

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY



2026-2027

Student Handbook for the Research-Intensive
Graduate Program

Table of Contents

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF	1
DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES (DGS).....	1
GRADUATE COORDINATOR.....	1
GRADUATE EMPLOYEE (GE) INFORMATION	1
GENERAL POLICIES	1
ADMISSIONS	2
CONDITIONAL STATUS	2
CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENT	2
DISSERTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DAC).....	2
CHANGING PRIMARY ADVISORS/DAC MEMBERS	3
REQUIRED COURSE WAIVER POLICY	3
MENTORING FEEDBACK AND ANNUAL REVIEW	3
TEACHING ACADEMY, GRADUATE TEACHING INITIATIVE, & RESEARCH ACADEMY.....	4
SEMINAR SERIES	4
SCHOLARSHIPS: DETAILS ABOUT THE AVAILABLE SCHOLARSHIPS CAN BE FOUND ON THE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE.	4
MS DEGREE	5
COURSEWORK	5
PROJECT VS. THESIS	5
MS PROPOSAL	6
MS PROJECT/THESIS DEFENSE.....	6
RECOMMENDED SCHEDULE	6
PHD PROGRAM DEGREE COURSEWORK	7
CANDIDACY EXAM (DETAILED POLICY BELOW).....	8
ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY	8
DISSERTATION DEFENSE	8
DEADLINES FOR GRADUATING TERM.....	9
RECOMMENDED SCHEDULE	9
PHD CANDIDACY EXAMINATION POLICY	10
PHILOSOPHY	10
CONTENT	10
GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO EACH PART OF THE EXAM	10
GUIDELINES FOR PRE-EXAM (AIMS PAGE).....	10
GUIDELINES FOR PART A (GRANT PROPOSAL).....	10
GUIDELINES FOR PART B (ORAL EXAM).....	11
GUIDELINES FOR PART C (ONE-PAGE RESPONSE).....	12
GRADING.....	12
TIMELINE & SCHEDULING.....	13
APPENDIX A: FORMS	16
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROJECT PROPOSAL	17
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROJECT COMPLETION	18
PHD CANDIDACY EXAM APPLICATION.....	19
PHD CANDIDACY EXAM RESULTS	20
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS COURSE REQUEST.....	21
NON-HPHY 600-LEVEL COURSE REQUEST	22
FORMAL FEEDBACK FORM.....	23

Administrative Staff

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

The DGS is a faculty member within the department of Human Physiology. The role of the DGS is to ensure the quality of graduate education is uniform across the department. The DGS serves as an advocate for graduate students with respect to the department faculty and university at large. Additionally, the DGS coordinates departmental Graduate Employee (GE) assignments.

Graduate Coordinator

The Graduate Coordinator is a staff member within an Academic Support Unit. The role of the Graduate Coordinator is to help implement the policies of the Graduate Program, including maintaining graduate student files, tracking graduate student progress, overseeing the department seminar series, and acting as liaison between the Division of Graduate Studies and the department.

Graduate Employee (GE) Information

GE is the term used at the UO for graduate assistantships, regardless of whether the funding is for teaching (TA) or research (RA). There are three GE levels:

- GE I: Graduate students who are not eligible for a GE II or GE III appointment.
- GE II: Graduate students who have a) an MS in a related field prior to enrolling at University of Oregon, b) an MS in Human Physiology at the University of Oregon, or c) completed 45 credit hours toward a doctoral degree, be in good academic standing, and have approval from the DGS and department head.
- GE III: Regularly enrolled doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy (by passing the candidacy examination).

Transition from a GE I to a GE II is automatic with the completion of a MS in Human Physiology at the University of Oregon or after a student has successfully completed 45 credit hours towards their doctoral degree.

Students, in consultation with their Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC), may opt to get a Master of Science (MS) on their way to earning a PhD.

Students with teaching appointments (TA) are sometimes offered a research assistantship (RA) by a department faculty member after the academic year has begun. In such cases, the student must receive the approval of the DGS before making a contract change from TA to RA.

GENERAL POLICIES

The research-intensive graduate program leads to a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. The primary goal of this program is to provide classroom and research experiences that will allow students to grow into professionals with the knowledge and experience to be exceptional researchers and educators. Providing students with an in-depth understanding of human physiology and advanced research skills is our hallmark. The program also provides students with the opportunity to grow as university-level educators.

Admissions

Decisions on accepting applicants to the graduate program are based on student qualifications, as well as space within laboratories and financial support available, all of which vary from year to year. There is no “classroom only” option – all students must work in a research lab as part of their studies. A laboratory PI will generally be the student’s Primary Advisor.

Conditional Status

If admitted to the graduate program with a conditional status, students need to fulfill the condition by the end of their first year of study, unless otherwise detailed in their acceptance letter. Examples of why students would be admitted conditionally include but are not limited to missing specific courses or a low GPA.

Continuous Enrollment Requirement

Students should refer to the Division of Graduate Studies’ continuous enrollment policy; <https://graduatestudies.uoregon.edu/academics/policies/general/continuous-enrollment>.

Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC)

Doctoral students should work with their Primary Advisor to identify appropriate faculty members to serve on the DAC.

Purpose: Advise the student from early in their training on coursework, requirements, and research topics.

Formation: Each student should work with their Primary Advisor shortly after their arrival on campus to form their DAC no later than Spring term year 1.

