

# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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## General Program Information

There are many academic and administrative steps involved in earning a degree from the Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health Program (FSNH or Program). The Program, the School of Public Health (SPH), and the UW Graduate School (Grad School) each have specific requirements. This Graduate Student Handbook is intended to provide an overview of important information regarding Program and Graduate School policies and procedures. It is an *overview* rather than an exhaustive document. Please consult the following resources for additional information regarding policies and procedures for your academic program.

- [University of Washington Graduate School](#)
- [School of Public Health](#)
- [Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health Program](#)

There are many people involved in you earning your degree, too! Below are some of the team members invested in your success:

### **Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) – Cristen Harris**

The Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) is an official FSNH faculty representative liaison between the Program and the Grad School. The primary role of the GPC is to advise, counsel, and assist graduate students, or to assure all students receive this service from another member of the graduate faculty. The GPC also serves as your faculty advisor until you graduate or choose to complete a thesis or dissertation, in which case your thesis /dissertation advisor becomes your advisor. The GPC can assist with questions when deciding on a culminating experience project – capstone, thesis, or dissertation – or forming your supervisory committee. The GPC also regularly monitors student academic progress to ensure that program milestones are met.

### **Graduate Program Adviser (GPA) – Jenifer Pesicka Hiigli**

The FSNH Student and Academic Services Director serves as the Graduate Program Adviser (GPA), the official staff representative and liaison between the Program and the Grad School. They are one of three staff members – along with the Senior Adviser and Operations and Advising Specialist – who make up the Student and Academic Services team. The GPA can assist with program requirements, Program/School/University policies, degree audits, registration, academic student employment, program scholarships and funding, the student concern policy, health and wellness, graduation, events, community building, and just about anything you aren't sure how to address.

### **Master of Public Health (MPH) Program Director – Anne Lund**

The FSNH MPH Program Director is the primary contact for MPH Public Health Nutrition degree requirements, including fieldwork (NUTR 532) and – in conjunction with the GCPD Director – practicum (NUTR 595). The FSNH MPH Program Director sits on the SPH MPH Steering Committee.

### **Graduate Coordinated Program in Dietetics (GCPD) Director – Anne Lund**

The GCPD Director manages all areas of the RDN training program and ensures accreditation standards are met by each student. They are responsible for overseeing curriculum and practice experience site placement (with over 100 local nutrition and dietetic practitioners) and aligning these experiences with MPH and MS degree requirements.

#### **Michelle Averill, PhD, RDN**

*Interim Program Director*  
[carrots@uw.edu](mailto:carrots@uw.edu)

#### **Cristen Harris, PhD, RDN, CD, CEDS, CSSD, ACSM-CEP, FAND**

*Graduate Program Coordinator*  
[clharris@uw.edu](mailto:clharris@uw.edu)

#### **Jenifer Pesicka Hiigli, MEd**

*GPA, SAS Director*  
[gradnutr@uw.edu](mailto:gradnutr@uw.edu)

#### **Anne Lund, MPH, RDN**

*GCPD and MPH Program Director*  
[ael4@uw.edu](mailto:ael4@uw.edu)

#### **Nichole Maiman Waterman, MA, MLIS**

*SAS Operations and Advising Specialist*  
[gradnutr@uw.edu](mailto:gradnutr@uw.edu)

#### **Lacey Henderson**

*GCPD Student Services Coordinator*  
[gcpd@uw.edu](mailto:gcpd@uw.edu)

### **Student and Academic Services (SAS) Operations and Advising Specialist – Nichole Maiman Waterman**

The Operations and Advising Specialist is part of the SAS team and takes the lead on admissions, compliance requirements (including those of the Health Sciences Immunization Program), academic student employee hiring, time scheduling, and student milestone tracking.

### **GCPD Student Services Coordinator – Lacey Henderson**

The GCPD Student Services Coordinator is the primary contact for student questions pertaining to the RDN training program. They manage the GCPD admissions process and work closely with the GCPD Director to ensure the program meets accreditation standards.

