

A HANDBOOK FOR MASTER'S DEGREE SEEKING GRADUATE STUDENTS
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION AND FOOD SCIENCES

This handbook has been compiled to assist graduate students in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences (NFS). The purpose of the handbook is to acquaint students with departmental standard operating procedures. As with all components within the University, all procedures must comply with the policies and procedures set forth by Texas Woman's University. The information contained in this handbook is to supplement but not replace the Graduate Catalog.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING A MASTER'S DEGREE

For general requirements and regulations for a Master's Degree, refer to [Graduate School](#) and [Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences](#).

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Upon acceptance into the graduate program, the NFS Graduate Admission Committee will assign an academic advisor to the student. The name of this advisor is included in the letter of acceptance from the Dean of the Graduate School. This advisor directs the student's course work until an academic advisory committee is formed. It is the responsibility of the student to make an initial appointment with this advisor before registering for any courses.

A student has the option to change advisors. This should be done as early as possible during the course of study. The student must complete a form for changing advisor (available in the departmental office) and secure appropriate signatures before submitting to the Chair of the department.

Changes in Admission Status

When the admission status is "Provisional", conditions stated on the letter of admission must be met prior to the submission of the degree plan. The student should contact the academic advisor to submit a request to the Graduate School through the Department for changing admission status to "Unconditional" admission. Failure to meet the conditions of admission will result in the removal of the student from a degree program. (See [Graduate Catalog](#).)

Academic Advisory Committee

The student, in consultation with the academic advisor will decide on the membership of the committee. An Advisory Committee of no fewer than 3 members should be formed when the student has the "Unconditional" admission status and has completed 12 semester hours of graduate coursework. Two of the members of the Advisory Committee must be full-time faculty in the component. If a minor is declared, at least one committee member should be from the minor department.

The primary function of the Academic Advisory Committee is to work with the student in developing an appropriate program of study leading to the desired degree. The student works with the advisor in preparing a degree plan. (See [Graduate School forms](#).) A committee meeting, chaired by the academic advisor, is convened for the approval of the degree plan. The student is responsible for scheduling the time and place of the meeting as well as submitting the approved degree plan bearing all the signatures of the committee members to the Graduate School through the chair of the department.

Degree Plan for M.S. in Nutrition, M.S. in Food Science, and M.S. in Food Systems Administration

The Degree Plan can be filed when a student has unconditional admission status and has completed 12 semester hours of coursework. When a student elects to complete a thesis, the degree plan should reflect a minimum of 30 semester hours including at least 18 semester hours of organized course work; a maximum of 6 hours of research/independent study/co-op education/internship experience; and a maximum of 6 hours of thesis. If the professional paper option is elected, the degree plan should reflect a minimum of 36 semester hours including at least 24 hours of organized course work; a maximum of 6 hours of independent study/co-op education/internship experience; and 3-6 credit hours of professional paper. If coursework option is elected, the degree plan should reflect a minimum of 42 hours including at least 36 hours of organized coursework and a maximum of 6 hours of independent study/co-op education/internship experience.

1. No course with a grade below "C" should be included on the degree plan.
2. No more than 6 credit hours may be transferred from another institution.
3. The total minimum semester hours required corresponding to the program sought must be listed on the degree plan.
4. Only graduate courses with a grade of "B" or better can be transferred from another institution.
5. The degree plan must include the following core courses in addition to a graduate level statistics course and a graduate level seminar.
M.S. in Nutrition: NFS 5314 and NFS 5363
M.S. in Food Science: NFS 5003, NFS 5013, and NFS 5023
M.S. in Food Systems Administration: NFS 5713, NFS 5763, and NFS 5773
Students must receive a "B" or better grade in NFS 5003, NFS 5314, and NFS 5773.
6. No absolute time period exists when a master's degree must be completed; however, courses taken at TWU that are older than six years cannot apply toward any master's degree.
7. A minor field requires at least 9 hours of course work in that field.
8. A minor may be earned only in a field in which TWU offers a graduate degree.

Degree Plan for M.S. in Exercise and Sports Nutrition

Refer to specific degree plans under the coursework option, professional paper option, thesis option, or International Olympic Committee (IOC) Diploma in Sports Nutrition on the [Nutrition and Food Sciences](#) site.

Change of Research Advisor

When a student desires to change an advisor, the student must complete a form for changing the advisor ([Change of Advisor form](#)) and secure appropriate signatures before submitting to the Chair of the department.

Change in Degree Plan

Once the degree plan has been filed and approved by The Graduate School, any changes should be made by the major professor/advisor and sent to The Graduate School on the appropriate form (See [Graduate School forms](#)) with the approval of the Chair of the department.

Pursuing Two Master's Degrees

A student who desires to pursue a second master's degree after the completion of one master's degree should refer to the policy stated in the [Graduate Catalog](#). The current guidelines in determining the maximum possible number of credit hours that can be transferred from one master's degree to a second master's degree is up to 12 semester hours in a program requiring 30-44 credit hours.

A student who desires to pursue two master's degrees simultaneously within the NFS Department must file two separate degree plans, one for each discipline, and complete one thesis or professional paper for each study discipline.

RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

Research Committee

A Research Committee should be formed when the student is ready to work on research toward a thesis or professional paper. The members of the research committee should consist faculty members who have the expertise in the area of research that a student is pursuing.

The purpose of the master's level research committee is to direct the student's research progress with respect to the thesis or professional paper. The major professor serves as chair of the research committee and is responsible for the overall supervision of the research project.

