

Graduate Student Handbook

MS Degrees in Human Environmental Sciences 2026-2027



Last Revised July 2026

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION	3
MASTER’S DEGREE	4
MS Program Requirements.....	4
MS Curriculum Summary.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
MS Concentrations in HESC	6
Apparel Merchandising & Product Development.....	6
Gerontology	6
Human Development & Family Sciences.....	6
Hospitality Management.....	6
Human Nutrition.....	7
Selection of the Academic Advisor and Committees	8
Program of Study	8
Thesis Research, Writing and Approval	11
Milestones and Forms	12
Responsibility of Students	15
Responsibilities of Faculty.....	17
Assistantships and Other Financial Aid.....	18

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the School of Human Environmental Sciences at the University of Arkansas is to inspire people and organizations to reach their full potential through delivery of innovative research, education, and service focused on individuals, families, and their environments. The school offers five graduate concentrations dedicated to instilling into their graduates the skills needed to complete that mission.

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to provide you with guidance in successfully achieving your goal of earning a Master's (MS) degree in the School of Human Environmental Sciences (HESC). We are glad you are here and look forward to working with you to make your journey as satisfying and fulfilling as possible. If you have questions or concerns as you read this handbook or as you move through your program, the faculty are available to assist you. Please let us know how we can best help you in your endeavors.

This handbook presents information that HESC graduate students may need. This handbook points to and supplements current policies and regulations and may be superseded by notices sent to the graduate student and/or the academic advisor, or otherwise disseminated by the Graduate School; the Division of Agriculture; the College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences; HESC; or the University of Arkansas' higher administration.

The University of Arkansas is committed to providing equal opportunity for all regardless of race/color; national or ethnic origin; age; religion; disability; sex; sexual orientation; gender; gender identity and expression; marital or parental status; military or veteran status; genetic information; and any other characteristic protected under applicable university policy, state or federal law/executive order.

The [Graduate School](#) of the University of Arkansas maintains a web site that contains the [Graduate Student Handbook](#). You are encouraged to consult this site for elaboration of policies described in this HESC Student Handbook, or for further information about general Graduate School policies.

HESC has a Master of Science degree with programs of study available in: Apparel Merchandising and Product Development (AMPD), Gerontology (GERO), Human Development and Family Sciences (HDFS), Hospitality Management (HOSP), and Human Nutrition (NUTR). Thesis and non-thesis degree options are available to HESC graduate students. Specific policies guiding those options are included elsewhere in this handbook. The school also participates in two Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programs: the Ph.D. in Agricultural Food and Life Sciences with a concentration in Human Nutrition and the Ph.D. in Public Policy with specializations in [Agriculture Policy](#) and [Social Justice Policy](#), as described in the [Graduate School Catalog](#).

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Office, HOEC 118, 479-575-4305, hescgrad@uark.edu

School Director:

Dr. Norm Hord, Professor
Office: HOEC 119, 575-6346
nhord@uark.edu

Graduate Coordinator:

Dr. Amanda Terrell, Associate Professor
Office: HOEC 215, 575-7538
amandat@uark.edu

MASTER'S DEGREE

MS Program Requirements

Because our students are often working professionals with busy lifestyles, we offer two flexible options for completing an MS degree in Human Environmental Sciences:

Thesis Track: minimum of 30 hours

- Available on-campus only
- 12 hours core courses within concentration (AMPD, HDFS, HOSP, NUTR)
- 3 hours graduate level statistics
- 3 hours graduate level research methods
- 6 hours electives
- 6 hours thesis writing and an approved thesis project
- Thesis defense to pass the program

Non-Thesis Track: minimum of 30 hours

- Available on-campus and 100% online (AMPD and HDFS)
- 12-15 hours of core coursework in concentration (AMPD, GERO, HDFS, HOSP, NUTR)
- 3 hours graduate level statistics
- 3 hours graduate level research methods
- 9-12 hours electives
- Oral and written comprehensive exams to pass the program

No more than six (6) hours of graduate credit from another university's graduate school for which the student earned a B or higher will be accepted toward an MS degree in HESC. The content of that six hours must be deemed appropriate to the current degree objectives by the advisory committee.

Once minimum requirements are met, programs are tailored to meet individual needs. At least 50% of the minimum degree requirements (excluding thesis) are courses at the 5000 or 6000 level. Areas of concentration may have additional requirements or recommendations for degree programs. The research topic or the student's career plans may suggest other courses that should be included.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES CURRICULUM SUMMARY

HESC Required Courses

HESC/AGED 54603: Research Methodology in Social Sciences
ESRM 53903: Statistics in Education and Health Professions (or similar course)

Option 1: Apparel Merchandising and Product Development *(on campus)*

AMPD 50003: Apparel Sourcing and Merchandising Systems in the Global Economy
AMPD 50203: Social, Psychological and Cultural Aspects of Dress
AMPD 50303: Issues and Trends in Textile Studies
AMPD 50403: Theories and Practices in Apparel Merchandising

Option 2: Gerontology*

HDFS 50803: Foundations in Integrative Aging Studies
HDFS 54103: Adult Development
HDFS 58303: Physical Health, Wellness, and Active Aging *OR* HDFS 58603 Socioemotional and Cognitive Well-Being Throughout Adulthood
HDFS 54503 Aging in the Family *OR* HDFS 54903 Environments and Aging
HDFS 58503: Policy and Aging *OR* HDFS 59003 Implementation of Community Programs for Adults *OR* HDFS 59103 Applied Research Methods and Evaluation of Aging Programs

Option 3: Human Development and Family Science *(on campus or online)*

HDFS 54003: Family Theories and Methods
HDFS 54203: Theories of Human Development
HDFS 54303: Advanced Studies in Child Development
HDFS 57703: Advanced Studies in Family Science