### **Nutritional Sciences Program Core, Interdisciplinary, and Clinical Faculty**

FSNH core faculty are the program's primary instructors. Additionally, they serve on Program committees (e.g., Admissions, Curriculum, Student Affairs) and as primary advisors and [committee chairs/members](#) for students completing thesis or dissertation projects. A larger group of interdisciplinary and clinical faculty serves as an extension of the FSNH core faculty. Interdisciplinary faculty chair and serve on student committees, guest lecture in Program courses, and often support and involve students in their research. Clinical faculty may be involved in instruction and frequently provide practice experience mentorship for students in the GCPD. The list of core, interdisciplinary, and clinical faculty may be found on our [website](#).

# Registration and Enrollment

## **Registration**

Students register for classes online through [MyUW](#). Quarterly class schedules and schedule line numbers (SLNs) are available in the [Time Schedule](#).

## **Add or Faculty Codes**

Please see [our website](#) for instructions and required forms to obtain add or faculty codes for:

- Independent study (NUTR 600), thesis (NUTR 700), or dissertation (NUTR 800) credits
- MPH fieldwork (NUTR 532) or practicum (NUTR 595) credits

If you would like to register for a restricted course in another department/program, please contact that unit directly to request an add/faculty code.

## **Grading Policies**

The Program uses the grading system described in [UW Scholastic Regulation, Chapter 110.1.B](#). All required courses for the MPH, MS, PhD, and GCPD must be taken for a numerical grade unless: 1) the course is only offered with Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) grading, or 2) the academic quarter has been deemed one of "extraordinary circumstances."

A minimum grade of 3.0 is required for the successful completion of core program (NUTR) classes. A minimum course grade of 2.7 is required for a non-NUTR course to count toward other program requirements, degree requirements, and the Graduate School's graded and total credit counts.

Electives may be taken for a numerical grade, CR/NC, or Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory (S/NS) if you have satisfied the Grad School's minimum requirement for numerically graded credits. See Grad School [Policy 1.1](#) for more information.

## **Maintaining Your Grade Point Average (GPA)**

The Grad School requires the Program to review your academic progress at the end of each quarter. To maintain graduate standing and degree eligibility, you must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher for all courses numbered 400 and above. A GPA below 3.0 will be reviewed by the GPC and may result in a warning. An unsatisfactory GPA continuing for more than one quarter could result in academic probation.

## **Continuous Enrollment Requirements**

To maintain graduate status, a student must – from the time of initial enrollment in the Grad School until completion of all requirements for the graduate degree – be enrolled on a full- or part-time basis or be in "On-Leave" status. Failure to maintain either continuous enrollment or On-Leave status constitutes evidence that the student has resigned from the Grad School.

A full-time load during the academic year is defined as at least 10 credits. RAs, TAs, and trainees are required to take at least 10 credits in autumn, winter, and spring quarters and 2 credits in summer for the quarters in which they hold their positions. You must also register for a minimum of 2 credits during the quarter in which you graduate.

## **On-Leave Status (Requesting a Leave of Absence)**

Graduate students are required to maintain graduate status during their program of study. If you plan to be away from the University (not registered) during any quarter other than summer, you must apply for On-Leave status. Eligibility requirements, policies, and procedures for requesting On-Leave status are further explained in Grad School [Policy 3.5](#).

Failure to maintain graduate status through registration or an approved request for On-Leave status effectively ends a student's continuation in the program and requires a formal application to the Grad School, approval by the Program, and a \$250 fee to be reinstated.

### **Satisfactory Progress**

A student admitted to FSNH must maintain satisfactory performance and progress toward completion of their graduate degree. General expectations for graduate student performance and progress include, but are not limited to, required coursework, research, scholarship, professional behavior relevant to the program, fieldwork, practicum requirements, and length of time allowed for completion of various phases of the program.

Each quarter, the Graduate Program Adviser reviews student performance for satisfactory progress by assessing:

- The successful completion of coursework ( $\geq 3.0$  GPA in each core NUTR class and a cumulative GPA  $\geq 3.0$ ).
- Compliance with non-course program requirements and deadlines:
  - Prerequisite completion
  - UW Health Sciences Immunization Program (HSIP)
  - Others, including required trainings and background checks, mentoring agreements, and the Program portfolio

If a student does not maintain satisfactory progress by the above criteria, the Program will move forward with intervention steps as outlined in [UW Graduate School Policy 3.7](#).

