

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) IN NUTRITION
GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2022-2023



**TEXAS WOMAN'S
UNIVERSITY**

**Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences
Texas Woman's University**

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Each student in the Doctoral Program is responsible for reading and adhering to the policies within this handbook.

See Nutrition and Food Sciences Website:

<https://twu.edu/nutrition-food-sciences/graduate-programs/phd-in-nutrition/>

See Graduate School Website:

<https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/>

Please see the website for all current forms:

<https://twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) IN NUTRITION

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been compiled to provide doctoral students in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences (NFS) with important information about the degree and the processes involved in successfully completing the program. The information in this handbook supplements but does not replace the TWU [Graduate Catalog](#). For general requirements and regulations for a doctoral degree, refer to [Graduate School](#) and [Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences](#) in the Graduate Catalog and online.

ADMISSIONS

Admissions to Doctoral Program

The applicant must comply with all Graduate School admission criteria and be admitted into the Graduate School at TWU prior to being admitted into the PhD Nutrition program. Students may be accepted to the Graduate School as Unconditional or Provisional. **Criteria: Undergraduate and Graduate GPA, and measures of the student's potential (including 2 letters of recommendation and a personal statement).**

- **Unconditional acceptance:** The applicant must present: (a) a **master's degree** or its equivalent, and **exhibit research experience that is equivalent to a thesis.**; (b) official transcripts showing evidence of prerequisite undergraduate courses in human anatomy and physiology, all chemistry courses through biochemistry, introduction to nutrition, advanced nutrition, and a lifecycle nutrition course; (c) a grade point average (GPA) of at **least a 3.5** on a 4.0 scale on the last 60 credit hours of bachelor's degree as well as all post-baccalaureate and graduate coursework..
- **Provisional acceptance:** If the above conditions are not fully met, a student may receive a provisional acceptance. **Conditions stated on the admission letter must be completed prior to degree plan submission.** When Provisional conditions have been met, the student contacts their major professor to submit a request to the Graduate School for change to Unconditional status. **Failure to meet the conditions for admission may result in the removal of the student from a degree program.** See the [Graduate Catalog](#) for additional information.

Admission to Candidacy

Admission to Graduate School does not imply admission to candidacy for a doctoral degree. Following is the sequence to gain acceptance to candidacy to the doctoral program in NFS. Details for each step are below.

1. Admission to program ([Graduate School](#))
2. Formation of an academic advisory committee
3. Completion of core requirements, including research tools
4. Submission of degree plan (**before completion of 18 semester hours**)
5. Successful completion of qualifying exam (all sections)
6. Admission to candidacy

In addition to the steps above, we recommend that all students participate actively in research from their first semester at TWU. This research will be conducted under the direction of your chosen faculty advisor.

All PhD Students will have two committees to oversee their graduate efforts, their Academic Advisory Committee and their Research Committee. Some students may select the same committee members for both committees.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Role of the Academic Advisory Committee

All academic advisory committee members must be members of the TWU Graduate Faculty and have a terminal doctoral degree. The academic advisory committee reviews the student degree plan and administers the written and oral portions of the qualifying exam. The sequence for the advisory committee is as follows:

1. **Semester 1:** The admissions committee assigns an academic advisor when the student is accepted. This faculty will guide each student in choosing courses during the first semester.
2. **Semester 2:** The student selects a major professor to guide the rest of their doctoral program. Following are guidelines about the committee:
 - a. The student and major professor will discuss potential faculty members.
 - b. The final committee will consist of at least five members of the Graduate Faculty.
 - c. At least three of the members of the committee must be NFS faculty.
 - d. Up to two members from outside NFS, including minor area faculty, may be invited to participate.
 - e. If a committee member is from an outside university or entity, a letter of request and CV of the individual must be submitted to and approved by the graduate Dean before degree plan approval.

A student has the option to change advisors. This should be done as early as possible during the course of study. The student must complete a Change of Advisor form (see NFS department office) to change advisors and secure appropriate signatures before submitting to the Department Chair.