Option 4: Hospitality Management *(on campus)*

HOSP 56503: Global Travel and Tourism Management
HOSP 56603: Critical Issues and Trends in Hospitality and Tourism
HOSP 56703: Destination Marketing and Operations
HOSP 56903: Hospitality Management Internship

Option 5: Human Nutrition *(on campus)*

NUTR 51103: Advanced Nutrition I
NUTR 52303: Advanced Nutrition II
NUTR 52203: Nutrition During the Life Cycle
FDSC 64403: Metabolism of Xenobiotics

Thesis Track

HESC 6000v: Master's Thesis (6 hours)
Electives (6 hours)

Non-Thesis Track

Electives (9-12 hours*)
Comprehensive Exam

MINIMUM HOURS REQUIRED FOR DEGREE: 30 HOURS**

**Gerontology concentration requires 6 hours of research methods and statistics, 15 hours of core coursework, and 9 hours of electives; **Program requirements and course offerings subject to change*

MS Concentrations in HESC

Apparel Merchandising & Product Development

The [Apparel Merchandising and Product Development](#) (AMPD) concentration provides opportunities for advanced study of learning both theoretical knowledge and applications in textiles, apparel production, and merchandising. Students are prepared for a career in both academia and the apparel industry with outstanding competencies in quality assurance, product development, retail buying, merchandising, store operations, and brand management. The faculty bring expertise in the areas mentioned above within the textile and apparel complex.

AMPD Faculty (Graduate Faculty Membership Level)

Dr. Laurie Apple, Associate Professor, 479-575-4576, lapple@uark.edu (G2)

Dr. Lance Cheramie, Instructor, 479-575-6732, cheramie@uark.edu (G2T)

Dr. Eunjoo Cho, Professor, 479-575-4599, ejcho@uark.edu (G2)

Stephanie Hubert, Instructor, 479-575-4826, skhopper@uark.edu (G4T)

Dr. Leigh Southward, Associate Professor, 479-575-4311, csouthwa@uark.edu (G2)

Dr. Sarah Hixson, Teaching Assistant Professor, 479-575-4952, swhixson@uark.edu (G2)

Gerontology

The [Gerontology](#) (GERO) concentration provides a broad range of skills essential for leadership in the field of aging while offering practical learning opportunities, so graduates are well-equipped to meet the needs of this changing demographic. The online curriculum prepares students to be a practitioner in integrative aging studies and an advocate for older adults whether working in a long-term care facility, design spaces to help adults age in place, or own a business and seek specialized knowledge and skills to engage with this older population. This program is offered through a collaboration between five reputable universities as part of [IDEA](#).

Gerontology Faculty (Graduate Faculty Membership Level)

Dr. Timothy Killian, Associate Professor, 479-575-7214, tkillian@uark.edu (G1)

Human Development & Family Sciences

The [Human Development and Family Sciences](#) (HDFS) concentration prepares students for employment in a variety of roles across many human service fields such as child care professionals, social service workers in child and family agencies, advocates for youth and adolescents, parent educators, crisis and support service providers, facilitators of adult adjustment, and Cooperative Extension specialists. Students selecting the thesis option will also be prepared for further graduate study at the doctoral level.

Human Development & Family Sciences Faculty (Graduate Faculty Membership Level)

Dr. Betsy Garrison, Professor, 479-575-4305, megarris@uark.edu (G1)

Dr. Timothy Killian, Associate Professor, 479-575-7214, tkillian@uark.edu (G1)

Dr. Weiyi Ma, Associate Professor, 479-575-3608, weiyima@uark.edu (G3)

Dr. Shelley McNally, Teaching Associate Professor, 479-575-6288, smcnally@uark.edu (G3)

Dr. Shari Moxley, Teaching Assistant Professor, 479-575-3245, moxley@uark.edu (G2T)

Dr. Treisha Peterson, Teaching Assistant Professor, treishap@uark.edu (G3)

Dr. Amanda Terrell, Associate Professor, 479-575-7538, amandat@uark.edu (G1)

Dr. Don Willis, Assistant Professor, 479-970-4835, dewillis@uark.edu

Hospitality Management

[Hospitality Management](#) (HOSP) develops pioneering leaders in hospitality management through

progressive and innovative research, dynamic instruction, and pragmatic experiential learning. Hospitality management graduate students are exposed to a variety of networking and job opportunities with an active industry board of advisors, the program's annual fundraiser Students Mastering the Art of Hospitality (SMASH), as well as other professional opportunities.

Hospitality Management Faculty (Graduate Faculty Membership Level)

Dr. Nick Johnston, Assistant Professor, 479-575-4952, nj034@uark.edu (G1)

Robert Powell, Lecturer, 479-575-7171, rp025@uark.edu (G4T)

Suzanne Rhodes, Instructor, 479-575-2237, suzanner@uark.edu

Dr. Kelly Way, Associate Professor, 479-575-4985, kway@uark.edu (G1)

Human Nutrition

The [Human Nutrition](#) (NUTR) concentration develops pioneering leaders in human nutrition through progressive and innovative research, dynamic instruction, and pragmatic experiential learning. Human nutrition is naturally interdisciplinary, intersecting with multiple disciplines such as biochemistry, physiology, molecular biology, psychology, community and public health, plus so much more. The HESC MS Concentration in Human Nutrition focuses on greater depth in the fundamentals of nutritional biochemistry and metabolism, and in developing skills in interpreting and critiquing nutrition research and claims. For those seeking to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN), this program does not provide any supervised practice experience.

Students who do not currently hold a BS degree in human nutrition/dietetics will be required to complete leveling nutrition courses plus undergraduate biochemistry (or equivalent to CHEM 38103) before admittance to the MS program. Students who pursue an HESC MS degree must have completed the DPD undergraduate curriculum and a dietetic internship to be eligible to qualify for the RD exam. Effective January 1st, 2024, the qualifying requirements for the RD exam are: completion of DPD coursework, a completed dietetic internship, and a confirmed MS degree.

