

August 1, 2011

Policy and Procedure Guide.

Master of Science (M.S.) Degree in Health Education and Behavior

Graduate School Policy

"It is the responsibility of the graduate student to become informed and to observe all regulations and procedures required by the program s/he is pursuing. The student must be familiar with those sections of the Graduate Catalog that outline general regulations and requirements, specific degree program requirements, and the offerings and requirements of the major academic unit. Ignorance of a rule does not constitute a basis for waiving that rule".

Department of Health Education & Behavior
College of Health and Human Performance
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611

1. Degree Title and Options

Master of Science in Health Education and Behavior, referred to in general terms as an M.S. or a Master of Science degree, includes 3 options: a 30-credit *Non-Thesis Option*, a 36-credit *Project In Lieu Of Thesis Option* and a 36-credit *Thesis Option*.

2. M.S. Student Classifications

7HH – graduate students seeking their first master’s degree. 8HH – graduate students who have earned a master’s degree, or who have earned 36 or more credits while seeking a master’s degree.

3. Interest Areas, *Non-Thesis Option*

The 30-credit *Non-Thesis Option* includes 15 credits in Department foundation core coursework plus 15 credits in Department elective coursework that the student and advisor select based on the student’s personal interests. Interest areas typically include a primary course (3 credits) that focuses on the interest area, plus 4 additional courses (12 credits) that relate to the interest area. Projects relating to interest areas can be completed as non-lecture coursework. One interest area course (3 credits) can be used toward project completion.

4. Conditional Admission

The Graduate School grants conditional admission for students to begin master’s work with the understanding that they will meet specific conditions to continue in the program such as minimum GRE scores, minimum GPA in graduate coursework, or pre-requisite coursework. The letter of acceptance lists conditions students must meet. Responsibility for meeting the conditions, both in terms of specific details and within specific time limits, rests with the student, with support from the advisor, and graduate program coordinator. Students who do not meet the conditions may be dismissed from the program.

5. Minimum Credits for the Degree

The Graduate School requires that M.S. degrees included at least 30 credits beyond the bachelor’s degree work. M.S. degree programs of study may exceed the minimum number of credits.

6. Core Coursework (Required; 5 Courses/15 Credits)

HSC 6037 – Philosophy and Principles of Health Education
HSC 6318 – Planning Health Education Programs
HSC 6507 – Epidemiology
HSC 6712 – Evaluating Health Education Programs
HSC 6637 – Social Marketing and Health (30 Credit Option) **or**
HSC 6603 – Theories of Health Behavior and Practice (36 Credit Options)

7. Minimum Credits Required in the Department of Health Education & Behavior

M.S. students must earn at least 30 credits (*Non-Thesis Option*) or 36 credits (*Thesis Option* and *Project In Lieu Of Thesis Option*) in Department of Health Education & Behavior coursework as part of the M.S. program, regardless of their previous education and experience.

8. Credit for Transfer Coursework

M.S. students can request transfer of up to 9 credits of previous health education graduate coursework (no more than 7 years old) toward requirements for the M.S. degree. Only graduate lecture coursework with grades of B or

higher may be considered for transfer (no readings, independent study, supervised teaching, supervised research, internship, thesis credit, etc.). Seminars and special topics courses will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The Graduate Program Advisory Committee and faculty advisor base transfer decisions on (1) equivalence of a previous course to a similar course offered at the University of Florida, and (2) how the transfer course supports the student's program of study. Some special considerations apply based on category of transfer. *Major*—transferred courses should come from a peer department (such as programs listed in the ESG and AAHE directories), and should be equivalent in content and rigor to similar courses offered in the Department of Health Education & Behavior. *Electives*—transfer of elective courses occurs on a case-by-case basis, with the assumption that the course has some relationship to the student's overall career goals. The graduate coordinator may request that students provide books, course outlines, and catalog descriptions for courses they request to transfer.

9. Lecture Coursework

Lecture coursework includes courses offered in a traditional, face-to-face, teaching-learning format where instructors and students meet at set days and times for a semester or term.

10. Non-Lecture Coursework

Non-lecture coursework includes work scheduled independently between students and a faculty sponsor in courses such as readings (HSC 6904), independent study (HSC 6905), supervised teaching (HSC 6940), and supervised research (HSC 6910). Each credit hour of non-lecture coursework equals about 40 clock hours of effort. Students must present a signed and approved *Proposal for Non-Lecture Coursework* form before registering for non-lecture coursework.

11. Academic File

All graduate students have an official *academic file* (or student file) maintained in the department office by the graduate program staff. Academic files contain materials such as application packages, original program of study planning forms, faculty advisor appointments, advisement records, correspondence, forms, and related information.

