



**Financial Planning, Housing
& Consumer Economics**
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

**FINANCIAL PLANNING,
HOUSING AND
CONSUMER ECONOMICS**



Financial Planning, Housing & Consumer Economics

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Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Economics graduate program. This handbook is designed to guide you during your time as a graduate student in FHCE. It is organized according to the major programmatic milestones you will encounter.

This handbook was developed to provide essential information and promote transparency and accuracy about policies, procedures, and program expectations for students enrolled in FHCE graduate programs. This handbook provides important information on basic policies and procedures for FHCE graduate students and faculty. However, it does not cover all University policies related to graduate education at UGA. Like all graduate programs at the University of Georgia (UGA), FHCE graduate programs operate within the Graduate School's administrative structure.

All faculty and graduate students should make sure they understand the relevant Graduate School policies. This should be regarded as an addition to the following information:

- [UGA Bulletin](#)
- [Theses and Dissertations Guidelines](#)
- [Graduate School's Policies](#)

While we strive to provide accurate and up-to-date information in this handbook, the Department reserves the right to make changes, revisions, and amendments to statements regarding policies, curricula, or other matters.

Students enrolled in the graduate program agree to comply with the Department's policies and requirements and to accommodate any necessary changes.

FHCE Graduate Program Administration

Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. Kim Skobba,
Meigs Professor, Housing Management and Policy
Office: House D, Room 201
Email: kskobba@uga.edu

The **Director of Graduate Studies** has overall responsibility for the Department's graduate programs. The Director of Graduate Studies is recommended by the Department Head and appointed by the Graduate School Dean. Questions or concerns about the overall program should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Graduate Program Administrator

Jessica Pritchard Mangum
Graduate Program Administrator
Office: 210 E Dawson Hall
Phone: 706-542-4655
Email: jessica.mangum@uga.edu

The **Graduate Program Administrator** provides essential support to graduate students throughout their academic journey and acts as a liaison between the Department and the Graduate School. Jessica assists with admissions, manages programs of study and graduation paperwork, and helps students navigate university systems. She is usually the main point of contact regarding program-related questions and the primary source of information regarding departmental requirements, Graduate School policies, and important deadlines.

Overview of Degree Programs and Areas of Emphasis

FHCE offers three graduate degree programs: 1) a Professional Master of Science degree; 2) a Master of Science with thesis degree; and 3) a Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Each degree program includes several different areas of emphasis. An ***area of emphasis, also called a concentration area***, is a focused course of study that enables students to develop specialized knowledge and skills in a particular subject.

Professional M.S. Degree Program (Non-Thesis) (M.S.-NT)

The Professional Master's program is designed to prepare students for an applied career. There are five areas of emphasis offered: Applied Consumer Analytics, Community Development, Consumer Economics, Financial Planning, and Housing Management and Policy.

M.S. Degree Program with Thesis (M.S.)

The M.S. thesis-based program is designed to develop advanced knowledge, research skills, and expertise in a specific FHCE area of emphasis. There are three areas of emphasis offered in this program: Consumer Economics, Financial Planning, and Housing Management and Policy.

Ph.D. Program

The doctoral program is designed to give students the highest level of research-based academic preparation. There are three areas of emphasis offered in the FHCE Ph.D. program: Consumer Economics, Financial Planning, and Housing Management and Policy.

Details about each program and program requirements begin on page 9.

2. Department and UGA Policies and Procedures

This section provides information about the procedures and policies of the Department of Financial Planning, Housing and Consumer Economics, and the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, as well as key UGA Graduate School Policies. Students and faculty members need to refer to the policies and procedures of the Department and the Graduate School when questions arise. It is the student's responsibility to be knowledgeable of and follow all Department and Graduate School policies. If the policies and procedures are unclear, please consult with the Department's Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Program Administrator.

Graduate School and departmental policies can occasionally conflict. Be sure to consult the Director of Graduate Studies when this happens, as some departmental policies take precedence over Graduate School policies, and vice versa.

Resolving Problems, Grievances, and Disagreements

FACS General Conflict Resolution Pathway

Graduate students are encouraged to utilize the various resources available through the University and Graduate School to address concerns or conflicts. The College of Family and Consumer Sciences is committed to providing multiple avenues for students to resolve issues in a fair and supportive manner.

In general, graduate students in need of assistance for resolving problems, grievances, and disagreements should follow this conflict resolution pathway:

1. Your Adviser
2. Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Head
3. College-level Administrator:
 - a. Academic/classroom issues: Assistant Dean for Academic Programs
 - b. Research-related issues: Associate Dean for Research
4. UGA Graduate School Associate Dean.

In many cases, relatively minor conflicts can be resolved through clear communication with your advisor (e.g., clarifying expectations, establishing working arrangements). The Director of Graduate Studies and Department Head are also available to provide consultation, advice, or mediation to facilitate outcomes amenable to all parties.

For more serious or sensitive matters where direct engagement with an advisor may not be appropriate, students are encouraged to first review procedures outlined in their program handbook as well as consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Head. Should the issue not be resolved at this level, the student and/or the Director of Graduate Studies should contact the appropriate college administrator.

