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Section One: Overview

1. Graduate Studies Bulletin
   It is the right and responsibility of every graduate student at UofSC to be familiar with the current version of the Graduate Studies Bulletin. The document contains general information concerning the Graduate School and includes information specific to the Arnold School of Public Health, graduate degrees offered by the Department of Exercise Science (EXSC), and a description of graduate courses.

2. Program of Study
   The Program of Study lists all courses that a student must complete as a part of the degree to which he/she has been admitted. The Program of Study form must be signed by the student, the student's advisor, and the Graduate Director in accordance with the graduate curriculum for the Department of Exercise Science. The approved Program of Study must be submitted to the Graduate School for review and approval by the Graduate Dean. The time at which it is submitted is based on degree requirements. All forms are located here.
   All courses in a Program of Study leading to a Master's degrees must be completed within a 6-year period from the date of admission to graduation. Courses not completed within this period must be retaken.
   All courses in a Program of Study leading to the Doctoral degree must be completed within a 10-year period from date of admission to graduation. Courses not completed within this period must be retaken.

3. Transfer Credits
   A maximum of nine credit hours from another institution may be approved by the Graduate School and the Department of Exercise Science as transfer credits toward earning a graduate degree. Upon the approval of a Program of Study by the advisor and Exercise Science Graduate Director, the student must complete a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit for each course to be transferred. The following provisions apply:
   - The courses must be documented by an official transcript mailed to the Graduate School by the awarding institution.
   - The transcript must clearly indicate that graduate credit was awarded or specifically verified by the institution's Registrar or Graduate Dean.
   - The courses must be judged as appropriate by the student's academic committee and listed on a Program of Study approved by the Graduate School.
   - Courses with grades lower than “B” are not transferrable.
• Students who have another graduate degree in a related field (e.g. MS, MPH, DPT) can transfer their degree (not individual courses) which allows for the first 30 hours of the required 60 hours of their PhD.

• Students in Doctoral programs defined as post-baccalaureate must have on the Program of Study (D-POS) a minimum of 60 hours that are in-date (i.e., completed within 10 yrs), **30 of which must be unique to the University of South Carolina**. Students in Doctoral programs defined as post-master’s must have on the Program of Study (D-POS) a minimum of **30 hours in-date and unique to the University of South Carolina**.

### 4. Research Projects

Students who are involved in research projects associated with degree programs (i.e. Master’s theses, Master’s projects, and dissertations) are required to be **formally enrolled during the period that they are actively engaged in the project**. Collection of data, laboratory analysis of data, computer analysis of data, manuscript review (with faculty) and revisions are examples of active engagement. The minimal enrollment is 1 credit. The student would normally be enrolled in either EXSC 798, EXSC 799, or EXSC 899, but enrollment in any course within the EXSC department or another university department will satisfy the requirement. This requirement is to reflect the involvement of the University’s resources in the process. Students who enroll for research hours in a given semester must execute the work for which they are receiving credit in that same semester.

The above stated regulation applies to Master’s degree students completing a project (EXSC 798) as well. A project student should not enroll in EXSC 798 until he/she is prepared to conduct the work. A project proposal must be approved by the student’s advisor and the MS Graduate Director prior to the student’s enrollment in EXSC 798. Failure to complete the project within the enrolled semester will require the student to register for at least one graduate credit each semester until the project is complete.

### 5. Application for Graduation

**Graduation Applications** must be turned into the Graduate Student Services Coordinator at the Arnold School of Public Health by the **designated date** for that semester; this is usually no later than 15 days after the beginning of the semester in which a student plans to graduate.
SECTION TWO: PROGRAMS OF STUDY

1. Master of Science Degree Program – Progress to Degree

Below is a general progression to degree that can be found on the Graduate School Website.

A. SUBMIT PROGRAM OF STUDY - Every degree student must file a Master’s Program of Study (M-POS) in the Graduate School for approval by the dean of the Graduate School. If needed, you may file a program adjustment form to request changes to your original POS.
   • Master’s Program of Study Form (MPOS)
   • Program of Study Adjustment Form (POSA)

B. APPLY FOR GRADUATION - In your final term of study, submit your application for graduation to the Graduate School. Complete the online graduation application in Self Service Carolina. The Apply to Graduate link is located under the Student tab in the bottom left corner of the page.

C. TAKE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM/PASS LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS - All candidates for a Master’s degree must complete a comprehensive assessment in the major field of study that is distinct from program course requirements. Language and research methods requirements for the Master’s degree vary from program to program.

D. SUBMIT THESIS DRAFT - Submit your thesis draft to your advisor and to your thesis committee.

E. CHECK THESIS FORMAT/DEFEND THESIS - Submit a draft of your thesis via the ETD process for a preliminary format check. In order to submit your draft, you will create an account within the UMI/ProQuest site. (This is the site you will use to submit your final approved thesis.) Defend your thesis (if applicable), and make any final revisions required by your committee and the Graduate School. Visit the Thesis and Dissertation Portal to view the format guide, ETD samples, templates, and instructions on how to submit your document.

F. SUBMIT SIGNATURE AND APPROVAL FORM - Submit your Thesis Signature and Approval form to the Graduate School in hard copy.

G. SUBMIT THESIS - Submit your final approved thesis via the ETD process.

H. GRADUATE - Congratulations, you made it!
**MS Assignment of Academic Advisor**

Students entering the graduate program in Exercise Science will be advised by the MS Graduate Director. The student is to meet with their advisor prior to the start of each semester. The academic advisor and student are responsible for completing a Program of Study by the end of the second semester. The advisor and the student should review the student's academic performance and ensure that appropriate progress is being made to completion of the Program of Study. If academic problems arise the advisor will be directly involved in the resolution of the problem. Students are encouraged to use their academic advisor to express concerns over the program or their future.