Degree Plan

A degree plan must be submitted to the Graduate School before completion of 18 semester hours at TWU. The student, in consultation with the major professor, prepares a [degree plan](#) and presents it to the academic advisory committee for approval during a scheduled meeting. During this meeting, the committee and the student discuss the student's research interests and intentions so that an appropriate course of study can be agreed upon. In addition, the committee discusses past courses for the master's degree and recommends which courses should transfer and be applied to the doctoral degree at TWU. As stated in the Graduate Catalog, **only courses in which a grade of B or better** has been earned may be transferred, and there is no automatic transfer of credit. In addition, **no more than 30 credit hours from a master's degree or 15 hours from a doctoral degree** may transfer towards the doctoral degree.

The degree plan will then be submitted to the NFS Chair for review. The student is responsible for scheduling the time and place of the meeting as well as submitting the approved degree plan with the signatures of the committee members to the NFS Chair for approval. The completed form will be sent to the Graduate School with the approval of the NFS Chair.

Change in Degree Plan

Once the degree plan has been approved by the Dean of the Graduate School, any changes should be made after consultation with the academic advisory committee and the Chair of the student's committee. The completed [Change in Degree Plan](#) form is sent to the Graduate School with the approval of the NFS Chair.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR PHD IN NUTRITION

Requirements	Courses
Core courses in nutrition (13 credits)	NFS 5213 Human Nutrition and Metabolism: Macronutrients* NFS 5223 Human Nutrition and Metabolism: Micronutrients* NFS 6123 Micronutrients NFS 6124 Macronutrients
Research tools (minimum 12 credits)	HSC 6803 Grant Writing 6 credit hours of statistics 3 or more credit hours of other research methods courses recommended by the advisory committee (see below)
Nutrition electives (6 credits)	6 credit hours or more of graduate courses in nutrition
Outside NFS department electives (no minor or emphasis) (9 credits)	9 graduate credit hours in a focused area, to be decided in consultation with the advisory committee.
Minor or Emphasis in Food Science (9 credits)	9 graduate credit hours in Flavor Chemistry, to be decided in consultation with the advisory committee
	.
Seminar in Nutrition (1 credit hr x 4 = 4 credit hr)	4 semesters minimum of NFS 5331 or NFS 6331 Seminar in Nutrition
Research in Nutrition and Food Sciences (as needed)	NFS 6921, NFS 6923, NFS 6931, NFS 6933, NFS 6941, NFS 6943
PhD dissertation (6 credits)	NFS 6983 Dissertation I NFS 6993 Dissertation II

Total minimum credit hours needed for PhD in Nutrition is 90 credit hrs.

*Usually these requirements are met during the master's degree by taking a 3-6 hour course in metabolism, macronutrients, or micronutrients.

Note: A **maximum number of 30 credits** will be permitted to **transfer from an MS** degree and a **maximum number of 15 credits** from **another PhD program** can transfer pending approval by Academic Advisory Committee

Research Tools

A doctoral student must complete two research tools. Each research tool must have a minimum of six credit hours. One research tool must be six hours of graduate level statistics. The other six hours of research tools will be HSC 6803 Grant Writing and an approved course as determined appropriate by the academic advisory committee. This may include, for example, research design courses, research methods courses in qualitative or quantitative methods, or other tools as appropriate.

Suggested Course Sequence*

Following is a sample course progression. Doctoral students will all progress at different rates, and they should consult with their major professor about transfer courses accepted.

Fall 1

Course	Credit Hours
Research Tool (Design, Qualitative Methods, Other Methods Course)	3
NFS 6331 Seminar in Nutrition	1
Statistics Course	3
Nutrition Elective	3

Spring 1

Course	Credit Hours
NFS 6123 Micronutrients or NFS 6124 Macronutrients	3-4
NFS 6331 Seminar in Nutrition	1
Statistics Course	3
Research	3

Summer 1

Course	Credit Hours
HSC 6803 Grant Writing (research tool)	3

Fall 2

Course	Credit Hours
Nutrition Elective	3
NFS 6331 Seminar in Nutrition	1
Research	6

Spring 2

Course	Credit Hours
NFS 6123 Micronutrients or NFS 6124 Macronutrients	3-4
NFS 6331 Seminar in Nutrition	1
Nutrition Elective	3
Research	3

Fall 3

Course	Credit Hours
TAKE PRELIM EXAM **	
Research	6-9

Spring 3

Course	Credit Hours
NFS 6983 Dissertation I	3
Research	6

Summer 3

Course	Credit Hours
Research	3-6

Fall 3**Course**

NFS 6993 Dissertation II

Credit Hours

3

Total Hours:**63-70*****

*Assumes NFS 5213/5223 requirements have been met during master's degree.

