CAL STATE LA

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES

Department of
NUTRITION & FOOD SCIENCE

Master of Science Degree in Nutritional Science

Graduate Student Handbook
2025-2026

Please note that criteria and/or procedures in this handbook are subject to change.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome aboard! This is an exciting time to be a graduate student in the Department of Nutrition & Food Science at Cal State LA. Graduate students earning their Master's of Science degree in Nutritional Science have access to top-notch faculty with a wide range of expertise and practical experience. The program was designed to provide students with varied opportunities to reveal their potential and excel academically and professionally. Our individualized approach consists of a flexible curriculum aimed at introducing students to selected areas of dietetics and nutrition, while also providing breath in related research areas. Alumni from our program are successful in gaining acceptance into prestigious doctoral programs and go onto successful careers in healthcare, clinical settings, food service management, school nutrition programs, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), sports nutrition, research, education, and community outreach.

Please visit our Nutritional Science MS degree | Cal State LA to learn more about the program application.

This handbook is your roadmap through the graduate program. It contains the information you need to successfully navigate through the logistics of higher academia while on your journey. We, the faculty in Nutritional Sciences at Cal State LA, are here to provide the critical resources for you to learn, conduct research, and gain the practical skills required to be competitive for employment in the field or doctorate education.

Please refer to the Department of Nutrition & Food Science webpage for the list of faculty and their research interests as well as the types of research that are being conducted on campus.
Faculty & Staff in Nutritional Science

GRADUATE COORDINATOR

Anureet Kaur, Ph.D. akaur23@calstatela.edu

The Graduate Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the admission process for each applicant. After admission, students can also direct general questions regarding the program to the Graduate Coordinator.

SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Dr. Kathryn Amanda Hillstrom, EdD,MPH,RDN kgraves@exchange.calstatela.edu

The Director of the Nutrition & Food Science oversees the undergraduate and graduate programs in Nutrition & Food Science.

GRADUATE MENTORSHIP

Mentorship in academia is a time-honored tradition. The role of a graduate mentor is to provide academic advice, share resources, and hone the skills of his/her advisee. More than likely, your graduate mentor will be the head of your thesis/program committee and will be present the day of your graduate defense. A graduate mentor will act as a personal guide on your path to success in the program and even beyond. It is therefore important for the mentor and mentee to be a good match. Newly admitted students to the graduate program are assigned a mentor. Students are responsible for seeking out and connecting with their mentor. If a change is mentors is needed, please advise the Graduate Coordinator. It is strongly encouraged that students research the expertise of a faculty member of interest and request an initial meeting to discuss beginning a mentorship relationship. When possible, and if the student works in a research laboratory, the research mentor would likely also serve as the academic mentor.

2. PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Mission: The mission of the Nutritional Sciences Program at Cal State LA is to prepare graduates to excel in nutrition communication, research, policy, advocacy, and service. Graduates will improve individual and community health as innovative leaders in nutrition. Students enrolled in the didactic program in dietetics will be prepared for supervised practice leading to eligibility for the CDR credentialing exam to become Registered Dietitian Nutritionists.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of the graduate program, students will be able to:

1. Conduct a thorough review of nutrition-related scientific literature using library resources, evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and other peer-reviewed material and analyze this material for scientific merit.
2. Demonstrate strong oral communication skills through completion of a thoroughly researched presentation.
3. Translate knowledge and skills from Nutritional Sciences competencies to nutrition research or evidence-based clinical practice.
4. Implement ethical conduct, leadership skills, and a commitment to lifelong service.
5. Prepare a well-written and structured comprehensive exam, thesis or project that involves a comprehensive written evaluation of the existing literature about a nutrition topic.

3. ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

University Requirements

Applicants must apply via the online Cal State LA Apply application. The University requires that students have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and earned a minimum 3.0 GPA in the last 60 semester units. Deadlines for the university applications can be found on the Admissions and Recruitment webpage.

Department Requirements

There is a secondary application that needs to be completed to be admitted into the Master of Science degree program in Nutritional Sciences in the Cal State Apply system, Cal State Apply. For the supplemental application, applicants must meet the following:

1. Undergraduate major in Nutritional Sciences or related field (e.g., biology, chemistry physics, education, public health, psychology, etc.)
2. Minimum GPA of 3.0 in last 60 semester units of undergraduate work (all courses need to have earned C or better).
3. Official Transcripts
4. Statement of goals for graduate study (*see Appendix*)
5. Two letters of recommendation
6. Submission of GRE general test scores
7. Completion of the following prerequisites. Students who have a verification statement or are Registered Dietitian Nutritionists do not need to satisfy the following prerequisites.
    - BIOL 2030 - Human Anatomy (4)
    - BIOL 2040 - Human Physiology (4)
    - CHEM 1010 - Fundamentals of Chemistry (4)
    - CHEM 1020 - Fundamentals of Organic Chemistry (4)
    - MICR 1010 - Introduction to Microbiology (3)
    - NTRS 3170 - Introduction to Nutrition and Metabolism (3)
    - NTRS 4170 - Advanced Nutrition I (3)
    - NTRS 4175 - Advanced Nutrition II (3)

Type of admission

1. Full admittance
2. Conditional admittance

Full admittance: Full admittance indicates the applicant has met all requirements for the graduate program. These students can immediately begin taking graduate coursework in the degree program.

Conditional admittance: Conditional admittance indicates the applicant has demonstrated promise for graduate level work but the admissions committee believes the applicant does not have the appropriate undergraduate background to begin the graduate coursework upon arrival. Applicants conditionally admitted will typically be required to complete undergraduate courses in their first semester. These prerequisite courses can include courses in nutritional sciences or a Post Baccalaureate designated by the graduate coordinator. These courses will be listed with your offer of admission. All required prerequisites must be completed with a grade of "B" or better.