**MS Program of Study**

The Program of Study lists all courses that a student must complete as part of his/her degree program. The Program of Study form must be signed by the student, advisor, Graduate Director, and the Graduate Dean.

The Program of Study must include the following:

- The correct number of hours for the degree. No more than six hours may be in thesis preparation, EXSC 799.
- A maximum of three 500 level courses may be included.
- No more than six hours of independent study (EXSC 790).
- Only courses with dates of completion no more than six years prior to the satisfaction of all degree requirements.
- *The Program of Study form must be forwarded to the Graduate School no later than the student's second semester of academic work.*

**Adjustments to the Program of Study:** Circumstances that may require an adjustment to an approved Program of Study include:

- Substitution of one course for another on an approved Program of Study
- Deletion of a course from an approved Program of Study
- Addition of an additional course to an approved Program of Study

The student must complete the Request for Adjustment in Graduate Program form available on the Graduate School website. This form must be approved by the student’s advisor, Graduate Director and the Dean of the Graduate School.
Master of Exercise Science (MS) Curriculum – 33 credit hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS in Exercise Science Core</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBH 700 - Perspectives in Public Health (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOS 700 - Introduction to Biostatistics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXSC 780 or 781 - Physiology of Exercise or Physiology, Exercise, &amp; Disease</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXSC 787 - Research Methods and Design for Exercise Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose one of the following:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXSC 700 - Physical Activity and Health: Epidemiology, Research, and Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXSC 710 - Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXSC 731 - Mechanisms of Motor Skill Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXSC 777 - Endocrinology of Exercise and Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Electives (12 or 15; minimum 9 EXSC credits) 12 or 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project (EXSC 798) or Thesis (EXSC 799) (3 or 6)</th>
<th>3 or 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of Advisor-Approved Elective Courses

- EXSC 666 – Cardiorespiratory Exercise Physiology (3h)
- EXSC 669 - Skeletal Muscle Physiology: Form and Function (3h)
- EXSC 755 - Selected Topics in Exercise Science (3h)
- EXSC 790 - Independent Study (1-3h, repeatable up to 6h)
- EXSC 754 - Community-Based Physical Activity Interventions (3h)
- EXSC 563 - Physical Activity and the Dimensions of Aging (3h)
- EXSC 585 - Women’s Health and Physical Activity (3h)
- PHYT 788 - Evidence Based Practice in Physical Therapy (3h)
- RHAB 540 – Assistive and Adaptive Technology (3h)
- RHAB 710 - Medical Aspects of Rehabilitation (3h)
- PHPH 750 - Fundamental Neuroscience (4h)
- BIOS 757 - Intermediate Biometrics (3h)

MS Comprehensive Exam

A comprehensive examination is administered by the Department of Exercise Science near the completion of the student’s Program of Study. The comprehensive examination may be taken when the student has completed all but two major courses. The exam must be completed at least 15 days and not more than two years prior to the date at which all degree requirements are met.

Comprehensive exams are offered three times a year. Generally, the exams are given in mid-February, mid-June, and mid-October. Students will be required to sign up for the exam in the Department Office approximately one month in advance of the test date.

Preparation of the comprehensive exam will be completed by the graduate faculty. The exam will consist of essay questions designed to test the student’s mastery of the subject matter. Project students will take the exam on two consecutive days for three hours each day. Thesis students will take only the first day of exams. Thesis students will be tested orally at their thesis defense in place of the second day of written exams. The exam typically will include three questions for each day.
Comprehensive exams will be graded by at least 2 members of the graduate faculty. Grading scale breakdown: 4 = Excellent; 3 = Pass; 2 = Marginal; 1 = Fail. In order to pass, one must score at least a 5 on each question (sum of scores from two evaluators). Students failing in their initial examination will be required to repeat all or part of the exam. **A second failure of the comprehensive exam will result in the student’s release from the graduate program.**

**MS Thesis**

By the end of their second semester, students following the thesis program must identify a Thesis Advisor. The Thesis Advisor will be assigned based upon the interests of the student and availability of the professors actively pursuing research in the area.

**Thesis Committee**

By the end of their first year, each student will identify an Advisory Committee with the aid of the Thesis Advisor. The Advisory Committee will act as critical reviewers of the thesis proposal and all activities associated with the thesis. The Advisory Committee is responsible for giving final approval to the thesis proposal, the thesis proposal presentation, the final written form of the thesis and the oral defense of the thesis. The Advisory Committee shall consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of five members, all of whom must have Graduate Faculty status. At least two must be members of the UofSC Department of Exercise Science. The names of the committee members must be filed with the Department Chair. Advisory Committee forms can be obtained in the departmental office.

**Thesis Proposal**

- The student will develop a thesis proposal in conjunction with the Advisory Committee.
- After the graduate student and Thesis Advisor have discussed a proposed thesis topic, the student will prepare a brief preliminary proposal that includes a brief rationale for the study, a clear statement of the proposed topic, and reasonable detailed methodology to be used. This document must be approved by the Thesis Advisor before proceeding any further.
- The student and the Thesis Advisor may wish to schedule a pre-proposal committee meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to get committee input and consensus before beginning work on the thesis prospectus.
- Once approval is given, the student will develop a thesis proposal. This proposal will be distributed to the thesis committee only when the Thesis Advisor judges it to be ready to be read by the committee.
- A thesis proposal generally should provide pilot data and/or other evidence that the procedures to be used are appropriate.
- After a draft of the thesis proposal is approved by the Thesis Advisor, it is distributed to the thesis committee and a thesis proposal defense is scheduled.
- After the thesis proposal presentation has been concluded, the Advisory Committee will either approve the proposal or make appropriate revisions. Primary data collection must not occur before final approval by the Advisory Committee.
• For all theses which use human subjects, approval must be obtained from the appropriate institutional review board(s) before data collection can begin.