** May be taken when core courses listed on application form (page 9) are completed.

***Assumes 20-27 hours of master's degree transferring to PhD Degree. This may NOT be the case. Transferred hours must be approved by the student's academic advisory committee on their degree plan.

PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

Qualifying Exam Purpose

The Nutrition and Food Sciences (NFS) PhD Qualifying examination is a test of the ability of a doctoral student to apply their knowledge, experience, and independent, critical thinking prior to their admission to candidacy in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences. The NFS Qualifying Exam is intended to ensure that doctoral students are adequately prepared to conduct research in nutrition. Thus, the exam will test students' general nutrition knowledge, statistical and research methods knowledge and skills, and knowledge and skills in their area of scholarly/research focus.

Eligibility to Take the Qualifying Exam

Students must successfully **complete most of the core PhD required courses** (see Application Form page 9) **prior to taking the exam** and **submit the application form during the first 2 weeks** of a regular fall or spring semester..

Qualifying Exam Procedure

The student's Research Committee will administer their exam. Students must take and pass the written examination in order to be eligible to take the oral examination. Both exams (written and oral) must be passed for a student to be admitted to candidacy for the PhD in Nutrition.

Written Exam

1. In the semester chosen to take the Qualifying Exam, the student will submit the **Qualifying Exam Application form** to their Research Committee Chair. The application form certifies that the student has successfully completed most of the core courses (see Application form page 8) and provides the Research Committee with the student's dissertation title and a brief summary of the proposed project.
2. Within 10 working days after receiving the application form, the student's research committee will develop written questions for the student to test their **1) general nutrition knowledge, 2) statistical and research design knowledge and skills, and 3) knowledge and skills in their area of scholarly/research focus**. The student's committee has discretion to choose appropriate questions on these topics to assess the student's knowledge and skill in preparation to conduct research. **The student's committee will provide direction regarding what topics to review at least five (5) days prior to the exam.**

3. On dates scheduled together with the student's Research Committee Chair, the student will independently (without assistance from others) write answers to their research committee's questions. The exam will be no longer than 8 hours per day for five (5) consecutive days, but the committee will direct the content to include essay questions. **The student must complete this exam entirely on their own.** They cannot get assistance from anyone, bring notes, or have access to the internet. The exam will be administered on campus on a university computer and will be proctored. If resources are permitted to be used, the student will be notified of which resources.
4. **Within 10 working days of writing the exam**, the student's Research Committee will grade the exam using a general one point rubric developed by the student's Research Committee and notify the student of the results. A pass or fail will be assigned with supporting evidence for either outcome.
5. If the student fails the written exam, they may have another opportunity in the next academic semester. If the student fails the exam a second time, they may not continue to participate in the program.

Oral Exam

1. If the student passes the written exam, the student will schedule the oral exam with the Research Committee **within 10 working days**.
2. The oral exam will cover the topics on the written exam and may also cover other areas of knowledge needed by the student.
3. The Research Committee will decide whether the student passes using a consensus, pass/fail approach. If the student fails the oral exam, they may have a second attempt. If they fail the second attempt, they may not continue to participate in the PhD Program.

Application for NFS PhD Qualifying Examination (Part 1, Written Proposal)

Student Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

I am requesting to take the NFS PhD Qualifying Examination (Part 1, Written Exam). I hereby declare that I have completed the NFS core courses and Research Tools as stated in the PhD Qualifying Examination Guidelines and am eligible to take this examination this semester. A checklist of the required courses and a copy of my transcript are attached with the application. I have read the Guidelines in its entirety (found in the PhD Handbook, pages 7-8) have a full understanding that I am allowed to have only two opportunities to take this examination.