Human Nutrition Faculty (Graduate Faculty Membership Level)

Nancy Buckley, Instructor, 479-575-4689, nhb@uark.edu

Dr. Joanna Fiddler, Assistant Professor, jfiddler@uark.edu (G1)

Dr. Ryan Fiddler, Teaching Associate Professor, rfiddler@uark.edu (G2)

Mallori Roberts, Instructor, 479-575-4952, mcrob@uark.edu (G4T)

Dr. Sabrina Trudo, Associate Professor, 479-575-4863, trudo@uark.edu (G1)

Selection of the Academic Advisor and Committees

After being admitted to the Graduate School and accepted in HESC, students will be assigned to an academic advisor by the Graduate Coordinator. Students may elect to switch to another qualified member of the graduate faculty in their academic area before selecting an academic advisory committee with approval in writing from the new advisor*. The academic advisor must be from the area—AMPD, GERO, HDFS, HOSP, NUTR—in which students are seeking their degrees. Graduate faculty in other areas of HESC can serve on advisory committees but cannot serve as a student's academic or thesis advisor.

At the beginning of their first semester, but no later than the end of the semester in which a student will have earned SIX hours of applicable credit toward their degree, students, in consultation with their advisors, will select an academic advisory committee including at least two other members of the graduate faculty. An academic advisory committee should include the academic advisor, at least one additional faculty member from the area of concentration in which students are seeking their degrees (AMPD, GERO, HDFS, HOSP, NUTR), and at least one from another area either inside or outside of HESC. Students should contact the selected faculty to determine if they are able to serve on their committees before submitting their proposed academic advisory committees to the Graduate School using the [Master's Committee](#) form. An academic advisory committee oversees a student's entire graduate program, including the formal approval of course work and, for non-thesis students, oral and written examinations when work is completed.

Thesis students, at the beginning of their second semester and after consulting with their academic advisor, will select a thesis advisor and thesis advisory committee. This committee may (but does not have to) be the same committee as a student's advisory committee. The thesis committee members are selected based on interest and knowledge about the student's thesis topic. This committee is responsible for approving the thesis proposal, assisting in the student's research efforts, approving the completed thesis, and administering any required oral and written exams. The proposed thesis advisory committee must also be submitted to the Graduate School using the [Master's Committee](#) form, either by selecting "BOTH Master's Advisory and Master's Thesis Committee" on the initial form, or by submitting a separate form for the thesis committee.

Along with the university catalog and graduate handbooks, each student's academic advisor is their primary resource for most program-related questions and concerns. The next line of support is the Graduate Coordinator, followed by the School Director. **Any request for a change of academic advisor should be made in writing to the Graduate Coordinator.* The reason(s) for the request should be clearly stated. Prior to submitting a change request, students should discuss the decision with both the current advisor and with the faculty member they intend to request as their new advisor. New advisors should then send an email to gradinfo@uark.edu to inform the Graduate School that they have agreed to be the student's new advisor. The email should contain the student's ID number and program area. The student, current advisor, and Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu) should be copied on the email. An updated Master's Committee form will be required if a committee is already on file with the Graduate School. See the [Graduate School Student Handbook](#) for more information.

Program of Study

The first meeting of the academic advisory committee should occur before the end of the first semester of graduate study in which students will have earned six hours of applicable credit toward their degree. The purpose for the first meeting is to establish a program of study that will facilitate students' successful completion of the program in a timely manner. At this time, students, their academic advisors, and committee members will agree on the course work for the students to take throughout their program. In addition, academic advisory committees evaluate the backgrounds of their students. If a student's

background is determined to be inadequate for their area of concentration, additional background (leveling) courses may be required that will not count toward their degree. Advisory committees should review their student's proposed program of study plan as well as any changes suggested by members of the committee, and then sign the [Program of Study](#) form indicating approval of the final listings of courses.

Students who fail to meet with their committees and submit a Program of Study form by the end of the first semester assume the risk that courses taken may not be approved by the committee as part of their program of study. *In addition, students on an assistantship risk losing the assistantship if they do not have a Program of Study form approved prior to completing 12 hours of graduate work.*

Once the committee signs the Program of Study form, it should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu). The HESC office will obtain final signatures and submit the form to the Graduate School, retaining a copy for the student's record. The student's program of study should be updated each semester to reflect course grades and cumulative GPA and reviewed/approved by the advisor and advisory committee. Any changes to the student's originally submitted plan of courses will require an updated and signed Program of Study form. The final updated Program of Study form must be forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu) and HESC main office when the student applies for graduation. The student's degree audit cannot be cleared for graduation if an up-to-date plan of study is not on file with the department. Unless a student is in an approved online concentration, no more than 50% of coursework may be taken online. *Importantly, international students are limited to one online course per semester.*

Time Extension and Recertification of Course Work

All requirements for the MS degree must be completed within six consecutive calendar years from the date of the first courses used to fulfill degree requirements. Students who need additional time must have their academic advisor submit a Request for Time Extension form (available from the Graduate School) for review and approval by the Graduate Dean, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. As part of the request, the advisor must explain how the student's knowledge of any coursework more than six years old at the time of graduation will be recertified—for example, by examination by the current instructor of the course, or by examination on the subject matter during the thesis defense or comprehensive exam. Recertification requires demonstrating that the student's knowledge of the content is current; it is not sufficient that the course content has not changed. Time extensions are allowed only for coursework taken at the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville); no extensions are granted on transfer credit. Courses taken more than 10 years prior to conferral of the degree will normally not be eligible for recertification.

