



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

2025-2026

GRADUATE

HANDBOOK

**FINANCIAL PLANNING,
HOUSING AND
CONSUMER ECONOMICS**



Financial Planning, Housing & Consumer Economics

GRADUATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

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FHCE GRADUATE PROGRAMS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

FHCE Policies and Procedures

This handbook provides information about the **procedures and policies of the Department of Financial Planning, Housing and Consumer Economics**. 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](#).

Students and faculty members need to refer to the policies and procedures of the department and 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.

Occasionally, Graduate School and departmental policies are inconsistent; be certain to consult the Director of Graduate Studies when these cases arise as some departmental policies supersede the Graduate School's policies and vice versa.

Did you know?

Many forms are required for graduate study. The Graduate Coordinator must sign most forms.

The Role of the Director of Graduate Studies

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 or the Graduate Program Administrator.

Graduate Continuous Enrollment Policy

The Graduate School requires all students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia to maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until all degree requirements are completed. For more detailed information, please visit the [Graduate School's enrollment policy website](#).

Time Limit

All requirements for the M.S. and M.S.-NT degrees must be completed in [six years](#). 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.

Appeals Procedure

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.

Degree Progression Evaluation

Each year, students must schedule a meeting with their Advisory Committees to discuss degree progression. Students complete Section A of the [Degree Progression Evaluation form](#); the Advisory Committee completes and signs Section B. The form is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Admission to Ph.D. Program without Master's Degree

For applicants seeking admission to the Ph.D. program without first completing a master's degree, the Graduate Admissions Committee seeks applicants with the following criteria:

- 1200 combined quantitative and verbal GRE score (or equivalent if using new GRE or GMAT);
- 3.5 undergraduate grade point average;
- Evidence of the ability to contribute to the completion of a research paper (such as a published scholarly journal article, Honor's thesis, CURO paper, etc.);
- Outstanding letters of recommendation.

The Department may also require an interview with candidates that meet most of the above criteria for consideration for acceptance as a straight-to-Ph.D. candidate.

Helpful Hint:
Become very familiar with Graduate School and Departmental Graduate Policies

Graduate Advisory Committees (M.S. Thesis and Non-Thesis and Ph.D.)

All graduate students must formulate an Advisory Committee, which is comprised of three (minimum) graduate faculty members that 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. 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

Selection of a Major Professor

In the Master's program, select faculty serve as temporary advisors until students have identified a major professor. In some instances, certain faculty will serve as your major professor. The following is a point of contact for each area in the M.S. program. Ph.D. students are pre-assigned a major professor prior to entering the program. Contact the Graduate Program Administrator if you are unsure who your point of contact is.

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	kskoba@uga.edu
Dr. Diann Moorman	Consumer Economics	dmoorman@uga.edu
Dr. Dee Warmath	Consumer Analytics	warmath@uga.edu

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. Students should select a major professor based on research interests, areas of expertise, schedules, personalities, and working styles. 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 the 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 the Final Examination and the Capstone Case Presentation (financial planning), final presentation (Applied Consumer Analytics) or applied internship project (consumer economics).

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 a Graduate Faculty member, but not necessarily FHCE faculty members. When appropriate, additional voting members may be appointed to the committee. See the Graduate School's policies concerning Advisory Committee composition for details. The Graduate School's policies concerning advisory committees are in the [Graduate Bulletin](#).

Once Advisory Committee members are identified, the student completes the [FHCE Advisory Committee Form](#) and submits form to fhcegrad@uga.edu for approval and then completes the **Advisory Committee form** within the [Enrolled Student Progress Portal](#). The Director of Graduate Studies and Major Professor will be notified for approval and signature. If changes in the Advisory Committee members are required, the student must prepare and submit a new **Advisory Committee form**. The major professor will inform the faculty members who are

Did you know?

All graduate students are required to submit a form called "Program of Study" (POS); Ph.D. students submit two: *Preliminary Program of Study and Final Doctoral Program of Study.*

dropped from the committee (if applicable). If a change in major professor is requested the student should work with the Director of Graduate Studies to initiate the change.

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.

See the link for more information.