Role: The DAC should meet with the student shortly after the student arrives on campus to review the student’s academic record, try to identify and point out gaps in the student’s preparation or potential difficulties with departmental requirements and regulations, and plan jointly with the student their first term’s work beyond the required courses. The DAC will also administer the Candidacy exam and advise the student in completing their dissertation work.

Composition: minimum of four members; at least two members must be from HPHY.

1) Chair (UO-Affiliated)

- Chair cannot be the student’s Primary Advisor.
- Chair participates in all aspects of the meeting(s) and is a first-point resource outside the Primary Advisor for the student.
- Chair should be tenure-track faculty member (with a PhD) at the UO, but they are not required to be from HPHY.
 - If the Chair is not from HPHY, they must be authorized by the department to serve in this role.

2) Primary Advisor

- Must be a member of the graduate faculty with authorization to serve as Primary Advisor.
 - If not from HPHY, must be authorized by the department to serve as Primary Advisor.

3) Additional Scientific Advisors

- If co-advised, this spot is for the co-advisor.
 - If not co-advised, can be other UO faculty, Advisor-Approved clinical or industry partner or faculty outside UO.
 - Must be authorized by department, CAS Dean, and Division of Graduate Studies to serve on committee.
- 4) The Institutional Representative
- Tenure-related member of the UO graduate faculty from outside HPHY department.
 - If Primary Advisor is not from HPHY, the IR must also be from a different department/research institute than the Primary Advisor.

Changing Primary Advisors/DAC Members

Graduate students must have a Primary Advisor. The advisor-advisee relationship requires initial and continuing mutual consent for that relationship. When either the student or Primary Advisor is considering ending this relationship, a meeting should be called between the student, Primary Advisor, and DGS, who will notify the DAC of the meeting's outcome. If an amicable solution cannot be found and the decision is made that a Primary Advisor change is in order, the student must find a new Primary Advisor within 8 academic weeks of this decision. The first step in this process should involve a meeting with the student and DGS to discuss options for another Primary Advisor. The 8 weeks does not include university break periods. If a student goes longer than 8 weeks without a Primary Advisor, the Division of Graduate Studies will be notified, which is an action that could result in the student's termination from the program. It is important to note that while the department will help, if possible, it is the responsibility of the student to find a new Primary Advisor. There is no guarantee that students will find a replacement Primary Advisor.

In the case of shifts in research focus or change of Primary Advisor, the remaining DAC members will work with the DGS and Graduate Coordinator to facilitate a revised committee structure for the student prior to the student's dissertation defense (no later than 6 months prior to defense).

Required Course Waiver Policy

Required courses may be waived with transfer credits under the following conditions: (i) the student has completed (with a grade of B- or higher) a course judged by the instructor-of-record for a course at the University of Oregon as equivalent for covering the same knowledge and skills, and (ii) the student has approval from their Dissertation Advisory Committee.

The student should submit the following to the DGS for review: 1) transfer course syllabus, 2) documentation of the grade received for the course, 3) an approval letter from their Dissertation Advisory Committee, and 4) a written justification for the waiver, which should include confirmation from the instructor-of-record at the University of Oregon.

Mentoring Feedback and Annual Review

Formal and informal mentorship feedback occurs regularly (~once every two months) throughout the year. It is recommended that formal feedback #1 occurs early in the academic year followed by 2 informal feedback sessions. The student and advisor will each complete a [Formal Feedback](#)

[Form](#). During the winter quarter, graduate students should have a second formal meeting with their Primary Advisor to review their progress and goals, and the dates of the two formal meetings should be included in the Annual Review followed by 2 additional informal feedback sessions. Based on the formal feedback meetings, a short progress report will be written for each student by their Primary Advisor as the annual review. The intent of this meeting and report is to ensure that students are making measurable progress in their degree, as evidenced by the milestones of coursework, comprehensive exams, dissertation proposal and defense. This report should summarize where the student is in their studies and the expectations and planned work for the next year. Reports must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator no later than the conclusion of winter term and will be reviewed by the DGS. The report must also be shared with all DAC members, who will indicate annually approval to continue in the program using [this form](#).

Where there is a potential concern about progress, the DGS will meet with the individual student and/or Primary Advisor, as appropriate. Informal mentorship feedback should occur twice between each of the formal feedback meetings. There are no reports required from the informal feedback unless the mentee or mentor wishes to involve the DGS or department head.

Teaching Academy, Graduate Teaching Initiative, & Research Academy

Prior to the start of the academic year, the department hosts a two-part Teaching Academy and Research Academy:

- **Tier One:** designed to arm new GEs with key information and perspectives that can help them succeed in the classroom. All new Human Physiology graduate employees are required to attend.
- **Tier Two:** designed to provide continuing professional development within the realm of effective teaching. It will be delivered at a level that should be appealing to both the new and the experienced instructor. All graduate employees are welcome to attend.
- **Research Academy:** designed to provide guidance for research activities within the department. This includes discussion of expectations within our program, proposed timelines, grant writing, and resources. All new Hyman Physiology graduate employees are required to attend, and all other graduate employees are welcome to attend.

Other on campus resources such as the [graduate teaching initiative](#) are available as well for students to receive additional training in teaching.

Laboratory Safety

At the beginning of the academic year, the department will schedule classes in CPR and First Aid. All students are expected to attend the appropriate classes to keep their certification current. If students cannot attend, it is their responsibility to maintain CPR and First Aid certification and provide proof of certification to the Graduate Coordinator no later than the first day of Fall term.