The graduate student in consultation with the major professor is responsible in forming the Research Committee. The student may elect to keep the same membership for both the academic advisory committee and the research committee; or may elect to change the committee membership. The Research Committee should consist of three members with no fewer than two voting members of the Graduate Faculty from the major component. The chair of a research committee should be a full-time voting member of the Graduate Faculty. A full-time non-voting member of the Graduate Faculty may serve as the chair of a research committee with permission from the dean of the Graduate School. When a minor is declared, at least one committee member should be from the minor department. A non-TWU member may be appointed to the committee with the approval of the Chair of the department and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Research Advisor, Research Topics for Theses, and Publication of Research

Prior to the selection of a research topic, students are encouraged to arrange an appointment with those faculty members whose research is of interest to the students. The student will identify a faculty member willing to serve as his/her research advisor and begin research work at a mutually acceptable time. Prior to submitting a thesis, the student must write a manuscript and submit it for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Content Options of a Professional Paper

A. Professional publication

A professional publication is a manuscript prepared for submission to a peer-reviewed publication (i.e., *Journal of The American Dietetic Association*, *Journal of Nutrition Education*). The format should adhere strictly to guidelines for authors of the peer-reviewed publication. The manuscript must be reviewed by an appropriate outside reviewer prior to the oral defense.

B. Critical review of literature

A critical review of literature involves extensive study of a special problem in the field. The review will typically include an introduction, research question, comprehensive summary of findings, discussion and interpretation of major findings, implications for research and references.

C. Development of an educational module

The student may elect to develop an educational module or tool utilizing appropriate media and/or computer technologies. The professional paper on the project will include a review of the research literature, a description of the materials developed, the product, some form of evaluation of the project's utility, and a summary and discussion of the project.

D. Pilot study

Methodology, research instruments, and validity of research tools often must be tested prior to inclusion in a research project. A pilot study includes the same components as needed for a larger study; however, the design may allow more flexibility and/or a smaller sample size. Results of the pilot project should be evaluated with a view toward revising and improving the research instruments and/or methodology. The professional paper for a pilot study should include introduction, purpose or research question or hypotheses, review of literature, methods, results and discussion, potential for further research, and references.

E. Existing data

A student may analyze existing data previously collected as the basis for a professional paper. The format should include an introduction, research questions or hypotheses, review of literature, methods (analytical and statistics), results and discussion, and references.

Course Registration Required for Thesis/Professional Paper

A Master's student should register for Thesis (NFS 5983) during the semester when the prospectus is in preparation. Each semester, the student should register for Thesis (NFS 5993) or research courses (NFS 5961 or NFS 5963) while working on the research project. During the course of study, the student is required to register once for NFS 5961 with each member of the research committee (except the chair). Registration for thesis/professional paper hours during summer sessions is not required if the student does not plan to use university facilities or meet with the major professor.

Prospectus

Steps for Prospectus Preparation

1. The student, working under the direction of the major professor, develops the prospectus. The prospectus should be prepared according to the guidelines established by The Graduate School. (See [Graduate School Degree Completion](#) and open the document "TWU's Guide to Preparation and Processing of Dissertations, Theses, Professional Papers.")
2. After the prospectus is approved by the major professor, a hard copy (not sent electronically) of the prospectus along with a comprehensive review of literature is given to each committee member at least 10 working days prior to the committee meeting.
3. The student, not the major professor, is responsible for scheduling the prospectus meeting and meeting room. If media equipment is required, the student is responsible for making these arrangements in cooperation with the major professor. The major professor chairs the prospectus meeting.
2. An approved prospectus must bear signatures of all committee members.
3. The approved prospectus should be filed with the NFS Department for routing to the Graduate School. The student should check with the NFS Department Office for the appropriate number of copies required. The prospectus for the professional paper option is filed only with the NFS Department, not the Graduate School, and the Research Committee will decide on the format of the prospectus.

THESES AND PROFESSIONAL PAPERS

Thesis

A thesis follows the format described in the guidelines established by The Graduate School (See [Graduate School Degree Completion](#) and open the document “TWU’s Guide to Preparation and Processing of Dissertations, Theses, Professional Papers”) or a manuscript according to the format of the intended journal for publication.

Professional Paper

The format of the professional paper is flexible and will be developed in a style most appropriate for the objectives of the project. The student, major professor and members of the research committee will agree upon the scope and the extent of the professional paper as well as the format of the final written report.

Guidelines for Review and Filing of Theses and Professional Papers

- The candidate for a Master's degree must take a final examination, which is generally the oral defense of the thesis/professional paper. The major professor chairs the meeting where the student begins with an oral presentation of the thesis or professional paper.
- After a thesis or professional paper is written and approved by the major professor, a printed copy (not electronically transmitted) should be given to each member of the committee **at least 10 working days before the final oral defense meeting**.
- The meeting for the final oral defense of theses or professional papers should **not** be scheduled within the period from two weeks before the beginning of the final exam period through the second week of the following semester.
- The student is responsible to schedule the meeting time and to reserve the meeting room and audiovisual equipment.
- The student is responsible for preparing two forms: (1) Certification of Final Examination (See [Graduate School Degree Completion](#)) and (2) Signature Page (See [Graduate School Degree Completion](#) and open the document “TWU’s Guide to Preparation and Processing of Dissertations, Theses, Professional Papers”).
- Upon successful completion of the oral defense, the student should finalize the professional paper or thesis. The original copy of the Certification of Final Examination should be submitted to the Graduate School. A copy of the Certification of Final Examination should be submitted to NFS department to be filed.

- The student must be enrolled in thesis (NFS 5993) or professional paper (NFS 5973) during the semester when oral defense takes place in order to hold conferences with the research committee and to take the final examination.

Copies and Forms to be Submitted to the Graduate School

It is the responsibility of the student to submit the Certification of Final Examination, and the required number of copies of the completed thesis to the Graduate School (See [Graduate School Degree Completion](#)).

A Schematic Diagram of the Process for Pursuing a Master's Degree