I have finished the following courses with satisfactory grades:

_____ NFS 5213 Nutrition and Human Metabolism: Macronutrients (or equivalent course as determined by my committee)

_____ NFS 5223 Nutrition & Human Metabolism: Micronutrients (or equivalent course as determined by my committee)

_____ NFS 6124 Macronutrients **OR**

_____ NFS 6123 Micronutrients

_____ 6 hours of statistics (specify course codes and titles):

_____ 6 hours of other Research Tools, including HSC 6803 Grant Writing (specify course codes and titles):

A copy of my transcript is also attached with this application.

Student Initials: _____

Major Advisor Initials: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Major Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

MINIMUM COMPETENCY AREAS FOR PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

The minimum competency areas apply to both the written and oral examinations. The **student's academic advising committee will guide the student as to specific areas to prepare for the exam, including any areas of specialization.**

PhD in Nutrition with No Emphasis Area

Although it is an option, an emphasis area is not required for PhD in Nutrition. Each student should have basic knowledge and applied knowledge before taking the Qualifying Examination.

Basic Knowledge

A doctoral student should be able to:

1. Recognize basic structures of all essential nutrients including vitamins, carbohydrates, amino acids, and lipids
2. Demonstrate understanding of intermediary metabolism and its regulation of all nutrients (not just be able to repeat the steps from memory);
3. Discuss in detail the practical application of the use of statistics in nutrition research.

Applied Knowledge

A doctoral student should be able to:

1. Discuss nutrition through the life cycle, energy metabolism, nutrition in disease states, assessment of human nutritional status, with a thorough understanding of the use and the development of the Dietary Reference Intakes.
2. Demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge of statistics and research design as well as current trends and controversies in nutrition.

PhD in Nutrition with Minor or Emphasis in Flavor Chemistry

In addition to basic and applied knowledge in nutrition, the student who focuses on Flavor Chemistry should be able to:

1. Explain the chemistry and composition of basic foods including the major and minor constituents
2. Describe the functional properties of foods and food systems based on their composition including their solubility, food dispersion characteristics, and food stability tendencies
3. Explain the physical and chemical properties of food and food ingredients and how this affects flavor stability and food properties
4. Describe both subjective and objective evaluations of foods including sensory and analytical testing

RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

Research competencies will be demonstrated through the successful completion of the graduate research methods and statistic courses and/or the production of a dissertation.

- Beginning students should discuss their research interests with each NFS **faculty during their first semester at TWU**. It is expected that a doctoral student will begin working on a research project within one year of beginning course work toward his/her degree.
- **Doctoral student must have submit and/or publish at least two papers in peer-reviewed journal(s) before the dissertation defense.** The student must be first author of at least one of these articles.

- Students are encouraged to identify a major professor and begin their research as soon as possible but **no later than one year after entering the program**. It is the responsibility of the student to identify a major professor.

Course Registration Required for Research and Dissertation

- The student should register for **NFS 6983 Dissertation I** during the semester when the **prospectus is defended** and **NFS 6993 Dissertation II** in the semester when the **dissertation is defended**. This should only be taken after passing the Qualifying exam.
- Each semester thereafter, the student should register for research (NFS 6921, NFS 6923, NFS 6931, NFS 6933, NFS 6941, or NFS 6943) and /or independent study (NFS 6911, or NFS 6913) with the major professor unless the Advisor is not available to fill the role. The student can then enroll under of their committee members
- Registration for dissertation or research hours during summer sessions is not required if the student does not plan to use university facilities or meet with the major professor. University regulations state that only officially registered students may hold conferences with faculty concerning the preparation of a dissertation or work in a laboratory.

Research Committee

A research committee should be formed when the student has satisfactorily passed the written qualifying exam. The research committee administers the oral qualifying examination. The members of the research committee usually are faculty members who have expertise in the area of research that the student is pursuing. It is recommended that the student's academic advisory committee and research committee members include the same members. A non-TWU faculty may serve as a co-chair of the research committee with the approval of the major professor, NFS Chair, and Dean of the Graduate School.