Seminar Series

The department runs a seminar series. Faculty invite speakers who are emerging leaders or leaders in their respective field. External speakers will present every other week in a one-hour research presentation format with audience questions. The research presentation will be followed with an informal Q&A session with the speaker for graduate students. Consistent attendance reflects professional behavior, and it is expected that students regularly attend these activities.

Scholarships: Details about the available scholarships can be found on the department [website](#).

MS DEGREE

Students who want to earn a Master of Science on their way to completing the doctoral degree (Master's in-passing) must notify the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Coordinator in writing no later than the end of Winter term of their first year.

Coursework

The Master of Science in-passing consists of a minimum of 45 credits beyond the bachelor's degree, with at least 30 of these credits in Human Physiology (HPHY) courses at the UO. Additionally, 24 of the total credits must be graded credits (i.e., not Pass/No Pass).

The following are required classes:

- Professional Skills (HPHY 611, 612, 613) [1 credit each]
- System Physiology (HPHY 621, 622, 623) [4 credits each]
- Students must complete two courses in statistical analysis covering the following topics: descriptive statistics, logic of hypothesis testing, elementary inferential statistics, confidence intervals, and introduce one-way analysis of variance, post hoc comparisons, a priori contrasts, within-subjects and between subjects effects, 2-way and higher order designs, and interactions.
 1. EDUC 641 & 643 automatically count towards this requirement. Students wanting to take any other statistical analysis course(s) need to request the course(s) count toward this requirement by filling out a [Statistical Analysis Course Request](#) form and having it approved by their Dissertation Advisory Committee prior to enrolling in the course(s).
- Research (HPHY 601) or Thesis (HPHY 503) [minimum of 9 credits]
 1. See Project vs Thesis section below to determine which credits to register.

In addition to these required elements, other Human Physiology courses and courses in other departments can be taken outside of the department to fulfill the 45-credit requirement, especially to augment the student's training in an area unique to their research topic.

All planned coursework should be discussed with the student's DAC to determine the most beneficial set of courses for the individual student.

The DAC should guide the student in developing the MS proposal, data collection and analysis and writing up the results.

Project vs. Thesis

To receive an MS in-passing, students must complete a substantial body through either a special project or the writing of a formal thesis. In terms of research, the department expectations are the same for both options; the only difference is whether a student prepares a journal style manuscript that is reviewed by the department only or completes a formal thesis that is submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies. The department strongly suggests that students complete a special project, but students should work with their DAC to determine the best option.

Students who choose to complete a special project for their MS in-passing should register for research credits (HPHY 601). Students who choose to complete a formal thesis are required to register for thesis credits (HPHY 503).

MS Proposal

Students must prepare a formal proposal for their research project and present it to their DAC in the fall term of their second year of study. The proposal should provide an outline of the research project that the student proposes to complete for their MS in-passing. It should include relevant background information, current gaps in the knowledge, specific aims and hypotheses to be addressed, a detailed outline of the experimental methods and statistical analyses to be used, the expected results, and a timeline. Students should submit their written proposal to their DAC at least 2 weeks prior to the proposal defense. *Suggested format for the proposal defense:* The student may do a “mini dissertation proposal” as a presentation. The presentation should include justification for why they are doing the project (i.e., background and short literature review); methods section; preliminary data (if collected); and finally, a short timeline for completion.

Once the DAC is satisfied that the student has satisfactorily addressed the committee’s questions/concerns, they will sign off on the proposal using the [MS Project Proposal](#) form. The Committee Chair should submit this form to the Graduate Coordinator after signing off on the proposal, but no later than the Wednesday of Finals week. Students must successfully defend their research proposal **prior to** undertaking the project/thesis research.

MS Project/Thesis Defense

The DAC, in consultation with the student, determines the format for presentation of their research, which will include an oral defense and either a journal-style manuscript or a formal master’s thesis.

The oral defense of the MS research is the culmination of the work completed by the student to complete their MS in-passing. As with the MS proposal, the final written thesis or journal-style manuscript should be provided to the DAC at least 2 weeks prior to the defense. Following the defense, the candidate will often be required to complete revisions that require approval from the DAC. Once all required revisions are complete, DAC will determine whether the student’s work is satisfactory, and if so, will sign off on the project/thesis by submitting the [MS Project Completion](#) form to the Graduate Coordinator no later than the Friday before the start of the new term.

Deadlines for Graduating Term

- Apply for Advanced Degree via GradWeb: submit application by Friday, Week 2.
- Submit special project or formal thesis: at least 2 weeks prior to the oral defense date.
 1. If extenuating circumstances make this impossible, then approval for a shorter time needs to be agreed upon by all committee members, or the defense rescheduled.
- PROJECT OPTION – Submit the MS Project Completion form to Graduate Coordinator: after DAC signs off but no later than Wednesday of finals week.
- THESIS OPTION – Upload thesis and thesis approval form to the Division of Graduate Studies: Monday finals week. See information on the Grad School website for deadlines.

Recommended Schedule

- Complete Systems Physiology and Professional Skills sequences during first year.
- DAC formed by end of spring term of first year.
- Proposal defense by fall term of second year.
- Finish required coursework in year two.
- Attend Annual Meetings with DAC in remaining years.
- Defend MS in-passing project/thesis at end of year.