**Thesis Defense**

• The format of the written thesis must be consistent with Graduate School requirements and guidelines.
• The body or text of the thesis must be in the form of a journal-style article and should be written in the style appropriate for the intended journal of publication.
• Upon completion of the thesis, the student must notify the graduate faculty in writing at least 10 days in advance of the scheduled date of the thesis defense. A brief abstract of the thesis should accompany this notification.

**Graduate School Guidelines and Deadlines**

• Thesis Signature and Approval Form must be completed.
• Guidelines concerning regulations for Master’s theses are available from the Graduate School.
  It is the student’s responsibility to obtain current guidelines concerning application for graduation and acceptable Master’s thesis format.
• As with guidelines, deadlines for submitting theses and applications for graduation are subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of these deadlines. In general, the following date is important: Deadline for Submission of Thesis/Dissertation is 20 days prior to graduation.

**MS Project**

The primary purpose of the MS project is application, analysis, evaluation, or creation of knowledge. Prior to the start of their second year, students choosing to complete a project will identify a Project Advisor based on the interests of the student and availability of faculty actively pursuing research in that area. The Project Advisor must be a faculty member in the Department of Exercise Science and must hold Graduate Faculty status. The Project Advisor has responsibility for developing the specific course of study to be followed in the project, the final approval of the written project proposal and end project. Each student in cooperation with the Project Advisor may form an advisory committee to aid in development of their project.

**2. Doctor of Philosophy Degree Program – Progress to Degree**

The PhD program in Exercise Science is designed to prepare students for research careers in the exercise sciences. Graduates are trained for entry into positions in universities, colleges, research institutes and research-oriented clinical settings. Areas of research emphasis correspond to those of the departmental faculty.
Below is a General Progression to Degree that can be found on the Graduate School Website.

A. **CHOOSE YOUR COMMITTEE** - Your Advisory, Comprehensive Examination and Dissertation Committees may be appointed at the same time.
   - Doctoral Committee Appointment Request (DCA)

B. **COMPLETE QUALIFYING EXAM** - Take the qualifying exam and submit your approved Doctoral Program of Study (POS) to the Graduate School. If needed, you may file a Program of Study Adjustment (POSA) form to request changes to your original POS.

C. **PASS COMP EXAM/ FULFILL LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS** - You must pass a written and oral comprehensive examination conducted by your academic program under the direction of your Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination Committee. Language and research methods requirements for the Doctoral degree vary from program to program.

D. **APPLY FOR GRADUATION** - In your final term of study, submit your application for graduation to the Graduate School. Complete the online graduation application in Self Service Carolina. The Apply to Graduate link is located under the Student tab in the bottom left corner of the page.

E. **SUBMIT DRAFT/SCHEDULE DEFENSE** - Submit a draft of your dissertation to your advisor and committee members. Schedule and submit your Dissertation Defense Announcement at least 14 days prior to defense, using the ETD Administrator.

F. **CHECK FORMAT/DEFEND DISSERTATION** - Submit your dissertation draft to the Graduate School for a preliminary format check. In order to submit your draft, you will create an account with the UMI/ProQuest site. (This is the site you will use to submit your final approved dissertation.) Complete your dissertation defense, and make any final revisions required by your Committee and the Graduate School. Visit the Thesis and Dissertation Portal to view the format guide, ETD samples, templates, and instructions on how to submit your document.


H. **SUBMIT DISSERTATION** - Submit your final approved dissertation via the ETD process.

I. **GRADUATE** - Congratulations, you made it!
### EXSC PhD Milestones for Progress to Graduation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Remediation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milestone 1</strong></td>
<td>No Grad Degree</td>
<td>Masters of Science</td>
<td>End of 2nd or 3rd year.</td>
<td>Completion of all required courses for Masters of Science.</td>
<td>Students must take and pass all required courses for Masters of Science with a cumulative 3.0 GPA or higher in those courses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual IDP</td>
<td>Completion of IDP outlining 1st year courses completed and plan for future courses, research, scholarship, teaching, and service related activities. Creation of Program of Study (POS).</td>
<td>Establish goals with IDP within 30 days of 1st semester each academic year. Submit completed accomplishments by last day of classes of 1st year. To be reviewed by POS Committee and full Doctoral EXSC faculty each year. Orally presented to full Doctoral EXSC faculty every other year (1st, 3rd, 5th, …)</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance towards degree as indicated by mentor and POS Committee.</td>
<td>Student completes IDP document and presents an oral summary to faculty regarding annual progress from IDP. Student receives written letter rating progress towards degree from department.</td>
<td>Additional course work, scholarship, or exam, as deemed necessary by mentor and POS Committee, to determine ability to stay in program. May lose GA/TA with unsatisfactory performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milestone 2</strong></td>
<td>Qualifying Exam</td>
<td>Produce a written product and orally defend to Qualifying Exam Committee (see details below).</td>
<td>Typically end of course work – usually end of 2nd or start of 3rd year</td>
<td>Pass, conditional pass, or fail Must pass prior to moving to comps/proposal in Milestone 3</td>
<td>See Qualifying Exam Format section below</td>
<td>Allowed only one fail to continue in program. Fail/conditional pass – must retake, rewrite, or revise all or portion of same or new written product May lose GA/TA with unsatisfactory performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milestone 3</strong></td>
<td>Dissertation Proposal (Comps)</td>
<td>Student develops written dissertation proposal document and presents the research orally to faculty and students</td>
<td>End of course work – typically start or end of third year</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance as indicated by mentor and dissertation committee. Must satisfactorily pass prior to moving to Milestone 4</td>
<td>Student provides written document and presents orally. Oral presentation advertised 2 weeks in advance for attendance by EXSC faculty and students</td>
<td>Revisions of written document, specific aims, analysis plan, and/or study design per dissertation committee’s recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milestone 4</strong></td>
<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
<td>Student develops written manuscripts and presents the results orally to faculty and students</td>
<td>Typically end of 4th year</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance as indicated by mentor and dissertation committee</td>
<td>Student provides written document and presents orally. Oral presentation advertised 2 weeks in advance for attendance by EXSC faculty and students</td>
<td>Revisions of written document per dissertation committee’s recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Committee Membership Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Program of Study Committee</td>
<td>Minimum 3 faculty: Mentor plus 2 other EXSC faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Qualifying Exam Committee</td>
<td>Minimum 3 faculty: Mentor plus 2 other faculty (can be faculty at USC or outside the university).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE: Committee can include members from Program of Study Committee, but this is not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dissertation Committee</td>
<td>Minimum 4 faculty: Mentor plus 2 additional EXSC faculty (other members can be faculty at USC or outside the university). Exceptions can be made based on expertise required for the dissertation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NOTE: Committee can include members from Program of Study or Qualifying Exam Committee, but this is not required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Milestone 1: Individual Development Plan (IDP)

