



PROGRAM POLICY STATEMENT
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nutrition Science
Department of Health Behavior and Nutrition Sciences

Contents

- I. Program Overview**
 - A. Mission Statement
 - B. Current Status
 - C. Degree Offered
- II. Admission**
 - A. Admission Criteria and Requirements
 - B. Prior Degree Requirements
 - C. Application Deadlines
 - D. Admission Categories
 - E. Other Documents Required
 - F. HBNS Statement of Diversity and Inclusion
 - G. University Statement
- III. Academic Degree: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nutrition Science**
 - A. Degree Requirements
 - B. Faculty Advisors and PhD Dissertation Committees
 - C. Timetable and Satisfactory Progress toward Degree
- IV. Assessment Plan and Program Educational Goals**
- V. Financial Aid**
- VI. Program Administration and Organization**
 - A. Program Faculty
 - B. NS Graduate Programs Director
 - C. Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee
 - D. Program Resources

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I: Program Overview

A. Mission Statement

The Nutrition Science (NS) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program provides the highest degree for nutrition science professionals, preparing graduates for research careers in many settings, including academia, non-governmental organizations (business and non-profit), allied health fields, and public service at all levels of national government. The curriculum will provide graduate students with the training needed to become effective scientific practitioners with the capacity to conduct independent research in nutrition with health-related outcomes, in academic and applied settings. Completion of a high-quality PhD dissertation, **based on original research**, is a key feature of the academic program. Students' capacity to complete dissertation research is developed through a rigorous curriculum designed to bring students to the intellectual forefront of their discipline. Nutrition science research involves the study of diet and metabolism, including effects on health, performance, and disease in addition to the study of human behaviors related to food choices, with the goal of translation of such knowledge to the community through high quality, evidence-based interventions.

B. Current Status

The NS PhD Program was approved by the Faculty Senate in February 2018, began enrolling students in fall 2018. The program will be reviewed for permanent status in fall 2025.

C. Degree Offered

The degree awarded to those who complete this program is a PhD in NS.

II: Admission

A. Admission Criteria and Requirements

A.1. Criteria

Applicants from diverse educational and professional backgrounds in nutrition or a related science/health field, who have a strong interest in nutrition science and human behavior are encouraged to apply. Each application will be evaluated on the basis of the following key areas:

- 1) Academic record/achievement;
- 2) Work, research, and/or community health experience;
- 3) Matching interest with and availability of current NS faculty to serve as the student's faculty advisor; and
- 4) Commitment to, interest in, and awareness of the study of diet and metabolism and their effects on health, performance, and disease; dietary behaviors; and/or the development and translation of evidenced-based nutrition interventions.

A.2. Requirements

Applicants must submit all materials directly to the University of Delaware Graduate College using the online admission process to be considered for admission.

Admission decisions will be made by the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee. Students will be admitted to the program based on enrollment availability, the availability of faculty mentorship, and their ability to meet the following **minimum** entrance requirements:

- 1) A master's degree in a related field from an accredited college or university with a GPA ≥ 3.3 for the NS PhD Program **or** a bachelor's degree in a related field from an

accredited college or university with an undergraduate GPA ≥ 3.3 for the Master of Science (MS) to PhD bypass option;

- 2) GRE scores within the past 5 years; and, as necessary
- 3) TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score of at least 600 (paper based), TOEFL iBT of at least 100, or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) overall band score of 7.0 for non-native English speakers.

B. Prior Degree Requirements

A completed master's degree in a nutrition and/or dietetics related field is required for direct admittance to the NS PhD Program.

Students enrolled in the MS in Human Nutrition (within the Department of Health Behavior and Nutrition Sciences [HBNS] at the University of Delaware), who have completed, a graduate level study design course, and a graduate level statistics course, each with a grade of A- or better) may apply to the NS PhD Program in the winter of their first year of graduate study with agreement in writing from their MS advisor. If admitted, they may begin the NS PhD Program in what would have been the second year of their MS in Human Nutrition within the Department. Students applying to the MS to PhD bypass option must have:

- 1) exceptional performance during the first year of the MS in Human Nutrition program; and
- 2) the approval of the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee and their advisor.

C. Application Deadlines

Applications (all materials) for the NS PhD Program will be reviewed on a rolling basis between January 15 and March 15 for admission to the program at the beginning of the following fall semester. Since application decisions will be made on a rolling basis within this timeframe (January 15th – March 15th), applicants are strongly advised to complete and submit applications as early as possible.