Conditionally admitted students have one academic year from the point of admission into the M.S. program to finish prerequisite courses. Failure to pass prerequisite courses with a B or better within one academic year will result in a dismissal from the program.

ADMISSION PROCESS

Deadline: February 15th

Application review: We will begin to review applications as we receive them, so we encourage students to apply early.

Funding Opportunities: Nutritional science graduate students with the appropriate background may be employed as a lab instructor (*i.e.*, teaching associate, TA) or as a graduate assistant (GA) to a faculty member teaching a large lecture course. Preference will be given to students with an appropriate background. In addition, faculty with external funding may employ graduate students as research assistants or for community outreach programs.

Please contact Administrative Support Coordinator, Joana Cebreros at jcebrer8@calstatela.edu if you're interested in learning more about funding opportunities.

In addition, the courses for the graduate program are offered in the late afternoons and evenings so outside employment is appropriate. Courses typically begin in the evening Monday through Thursday. Some courses are also offered entirely online.

Funding Opportunities for Graduate Students

The Office of Graduate Studies oversees and/or assists students with several student support programs. Please review the Office of Graduate Studies website.

Graduate Equity Fellowship Program

These grants are designed to increase the number of master's degrees awarded to economically disadvantaged CSU students, especially those graduate students that are underrepresented among graduate degree recipients in their discipline and to those who are disabled.

International Graduate Student Tuition Waiver Program

A limited number of non-resident tuition fee waivers or tuition fee reductions may be granted to non-resident graduate students who are either domestic non-resident students or citizens of a foreign country.

Travel Support for Conferences and Professional Development

The Travel Support for Student Presentations (TSSP) is a reimbursement program designed to encourage and assist Cal State LA graduate students whose work has been accepted into a professional/academic conference. The Travel Support for Professional Development of Graduate Students (TSPD) is a reimbursement program designed to encourage and assist Cal State LA graduate students to participate in professional development activities that will foster their educational and career goals.

Culminating Project Fund to Support Completion of Thesis, Creative Activity, or Dissertation Program

This fund is a reimbursement program designed to support Cal State LA graduate student research and/or scholarship conducted towards completing a thesis, creative activity, or dissertation. Students funded through this award will receive reimbursement for approved supplies, equipment, and services.

California Pre---Doctoral Scholars Program ("Sally Casanova Scholars")

The California Pre-Doctoral program is designed to increase diversity within the pool of university faculty by supporting the doctoral aspirations of students in the CSU.

Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP)

The California State University (CSU) Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) aims to increase the number of promising doctoral students applying for future CSU instructional faculty positions by offering financial assistance in the form of a loan and mentorship by CSU faculty.

4. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

To graduate from the program, students must:

Complete the 30-unit curriculum (SECTION 5)
Advance to candidacy (SECTION 6)
Submit a culminating assignment (SECTION 7)

5. COURSE CURRICULUM

The course curriculum for each academic year can be found in the university catalog. The MS degree program for 2023-2024 is as follows:

Requirements for the Degree (30 units)

A total of 30 units is required, with 20 core units, 6 elective units, and up to 4 units of culminating experience.

Core Courses (20 units)

- NTRS 5030 - Biostatistics and Qualitative Research in Nutritional Science [3]
- NTRS 5110 - Research Concepts and Methodology in Nutritional Science [4]
- NTRS 5130 - Advanced Problems and Topics in Nutritional Science [3]
- NTRS 5270 - Nutritional Epidemiology [3]
- NTRS 5330 – Advanced Nutritional Counseling [3]
- NTRS 5970 - Graduate Research [1-4]

Elective (6-10 units)

Select 6 units from the list below for students doing a thesis or project. Select 10 units from the list below for students doing the comprehensive exam:

- NTRS 5190 - Seminar: Special Topics in Food and Nutritional Science [3]
- NTRS 5210 - Advanced Topics in Eating Behaviors [3]
- NTRS 5230 - Advanced Topics in Dietetic Management [3]
- NTRS 5250 - Advanced Topics in Food Science and Technology [3]
- NTRS 5950 - Fieldwork in Nutritional Science [1-3]

Comprehensive Examination, Thesis or Project (0, 4 units)

Students who complete a comprehensive exam must take a total of 10 units from the electives list to reach the 30 units needed for this degree program. Students planning to take the Comprehensive Exam should enroll in NTRS 5960 during the term in which they complete all other course work listed on their course of study.

Students completing a thesis or project must complete a total of 4 units.

- NTRS 5960 - Comprehensive Examination [0]
- **or**
- NTRS 5990 - Thesis [1-4]
- **or**
- NTRS 5995 - Project [1-4]

While the program was designed to be completed in 1 year, students may need to take courses over a longer time period. Your academic advisor can suggest a modified roadmap for program completion.

