



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Industrial and Organizational Psychology MS Graduate Program Handbook

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The information in this handbook supplements **but does not replace** information in the *UCF Graduate Catalog*.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Welcome to the Master of Science Degree Program in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. We refer to our program as “applied” and “professional.” The “applied” refers to our focus on the application of theory and research to the human resource problems encountered by today’s industrial organizations. The “professional” refers to our commitment to equip our graduates with an arsenal of professional skills which will ensure their continued employment marketability.

Thank you for choosing to continue your graduate career here at UCF. The next two years will be rigorous and demanding. But the next two years will also be fruitful and rewarding.

### ***The University***

The University of Central Florida is located 13 miles from downtown Orlando on a 1,200-acre campus adjacent to the Central Florida Research Park. It is within one hour of the Atlantic Ocean, the Kennedy Space Center, and the Walt Disney World Complex. Since its opening in the fall of 1963, it has developed into a comprehensive state university offering degree programs at all levels of instruction. UCF currently has an enrollment in excess of 60,000 students and offers more than 210 baccalaureate and advanced degree programs. The University's mission is to provide high-quality educational, cultural, social, and research programs to citizens of Central Florida, the state, and the nation.

### ***The Department***

The Department of Psychology consists of more than 50 faculty members with interest in areas such as clinical, human factors, cognitive, experimental, and developmental social psychology, as well as industrial and organizational psychology. Faculty of the department are involved in a variety of research projects concerned with topics such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in veterans, the treatment of marital dysfunction, visual performance in low-level flight, technology and assessment, diversity in the workplace, occupational health psychology and workplace stress. Research equipment is available for research on topics such as computer graphics, image generation for visual flight simulation, visual adaptation and contrast sensitivity in visual performance, team training, performance assessment, and transfer of training. Extensive simulation equipment is available for research through the university's Institute for Simulation and Training. In addition to the Master of Science degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology, the department offers a Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology, and doctoral degrees in Clinical, Human Factors, and Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

### ***The Program***

The Master of Science program in Industrial and Organizational Psychology is located at the UCF Orlando Main campus and Orlando Technical Center Building 600 in Research Park. The purpose of the Master's program is to provide high quality professional training in the traditional areas of I/O Psychology and to prepare graduates for careers as practicing psychologists in applied, organizational settings. The program is administered by the program director and a committee of the entire I/O program faculty. Faculty members for the master’s program overlap with the doctoral program faculty. Areas of interest represent the basic areas of personnel

psychology, organizational behavior, general experimental psychology, and human factors psychology. Our I/O faculty is actively involved in teaching/training, research activities, and applied practice. In addition, I/O faculty members maintain active liaison with local business firms which provide practicum placements, job opportunities, and support for program students.

### ***Program Contacts***

Victoria Pace Program Director	PSY 281J UCF Orlando	(407) 823-4481 <a href="mailto:Victoria.Pace@ucf.edu">Victoria.Pace@ucf.edu</a>
Dani Draper Graduate Admissions Specialist	PSY 301G UCF Orlando	(407) 823-2458 <a href="mailto:Danielle.Draper@ucf.edu">Danielle.Draper@ucf.edu</a>
Florian Jentsch, Chair Psychology Department	PSY 301P UCF Orlando	(407) 823-3576 <a href="mailto:Florian.Jentsch@ucf.edu">Florian.Jentsch@ucf.edu</a>
Tosha Dupras Interim Dean College of Sciences	CSB UCF Orlando	(407) 823-6725 <a href="mailto:Tosha.Dupras@ucf.edu">Tosha.Dupras@ucf.edu</a>

### ***Advising and Mentoring***

Throughout your graduate career here at UCF, you may have several different advisors. There are, however, three advisor roles defined in the program.

#### *Academic Advisor*

All questions regarding courses, curriculum, and program policies and procedures are referred to your academic advisor. The program director is academic advisor for all students enrolled in the MS I/O program.

#### *Research Advisor*

The research advisor supervises the student research activities. Students electing the thesis option may select their own research advisor from the I/O faculty. The research advisor serves as the chairperson of the thesis committee. Students electing the non-thesis option may be supervised by a faculty advisor for research lab work, or the program director in conjunction with the Director of UCF Performance Solutions.

#### *Practicum Advisor*

The practicum advisor supervises the student's activities when working at a practicum or internship site. Usually, the practicum advisor will be the program director.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Master's Program in Industrial and Organizational Psychology is a professional graduate program which focuses on the development of practitioner skills in the areas of employee selection, training, performance appraisal, and other relevant competencies needed in the application of Industrial and Organizational psychology. Our program is geared for students who have interest in acquiring or honing applied knowledge, skills, and abilities. It is a 38-hour, full-time program, and is designed to be completed in two years. In addition to our applied focus, the program emphasizes the development of strong research skills.