### **UW Health Sciences Immunization Program (HSIP) – MS and MPH students only**

During your coursework and training, you may find yourself in environments that present a risk for certain infections or serve vulnerable client/patient populations. For this reason, FSNH requires you to participate in and maintain compliance with the UW Health Sciences Immunization Program (HSIP), which mandates the completion and documentation of tuberculosis testing and all Health Care Personnel (HCP) immunizations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). You will be charged an annual HSIP fee for participation. If you do not comply with all HSIP requirements, a registration hold will be placed on your account. Please see the [HSIP website](#) for more information.

# Master of Public Health and Master of Science Degrees

Use the below information in conjunction with advice from your faculty advisor/thesis chair, the GPC, the GPA, the Program, and the Graduate School.

## Graduate School

- [Graduate School Policies](#)
- [Graduate Degree Requirements](#)

## Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health Program

- [Master of Public Health Degree Requirements](#)
- [Master of Science Degree Requirements](#)

## Degree Requirements

- **MPH:** All MPH students complete a structured curriculum of required courses, electives, and milestones, including a culminating capstone or thesis project (also known as an Integrative Learning Experience or ILE).  
The MPH curriculum also requires practicum and fieldwork to give students first-hand experience of real work sites. It is each student's responsibility to work with the Program and SPH to find, arrange, and complete practicum and fieldwork projects that fulfill program requirements.
- **MS:** All MS students complete a structured curriculum comprised of required courses and electives and milestones including a culminating capstone or thesis project.  
Due to separate curriculum requirements, course sequencing, and course access, it is not possible for MS students to switch to the MPH after beginning the program.

## Course Requirements and Degree Progress Tracking

Degree progress and course requirements are tracked through the UW's Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS). DARS, which you access through your MyUW account, is a computerized degree audit to help you monitor your progress toward completing your degree. SAS staff may run a DARS report to review your status, but you are ultimately responsible for maintaining your progress. Questions about the DARS report or your requirements can be directed to [gradnutr@uw.edu](mailto:gradnutr@uw.edu).

## Graduate Student Portfolio

The portfolio is an important milestone to demonstrate and document professional skill-building and progress toward degree completion. The portfolio consists of a professional resume and a self-assessment summarizing goals and achievements. The goal is for students to identify strengths as well as areas for development and continued training as they enter their second year of study and begin work on their culminating projects.

Portfolios are submitted at the end of spring quarter during students' first academic year. They are reviewed by faculty who provide direct feedback. Information about the portfolio is provided in a spring quarter orientation as well as on [our website](#).

## Culminating Experience

MPH students complete either a capstone or thesis for the Culminating Experience/Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) requirement, which intends to demonstrate the synthesis of foundational and concentration competencies. You will attend an advising session during your first year to receive more information about both options before having to choose one.

- **Capstone Project:** Many students will complete a practice-based capstone project. Associated with a course taken during the degree's second autumn quarter, the client-driven capstone project necessitates students to work directly with a community partner to produce a nutrition-focused deliverable.
- **Master's Thesis:** The purpose of a thesis is to provide experience developing a research question, testing that question, obtaining and analyzing data, and writing up your results. Please visit the [Graduate Student Resources](#) page for the current year's thesis manual.

For more details, please visit the [Graduate Student Resources](#) page and see the current year's ILE Form.

### **International Students**

While enrolled in the practicum, fieldwork, and GCPD practice experience, students with F-1 visas must be registered for [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#), and those with J-1 or J-2 visas need to apply for [Academic Training](#). If you fall into one of those groups, you'll meet with the GPA to shepherd your application through [International Student Services \(ISS\)](#).

### **Preparing for Graduation**

SAS will provide steps to graduation on the [Graduate Student Resources](#) website.

### **Time Limit**

All work for a master's degree must be completed within six years upon admission, including any quarters of leave.