Academic Probation/Dismissal

Students may be dropped from further study in the Graduate School if at any time their performance is considered unsatisfactory as determined by either the program faculty or the Dean of the Graduate School. Academic or research dishonesty and failure to maintain the required cumulative grade-point average are considered unsatisfactory performance. Whenever a graduate student's cumulative GPA on graded coursework taken for graduate credit falls below 2.85, the student will be warned of the possibility of academic dismissal. A student who has accumulated at least 15 hours of graded coursework with a cumulative GPA below 2.85, and who has received at least one warning, will be academically dismissed from the Graduate School. See the [Graduate Student Dismissal Policy](#), the [Academic Probation Policy for Graduate Students](#), the [University's Academic Integrity Policy](#), and the [Research and Scholarly Misconduct Policies and Procedures](#).

The Graduate Student Dismissal Policy states that the graduate faculty of an academic degree program may recommend that the student be readmitted to the Graduate School after dismissal. Dismissed students with non-degree status may petition for readmission to the Graduate School by submitting a written appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School. The graduate faculty of any degree program may establish and state in writing

requirements for continuation in that program.

Assessment of Graduate Student Learning Outcomes

Student attainment of learning outcomes will be assessed in terms of four key areas at the end of their program of study. The four key areas are content knowledge, critical thinking, problem solving, and communication. The assessment rubric for both thesis and non-thesis track students is available on the HESC Graduate Program website [Forms and Resources](#) page.

Thesis Proposal

Students generally complete their research methods course prior to, or while developing, their proposals. Before beginning a thesis proposal, students must select a thesis advisor who may or may not be their initial academic advisor. Students should consult with their thesis advisors to explore ideas on appropriate thesis topics prior to beginning any work on a thesis proposal. Selection of the thesis topic should be mutually determined by students and their thesis advisors. Thesis advisors should inform students about the content and format preferred for their thesis proposals.

In general, thesis proposals should demonstrate, through a literature review, the research that has been done previously on the subject. The proposed research should be an original, independent study that addresses a significant problem, includes sufficient detail about the design and methods to evaluate rigor and feasibility of the research, is workable with the resources available, and with it, students are likely to succeed. Thesis projects can involve lab work, the collection of original data, or the analysis of a secondary data set in an original manner. Titles should be brief, but specific, including key words related to major factors covered in the research.

The following proposal components should be included:

- Introduction: background of the study, statement of the problem, rationale, purpose, objectives, and justification.
- Review of literature: definitions of key variables, summary of existing studies on the topic, research framework, support for hypotheses or research questions.
- Method: sample, instruments, data collection procedures, statistical analysis to be used.
- References: every citation in the text must have a corresponding reference in the reference section following the style manual of your discipline (e.g., *APA—American Psychological Association*).

Students' research proposals are complete after much consultation with their thesis advisors and other faculty members. Once their proposals are complete and have been accepted by their thesis advisors, students should schedule a proposal meeting with their thesis advisory committees. The proposal meetings are an opportunity for students to clarify any issues with their committees and to reach a consensus on expectations. Proposal meetings are required for all HESC MS students. Thesis proposals must be presented and approved by all thesis committee members no later than the middle of the semester preceding the semester in which a student plans to graduate. It is recommended that students complete their thesis proposal meetings at the beginning of the third semester and no later than the end of the third semester. Students' graduation plans (i.e. their desired graduation dates) will not be a factor in approving proposals presented after the deadline.

It is recommended that students send copies of their proposals to their thesis committee members two weeks prior to the meeting. During the meeting students will make a formal presentation and should be prepared to answer questions from their committee. Students will be asked to leave the room while their committee discusses their proposals. Committees may make recommendations for further work instead of approving at that time.

It is important that all committee members approve proposals before students proceed with research to reduce the chance of problems during their thesis defense.

The [Thesis Proposal](#) form will need to be completed during the meeting and signed by the committee indicating whether the proposal is approved or if it needs revisions, then submitted to hescgrad@uark.edu. If revisions are needed, an updated Thesis Proposal form will need to be submitted once the revised proposal is approved.

Once a proposal is approved, the [Thesis Title](#) form should be completed and submitted to hescgrad@uark.edu along with the final [Thesis Proposal](#) form and a [Master's Committee](#) form for the thesis committee if one has not already been completed and submitted. These forms must be submitted no later than the end of the semester prior to the semester in which a student expects to graduate.

Approval of research proposals must occur before data collection begins for original research or before data analysis commences when using secondary data. If research proposals use human subjects, [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI\)](#) training must be completed, certificates of completion must be submitted to the HESC main office, and [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) approval must be gained before students will be allowed to move forward with their research. Students' advisors and thesis committees are available to assist in their students' meeting this requirement.

Thesis Research, Writing and Approval

While the thesis advisor will have the primary advisory role for the accomplishment of the research and writing of the thesis, students should consult members of their thesis committees from time to time for advice and should inform the committees promptly of major changes in research direction, explaining the reasons for such changes. Students should provide their committee members with copies of their complete, readable, typed, and edited draft for review two weeks before their final defenses. Committee members must approve finished theses; therefore, suggestions of these faculty members at an early stage may be invaluable, particularly in allowing a thesis of the expected high quality to be presented to the Graduate School in time to meet the completion deadlines for all degree and graduation requirements.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval

Although students retain the primary responsibility of making certain they follow all procedures required by HESC and the U of A, one of the roles of student advisors and advisory committees is to assist graduate students in understanding IRB rules and policies. An IRB protocol must be completed prior to collecting data for any research conducted by anyone from the U of A, including graduate students. There are specific rules and procedures that must be followed in order to comply with the policies and procedures governing research using human and animal subjects. To understand more about the IRB, see [Research Compliance](#).

Following approval by the [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#) or the IRB, students may begin their proposed research. The IRB protocol submission service is electronic. It is important to get approval well in advance of conducting the research—whether that is a survey, interview, or observations—otherwise the data collected will not be eligible for use in research. For more information in regards to IRB protocol submissions, please visit [Human Subjects Research](#). MS students should be enrolled in HESC 6000V (Thesis Research) while conducting the research.