### *Program Tracks*

Two program tracks are available. Most of our students elect the non-thesis option. This option requires students to complete 26 hours of academic coursework, 12 credit hours of restricted electives, and a research requirement. A thesis option is also offered. This option, recommended for students seeking to pursue a doctoral degree, requires students to complete 26 hours of academic coursework, 6 credit hours of restricted electives, and 6 hours of thesis. The coursework for each option is outlined.

### *Sample Course Schedules:*

#### Non-Thesis Option

##### Year 1

###### Fall

- INP 6005: Overview of Research in Industrial and Organizational Psychology (3)
- PSY 6216C: Research Methodology (4)
- INP 6317: Work Motivation and Job Attitudes (3)

Semester Total: 10 credit hours

###### Spring

- INP 6058: Job Analysis and Performance Appraisal (3)
- PSY 6308C: Psychological Testing (4)
- [SOP 5059: Advanced Social Psychology](#) (3)  
**OR**
- [INP 6215: Assessment Centers and Leadership](#) (3)  
**OR**
- [INP 6605: Training and Team Performance](#) (3)

Semester Total: 10 credit hours

##### Year 2

###### Fall

- INP 6318: Recruitment, Placement, and Selection (3)
- INP 6072: Survey Research Methods and Program Evaluation in I/O Psychology (3)
- [INP 6945C: Industrial Psychology Practicum](#) (3) **OR**
- [INP 6933: Seminar in Industrial and Organizational Psychology](#) (3)  
**OR**
- [INP 6091: Industrial and Organizational Psychology Consulting Practice](#) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

###### Spring

- INP 6080: Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in I/O Psychology (3)
- [SOP 5059: Advanced Social Psychology](#) (3)  
**OR**
- [INP 6215: Assessment Centers and Leadership](#) (3)  
**OR**
- [INP 6605: Training and Team Performance](#) (3)
- INP 6945C: Industrial Psychology Practicum (3)  
**OR**
- INP 6933: Seminar in Industrial and Organizational Psychology (3)  
**OR**
- [INP 6091: Industrial and Organizational Psychology Consulting Practice](#) (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

## Thesis Option

### Year 1

#### Fall

- INP 6005: Overview of Research in Industrial and Organizational Psychology (3)
- PSY 6216C: Research Methodology (4)
- INP 6317: Work Motivation and Job Attitudes (3)

Semester Total: 10 credit hours

#### Spring

- INP 6058: Job Analysis and Performance Appraisal (3)
- PSY 6308C: Psychological Testing (4)
- [SOP 5059: Advanced Social Psychology \(3\)](#)  
**OR**
- [INP 6215: Assessment Centers and Leadership \(3\)](#)  
**OR**
- [INP 6605: Training and Team Performance \(3\)](#)

Semester Total: 10 credit hours

### Year 2

#### Fall

- INP 6318: Recruitment, Placement, and Selection (3)
- INP 6072: Survey Research Methods and Program Evaluation in I/O Psychology (3)
- INP 6971: Thesis (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

#### Spring

- [SOP 5059: Advanced Social Psychology \(3\)](#)  
**OR**
- [INP 6215: Assessment Centers and Leadership \(3\)](#)  
**OR**
- [INP 6605: Training and Team Performance \(3\)](#)
- INP 6080: Ethical, Legal, and Professional Issues in I/O Psychology (3)
- INP 6971: Thesis (3)

Semester Total: 9 credit hours

### *Program Course Descriptions*

#### INP 6005. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH IN INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

3(3,0). PR: Admission to MS or PhD program in Industrial/Organizational Psychology, or CI. Designed to familiarize graduate students with the core research topics of interest to contemporary I/O psychologists.

#### INP 6058. JOB ANALYSIS AND PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

3(3,0). PR: Admission to Industrial Organizational Psychology M.S. or C.I. Theory and practice in collection, analysis, and use of job analysis data; survey of theories, research and practice in the areas of industrial/organizational performance appraisal.

#### INP 6072. SURVEY RESEARCH METHODS AND PROGRAM EVALUATION IN I/O PSYCHOLOGY

3(3,0). PR: PSY 6216C and admission to master's program in Industrial and Organizational Psychology or Ph.D. in Psychology or C.I. Applied issues in the evaluation of programs/interventions and survey design, sampling, and data analysis in organizations.