Recommended roadmap for 2025-2026:

Fall Semester – 15 units NTRS 5030 Biostatistics and Qualitative Research in Nutrit Science (3) NTRS 5110 Research Methodology (4) NTRS 5330 Advanced Nutritional Counseling (3) or NTRS 5210 Advanced Topics in Eating Behaviors (3) NTRS 5220 Advanced Nutritional Biochemistry (3) NTRS 5970 Graduate Research (2) **Fill out Program Plan with academic advisor early fall semester** **Apply to graduate for spring by November 15** **Submit advancement to Candidacy form during winter (GS 10)**
Spring Semester – 15 units NTRS 5270 Nutritional Epidemiology (3) NTRS 5970 Graduate Research (2) NTRS 5130 Advanced Topics in Nutrition (3) NTRS 5330 Advanced Nutritional Counseling (3) or NTRS 5210 Advanced Topics in Eating Behaviors (3) Elective -see list below (3)-For Comp Exam students. NTRS 5990 (4) Thesis or NTRS 5995 (4) Project for culminating experience or *NTRS 5960 (0) Comprehensive Exam plus NTRS 5950 (1) Fieldwork in Nutritional Science

*Students who complete a comprehensive exam must take additional courses from the electives list to reach the 30 units needed for this degree program.

Electives (choose two from the list below):
NTRS 5180 Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy (3)
NTRS 5190 Special Topics in Food and Nutritional Science (3)
NTRS 5210 Advanced Topics in Eating Behaviors (3)
NTRS 5230 Advanced Topics in Dietetics Management (3)
NTRS 5250 Advanced Topics in Food Science and Technology (3)
NTRS 5260 Food Environment and Nutrition (3)
NTRS 5280 Advanced Sports Nutrition (3)
NTRS 5950 Fieldwork in Nutritional Science (1-3)

This is a suggested schedule only. Complete your individualized program plan with your advisor the first semester you are enrolled. Please make sure to meet with your advisor every semester.

GRADES AND POLICIES

Academic Continuation

Graduate students are expected to maintain a B (3.0) average in all courses attempted at Cal State LA and any other college or university attended and to make satisfactory progress toward their academic objectives. Students who do not maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 cannot advance to candidacy. Students who receive financial aid should inform themselves of additional criteria defining satisfactory progress by consulting the Center for Student Financial Aid and Scholarships.

Incomplete Grades

I (Incomplete) is an interim grade designed for students who are passing but who through extenuating circumstances have not been able to complete a portion of the work required for the course. An Incomplete grade shall be assigned at the discretion of the faculty member only when the faculty member concludes that a clearly identifiable portion of course requirements cannot be met within the academic term for unforeseen reasons. An Incomplete shall not be assigned when it is necessary for the student to attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered. See the university catalog for more information in the Procedures and Regulations section.

Repeating a Course

Individual colleges and departments/divisions/schools/programs may have additional restrictions on repeating courses. Graduate students may not repeat for credit any course already completed with a grade of B (3.0 grade points) or better.

Appeals

A graduate student who is concerned about a grade, course evaluation, candidacy decision, or degree requirement should first discuss the matter with the relevant faculty member, then the thesis/project mentor, then the graduate coordinator, and then the department chair. If the matter cannot be informally resolved, then the student may file a formal grievance in accordance with Cal State LA policy. Copies of this policy are available in Student Affairs, Room 117 or online through the Office of Student Conduct.

Academic Probation for Postbaccalaureate and Graduate Students

Graduate students are subject to academic probation if their grade point average falls below a B (3.0) in course work in their master's degree program or in all units completed after becoming classified, whether or not the course work is taken at Cal State LA.

Students may be placed on administrative-academic probation for any of the following reasons:

- Withdrawal from all or a substantial portion of courses for which they registered in two successive semesters or in any three semesters.
- Repeated failure to progress toward a stated degree or program objective when such failure is within their control.
- Failure to comply, after due notice, with a routine academic requirement or regulation.

Notice is given in writing of the conditions for removal from administrative-academic probation, as well as circumstances that would lead to disqualification should probation conditions not be rectified.

Disqualification Regulations for Graduate Students

Graduate students who are on academic probation and who do not meet the requirements of their probation are subject to disqualification in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Graduate students who are on academic probation are subject to disqualification if after being placed on scholastic probation they do not raise their average to B (3.0) after completion of 12 semester units or two semesters in residence, whichever comes later.
- Graduate students whose grade point average falls more than nine grade points below B (3.0) will be disqualified from pursuing the master's degree program.
- Students who are disqualified from a master's degree program may not reenter that program. They may be admitted to another program only on the recommendation of the new major department/division concerned and with the approval of the appropriate college graduate dean.

Graduate students who are on academic-administrative probation may be disqualified for any of the following reasons:

- The conditions for removal of administrative-academic probation are not met within the period specified.
- Students become subject to academic probation while on administrative-academic probation.
- Students become subject to a new administrative-academic probation period for the same or similar reasons of a previous probationary period, although not currently in such status.

A more detailed description of Academic Probation is described in the general Cal State LA Graduate Handbook through the Office of Graduate Studies.

Ethics

The University in its quest for truth and knowledge embraces honesty and integrity. These fundamental values must not be compromised. The trust and respect among professors, students and the society need to be vigilantly protected. Cheating and plagiarism can be

neither justified nor condoned as this would destroy the ideals and purposes of higher education. Academic integrity is one foundation for a society based on trust and honesty. Therefore, the University and the Department of Nutrition & Food Science does not tolerate plagiarism or cheating in any form, and violations of our academic honesty policies may result in being dismissed from the program. The following are included as violations of the Academic Honesty Policy.