How to request to enroll in HESC 6000V Thesis hours

1. A student should discuss with the thesis advisor the number of hours and the term to complete those

- hours.
2. After the discussion, the thesis advisor should contact the HESC main office to request opening HESC 6000V for the student. The email request should include the number of hours, the term, the student's name and ID number, and the thesis advisor's name.
 3. The HESC main office will then notify that the student has been enrolled in HESC 6000V Thesis.

Writing the Thesis

The [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#) is available from the Graduate School and the guidelines required by the graduate faculty at the U of A must be strictly followed. The latest edition of the guidelines should be obtained from the Graduate School. Students should not use theses accepted in prior semesters as guides for formatting their own thesis because requirements change. This Graduate Student Handbook neither summarizes nor supersedes the Graduate School Guide.

As presented in the [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#), the Graduate School now accepts a journal style for theses. The traditional thesis consists of six chapters (Introduction, Review of Literature, Methods, Results, Discussion, and Limitations and Future Research Suggestions). The journal style consists of condensed parts of a thesis, which should be written according to the instructions given by the chosen refereed journal publication. A thesis in this style includes at least one discreet journal manuscript instead of the more traditional single presentation. The decision regarding which style to select must be made in consultation with the major professor and, if the journal style is selected, the Graduate School provisions specified in the guidelines must be followed. In addition, the journal style requires an extensive review of literature in the introductory chapter. If a manuscript has been accepted for publication, a letter of permission from the publisher must be included as an appendix in the thesis.

Milestones and Forms

This section covers the milestones set by the Graduate School and their associated required forms, as well as additional events and forms required by HESC. Consult the [Graduate School website](#) for the most current calendar, checklists, and thesis guides. The expected progress for MS students toward completion of the MS degree is outlined in the Thesis Track Timeline and the Non-Thesis Track Timeline. Also see the Program Milestones Checklist and the Due Date Quick Reference chart. Current versions of all of these documents are posted on the HESC Forms and Resources page: <https://human-environmental-sciences.uark.edu/academics/graduate-programs/grad-resources.php>

E-signatures are acceptable for all forms. HESC forms can be found on the [HESC Graduate Program website](#). Links to Graduate School forms can be found on the [Graduate School's Current Student Hub](#).

MS Student Agreement, Guidelines for Authorship, Graduate Assistantship Agreement

The Master Student Agreement is to ensure students in the HESC MS program understand the requirements to participate in the program and must be completed by all HESC graduate students. All graduate students, both thesis and non-thesis track, need to review and acknowledge the HESC MS [Guidelines for Authorship](#). MS students on an assistantship or Fellowship are required to read and sign the HESC Graduate Assistantship Agreement, which outlines the stipulations for maintaining the assistance.

The Master Student Agreement, Guidelines for Authorship, and (if applicable) Graduate Assistant Agreement are available as an online survey. The link for the form will be made available to students before the beginning of their first semester. After completing the form, students will be emailed a pdf of the documents.

Master's Advisory Committee

Submit the [Master's Advisory Committee](#) form, consisting of the major advisor and at least two other members of the graduate faculty, at the beginning of the first semester, but no later than Reading Day at the end of the first semester. The form should be initiated by the student, signed by committee members, and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu). The HESC office will obtain final signatures and submit the form to the Graduate School, retaining a copy for the student's record.

Program of Study

The [Program of Study](#) form is an HESC form that should be submitted at the same time as the [Master's Advisory Committee](#) form. The student initiates the form and reviews it with the academic advisor and advisory committee. Once the committee signs it, it should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu). The HESC office will obtain final signatures and file in the student's record.

CITI Training

Complete the CITI Program training by no later than Reading Day at the end of the first semester.

1. Go to the [CITI Program website](#) and click on "log in through my organization."
2. Type University of Arkansas Fayetteville in the box.
3. Click on Continue to SSO Login/Instructions.
4. Enter your UARK ID and Password (you may be asked to associate your SSO with a CITI Program account)
5. Click on View Courses
6. Click on Add a Course
7. Under Question 3 – Responsible Conduct of Research, select Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course.

Once completed, submit the pdf completion report to the HESC main office at hescgrad@uark.edu.

Master's Thesis Committee

Submit the [Master's Thesis Committee](#) form, consisting of a thesis advisor and at least two other members of the graduate faculty (one of whom must be from the student's field while the other must be from outside the field), as soon as the committee has been selected but no later than Reading Day at the end of the second semester. The form should be initiated by the student, signed by committee members, and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu). The HESC office will obtain final signatures and submit the form to the Graduate School, retaining a copy for the student's record.

Research Symposium

Thesis students are required to participate in the annual HESC Graduate Research Symposium each spring. Students must prepare a research poster and an abstract (< 300 words). The posters will be printed in color and displayed at the Research Symposium location and students will present their research (or proposed research) to symposium attendees.

Thesis Proposal

The [Thesis Proposal](#) form is an HESC form consisting of the proposed thesis title, any notes or suggested changes by the committee, and signatures of the committee members indicating whether the proposal is approved or if it needs changes. The form should be initiated by the student, completed during the thesis proposal meeting, submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu). The HESC office will file it in the student's record. If revisions are needed, an updated Thesis Proposal form will need to be submitted to the office once the revised proposal is approved.

Master's Thesis Title

Submit the [Master's Thesis Title](#) form, consisting of the title of the thesis and approved by the thesis advisor,

as soon as the thesis topic has been established, but no later than Reading Day at the end of the semester before the semester the student intends to graduate. This form is completed once the thesis proposal has been approved by the thesis committee, usually at the proposal meeting, and should be submitted with the final Thesis Proposal form. The Master's Thesis Title form should be initiated by the student, signed by the advisor, and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu). The HESC office will obtain final signatures and submit the form to the Graduate School, retaining a copy for the student's record.