INP 6080. ETHICAL, LEGAL, AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN I/O PSYCHOLOGY  
3(3,0). PR: Admission to master's program in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Psychology Ph.D., or C.I. A review of the applied behavioral problems recurrent in the professional practice of Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

INP 6091 INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTING PRACTICE

3(3,0). PR: Admission to Industrial and Organizational Psychology Master's, Psychology Ph.D., or C.I. Develop consulting skills in industrial and organizational psychology by applying theories and methods to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness.

INP 6215. ASSESSMENT CENTERS AND LEADERSHIP

3(3,0). PR: Graduate admission and C.I. Survey of assessment center technology and application with emphasis on leadership theory and practice.

INP 6317. WORK MOTIVATION AND JOB ATTITUDES

3(3,0). PR: Admission to Industrial Organizational Psychology M.S. or Ph.D., or Modeling and Simulation M.S. or Ph.D., or Applied Learning and Instruction M.A., or C.I. Review of theories, research and application of psychological principles to organizational settings, including human motivation and job attitudes.

INP 6318. RECRUITMENT, PLACEMENT, AND SELECTION

3(3,0). PR: PSY 6308C and admission to Industrial Organizational Psychology M.S., or C.I. Issues recruiting, placing, and selecting employees and an examination of currently used tests in industry.

INP 6605. TRAINING AND TEAM PERFORMANCE

3(3,0). PR: Admission to Industrial Organizational Psychology M.S., Psychology Ph.D., or C.I. Survey and theory of training and small groups including team effectiveness and team performance within applied contexts.

INP 6945C. INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM

3(1,6). PR: Admission to Industrial Organizational Psychology M.S. or C.I. Supervised placement in an applied setting. Graded S/U.

INP 6971 THESIS 1-99. PR: Program Director Approval/Thesis Committee Approval. Conduct of an empirical research project under direction of an approved thesis committee.

INP 6933. SEMINAR IN INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

3(3,0). PR: Admission to Industrial and Organizational Psychology Master's, Psychology Ph.D., or C.I. Selected topics in industrial and organizational psychology.

PSY 6216C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4(3,2). PR: Admission to Industrial Organizational Psychology M.S., Clinical Psychology M.A., or Clinical Psychology M.S., or C.I. Logic and procedures of psychological research and evaluation; application of experimental and non-experimental techniques in analyzing psychological variables; review of relevant psychological research.

### PSY 6308C. PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING

4(3,2). PR: Admission to Industrial Organizational Psychology M.S. or C.I. Theory of test construction, including test reliability and validity.

### SOP 5059. ADVANCED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

3(3,0). PR: SOP 3004C, graduate status or senior standing, or C.I. The major findings and theories in social psychology including an in-depth review of relevant research.

\*Elective courses must be approved by the program director.

### *Non-Thesis Research Process*

To fulfill the program's research requirement, students in the non-thesis track have two options. One option is to identify a faculty supervisor in the I/O program to work with on a potentially publishable research project. Through contributing meaningfully to the project, students are expected to earn co-authorship on a professional conference presentation, book chapter, or journal article submission that results from the project. Authorship requires significant intellectual contribution to the work, such as hypothesis development, literature review, writing, and managing data collection and analysis. Authorship is only given for a major intellectual contribution to the project, so students taking this option should understand that many projects require more than the minimum expectation of contributing approximately 10 hours per week for each of the four semesters. Only students who have earned co-authorship on a submitted book chapter or journal article manuscript or on an accepted presentation at a national or regional conference will pass the research requirement.

The second option is to participate in applied research and consulting activities through UCF Performance Solutions (<http://psychology.cos.ucf.edu/performancesolutions/>), under the supervision of the faculty member leading the project(s) and/or the director of Performance Solutions. Students will be expected to contribute meaningfully to their work on infrastructure teams and their work on paid projects, if applicable. Example activities students may perform include conducting literature reviews, writing white papers, data collection and analysis, preparing proposals for prospective clients, presenting results, and assisting with marketing and business development activities for Performance Solutions. The aim of these activities is to facilitate development of the top 10 competencies for "individual contributor" suggested by Zelin et al. (2015) and published by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (Division 14 of the American Psychological Association) as important for the application of research to the practice of I/O psychology. Students must comply with the progress system determined by the director of Performance Solutions, which may include self-reported progress towards individual and team goals using work diaries. These and other tracking methods the director requests, such as faculty evaluations for paid projects, must be submitted to the director of Performance Solutions before finals week. Students will receive feedback on their progress from the director of Performance Solutions at the end of each semester. Only students who have been determined to make meaningful contributions to their infrastructure teams and paid client projects will pass the research requirement.