**Purpose:**

The IDP is an intentional and purposeful activity that is the product of a thoughtful analysis of the background, interests, and needs of each student. This includes developing a mentoring plan that assesses the needs and goals of each student, describes short- and long-term career objectives, and identifies professional development activities needed to reach them.

The IDP is a tool to help in this planning process and also to facilitate communication between mentees and mentors. The IDP should be viewed as a dynamic document that is reviewed annually and updated throughout an individual’s training.

**Expectations:**

**Creation and Submission of IDP**

- **Fall semester IDP:** Each Doctoral student will complete an IDP within the first 30 days of each Fall academic semester. The Fall IDP will establish the goals and plan for the upcoming academic year.
- **Spring semester IDP:** Each Doctoral student will complete a followup IDP by the last day of classes of the Spring academic semester. The Spring IDP will include completed accomplishments from the Fall IDP, as well as other accomplishments.

**Faculty review of IDPs**

Each IDP (Fall and Spring) should be reviewed and approved by the student’s mentor and their Program of Study committee before final submission to the Graduate Director. The student’s mentor and Program of Study committee should work closely with the student to create and revise the IDP throughout each semester. The IDP should be reasonable and appropriate based on the combined needs, experience, and expectations of the student and mentoring team. The entire EXSC staff will have access to all IDPs and the opportunity to review them annually.

**Oral defense of IDP**

Every other year (1st, 3rd, 5th, …), each student will make a 15 minute oral presentation to the EXSC faculty describing their IDP goals, progress, and future plans. Based on the results and feedback from the oral IDP presentation, each student will receive a letter of progress from the department indicating their rating of progress towards degree. Any deficiencies in training or achievements will be adjudicated with additional course work or scholarship, as deemed necessary by the mentor and Program of Study committee or via a potential exam to determine ability to stay in program. Failure to submit an IDP each semester or to give the oral IDP presentation and/or unsatisfactory performance in either of these may result in the student losing their GA/TA position.

Milestone 2: Qualifying Exam Format

- Topic and format are Mentor/Qualifying Exam Committee Determined
- Timeframe to respond: 1 to 4 weeks (Mentor/Qualifying Exam Committee Determined)
- Written product(s) could encompass one or more of the following:
  - Data analysis (data set provided) with manuscript as written product to defend
- Paper (e.g., position paper, methods paper, systematic review)
- Small grant (e.g., R03/R21 style)
- Scholarly analysis or discourse related to questions in the field
- Other – as determined by Mentor/Qualifying Exam Committee

- The topic and product can be aligned with the student’s dissertation, but cannot be the entire dissertation.
- Student independently competes written product – honor code.
- Following a successful or conditional pass on the written product, student will orally present/defend the product with the Mentor/Qualifying Exam Committee (within 30 days, as determined by the committee).
- Following the oral defense, Mentor/Qualifying Exam Committee determines if student is ready to progress to their dissertation.
- Grading Options: Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail
  - Pass - admission to candidacy
  - Fail/Conditional Pass – must have retaken exam, as specified by committee, within 30 days of decision.

**UofSC Grad School Requirements:**
- **Qualification Exam:** at least one year prior to graduation, signifies “Admissions to Doctoral Candidacy”
- **Comprehensive Exam (aka Dissertation Proposal):** Must be administered no later than 60 days prior to graduation. Written and Oral required.

**PhD Committee**

The Graduate Dean must approve an advisory committee for the candidate before a Program of Study can be recommended for the PhD student. The student must submit the [Doctoral Committee Appointment Request](#) (G-DCA) which names the members of the committee. In addition to securing the permission of Graduate Faculty members to be named to this committee, the composition of this committee must receive approval of both the Exercise Science Graduate Director and the Graduate Dean. The committee for the Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation can be the same or different.

The Committee includes three members in the UofSC Department of Exercise Science and one outside member (outside the Department of EXSC, see Graduate School requirements for outside member). This committee must be appointed prior to the student's admission to candidacy.