# Doctor of Philosophy Degree

Use the below information in conjunction with advice from your faculty chair and supervisory [committee](#), the GPC, the GPA, the Program, and the Graduate School.

*Note: As we currently do not admit external applicants into our PhD program, the following information is for students continuing on to the PhD from a completed FSNH master's degree.*

## Graduate School

- [Graduate School Policies](#)
- [Graduate Degree Requirements](#)

## Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health Program

- [Doctoral Degree Requirements](#)

## Degree Requirements

All PhD students complete a curriculum comprised of required courses and electives. Additionally, you will complete several required milestones including completion of the FSNH Graduate Student Portfolio, a PhD teaching requirement, general exam, dissertation, and final exam.

## Course Requirements and Degree Progress Tracking

The PhD curriculum offers flexibility in selecting courses to satisfy several content areas. It is expected that you will plan courses to satisfy the requirements in consultation with the GPC and your dissertation chair.

Degree progress and course requirements are tracked through the UW's Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS). DARS, which you access through your MyUW account, is a computerized degree audit to help you monitor your progress toward completing your degree. SAS staff may run a DARS report to review your status, but you are ultimately responsible for maintaining your progress. Questions about the DARS report or your requirements can be directed to [gradnutr@uw.edu](mailto:gradnutr@uw.edu).

## PhD Teaching Requirement

PhD students are required to have teaching experience. This requirement may be fulfilled via a teaching assistantship under the direction of a faculty instructor, providing at least one guest lecture in an undergraduate or graduate course, teaching experiences at other institutions, or completion of the course GRDSCH 630: Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

## Doctoral Supervisory Committee

Your supervisory committee should be formed and approved by the GPC and GPA soon after entering the PhD program. This committee oversees your academic work throughout the program, and consists of a minimum of four members, at least three of whom (including the chair and the Graduate School Representative [GSR]) must be members of the Graduate Faculty with an endorsement to chair doctoral committees. A majority of the members must be members of the Graduate Faculty.

GSRs are selected by the student in consultation with the committee chair. All endorsed graduate faculty – with the exception of affiliates – are eligible to serve as a GSR. GSR assignments are unlimited with the exception that faculty are limited to no more than four concurrent appointments within a specific department. The GSR cannot hold any departmental affiliations in common with the student or with the doctoral committee chair. The GSR's roles are to represent the broad concerns of the University with respect to high standards of scholarly performance; to provide for the Graduate School a non-specialist's view of the quality of the student's work, ensuring that the student's mastery of the subject matter is broad and comprehensive; and to assure that all procedures are carried out fairly



and according to the guidelines of the Graduate School. For more information on the roles of doctoral committee chairs, members, and GSRs, visit [Policy 4.2: Supervisory Committee for Graduate Students](#).

To allow time to identify a suitable GSR, it is suggested that the doctoral supervisory committee be established at least four months prior to the intended date of the General Examination.

Once approved, submit your committee membership to SAS at [gradnutr@uw.edu](mailto:gradnutr@uw.edu) and copy the GPC. Your committee will be registered with the Graduate School for approval. If you select someone from off-campus to serve on your committee, a Curriculum Vita (CV) must accompany a letter to the Graduate School requesting an ex-officio appointment. Your supervisory committee should convene at least once a year to review your progress, discuss current issues, and determine future plans and activities.

### **Research Requirements and General/Final Exams**

The process for preparing your dissertation proposal, planning your general exam, and working toward the completion and submission of your dissertation will be described by the GPC and GPA.

### **Preparing for Graduation**

SAS will provide steps to graduation on the [Graduate Student Resources](#) website.

### **Time Limit**

All work for the doctoral degree must be completed within ten years of admission, including any quarters of leave.

## Graduate Coordinated Program in Dietetics

Students in the Graduate Coordinated Program in Dietetics (GCPD) work simultaneously toward completion of a graduate degree in Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health and the coursework and practice experience necessary to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). Graduates of the program engage in client-centered health promotion, disease prevention, medical nutrition therapy, public health practice, and nutrition policy development. Please refer to the GCPD Handbook for more information, policies, and requirements.