Key competencies (from Zelin et al., 2015) needed for the successful application of research to practice include:

Table 1  
*Top-10 Competencies for Each Level Within Consulting*

Top Competencies				
Individual contributor	Expert individual contributor	Manager	Manager of managers	Executive
1. Communication: Written <sup>a</sup>	1. Communication: Verbal <sup>a</sup>	1. Communication: Verbal <sup>a</sup>	1. Communication: Verbal <sup>a</sup>	1. Integrity <sup>a</sup>
2. Critical thinking <sup>a</sup>	2. Ethical behavior <sup>ab</sup>	2. Ethical behavior <sup>a</sup>	2T. Decision making <sup>a</sup>	2. Trustworthiness <sup>b</sup>
3. Communication: Verbal <sup>a</sup>	3. Communication: Written <sup>a</sup>	3. Communication: Written <sup>a</sup>	2T. Problem Solving <sup>a</sup>	3. Communication: Verbal <sup>a</sup>
4. Interpersonal skills <sup>a</sup>	4T. Critical thinking <sup>a</sup>	4T. Interpersonal Skills <sup>a</sup>	2T. Strategic thinking	4. Ethical behavior <sup>b</sup>
5T. Knowledge of validation principles	4T. Integrity <sup>a</sup>	4T. Adaptability <sup>a</sup>	5T. Critical thinking <sup>a</sup>	5. Interpersonal skills <sup>a</sup>
5T. Initiative <sup>a</sup>	4T. Trustworthiness <sup>ab</sup>	6. Trustworthiness <sup>a</sup>	5T. Ethical behavior <sup>ab</sup>	6T. Critical thinking <sup>a</sup>
5T. Problem solving <sup>a</sup>	7. Interpersonal skills <sup>a</sup>	7T. Customer Service	7. Prioritization	6T. Initiative <sup>a</sup>
8. Attention to detail	8. Conscientiousness <sup>a</sup>	7T. Ethical behavior <sup>a</sup>	8. Interpersonal skills <sup>a</sup>	8. Adaptability <sup>a</sup>
9. Conscientiousness <sup>a</sup>	9. Problem solving <sup>a</sup>	7T. Project management	9. Adaptability <sup>a</sup>	9. Communication: Written <sup>a</sup>
10. Ethical behavior <sup>a</sup>	10. Self-discipline	10. Decision making <sup>a</sup>	10T. Initiative <sup>a</sup>	10. Decision making <sup>a</sup>
			10T. Integrity <sup>a</sup>	

*Note:* T indicates same means. Superscripts reflect potential mean differences for the same competencies across levels. The same competency across levels sharing the same superscript had means that did not differ from one another (e.g., (e.g., Communication: Written compared across individual contributor, expert individual contributor, manager, manager of managers, and executive). The same competency across levels with a different superscript reflected a significant mean difference (e.g., trustworthiness between executive and manager differed; trustworthiness for expert individual contributor did not differ from manager or executive as it shares the same superscript with both).

### ***Thesis Research Process***

The thesis process requires the student to work closely with a faculty member on a research project resulting in an independent empirical research report that is evaluated by a faculty committee. The objectives of the project are:

- Application of research skills acquired in the classroom
- Demonstration of both oral and written communication skills
- Completion of a research project from inception to final report
- Contribution to research literature through publication in a referred journal or presentation at a regional, national, or international conference.

Major components of the thesis process include the thesis proposal and the thesis defense.

### ***Thesis Proposal***

The thesis proposal process should begin by the end of the second semester in the program. This process includes a review of the literature of a research topic, discussions with program faculty, identification of a thesis chair and evaluation committee, a written thesis proposal, and a formal thesis proposal meeting. Several methods may be used to generate a research topic, ranging from personal interests to recommendations from faculty. Consultation with the program director, or any other I/O graduate faculty, can facilitate the initial stages of the thesis proposal process. Early in the process, the student should approach I/O faculty members to determine their interest in the project and their willingness to serve as committee member or chair. Under the supervision of the faculty member agreeing to serve as chair, the student prepares a proposal conforming to the most recent APA Publication Manuscript Guidelines, and includes an abstract, introduction,

research methodology, statistical analysis plan, preliminary discussion of the expected results, and a complete list of references and supporting literature. A formal thesis committee meeting must be held to review the proposal, address any concerns raised by committee members, and formalize the activities the student must perform to complete the thesis.

### *Thesis Committee*

In conjunction with the chair, the student will identify a minimum of two other faculty members to serve on the thesis evaluation committee. Great care should be taken in selecting committee members. Issues such as interest, expertise, and availability should all be taken into account. It is this committee that makes all final decisions regarding the thesis.