- **Cheating**: the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.
- **Plagiarism**: the act of using ideas, words, or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own, without giving proper credit to the original sources.
- **Misrepresentation**: Knowingly furnishing false academic information to a university official, faculty member, or campus office.
- **Collusion**: Any student who intentionally helps another student perform any of the above acts of cheating, plagiarism or misrepresentation.
- **Artificial Intelligence:**

6. ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Advancement to candidacy is the process by which students become approved to carry out their thesis or project. To advance to candidacy, students must:

- Satisfy of Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (*see below*)
- Complete all required courses if conditionally admitted
- Completion of a minimum of 12 semester units of the master's degree study plan with a minimum GPA of 3.00. Students who do not maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00 cannot advance to candidacy
- Download and complete of the GS-10: Advancement to candidacy form:
    - o Section 1: Completed by the STUDENT
    - o Section 2: Completed by the STUDENT and GRADUATE COORDINATOR
    - o Section 3: Completed by the STUDENT and the COMMITTEE CHAIR
    - o Section 4: GRADUATE COORDINATOR submits to ASSOCIATE DEAN

Continuing Student Status

(Senate: 3/16/68, 8/14/74, 11/19/19; President: 4/3/68, 8/29/74, 1/13/20)

This policy defines the "Continuing Student Status" for undergraduate and graduate students. A student who has lost continuing student status must reapply to the university, and shall be held to the catalog requirements in effect at the time of readmission. For the purposes of this policy, only fall and spring terms are considered semesters, while winter and summer terms are not. Enrollment in winter or summer terms does not count towards maintaining continuing student status, and lack of enrollment in winter or summer terms does not interrupt

continuous enrollment. If a student withdraws from all classes in a given semester, that semester will not count towards maintaining continuing student status.
Students who are enrolled in consecutive semesters will maintain continuing student status.

Graduate students **who have not Advanced to Candidacy** will maintain continuing student status if they are absent for one semester as long as they enroll in the following semester. Unless a leave of absence is granted, graduate students who have not Advanced to Candidacy will lose continuing student status if they are absent for two consecutive semesters. Graduate students **who have Advanced to Candidacy** will lose continuing student status if they are absent for one semester without an approved leave of absence (i.e., any break in continuous enrollment).

Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)

All CSU students are required to demonstrate competence in writing as a requirement for all advanced degrees and all credentials. Graduate students are considered to have met the GWAR requirement upon admission to the University if they have completed **either** of the following:

1. Earned a bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university where English the primary medium of instruction; or
2. Attained a score of 41 or better on the writing portion of the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) or a score of 4 on the analytic writing portion of the GRE or the GMAT.

Graduate students must satisfy this requirement before completing 12 semester units. Graduate students may take the writing proficiency exam once (UNIV 4000). Students who do not pass are required to pass the designated GWAR course (UNIV 4010). Students who do not satisfy the GWAR requirement within their first 12 units may be subject to a registration hold. Students must classify this GWAR in order to advance in candidacy.

7.CULMINATING ASSIGNMENT

THESIS OR PROJECT

I. Purpose

A thesis or project that is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate program at California State University, Los Angeles, must satisfy the following definitions excerpted from Section 40510, Title 5, of the California Code of Regulations (prior to January 1, 1988, referred to as the California Administrative Code).

A **thesis** is the written product of the systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product demonstrates evidence of originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. An oral defense of the thesis is often required.

A **project** is a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It demonstrates evidence- of originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written manuscript that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation. An oral defense of the project may be required.

II. Responsibilities

Responsibilities

The shared goal of students, faculty, staff, and administrators is to assure quality theses in terms of both content and style, and to have a process to prepare and submit a thesis or project that is as efficient, effective and as fair as possible.

Responsibility of Students

Students (also known as Candidates) themselves are ultimately responsible for the successful completion of their theses and projects, including submission of information and drafts in a timely fashion. Theses and projects must demonstrate evidence of originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a strong rationale for their need. The candidates' responsibility includes not only completing the work of the thesis or project itself in a professionally competent manner, but also knowing and adhering to all university, college, and department requirements related to the master's thesis or project. The candidate is also responsible for regular contact, as appropriate, with individual faculty members and Committees.

Responsibility of the Committee Chair

The Committee Chair has the leading role in guiding the student in a thesis or project, from its inception to acceptance by the University, and assumes a special mentoring role to help the student excel. The Committee Chair assures that theses and projects are of high quality and will reflect positively on the department or program. Thus, the Committee Chair assures that the student has the proper preparation in terms of coursework and research skills to pursue the proposed research and scholarship. The Committee Chair also interacts with the student as appropriate, coordinates the efforts of other Committee members, and generally assures that the research and the manuscript itself meet the expected standards of quality.

Responsibility of Committee Members

Once faculty members agree to serve on a candidate's Committee, they are responsible for reviewing all submissions by the candidate in a timely fashion and for offering appropriate

feedback. They are further responsible for meeting with other Committee members to perform duties and assessments as needed.

Responsibility of Departments
Departments are responsible for ensuring that procedures exist for establishment and maintenance of thesis and projects.

The department will maintain information on all aspects of style and format of the thesis and projects that are required by the department; this information may not be explicitly stated in this document but will meet the college and university format requirements. Information on department requirements will be readily available in up-to-date written form at a sufficiently detailed level that is shared with the candidates as appropriate. The department, through its chair, shall ensure that all theses and projects are properly reviewed by the candidates' Committees and conform to current guidelines before submission to the University Thesis Coordinator and that all required corrections and changes are made before theses and projects are accepted by the University.

Responsibility of Colleges
Colleges have general oversight responsibility to assure that graduate theses and projects completed in their departments are of high quality in content and style. The College Dean or designee, with the consultation of the college's graduate studies committee, reviews and approves department format and style guidelines and assures that they do not conflict with university format requirements. The College Dean or designee forwards a copy of department guidelines and revisions as they occur, to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.

