



College of Health Sciences

DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY
& APPLIED PHYSIOLOGY

**University of Delaware
College of Health Sciences
Department of Kinesiology & Applied Physiology**

Applied Physiology, Doctoral Program
Graduate Student Handbook
2023-2024

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I. Introduction

Welcome to the Applied Physiology doctoral program in the Department of Kinesiology & Applied Physiology. This handbook is intended to assist you in the procedures to be followed as you progress through your graduate program. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact:

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II. Program Overview

The mission of the Applied Physiology Ph.D. Program is to provide advanced training for students in the field of applied physiology with the goal of preparing students for research-based careers.

Areas of in-depth study are driven by faculty research and encompass cardiovascular physiology, exercise physiology, musculoskeletal physiology, and neurophysiology. The programmatic emphasis is on the regulation, adaptation, and integration of mechanisms across all levels of biological organization from molecules to organ systems. Our faculty are continuously generating and disseminating new knowledge on health, aging, chronic disease, and injury prevention.

Along with in-depth, laboratory-based immersion, the mission of the proposed program is to provide high quality classroom-based instruction through a core graduate curriculum, electives, and seminars.

A. Degree Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy in [Applied Physiology](#) requires a minimum of 46 credits including 9 credits of dissertation. The program is designed to be completed in 4 years; however, refer to [Degree Time Limits](#) for more information.

Required courses (37 credits) for the doctoral degree include:

- KAAP 630 – Advanced Human Physiology I (3 credits)
- KAAP 631 – Advanced Human Physiology II (3 credits)
- KAAP 868 – Research (12 credits)
 - 3 credits of Research are generally taken per academic semester
- KAAP 801 – Graduate Seminar in Applied Physiology (4 credits)
 - Seminar taken 8 semesters, 4 semesters for credit & 4 semesters as listener
- Elective Courses – (9 credits)
 - Only 600, 800, and 900 level courses will apply towards the doctoral degree
- Statistics – (6 credits)*

* This statistics requirement can met by the following courses:

BISC 643: Biological data analysis
EPID667: Biostats for Health Sciences I
EPID667: Biostats for Health Sciences II
EDUC665: Elementary Statistics
EDUC812: Regression and Structural Equation Modeling
STAT608: Statistical research methods
STAT656: Biostatistics

Note, additional statistical courses may be considered and substituted with approval by the advisor and Program Director.

B. Faculty Advisors

Students are not admitted into the Applied Physiology PhD program without a faculty advisor. If, during the course of a student's academic program, the advisor is unable or unwilling to continue as advisor, it is the student's responsibility to identify an Applied Physiology faculty member willing to be the new advisor. The new advisor must be identified within 6 months in order for the student to be considered making satisfactory progress towards the degree.

Students may also elect to switch to a different advisor at any time with the approval of the Program Committee and with the consent of the new faculty advisor. Switching advisors does not change the deadlines for completing the requirements for a degree.

C. Plan of Study

Students are required to develop a Plan of Study with their advisor during the first academic semester of study. The Program Committee must approve the Plan of Study by the end of the first semester.

Student may need to alter their approved Plan of Study due to scheduling conflicts, creation of new courses, and/or change of research focus. Students who wish to make changes to their Plan of Study should first obtain permission from their advisor. The Program Committee must approve the revised Plan of Study.

D. Independent Study and Research Credits

Independent study courses will be accepted based on approval of the advisor and the Department Chair. A maximum of nine Independent Study credits may be included in the Plan of Study.

Research Credits will be accepted based on approval of the advisor. Students may not register themselves for Research Credits. Students must complete a KAAP868 Research Contract with their advisor and submit it to the Academic Program Coordinator. Only then will students be registered.

Students who have had substantially similar courses to one or more of those required prior to entering the Applied Physiology Program may substitute other appropriate courses with the approval of the advisor and the Program Committee.

E. Internships

Students desiring to complete an internship outside of the University during their time in the program must receive approval from their advisor and dissertation committee. This requires taking time off from the program and should be discussed with the advisor early in the program. It is recommended that the internship occurs during the summer months. During this time, a student will no longer be on contract. If it occurs during the semester, the student must apply for a Professional leave of absence through the Graduate College. Finally, pursuing an internship may delay graduation and have implications for funding later in the program if a student's progress exceeds the typical four years as outlined in section A.

F. Transfer Credits

Students who complete graduate credits with the classification of CEND (Continuing Education Non-degree) at the University of Delaware may use a maximum of nine graduate credits earned with this classification toward their graduate degree. The CEND credits, grades, and quality points become a part of the student's graduate transcript.

Up to nine graduate credits earned at another institution will be evaluated at the written request of the student. The credits, but not the grades or quality points from other institutions are transferable to University of Delaware graduate records.

All requests for transfer credits should be directed to the student's major department using a Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit form. Transfer credits will be accepted provided that such credits:

- Were earned with a grade of no less than B (for CEND credits, a grade of C or better is accepted by the Graduate College, but is not acceptable for Applied Physiology degree requirements)
- Are approved by the student's adviser and the chair of the student's major department
- Are in accord with the specific degree program of the student as specified by the unit's Graduate Program Policy Statement
- Are not older than five years
- Are graduate level courses
- Were completed at an accredited college or university

Graduate courses counted toward a degree received elsewhere may not be transferred into a degree at the University of Delaware. Credits from institutions outside of the United States are generally not transferable to the University of Delaware unless permission to transfer is given by the Graduate College before the course is completed.

III. Preliminary Examination

Students must pass a preliminary examination that tests their general knowledge base in applied physiology and their ability to critically evaluate scientific literature. The preliminary examination is an oral exam, content of the exam is usually based on course work taken during the student's first year of the academic program (KAAP 630&631: Advanced Human Physiology I & II), and an area of study that is consistent with the student's planned dissertation work. In order to be eligible to take the comprehensive exam, students must have completed Advanced Human Physiology I and II courses with a grade of B- or better. The preliminary examination must be completed by the end of the student's first year of enrollment.

A. Preliminary Examination Committee

The Program Committee will identify, each year, at least three faculty members who, in consultation with each student's advisor, will have responsibility for conducting and assessing the oral components of the preliminary exams for those students ready to take the exam. All members of the Applied

Physiology faculty are encouraged to participate in the oral portion of the exam. However, responsibility for determining the outcome of the exam (pass, re-examination, failure) will lie with the named members of the Preliminary Examination Committee. In the event of a re-examination, the same committee members will have responsibility for composing the exam and assessing the outcome.

B. Preliminary Examination Results

The results of this examination will be one of the following:

- **Pass** – The student may proceed to the next stage of their degree training
- **Conditional Pass** – In the event that the examination committee feels the student's performance was generally acceptable but with a specific deficiency, condition(s) will be specified that the student must satisfy to achieve a Pass and remain in the program. These conditions may include a re-examination on one or more question areas in either oral or written form
- **Re-Examination** – This result is appropriate for a student whose performance was unsatisfactory, but displayed evidence of the potential to complete graduate degree training. Re-examination must be complete within one semester. The possible outcomes of the re-examination are pass or failure. The student may not take the exam a third time
- **Failure** – This outcome would indicate that examination committee considers the student incapable of completing degree training and the student would be recommended for dismissal from the program

The advisor and Preliminary Examination Committee will determine on a case-by-case basis the composition of re-examination.

IV. Dissertation Requirements

Students in the Applied Physiology PhD program normally should complete an oral dissertation proposal defense by the end of their sixth semester and an oral dissertation defense by the end of their eighth semester. Prior to the presentation, proposals should have received approval from the University Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) and/or the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

A. Dissertation Committee

The student and their advisor will identify members of a Dissertation Committee within one semester of successful completion of the preliminary examination. Doctoral dissertation committees must consist of a minimum of four members and a maximum of seven members, including the advisor.

At least three of the members should be University faculty with appointments within the Applied Physiology program. At least one member is to be selected from outside the Applied Physiology

program and/or from outside the University. These outside committee members should be chosen based on their expertise in the area of study related to the dissertation, and in consultation with the advisor and other committee members. Outside committee members should hold a doctoral degree. The Program Committee must approve an outside committee member not holding a doctoral degree. It is the responsibility of the advisor to replace members who withdraw from the committee during the dissertation process.

B. Dissertation Committee Meetings

Students must convene their dissertation committees at least once every six to eight months. Upon completion of the meeting, the student's advisor must complete a meeting report, circulate it to the committee members for their review and signature and submit it to the Academic Program Coordinator. The deadlines for submission of these meeting reports are October 1 and March 1 of each year. Students who do not have committee meetings in a timely manner will be considered failing to progress and will be required to meet with the Program Committee to determine whether a recommendation for dismissal from the program is warranted.

C. Dissertation Proposal Defense

The written dissertation proposal will be made available to all members of the Applied Physiology faculty at least two weeks prior to the oral defense date. The oral defense meeting will include both a defense of the student's proposed dissertation research and an in-depth examination of the student's knowledge of their research specialization. The student is expected to demonstrate competency in both oral and written communication skills. All members of the Applied Physiology faculty will be invited to attend the oral defense meeting.

Following the oral presentation and questions from faculty in attendance, the Dissertation Committee will meet separately and vote on the outcome. The possible outcomes of the oral defense are pass, conditional pass, or failure. The outcome will be presented to the student, along with any conditions or requirements for proposal revisions. For conditional pass, requirements must be addressed within six months of the original defense date.

Once the proposal defense has been successfully completed, the student must apply to the Graduate College for admission into Doctoral Candidacy by submitting the Doctoral Degree Candidacy Recommendation Form. The Chair of the dissertation committee must also submit the Results of Dissertation Proposal Form to the Program Committee.

D. Dissertation Defense

The written dissertation will be made available to all members of the Applied Physiology faculty at least two weeks prior to the oral defense date. The oral defense meeting will include both a defense of

the student's completed dissertation research and an in-depth examination of the student's knowledge of their research specialization. The student is expected to demonstrate competency in both oral and written communication skills. All members of the Applied Physiology faculty will be invited to attend the oral defense meeting.

Following the oral presentation and questions from faculty in attendance, the Dissertation Committee will meet separately and vote on the outcome. The possible outcomes of the oral defense are pass, conditional pass, or failure. The outcome will be presented to the student, along with any conditions or requirements for dissertation revisions. For conditional pass, requirements must be addressed within six months of the original defense date.

Once the dissertation defense has been successfully completed, the student must submit to the Graduate College the Certification of Doctoral Defense Form. The Chair of the dissertation committee must also submit the Results of Dissertation Defense Form to the Program Committee.

E. Application for Advanced Degree

To begin the process for degree conferral, it is **the responsibility of the student** to apply for the advanced degree, by completing an Application for Advanced Degree.

<http://grad.udel.edu/policies/step-by-step-guide-to-graduation/>

Students must submit their form to the Academic Program Coordinator for review prior to obtaining any signatures. Once approved, the Academic Program Coordinator will return the form to the student so they may obtain necessary signatures. Students will then submit the Application for Advanced Degree to the Graduate College. A payment of \$95 for doctoral candidates is required when submitting the application.

V. Academic Policies

A. Graduate Student Responsibilities & Exceptions

It is **the student's responsibility** to satisfy all university requirements described in the Academic Regulations for Graduate Students section in the Graduate Catalog, as well as any additional requirements established by the faculty in the academic program in which the student is enrolled.

All students enrolled at the University of Delaware are subject to student life policies set by the University and documented in the University publication, Student Guide to University Policies.

Exceptions to policies may be requested of the Graduate College. A request for an exception should cite the policy, justify the request, and provide appropriate departmental support for the request from the graduate student’s advisor, the graduate program director, and the department chair.

B. Academic Good Standing

To be considered in good academic standing, a student must maintain a minimum cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale each semester. To be eligible for an advanced degree, a student’ cumulative grade point average shall be at least a 3.00 and grades in all courses required for the degree must be a minimum B-. A grade below a C- will not be counted toward the course requirements for a degree, but is calculated in the student’s cumulative grade point average.

C. Academic Probation

The Graduate College monitors the academic progress of all graduate students and notifies students in writing of all academic deficiencies. The cumulative GPA after each 9-hour increment determines academic standing. In addition to the University policy regarding minimum grade point average, some departments require graduate students to maintain certain performance minima in their program of study in all or in particular courses. Failure to meet the standard minima may lead to academic dismissal from the program.

If a student is on	And earns a cumulative GPA of:	The status will become:
Any status (or clear)	3.0 or above	Clear
Clear	2.99 – 2.5	Warning
Clear	2.49 – 2.0	Probation
Probation	Below 3.0	Dismissal
Warning	Below 3.0	Probation
Any status	Below 3.0	Dismissal

D. Satisfactory Progress toward a Graduate Degree

If a graduate student fails to make satisfactory progress toward all degree requirements, permission may be denied to continue in the degree program. At the close of each semester, winter session, or summer session, in those circumstances deemed appropriate by the Graduate Director exercising their professional judgment, the faculty of the APHY program may evaluate the progress of a graduate student toward meeting the academic standards of the program in which the student is enrolled. In addition to graded course work, academic standards include, but are not limited to, professional, ethical, clinical, and other standards required of graduate students.

Students are entitled to know the procedures and standards by which their academic performance is assessed. Each program has a statement of policies and procedures by which student academic

progress is monitored and by which comprehensive, qualifying, and final examinations/defenses are conducted and graded (see section IV). If, in the professional judgement of the program faculty, a student has failed to make satisfactory progress toward meeting the academic standards of the program in which that student is enrolled, the faculty may vote to dismiss that student from the program.

In the case of dismissal, the program director is required to send a report to the Graduate College that states the faculty vote on the decision causing dismissal and the justification for this action. The Graduate College will notify a student in writing when the student is being dismissed for failure to make satisfactory progress in the program.

In the case of academic dismissal, the student may appeal the termination by writing to the Graduate College. This appeal must be made within 10 class days from the date on which the student has been notified of academic dismissal. The Vice Provost will review the appeal and may either uphold the dismissal, grant reinstatement, or refer the case to the Graduate Hearing Board for resolution. If the Vice Provost grants reinstatement, the student must meet the conditions of the reinstatement. Failure to meet these conditions will result in dismissal from the program. A graduate student may be reinstated only once to a given major. The student's academic transcript will reflect the reinstatement with the appropriate academic probation status.

E. Degree Time Limits & Extensions

Time limits for the completion of degree requirements begin with the date of matriculation and are specifically expressed in the student's letter of admission. The University time limits are:

- Students entering a PhD program with a MS degree are given 10 consecutive semesters to complete the requirements
- Students entering a PhD program without a MS degree are given 14 consecutive semester to complete the requirements
- Students who change their degree plan and have transferred from one degree program to another degree program are given 10 consecutive semesters from the beginning of the first year in the latest program

Requests for time extensions must be made in writing and approved by the student's advisory committee and the chair of the department's graduate committee. The department will forward the request to the Graduate College. The office will determine the student's eligibility for a time extension and will notify the student in writing of its decision to grant and extension of time.

VI. Funding for Graduate Students

A. Funding during Academic Year

In the Applied Physiology program, we offer two types of funded positions for graduate students: Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants. Teaching Assistant positions are generally for two years or 4 semesters in total. Funding in subsequent years should come from Research Assistant Positions or Fellowships. The Graduate College does offer University Graduate Scholars Awards, University Doctoral Fellowship Awards (must be at least in third year of program) and University Dissertation Fellowships (must propose prior to receiving award). The program can nominate up to two students for each award. A student must apply for them with a letter of support from their mentor. Those students being submitted for this award are determined by the program committee. Students do not apply directly to the Graduate College. In addition, many students apply for American Heart Association Pre-Doctoral Fellowships and are encouraged to apply to other organizations.

B. Funding during Summer

Funding in the summer is separate from your Teaching Assistant and/or Research Assistant position during the Academic Year. It is recommended that you talk with your advisor to discuss funding opportunities for the summer.

The Graduate College offers a [Summer Doctoral Fellowship](#) up to \$4,500 with an application deadline in May of each year. This award provides support for those students who do not have summer appointments or do not have appointments at the campus minimum stipend rate. Hence, most of our students are not eligible for this award.

C. Additional Employment Policy

The minimum stipend for students on a full contract is intended to be a living wage, allowing students to fully engage in their academic program of study. However, students may pursue additional employment beyond their contract. Graduate students on contract are always encouraged to discuss additional employment with their advisors to avoid any situation that might impede their academic progress, but disclosure or approval by the student's program director, the student's advisor or the Graduate College is not required as long as the total amount of contract and additional paid work is less than 29.5 hours per week. Additional employment, through a combination of work for the University of Delaware and work outside of the University, beyond 29.5 hours per week total must be approved by the Graduate College based on recommendations of the student's advisor and graduate program director. Finally, students who are US citizens may never work more than 29.5 hours per week for the University of Delaware. The payroll forms for additional employment on campus are routed through the Graduate College for approval to the UD payroll office.

Students who are non-US citizens must comply with the same policy as for US citizens with the following amendments: Immigration regulations limit visa holders to working no more than 20 hours per week in the Fall and Spring semesters, but visa holders may work additional hours for the University of Delaware during the Winter and Summer sessions on campus.

D. Travel Funds

The department provides up to \$2,000 per PhD student for travel to conferences to present their research over the course of their time in the program.

The Graduate College also provides funds for travel up to \$1,500 with 1:1 matching over the course of a graduate student's study at UD. This money can be utilized all at once or for several different travel awards. This award can be utilized to cover the cost of presenting one's academic work or for professional development; travel for research or scholarship; or for field or clinical research based data acquisition. Applications must be submitted one month prior to travel. Please see the Graduate College website for more details <https://grad.udel.edu/graduate-community-portal/students/travel-award/travel-award-application/>.

The \$2,000 allotment from the KAAP department for PhD students is inclusive of the 1:1 match on the Graduate Student Travel Award. In total, KAAP PhD students are eligible for \$3,500 in travel support over the course of their degree. Students should exhaust the Graduate Student Travel Award prior to applying for KAAP-only funds. Students should contact the Academic Program Coordinator who will work with the Department Business Administrator on requests.