The major professor has authority over the project and must be a full member of the TWU Graduate Faculty. The research committee evaluates the professional promise, plans for continued study, and progress of the student with respect to the dissertation. The research committee approves the prospectus and the dissertation as well as certifies the completion of the final examination.

The graduate student, in consultation with the major professor, is responsible for forming the research committee. The research committee must consist of at least five members with no fewer than three voting members of the Graduate Faculty (Full or Associate Graduate Faculty status) from the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences. The other members may be Full, Associate, or Assistant Graduate Faculty from NFS or other departments at TWU, graduate faculty from other educational institutions, or industry professionals with appropriate academic credentials and experience.

All members of the student's research committee, however, must have a doctoral degree. The major professor for the research committee must be a full-time voting member of the Graduate Faculty. Approval must first be secured from the Chair of the NFS department and the Dean of the Graduate School for a non-TWU person to serve on the research committee. The major professor should submit a memorandum accompanied by a copy of the curriculum vitae of the individual explaining the reason for requesting the individual to serve on the research committee. When a student declares a minor, at least one member of the research committee should be from the minor department.

PROSPECTUS GUIDELINES

Doctoral students must have completed the following before submitting a prospectus and beginning research toward the dissertation:

- Satisfactorily pass both the written and oral qualifying examinations,
- Have an approved degree plan,
- Be admitted to candidacy

A prospectus is a document that identifies the **research topic, research methods to be used, and the anticipated central hypotheses or research questions**. It is anticipated that some preliminary results leading to the hypothesis of the dissertation may be included in the background of the prospectus.

The student, working under the direction of the major professor, develops the prospectus. The prospectus should be prepared according to the [guidelines](#) established by the Graduate School. After the prospectus is approved by the major professor, a copy of the prospectus along with a comprehensive review of literature is given to each committee member **at least 10 working days** prior to the committee meeting. The meeting for the prospectus should not be scheduled within the period from two weeks before the beginning of the final exam through the second week of the following semester including breaks.

The student, not the major professor, is responsible for scheduling the prospectus meeting and meeting room. If media equipment is required, the student is responsible for making these arrangements in cooperation with the major professor. The major professor chairs the prospectus meeting.

The approved prospectus, with all appropriate signatures, must be filed with the NFS department for routing to the Graduate School. **While preliminary data may be in hand, dissertation associated research should not commence until the prospectus is approved by the committee and notification of approval by the Graduate School.**

DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

All NFS students are to follow the manuscript format to prepare their dissertation (see below and templates provided by the department). The style and references of the dissertation should follow the format of the American Society of Nutrition Journals. The exception are the manuscripts chapters (III and IV) which are to be in the same style and references as described in the submitted journal's Guide to Authors. The format for the title page and abstract for a dissertation are found at the graduate website: <https://www.twu.edu/gradschool/forms/>.

After a dissertation is written and approved by the major professor, a printed copy (not electronically transmitted) should be given to each member of the committee **at least 10 working days before the final oral defense meeting**. No meeting will be scheduled during the final two weeks of the semester, during the first two weeks of the next semester, or during semester breaks. The major professor will chair the oral defense meeting.

A calendar of deadlines is available on the Graduate School website and lists graduation requirements and dates. Final dates for submitting the thesis CANNOT be waived for any reason (See Graduation Deadlines at <https://twu.edu/gradschool/current-students/degree-completion/>). **Each candidate, not the research advisor, is responsible for meeting Graduate School requirements and deadlines.** The Graduate School staff is available to answer questions or to clarify policies or procedures.

Dissertation Format

The proposed section headings follow the manuscript format used in the American Society of Nutrition Journals and should be followed when writing a dissertation*

a. **Chapter I – INTRODUCTION**, will include the following:

- Title
- Introduction
- Problem Statement
- Hypothesis or Hypotheses
- Definitions
- Assumptions and Limitations
- Significance

b. **Chapter II – REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This chapter should aim toward contrasting/comparing of similarities and differences in terms of the present study and completed literature.

c. **Chapter III - MANUSCRIPT #1 TITLE**

- Disclosure stating if the paper is already published or will be published. Also reference Appendix if needed
 - Ex: The work described in this chapter in its entirety has been published in the following reference with minor modifications in numbering of figures: (citation)
 - Ex: Additional data that was not included in the submission is located in Appendix A.
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion

d. **Chapter IV – MANUSCRIPT #2 TITLE**

- Same components as Chapter III should be included here.