Ph.D. Declaration of Concentration Area

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

M.S. Thesis and Non-Thesis Programs

Program of Study (POS)

The [Program of Study \(POS\) form](#) lists the courses students plan to take and when. Students should consult with their major professor and Advisory Committee members to plan the POS. All students must complete, obtain signatures, and submit to the Graduate School either the *Program of Study for Master of Science Candidates* for M.S. students or the *Final Doctoral Program of Study* for Ph.D. students. In addition, Ph.D. students first must complete the department's [Preliminary Program of Study for Ph.D. Students in FHCE \(PPOS\) form](#) and submit it to 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 prepare a [Recommended Change in Program of Study form](#), secure the signatures of the major professor and department's Director of Graduate Studies, and submit the form to the Graduate School to make the change. Note this is a *different* form than the one used to create the Program of Study. 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.

GradFirst Course

As required by the Graduate School, all graduate students matriculating Fall 2022 or later must enroll in a one-hour GradFirst course with in 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/>

M.S. Transfer Credit

If graduate credit earned at an accredited institution constitutes a logical part of the student's program, up to six hours of transfer of credit may be allowed when recommended by the student's major professor and Director of Graduate Studies, and when approved by the dean of the Graduate School. Such transfer credit cannot exceed the following scale and must fall within the time limit of the degree.

Split-Level Courses

A student who has undergraduate credit for the 4000- or 5000-level section of a split-level course cannot receive graduate credit for the course *even if the student completes the graduate-level syllabus*.

FHCE M.S. Degree Program Options

The M.S. degree requires at least 37 with thesis/31 hours for non-thesis semester hours of coursework and two semesters of residency. Specific requirements for the M.S. programs with and without a thesis are listed below.

M.S. Thesis Degree Program

The M.S. program offers flexibility in selecting coursework to meet a variety of career goals in consumer economics, family financial planning, or housing. 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.

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

M.S. Non-Thesis Degree Program (Financial Planning Concentration) (30 credit hours)

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 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) (30 Credit hours)

The M.S. Non-Thesis program in Housing Management and Policy offers extensive 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. Non-Thesis Degree Program (Community Development) (30 Credit hours)

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) (30 credit hours)

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. and Non-Thesis Final Exams

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

The final exam/capstone form can be found here: <https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/portfolioandexamform.pdf>

Doctoral Degree Program

Program of Study (POS)

The [Program of Study \(POS\) form](#) lists the courses students plan to take and when. Students should consult with their major professor and Advisory Committee members to plan the POS. All students must complete, obtain signatures, and submit to the Graduate School the *Final Doctoral Program of Study* for Ph.D. students. In addition, Ph.D. students first must complete the department's [Preliminary Program of Study for Ph.D. Students in FHCE \(PPOS\) form](#) and submit it to 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 prepare a [Recommended Change in Program of Study form](#), secure the signatures of the major professor and department's Director of Graduate Studies, and submit the form to the Graduate School to make the change. Note this is a *different* form than the one used to create the Program of Study. 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.

GradFirst Course

As required by the Graduate School, all graduate students matriculating Fall 2022 or later must enroll in a one-hour GradFirst course with in 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.

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

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).

Ph.D. Transfer Credit

If graduate credit earned at an accredited institution constitutes a logical part of the student's program, transfer of credit may be allowed when recommended by the student's major professor, advisory committee, Director of Graduate Studies, and when approved by the dean of the Graduate School. Such transfer of credit cannot exceed nine (9) semester hours and must fall within the time limit of the degree. No grade below B may be transferred. The courses to be transferred may not have been used to fulfill the requirements of a degree program at another institution. Transfer credit may not be used to satisfy the residency requirement. If the residency requirement has not been satisfied and the transfer course is taken during the Fall or Spring semester, a "break" in residency will occur unless the student is also registered at UGA. Transferred courses may not be included in the 16 hours of 8000- and 9000- level credit on the program of study. Transfer grades are not used in calculating cumulative averages. All requests for transfer credit, with accompanying official transcripts, must be in the Graduate School at least 30 days prior to the time the student plans to graduate. Courses taken prior to the student's admission to their degree program at The University of Georgia are eligible for transfer.

Split-Level Courses

A student who has undergraduate credit for the 4000- or 5000-level section of a split-level course cannot receive graduate credit for the course *even if the student completes the graduate-level syllabus*.

Ph.D. Concentration Areas

The 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. Concentration 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. 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. 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 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.