Annual Graduate Student Academic Review and Graduate Assistant Evaluation

The Graduate Council requires that every MS student (thesis and non-thesis track) be [reviewed annually](#) for progress toward the degree. At a minimum, the review will cover progress in the following: a) completing courses with an adequate grade point average; b) completing the thesis/dissertation/ project requirements; c) completing all of the required examinations; d) in completing other requirements for the degree.

The academic advisor (i.e., review coordinator) should complete the review in person with the student (except where that is impossible or impractical as approved by the Graduate School). When the review is complete, the student and review coordinator should sign the [Annual Review](#) form and submit it to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu). The HESC main office will obtain final signatures and submit the form the Graduate School, retaining a copy for the student's file. The form must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator by May 31. If a student receives two consecutive reviews indicating that the student is not making adequate academic progress toward their degree, the HESC-MS program and the Graduate School have the option to dismiss the student.

For students on a graduate assistantship, the [GA Evaluation](#) form should be completed by their work supervisor on the same timeline as the annual student academic review and is due May 31. The form should be reviewed together by the GA and the supervisor to document whether the GA is meeting work and academic expectations. This evaluation will inform whether the student is recommended for continuation of their assistantship.

Thesis Defense

The thesis, after its acceptance by the thesis advisor, should be submitted for approval to each thesis committee member. It is recommended that students send their thesis committee members a copy of their thesis two weeks before their scheduled thesis defense. Students should defend their theses at least four weeks prior to the graduation date. Faculty will evaluate theses using the [rubric provided on the HESC website](#).

Thesis Pre-check

A final draft of the thesis must be reviewed by the Graduate School. Students should begin the thesis pre-check process at least two weeks prior to the thesis submission deadline (see [Guide to Theses and Dissertations](#) for more information).

Intellectual Property Disclosure

The [Intellectual Property Disclosure](#) form is required by all MS students submitting a MS thesis. The form should be initiated by the student, signed by the thesis advisor, and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu) who will sign it and return it to the student, copying the HESC main office. The student will submit the form with the final copy of the thesis to the Graduate School.

MS Comprehensive Examination (Non-Thesis Track Students Only)

For non-thesis students, comprehensive written and oral examinations should be completed at least two weeks before graduation. The [Comprehensive Exam Timeline](#) outlines important deadlines for spring and fall graduation. The exam should comprehensively address course material to assess students' knowledge

and capacities to earn a given graduate degree. Every comprehensive exam that is administered should include a range of questions to incorporate the following:

- Knowledge of background literature
- Evidenced-based knowledge and reasoning, including appropriate source citations
- Theoretical concepts
- Mastery of developing/discussing objectives, research questions, and/or hypotheses
- Research design and methodology
- Forming solutions to identified problems
- Quality organization, level of detail, writing, and oral presentation.

The written and oral exams will be evaluated using the [Comprehensive Exam Assessment Rubric](#) to determine how well candidates have mastered the content of their field, the connection to research, and the impact on content. The rubric provides a consistent guide for faculty to assess student performance across the MS level coursework. A satisfactory level is 80% or higher. The academic advisor and committee members complete the rubric, which should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu) at least two weeks before graduation.

The following process is recommended:

- Academic committee chair (academic advisor) coordinates exam development with the committee and sends questions to the student with a deadline for responses at least one week from the date the exam is provided
- Student completes and submits the written portion of the exam within the timeframe assigned and schedules their oral examination with their committee
- Student prepares visual presentation of exam questions and responses and includes additional content relating their exam to their career goals and presents to committee
- Committee asks questions about student's exam responses to assess both knowledge and application of learning
- Committee members complete the comprehensive exam assessment rubric and submit it to the committee chair who then emails it to hescgrad@uark.edu for assessment reporting

MS Completion Form

Submit the [MS Completion](#) form when all MS degree requirements are completed, but no later than by Reading Day at the end of the semester of graduation. The form should be initiated by the thesis committee chair for thesis track students or by the advising committee chair for non-thesis track students and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (hescgrad@uark.edu). The MS Completion form is required for the Graduate Coordinator to clear students for graduation in Workday.

Graduation Checklists

Students must apply to graduate via Workday before the graduation deadline for the semester of graduation (March 1st for spring, July 1 for summer, and October 1st for fall commencement). Please check [Graduation Resources](#) for further detailed information.

Responsibility of Students

The responsibility for initiating contacts and completing all requirements for the degree rests with the student. Faculty advisors are available to support and assist students as they pursue their graduate degree. Each graduate student shall become familiar and comply with regulations of the U of A, the Graduate School, and HESC as outlined in the [Graduate School Catalog](#), the [Graduate School Handbook](#), and in this Graduate Student Handbook, and will meet the deadlines set annually by the Graduate School. Students registering for variable credit are expected to contact the professor and establish a schedule for meeting the

requirements for that course. It is the responsibility of the graduate student to initiate all actions required for fulfilling the degree requirements.

Students whose writing skills are weak should consider enrollment in writing courses and/or seek help at the [Student Success at the CORD](#). Drafts of the developing thesis should be submitted for review to the thesis advisor and, later, to the committee, according to the prescribed format determined by the advisor and the thesis committee. Students should ensure that the writing style, grammar, format, spelling, and general appearance are accurate and professional. The advisor will determine when the thesis has progressed to the point that it is ready for reading by all the committee members. The thesis project is recommended to be distributed to committee members with a request that the committee members read the document within two weeks to identify any major problems that might require extensive revision. All costs for typing, revising, illustrating, and reproducing the thesis are to be borne by the student.

The student is responsible for contacting prospective members of the advisory committee to obtain their permission to be nominated to serve on the committee, for scheduling meetings with the advisor and with committee members, and for providing them with copies of appropriate materials (program of study, thesis proposal, thesis) well ahead of scheduled meetings.