The thesis committee must be composed of a minimum of three members, all of which must possess a terminal degree in their respective field. The thesis chair must be from the I/O area faculty, and at least one other member must be a departmental faculty member. The third member may come from the UCF faculty or the professional community (if approved by Graduate Studies).

A list of current Industrial and Organizational Psychology Faculty members and Research Associates follows, along with contact information and Areas of Interest. Use this to identify faculty with whom you might wish to work:

### ***Industrial and Organizational Psychology Faculty***

<b><i>Faculty</i></b>	<b><i>Campus/Email</i></b>	<b><i>Areas of Interest</i></b>
Victoria Pace, Program Director and Associate Lecturer	<b><i>UCF Orlando</i></b> <a href="mailto:Victoria.Pace@ucf.edu"><b><i>Victoria.Pace@ucf.edu</i></b></a>	<b><i>Personality, employee retention, psychometrics, innovation, and employee selection</i></b>
Steve Jex, PhD Program Director and Professor	<b><i>UCF Orlando</i></b> <a href="mailto:Steve.Jex@ucf.edu"><b><i>Steve.Jex@ucf.edu</i></b></a>	<b><i>Interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace, employee health and well-being, retirement decision making, counterproductive work behaviors</i></b>
Mark Ehrhart, Professor	<b><i>UCF Orlando</i></b> <a href="mailto:Mark.Ehrhart@ucf.edu"><b><i>Mark.Ehrhart@ucf.edu</i></b></a>	<b><i>Organizational climate and culture, organizational citizenship behavior, leadership, implementation, levels of analysis, and health/mental health organizations</i></b>
Mindy Shoss, Associate Professor	<b><i>UCF Orlando</i></b> <a href="mailto:Mindy.Shoss@ucf.edu"><b><i>Mindy.Shoss@ucf.edu</i></b></a>	<b><i>Work stress, counterproductive work behavior, job insecurity, adaptability, and interpersonal interactions at work</i></b>
Barbara Fritzsche, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies	<b><i>UCF Orlando</i></b> <a href="mailto:Barbara.Fritzsche@ucf.edu"><b><i>Barbara.Fritzsche@ucf.edu</i></b></a>	<b><i>Diversity in the workplace, especially our aging workforce, workplace health and wellness</i></b>

C. Shawn Burke, Research Professor	<b><i>UCF Institute for Simulation and Training (IST)</i></b> <b><i><a href="mailto:Sburke@ist.ucf.edu">Sburke@ist.ucf.edu</a></i></b>	<b><i>Teamwork, team training, culture and teams</i></b>
Shiyang Su, Assistant Professor	<b><i>UCF Orlando</i></b> <b><i><a href="mailto:Shiyang.Su@ucf.edu">Shiyang.Su@ucf.edu</a></i></b>	<b><i>Item response theory, test development and validation</i></b>
Kristin Horan, Assistant Professor	<b><i>UCF Orlando</i></b> <b><i><a href="mailto:Kristin.Horan@ucf.edu">Kristin.Horan@ucf.edu</a></i></b>	<b><i>Interventions to improve employee health, safety, and well-being, high risk occupations, interactions between health behaviors and work</i></b>
Michael Chetta, Lecturer	<b><i>UCF Orlando</i></b> <b><i><a href="mailto:Michael.Chetta@ucf.edu">Michael.Chetta@ucf.edu</a></i></b>	<b><i>Selection and Assessment, Performance Management, Qualitative Analyses, Survey Development and Test Validation, Client Satisfaction and Employee Engagement</i></b>

### *Thesis Defense*

After completing the set of activities defined during the proposal meeting, and upon the concurrence of the student's thesis committee, a thesis defense meeting must be scheduled. A date, time, and place for the meeting will be posted one week prior to the actual date, along with a notice of examination. The thesis defense meeting represents an opportunity for the intellectual exchange of ideas as well as an evaluation of the worthiness of the research report. The thesis defense meeting, therefore, is an open meeting, and may be attended by other members of the department or the university community.

The thesis defense meeting should be scheduled for approximately one and a half hours. The format of the meeting includes an oral presentation of the research, a question and answer session, and a closed executive session attended only by the thesis committee members.