The admission process at the Department level will be completed as follows: completed applications will be reviewed by the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee and applicants who meet the admission criteria will then have their application file reviewed by the entire graduate faculty. Graduate faculty members will provide feedback on each applicant to the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee. Faculty identified by applicants as having shared research interests will also comment on their willingness and ability (in terms of time and funding) to serve as the applicant's advisor. A faculty member typically can advise no more than two NS PhD Program students simultaneously (regardless of where the students are in their course of study). The goal is for faculty to advise/mentor students whose background, goals, and objectives are compatible with their own research and funding. Only qualified applicants who have a potential faculty advisor will be invited to complete an interview. To be admitted to the NS PhD Program, a student must have a faculty advisor. The Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee, in conjunction with potential advisors, will make final decisions on admission. Admitted students will begin the program in the fall semester. Admission to the program is limited and not all qualified applicants will be admitted.

D. Admission Categories

Students may be admitted into the NS PhD program in one of four categories:

- 1) Admitted full-time with full assistantship that provides tuition and a stipend support;
- 2) Admitted full-time with partial assistantship that provides tuition support;
- 3) Admitted full-time with no assistantship support; or
- 4) Admitted part time with no assistantship support.

Graduate Assistantship support may be provided only to full-time students on a year-to-year basis. See Section V: Financial Aid for additional information about funding.

E. Application Documents Required

PhD applicants are required to submit:

- 1) A graduate application essay;
- 2) Current curriculum vitae;
- 3) A minimum of three letters of recommendation; it is recommended that at least two letters be from academic references;
- 4) Official transcripts and GRE scores; and, as necessary
- 5) TOEFL or IELTS scores (for international applicants only).

MS to PhD bypass applicants are required to submit:

- 1) A letter of recommendation from their MS advisor to the PhD Program Director indicating their recommendation for acceptance into the PhD program;
- 2) A letter of recommendation from the identified PhD advisor to the PhD Program Director indicating their agreement to work with the student;
Note: If the student's MS advisor is going to be their PhD advisor, then just one letter of recommendation is needed;
- 3) An updated graduate application essay;
- 4) Current curriculum vitae; and
- 5) Unofficial copy of graduate transcripts.

All documents to apply for the MS to PhD bypass should be combined into a single PDF document and submitted to the Graduate Services Coordinator before the March 15 deadline.

F. HBNS Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Department of HBNS is committed to sharing values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We believe that we can best promote and endorse these values by recruiting and retaining a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff and by creating a climate of respect that is supportive of their academic success. This climate for diversity, equity, and inclusion is central to achieving our academic potential through research and scholarship, teaching, and service.

The HBNS gives definition to this climate of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community as it is related to:

1. **Access to our Department's Programs and Practices:** We implement academic programs and scholarly practices that seek to provide equitable access and enable all students to grow academically. Specific strategies that we are strongly committed to include:
 - a. Active participation in the annual, 6-day College of Health Sciences Summer Camp that provides a deep exploration into health sciences majors and careers for traditionally underrepresented students (e.g., minority, low-income, or [soon to be] first generation students).
 - b. The provision of a dynamic and up to date HBNS website that utilizes culturally diverse images and engages current and potential students, as well as their families, in learning about our ongoing programs.
 - c. Engagement with the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program (the McNair's Scholars Program). The McNair Scholars program is renowned for preparing traditionally underrepresented groups for graduate education.

- d. Recruitment of students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and organizations. Specifically, we engage with central organizations such as The Delaware Valley Consortium for Excellence & Equity (formerly the Delaware Valley Minority Student Achievement Consortium or DVMSAC), and The New Jersey Network to Close the Achievement Gaps to directly market our academic programs to traditionally underserved groups.
2. **Teaching and Learning:** We are rigorous and empathetic teachers who collectively seek to examine and revise our curriculum and teaching practices as necessary to ensure that we are effective in helping all students achieve their academic potential. Specific strategies that we use to promote inclusive teaching and learning include:
- a. Prior to the start of each academic year, graduate students and faculty can participate in an intensive in-service training related to diversity, equity and inclusion. This interactive training focuses on individual cultural competence and specifically works to build participants' cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. At the conclusion of the training, attendees are encouraged to develop a cultural competence plan for an aspect of their work in the coming academic year.
 - b. Faculty are trained and actively encouraged to connect students (both direct advisees and any student who solicits help) with professional groups and organizations that promote diversity and assist in establishing networks as per the Office of Equity and Inclusion at the University of Delaware.
 - c. All PhD students in the program are provided with a tailored advising and mentoring plan that is designed to maximize academic success. The University of Delaware's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resources will be consulted in the development of this plan.

G. University Statement

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths as determined by the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee.

III: Academic Degree: PhD in Nutrition Science

The NS PhD Program provides the highest degree for nutrition science professionals, preparing graduates to become effective scientific practitioners who conduct independent research. Completion of a high-quality PhD dissertation includes the degree requirements outlined below as a key feature of the academic program. In addition, students are expected to actively engage in other research and scholarly pursuits including the design, execution, and dissemination of research activities (e.g., data collection, data analysis, presentations, manuscripts, grant writing, etc.).