Chapter V – will be titled CONCLUSIONS and include the following sections:

- Discussion – should be summary of what is in the manuscript(s)
- Conclusions – Overall conclusions from the research completed
- Implications and Recommendations

e. **Chapter VI – REFERENCES**

Should be one comprehensive reference list for the whole document

f. **APPENDICES –**

Created and used as needed. Contains additional information regarding methods or results

* You should use one, uniform style for your thesis/dissertation, however manuscript chapters may be in the style of the journal that they were submitted to. See Departmental template for an example.

Preparation of Dissertation

- a. Submit the completed Dissertation to the research advisor for comments and suggestions per research advisor's schedule and instructions.
- b. Resubmit the corrected draft to research advisor until it is finally approved.
- c. After the research advisor has given approval, corrected Dissertation is submitted to other research committee members by the student.
- d. Student provides the corrected thesis to the research committee members at **least 10 working days** prior to the oral examination.
- e. Student schedules final oral examination with scheduling input from all committee members.

Dissertation Defense Announcement

The major professor and the student are responsible for sending information of the oral defense of the dissertation at least one week prior to the defense meeting for other interested faculty and students to attend. Defense information can be entered using this [google form](#) or by emailing Dr.

LeMieux (mlemieux@twu.edu), If emailing, please make sure to include:

- Student's Name and Credentials (if any)
- Advisor's Name
- Graduate Program Name
- Dissertation Title
- Defense Date and Location
- Photo of Student.

Final Oral Examination Procedures

The student schedules a meeting for defense of the dissertation after distributing the paper and at a time all members will be present. Two forms must be completed once the student has passed their defense:

1. [Certification of Final Examination](#) confirms successful completion of the oral exam and is signed immediately after the oral examination.
2. The **original copies of the signature page** for the dissertation are signed after the student completes all revisions of the dissertation requested by the committee members.

Upon successful completion of the oral defense, the student should finalize the dissertation. The original copy of the Certification of Final Examination should be submitted to the Graduate School. A copy of the Certification of Final Examination should be submitted to the NFS department to be filed. It is the student responsibility to submit a signed Certification of Final Examination to the Graduate School.

Guidelines for Publication Agreement

The ethical standards written in Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association: Seventh Ed. will be used as guidelines for authorship, reporting and publishing the master's thesis. <https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition>

Final Dissertation Filing Procedures

The dissertation must be prepared in accordance with regulations outlined on TWU Graduate School website (Please see <https://twu.edu/gradschool/current-students/thesis-anddissertation/>) Also, make an appointment with a Graduate Service Formatting Editor to ensure you have followed the proper formatting for filing a dissertation. The research advisor may not forward the dissertation unless a clearance has been obtained from the IRB or IACUC. To close an approved IRB study, all signed informed consents from human participants must be electronically submitted to the IRB and the Close Study Request Form is completed.

Graduation Policies

Graduate students must be enrolled in Dissertation II (NFS 6993) during the semester in which they graduate unless all requirements of the Graduate School are met prior to the first day of registration of the ensuing semester.

If a student fails to meet the deadline for graduation established by the Graduate School in a given semester but completed all requirements by the close of that semester, the Dean of the Graduate School will write a letter to the effect to the student's employer. The letter is tantamount to the awarding of the degree.

Students in the PhD in Nutrition Program who wish to qualify for **August graduation** should be aware of the following:

1. NFS 6983 - Dissertation I must be completed and approved prior to the first day of spring semester.
2. Data and the Results, Discussion, and Conclusion must be completed and approved prior to spring semester last week of classes.
3. If a member of the research committee is to be replaced because the faculty member will not be available when the student plans to defend during the summer, the request for change must be initiated by the research chair prior to dead week of spring semester.
4. The final defense must be held during the research chair's scheduled summer session.