The format and extent to which other attendees may participate in the question and answer portion of the meeting is left to the discretion of the thesis chair. During the oral presentation, the student should summarize the literature review, describe the method and analyses performed, interpret the research results, and discuss the implications of the study. During the question and answer session, the student will face questions, comments, and criticisms from the thesis committee. Finally, a closed executive session will be conducted. During this session, the student and any other attendees are excused. In the executive session, the thesis committee members discuss the merits of the project and vote on its acceptance. The committee may decide to accept the thesis, accept the thesis with minor revisions (requiring no rescheduled proposal meeting), or hold for major revisions (requiring that a new thesis meeting be rescheduled **after** revisions are completed).

## *Thesis Enrollment Requirement*

Master's students who are engaged in thesis activities must be enrolled in thesis hours. The minimum number of thesis hours required is 6 and all students taking the thesis option must be enrolled in thesis hours during the term they graduate.

## ***Suggested Thesis Timeline and Tips within the MSIOP Program***

*Fall of first year:* Determine areas of greatest interest by early literature review and discussion with others. Talk with faculty members who specialize in those areas, to begin identification of potential Thesis Committee Chair (Advisor).

*Spring of first year:* Ask a faculty member if s/he would be willing to be your Thesis Advisor. Once you have chosen an advisor, work with her/him on your topic, research hypotheses, methods, etc. Ask your advisor to help you identify other faculty who may be logical thesis committee members. Working with your committee chair, consult those members also for their ideas and suggested resources regarding content, measurement tools, and analysis procedures as you write your proposal.

*Summer between first and second year:* Check upcoming year's thesis defense and graduation application dates so that you will meet them and defend your thesis in time for Spring graduation requirements.

*Summer or early fall of second year:* Successfully propose your thesis. Submit your research to the IRB as appropriate. Collect data. Begin analyses. Add to and edit your proposal document as you progress so that it transitions into the manuscript you will present for your thesis defense.

*Spring of second year:* Early in the semester, you should schedule your defense. At least two weeks prior to your defense date, you must send your final thesis manuscript to all committee members so they will have time to review it within their schedule before the defense meeting.

### ***Things to think about\*:***

The idea generation to the proposal stage is (most likely) the most intensive part of your thesis. Picking a thesis topic is a daunting task. You do not have to do this on your own. Instead, you should start thinking of possible topics, and then work with a professor(s) to narrow it down. You should plan on multiple meetings to choose a topic. You are responsible for reviewing the literature to ensure

- Your idea hasn't been done before—you must at least add a novel twist if the topic has been examined in a similar way before
- You can identify a reason (practical or research-related) to pursue your idea/topic
- Your idea has good grounding in theory— be able to support what you are saying, using citations

Start writing it all down to build your proposal.

- Introduce the topic and summarize what we know about the topic
- State what we don't know and describe how your study is going to fill that gap
- Note the contribution that your study will make to science and practice

- Formally state your hypotheses
- To save time later, drafts should be formatted in APA style, 12-point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, no extra space between paragraphs

\*Thanks to Dr. Shoss for most of these.

### ***Practicum Process***

Practicum assignments serve to provide the student with experience in an applied setting while also aiding local organizations in meeting specific project needs. Practicum sites may involve settings in private industry, federal, state, or local government, educational institutions, or consulting firms.

Practicum assignments involve one-semester commitments ranging from 12 to 15 hours per week. Depending on the nature of the assignment, this time may be distributed in a variety of ways across the organization, library and research facilities, field settings, etc.

The student has the primary responsibility for locating the practicum site, however, program faculty will assist in the process when needed.

The practicum process begins in the second semester or earlier, when the student begins searching for an appropriate placement for the following summer (preferred), fall, or spring semester. Once a suitable site is located, a behavioral agreement between the graduate student and the organization will be generated. Behavioral agreements and performance objectives are jointly decided by the supervising faculty member (typically the program director), the organization representative, and the student. The faculty supervisor may visit the site periodically to ensure compliance with the behavioral agreement. The student will submit tangible evidence of practicum performance (i.e., work product, activity log, final report), along with an on-site supervisory rating. The student will provide a rating of the practicum site. All required documents will be uploaded to the MSIOP webcourses page.

## **PROGRAM MILESTONES**

There are several important milestones that mark satisfactory progress in the program. These milestones will occur at the same regular intervals and are as follows:

### ***Orientation Milestone***

Prior to the commencement of the initial fall semester, incoming students will be invited to attend a graduate student orientation. The purpose of this orientation is to (1) acquaint incoming students with each other, (2) outline the program requirements, (3) define the student's responsibilities in managing their education, and (4) review the program of study for the incoming class. During this session, students will review the *Program of Study* form. This multipurpose form is used to keep students on track by identifying the appropriate courses, audit performance in academic coursework, and certify students for graduation. Students must review and sign this form. It will then be inserted into the student's file and used to track the student progress.