A. Degree Requirements

The NS PhD Program requires successful completion of a minimum of 48 credit hours, completion of a comprehensive examination, a dissertation which includes oral and written components, and a publishable paper. The NS PhD Program is designed to be completed over a 4-year period for full-time students and no more than 7 years (14 consecutive semesters) for part-time students.

In addition to the minimum of 48 credit hours, degree requirements for the NS PhD Program include:

1. Comprehensive exam (section A.5)
2. Oral dissertation proposal defense and oral dissertation defense (section A.6a)
3. Written dissertation (section A.6b., Table 3)
4. Other (Publishable Paper Requirement, section A.7)

A.1. Coursework and Credit Hours

An outline of the 48 required credit hours is provided in Table 1. Students who have had substantially similar courses to one or more of those required prior to entering the NS PhD Program may substitute other appropriate courses with the approval of their advisor, the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee, and the completion/approval of the course substitution form required by the Graduate College. A maximum of 9 credits may be substituted in the program of study. Only those courses in the 600, 800 and 900 levels will apply towards the NS PhD Program. Independent study courses will be accepted based on approval of the student's advisor and the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee. A maximum of 3 independent research study credits may be included in the program of study.

Table 1: Outline of NS PhD Program Coursework

Course	# Credits
NTDT822: Research Methods in Nutrition Assessment	3
NTDT812: Current Topics in Nutrition	3
NTDT electives (<i>Sample NTDT electives provided in Appendix A</i>).	9
BHAN856: Multivariable Biostatistics for Population Health	3
BHAN855: Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in Health Sciences	3
Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods Electives (<i>Sample Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods electives provided in Appendix A</i>).	9
BHAN860: seminar (every Fall semester)	0
NTDT665: seminar (every Spring Semester)	0
General elective (<i>Sample general elective courses provided in Appendix A</i>).	3
NTDT868 Independent Research	6
NTDT969 Dissertation Research	9
<u>TOTAL CREDITS</u>	48

A.2. Planned Program of Study

Students are required to develop a curricular program of study plan with their advisor during the first semester of study. Students admitted part-time basis will develop an individual program of study with their Advisor that will outline completion degree requirements. It is expected that the part-time students will take longer to complete the program requirements than full-time students. Depending on the student's background and interests, the program of study may include courses beyond the minimum number required for the degree. The planned program of study must first be approved by the student's advisor. A typical plan for the program of study (**showing the minimum requirements for the degree**) for students in the NS PhD Program is shown in **Table 2a**. A typical plan for the program of study for students wishing to complete the

MS/NS PhD bypass option is shown in **Table 2b**. Please see **Section II item F.2** for information about development of student advising and mentoring plans.

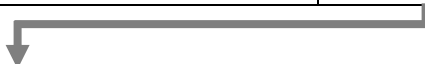
Table 2a: Sample Plan for NS PhD Program of Study (for those with MS degree and enrolled full-time)

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Year 1	BHAN860: Seminar (0) BHAN855: Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in Health Sciences (3) or Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) NTDT812 Current Topics in Nutrition (3) NTDT elective (3) NTDT868 Independent Research (1)		NTDT665: Seminar (0) BHAN856: Multivariable Biostatistics for Population Health (3) or Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) NTDT822: Research Methods in Nutrition Assessment (3) NTDT elective (3) NTDT868 Independent Research (1)	Research (0)
Year 2	BHAN860: Seminar (0) BHAN855: Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in Health Sciences (3) or Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) NTDT elective (3) NTDT868 Independent Research (1)	<i>Comprehensive Exam</i>	NTDT665: Seminar (0) BHAN856: Multivariable Biostatistics for Population Health (3) or Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) General Elective (3) NTDT868 Independent Research (3) <i>*Dissertation Proposal Defense</i>	Research (0)
Year 3	BHAN860 Seminar (0) NTDT969: Dissertation Research (9)		NTDT665: Seminar (0) **Sustaining	Research (0)
Year 4	BHAN860: Seminar (0) **Sustaining		NTDT665: Seminar (0) **Sustaining <i>Dissertation Defense</i>	

*Dissertation proposal defense to occur by the end of the 4th semester of study but no later than prior to the start of the second summer session during Year 2. **Note that *sustaining* in this context means that the student is still classified as a full-time student.

Table 2b: Sample plan for MS/PhD bypass (for those enrolled full-time)

	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
MS Year 1	NTDT631 (3) Research Design (3) Statistics (3)	<i>Apply to MS/PhD program bypass option)</i>	NTDT611 (3) NTDT869 (2) NTDT665 (1)	Research (0)