Application for the Degree

A student cannot be cleared for graduation until an application for the degree has been filed with the [Registrar's Office](#) and the appropriate graduation fee has been paid.

Regional and National Organizations

Graduate students are encouraged to join and participate in the activities of various regional and national organizations related to their particular interests. The graduate experience is enriched if students avail themselves of opportunities to attend and present at regional and national organizations' annual meetings. The Graduate School offers competitive travel grants to assist students in covering the expenses of attending regional and national meetings. To be eligible for these travel grants, the student must be presenting at the conference. Applications for these funds are available on the [Graduate School's website](#).

Professional Behavior

The exercise of intellectual freedom places responsibilities on graduate students for upholding high ethical standards of conduct. The graduate student has the responsibility to be unfailingly objective, thorough, and honest in the conduct and reporting of research and in the examination, interpretation, and citation of the work of others. The graduate student should cultivate and maintain a professional attitude and must recognize that statements should be made by students only on the basis of adequate and accurate information, as these statements reflect on the school and on the profession. Accepting a graduate appointment implies acceptance of the goals and objectives of the school. A spirit of mutual aid and helpfulness among fellow students is a prerequisite for making the period of graduate study enjoyable and congenial.

Academic Integrity

Graduate students are expected to adhere to the strictest of academic honesty standards. Students should review the U of A's [Academic Integrity Policy](#), [Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#), and the [Academic Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students](#). Failure to comply with any dimension of the academic honesty policy established by the university will result in dismissal from the HESC graduate program and the U of A. Specifically, academic honesty means:

- NOT collaborating on lab work, take-home exams, homework, or other assignments when told to work independently;

- NOT submitting someone else's work as one's own, including work obtained from other students, the internet, or any other source;
- NOT submitting work offered for credit in another class without the specific permission of the instructor;
- NOT plagiarizing another's work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to: copying or paraphrasing someone else's work or ideas without giving appropriate credit; accepting term paper assistance either from the internet or from local providers; or turning in someone else's work as one's own. It is the student's responsibility to know what plagiarism is and its consequences.

Publications, Presentations, and Authorship

No research is complete until its results are made available to other researchers. To this end, students are strongly encouraged to publish and/or present the findings of their research through appropriate channels soon after the research is completed. Students (with the aid of their thesis advisor) should immediately begin development of a manuscript or manuscripts for submission to a scientific journal in the field. Although publications are usually based on thesis results, other research projects stemming from class assignments, independent study, or practice may serve as bases for publication. The [Guidelines for Authorship](#) should be followed in all situations.

Research presentations at state, regional, or national meetings of professional organizations provide another method for dissemination of results. Students should consult with their thesis advisor regarding submission of papers for presentation.

A full discussion of research publication philosophy, procedures, and authorship between the thesis advisor and the graduate student should occur by the end of the second semester. The thesis advisor should ensure that students are aware of and understand HESC's philosophy on publication and authorship. The Student Acknowledgment of Guidelines for Authorship must be completed by the student via the online survey provided at the beginning of the first semester.

Various disciplines may follow different conventions for publication and authorship, and this should be clarified and agreed upon prior to beginning research. Avenues of communication between students and the thesis advisor should remain open to address changes that may occur as work progresses. The process should be flexible so that unique situations may be evaluated based upon specific conditions and individual merit. The communication process should allow for renegotiation of authorship if substantial changes in contribution to the research occur. In all instances, graduate students must be given the opportunity for first authorship of publications and presentations based on their thesis research. If a faculty member significantly contributed to a student's thesis, the faculty member has earned co-authorship on any publications and presentations.

Responsibilities of Faculty

Academic Advisor

Academic advisors assist students early in their programs to select appropriate coursework for the students' program of study, consistent with students' stated degree objectives. Academic advisors assist students in the selection of an academic advisory committee, and thesis students in the selection of a thesis advisor (who may or may not be the same faculty member as the academic advisor) and thesis advisory committee.

Students should regularly initiate contact with their academic advisors in order to assure that they are making appropriate academic progress. Academic advisors shall approve all course work at registration, and regularly review students' progress. Academic advisors must update students' Program of Study forms each semester with their grades and cumulative GPA. Academic advisors should conduct face-to-face interviews with students to perform annual graduate student academic reviews. If the academic advisor is different than thesis advisor, the academic advisor should consult with the thesis advisor.

Thesis Advisor

The selection of the thesis advisor should be made by the student no later than Reading Day at the end of the second semester. The selection should be made based on a student's interest and the faculty member's expertise. Through regular student-initiated appointments, the thesis advisor shall assist the student in choosing a research project related to the advisor's expertise and within limits imposed by existing facilities and project commitments. The thesis advisor shall guide the student throughout the thesis experience. The method and philosophy of developing and carrying out the graduate program shall rest with the thesis advisor, in consultation with the student's advisory committee and in conformity with established Graduate School policy (see [Guide to Theses and Dissertations](#)).

The thesis advisor works closely with the student through all phases of research and in developing the thesis. In the interest of maintaining high quality in the development of needed research skills and in the development of the thesis, the advisor should encourage the student to obtain special help in improving writing or other skills if this lack is impeding the student's research or writing progress. The advisor will carefully examine the final draft of the thesis before it is submitted to the committee as a proposal or as the final draft for defense. In addition, the thesis advisor (along with any committee members wishing a final review after revisions) will do the final review of the thesis as it has been revised following defense before it is submitted to the Graduate School. Following this review and the completion of any other revisions requested by the advisor or committee members, the advisor will verify that all committee signatures have been secured before affixing a signature denoting approval of both the research itself and the scientific, grammatical, and literary quality of the document. In consultation with the thesis advisor, the student is responsible for assuring that the [Thesis Title](#) form is submitted to the Graduate School and the [MS Completion](#) form is submitted to the Graduate Coordinator at the appropriate time.