All committees requiring the Graduate Dean's approval must receive that approval **before** functioning as committees. Where alteration of committee membership is necessary, the change must be requested in writing with appropriate justification and receive approval before a new member can serve.
**PhD Program of Study**

Although students will work on their Program of Study from their first year onwards as part of the IDP process, after passing the qualifying exam each student must formally submit their Program of Study form. Students enrolled in the Doctoral program have ten years from the first term of enrollment in which to complete the degree. Students must be enrolled for at least one credit hour during the term of graduation.

**Residency Requirement** - Doctoral students in the Department of Exercise Science must enroll in an approved Program of Study for at least 3 academic years. One academic year (August - May) must be spent on the Columbia campus as a full-time student.

**Adjustments to the Program of Study** - The Program of Study represents a contract between the University, the Department and the student and once approved, it is binding unless all parties agree to its adjustment. Any adjustments to the Program of Study must be completed using the Program of Study Adjustment Form and approved by all parties concerned.

**PhD Curriculum**

Students will complete an approved Plan of Study of up to 60 hours beyond the baccalaureate level or 30 hours beyond the Master’s level or clinical doctorate level. Included in the plan of study are any approved transfer credits. The PhD curriculum includes coursework in exercise science, statistics, and research methods and design. The student will also be required to form a cognate of specialization which can include electives from such areas as physiology, neuroscience, epidemiology, health promotion, motor control, physical therapy, and psychology, as well as independent study and dissertation hours. Doctoral students are also expected to attend and present at weekly research seminars. In addition to coursework, all Doctoral students are expected to be heavily involved in ongoing research during their time in the academic program.

**General Course Requirements – PhD**

*Public Health (≥ 3 hours)- course defined below*

*Exercise Science (≥6 hours)*

*Research/Statistical Methods (≥6 hours) – one course defined below*

*Dissertation (≥12 hours)*

**Required Course for all Exercise Science PhD Students (nine hours) that meet General Course Requirements above**

*PUBH 700 Perspectives in Public Health or equivalent (3h)*

*Students with a MPH degree from a CEPH-accredited school of public health will have had these courses and can be released from this requirement.*

All PhD students are required to fulfill the equivalent of the existing MS program in their emphasis or a closely related field. If students do not wish to take any of the required courses, they must provide evidence of successful completion of equivalent courses prior to matriculation into the Doctoral
program. In consultation with their advisors, students are to develop a cognate of emphasis, and electives should be related to this area of specialization. Students can develop a specialization in many areas including but not limited to physiology, neuroscience, epidemiology, health promotion, motor control, physical therapy, and psychology.

**Note:** All courses should be at the 700- or 800-level. In general, 600-level courses are not acceptable for Doctoral students unless otherwise approved by your advisor, Program of Study committee, and/or Graduate Director.

**Sample Course Options**

These courses are by no means exhaustive and can be supplemented with other courses approved by the student’s advisor, Program of Study committee, or the Graduate Director.

**Exercise Science**

EXSC 710 - Behavioral Aspects of Physical Activity (3)
EXSC 731 - Mechanisms of Motor Skill Performance I (3)
EXSC 755 – Selected Topics in Exercise Science (3)
EXSC 755 - Neural Control of Movement (3)
EXSC 780 - Physiology of Exercise (3)
EXSC 781 - Physiology, Exercise and Disease (3)
EXSC 787 - Research Methods and Design for Exercise Science (3)
EXSC 790 – Independent Study in Exercise Science (6 - 12hr total)
EXSC 882 - Physical Activity and Health (3)

**Physical Therapy (considered as EXSC hours)**

PHYT 788 - Evidence Based Practice in Physical Therapy (2)

**Epidemiology**

EPID 741 – Intermediate Epidemiologic Methods (3)
EPID 744 - Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology (3)
EPID 758 - Application of Epidemiology in Public Health (3)

**Psychology**

PSYC 727 - Foundations in Community Psychology (3)
PSYC 783 - Health Psychology/Behavioral Medicine (3)
PSYC 801 - Cognitive Neuroscience I (3)

**Health Promotion Education and Behavior**

HPEB 701 - Theoretical Foundation of Health Education (3)
HPEB 710 - Evaluation for Public Health Education Programs (3)
HPEB 731 - Health Promotion for Older Adults (3)
HPEB 748 - Community Health Development (3)
HPEB 752 - Nutrition and Public Health (3)
Physiology, Pharmacology, Neuroscience

*PHPH 741 - Special Topics in Neuroscience (3)*
*PHPH 745 - Neurophysiology (3)*
*PHPH 750 - Fundamental Neuroscience (4)*
*PHPH 751 - Fundamentals of Neuroscience II (4)*

**PhD Comprehensive Examination**

The student must satisfactorily pass a comprehensive exam in his/her field(s) of study. The comprehensive exam must include both written and oral components and should reflect the student's curriculum as represented by the Program of Study. The degree must be completed within five years of completing the comprehensive exam.

The student’s committee administers the oral part of the comprehensive examination. The Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Verification form must be completed by the Graduate Director and submitted to the Graduate School (no less than 60 days prior to Graduation). Upon passing the comprehensive examination Milestone 2, the Doctoral student earns the title of Doctoral candidate. The successful passing of the dissertation proposal defense will constitute the completion of comprehensive exam. Please see PhD Dissertation section below.

**PhD Dissertation**

**Dissertation Committees**

Committee member updates (e.g. additions or deletions) must be submitted as they occur using the [Doctoral Committee Appointment Request](#) (G-DCA).