	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Year 1	BHAN860: Seminar (0) BHAN855: Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in Health Sciences (3) or Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) NTDT812 Current Topics in Nutrition (3) NTDT elective (3) NTDT868 Independent Research (1)		NTDT665: Seminar (0) BHAN856: Multivariable Biostatistics for Population Health (3) or Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) NTDT822: Research Methods in Nutrition Assessment (3) NTDT elective (3) NTDT868 Independent Research (1)	Research (0)
Year 2	BHAN860: Seminar (0) BHAN855: Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in Health Sciences (3) or Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) NTDT elective (3) NTDT868 Independent Research (1)	<i>Comprehensive Exam</i>	NTDT665: Seminar (0) BHAN856: Multivariable Biostatistics for Population Health (3) or Statistics/Data Analysis/Research Methods elective (3) General Elective (3) NTDT868 Independent Research (3) <i>*Dissertation Proposal Defense</i>	Research (0)
Year 3	BHAN860 Seminar (0) NTDT969: Dissertation Research (9)		NTDT665: Seminar (0) **Sustaining	Research (0)
Year 4	BHAN860: Seminar (0) **Sustaining		NTDT665: Seminar (0) **Sustaining <i>Dissertation Defense</i>	

*Dissertation proposal defense to occur by the end of the 4th semester of study but no later than prior to the start of the second summer session during Year 2.. **Note that *sustaining* in this context means that the student is still classified as a full-time student.

A.3. Residency Requirement

While students who receive graduate assistantships will need 8 academic semesters to complete the NS PhD Program degree, self-funded students with exceptional progress towards the degree may complete the requirements in a minimum of 6 academic semesters. At least one continuous academic year must be devoted exclusively to full-time study (6 credit hours per semester for a student receiving an assistantship; 9 credit hours per semester for a student not on assistantship) in the NS PhD Program in residence at the University of Delaware. To fulfill the residency requirement, part time students need to be enrolled in credit hours for a continuous academic year and engaged in program-related activities as defined by their individual plan of study. This residency requirement may be fulfilled using a fall and spring semester combination or a spring and fall semester combination, but summer and winter sessions do not count toward the residency requirement.

A.4. Progress Requirement

Students must convene their dissertation committees at the latest during the second semester of study and each semester thereafter arrange a meeting to formally share progress towards their degree. Upon completion of each meeting, the student must complete a meeting report that is signed and approved by their advisor and reviewed by the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee. Upon approval, the student will share the report with the dissertation committee. Upon approval the student will share the report with the dissertation committee. Students who do not have committee meetings in a timely manner will be considered as failing to progress and will be required to meet with the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee to determine whether a recommendation for dismissal from the program is warranted.

A.5. Comprehensive Examination Requirement

Students must pass a comprehensive examination that tests their general knowledge base in nutrition science and their ability to critically evaluate scientific literature. Specific details are as follows:

- 1) The Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will have responsibility for the written examination, including writing and grading examination questions.
- 2) The comprehensive exam must be taken after completion of approximately 30 credits which for a full-time student typically occurs during Winter Session in the second academic year of study. The comprehensive exam for part time students will be scheduled and included in their individual plan of study.
- 3) The written examinations are graded on a pass/fail basis, with a letter grade of C or greater indicating "pass". Students who fail the comprehensive examination will be provided with a marked copy of their exam and have a feedback session with their advisor where areas to improve will be discussed. Students have one opportunity to retake and pass the examination questions that were failed. The retake must be taken within two months of the initial examination. A failure on the retake will result in dismissal from the NS PhD Program and students will have the option to complete the MS in Human Nutrition program requirements.
- 4) Students must pass the comprehensive examination requirement before proceeding to the dissertation proposal defense.

A.6 Dissertation

A student's dissertation is a substantial original study that requires approval at the dissertation proposal stage by the dissertation committee. Independent study time and all research activity prior to the dissertation proposal are intended to be productive and lay the groundwork for the dissertation. All work included in a student's dissertation must be formally approved by all

members of the student's dissertation committee, at dissertation committee meetings and at the oral dissertation proposal defense. The dissertation includes both oral and written components.

A.6a. Oral Dissertation Proposal Defense and Oral Dissertation Defense Requirements

Full-time students in the NS PhD Program must complete an oral dissertation proposal defense preferably by the end of the 4th semester of study but no later than prior to the start of the second summer session during Year 2. Deadline for completion of an oral dissertation proposal defense by a part-time student will be identified in the written individual program of study. Prior to the oral presentation, the student should have prepared their full Institutional Review Board (IRB)/Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC) package [e.g., protocol, consent, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (also known as HIPAA), measures] if applicable. Following the successful oral defense of the dissertation proposal, the student should submit their IRB/IACUC materials as soon as possible.

Procedures for the oral dissertation proposal defense and the oral dissertation defense are the same. The written dissertation proposal and the final written dissertation will be made available to the student's PhD dissertation committee members at least two weeks prior to the oral defense date. The oral defense meeting will include both a defense of the student's proposed or completed dissertation research and an in-depth examination of the student's knowledge of their research specialization. Students are expected to demonstrate competency in both oral and written communication skills. All HBNS faculty and students will be invited to attend the oral dissertation proposal defense meeting and oral dissertation defense meeting.