12. Personnel File

Graduate students who receive financial support in the form of scholarships, fellowships, graduate assistantships, research assistantships, or OPS (hourly) employment from the department have a *personnel file* (or employee file) maintained by the department office manager. Personnel files contain materials such as contracts, deductions and tax information, pay records, time logs, correspondence, and related financial information.

13. Faculty as Advisors

The Advisor (also referred to as the Supervisory Committee Chair) represents a key person in a successful M.S. program. M.S. students typically keep the same advisor for the duration of their programs. Advisors help students plan a program of study, ensure completion of the CHES examination, and conduct a thesis or project if appropriate. They also provide personal, professional, and academic advice. Only faculty specifically designated by the Graduate School may serve as advisors or supervisory committee members. The department matches students and advisors based primarily on professional and research interests. Assignments also depend on faculty members' overall responsibilities including number of master's students, number of theses and projects-in-lieu-of-theses in progress, number of Ph.D. students, number of Ph.D. candidates, teaching assignments, administrative assignments, and related professional activities.

14. Advisors and Supervisory Committees

Students in the 30-credit *Non-Thesis Option* have 1 Advisor. Students in the 36-credit *Thesis Option*, and the 36-credit *Project In Lieu Of Thesis Option*, have 1 Supervisory Committee Chair and at least 1 Supervisory Committee member.

15. Planning an M.S. Program of Study

Advisors help students plan an M.S. program of study. Advisors help students select core, interest area or elective coursework. Students electing to complete a thesis or project will obtain input from their supervisory committee members during the program planning process. In addition to specifying coursework in the various categories, the program of study includes projected dates (semesters) for documenting completion of the CHES examination requirement, and a projected month and year for graduation. The dates may change, but the student, advisor, and supervisory committee (when indicated) begin work with a projected calendar. If changes are made to the plan of study the advisor must approve the changes and note those changes on the original program of study planning sheet in the academic file. The graduate program assistant assists students in submitting the appropriate paperwork.

16. Comprehensive Examination

All M.S. students complete an examination that represents the capstone event in successfully completing their degree program. For students in the 30-credit, *Non-Thesis Option*, and in the 36-credit *Project In Lieu Of Thesis Option*, completion of the CHES examination serves as the comprehensive examination for their M.S. program. During the final semester of their programs, student in these options must provide the Graduate Program Coordinator with documentation that confirms that the student completed, or will complete, CHES requirements. (See the graduate program staff for assistance.)

Students in the 36-credit, *Project In Lieu Of Thesis Option* also must successfully present their completed project to the Supervisory Committee during the final semester of their program. Likewise, students in the 36-credit *Thesis Option* must successfully defend their thesis to the Supervisory Committee during the students' final semester in the program

Students must complete the Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES) examination as part of their program requirements. The CHES examination can be completed anytime during a student's program as long as they meet the minimum eligibility requirements. Students typically complete the CHES examination during the semester in which they graduate with their baccalaureate degree. Students should check the CHES website for examination dates and locations. It is the student's responsibility to complete the CHES registration process and pay all fees required to complete the examination. Students should inform their faculty advisor of their examination date as soon as it has been scheduled.

Students entering the MS program currently holding the Certified Health Education Specialist must earn a total of 15 continuing education contact hours (MS coursework cannot be counted for CE contact hour credit) while in program. Upon completion, evidence of CHES continuing education contact hours should be provided to the faculty advisor. The information will be placed in the student's academic file.

17. Thesis Proposal

Thesis proposal meetings must be completed during the Fall and Spring semesters, or by the mid-point (end of week 3) of the Summer Session A Term. Proposal meetings may not be scheduled during the Summer Session B Term.

Proposal presentations typically last about 30 minutes. They often include a brief handout of the presentation outline and main points, and electronic presentation formats such as PowerPoint presentations. Advisors help students decide on an appropriate presentation package.

Advisors invite all graduate students and department faculty to attend the public portion of proposal meetings.

In preparing for thesis proposal meetings, M.S. students will:

Work closely with the advisor and supervisory committee at all stages in developing a proposal.

Prepare a proposal that includes 3 fully developed chapters presented to the supervisory committee at least 2-3 weeks (10-15 work days) prior to the proposal meeting.

Provide supervisory committee members with 1 paper copy, and 1 electronic copy (delivered by email) as an MS Word file, of the proposal, and place 1 paper copy of the proposal on reserve for public reference in the department office.

Students traditionally take responsibility for contacting committee members and arranging a date, time, and location for proposal meetings. Refreshments are not required at proposal meetings. If students voluntarily choose to provide refreshments, limit the items to beverages such as juice, coffee, or water.

18. Final Defense of the Thesis

Thesis final defense meetings must be completed during the Fall and Spring semesters, and by the mid-point (end of week 3) of the Summer Session A Term. Thesis final defense meetings may not be scheduled during the Summer Session B Term.

Final defense presentations typically last about 30 minutes. They often include a brief handout of the presentation outline and main points, and electronic presentation formats such as slides, overhead transparencies, or PowerPoint presentations. Advisors help students decide on an appropriate presentation package.

Advisors announce the thesis final defense date, time, and location at department and college levels.

Advisors invite all graduate students and department faculty to attend the public portion of thesis final defense meetings.

In preparing for thesis final defense meetings, M.S. students will:

Work closely with the advisor and supervisory committee at all stages in completing the thesis.

Prepare a final version of the thesis presented to the supervisory committee at least 2-3 weeks (10-15 work days) prior to the final defense meeting.

Provide supervisory committee members with 1 paper copy, and 1 electronic copy (delivered by email) as an MS Word file, of the final version of the thesis, and place 1 paper copy of the final version of thesis on reserve for public reference in the department office.

Students traditionally take responsibility for contacting committee members and arranging a date, time, and location for thesis final defense meetings. Refreshments are not required at the final defense. If students voluntarily choose to provide refreshments, limit the items to beverages such as juice, coffee, or water. Dress in business casual attire. Personal friends and relatives do not attend the final defense meeting.

All supervisory committee members must be physically present and sign the appropriate paperwork following successful defense of a thesis. Most theses, even in final form for the meeting, require some follow-up work.

M.S. thesis-option graduates provide bound copies of the thesis for the department library and for each supervisory committee member. Some supervisory committees may delay signing the final paperwork for graduation until the student delivers the bound copies.

19. Graduate Student of the Year Award Selection Process

The Department of Health Education & Behavior's *Graduate Student of the Year Award* honors one M.S. student and one Ph.D. student who exemplify high achievement through academic scholarship, and professional leadership and service. Academic scholarship is demonstrated through achieving high grades in coursework as well as through publications in the professional literature and presentations at professional meetings. Professional leadership and service are demonstrated through voluntary work in professional organizations such as Eta Sigma Gamma as well as in the community in health-related programs. Other significant achievements, such as teaching excellence, also may be considered for the award. Any individual officially enrolled as a student major in good standing in the Master's or Doctoral degree programs in the Department is eligible for nomination. The Coordinator for Graduate Programs invites nominations from the Department faculty on or before February 1. The Graduate Program Advisory Committee selects the award recipients. The Coordinator for Graduate Programs or the Department Chair formally announces the recipients of the award.

20. Student Travel Policy

Students are encouraged to demonstrate academic scholarship through presentations at professional meetings. Any individual officially enrolled as a student major in good standing in the Master's or Doctoral degree programs in the Department is eligible for student travel funds (when available). Students wishing to receive departmental funds for professional travel should submit a student travel request form to the DHEB office manager. Proof of presentation (letter/email indicating acceptance of your abstract) is required for the request to be processed. Decisions related to travel approval (and dollar amount funded) are at the discretion of the department chair. The College of Health and Human Performance, the UF Graduate Student Council, and other campus organizations have supplementary travel funds available. It is the student's responsibility to obtain travel funds.

21. Planning for Graduation

Planning for graduation starts the day M.S. students begin their programs of study. To ensure a successful graduation experience, complete the following steps:

- Set a tentative term and year for graduation with your advisor at the initial program of study planning meeting.
- Select an actual term and year for graduation at the appropriate point in completing the program of study.
- Confirm with the advisor that all degree program requirements will be met for graduation that term and year.
- Inform the graduate program assistant of the term and year for graduation.
- Submit an application to graduate to the Registrar by the end of the term immediately preceding the term and year for graduation.
- Request a "graduation check" from the Graduate School.

- Ensure that transferred coursework approved by the graduate program committee was accepted by the Graduate School.
- Clear all “holds” on your records (outstanding fees, library late charges, SHCC fees, parking fines, and related items.)
- Clear all incomplete (“I”) grades.
- *Non-Thesis Option* students, and *Project In Lieu Of Thesis Option* students, confirm that paperwork was submitted by the Advisor confirming that the student has met all requirements for graduation.
- *Thesis Option* students confirm that paperwork was submitted by the advisor and supervisory committee confirming successful defense of the thesis.
- Inform the Dean’s Office, College of Health and Human Performance, if you plan to attend or participate in commencement for the term and year of graduation. You will receive a notice and invitation from the Dean’s office. (The faculty recommends that all graduate students participate in commencement.)
- Complete a *DHEB Graduate Program Exit Survey*, provided by the graduate program staff, before leaving campus.

22. A Lasting Commitment to Personal Integrity

By formally registering for coursework at the University of Florida, students agree to conduct themselves based on principles contained in the following official statements:

"We, the members of the University of Florida, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."

"I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

"All faculty, staff and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate."

Policies, procedures, and specific requirements may change without prior notice. Confirm the accuracy of the information in this document as needed. Please submit comments, questions, and suggestions for improving this document to the Graduate Program Coordinator.