Responsibility of the University Thesis Reviewers
The University Thesis Reviewer assures that each thesis or project submitted meets approved university format guidelines and assists in the verification that department guidelines have been met. The reviewer also transmits the final approval to the University Thesis Coordinator (UTC) indicating that the thesis or project requirement has been satisfied. To accomplish the above functions, the UTC provides workshops for students and faculty. The Thesis Reviewers and the UTC do not check a thesis or project for subject content or research quality.

Responsibility of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research
The Office of Graduate Studies and Research oversees and implements all policies and procedures governing graduate theses. It also publicizes and disseminates the articulation of these policies and procedures to the campus through such vehicles as the "Thesis Guide."

III. Policies

Authorship of Theses and Dissertations

It is university policy that one and only one candidate may author a thesis or project report. While candidates may collaborate on the research or project portion of their culminating work, each candidate is nonetheless responsible for writing their own thesis, or project report.

Plagiarism

The policy concerning plagiarism is stated in the university catalog: Plagiarism is a direct violation of intellectual and academic honesty. Although it exists in many forms, all plagiarisms refer to the same act: representing somebody else's words or ideas as one's own. The most extreme forms of plagiarism are the use of a paper written by another person or obtained from a commercial source, use of a paper made up of passages copied word for word without acknowledgment. Paraphrasing another author's idea or quoting even limited portions of her or his text without proper citation is also an act of plagiarism. Even putting someone else's ideas into one's own words without acknowledgment.

In none of its forms can plagiarism be tolerated in an academic community. It may constitute grounds for a failing grade, probation, suspension or expulsion. See the current California State University, Los Angeles, Academic Honesty Policy further information on plagiarism and student discipline.

IV. Procedures

Registration in Courses for Thesis or Project Work

Students completing research units and thesis or project units required for graduate degrees must be regularly enrolled during any semester in which they use university facilities or consult with faculty. Students who have previously enrolled in all allowable research units and are not enrolled in any other credit-bearing courses or thesis or project units but who will use university facilities or consult with faculty must register in UNIV 9000.

Initiation, Preparation, and Submission

Graduate students in nutritional sciences can select either a thesis, project or comprehensive examination option for the master's degree. You must have an identified committee chair to select the thesis or project option. A student who selects the thesis or project option must complete the steps described below. A student who selects the thesis or project option must complete the steps described below.

After fall semester, most students will have applied through the department to the college dean for candidacy using the university's Form GS-10 and be formally advanced to candidacy. During fall semester, students will also follow the following steps to get prepared to complete their thesis/project. Deadlines will be established through the NTRS 5970 course.

The next steps are as follows:

- Establish an approved Committee and thesis or project title.
- Follow department requirements for enrolling in thesis or project courses.
- Fulfill registration requirements during thesis/dissertation preparation, submission, in the semester in which you intend to graduate.
- Submit an acceptable thesis, or project, proposal to the department and fulfill all of their respective requirements.
- Meet the department, and college requirements for thesis and project defense.
- File the signed thesis or project approval page (Form GS-13) in the department and college offices.
- Submit the thesis, or project, to the appropriate Thesis Reviewer following university and department requirements.

Candidates are strongly advised to attend a campus-wide workshop about thesis preparation requirements. NOTE: The date of submission of the thesis or project will usually determine the semester that a student graduates, assuming all other graduation requirements are met. If revisions are needed, the revised thesis or project must be submitted within the allowed period. Otherwise, graduation will be at a later date. Deadline dates can be found at the thesis preparation website. No extensions of the filing deadline will be allowed.

Creation of the Committee

The Committee provides guidance to the student in the planning and execution of the thesis or project. The Committee is made up of at least three members. The Committee usually consists of a minimum of two full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members from Cal State L.A. Part-time or full-time lecturer faculty members, emeriti faculty members, and off-campus professionals with appropriate training, knowledge, and skills may serve on thesis and project Committees in addition to the minimum number of tenured/tenure-track faculty members from Cal State L.A. Normally, students approach appropriate faculty members to inquire if they would be interested in serving on the Committee or as chair of the Committee. The department chair or the Committee chair may assist the student in finding faculty for the Committee or to replace existing members if they become unable or unwilling to serve.

Once appointed to a thesis or dissertation Committee, a faculty member is not to be removed from the Committee without their written consent, or in extraordinary situations by decision of the department chairperson and the associate dean of the college. Candidates should follow departmental guidelines for the establishment of the Committee. After the Committee has been established, a completed Request for Thesis or Project Committee form (see Appendix) should be completed and submitted to the graduate coordinator for approval.

Proposal Submission

In most departments a thesis or project proposal must be approved before the student may undertake this work. This proposal will be completed in NTRS 5970 (fall semester). Students

must be “Advanced to Candidacy” before they may enroll in units for research, thesis, or the project.

Research with Human Subjects

For theses that involve research with human subjects, it is necessary to adhere to the established policies regarding the use of such subjects. For research involving human animal subjects, approval must be obtained in advance of conducting the research through the Institutional Review Board (IRB, for human subjects). If, at any time throughout the duration of the research, the faculty affiliated with the IRB approval leaves and is no longer employed by Cal State L.A., the candidate must update their approval with IRB. Information on regulations affecting both is available via the website of the Office of Research Development.

The Cal State LA IRB process can take several months, and students should apply for IRB approval as early as possible and no later than the end of the semester prior to collecting data. Prior to applying for IRB, students are required to complete an annual education and training program on the protection of human research subjects via the CITI program. Instructions for training will be provided during NTRS 5110: Research Concepts and Methodology in Nutritional Science Research. For more detailed information about the IRB and its procedures, the student should register on IRBnet.

Students completing a project will typically not need to secure IRB approval. Please check with your committee chair.