Immediately following the oral presentation of a defense, the PhD dissertation committee will meet separately to pose questions to the student. Once all questions have been answered the student will leave the room and the PhD dissertation committee will vote on the outcome of the defense. The possible outcomes of the oral defense are:

- 1) Pass. The student may proceed to the next stage of his/her degree training.
- 2) Conditional pass. In the event that the student's PhD dissertation committee feels the student's performance was generally acceptable but with a specific deficiency, condition(s) will be specified that the student must satisfy to achieve a Pass and remain in the NS PhD Program.
- 3) Re-examination. This result is appropriate for a student whose performance was unsatisfactory but displayed evidence of the potential to complete graduate degree training. Re-examination must be completed by the end of the next semester. The possible outcomes of the re-examination are pass or failure. The student may not take the exam a third time.
- 4) Failure. This outcome would indicate that the student's PhD dissertation committee considers the student incapable of completing degree training and the student would be recommended for dismissal from the program and may be awarded MS in Human Nutrition degree pending the completion of any outstanding coursework.

The outcome will be presented to the student. If 'conditional pass' or 're-examination' is the outcome, all conditions or requirements for proposal or dissertation revisions will be documented in a written format that is signed by the student, the Faculty Advisor (Dissertation Chairperson) and all members of the Dissertation Committee. For 're-examination', the reason why the student failed and a description of what a 're-examination' means needs to be detailed in the written documentation. For conditional pass, specific deficiencies or conditions must be addressed within two months of the original oral defense date. For re-examination, the revised written dissertation and revised oral defense must be completed by the end of the next

semester. The possible outcomes of the re-examination are pass or failure. The student may not take the exam a third time.

Once the proposal defense has been successfully completed, the student must apply to the Graduate College for admission into candidacy. For students with the outcome ‘re-examination’ students must register for pre-candidacy credits that can be transferred to candidacy credits upon receiving a ‘pass’ or ‘conditional pass’. Once the final dissertation defense has been successfully completed, the student should notify the PhD Program Director who will provide additional directions.

A.6b. Written Dissertation Format

The Department supports both a traditional and an article style (“Three Papers”) written dissertation format. While the scope and expectations for the NS PhD Program dissertation are provided elsewhere, Table 3 depicts the general content for both formats.

Table 3: Written Dissertation Requirements Based on Format

	Traditional Dissertation	Three Papers Dissertation^a
Chapter Requirements	Minimum of 5 chapters, may be more. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1: Introduction and specific aims • Chapter 2: Substantive review of the literature/conceptual framework • Chapter 3: Methods • Chapter 4: Results • Chapter 5: Discussion, conclusion 	Minimum of 5 chapters, may be more. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1: Introduction, overarching purpose, and conceptual framework • Chapter 2: Manuscript 1 • Chapter 3: Manuscript 2 • Chapter 4: Manuscript 3 • Chapter 5: Summary chapter of key findings, future research directions
Manuscript Types	N/A	Minimum of 3 manuscripts. Up to 1 of the 3 manuscripts may be any type of review or meta-analysis manuscript.
Manuscript Status	N/A	At least one manuscript must be published or submitted for publication; other manuscripts must be suitable for publication at the dissertation defense.

Authorship	PhD candidate is sole author of the dissertation	Students are to be the first author on each manuscript. Co-first authorship is acceptable if the student is one of the first and submitting authors and the student's Dissertation Committee has provided approval; Dissertation Committee approval should be documented in the minutes from the meeting in which the co-first authorship was approved.
References	Comprehensive reference list at the end of the dissertation	References are included within the manuscripts of Chapters 2-4 and if needed, an additional reference list covering Chapters 1 & 5 at the end of the dissertation

^aAdapted from Indiana University Richard M Fairbanks School of Public Health.

For the Three Papers Dissertation format, if a paper has been accepted for publication, the published manuscript in a word (not PDF) version should be included as the chapter. Permissions that include the “rights link” from the journal indicating that it is okay to copyright these articles should be disclosed in an associated appendix. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her advisor to ensure compliance with permissions requirements.

A.7. Other (Publishable Paper Requirement)

The NS PhD Program requires all students to be the first author or a co-author on at least one manuscript that is published or submitted for publication prior to final oral dissertation defense.

B. Faculty Advisors and PhD Dissertation Committees

B.1. Faculty Advisors

During the application process, each student will nominate a minimum of two potential NS PhD Program faculty members with which they share research interests. At least one faculty member must be willing and have the time to serve as an advisor and accept responsibility for oversight of the student's academic progress in the program. Final faculty advisor selection will be made by the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee and will be based on converging research interests and faculty availability. PhD student faculty advisors can typically advise no more than two NS PhD Program students simultaneously (regardless of where the students are in their respective NS PhD Program).

If, during the course of a student's academic program, the faculty advisor is unable or unwilling to continue as advisor, the student will work with the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee to identify another faculty member willing to be the new advisor. The new advisor must be identified within two months of the decision in order for the student to be considered making satisfactory progress toward the degree. Switching advisors does not change the deadlines for completing the degree requirements.