For more information, see the [FACS Guidelines for Resolving Problems, Grievances, and Disagreements](#)

Academic Probation, Remediation, and Dismissal

Graduate School Probation and Dismissal

Students with a cumulative graduate course GPA below 3.0 for two consecutive terms are placed on academic probation by the Graduate School. They then must make a 3.0 or higher GPA (in graduate courses) every succeeding semester until the cumulative graduate GPA is 3.0 or above. If they make below a 3.0 semester graduate GPA while on probation, they are dismissed. When students repeat a graduate course, the last grade will be utilized to calculate the cumulative graduate GPA that is used for probation, dismissal, admission to candidacy, and graduation. Grades of S, U, I, and V will not be used in calculating the cumulative graduate average. However, when a grade of I converts to F, this may result in an action of probation or dismissal for the semester in which the conversion takes place, even if the student is not registered for the semester in which it converted.

Students may also be dismissed by the Graduate School as a result of sanctions issued by one of the following UGA offices: Office of Academic Honesty and Student Appeals, Equal Opportunity Office, Office of Research, Office of Student Conduct.

Graduate Assistant Eligibility While on Academic Probation

Graduate students who are placed on academic warning may not have their assistantship removed unless

it is deemed by the major professor (if applicable), in consultation with the director of graduate studies and unit head, that the activities associated with the assistantship are contributing to the student's impaired academic performance. In this case, an alternative source of funding that will allow the student to focus on academic performance should be considered. If a student is subsequently placed on probation, the decision to change the source of or remove an assistantship shall be determined by the major professor (if applicable) in consultation with the director of graduate studies and unit head.

Link to the [Graduate School Probation and Dismissal Policy](#)

FHCE Remediation and Dismissal Policy

Graduate students in FHCE may be dismissed from the program for the following reasons:

- Unsatisfactory academic progress
- Failure to pass the preliminary examination or oral comprehensive examination after two attempts [PhD students only]
- No clear path to degree completion

Satisfactory Academic Progress

The following criteria define satisfactory academic progress:

- Maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Enrolling and successfully completing required program coursework
- Completing programmatic milestones in a timely manner
- Engaged in scholarly activities appropriate for degree and stage in the program
- Performing graduate assistantships in a satisfactory manner

Students who do not demonstrate satisfactory academic progress in one or more areas will be notified by their major professor. The major professor will provide a written remediation plan that describes the area(s) of concern, the actions required to achieve satisfactory progress, and a clear timeline for completion and evaluation.

Graduate faculty may also recommend dismissal for students who are falling significantly short despite prior remediation OR for a transgression serious enough to warrant dismissal without first putting a remediation plan in place.

No Clear Path to Degree Completion

Graduate students who are unable to identify a major professor or who cannot form an advisory committee will be placed on a status called "No clear path to degree completion." Students will be given one semester after being placed on this status to identify a major professor or form a committee. Students should work closely with the Director of Graduate Studies to resolve the problem. If the situation is not resolved during this semester, the student can be dismissed from the program.

Students may also be dismissed by the Graduate School as a result of sanctions issued by one of the following UGA offices: Office of Academic Honesty and Student Appeals, Equal Opportunity Office, Office of Research, Office of Student Conduct.

Dismissal Appeals

A student who is dismissed from a graduate program may appeal the decision within 30 days to the FHCE Graduate Policy and Admissions Committee. Following an appeals meeting, the Committee has two weeks to notify the student in writing of its decision. The student has 30 days to appeal to the College of Family and Consumer Sciences Appeals Committee if the FHCE Graduate Policy Committee denies the appeal. If the College of Family and Consumer Sciences Appeals Committee denies the

appeal, the student has 30 days to appeal to the Graduate School.

Students who are dismissed by the Graduate School for academic reasons may appeal the dismissal to the Graduate Council. The appeal must be submitted to the Dean within 30 calendar days following receipt of notice of dismissal. Information concerning the appeal process may be obtained in the Graduate School. Dismissals by the Graduate School due to violations of (i) the Academic Honesty Policy, (ii) the Sexual Misconduct Policy or Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, (iii) the Research Misconduct Policy, or (iv) Student Code of Conduct cannot be appealed to Graduate Council. See the Graduate School Appeals policy for more information.

Readmission Following Dismissal

Students who are dismissed may reapply to the Graduate School for admission to the same graduate program or a different degree-granting unit, unless the dismissal was the result of (i) sanctions issued by one of the following UGA offices: Office of Academic Honesty and Student Appeals, Equal Opportunity Office, Office of Research, or Office of Student Conduct, or (ii) a violation of ethical/professional standards in program's handbook (or professional society).

Enrollment Policies

Minimum Credit Hours

Graduate students must register for a minimum of 3 hours of graduate or professional credit during any semester in which they use University facilities and/or staff time. A student who holds an assistantship must register for a minimum of 12 hours of graduate credit fall and spring semesters and 9 hours of graduate credit during the summer semester.

Graduate Continuous Enrollment Policy

All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must maintain minimum continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) graduate or professional course credits in at least two semesters per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer), including the 3 hours of graduate credit that is required for registration during the semester in which degree requirements are complete, until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated. For more detailed information, please visit the [Graduate School's enrollment policy website](#).

Additional policies and procedures of the University of Georgia Graduate School provide important information that should be used in conjunction with the policies and procedures in the Department of Financial Planning, Housing and Consumer Economics. Graduate School policies and procedures are available in the Graduate School Website.

3. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Initial Advisor, Major Professor and Advisory Committee

Initial Advisor

Master's students and PhD students in some emphasis areas will be advised by an initial, temporary advisor for their first semester before a major professor is assigned or selected. Ph.D. students are often assigned a major professor prior to entering the program. The following is a point of contact for each emphasis for graduate students who have not yet been assigned or selected a major professor. Contact the Graduate Program Administrator if you are unsure of your point of contact or major professor.

Name	Research Area	email
Dr. John Grable	Financial Planning	grable@uga.edu
Dr. Kristy Archuleta	Behavioral Financial Planning & Financial Therapy	karchuleta@uga.edu
Dr. Kim Skobba	Housing Management Policy	kskobba@uga.edu
Dr. Diann Moorman	Consumer Economics	dmoorman@uga.edu
Dr. Dee Warmath	Consumer Analytics	warmath@uga.edu

Major Professor

A major professor is the student's mentor throughout graduate study. The student consults with the major professor and the Advisory Committee about all aspects of the student's graduate program. Faculty service as major professor and Advisory Committee member is voluntary and is formalized when the Advisory Committee form is submitted to the Graduate School within the [Enrolled Student Progress Portal](#). Students should meet with their major professor on a regular basis and with their Advisory Committee at least yearly. It is FHCE practice for non-thesis students to have an Advisory Committee. Consult with your major professor about how to proceed with your advisory committee selection and procedures.

For **M.S. (Thesis) and Ph.D.** students, the major professor advises and approves courses and the student's program of study, their research topic as well as completion of the thesis/dissertation proposal and final document. For **M.S. Non-Thesis** students, the major professor advises and approves coursework and the student's program of study, the final oral examination and final presentation or applied internship project.

Selection and Function of Advisory Committees

Students select an Advisory Committee based on compatibility of research interests, schedules, personalities, and working styles. The major professor and at least one other member must be FHCE faculty with Graduate Faculty status. Additional members must be Graduate Faculty members, but not necessarily FHCE faculty members. If appropriate, additional voting members may be appointed to the

committee. See the Graduate School's policies concerning Advisory Committee composition for details.

Graduate Advisory Committees

All graduate students must form an Advisory Committee, which is comprised of three (minimum) graduate faculty members who are primarily from within the student's concentration area or the FHCE department. One of the three faculty members should be the Major Professor of the Advisory Committee.

To help select the Major Professor and the Advisory Committee, graduate students should become acquainted with the faculty and their areas of expertise. Faculty members are willing to discuss professional and research interests and pursue possible research topics with students. Those discussions form the basis for the student's selection of a major professor and Advisory Committee. Members of the faculty who agree to serve on an Advisory Committee indicate their agreement by signing the Advisory Committee Form.

Advisory Committee Selection Timeline and Forms

Students should select the Advisory Committee by the following deadlines:

Degree Type	Deadline
M.S. Students	End of first semester
M.S. Non-Thesis Students	End of first semester
Ph.D. Students	End of second semester

Once Advisory Committee members are identified, the student completes the Graduate School [Advisory Committee Form](#) online. The form is routed to the student's Major Professor, Advisory Committee members, and the Director of Graduate Studies for approval. If changes in the Advisory Committee members are required, the student must prepare and submit a new Advisory Committee form. If a change in major professor is requested, the student should work with the Director of Graduate Studies to initiate the change.

Ph.D. Declaration of Emphasis Area

Students are required to declare an emphasis area when completing their advisory committee form. When selecting an advisory committee, Ph.D. students must select a major professor from the emphasis area(s) identified on the advisory committee form. If multiple emphasis areas are selected, the major professor and overall committee makeup should reflect this diversity (i.e., committee members should be from the multiple emphasis areas). In accord with the student's research agenda, students are encouraged to have at least one committee member from outside the emphasis area. Faculty emphasis areas and research interests are at <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/graduate-faculty>.

Degree Progression and Program Time Limits

Annual Degree Progression Meeting and Form

Each year, students must schedule a meeting with their major professor to discuss degree progression. Students complete the Progression Toward Degree Form, which will be emailed by the Graduate Program administrator. The form is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Program Completion Time Limits

The pace at which students complete their coursework varies for each individual student. Most master's degree programs are designed to be completed in one to two years. The PhD program typically takes four or five years to complete. The Graduate School has time limits for completion, which are explained below.

For students who matriculated before Fall 2024:

All requirements for the doctoral degree, with the exception of the dissertation and oral defense, must be completed within a period of six (6) calendar years following initial enrollment/registration in the program. Doctoral candidates must successfully defend their dissertation within five (5) years after admission to candidacy. When a student's candidacy expires, readmission to candidacy through taking another oral examination is required. The student may also be asked to produce additional written products related to his or her Area of Specialization prior to the new oral examination.

For students who matriculate in Fall 2024 and later:

All requirements for the doctoral degree and the degree must be awarded within eight (8) calendar years after initial enrollment/registration in the program. The eight-year time limit does not include approved periods of leave.

Students who fail to complete their degrees within 8 years after initial enrollment will be considered as not making satisfactory progress to degree completion and will be dismissed from Graduate School. The Graduate School will notify all doctoral students when they have reached the 7-year mark to warn them about the impending 8-year degree time limit.

All requirements for the Ph.D. degree, except the dissertation and final oral examination, must be completed within a period of eight years. A Ph.D. candidate who fails to complete all degree requirements within five years after passing the comprehensive examination is required to take the comprehensive examinations again and be admitted to candidacy a second time.