PHD PROGRAM DEGREE

Coursework

The doctoral degree consists of a minimum of 81 credits of graduate-level work beyond the bachelor's degree. At least 60 of these credits must be completed through Human Physiology courses.

The following are required classes (if not already completed as part of earning the MS in-passing in Human Physiology at the University of Oregon) and must be passed with a grade of B- or better:

- Professional Skills (HPHY 611, 612, 613) [1 credit each]
- System Physiology (HPHY 621, 622, 623) [4 credits each]
- Students must complete at least one upper division 600 level Human Physiology class. Current options include Signal Transduction (HPHY 640), Advanced Respiratory Physiology (HPHY 670); Human Cardiovascular Control (HPHY 676); Kinematics of Human Movement (HPHY 684); Kinetics of Human Movement (HPHY 685).
 - Students wishing to take a non-HPHY 600-level course to fulfil this requirement should submit a [non-HPHY 600-level Course Request](#) form to their Dissertation Advisory Committee for approval prior to enrolling in the non-HPHY course.
- Students must complete two courses in statistical analysis covering the following topics: descriptive statistics, logic of hypothesis testing, elementary inferential statistics, confidence intervals, and introduce one-way analysis of variance, post hoc comparisons, a priori contrasts, within- and between-subjects effects, 2-way and higher order designs, and interactions.
 - EDUC 641 & 643 automatically count towards this requirement. Students wanting to take any other statistical analysis course(s) need to request the course(s) count toward this requirement by filling out a Statistical Analysis Course Request form and having it approved by their Dissertation Advisory Committee prior to enrolling in the course(s).
- Dissertation (HPHY 603) [minimum of 18 credits]. These credits cannot be taken until the student has passed the candidacy exam.

In addition to these required elements, other Human Physiology courses and courses from other departments that augment the student's training in an area unique to their research topic can be taken to fulfill the 81-credit requirement. All planned coursework should be discussed with the student's DAC to determine the most beneficial set of courses for the individual student.

Satisfactory Academic Standing

To be considered in good standing with the Division of Graduate Studies, students must: 1) take courses for letter grades and receive grades of B- or better, 2) maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average, and 3) accumulate no more than 7 credits of incomplete (I) grades. Additional satisfactory progress details can be found on the Division of Graduate Studies' Website.

The Department of Human Physiology also considers research progress in determining satisfactory academic standing. Grades of "Incomplete" or "N" in research credits are a strong indicator of lack of research progress.

Professional engagement is expected within the program including timely correspondence, typically within 72 hours of initial communication. Lack of maintained professional engagement according to program standards is grounds for probation and/or dismissal.

Annual DAC Meeting

Meetings with this committee occur annually throughout degree progression.

Yearly meetings will include a portion of time dedicated to the committee members discussing with the Primary Advisor and without student, followed by a discussion between committee members and the student without the Primary Advisor. Each year following the DAC meeting, all DAC members must indicate approval to continue in the program using [this form](#).

If it is determined that a student is making unsatisfactory progress in research toward their degree (such as, through “Incomplete” or “N” grades in research credits, “No pass” for candidacy progress), a written description of clear next steps/milestones will be created in agreement between student and DAC members and will be submitted to the DGS and GC. The timeline for completion needs to be consistent with Division of Graduate Studies criteria and other timelines established with the GC, particularly those related to the Incomplete policy.

Special consideration of timing for Year 2 DAC meeting: During Fall term of 2nd year (4th term), the student will meet with the entire DAC to discuss progress and give a brief (15-20 min) presentation outlining possible plans for the dissertation. No later than one week prior to this meeting, the student may submit a 2–4-page report that includes an introduction to the dissertation project and summary of early progress, including any relevant data. The report may include a draft of the dissertation Aims. This report and meeting serve the purposes of familiarizing the DAC with the planned dissertation Aims and should facilitate approval of the Aims once they are shared with the DAC (preferably by the end of the fall term of Year 2; see PhD Candidacy Exam Policy Format & Timeline below).

Candidacy Exam (detailed policy below)

Students should initiate the Candidacy Exam in fall term of year 2 and complete the Candidacy Exam in spring term of 2nd year (6th term), but no later than last day of spring term in Year 3. Candidacy Exam details within the policy will be determined by the DAC.

Advancement to Candidacy

After successful completion of the Candidacy Exam, the student will be advanced to candidacy. After advancement, the student must enroll in Dissertation credits (HPHY 603) during every subsequent term of enrollment and complete a minimum of 18 total dissertation credits by the time of graduation. Students must register for at least 3 credits in the term of graduation (9 if holding a GE appointment). If the student is either advancing to candidacy or graduating in the summer term, they do *not* need to register for summer credits.

Dissertation Defense

The public oral defense of the dissertation project is the culmination of the research completed by the candidate during the doctoral degree. Students will follow the Division of Graduate Studies’ policies and guidelines for the dissertation oral defense. Dissertation Advisory Committee members needn’t all participate, but this is the preferred best practice. For the dissertation defense, the student, Chair, Primary Advisor, and IR must be present. One Core Member can waive their attendance and submit any questions to the committee chair in advance. See the Division of Graduate Studies’ Oral Defense Attendance Policies for additional attendance options.

Students will be required to submit all dissertation documents to the committee no later than 3 weeks prior to the public defense. Following defense, candidate will often be required to complete

revisions to the dissertation that require approval from at least the Primary Advisor and, potentially, the remaining DAC members.