### **Admissions**

Applicants to the GCPD must also apply and be admitted to a Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health degree program, except for PhD students who can apply to the GCPD once enrolled in their degree program. Current FSNH students who wish to apply or reapply to the GCPD must meet with the GCPD Director and apply to the program by December 1 for the following year. Current FSNH students are not given priority for admission to the GCPD. The GCPD admissions committee will solicit FSNH faculty for admissions recommendations.

## **Additional Information**

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at the University of Washington are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct, professional honesty, and personal integrity. Review the [SPH Academic Integrity Policy](#) for more information.

### **Email**

Important notices and information will be sent to you via email, so it is important that you check your UW email often.

### **Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC) – currently inactive**

The Graduate Student Advisory Council Includes representatives from each cohort and degree program to provide a formal way of sharing feedback and engaging with the Program. GSAC meetings are scheduled 2-3 times per year.

### **Graduate Student Representatives**

Two graduate students may serve as Program representatives on the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS). The GPSS represents students from diverse academic departments and non-academic programs and communities, and advocates for the rights of students to UW administration, as well as state and federal governments.

SAS will reach out to all graduate students during autumn quarter to solicit volunteers.

### **FSNH Student Room**

FSNH has a student room located in 330 Raitt Hall available during regular building hours. There are computers available for student use, as well as a printer, conference table, whiteboard, and a small collection of resource books.

### **Raitt Hall Access and Security**

The doors to Raitt Hall are opened at 7:30 am and locked at 6:00 pm. The building is closed on weekends and holidays. UW buildings are public, and many people pass through them daily; the University is not responsible for personal property brought into the buildings. Dial 911 to report thefts and suspicious persons to University Police. For non-emergency issues or questions, the UW Police Department can be reached at 206-685-8973.

### **Student Concern Policy**

The School of Public Health (SPH) [Student Concern Policy](#) exists to better partner with students to resolve conflicts and address concerns that arise during students' tenure in their programs. Students are invited to pursue resolution of concerns that arise as a result of their enrollment in SPH through informal or formal mechanisms. Faculty, staff, and administrators will act in good faith to listen, understand, and work in partnership with students to resolve issues that impact students individually, and to consider the totality of reported concerns to improve the school climate and educational outcomes for all students.

Students can anonymously report issues that have caused concern to [dcinfo@uw.edu](mailto:dcinfo@uw.edu). This email account is monitored regularly by SPH Student and Academic Services, and students can email [dcinfo@uw.edu](mailto:dcinfo@uw.edu) for immediate follow-up. Anonymous concerns will be brought to the attention of the most likely resolution body within the school and will be included in aggregate reports of concerns received.

Anonymous reporting of bias, discrimination, intimidation, and/or microaggressions can be submitted [online](#). Notifications received through this anonymous form will be viewed by the Assistant Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the Director of Program Operations for Student and Academic Services and addressed based on the

concern, the desired outcomes, and in consultation with other school and departmental administrators, faculty, staff, and students as appropriate.

### **Teaching Assistantships**

Many FSNH graduate students serve as teaching assistants (TAs) for undergraduate NUTR classes. Applications for TA positions are distributed each quarter for employment the following quarter. These ~20-hour-per-week appointments are compensated with a tuition waiver, stipend, and health benefits for the quarter of employment.

Expectations vary somewhat from class to class, but TAs generally engage with students by leading discussion sections, grading student assignments and/or exams, and assisting the instructor(s) in course support. TAs receive training and orientation to their roles when their appointments begin. Instructors and TAs interact during the quarter to assess and ensure that TAs are teaching the required material competently, and to provide guidance regarding content, presentation, and student involvement.

Graduate students who are not native English speakers may be appointed as TAs with teaching duties if they fulfill the following three requirements as explained in [UW Graduate School Policy 5.2](#):

1. Meet the general English language proficiency (ELP) requirement.
2. Meet the additional spoken English language proficiency requirement.
3. Participate in [Teaching@UW: Strategies for TAs](#) at the Center for Teaching & Learning.