4. Degree Program Requirements

Program of Study (POS)

The Program of Study (POS) form in DegreeWorks lists the courses students plan to take and when. Students should consult with their major professor and Advisory Committee members to plan their program coursework. All students must complete a full Program of Study for Master of Science Candidates for M.S. students or a full Doctoral Program of Study for Ph.D. students ("Full Plan"). In addition, Ph.D. students first must complete a partial program of study ("Partial Plan") in DegreeWorks, to be approved by the Department's Director of Graduate Studies.

Minor changes in the POS may be approved by the major professor after consulting with committee members; major changes require a meeting of the committee. Students may take courses not listed on the POS. However, if plans change and a course listed on the POS is **not** taken, the student must submit a revised program of study in DegreeWorks to make the change ("Revise Approved Full Plan"). The Graduate School requires that a student take **every** course listed on the POS.

Students must receive a B- or higher for a course to count towards a FHCE graduate student's

program of study. The student may retake a FHCE graduate course one time. If the student earns a grade lower than a B- when retaking a FHCE graduate course, that course cannot be used in the student's program of study. If the course is required, the student may be counseled out of the program.

Transfer Credits

Students who have earned graduate credit at a previously attended institution may be eligible to transfer credit to their program when the credit is appropriate to the program, is recommended by the student's major professor and the Director of Graduate Studies, and receives approval from the dean of the Graduate School. The number and proportion of credits is determined by Graduate School policy. For more information, refer to the Graduate School's [Acceptance of Credit by Transfer](#) policy.

GradFirst and Split-Level Courses

GradFirst Course

As required by the Graduate School, all graduate students must enroll in a one-hour GradFirst course within the first year of the students' studies, preferably in the first semester. This does not apply to students only seeking a certificate and NOT a degree.

If you are an online student: Approved online sections are not visible on Athena to prevent the seats from being enrolled by students who could otherwise take an in-person section. However, we will work directly with online students to advise them on an option that fits their schedule and location. In these cases, please contact gradfirst@uga.edu for assistance.

More information can be found here: <https://grad.uga.edu/gradfirst/>

Split-Level Courses

Split-level courses are courses that include an undergraduate level and graduate level within the same course (e.g., FHCE 4000/FHCE 6000). Students who completed an undergraduate level of a split-level course cannot receive credit for the graduate level of the course *even if the student completes the graduate-level syllabus*.

FHCE M.S. Thesis and Non-Thesis Programs

M.S. Thesis Degree Program

The M.S. program offers flexibility in selecting coursework to meet a variety of career goals in FHCE areas of emphasis. Students must complete 19 hours of core coursework, 9 hours in their chosen area of concentration, 6 hours in allied department(s) as determined in consultation with the Advisory Committee and a master's thesis. Students enrolled in the thesis-based master's program are required to write and defend a thesis. See the Thesis and Dissertation section for more information on this requirement.

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/FHCE_MS_Requirements.pdf

M.S. Non-Thesis Degree Program (Applied Consumer Analytics Concentration)

The M.S. Non-Thesis program in Applied Consumer Analytics offers coursework to acquire the analytical skills needed to transform data into practical information for use in organizational and policy decisions. Specific requirements are outlined here

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSNT_Consumer_Analytics_Curriculum_1.pdf

M.S. Non-Thesis Degree Program (Community Development)

The M.S. Non-Thesis program in Community Development offers interdisciplinary coursework that links conceptual knowledge with practical experience to meet students' career goals. Link to the requirements worksheet is shown below:

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSNT_Community_Development_Curriculum- w GradFirst 2025.pdf

M.S. Non-Thesis Degree Program (Consumer Economics Concentration)

The M.S. Non-Thesis program in Consumer Economics offers two tracks that students can choose to pursue. Option 1: Consumer Economics track or Option 2: Applied Consumer Analytics track. Both tracks offer extensive coursework to meet students' career goals in the Option they choose to pursue. Link to the requirements worksheet is shown below:

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSNT_Consumer_Economics_Curriculum- w GradFirst.pdf

M.S. Non-Thesis Degree Program (Financial Planning Concentration)

The M.S. Non-Thesis program in financial planning offers extensive coursework to meet students' career goals in an applied financial planning setting. Students have the option of pursuing either Options 1: the Financial Planning track or Option 2: the Behavioral Financial Planning/Financial Therapy track. Students complete 4 hours of core coursework, and pursue the remaining 27 credit hours in the Option that they choose to pursue. Specific requirements are outlined here

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSNT_Financial_Planning_Curriculum w GradFirst.pdf

M.S. Non-Thesis Degree Program (Housing Management and Policy Concentration)

The M.S. Non-Thesis program in Housing Management and Policy offers coursework to meet students' career goals in this emphasis that blends social and behavioral sciences, public policy, planning, management and economics. Specific requirements are outlined here:

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/MSNT_Housing_Management_and_Policy_Curriculum- w GradFirst.pdf

M.S. and Non-Thesis Final Exams

M.S. students are required by the Graduate School to pass a final/capstone project over their Program of Study (POS). The part of the final/capstone project dealing with the program of study may be written or oral; the part concerned with the thesis or capstone project must be an oral presentation. The Advisory Committee administers the final/capstone project presentation. All members of the Advisory Committee must be present for the entire oral presentation. Students should discuss the final/capstone approval form with their major professor, who should consult with the Advisory Committee as to the timing of the presentation.