B.2. PhD Dissertation Committee

The student is expected to work with their faculty advisor to assemble a dissertation committee by the second semester of the program. Part-time students will identify when they are to

assemble their dissertation committee in their written individual program of study. The dissertation committee will consist of:

- 1) not less than four and not more than six members and shall be chaired by the faculty advisor. At least four members must hold a terminal doctoral degree.
- 2) at least two of the four members must represent currently employed NS PhD Program faculty, one of whom shall be the faculty advisor/committee chairperson; and
- 3) at least one of the four members must be an external examiner chosen from a different academic program or from outside the University; and
- 4) the Committee can have up to two additional members (outside of the four members who hold a terminal doctoral degree) who must be experts in the field of dissertation study.

The faculty advisor/committee chairperson shall have established a record of publication in the field of the dissertation and shall be a member of the faculty of the NS Program in the Department. Faculty members who have retired or resigned from the University may chair committees of students whose work began under their direction prior to their retirement or departure from the University. A faculty advisor/committee chairperson who is not employed by the University of Delaware may serve as co-chair of the committee providing that the other co-chair meets the conditions stated above.

C. Timetable and Definition of Satisfactory Progress toward Degree

C.1. Time Limit for Completing the Degree

The time limit for completion of the NS PhD Program degree requirements begins with the date of matriculation into the program and is specifically detailed in the student's letter of admission. Students entering the NS PhD Program with a master's degree who receive graduate assistantships will need 8 academic semesters to complete the NS PhD Program degree; self-funded students with exceptional progress towards degree may complete the requirements in a minimum of 6 academic semesters. A maximum length of up to 10 consecutive semesters is allowed to complete the requirements. Students who change their degree plan and have transferred from one degree program to another degree program are given 10 consecutive semesters from the beginning of the first year in the NS PhD Program. Students in the MS to PhD bypass option are given up to 14 consecutive semesters to complete the degree requirements. This time limit for completion of the NS PhD Program applies to all students, including those admitted as part-time; however, the time limit can be adjusted if appropriate progress is being made based on the individual plan of study.

An extension of time limit may be granted on a case-by-case basis. The student, Advisor, and Dissertation Committee will discuss and outline the extension of time being requested in writing. The NS PhD Program Director and Department Chairperson will approve the request and forward the request to the Graduate College.

C.2. Submission of Required University Forms

When a student has met the requirements for admission to candidacy as previously explained (section III. A.5.), the student will submit a Recommendation for Candidacy form to the NS PhD Program degree form to the Graduate College. The student's classification will change to post-candidacy upon admission to candidacy status. The deadline for admission to candidacy for the fall semester is August 31. The deadline for admission to candidacy for the spring semester is January 31. The deadline for admission to candidacy for the summer is April 30. **The student is responsible for ensuring that admission to candidacy is secured at the proper time.**

To initiate the process for degree conferral, candidates must submit an “Application for Advanced Degree” to the Graduate College. The application deadlines are February 15 for Spring candidates, January 15 for Winter candidates, May 15 for Summer candidates, and September 15 for Fall candidates. The application must be signed by the candidate’s advisor, the PhD Program Director and Department Chair. Therefore, routing of the Application for Advanced Degree must begin at least two weeks prior to the application deadline. An application fee for PhD degree students is required when the application is submitted. Upon completion of the degree audit, the Graduate College notifies students in writing when they have met all degree requirements.

C.3. Grade Requirements for Satisfactory Progress

Failure to satisfactorily progress in the program will be based on the University Graduate Policy as noted below (Table 4).

The Graduate College monitors the academic progress of all graduate students and notifies students in writing of all academic deficiencies. The cumulative GPA after each 9-hour increment determines academic standing.

Table 4: The University’s Academic Probation Policy is expressed in the following chart

If student is on:	And earns a GPA of:	The status becomes:
Any status	3.0 or above	Clear
Clear	2.99-2.5	Warning
Clear	2.49-2.0	Probation
Probation	Below 3.0	Dismissal
Warning	Below 3.0	Probation
Any status	Below 2.0	Dismissal

C.4. Reasons for Dismissal from the Program

The Graduate College notifies students when they are dismissed from graduate programs without completing a degree. Dismissals usually take place at the end of a term. Students may be dismissed for reasons stated in the Dismissal Policies of the Graduate College.

In the case of dismissal, the NS PhD Program Director is required to send a report to the Graduate College that states the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee voted on the decision causing dismissal and the justification for this action. The Graduate College will notify a student in writing when the student is being dismissed for failure to make satisfactory progress in the program. Students who are dismissed from the NS PhD Program may apply for admittance to the MS in Human Nutrition program.

C.5. Procedures for Student Appeals

Students who receive what they perceive as an unfair evaluation by a faculty member or faculty committee may file a written grievance in accordance with the University of Delaware policies.