Defense of Thesis and Project

For nutritional science MS students, it is a requirement that a student to present an oral defense of the thesis or project before the Committee. The defense will be open to the public and is publicized through distribution of a thesis or project abstract. An electronic draft of the thesis or project must be provided to each Committee member no later than two weeks before the scheduled oral defense (or later with the consent of the entire Committee). The final draft of the thesis or dissertation is prepared following the defense. The approval page should be signed only after the final draft has been reviewed and approved by the Committee members.

Submission of Completed Theses and Projects to the University

After the Committee has approved the contents of the thesis or project, the candidate prepares a copy of it in finished format, along with the approval page (GS-13 form). The finished copy is again submitted to the Committee for approval, with the approval page. If the finished copy satisfies content and university format requirements, in the opinion of the committee, all approval pages are signed by Committee members. Then the finished copy and one signed approval page are presented to the appropriate Thesis Reviewer.

NOTE: Candidates should closely review the instructions related to the format of the thesis and project that are available on the Office of Graduate Studies and Research website. Students may also schedule an appointment with the appropriate Thesis Reviewer for a short

consultation on format for the thesis. The Thesis Reviewer reviews the finished copy for acceptability of physical format. If corrections are required, the Thesis Reviewer will return the thesis within two weeks, with directions for corrections to be made, and will discuss these revisions with the candidate. Assuming that all suggested changes are made in the allotted time, the semester in which the final draft of the thesis or project is submitted to the University Thesis Coordinator is the semester in which the student will graduate.

The candidate must upload (after approval by the Thesis Reviewer) the finished electronic copy of the thesis to Proquest/UMI, the publisher's website, by the posted deadline.

NOTE: Thesis Reviewers are students too. They have scheduled office hours and a designated number of hours that they work each week. Thesis Reviewers are not available on demand or at the last moment to stop work on the theses or projects of other students to handle and process late submissions. Students who wait until late in the term to work with their Thesis Reviewer, or who provide the final approved copy to the reviewer very near the deadline for the term, may find that their thesis or project will not be approved for acceptance and uploading to ProQuest/UMI by the deadline for the term. If this should happen, the student will be required to register for the following term and pay appropriate fees in order to submit their thesis or project and graduate.

Additional Copies of the Thesis or Project

The nutritional sciences department maintains copies of every thesis or project. Please email a final copy to the MS Coordinator and your Chair.

Preparation Requirements

There are specific requirements for typing and page formatting. All of this information can be found on the Formatting Guidelines on the Graduate Studies website.

Projects and theses are typically four chapters long. Content for each chapter is below.

Typical Content of a Thesis

1. **Introduction/Literature Review**
    - Relevant background information/Previous research on topic/Literature Search strategy
    - Hypothesis/Aims/Research Question (Your contribution to the field!)
    - Definition of terms
    - Purpose/Significance of the Thesis
    - Contribution to the Public Good

2. **Methods/Procedures**

- Describe how you collected your data
- What methodological framework is guiding your research? Why is this methodology the most appropriate for your study?
- How are ethics considered when designing the study and collecting data?

3. **Results**
    - What did you find?
    - How do these findings relate to your Hypothesis/Argument/Research Question?

4. **Discussion/Evaluation/Conclusion**
    - How does your research advance your discipline?
    - What could you have done to improve the research process (different theory, method, or application)?
    - What are some recommendations for future research or practice?

Typical Content of a Project

1. Introduction/Literature Review
- Relevant background information/Previous research on topic/Literature Search strategy
- Project Objectives (Your contribution to the field!)
- Definition of terms
- Purpose/Significance of the Project
- Contribution to the Public Good

2. **Methods/Procedures**
    - What did you do to complete the project?
    - What methodological framework is guiding your /project? Why is this methodology the most appropriate for your study?
    - How are ethics considered and addressed in creating this project?

3. **Results**
    - What was the final product or outcome of your project? Include a description of each element of the project and the actual project itself in this section.
    - How do these findings relate to your Project Objectives?

4. **Discussion/Evaluation/Conclusion**
    - How does your project advance your discipline?
    - What could you have done to improve the project (different theory, method, or application)?

- What are some recommendations for future research or practice?

Digital Technology

If your thesis or project includes video, audio, photography, or other technology, the content must be submitted using the technology that is in major use at the time the project is submitted. Contents of each photograph should be described in the report of the project and captions or titles provided. Additionally, a list of the photographs must be included in the report accompanying the project. The list is prepared in the same format used for a list of figures.

Style Manuals

The nutrition program and the College of Health and Human Services utilizes the American Psychological Association 7th edition. See APA Style and Purdue OWL.

Grading Rubric

A grading rubric will be provided with specific objectives for the thesis/project. Please review the rubric prior to completing your thesis/project.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

I. Purpose

The purpose of the comprehensive exam (comp exam) is a culminating experience to assess whether students who are in their final semester of our graduate program are able to integrate nutritional science knowledge, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery in the field of nutritional science. The exam also provides evidence that you are able to locate, organize and critically analyze information, provide accurate referencing of resources, and to write in a clear and advanced manner about concepts in nutrition.

II. Eligibility

1. You will typically take the comp exam in the semester in which you complete your final coursework. You must receive approval from a graduate advisor. The advisor will verify that you are enrolled in the remaining courses and are ready to take your comp exam. Email admin support and your faculty advisor for permission to enroll in NTRS 5960.

Once faculty provide permission, a permit will be issued. Then, register for the course like you do for your other MS courses.