Deadlines for Graduating Term

- Format of Dissertation: adhere to the formatting guidelines in the Thesis and Dissertation Style and Policy Manual available through the Division of Graduate studies website <https://graduatestudies.uoregon.edu/academics/thesis-dissertation> (as of March 6, 2026).
- Apply for Advanced Degree: apply online via GradWeb no later than Friday week 2.
- Complete written copy of dissertation: submit to the committee members at least 3 weeks prior to the oral defense date.
 - 1) If extenuating circumstances make meeting this deadline impossible, approval for a shorter time needs to be agreed upon by all committee members, or the defense date must be rescheduled.
- Title, date and time of oral defense: submit to the Graduate Coordinator at least 3 weeks prior to the oral defense.
 - 1) The Graduate Coordinator will work with the student to find a location for the defense.
- Application for Final Oral Defense: apply online via GradWeb at least 2 weeks prior to defense.
 - 1) You must have a room reserved prior to applying for the oral defense.
- Final Oral Defense: must be completed by end of week 9.
- Committee certification of defense: completed by committee via GradWeb no later than 2 weeks after defense.
- Upload approved dissertation: once the Dissertation Chair approves the final dissertation, you must upload your dissertation to ProQuest/ETD no later than 2 weeks after the defense.
- Term-by-term deadlines can be found on the Division of Graduate Studies' website.

Recommended Schedule

- Complete Systems Physiology and Professional skills sequences during first year.
- DAC formed by the end of first year.
- Finish required coursework in year two.
- Candidacy Exam completed by end of second year.
- Attend Annual Meetings with DAC
- Communication with proposal committee as needed (meetings and email).
- Defend PhD.

Time to completion will vary greatly between students, but ideally a student coming in with an MS should defend within 4 years and those coming in without an MS should defend within 5-6 years.

PHD CANDIDACY EXAMINATION POLICY

The Doctoral Candidacy Examination is a series of written and oral examinations by the Dissertation Advisory Committee that culminate in a dissertation research proposal. This exam should occur near the end of the second year and must be completed by the end of year 3 to remain in good academic standing. The timing of these exams may be adjusted by the DAC with approval of the DGS. After successful completion of the candidacy exam and required coursework (at least 45 credits – Division of Graduate Studies requirement), the student is “advanced to candidacy” and will be considered as successfully completing the dissertation research proposal.

Philosophy

The candidacy exam is based on the philosophy that a doctoral student obtains both a breadth and depth of knowledge about human physiology during their formal course work. Along these lines, the goal of the candidacy exam is not to test the student’s global knowledge about the field but rather start them on a directed set of studies within the field of physiology that will allow them to become an expert. The format of the candidacy exam is therefore designed to test the student’s knowledge of, and ability to assimilate, the primary research literature within their field and should ascertain their readiness to embark on the line of research that will constitute their doctoral dissertation.

Content

The candidacy exam is the beginning of the doctoral student’s pathway to becoming an expert. Doctoral students must demonstrate the ability to use their existing knowledge base to understand observations and synthesize ideas relevant to the field. Also, doctoral students must demonstrate the ability to organize information succinctly to address questions of key interest in the field. The candidacy exam is therefore in the format of a grant proposal with a written rebuttal and oral defense of the proposal. The grant topic is determined by the Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC), all of whom serve as the examiners. The DAC is formed in year 1 and thus allows committee members to best advise the selection of courses in the doctoral student’s program of study.

Guidelines Specific to Each Part of the Exam

Guidelines for Pre-Exam (Aims Page)

The Aims Page will be shared with the DAC and must receive approval from all committee members no later than the quarter prior to proceeding with the three parts of the exam. The Aims Page must also indicate the chosen funding opportunity announcement (FOA) format for Part A. The approved Aims Page, as well as the PhD Candidacy Exam Application form, should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator no later than the last day of the term approved by the DAC.

Guidelines for Part A (Grant Proposal)

The student will write independently a trainee-style grant proposal to demonstrate 1) the student’s knowledge of, and ability to assimilate, the primary research literature within their particular research topic or subspecialty and 2) the student’s ability to formalize a novel research question for experimental investigation. The research topic may be either related to a currently funded study or may be completely independent but must be original work by the student and should represent the student’s research direction as Part A also serves as the written dissertation proposal.

The student will be able to access any and all resources necessary to develop the proposal but must appropriately cite resources and submit a references list (does not count toward page limits, see

below). The student may discuss their plan with others, including their Primary Advisor and committee members, but the written proposal must be their own independent work. The Primary Advisor and committee may suggest a general direction and may provide the student with a reading list, but the Primary Advisor and DAC cannot edit the grant proposal document. The student can receive feedback on the Specific Aims from anyone including DAC members, and the student can receive feedback on the proposal from peers or instructors, e.g. as part of a grant writing course.

It is expected that the student will demonstrate the ability to synthesize the literature in their own scholarly voice and apply a level of critical analysis to the current literature. Thus, discussion of the literature should contain not only the general postulates, but acknowledgment of weaknesses and omissions in theory development or experimental results.