The final exam/capstone form can be found here:

<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/portfolioandexamform.pdf>

FHCE Doctoral Degree Program

The FHCE Ph.D. program provides students with a comprehensive research-based education in consumer economics, financial planning, or housing, complemented with allied coursework in applied economics, research methods and statistics. Emphasis areas include consumer economics, financial planning, and/or housing.

Ph.D. Coursework

The Ph.D. degree requires at least 60 semester hours of coursework and 30 consecutive semester hours of residency. Students must receive a B- or higher for a course to count towards a FHCE graduate student's program of study. The student may retake a FHCE graduate course one time. If the student earns a grade lower than a B- when retaking a FHCE graduate course, that course cannot be used in the student's program of study. If the course is required, the student may be counseled out of the program.

Courses taken in the M.S. program may be used to satisfy Program of Study requirements; courses used to satisfy the requirements of one degree cannot be used to satisfy the requirements of another ([Graduate Bulletin](#)). Alternative courses are subject to Advisory Committee approval.

Specific requirements are outlined here:

https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/FHCE_2025_Course_Requirements_PhD_Approved_Fall_2025.pdf

Ph.D. Seminar

Ph.D. students are required to enroll in a one-hour seminar offered by the Department each semester they are taking courses. If a student has a conflict with the course time due to assistantship responsibilities or the scheduling of required courses, then the student must consult the major professor and the Director of Graduate Studies and provide written justification to include with the student's portfolio (see below).

Doctoral Program Milestones

Ph.D. Preliminary Exam

The preliminary exam is a significant milestone for doctoral students in the Department of Financial Planning, Housing and Consumer Economics (FHCE). The exam serves as an early assessment of the student's ability to integrate and apply foundational knowledge to ensure that a student is qualified to continue the coursework required in their doctoral program of study. The exam covers FHCE 8000: Research Methods, FHCE 8100: Theory, and graduate-level introductory statistics taken in the first year of doctoral study. To be eligible to take the preliminary exam, students must have completed these three courses with a grade of B or higher prior to the exam date. Students will be notified of the exam date and time and provided a study guide in May, with the primary exam administered the week before fall semester classes begin. Students who are eligible for testing accommodations are responsible for contacting UGA Accessibility and Testing prior to the exam date.

Taking the Exam

Eligible students are expected to sit for the annual preliminary exam at the scheduled date and time. Deferrals or alternate accommodations may be granted only under documentable, extraordinary circumstances:

- Compelling personal circumstances such as the death of an immediate family member, jury duty/legal summons, mandatory military service, or active childbirth/parental leave.
- Severe illness or medical emergencies requiring hospitalization affecting the student or a direct dependent.
- Academic or professional schedule conflicts directly related to completing degree requirements

(e.g., presenting research at a conference in the student's field of study).

In the case of unforeseen emergencies, students must contact the Director of Graduate Studies no later than 24 hours after the test date. Supporting documentation may be requested. Students with known conflicts must notify the Director of Graduate Studies and provide required documentation at least 30 days prior to the exam. Students with short-term conflicts must take a makeup exam within 7 to 14 days of the scheduled preliminary exam date. Makeup exams for longer-term circumstances will be conducted in January, during the week prior to the start of the spring semester.

The following reasons are not considered valid grounds for missing or deferring the preliminary examination:

- Personal leisure travel, routine family events, or vacations scheduled during the exam period.
- Non-mandatory work commitments or conflicting employment schedules.
- Misreading the exam schedule or location.
- Requesting additional preparation/study time.

Missing the preliminary exam for reasons other than an approved, documented reason will count as the first exam attempt and will result in an automatic failure.

Passing the Exam

To achieve a passing grade, a student must earn a minimum score of 70% on the exam. This threshold reflects the baseline level of mastery required for advanced study in the program.

Retaking or Making Up the Exam

Retake exams and long-term makeup exams will be conducted the week before the spring semester begins in January. The following students will be required to take the January exam:

- Students who failed the first exam attempt.
- Students who missed the first exam due to unapproved circumstances.
- Students who were granted a deferral due to longer-term approved circumstances in the fall.
- Second-year students who were ineligible in the fall due to missing or incomplete required coursework, but who have completed all eligible prerequisite coursework by the end of the fall semester.

Failing the Second Exam Attempt

Students who do not successfully pass the preliminary examination on their second attempt, or who miss two consecutive exams for unapproved reasons, will be formally recommended for dismissal from the doctoral program at the conclusion of the spring academic term. If eligible based on earned credits and performance, the exam committee may recommend the student be allowed to fulfill remaining requirements to graduate with a master's degree rather than proceeding in the doctoral program. Departmental funding (assistantships, stipends, or fellowships) will conclude at the end of the term in which the second failure occurs.

Ph.D. Portfolio

In addition to coursework, FHCE Ph.D. students are expected to have appropriate experience in research, teaching, and service. Students will document these experiences in their Doctoral Program

Portfolio. The student's Advisory Committee will annually review whether the student is satisfactorily progressing towards fulfilling the research, teaching and service experience requirements in their Doctoral Program portfolio and approve any additional experiences as needed.