### ***First Semester Milestone***

Once students have completed 10 hours of coursework (usually after the first semester), their academic progress is reviewed by the program director. Students with marginal or less than satisfactory performances are scheduled for a face-to-face interview with the program director to discuss their status in the program. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss possible employment or family conflicts, review time management issues, and to identify possible sources of additional support. In addition, possible changes in the fit between the student's goal and the program's objectives will be addressed.

### ***First Year Progress Milestone***

Similar to the *First Semester Milestone*, student performance is reviewed again near the end of the second semester. While the general purpose of this milestone is to positively address any performance issues, failure to satisfactorily resolve issues at this stage might require that some students leave the program.

### ***Practicum Planning Milestone***

Prior the end of the second semester, each student will meet with program director to discuss the practicum requirement. The purpose of this meeting is to acquaint the student with the practicum process. At this milestone, students must (1) prepare a resume for distribution to potential practicum sites, (2) evaluate their availability for practicum placement within the community (i.e., "In what discipline do I want to work?", "When would I be available for work?", etc.), (3) explore the possibility of developing a practicum opportunity at their current workplace, and (4) generate a search plan to locating a practicum. This meeting may be combined with the first year progress meeting.

### ***Thesis Option Milestone***

Prior to the completion of the second semester, students must decide whether they plan to elect the non-thesis or thesis options. This decision affects the second year course curriculum. At this milestone, students selecting the thesis option must (1) gain the consent of approved faculty members to serve as chairperson and committee members, and (2) submit a completed and signed *Thesis Committee Approval Form*. Information regarding approved faculty members who may serve on thesis committees can be obtained from the program director.

### ***Second Year Curriculum Planning Milestone***

Prior to the beginning of the student's second year of coursework, those students wishing to modify or alter the program of study must meet with the program director for approval. For example, some students may wish to include one or more courses from the College of Business Administration. All substitutions to the program of study must be approved by the program director prior to enrollment in the substitute course. At this milestone, any approved changes must be noted on the *Program of Study* and *Course Substitution* forms which resides in the student's file.

### ***Graduation Review Milestone***

The MS degree is conferred when students have fulfilled the requirements of either the thesis or non-thesis option. No graduate credit will be given for any grade lower than a B- (2.75), but the grade will be counted toward the GPA. Courses must be retaken to achieve a grade of B- or higher; however, the unsatisfactory grade will remain on the transcript since there is no grade forgiveness at the graduate level. In order to stay in good academic standing, students must maintain a minimum Graduate Status GPA of 3.0 in all coursework taken since entering graduate status and a 3.0 in their plan of study.

At this milestone, students preparing to graduate must file an Online Intent to Graduate Form by the appropriate semester deadlines. This process requires the approval of the Program Director. Once the online form is completed, students will receive e-mail communications from the College of Graduate Studies at various stages of the review process. Students can also log in to myUCF and check the status of their Intent to Graduate at any time by navigating to the Student Center - Intent to Graduate: Status.

### ***Commencement Review Milestone***

The final milestone is the certification of students for graduation. To meet this milestone, students must (1) successfully complete all required courses in which they are enrolled, and (2) submit either a completed thesis or the *Non-Thesis Research Requirement Document*. Certification clears the student for graduation.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### *Fellowships*

The Office of Graduate Studies awards more than \$2 million in university fellowships to provide financial support for the graduate education of over 500 graduate students each year. These fellowships are funded by university appropriations, endowments, and other outside sources.

Some fellowships are awarded on the basis of academic merit. Others are available only to students who demonstrate financial need or minority applicants who qualify. For eligibility, students must be accepted as a graduate student in a degree program and enrolled full-time. To be considered full-time graduate students, students must be enrolled in at least 9 hours during fall and spring semesters, and 6 hours during the summer semester. To be considered for need-based awards, students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible. Allow up to six weeks for the FAFSA form to be processed.

The department automatically nominates each accepted applicant for all eligible fellowships offered through the college and program offices. Other fellowships, however, require students to fill out a fellowship application (either the UCF Graduate Fellowships Application or a fellowship-specific application). For more details about graduate fellowships, visit the Office of Graduate Studies website ([www.graduate.ucf.edu](http://www.graduate.ucf.edu)).

### *Assistantships*

Departmental support is offered on a competitive basis to a very limited number of graduate students in the form of departmental assistantships. Master's level students receiving departmental assistantships function as graduate teaching assistants. Master's level graduate teaching assistants provide support to primary instructors in classroom management, exam scoring, lab instruction, and/or other roles directly related to classroom instruction. Students may be required to work up to 20 hours per week. Departmental support is offered on a semester-by-semester basis. Usually, students receiving support in the fall semester will receive support in the spring semester contingent upon satisfactory performance of their assistantship duties.