**Dissertation Proposal Procedures**

Based on extensive review of the literature and pilot work, the student must propose (comprehensive exam) and defend before the Dissertation Committee a research project that addresses a deficiency or weakness in the literature. The Doctoral student will develop a dissertation proposal using departmental guidelines. Generally, the proposal document will include the following:

- **Introduction** in which the rationale for testing the hypothesis(es) is (are) clearly stated, including limitations, delimitations and scope of the proposed investigation.
- **Review of the literature** pertaining to the research question.
- **Detailed methodology**, including pilot data which corroborate the need for the research, provides data for power calculations and documents the validity and reliability of the selected methodologies.

The proposal document is prepared by the student in conjunction with the chairperson of the committee. Once approved by the chairperson, it is then distributed to the other members of the dissertation committee and a proposal defense is scheduled. The general format of a dissertation proposal defense is as follows:

- **~30 minutes**: Presentation of dissertation research by the student/candidate to include: Introduction, Rationale, Hypothesis(es), and Methodology.
- **15 -20 minutes**: Question and answer period by the full audience, after which all but the
student and committee members are excused.

- **15 + minutes:** Continued questioning of the student by the committee.

At the conclusion of the proposal presentation, the Dissertation Committee will either approve the proposal or make appropriate revisions. Approval from the appropriate Institutional Review Board(s) must be received prior to data collection for all dissertations that use human subjects. Candidates using animal models must participate in a short course on handling laboratory animals.

**Dissertation Defense Procedures**

The student must publicly defend the results of his/her research before the Dissertation Committee and any other interested parties. During ALL phases of the completion of the dissertation, any candidate who uses university resources or facilities or confers with a faculty member on dissertation work must be officially enrolled for dissertation credit. The body or text of the completed dissertation must be in the format and written in the style appropriate for the intended journal(s) of publication. The candidate works under the guidance of the chairperson of the Dissertation Committee and the other committee members in preparing the dissertation for dispersal to the full Dissertation Committee. Upon completion of the dissertation research, the candidate must notify the Graduate Faculty in writing at least 10 days prior to the scheduled defense. This written notification should include a brief abstract of the results, along with the date, time and location of the defense. The general format of a dissertation defense is as follows:

- **~30 minutes:** Presentation of Dissertation Research by the candidate to include: Introduction, Rationale, Hypothesis(es), Methodology, Results, Interpretation/Discussion, Summary and Conclusions.

- **15 -20 minutes:** Question and answer period by the full audience, after which all but the student and committee members are excused.

- **15 + minutes:** Continued questioning of the candidate by the committee

Final official approval of the dissertation is by majority vote of the Dissertation Committee. Signatures of committee members on the title page constitute approval.

**Submission of the Dissertation to the Graduate School**

The successfully defended dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School in the accepted format specified according to Graduate School regulations. The dissertation must be turned into the Graduate School approximately 20 days before the end of the semester in which the student plans to graduate, but students are responsible for verifying deadlines. A bound copy of the dissertation should be provided to the candidate's Advisor/Chairperson of the Dissertation Committee.
3. Doctor of Physical Therapy - Please refer to the DPT Policy and Procedure manual for DPT program criteria.

4. Masters in Public Health in Physical Activity and Public Health - Please refer to the program’s handbook for program criteria.

5. Masters of Advanced Athletic Training - Please refer to the program’s handbook for program criteria.

6. Masters of Athletic Training - Please refer to the program’s handbook for program criteria.

Section Three: Requirements of Graduate Assistants

1. Professionalism Standards
   Graduate assistants are fully admitted graduate students who are paid employees of the University of South Carolina. As such, they are expected to perform their assigned duties in a timely, effective, and responsible manner. Graduate assistants play key roles in the Department of Exercise Science and the way they perform their duties reflects importantly on the department’s reputation with students, clients, research subjects and other members of the University community.

   Graduate assistants are typically appointed to 0.5 full time equivalent (FTE) positions and, accordingly, are assigned to work 20 hours per week throughout the semester. However, in some cases appointments are made at lower fractions of an FTE. Starting and finishing dates for work assignments are designated on a semester-to-semester basis and may vary with the nature of the specific assignment.

2. Research and Lab Safety Training Programs
   The Department of Exercise Science requires all graduate students who are teaching or conducting research in any of the department labs to complete the appropriate Research and Lab Safety Training Programs. These may include but are not limited to: Chemical and Lab Safety, Biosafety Level 2 for Labs, Hazardous Waste, Bloodborne Pathogens, Radiation Safety, etc. See course dates on the EHS website. Additionally, all students are required to complete Research Ethics training from the CITI program and
other sources (e.g., ethics classes, seminars, online training) as appropriate. **It is the responsibility of the student to complete these courses prior to or after enrollment and annually or as required thereafter. Completion certificates should be sent to the student’s direct supervisor and will be reviewed as part of the annual IDP process.**

### 3. Animal Handling Course

The [Animal Handling Course](#) is required for all personnel that may work with animals. The intent of this online course is to familiarize students with appropriate precautions when working with animals, as well as how to handle animals safely to prevent injury to the personnel and the animals. Additional tutorial sessions can be arranged to learn advanced techniques that may be necessary to fulfill either assistantship or thesis/dissertation responsibilities.

### 4. CPR

Graduate students may be required to be certified in *adult* cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in order to work or perform research in clinical settings, such as exercise testing. Such students will present their CPR card to the Department Chair, manager of the Clinical Exercise Research Center, or manager of the Sports Science Lab where a photocopy will be kept on file. Online CPR certifications are NOT accepted.

### 5. Placement/Assignment

Graduate assistantship work assignments are made on a semester-to-semester basis. These assignments are made by the Department Chair with input from the faculty. In making the assignments the following issues are considered:

- The needs of the department
- Competencies and background of the graduate assistant
- Interests of the graduate assistant

While consideration is always given to the graduate assistant’s preferences, the needs of the department must take precedence.