The Doctoral Program Portfolio Checklist

All doctoral students are required to complete items identified in the [Doctoral Program Portfolio Checklist](#). When a student's doctoral program portfolio has been approved as completed by the committee, the student can then proceed to the Oral Comprehensive Examination where they are required to present and defend their doctoral program portfolio.

Helpful Hint: The Doctoral Portfolio Checklist can be found online with all other forms:

<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/graduate-forms>

Teaching Preparation

The University requires students who have no prior college-level teaching experience to enroll in GRSC 7770 before they are given teaching responsibility. International students who were required to submit TOEFL scores must adhere to the university's English competency requirements, outlined at <https://ctl.uga.edu/grad-student/ta-policy/>

When Ph.D. students desire to teach a course, they must make that request in writing to the department head by January of the **preceding academic year (approximately 18 months)**. This early notification is necessary in order to deal with budget requests and teaching assignments. The student's Advisory Committee will determine if prior teaching experience fulfills the teaching and service expectations.

Completion of Doctoral Portfolio and Final Program of Study

Before the completion of their Doctoral Program Portfolio requirements, the student must have an approved full program of study in Degreeworks. The student's approved advisory committee must sign off on the program of study as well as the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School.

Oral Comprehensive Exam

Upon completing all coursework, passing the preliminary exam, and completing all doctoral program portfolio requirements, students will proceed to present their portfolio in the oral comprehensive exam. After passing the oral comprehensive exam, students are admitted to candidacy by the Department and the Graduate School.

Scheduling of Oral Comprehensive Exams

After completing all Doctoral Program Portfolio requirements, a student must wait at least two weeks before taking the oral comprehensive examination. A final Program of Study must also be on file with the Graduate School before the examination can be scheduled. The major professor or the student must notify the Graduate Program Administrator of the examination date and time by email. This notification must be received at least two weeks before the examination, as required by the Graduate School. The oral comprehensive examination is open to the university community. The examination portion is a closed session and is administered by the student's Advisory Committee. All committee members must be present.

Oral Examination Requirements

The oral exam may cover all areas of the student's Doctoral Program Portfolio or only selected areas. Two out of three (or a similar ratio if there are more than three Advisory Committee members) of the student's Advisory Committee members must vote pass for the student to pass. If the student passes, the student must submit the Graduate School's [Application for the Admission to Candidacy form](#) (signed by the major professor and Director of Graduate Studies) to the Graduate School along with the Graduate School's [Comprehensive Exam Form](#). The [FHCE Departmental Ph.D. Oral Comprehensive Exam form](#) is signed by the Advisory Committee and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

If the student's performance on the oral comprehensive exam is unsatisfactory, the Advisory Committee may require remedial work. Remedial work must be specified on the [FHCE Departmental Ph.D. Oral Comprehensive Exam Form](#). After the student completes the prescribed remedial work, the student's Advisory Committee may schedule one oral re-examination. The oral exam must be announced a second time to the Graduate School. Students must notify the Graduate Program Administrator via email at least two weeks prior to the oral exam retake. If the student does not receive two out of three (or similar ratio if more than three Advisory Committee members) passing votes the second time, the student is dismissed from the program.

Admission to Ph.D. Candidacy

Doctoral students are admitted to candidacy after passing the oral comprehensive exam. The [Admission to Candidacy form](#) is a certification by the doctoral student's major department that the student has demonstrated the ability to do acceptable graduate work in the field of study.

The final milestones in the PhD program include the development of the dissertation proposal, writing of the dissertation, and dissertation defense. These milestones are covered in the next section.

5. Master's Thesis and Ph.D. Dissertation

Master's students and doctoral students are required to write a thesis or dissertation, respectively. The first step is to develop a proposal or prospectus.

The Proposal/Prospectus

The proposal is often composed of the first three chapters of the thesis or dissertation. If the student is writing a manuscript style dissertation (in which Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are articles), they need to discuss the format of the proposal with the major professor. Once work begins on the research proposal the major professor will provide guidance and critical assessment, but the student is ultimately responsible for the proposal's development. Students who plan to use data involving human subjects must complete the required [Human Subjects training](#) and receive approval to complete research involving human subjects from the UGA [Institutional Review Board](#).

The proposal is refined through numerous drafts, which is a new but essential experience for many students. The goal is to produce a proposal that will receive the Advisory Committee's approval and that will guide the entirety of the research. Graduate students work with their major professor and Advisory Committee to plan a realistic time schedule for the completion of their research. Please note that committee service is voluntary and faculty members need adequate time (at least two

weeks) to respond to drafts and return requested feedback.

The format of theses and dissertations is formal and carefully prescribed. Be sure to follow the Graduate School format guidelines precisely (in the [Graduate School Style Manual](#)). On other matters of style consult the current *APA Publication Manual*. Check the [Graduate School deadlines](#) for electronically submitting a thesis or dissertation for format check in the semester of graduation; content changes can still be made to the thesis or dissertation after the format check.