The coursework, teaching and service experience the Advisory Committee approves are listed on the department's [Preliminary Program of Study for FHCE Students form](#). The student prepares the form and secures the Advisory Committee's signatures (at a committee meeting or in individual appointments). The form must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies. Upon completion of their Doctoral Program Portfolio requirements, the student also prepares the [Final Doctoral Program of Study form](#) and secures the committee's signatures (at a committee meeting or in individual appointments) as well as the Director of Graduate Studies' signature. The form must be submitted to the Graduate School before scheduling the Oral Comprehensive Exam.

Written and Oral Exams

All doctoral students must take a written Preliminary examination that covers research methods and theory related topics, at the end of their first year of doctoral studies. Additionally, doctoral students also have to complete a [Doctoral Program Portfolio Checklist](#). Upon completion of their Doctoral Program Portfolio requirements, the doctoral students take the oral comprehensive exams. Exams are administered by students' Advisory Committees.

Ph.D. Written Preliminary Exam

The preliminary exam provides an opportunity for students to integrate and apply knowledge gained in the core coursework in research methods and theory learned in the first year of their doctoral studies. The exam also enables faculty to assess the student's ability to integrate and apply knowledge in order to ensure that a student is qualified to continue the coursework required in their doctoral program of study. In the Preliminary exam, students are required to demonstrate their knowledge and preparation in research methodology, and theory in the area of Financial Planning, Housing and Consumer Economics. The student must pass the written preliminary exam before they can proceed to take the remaining coursework in their doctoral program of study. Student who are unsuccessful in passing the written preliminary exam in the first attempt will have an opportunity to re-take the preliminary exam at the time it is offered next. Upon passing their written preliminary exam and upon completion of their remaining coursework and 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 the Written Preliminary Examination

The written preliminary exam will be offered every year in early fall.

Evaluating the Written Preliminary Examination

The department's Reading Committee, which consists of four FHCE faculty who are members of the Graduate Faculty, is tasked with exam evaluation. At least two out of three (or a similar ratio if there are

more than three Reading Committee members) Reading Committee members must vote 'pass' for the student to pass this preliminary examination.

If the student's performance in the written preliminary exam is deemed unsatisfactory (fail), the student's Advisory Committee may require remedial work. After completing the prescribed remedial work, the student will have the opportunity to sit for the written preliminary exam a second time. If a student is unable to pass the written preliminary exam a second time, the student is dismissed from the doctoral program.

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>

The Oral Comprehensive Exam

No sooner than two weeks after completing the Doctoral Program Portfolio requirements, the student may schedule the oral comprehensive exam. The student must notify via email the Director of Graduate Studies

Assistant no less than two weeks before the oral exam. The Graduate School requires a two-week notice and all oral exams are open to the university community. The major professor or student notifies the department of the date, time, and location of the oral exam schedule. The student's Advisory Committee administers the exam; all members of the Advisory Committee *must* be present at the oral exam. A final Program of Study must be on file at the Graduate School prior to scheduling the oral comprehensive exam.

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

Master's students are not admitted to candidacy; doctoral students, however, are. 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. Students must pass both

the written preliminary exam and oral comprehensive exam before being admitted to candidacy.

M.S. Theses and Ph.D. Dissertations

Master's students (except those in a non-thesis program) 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.

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

Helpful Hint:
Begin exploring a research topic the first semester in graduate school.

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 has the opportunity to 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 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.

Overview of Steps for Thesis or Dissertation Defense

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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*

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Semester	Action	Form
1st semester	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 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
2nd Semester	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Prepare Program of Study 2) Apply for Graduation 	Program of Study form Athena --> Student --> Apply to graduate
3rd Semester	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

*Can be condensed into 2 semesters

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

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Semester	Action	Form
1st semester	1) 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 -> 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) Begin graduate courses	
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 Preliminary 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 3) Final Program of Study 4) Application for Admission to Candidacy	See Doctoral Portfolio Checklist PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form Oral Defense form Final 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
- 4) Complete PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form
- 5) Begin research for dissertation
- 6) Complete PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form

[Dissertation Proposal Defense form](#)

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

[PhD Degree Progression Evaluation form](#)

7th
Semester

- 1) Conduct research and write dissertation

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](#)