### 6. University Workshop for Teaching Assistants

Graduate assistants who are assigned to serve as instructors in laboratory sections or other courses are required by the university to complete a [workshop for teaching assistants](#). This workshop is typically held prior to the start of the fall semester. Teaching assistants are also required to take GRAD 701 in the fall semester. Teaching assistants only need to complete these trainings one time unless otherwise notified.
7. Office Hours

It is both a university and department requirement that graduate assistants with teaching responsibilities adhere to regular office hours. The purpose is to facilitate communication between students and their teaching assistant.

8. Enrollment Requirement

Graduate assistants are required to be registered as full-time students during any semester in which they are appointed to an assistantship. Therefore, the minimum amount of credits a student must take is six credits in the fall and six credits in the spring. During the summer, three credits are required to work under a graduate assistantship. Students who are in the dissertation or thesis phase can apply to be on special enrollment status (z-status).

9. Appointment Dates: University Holidays vs. Assistantship Responsibilities

In general, graduate assistantship duties start on the date designated by the department chair at the beginning of each semester and extend through the end of the final exam period for the semester. Typically graduate assistants are not required to work during university holiday periods. However, in some special cases graduate assistants may be required to work during holiday periods. University holidays are different from class holidays (i.e., Fall/Spring Break, Election Day). Graduate assistants will be notified of any special requirements at the time of assignment. In some cases, additional compensation will be awarded to graduate assistants for work during holiday periods. Communicate with your faculty supervisor to determine dates you are expected to work in fulfillment of your responsibility as an employee.

10. Outside Employment

Graduate assistants who are appointed at the 0.5 FTE level (20 hours per week) are not permitted to be employed outside of the department. This guideline applies to any activity that involves a continuing commitment to an outside employer for which compensation is made. Th

11. Seminar Attendance

Speakers are departmental students and faculty who present current research data, as well as visitors who are nationally and internationally recognized researchers. The date, time, location, speaker, and topic of these seminars will be posted. Graduate assistants are required to attend these seminars.

12. Problems and/or Concerns in the Program

Graduate assistants experiencing difficulties with an assigned work responsibility should bring such difficulties to the attention of the faculty supervisor as soon as possible. If the faculty supervisor is
unable to resolve the difficulty, the graduate assistant should bring the problem to the attention of the Graduate Director, then the department chair if not resolved. Such difficulties should not be allowed to continue for a prolonged period before bringing them to the attention of the faculty supervisor and/or department chair. Graduate students may file written grievances, appeals or petitions to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Curriculum seeking to reverse or modify decisions made at a lower level of authority.

Section Four: Health and Safety

1. Policy on Bloodborne Pathogens

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogens Standard applies to all employees who have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM). Students enrolled in the program should be particularly aware of the potential contamination from infectious agents in the health care environment. All employees will utilize universal precautions. Universal precautions is OSHA’s required method of control to protect employees from exposure to all human blood and OPIM. The term, universal precautions, refers to a concept of bloodborne disease control which requires that all human blood and certain human body fluids be treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV or other bloodborne pathogens. The standard states that any health care worker who might potentially come in contact with bodily fluids should be educated in infection control. Engineering controls and work practice controls will be used to prevent or minimize exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

2. Precautions for the Transmission of HIV and HBV

Basic training for students and faculty in the safe handling of bodily fluids and blood in conjunction with the following blood and bodily fluid precautions can help prevent the transmission of blood borne agents.

   a) The blood and other bodily fluids of all patients/participants will be considered to be infectious at all times.

   b) Whether or not the patient/participant is known to be infected with HIV, HBV, the student/faculty will:

      • Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before and immediately after contact with patients, their blood, urine, or other bodily fluid.

      • Wear gloves when handling patient’s or participant’s blood, bodily fluids, and/or items soiled with these fluids.

      • Wear gown, mask and eye coverings when performing procedures where aerosolization or splattering is likely to occur.

      • Consider sharp items (needles, pipette tips, scalpel blades etc.) as being infective and handle with extreme care to prevent accidental injury.
• Dispose of sharp items in puncture-resistant sharps containers immediately after use.
• Do not recap, purposefully bend, or otherwise manipulate by hand needles that are to be disposed.
• Minimize the need for emergency mouth to mouth resuscitation by using pocket masks, bag valve masks, or other ventilation devices.
• Clean up spills of blood or bodily fluids immediately with a disinfectant and clean work areas with a disinfectant after work is completed.
• If a cut or abrasion is present, cover these with a waterproof dressing.

c) If an incident occurs, please follow the following instructions:
- **During normal working hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm):** The exposed individual should immediately report to UofSC’s Student Health Services for a confidential post-exposure evaluation and for assistance with any necessary referrals and appropriate follow-up care. Student Health Services is only equipped to provide medical evaluations for low risk and minor exposure incidents. Higher risk and more significant exposure incidents will be referred to the Palmetto Health ER. The Student Health Services clinical staff and the exposed individual will ensure the health care professional evaluating the exposure incident receives a description of the job duties relevant to the exposure incident, route(s) of exposure, circumstances of exposure, agent or hazard involved in the incident (e.g. HIV+ blood, Vibrio parahaemolyticus, lentiviral vector), and relevant medical records.
- **Exposures occurring outside normal working hours and on weekends or holidays:** Report to the Emergency Department at Palmetto Health Richland Hospital. UofSC main campus faculty/staff/students and UofSC School of Medicine students should verify that UofSC’s Student Health Services is provided an incident report and any medical evaluation records. This report must include the date of the incident, person involved and their supervisor, nature and consequences of the incident, root cause, and a description of the material/hazard involved.