2. You must complete any of the incomplete work from previous semesters prior to taking the exam.
3. You must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the graduate program.
4. Prior to registering, you must complete the GS-10 Advancement to Candidacy form.
5. Each semester, the comp exam will be administered during Week 9. You will be provided with a question and then be given 14 days to complete the questions. The comp exam is estimated to take somewhere between 15-20 hours to complete, but that varies by student. You may want to arrange your work, volunteer and personal schedule to accommodate this extra time.
6. We typically need at least 2 weeks to read it and provide feedback. You may be asked to make significant changes, which could take at least another week for you to revise, and another week for us to read again.

III. Student Preparation

1. The graduate advisor will host an orientation workshop about the comp exam early each semester. The format of the exam will be reviewed and questions will be answered.
2. Students are also encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor at least once during the semester to answer questions.

IV. Development of the Examination

Each year, faculty in the department will generate a variety of questions related to topics in nutritional science. You will be asked to select from among the topics to complete the exam. The goal of the comp exam is integrative as it covers a variety of topics and information learned throughout the courses in the MS program. It will be used to assess achievement of the following program learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate information literacy and apply critical thinking in examining nutrition and health-related evidence-based scientific and professional literature.
2. Analyze the gap and translate knowledge from Nutritional Sciences competencies to nutrition research or evidence-based clinical practice.
3. Integrate mastery of nutrition concepts, which includes an examination of a problem, and application of diverse perspectives, through a well-written and structured culminating project.

V. Administration of the Exam

1. The exam will begin Monday morning of Week 9. You will be emailed a question. You must upload your response to the comprehensive examination Canvas website in two Mondays at 11:59pm.
2. The comp exam must be done alone without input or editing by anyone else. We will run it through Turnitin. **You may NOT reuse material you have written in other courses, but you may reuse references if the topic is similar.** Please do not use AI.

3. You may use any textbook, reputable online resources, or academic journals that are appropriate. Please be aware that you will be assessed on the quality and quantity of your references.
4. This is a take home exam and will not be proctored as you are writing it. We expect that it will be accomplished individually without input from classmates or others.
5. Specific expectations for the format of the exam will be included in the directions. The comp exam includes a literature review, a study proposal and a short, creative handout project.
6. You are expected to use the APA format for the: title page, headings, all text and in-text references and the references section.

VI. Evaluation

1. A team of two or more faculty will review your responses to the exam. Your identity will not be known to them but instead you will be identified by a number.
2. Faculty readers will use a rubric to assess the student response. The rubric will address the content, clarity, analysis, and formatting of the response, and will be distributed to you along with the exam questions.
3. If both faculty agree with a pass, you will pass. If there is a disagreement in the evaluations by the two faculty members, the response will be evaluated by an additional faculty member as a tiebreaker.
4. Once you pass the exam, there are no further steps to take.
5. If necessary, final determinations of exam results will be done by faculty consensus at a meeting dedicated to this activity.
6. You will be notified of the results by the faculty overseeing comp exams, or by your advisor within 2 weeks of when the examination is turned in.
7. If you receive a “rewrite” evaluation, you should meet with your graduate advisor to discuss your performance. The graduate advisor will summarize the main issues related to the inadequate response, and suggest ways to strengthen performance in subsequent attempts. If a rewrite is needed, you will need to enroll the following semester in the comprehensive exam (NTRS 5960).
8. The exam may be repeated two times for a total of three attempts. The inability to pass the comp exam in three attempts will result in the termination from the program.

VII. Instructions for Students Who Do Not Pass

1. Written notification will be provided if you do not pass the comprehensive exam. You will be informed of the content areas where demonstration of competencies did not meet standards.

2. It is the graduate student's responsibility to contact their program advisor to develop a study plan for all retakes.

We anticipate most students will successfully complete the comp exam as you have been well prepared throughout our MS program. We wish you the best of luck!

8. DEADLINES AND RECOMMENDED SCHEDULE

Completing coursework, data collection and analysis, and a written thesis or project within the required timeframe requires substantial commitment and organization. It is the student's responsibility to meet required deadlines and maintain progress in the program. The thesis/project needs to be completed no later than May 1st for a student graduating in the spring semester.

Each semester should involve the completion of at least one required document (proposal outline, thesis or project proposal, thesis or project draft, completed thesis/project) and submission of the document to the thesis/project mentor and committee. A typical schedule is:

SEMESTER 1

1. Determine thesis/project mentor.
2. With mentor's assistance, determine specific thesis/project topic.
3. Constitute thesis/project committee (3 member minimum including mentor) and complete the thesis/project committee membership form (see Appendix).
4. Develop proposal outline.
5. Write Chapters 1-2.
6. Send out completed and approved proposal outline to committee members.
7. Obtain training and certification sufficient for working with human subjects (e.g., IRB training, CITI training, etc.) if completing a thesis.
8. Based on feedback from committee, develop a thesis/project proposal.
9. Send out completed and approved proposal to committee members.
10. Revise proposal based on feedback from committee.
11. As appropriate, submit proposed research to the Office of Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities for IRB approval.

SEMESTER 2

12. Collect and analyze data or create project.
13. Complete outline and first draft of Chapters 3-4.
14. Submit first draft of thesis/project to mentor.
15. Revise thesis/project with mentor.
16. Send out revised thesis/project to committee members.
17. Based on feedback from committee, revise thesis/project.
18. Once the committee has approved the final draft of the thesis/project the student may schedule his/her defense with consultation from committee chair.
19. Successfully defend thesis/project.
20. Meet with a thesis reviewer in the Office of Graduate Studies for preliminary format review.
21. Submit final draft of thesis/project to ProQuest for official review (see Office of Graduate Studies for ProQuest link and more information.
22. Obtain committee signatures on GS-13 Form and submit it to the Office of Graduate Studies on or before the final deadline.
23. Upload final version of thesis/project on or before the final deadline.

9. GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

To graduate in any given semester (fall, spring or summer), the thesis/project must be defended and filed with the Office of Graduate Studies by deadlines posted for that semester. The dates change, but generally the last day to file will be early May, early August, and early December for spring, summer and fall graduation, respectively.

The student should apply to graduate with the University in the term they expect to complete their degree requirements. Information about graduation can be found on the University Graduation Office website. It is the responsibility of the student to meet with their thesis mentor early enough to ensure they have completed all of the coursework and thesis requirements before applying to graduate.

Commencement, the major walking and hooding ceremony, currently only occurs in May. We strongly advise, and some thesis mentors may require, students to have actually filed their theses before walking.

LIST OF CULMINATING ASSIGNMENTS (2020-2025)

Year	Student	Format	Title
2025	Angelica Hiney	Project	Dig into Nutrition: Nutrition Education for Youth Athletes
2025	Takia Durrett	Project	Oh Baby! Nourishing Recipes for Expecting Moms to Reduce the Risk of Gestational Diabetes and Preeclampsia
2025	Kayli Bagwell	Project	Macros and Mindfulness: Bridging Structured Nutrition and Intuitive Eating for Long-Term Weight Management
2024	Stephany Equite	Project	Intuitive Eating: Educational Content on the Principles of Intuitive Eating for the LatinX/Hispanic Community.
2024	Manual Calderon	Project	All About Protein: An Infographic to Increase Awareness About Protein Intake Among Male Youth Soccer Players
2024	Stephanie Izaguirre	Project	The Cardio-Protective Effect of Water-Soluble Vitamins on Anticancer Drug-Induced Cardiotoxicity.
2024	Ashley Lepe	Project	Promoting Weight-Inclusive Thinking in a Weight-Centric Environment: A Coach's Guide to Intuitive Eating Practices for High School Girl's Wrestling
2024	Asis Jackson	Project	*A Soul Food Cookbook for The Renal Diet*
2024	Shira Levin	Thesis	The Search for Health: A Qualitative Analysis of Where People with Chronic Conditions Turn for Trusted Health Information
2024	Holly Soto	Project	A Low-FODMAP Guide to Reducing Gastrointestinal Symptoms for Endurance Runners.
2023	Evelyn Seto	Project	Community gardens in Los Angeles: the creation of a pamphlet highlighting the benefits of gardening and commonly grown plants popular with Asian cultures
2023	Jaurice Salas	Project	The intersection of community gardening and culture: an inventory and recipes of popular plants grown by Latinx residents in Los Angeles community gardens
2023	Jamie-Salas Duarte	Project	Establishment of a book chapter-The Cardio-Protective Effect of Fat-Soluble Vitamins on Anti-Cancer Drug Induced Cardiotoxicity
2023	Laura Banderas	Project	Changing the Trend: Using social media to Influence Healthy Dietary Intake Among Adolescents One Reel at a Time

2023	Ellen Kang	Project	A Culturally Informed Guide to the DASH Diet for Korean American Adults
2023	Luis Alcala	Project	LA JARRA (The Pitcher): Ideas and Recipes to Replace, Recreate, and Reduce Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Intake
2022	Diana Gonzalez	Project	Exploring parenting styles and food-related parenting practices in relation to child development and growth
2022	Brittney Rae Sito	Project	Be good to yourself: the development of worksite wellness Workshops featuring themes and topics on integrative health and nutrition for well-being
2022	Jamie Ma	Project	Beat the boredom: a cookbook which incorporates metabolic food formula for patients with high tyrosine 1
2022	Shelby Taylor Burns	Project	The application of the academy of nutrition and dietetics' knowledge requirements in the Curriculum for a didactic program in dietetics
2022	Mikaela Faith Santos Marcelo	Project	Development of an infographic on the dietary approach to stop hypertension (DASH) diet for U.S. college students with elevated blood pressure
2022	Lian Boc	Project	Application of the low-fodmap diet on irritable bowel syndrome: a blog learning series
2022	Marissa Lindsey Weissbuch	Project	Be good to yourself: the development of worksite wellness programming, featuring themes and topics on family and Lifestyle nutrition
2022	Shan Jin	Project	Establishment of an effective assay to measure the impact of delta-tocotrienol on drug resistant human breast cancer cells
2021	Gerardo A. Alvarado	Thesis	Infographics and Sports Nutrition Knowledge Among Student Athletes
2021	Wendy Chung	Project	The Development of a Survey to Measure Alterations In Sleeping Patterns Among U.S. College Students During Covid-19
2021	Atziri Villafana	Project	The Development of a Survey to Measure Dietary Habits and Physical Activity Among U.S. College Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic
2021	Apryl Vines	Project	Listen To Your Gut: Educational Videos on The Gut-Brain Axis and The Therapeutic Use of Probiotics
2021	Anna Rodriguez	Project	A Mediterranean diet Cookbook for Stroke

2020	Lizbeth Flores	Thesis	Investigating The Effects Of Δ-Tocotrienol on Her2 Positive, Skbr3 Breast Cancer Cells
2020	Pasia-Leigh Daum	Project	Vitamin D And Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: An Infographic for Individuals with Low Vitamin D And Impaired Glycemic Control
2020	Rodney Rodriguez	Project	The Development of An Educational Superfood Infographic to Promote Awareness of The Health Benefits of Moringa Oleifera
2020	Amanda Allen	Project	Social Media, Disordered Eating, And Evidence to Support A Weight-Neutral Approach To Health Promotion: An Infographic