Advisory Committee Action on Proposal

After the major professor determines that the proposal has been refined sufficiently, the student is responsible for scheduling the proposal meeting with the Advisory Committee. Please note that the decision to schedule the proposal meeting rests with the advisor, and that the student must already have passed the written and oral exams and be admitted to candidacy before a dissertation proposal meeting may be held. **The Advisory Committee must be given adequate time to review the proposal – a minimum of two weeks for M.S. proposals and three weeks for Ph.D. proposals.** The student should discuss the format of the meeting with the major professor. Generally, students give a summary of the proposal and provide an outline of the next research steps. Committee members will then ask questions, discuss concerns, and suggest revisions. Editorial changes in the proposal that reflect suggestions or requirements from the Advisory Committee are the student's responsibility. The student should prepare the departmental form, [FHCE Advisory Committee Action on Student's Thesis Proposal](#) or [FHCE Advisory Committee Action on Dissertation Proposal](#), and bring it to the meeting. If the committee approves the proposal, the student secures the committee members' signatures, then submits the form to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students have two opportunities to gain approval for their thesis or dissertation proposal. If the Advisory Committee does not approve the proposal the first time, the student can revise and present a subsequent proposal. If the second proposal is not approved—regardless of composition of advisory committee members—the student may be counseled out of the program.

The Oral Defense

When the major professor agrees that the full thesis or dissertation is ready for Advisory Committee evaluation, the student distributes copies to the Advisory Committee. The student also prepares the [Approval Form for Master's Thesis, Defense and Final Exam](#) or the [Approval Form for Doctoral Dissertation and Final Oral Examination](#) and secures the major professor's signature on Part I. Each of these forms includes multiple sections that require signatures; it is the student's responsibility to retain the form until all three parts of the form are completed. A student may defend a thesis or doctoral dissertation when the major professor and one (or similar ratio if there are more than three Advisory Committee members) other Advisory Committee member agree that the thesis or dissertation is ready for defense and are willing to sign Part II of the form. The Advisory Committee must have a minimum of two weeks to read a thesis and a minimum



Important Policy:
For Ph.D. students, the Graduate Coordinator Assistant must be notified at least two weeks prior to the oral defense.

of three weeks to read a dissertation.

The student is responsible for scheduling the defense and reserving the room. The major professor notifies the department of the scheduled defense. In addition, doctoral students must notify the Graduate Program Administrator via email at least two weeks prior to the defense so that the Graduate School can be notified within the required timeframe. The University of Georgia requires that all defenses are open to the entire university community.

The oral defense must be scheduled at least three weeks prior to the Graduate School's final date for receipt of the corrected thesis or dissertation. All students must enroll for a minimum of three credit hours in the semester in which the degree requirements are completed.

Students should discuss the format of the meeting with the major professor. Generally, students give a summary of the research and major findings. The audience will then ask questions, discuss concerns, and suggest revisions. Parts II and III of the Approval Form are completed at the final defense.

During the final defense, committee members will almost certainly recommend changes. If these are minor, they are usually made under the advisor's supervision. Should major changes be necessary, it is likely that the Advisory Committee will read the thesis or dissertation again. It is not the Advisory Committee's responsibility to edit the thesis or dissertation, nor is it the committee's responsibility to ensure that it meets the Graduate School's formatting requirements. Students should work directly with the Graduate School in that regard. Students may obtain professional editing services if they have a weakness in this area.

Students submit their thesis or dissertation electronically. Some students elect *not* to have their thesis or dissertation released to the Internet since some journals consider this as being previously published.

Thesis/Dissertation Seminars

All graduate students are encouraged to present a seminar based on their thesis or dissertation. Ideally, this seminar takes place in the early stages of development so feedback from peers and faculty can be incorporated into the thesis or dissertation.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Per the Graduate Bulletin, the master's thesis or capstone project demonstrates independent judgment in developing a problem from primary sources, and a dissertation represents originality in research, independent thinking, scholarly ability, and technical mastery of a field of study. It is the responsibility of the advisory committee to review and evaluate the thesis or dissertation as a representation of a student's individual effort. As such, the use of generative AI in theses and dissertations is considered unauthorized assistance per the Academic Code of Honesty and is prohibited unless specifically authorized by members of the advisory committee for use within the approved scope. If approved by the advisory committee, the extent of generative AI usage should be disclosed in a statement within the thesis or dissertation.

Overview of Steps for Thesis or Dissertation Defense

Major professor determines the thesis or dissertation is ready for Advisory Committee



Major professor signs Part I of Approval form or Master's Thesis, Defense and Final Exam or Approval Form for Doctoral Dissertation and Final Oral Examination form



Student distributes copies of the thesis or dissertation to the Advisory Committee

- MS Advisory Committees have at least two weeks to review the thesis
- Ph.D. Advisory Committees have at least three weeks to review the dissertation



Major professor and once committee member (or similar ratio if there are more members) agree thesis or dissertation may be defended



Student schedules the oral defense and final examination; major professor informs department

- Must be scheduled at least three weeks before the Graduate School's final date of receipt of the corrected copy of the thesis or dissertation
- Major professor must notify Graduate Coordinator Assistant of dissertation defense and final examination schedule at least two weeks prior to defense



Oral defense. Advisory Committee signs Part II and III or approval form at oral defense. Must receive two out of three (or similar ratio) passing votes

- Thesis or dissertation is submitted for first format check to Graduate School



Student completes thesis or dissertation edits; major professor signs Part IV of approval form



Student submits final thesis or dissertation to Graduate School



Approval form signed by Graduate Coordinator and is submitted to Graduate School

Timeline for Master of Science (Thesis) Degree*

Semester	Action	Form
1st semester	1) Submit Program of Study plan in DegreeWorks and begin graduate courses 2) Choose major professor and Advisory Committee 3) Meet with Advisory Committee by end of semester (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying Advisory Committee members)	Advisory Committee form Program of Study form
2nd Semester	1) Prepare Full Program of Study 2) Apply for Graduation	Program of Study form Athena --> Student --> Apply to graduate
3rd Semester	1) Major professor approves thesis proposal 2) Thesis proposal defense (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying Advisory Committee members) 3) Conduct research and write thesis	Advisory Committee Action on Student's Thesis Proposal
4th Semester	1) Submit thesis for first format check 2) Major professor approves thesis 3) Schedule thesis defense (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying Advisory Committee members) 4) Thesis Defense and Final Exam form 5) Major professor approves final changes to thesis 6) Director of Graduate Studies approves thesis 7) Graduate!	ETD Format Check Thesis Defense and Final Exam Approval form Exit Survey

*Can be condensed into 2 semesters

Timeline for Master of Science, Non-Thesis (Financial Planning, On-Campus, Online) Degree*

Semester	Action	Form
1st semester	1) Submit program plan in DegreeWorks and begin graduate courses 2) Choose major professor and Advisory Committee 3) Meet with Advisory Committee by end of semester (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying Advisory Committee members)	Submit program plan in DegreeWorks Advisory Committee form -> AdvCmte tab
2nd Semester	1) Revise and submit final Program of Study	Program of Study form
3rd Semester	1) Apply for Graduation	Athena --> Student --> Apply to graduate
4th Semester	1) Major professor approves Capstone Presentation 2) Schedule Capstone Presentation (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying Advisory Committee members) 3) Capstone Presentation and Final Exam 4) Major Professor approves final changes to Capstone 5) Director of Graduate Studies approves Capstone 6) Graduate!	Thesis Defense and Final Exam Approval form Exit Survey

*Can be condensed into 2 semesters

Timeline for Master of Science Non-Thesis (CE, CA, CMD, FP & HMP) Completion*

Semester	Action	Form
1st semester	1) Submit program plan in DegreeWorks and begin graduate courses 2) Choose major professor and Advisory Committee 3) Meet with Advisory Committee by end of semester (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying Advisory Committee members)	Submit program plan in DegreeWorks Advisory Committee form -> AdvCmte tab
2nd Semester	1) Prepare Program of Study form; include courses the prepare student for research/quantitative applied internship 2) Schedule Advisory Committee meeting to review career goals and preliminary research/internship goals	Program of Study form
3rd Semester	1) Apply for Graduation 2) Identify research/applied quantitative internship host organization and develop plan	Athena --> Student --> Apply to graduate
4th Semester	1) Complete research/quantitative internship 2) Schedule Presentation and Final Exam (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying Advisory Committee members) 3) Research/Internship Presentation and Final Exam 5) Director of Graduate Studies approves Presentation/Final Exam 6) Graduate!	Research/Internship and Final Exam Approval form Exit Survey

*Can be condensed into 2 semesters

Exact timelines vary between degree programs, please see your faculty advisor for guidance

Timeline for Doctoral Degree Completion

Semester	Action	Form
1st semester	1) Submit program plan in DegreeWorks and begin graduate courses	Submit program plan in DegreeWorks
2nd semester	1) Choose major professor and Advisory Committee 2) Begin working on Portfolio Components -- Publications -- Presentations -- Teaching or Outreach -- Leadership/Citizenship 3) Complete PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form	Advisory Committee form -> AdvCmte tab Partial Program of Study form See Doctoral Portfolio Checklist
3rd Semester	1) Pass the Preliminary Exam 2) Prepare Preliminary Program of Study 3) Meet with Advisory Committee by end of semester 4) Continue working on Portfolio Requirements	PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form
4th Semester	1) Complete Portfolio Requirements 2) Receive approval of portfolio by Advisory Committee 3) Complete PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form	See Doctoral Portfolio Checklist
5th Semester	1) Schedule Oral Exam/Portfolio Defense (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying committee members) 2) Oral Exam/Portfolio Defense	See Doctoral Portfolio Checklist PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form

Departmental and Graduate School forms may be found at <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/fhce/graduate-forms>

Updated: 08/15/2025

4) Application for Admission to Candidacy

[Oral Defense form](#)

[Full Program of Study form](#)

[Application for Admission to Candidacy](#)

6th
Semester

1) Major professor approves dissertation proposal

2) Schedule dissertation proposal defense (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying committee members)

3) Apply for graduation in Athena

5) Begin research for dissertation

6) Complete PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form

[Dissertation Proposal Defense form](#)

[Athena --> Student --> Apply to Graduate](#)

7th
Semester

1) Conduct research and write dissertation

[PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form](#)

8th
Semester

1) Major professor approves dissertation

2) Schedule Dissertation Oral Defense (student and major professor coordinate reserving room and notifying committee members)

3) Submit information to Grad School for Commencement Program

4) Submit dissertation to Graduate School for first format check

5) Dissertation Defense and Final Exam

6) Major professor approves final changes to dissertation

7) Director of Graduate Studies approves dissertation

8) Complete PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form

9) Graduate!

[Dissertation Defense Approval form](#)

[Graduation Ceremony Form](#)



[Dissertation Defense Approval form](#)

[PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form](#)