If you need immediate assistance, call Campus Police from a university phone at 7-9111 or from any other phone at 803-777-9111 (24 hours a day, 7 days per week).

3. Graduate Student Requirements for Health and Safety

**Hepatitis B Vaccination Series:** All students are highly recommended to complete the Hepatitis B vaccination series, show medical documentation of immunity, or sign a waiver form declining the vaccination before beginning any lab or clinical work (or even course work). This is because many of our students are potentially exposed to blood and/or blood products, even during classroom activities. The vaccination series is available through private physicians, the health department, or the Student Health Services at UofSC for a fee. No student will be allowed to begin
working with biohazardous material until documentation of vaccination or waiver of vaccination is provided to the Environmental Health and Safety Unit (EHS). If a routine booster dose of Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended at a future date, such booster doses shall be required at the student’s expense. Those students that choose to decline the Hepatitis B vaccination must sign a waiver form to be kept on file at EHS in place of the immunization record. Any student employed by the Department of Exercise Science is eligible to receive the vaccination free of charge and should contact the Department Chair for further information.

Additional DPT Requirements: The DPT requirements are described in full detail on the DPT Policies and Procedures.

Section Five: Academic Standards for all Graduate Students in EXSC

1. Academic Probation and Suspension Policy - "3.00 Rule"
   
   Graduate degree-seeking students whose cumulative grade point average drops below 3.00 (B) will be placed on academic probation and allowed one calendar year in which to raise the grade point average to at least 3.00. In the case of conversion of grades of incomplete that cause a cumulative GPA to drop below 3.00, a degree-seeking student will be placed on academic probation at the end of the semester in which the grade is posted. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below the required minimum of 3.00 by receiving a grade for a course in which they received an Incomplete will, instead of a one-year probationary period, be granted only one major semester of probation dating from the semester in which the grade is received by the registrar in which to raise their cumulative GPA to 3.00 or above. Students who do not reach a cumulative 3.00 grade point average during the probationary period will not be permitted to enroll for further graduate course work as a degree or non-degree student.

2. Graduation Grade Point Averages
   
   At the time of graduation, the student’s cumulative grade point average must be at least 3.00. Additionally, the student's average on all grades recorded on the Program of Study must be 3.00 and the student's GPA for courses numbered 700 or above, recorded on the Program of Study, must be at least 3.00.

3. “I” (Incomplete) to “F”
   
   An “I” is a temporary mark that may be assigned at a professor's discretion to allow an additional specified amount of time to finish course requirements following illness, accident or unusual hardship. A grade of “I” is automatically converted to a grade of “F” after a default of one (1) year or unless
otherwise assigned by the course instructor. In the event of an “Incomplete” grade, the student must make arrangements with the course instructor to finalize completion of the course.

4. Student Assistance Program for Behavioral and Academic Problems

Faculty, staff, and other students may notice behavior that appears unethical or unprofessional in a student enrolled in the program. In addition, a student may experience academic problems with selected course content. Independent observations of isolated events may not be sufficient to draw attention to a larger potential problem. For this reason, collective observations may assist in the identification of a significant problem and indicate a need for external assistance.

Faculty and staff of the department have established policies and procedures for assisting students who are exhibiting behavioral or academic problems. The objectives of this program are:

- The early identification of students exhibiting behavioral and/or academic problems that will be detrimental to their progression in the academic program or outside work experiences.
- The development of a remedial plan of action designed to assist a student in managing and addressing behavioral or academic problems.

UofSC has a wealth of resources to assist students, faculty, and staff in addressing a range of student issues that may arise. An individual who observes unusual behavior (physical signs, emotional signs, or social interactions) should complete an incident report related to the issue. The confidentiality of the respondent will be assured. Upon receipt of a completed form, the appropriate University Office will follow-up with the matter promptly. Students may also be referred to additional support agencies on campus including the Counseling and Psychiatry Services (Student Health Services) for professional and personal problems and Student Affairs and Academic Support services for problems related to academic skills.

5. Counseling and Psychiatry Services

Maintaining your mental health during this vital time of your life is of the utmost importance in sustaining your academic performance and successes here at the University of South Carolina. Counseling and Psychiatry provides students a safe place to speak privately and confidentially with a trained counselor or psychiatrist about a variety of concerns. These may include stress, anxiety, loneliness, depression, relationship difficulties, questions about identity, eating concerns, substance use, sexuality, managing an existing mental health condition or any other issue. Their multi-disciplinary team of professional mental health providers includes psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, social workers and supervised trainees in psychology, counseling, and social work.

Currently enrolled UofSC students who have paid the student health fee are eligible to receive most services for counseling at no additional charge. However, students who request more than 10 individual sessions per academic year may incur additional charges. Visits with a psychiatrist require additional charges. Enrolled students who have not paid the student health fee are eligible to receive most services within Counseling and Psychiatry but are charged on a fee-for-service basis.
6. Academic Assistance

All students at UofSC can perform at their maximum potential when given the appropriate guidance and assistance. The Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support designs and provides comprehensive resources to support students’ academic achievement, and our outreach and intervention efforts strive to ensure that no student falls through the cracks. The Student Success Center offers graduate students access to classroom success consultation.

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in a class, contact the Student Disability Resource Center: 777-6142, TDD 777-6744, email sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu, or stop by Close-Hipp room 102. All accommodations must be approved through the Office of Student Disability Services. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor of any approved accommodations for each course.

7. Financial Aid

Information regarding financial aid may be obtained from the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships.