

MASTER’S 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, School of Public Health (“SPH” or “School”), and UW Graduate School each have specific requirements. This Master’s 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): Pia Chaparro

The Graduate Program Coordinator is an official FSNH faculty representative liaison between the Program and the Graduate 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, in which case your committee chair becomes your official advisor. The GPC can also assist with questions when deciding on a Culminating Experience and 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 (SAS) Director serves as the Graduate Program Adviser, the official staff representative and liaison between the Program and the Graduate School. They are one of three staff members—along with the Senior Adviser and Operations and Advising Manager—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 else 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.

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GCPD Student Services

Coordinator

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SAS Operations Manager: Nichole Maiman Waterman

The Operations Manager 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 practice experience and work closely with the GCPD Director to ensure the program meets accreditation standards.

Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health 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, etc.) and as primary advisors and [committee chairs/members](#) for students completing thesis 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 the [Graduate Student Resources page](#) for instructions and required forms to obtain add or faculty codes for:

- Independent study (NUTR 600) or thesis (NUTR 700) 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](#). All required courses for the MPH, MS, 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 Graduate School's minimum requirement for numerically graded credits. See [UW Graduate School Policy 1.1](#) for more information.

Maintaining Your Grade Point Average (GPA)

The Graduate 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 grade point average (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 Graduate 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 Graduate School.

A full-time load during the academic year is defined as at least 10 credits. TAs, RAs, and trainees are required to take at least 10 credits (reader/graders must take at least 5 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 [UW Graduate 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 Graduate 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 GPA reviews student performance for satisfactory progress by assessing:

- The successful completion of coursework (≥ 3.0 GPA in each core NUTR class and a cumulative GPA ≥ 3.0).
- Compliance with non-course program requirements such as:
 - Prerequisite completion
 - UW Health Sciences Immunization Program (HSIP) adherence
 - Various required trainings and background checks, mentoring agreements, the FSNH master's student portfolio, and others

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)

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 all master's students 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 [Health Student Immunity Requirements](#) for more information.

Master of Public Health and Master of Science Degrees

Use the information below 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 Curriculum](#)
- [Master of Science Degree Curriculum](#)

Degree Requirements

- **MPH:** MPH students complete a structured curriculum of required courses, electives, and milestones including a culminating capstone or thesis project (also known as the Integrative Learning Experience).
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 degree requirements.
- **MS:** MS students complete a structured curriculum of required courses, 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.

Master's 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

Master's 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 choosing one.

- **Capstone Project:** The practice-based capstone project is associated with a course taken during the degree's second autumn quarter. The client-driven, group 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 the 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 reference the current year's Culminating Experience 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 page](#).

Time Limit

All work for a master's degree must be completed within six 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

Master's applicants to the GCPD must also apply and be admitted to a Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health degree program. Current FSNH students who wish to apply or reapply to the GCPD must meet with the GCPD Director and submit materials to the program by December 1 for the following year. Current FSNH students are not given priority for admission to the GCPD. The GCPD 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 Graduate Student Space

FSNH has space reserved for graduate students 330 Raitt Hall available during regular building hours. There are laptop docking stations available for student use, as well as a printer, conference table, whiteboard, and small collection of resource books. Access to the room is by Husky Card only.

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. For off-hours access, enter code 627981 into the keypad on the southwest door. This code is for FSNH graduate students only and should not be shared.

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) provides a [Student Concerns Procedure](#) to help students resolve conflicts and address concerns that arise during their UW tenure. Students are invited to pursue resolution of issues 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.

Academic Student Employment

Many FSNH graduate students serve as Academic Student Employees (ASEs) – teaching assistants (TAs) or reader/graders (R/Gs) – for undergraduate NUTR classes. Applications for ASE positions are distributed each quarter for employment in autumn, winter, and spring.

- Teaching assistantships make up a large part of the funding available for FSNH graduate students. Expectations vary somewhat from class to class, but TAs generally engage with students by leading discussion sections, grading student assignments and/or exams, offering weekly office hours, and assisting instructors with other course-related needs. All TAs must participate in the Center for Teaching & Learning's [Teaching@UW: Strategies for TAs](#) prior to beginning their initial assignment. Positions average around 20 hours per week and provide a salary ([Graduate School Pay Schedule](#)), a tuition waiver, and [GAIP health insurance](#) for the quarter of the appointment.

Graduate students who are not native English speakers may be appointed as TAs with teaching duties if they fulfill the following 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.
- Hourly reader/graders assist with course-related duties—including grading student papers and examinations, supporting lectures, communicating with guest speakers, and completing other tasks as assigned—but do not have any direct teaching responsibilities. Hours vary by course need, but must remain under 20 per week, and are compensated with an hourly wage based on hours entered on a timesheet.

For more information about ASE positions, please reference the current FSNH ASE Handbook on the [Graduate Student Resources page](#).