Since the department cannot support all Master's students, some students will need to seek part-time employment elsewhere. Many other departments across the university offer assistantships and often recruit our students. For more complete information about university assistantships, please visit <https://graduate.ucf.edu/assistantships/>.

### *GTA Training Requirements*

Some assistantship positions (i.e., Graduate Teaching Associate, Assistant or Graders) require students receive GTA training *before* contracts can be processed. The training, offered by UCF's Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, covers course design, learning theories, ethics, and other topics relevant to preparing GTAs for their responsibilities. In addition, international students must demonstrate English proficiency by successfully passing the Versant English Speaking test.



See <https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-guide/graduate-teaching-requirements> for training requirements and registration instructions.

### ***Tuition Support***

Departmental assistantships include tuition reimbursement. The tuition waiver or payment credit on semester fee invoice to cover resident (in-state) tuition only – fees are not covered.

## **OTHER POLICIES**

### ***Student Rights and Responsibilities***

The Golden Rule was specifically created to provide answers to many questions a student may have about the university rules and regulations. This publication attempts to define students' rights and responsibilities in order to give them a better understanding of their role as a member of the UCF community. The Golden Rule can be found online at <https://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>. In addition, graduate students can find more about their responsibilities at the College of Graduate Studies web page <https://graduate.ucf.edu/> in the section marked Students > Orientation > Student Handbook.

For more information about college and university graduate policies, see also:

College of Sciences Graduate Services Website:

<https://sciences.ucf.edu/graduate/>

UCF Graduate Studies Website:

<https://graduate.ucf.edu/>

### ***Petitions and Grievances***

It is the student's responsibility to be informed of graduate policies and procedures, however, should a student wish to request an exception to a university or program policy, he or she must file a petition that outlines the nature of their request. Normally, petitions are presented to the graduate program's coordinator and/or committee, the college's Director of Graduate Services and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Council for consideration.

Should a student wish to file a grievance, he or she should first review UCF's Golden Rule (<http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>) and the Academic Grievance Procedures in the Graduate Catalog <https://www.ucf.edu/catalog/graduate/#/home>.

### ***Time Limitation for Degree Completion***

The student has seven years from the date of admission (prerequisite, articulation, and foundation courses are exempt) to the master's program to complete the degree. No course older than seven years at the time of graduation may be used in the Program of Study for a master's

degree. Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment (missing enrollment at the university for a period of two major semesters [spring/fall], excluding summers) must file for readmission to the university, although seven years is measured from when the student was first admitted to the program.

### ***Transfer of Credits***

Work taken at an accredited institution BEFORE a student is given graduate status at UCF may be transferred into the student's program of study. Transfer course work may come from the following areas:

- Work taken as a post-baccalaureate student at UCF
- Work taken at institutions within the State University System (SUS)
- Work taken at other accredited institutions not in the SUS
- Work taken while in graduate status in another major while at UCF
- Work taken in a graduate certificate program at UCF

No more than six (6) semester hours total of graduate credit may be transferred into the graduate program from UCF post-baccalaureate work or from other accredited institutions. All of the hours taken in a UCF graduate certificate program can be used in a graduate degree program with the consent of the program. These hours are not subject to the six-hour limit.

Graduate programs are permitted to accept up to nine hours of graduate course work taken at UCF while an undergraduate student as part of an undergraduate program of study. Oversight of the appropriateness of and discretion for accepting such courses into a graduate program of study will be provided by the instructor, graduate program coordinator, and graduate college coordinator. The use of these hours of graduate course work in a graduate program of study is at the discretion of the college and program. This does not apply to undergraduate course work taken while an undergraduate student.

Institutions not in the State University System must be fully accredited by a regional accrediting association of the Commission on Accreditation (e.g., the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). In some instances, UCF will have conducted an independent evaluation of a non-accredited institution. If judged to be equivalent, hours may be transferred from these schools. In all instances, only grades of B- or better will be transferred.

Students who wish to take course work elsewhere while enrolled as a student at UCF must apply and be accepted as a traveling scholar. Credits earned as a traveling scholar are considered "resident" credits that are earned at UCF. Consult the program director for additional information regarding traveling scholars.

### ***MSIOP Graduate Program Webcourse***

All students seeking the MS degree will be enrolled in the MSIOP Graduate Program webcourse. Students will submit completed practicum and research paperwork through the MSIOP webcourse and students should check the webcourse regularly for program announcements and potential job/practicum opportunities.