

## Review of the Steps in the Dissertation Process

1. Complete all required coursework
2. Complete selection of Doctoral Candidacy and Dissertation Committee membership
3. Complete Doctoral Candidacy Written and Oral Examination satisfactorily
4. Work with Chair and Committee members to revise and finalize the Dissertation Proposal
5. Conduct a round table of the Dissertation Proposal
6. Defend the Proposal
7. Submit necessary materials to Institutional Review Board
8. Submit signed Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Online Milestone Form with all attachments
9. Conduct the dissertation research

10. 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. A meeting of your Dissertation Committee pre-defense may be necessary
11. Write and rewrite chapters.
12. Prepare for dissertation defense by keeping the Committee actively involved. File **Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan** each year (annual review).
13. Upon approval of the Chair and all Committee Members, schedule tentative date for a Dissertation Defense.
14. Submit Preliminary Approval of Online Dissertation and Request for Online Defense Online 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.
15. Before defense, distribute copies of dissertation to Chair and Committee Members.
16. Defend dissertation. Dissertation Committee approves (or not) the dissertation prior to forwarding **Final ETD Approval** to the College Dean and the Dean of University Graduate School.
17. Revise dissertation on the basis of final comments from committee members received during defense.
18. Chair does the final reading and signing of the **Final ETD Approval**. Chair delivers it to Doctoral Program Director for review before forwarding to the College and UGS Dean's offices for final approval.
19. Submission of dissertation to Library.
20. Provide Doctoral Program Director with a copy of dissertation for the Department's files.
21. Complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates,  
<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>

## Publication of Dissertations

All FIU dissertations (and dissertation abstracts) are microfilmed by *University Microfilm International (UMI): Dissertation Abstracts International*. The style and format of the dissertation should conform to the FIU Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual (available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/student-forms.shtml>).

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

# VII Administration Requirements

## Forms Required by the University Graduate School

Prior to filing for doctoral candidacy examination, and through to the completion of the doctoral dissertation, several 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>).

## Deadlines

Complete the Final ETD Approval form after a final copy of the dissertation is approved by the committee.

Deadlines for submission of this form to the UGS are available at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/current-students-calendar-deadlines.shtml>

Submit form to the Academic units before the deadline to allow sufficient time for approval and signatures.

Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to make sure the form is received by the University Graduate School in a timely fashion.

## Continuous Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment of at least three (3) dissertation credits is required in the term that the student submits ETD form. Final ETD Approval form will not be processed without proof of current enrollment.

Further information regarding the UGS continuous enrollment policies is available at <http://catalog.fiu.edu/> or <http://gradschool.fiu.edu>

**Survey of Earned Doctorate Form:** Students must complete the electronic registration for the Survey of Earned Doctorates.

## 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 a "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 a "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 along with the guidance of the Major Professor or the Director of the Doctoral Program. Students that 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 a "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.

# VIII Registration Requirements

## Minimum Continuous Registration

Unless granted an Official Leave of Absence, all doctoral students and candidates must maintain continuous registration from the starting semester of course work to the completion of all requirements for the degree. This can be done in several ways: (a) registering and paying normal tuition and fees for at least three (3) credit hours per semester during the academic year, or (b) during any semester in which candidates are not otherwise enrolled, registering for three (3) credit hours of Dissertation Research.

## 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. Receipt by the library of two approved and final copies of the dissertation (and payment of micro-filming costs).

Doctoral students who have completed all requirements for their degree may participate in the Commencement ceremonies.

## Student Grievances

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>

# IX Financial Aid

## Financial Aid

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>

Students are not eligible for any financial assistance if they are working full-time and if they register for less than nine (9) credits per semester.

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.

Students with a GRE score in the top 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and an undergraduate or graduate GPA of 3.5 or better are eligible to compete for the prestigious Presidential Fellowship. Other funding opportunities are available for qualified students.

Further information on financial support for doctoral students is available from the University Graduate School by visiting <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/current-students-graduate-funding.shtml>

# X 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](http://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 2023-2024 Dietetics and Nutrition Ph.D. Handbook for the Dietetics and Nutrition Department at Florida International University and have reviewed it with my advisor. 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 toward degree completion include: not completing a Fall or Spring student evaluation, not achieving the SMART goals on two consecutive semesters. 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