The format of the grant should follow the guidelines of the respective funding opportunity announcement (FOA) agreed upon by the DAC. Appropriate examples include:

F31 NRSA <https://researchtraining.nih.gov/programs/fellowships/F31> (1-page Specific Aims & 6-page Research Strategy)

AHA predoctoral fellowship <https://professional.heart.org/en/research-programs/aha-funding-opportunities/predoctoral-fellowship> (2500 character lay summary & 5-page Research Plan)

SBIR Phase I <https://www.sbir.gov> (1-page Specific Aims & 6-page Research Strategy)

Formatting should be consistent with the respective FOA. References are excluded from this page limit. Alternatives to the above examples are allowable given the explicit approval of all DAC members.

After the submission of Part A, the DAC members will provide any individual feedback at least 1 week prior to Part B. The student may meet with the chair of the DAC prior to Part B to receive guidance on any notable areas of concern from the committee related to Part A. After turning in Part A, it is recommended that the student spend time reviewing the grant, to objectively assess the limitations in their written work and to prepare by reviewing written feedback provided by the DAC. Any deviations from the originally approved Aims must be approved by the DAC.

Suggestions for the student:

- Do not wait to begin writing the grant proposal until after the Aims Page is approved. These components can be written in parallel, and it is expected they will be written under the general guidance of the Primary Advisor and DAC members.
- Enrollment in a grant-writing course/workshop is strongly encouraged to facilitate the development of the proposal.
- Take time to proof-read all sections of Part A. Be sure to check for spelling/grammatical errors.

Guidelines for Part B (Oral Exam)

Part B is an oral exam in which the student must defend the grant proposal and answer questions related to Part A, including the feedback provided by the DAC, and any other material the examiners deem necessary to ascertain the student's knowledge of, and ability to assimilate, the primary research literature within their research topic or subspecialty. At the conclusion of the Part B Oral Exam, a summary of the critiques will be provided to the student by the chair of the committee. This should be provided at most 48 hours after the completion of Part B. It is recommended that the DAC use the scoring system appropriate for the target FOA, e.g. NIH F31. Please be mindful of policy

changes that may influence scoring criteria. DAC is expected to be familiar with these criteria. During the oral exam, the student must defend the grant proposal so the DAC is able to 1) ascertain the student's ability to assimilate the primary research literature within their research topic or subspecialty, 2) formulate a worthwhile/significant research question (or product for development) and 3) demonstrate expertise in experimental design and relevant methodology and rationalize alternative strategies.

Extenuating circumstances notwithstanding, all members of the DAC must be present for the entirety of Part B, which should be 2 hours in length. The student will give a ~20-30 minute formal presentation on their proposal at the start of Part B. The content of the presentation will be determined by the DAC. This will be indicated on the Candidacy Exam Application Form (Appendix A). During at least one hour of the oral exam, each examiner may question the student about their answers from Part A for an equal amount of time (e.g., 4 members would get 15 min each with the chair keeping time). In the remaining time, each member will have less but equal time (e.g., 4 members would get 5 min each with the chair keeping time). Once the student has completed the second round of questions in their oral exam, they will be asked to leave the room while the examiners deliberate on the success of the examination. The chair will ensure there is sufficient time at the end (~15 minutes) to allow a discussion with regards to P/NP and feedback to student.

It is expected that the student will demonstrate the ability to think on their feet and articulate their thoughts in a scholarly way related to the proposed work as well as topics foundational to the research premise. Students will have access to a copy of their written exam to review during this time; but will not have access to additional notes, books, or journal articles during the exam. Student may use a whiteboard to draw diagrams or use previously prepared slides to explain concepts.

Suggestions for the student:

- Do not read from your exam to answer a question.
- Recognize that the questions may not have a clear right or wrong answer.
- Ask for clarification of any question that is not understood, rather than trying to answer a question that is not clear.
- It is better to recognize and indicate to the committee when you do not know the answer to a question, rather than attempting to fish for an answer.

Guidelines for Part C (one-page response)

Part C is a one-page independently written response to the grant critiques provided by the DAC before Part B and the DAC chair after Part B. The student should complete this one-page response independently. This one-page response will provide the committee with an indication that their critiques have been understood and are being addressed by the student. It will also set the course for the grant revision that ideally will be submitted.

Suggestions for the student:

- The student should focus on addressing all concerns as concisely as possible.
- The student should use the format that most closely aligns with their given grant.

Grading

Each of the 3 exam sections (Parts A, B & C) will be assigned a grade by the DAC:

- PASS - indicates that the student's performance on that section was at the level expected of a doctoral candidate.
- CONDITIONAL PASS – indicates concerns about a student's performance on a given part of

the exam can be redressed.

- NO PASS - indicates that the student's performance on that section was below what is acceptable for a doctoral candidate and the student cannot advance to candidacy.

Students who receive a grade of NO PASS on Part A must redo Part A and receive a grade of CONDITIONAL PASS or PASS before they can proceed to Part B. Students will have only one opportunity to redo a NO PASS for Part A. A NO PASS after attempt #2 will result in dismissal from the program. In general, students will not be asked to redo Part A if they receive either a CONDITIONAL PASS or PASS, unless they also receive a CONDITIONAL PASS or NO PASS on Part B.

After Part B, the committee will assign the student a grade of PASS, or NO PASS. A NO PASS indicates that the student's performance was below what is acceptable for a doctoral candidate and the student may not progress to candidacy. Students will have only one opportunity to redo Part B. In general, students will not be asked to redo any portion of Part A prior to redoing Part B. However, at the DAC's discretion, a student may be asked to redo a portion of Part A on which the student received a grade of CONDITIONAL PASS prior to redoing Part B. Students who fail to Pass Part B on their second attempt will be dismissed from the doctoral program.