Specifically, if the issue remains unresolved after a meeting between the student and the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee, the student may submit a written appeal to the Department Chair within 10 business days of the meeting. The Department Chair will issue a

written decision on the appeal, and a description of the proposed resolution within 10 business days of appeal receipt.

In the case of academic dismissal, the student may appeal the termination by writing to the Graduate College. Please see the process for appeals under Dismissal Policies of the Graduate College.

All access to student records is in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

IV: Assessment Plan and Program Educational Goals

A variety of internal and external mechanisms will be used to evaluate the curriculum and overall effectiveness of the NS PhD Program. Established program educational goals (Table 5) will be evaluated on an annual basis.

Table 5. NS PhD Program Education Goals

PhD in Nutrition Science Program Educational Goals	
1	Students will demonstrate the ability to identify strengths and limitations of different nutrition assessment tools, and choose appropriate ones for different settings.
2	Students will demonstrate written proficiency of the literature in a nutrition-related content area.
3	Students will demonstrate oral proficiency of the literature in a nutrition-related content area.
4	The student will demonstrate the ability to: (1) generate and code summary variables; (2) code and run appropriate descriptive, bivariate, and multivariable models; (3) interpret output for descriptive, bivariate, and multivariable models
5	Students will demonstrate the ability to identify and answer a novel research question.
6	Students will demonstrate the ability to disseminate written scientific literature.
7	Students will demonstrate the ability to verbally present scientific results in a scholarly setting.

Internally, the NS PhD Program Director and the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will review student progress, grades, and pass/fail rate on coursework, comprehensive examination results, enrollments, and curricular program of study on an annual basis. This information will be used to evaluate the extent to which students are developing critical competencies in NS and to assess and adjust student flow through the NS PhD Program.

Markers of students' success will be tracked, including:

- 1) Publications (chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, books);
- 2) Presentations (invited and conferences);

- 3) Awards and honors;
- 4) Fellowships and grants to support research; and
- 5) Job placements (post-PhD and faculty positions, leadership positions in private and governmental public health organizations).

In addition, we will track how effectively the NS PhD Program advances students by tracking the following:

- 1) Program attrition (dropouts, dismissals) and
- 2) Time to complete the NS PhD degree.

Finally, we will use a variety of mechanisms for tracking students' perceptions of the program, including:

- 1) Anonymous student surveys to assess different aspects of the program including: classes, mentoring, funding, and research opportunities; and
- 2) Unsolicited student feedback.

Externally, the NS PhD Program will be subject to program review every seven years by two or more external reviewers in the field of Nutrition Science.

V: Financial Aid

Funding for NS PhD Program students will come from a variety of sources including, but not limited to department graduate assistantships (*Department-funded*) and faculty advisor grant support (*Faculty-funded*).

Different types of assistantships (Department-funded and Faculty-funded) may be awarded to full-time students (registered in at least 6 graduate credits each semester) based on admission ranking, needs of the program, experience and expertise of the graduate student and funding availability. Students appointed to assistantships, who are on contract, are provided experiences that can only be gained by performing instructional or research activities that are compensated based on the University's Graduate College guidelines and policies. Students may pursue additional employment beyond their contract however it must be within the Graduate Contract Additional Employment Policy.

For Department-funded assistantships, it is expected that students will serve in a teaching and/or research capacity to best meet the needs of the Department. This may include serving as a TA and/or instructor of record (IOR). Continuation of Department-funded assistantships is contingent upon the evaluation of the NS PhD Program Director, the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee and the Department Chair. The student must remain in good academic standing to be eligible for the continuation of the award.

Faculty-funded assistantships will be dedicated to the execution of the grant-funded activities as directed by the faculty advisor. Continuation of this award is primarily contingent upon the evaluation of the faculty advisor (study Principal Investigator) and secondarily with the NS PhD Program Director and the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee. The student must remain in good academic standing and meet the demands of the grant proposal and research activities directed by the faculty advisor to be eligible for the continuation of the award.

Students can also apply for internal funding through the University of Delaware and the Graduate College. Students can also apply for pre-doctoral support from funding agencies such as the American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health, or professional organizations

such as American Society for Nutrition. All students will be encouraged to apply for these external awards. The faculty advisor will mentor the student on the writing of the proposal.

VI: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

A. Program Faculty

The following HBNS faculty specialize in Nutrition Science and have research and teaching expertise that will be central to the implementation and administration of the proposed program. Responsibilities of program faculty include oversight of program policies and curriculum.