Thesis Advisory Committee

The thesis advisory committee serves to advise the thesis advisor and the student. Members may recommend course work, give advice or help with research techniques, or assist in other ways. Committee members are responsible for providing feedback to the student and to the thesis advisor about the thesis within two weeks of receipt of the thesis. The signature of a member of the thesis advisory committee on a thesis indicates approval of both the research that was done and of the thesis in which it is reported.

Assistantships and Other Financial Aid

[General policies of the Graduate School](#) govern graduate student appointments in HESC. Acceptance of a graduate assistantship constitutes a contract agreement with the U of A. All appointments of international students to graduate research assistantships must have prior approval of the Graduate School.

Acceptance of a graduate assistantship in HESC also constitutes a contract with the School, the graduate faculty, and the faculty member with whom the graduate assistant works. Graduate assistants will sign an agreement (via the online survey provided at the beginning of each assistantship appointment) with HESC indicating that they understand and accept the academic performance (no lower than a 2.85 cumulative GPA and meeting expected academic integrity standards) and expected job performance (20 hours per week of satisfactory work performance) standards of graduate assistants. Students also acknowledge that they accept

the possibility of losing the assistantship if they fail to meet any one of the above standards. Students also acknowledge that the renewal of the assistantship for a second year will be determined through a review of their performance by the HESC Graduate Coordinator and the area's graduate faculty at the end of each spring semester in the graduate program. Serious infractions of expected performance can result in a student being removed from an assistantship at any time. Students who do not complete their program within the allowed time-to-degree may be asked to payback funds paid to them or on their behalf.

Application and Criteria for Assistantships

Those desiring an assistantship should indicate their interest on their [initial application](#) form submitted to the graduate school. They also will need to complete an [Application for Graduate Assistantship](#) form, which can be uploaded to the Graduate School application portal, or sent directly to the HESC main office. A conditionally admitted student who has maintained a 2.85 average in the first two consecutive semesters of graduate level work taken for the degree program may become eligible to apply for an assistantship.

Tuition and Fees for Graduate Assistants

Tuition is paid for all graduate assistants. Tuition is waived by the HESC office once the student is registered before the semester begins. Miscellaneous fees, college fees, and international fees are the responsibility of the student. Resignation or termination of an assistantship during a semester may require the student to reimburse the university for all or a portion of tuition and fees paid on the student's behalf. The advisor and the HESC Graduate Coordinator must be notified immediately if the student makes any class changes (dropping, adding, or withdrawing from classes). *HESC graduate program orientation will be held at the beginning of the fall semester and is required for students on graduate assistantships.*

Reappointment for Subsequent Semesters

Assistantships that begin in the fall will initially be held for two semesters and can be renewed for another two semesters (not counting summer sessions) if the graduate assistant meets performance expectations. At the end of each spring semester, graduate assistants will be evaluated by their work supervisor, academic advisor, and the Graduate Coordinator/Department Chair.

Assistantships will be renewed for the second year only if the student:

- maintains a 3.0 cumulative grade point average (or has a success plan in place if GPA is between 2.85-3.0);
- has been enrolled in 6 to 12 credit hours per semester;
- has completed and filed a Program of Study form;
- has successfully completed the Annual Graduate Student Review;
- has met or exceeded expectations in evaluation of job performance and productivity; and
- has followed all academic policies and standards.

The first semester of appointment counts as part of the four-semester limit. In the rare instance a fall/spring graduate assistant is also offered an assistantship over the summer (i.e., a 12-month appointment), they are required to enroll in three credit hours for at least one summer session. Under exceptional circumstances, the student's adviser may appeal to the Director of the School and the Graduate School Dean for an extension of time. International students should consult current immigration policy if they need an extension of time as it may not be permissible per DHS regulations. All assistantship renewals are contingent upon budget.

Benefits for Graduate Assistants

Generally, each assistantship provides a full tuition waiver (in-state, out-of-state, and international), a monthly stipend, and a [health care plan](#). Graduate assistants receive the same holidays as the full-time staff, with one full day calculated as four hours. These holidays do not include student holidays such as spring

break. Graduate assistants are not eligible to earn paid vacation or paid sick leave. Graduate assistants must report for work on any day (as appropriate to their agreed upon work schedule) the U of A is open unless prior arrangements have been made with the supervising faculty member.

General Responsibilities of Graduate Student Employees

Graduate assistants work 20 hours per week on a regular schedule as agreed upon with the immediate supervisor. No “averaging” of workload – for example, working 10 hours one week and 30 hours the following week – is allowed. Deviation from the regular schedule is not allowed without prior approval from the immediate supervisor. In emergency situations that cause the graduate assistant to be late for or to miss the usual work hours, the student must contact the immediate supervisor as soon as possible to indicate how the graduate assistant can be reached and the expected time for returning to work. If the immediate supervisor cannot be reached, a message may be left with a school staff member and the supervisor contacted as soon as possible.

All graduate assistants may receive mail in HOEC 118. While the graduate assistant offices have communal phones, any telephone messages left with the HESC main office will be put in mail slots. Mail slots should be checked daily. In addition, all graduate assistants are expected to check their uark.edu email address daily for messages. Although many graduate students choose to use a non-campus e-mail for their personal use, they should either forward all mail in the U of A account to their personal account or check their U of A account daily. Many important messages from all levels of the university are sent only to U of A e-mail accounts. It is imperative students retrieve these messages daily. Occasionally, there will be required meetings for graduate students. The Graduate Coordinator should be notified promptly of any unavoidable conflicts the student has in attending required meetings or serving on designated committees.

Other Financial Aid and Outside Employment

Graduate students are eligible to apply for and may receive support from federally and privately funded programs, scholarships, or fellowships. General information and applications may be secured from the [Financial Aid Office](#). Additional employment outside of the graduate assistantship is not advised and any outside employment must be approved by the department with Conflict of Interest paperwork as appropriate.