Upon submission of Part C, the one-page rebuttal, the DAC will assign the student a grade for Part C. A PASS indicates the student's performance was as strong as is expected of a doctoral candidate. A grade of NO PASS indicates that the student's performance was below what is acceptable for a doctoral candidate and the student may not progress to candidacy. Students will have only one opportunity to redo Part C. Students who fail to Pass Part C on their second attempt will be dismissed from the doctoral program. There is no "Conditional Pass" option for Part C. The DAC will review Part C and assign a grade within one week.

Timeline & Scheduling

The DAC should be finalized in the first year of study to review and approve the doctoral student's proposed coursework prior to the candidacy exam. Once the DAC has approved the completed/in-progress coursework and the pre-exam Specific Aims page, the doctoral student should schedule both their written (submission of Part A) and oral exams (Part B). At this stage, the student must submit the PhD Candidacy Exam Application form (Appendix A), which includes setting dates for Parts A and B. Part A should be submitted to the DAC 3 weeks prior to Part B. DAC will provide written critiques of Part A within 2 weeks of submission. This time frame allows committee members time to evaluate the written exam (Part A) and for the student to prepare for the oral exam (Part B). The doctoral student will have up to 1 week following Part B to provide the one-page written rebuttal (Part C) to DAC critiques provided after Part A and summarized by the committee chair after Part B.

The ideal timing of the exam completes all exam parts by end of Year 2. The following timeline highlights dates that each section can be completed, though extenuating circumstances may allow for flexibility. Completing each section early will allow time to retake parts of the exam and still complete by the end of year 2.

	Fall										Winter										Spring										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Annual DAC Meeting																															
Specific Aims																															
Submit Candidacy Exam Application																															
Committee Approves Aims (revise)																															
Write grant																															
Committee Provides feedback																															
Oral Exam - Chair Provides Summary																															
1-Page Response																															
P/NP Decision - Candidacy Exam Results Form																															

Example timeline for completing the candidacy exam across weeks in Year 2 of the HPHY Ph.D. program.

Fall Term 2nd Year

- Week 1-4: Annual DAC meeting; report shared with DAC and presentation of planned Aims.
- Week 5 (Pre-exam): Aims page & PhD Candidacy Exam Application submitted to DAC for approval.
- Week 7: DAC provides feedback to student – if OK, then student proceeds (must follow timeline on Candidacy Exam Application),
 - If not OK, student resubmits Week 5 winter term; if OK, then student proceeds.
 - If not OK after second attempt, DAC will determine the subsequent steps.

Winter Term 2nd Year

Week 5 Winter term – Aims page and PhD Candidacy Exam Application resubmission as required and timeline is shifted accordingly.

Spring Term 2nd Year

- Week 5 – Written Exam due to DAC
- Week 7 – Feedback from DAC
- Week 8 – Oral exam with rapid feedback
- Week 9 – 1 page rebuttal submitted.
- Week 10 – DAC determines P/NP

Should it be necessary for a student to retake, or re-schedule, any part of the exam, the DAC will determine the appropriate time interval that will provide the student with a reasonable opportunity to improve their performance on that part of the exam. Students should contact the Graduate Coordinator for help reserving a room for the oral exam.

Grant writing courses are available and recommended that the doctoral student enroll in a course concurrent with or in advance of writing their grant proposal.

Language

English is recognized as the international language of science and students must be able to communicate their knowledge in that language. Students may have access to English language assistance from Academic Learning Services for Part A and Part C but not Part B (Oral) of the exam. Other outside assistance with writing undermines the ability of the committee to assess how well the student organizes their thoughts on a topic.

Misconduct

The written exam should be produced exclusively by the student without assistance from others, including any form of artificial intelligence, e.g., ChatGPT. References used as experimental evidence to support ideas must be properly cited. There is seldom reason to include verbatim statements, but if they are included, they must be surrounded by quotation marks and properly cited. References must be cited whenever the student uses previously published ideas and theories unless this information is considered part of the common knowledge of the field of human physiology as would be covered in a textbook. The department and university take violations of academic conduct seriously. Students unfamiliar with any aspect of academic misconduct are encouraged to see the following resources: <https://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct>.

Appendix A: Forms

The following pages contain forms for the following program milestones:

- MS Project Proposal
- MS Project Completion
- PhD Candidacy Exam Application
- PhD Candidacy Exam Results
- Statistical Analysis Course Request
- non-HPHY 600-level Course Request
- Formal Feedback

Master of Science Project Proposal

Name of
Student:

Project Working
Title:

Date of
Proposal:

The following members of the DAC verify that the student has satisfactorily addressed all questions/concerns from the committee about the project and give the student approval to begin their research:

Chair

Signature

Primary Advisor

Signature

Co-Advisor/Scientific Advisor

Signature

Institutional Representative

Signature

Master of Science Project Completion

Name of Student: _____

Date of Oral Defense: _____

Format: Journal-style Manuscript
(reviewed by department) Formal Master's Thesis
(reviewed by the Division of Graduate Studies)

Title: _____

The following members of the DAC hereby certify that all required revisions have been completed and that we find the student's work to be Satisfactory. The Committee approves the project submitted by the student in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Science degree:

Chair

Signature

Primary Advisor

Signature

Co-Advisor/Scientific Advisor

Signature

Institutional Representative

Signature

PhD Candidacy Exam Application

Name of Student: _____

Schedule:

Date Pre-Exam (Aims Page) turned in by student: _____

Date of part A (Grant) to be handed in by Student:
(Must be submitted 3 weeks prior to Part B) _____

Date of part B (Oral) to be given to student: _____

Date of part C (Rebuttal):
(must be turned in within 7 days after Part B) _____

The following members of the DAC verify that this student has completed substantively all required degree coursework, and is eligible to take the doctoral candidacy examination:

Chair

Signature

Primary Advisor

Signature

Co-Advisor/Scientific Advisor

Signature

Institutional Representative

Signature

PhD Candidacy Exam Results

Name of Student: _____

Date of Oral Exam: _____

For each committee member, indicate:

1. Your decision regarding the student's performance for each part: Pass, Conditional Pass (Part A only), No Pass
2. An overall recommendation for the exam: Pass or No Pass

Chair	Signature
Part A: _____	Part B: _____
Part C: _____	Exam Recommendation _____

Primary Advisor	Signature
Part A: _____	Part B: _____
Part C: _____	Exam Recommendation _____

Co-Advisor/Scientific Advisor	Signature
Part A: _____	Part B: _____
Part C: _____	Exam Recommendation _____

Institutional Representative	Signature
Part A: _____	Part B: _____
Part C: _____	Exam Recommendation _____

Statistical Analysis Course Request

Department of Human Physiology

Graduate students who wish to take a statistical analysis course other than EDUC 614 & 640 must submit this request form to the department prior to the course start-date. Doing so will allow sufficient time to enroll in an alternate course if this request is denied, thus ensuring compliance with enrollment requirements. Requests should be made to the student's Dissertation Advisory Committee, who will then forward the approved/denied form to the Graduate Coordinator for records retention.

Courses must be taken for letter grade and receive a grade of B- or better.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Course number: _____ Title: _____
(use subject code and course number, not CRN)

Instructor: _____ Course Term/Year: _____

Please provide an explanation/justification for your request to count this course towards your statistical analysis requirement:

A course syllabus or course description from the instructor (if a syllabus is not yet available) **must** be attached to this request.

Student Signature: _____

<u>Committee Recommendation</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved	_____ Advisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved	_____ Chair

Non-HPHY 600-Level Course Request

Department of Human Physiology

Students wishing to take a non-HPHY 600-level course to fulfil the “one 600-level Human Physiology class” requirement should submit this form to their Dissertation Advisory Committee for approval prior to enrolling in the non-HPHY course. Completed forms should be forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator for records retention.
Course must be taken for letter grade and receive a grade of B- or better to count.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Course number: _____ Title: _____
(use subject code and course number, not CRN)

Instructor: _____ Course Term/Year: _____

Please provide an explanation/justification for your request to count this course towards the “one 600-level Human Physiology class” requirement:

A course syllabus or, if a syllabus is not yet available, a course description from the instructor **must** be attached to this request.

Student Signature: _____

<u>Committee Recommendation</u>		

<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved	_____
		Advisor

<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved	_____
		Chair

Student's Name: _____
 Advisor's Name: _____

Formal Feedback Form

The purpose of this survey is to self-reflect on your role in your student-advisor relationship. Both the advisor and student will complete the form individually prior to meeting to discuss the form, if applicable. After which, both will sign-off on the forms and submit to the Director of Graduate Studies. Please circle the number that corresponds with your response for each question, if applicable. If you are choosing to forgo submitting feedback for this term, please skip to the bottom of the second page.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
1. My advisor is accessible and approachable	<input type="radio"/>					
2. My advisor provides constructive feedback (i.e., research design, presentations, writing, etc.) in a timely manner	<input type="radio"/>					
3. My advisor recognizes and respects differences in age, gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, and family backgrounds	<input type="radio"/>					
4. My advisor supports balancing work/life responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>					
5. My advisor helps support development of my personal knowledge, skillset, critical thinking, and overall professional independence	<input type="radio"/>					
6. My advisor illustrates effective teamwork and collaboration while working with other individuals	<input type="radio"/>					
7. My advisor supports me in setting goals and routinely monitors my progress towards my goals	<input type="radio"/>					
8. My advisor assists with networking and career development (i.e., conferences, seminars)	<input type="radio"/>					
9. My advisor supports me in acquiring resources (i.e., grants, fellowships, scholarships, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>					
10. My advisor listens carefully to my concerns and is supportive with conflict resolution	<input type="radio"/>					

Student's Name: _____
Advisor's Name: _____

The purpose of these open-ended questions is to self-reflect on the student-advisor relationship, if applicable.

1. What is going well in the student-advisor relationship? What are the benefits?
2. What challenges have you confronted in the student-advisor relationship? What barriers exist?
3. What recommendations do you have for strengthening or improving the student-advisor relationship?
4. What actions have you taken to incorporate previous feedback? What actions have you not taken?
5. What can I do as a student/advisor to get the most out of our time together?

Please check one of the following:

- I would like to discuss this form with the DGS I
- would like to discuss this form with the DH
- This form does not need to be discussed with the DGS or DH

Student's Signature: _____

Advisor's Signature: _____

Date of meeting between student and advisor: _____

By checking this box, I am choosing to forgo submitting feedback.