Table 5: Summary of HBNS Faculty with Nutrition Expertise

Faculty Member	Research Expertise
Sheau Ching Chai, PhD, RD	Diet and nutrient intake in prevention and reduction of age- and nutrition-related diseases; phytochemicals.
Carrie Earthman, PhD, RD	Body composition, energy metabolism and nutrition assessment in chronic and acute illness; clinical nutrition assessment; diagnosis and management of disease-associated malnutrition.
Cheng-Shun (Richard) Fang, PhD, RD	Dietary fiber and diseases, nutritional assessment.
Melissa Melough, PhD, RD	Nutritional and chronic disease epidemiology; maternal and child nutrition; endocrine disruptors and other environmental chemicals.
Carly Pacanowski, PhD RD	Weight and eating disorders in emerging adults; psychological outcomes of interventions to control body weight; health behaviors that prevent eating- and weight-related issues.
Shannon Robson PhD, MPH, RD	Behavioral weight management interventions in pediatric and adult populations; basic feeding studies manipulating diet.
Alisha Rovner, PhD	Public health nutrition, vitamin D, bone mineral metabolism.
Kelebogile Setiloane, PhD	Infant and child feeding practices, Cultural competency, Global health/Nutrition, Immigrant Health/Nutrition.
Jillian Trabulsi, PhD, RD	Early childhood nutrition; diet, nutrition and energy balance in healthy individuals and in those with chronic disease, obesity.

Additionally, the Department of Health Behavior and Nutrition Sciences faculty include those with expertise in Health Behavior Science; these faculty frequently collaborate with NS faculty, serve on Dissertation committees, and teach graduate elective courses that PhD NS Program students may take as an elective course.

B. NS PhD Program Director

The NS PhD Program Director will be a tenured faculty member affiliated with the program who holds the rank of associate or full professor. The term of service for the NS PhD Program Director is three years, with a limit of two consecutive terms. The NS PhD Program Director is the central program representative and point person.

The responsibilities of the NS PhD Program Director include:

- 1) Providing leadership and oversight for the program;
- 2) Organizing and leading meetings of affiliated faculty and the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee;
- 3) Communicating as necessary with the Graduate College;
- 4) Serving as the first point of contact for issues arising with program students and faculty
- 5) Approving all changes to programs of study;
- 6) Approving all changes in faculty advisors;
- 7) Corresponding with prospective students and overseeing program recruitment and admission decisions; and
- 8) Program evaluation and assessment.

C. Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee

The Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will be responsible for the administrative duties needed to run the NS PhD Program in the Department of HBNS. The Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee will consist of nutrition graduate faculty members and shall be chaired by the NS PhD Program Director. Responsibilities of the Nutrition Graduate Programs Committee shall include (but not limited to):

- 1) Admission of students into the program;
- 2) Approval of student programs of study;
- 3) Approval of student selection of a new faculty advisor after admission to the program;
- 4) Writing and grading written comprehensive examination questions;
- 5) Oversight of student progress in the program, including dismissal of students who fail to make satisfactory progress;
- 6) Approval of dissertation committees; and
- 7) Other tasks required for the continued success of the program.

D. Program Resources

D.1. Travel for Professional Meetings or Presentations

NS PhD students may apply for funding to support conference attendance. Refer to the HBNS Travel Policy for PhD Students.

Appendix A: List of Sample Elective Courses

Nutrition and General Electives	
HLPR813	Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine
HLPR819	Social Marketing
MMSC650	Medical Biochemistry
NTDT608	Nutrition Program Planning and Evaluation
NTDT632	Nutrition Epidemiology
NTDT640	Nutrition and Aging
NTDT655	Issues in International Nutrition
NTDT610	Overweight and Obesity Prevention and Management
NTDT810	Nutrition Informatics
Statistical/Data Analysis/Research Design Electives	
ANFS 650	Applied Biomedical Communication
BHAN609	Survey Research Methods
BISC643	Biological Data Analysis
COMM603	Communication Research Methods-Procedures
COMM604	Communication Research Methods-Analyses
EDUC812	Regression and Structural Equation Modeling
EDUC816	Mixed Methods in Social Sciences Research
EDUC856	Introduction to Statistical Inference
EPID603	Biostatistics for Health Sciences I
EPID604	Introduction to Epidemiologic Data Analysis in SAS
EPID605	Epidemiology Methods I
EPID610	Epidemiology Methods II
EPID613	Biostatistics for Health Sciences II
EPID614	Biostatistics for Health Sciences III
EPID615	Epidemiology Methods III
HDFS615	Research Methods
HDFS815	Research Issues and Design
KAAP602	Data Analyses and Interpretation in the Health Sciences
MMSC635	Practical Genomics, Proteomics and Bioinformatics

NURS814	Advanced Quantitative Research in Nursing Science
NURS815	Advanced Qualitative Research in Nursing Science
PSYC809	Research Design
PSYC860	Psychological Statistics
PSYC878	Hierarchical Linear Modeling
SOCI605	Data Collection and Analysis
SPPA718	Survey Research Methods
SPPA808	Qualitative Research Methods
STAT608	Statistical Research Methods
STAT613	Applied Multivariate Statistics
STAT615	Design and Analysis of Experiments
STAT656	Biostatistics
STAT818	Multivariate Analysis