MASTER OF SCIENCE IN OBESITY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT
GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2014-2015

Nutrition Program
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School of Nutrition and Health Promotion
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ASU Nutrition Program Homepage: https://snhp.asu.edu/programs/nutrition
MS in Obesity Prevention and Management at ASU:

ASU Graduate Education Homepage: http://graduate.asu.edu/
ASU Graduate Education On-Line Catalog:
http://catalog.asu.edu/graduate

ASU Graduate Admissions On-Line Application:
https://webapp4.asu.edu/dgsadmissions/Index.jsp

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I. INTRODUCTION

The faculty in the Nutrition Program at Arizona State University (ASU) in the School of Nutrition and Health Promotion, in collaboration with faculty across multiple disciplines at ASU, offers a Master of Science (MS) degree in Obesity Prevention and Management.

The MS in Obesity Prevention and Management is an innovative, interdisciplinary degree that draws on a wide array of expertise at ASU to integrate perspectives from the social, applied, life, and health sciences and provides advanced graduate level problem-focused, experiential training that is grounded in evidence and best practices for effective prevention and management of obesity. This degree is geared towards post-baccalaureate students and professionals who wish to advance their understanding of social, cultural, environmental, health, and psychological issues associated with obesity. The program emphasizes the complex etiology of obesity and includes courses that will enhance students' ability to work with individuals and populations at risk of obesity to develop effective strategies for prevention and management of the condition across the lifespan.

High obesity rates are associated with an array of poor psycho-social and health outcomes at the individual level and increased health care and associated costs at the societal level. Four tracks will be offered, providing each student with the ability to tailor his/her program of study to meet individual professional goals: Public Health Approaches for Behavior Change, Cultural Aspects of Behavior Change, Technological Approaches to Behavior Change and “General”. The MS in Obesity Prevention and Management will help prepare a workforce that understands the multifaceted nature of the problem and is trained to develop effective solutions at the individual and population levels. Depending upon the educational and professional backgrounds of incoming students, graduates of this program will be highly qualified for employment in public/private health care and health promotion/education settings, educational and workforce enterprises, industry/corporate entities, and media/communication outlets. This program is the first such interdisciplinary degree fully focused on this topic of paramount importance.

This Graduate Student Handbook supplements the guidelines of Graduate Education at ASU. Graduate students should be familiar with and observe all requirements and procedures. These materials are available on-line at: www.asu.edu/graduate.

Students completing the MS degree in Obesity Prevention and Management will:

- Critically analyze a range of causal pathways to obesity and be able to explain obesity as a complex multidimensional phenomenon.

- Demonstrate mastery of the literature related to obesity at multiple levels and domains, such as physiological, genetic, environmental, social, and psychological.

- Design and implement obesity prevention and management interventions at multiple levels.

- Possess the ability to discuss role of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention in addressing obesity at the individual and societal levels.

- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of barriers to weight loss and maintenance and best practices for obesity prevention and management in clinical and community settings.

- Demonstrate familiarity with a range of methods relevant to measuring and understanding multiple dimensions of obesity, such as methods from exercise science, nutrition, environmental science, and psychology.
II. MS IN OBESITY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A. Admission Requirements
Minimum of a bachelor’s degree (or equivalent) or a graduate degree in social or health science related fields from a regionally accredited College or University of recognized standing. The following entry-level competencies are needed for admission to the program: students should have completed undergraduate level courses in statistics and psychology and ideally have completed one or more courses each in nutrition, physiology, and chemistry.

B. Coursework Requirements to complete MS degree: Minimum of 30 credit hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Core Course:</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OBS 501 Obesity Prevention and Management: An Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBS 593 Applied Project</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The applied “obesity solution” project will involve designing and/or implementing an intervention for obesity prevention or management for a specific organization, group, or community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal: 9

Electives: Select remaining 21 credits from 400, 500, or 600-level NTR, EXW, PSY, HCD, HCR, IBC or BIO classes with advisor approval 21

TOTAL Minimum of 30 credits

C. Admission Procedures for MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Program

Admission to Graduate Study
Prospective students must apply online to ASU Graduate Education for admission into the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management degree program. Applications are accepted for students to begin the program in the ASU fall and spring semesters. The deadline to apply is February 28 each year.

At a minimum, applicants to the MS Obesity Prevention and Management program are expected to meet GPA requirements as established by ASU Graduate Admissions; however, typically a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA (on a 4.0 scale) is the minimum considered for admission into the ASU MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Program. Applicants are also required to submit official notification of scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), General Examination only. Applications cannot be processed without GRE scores (see Admission and Denial Criteria for more information) or an equivalent standardized test, i.e., MCAT or LSAT.

Program Requirements
Applicants to the MS program in Obesity Prevention and Management must also submit the following information along with their online ASU Graduate Admissions application:

1. A 2-3 page application letter in which the applicant explains why he/she wants to pursue this degree and why he/she feels well prepared to succeed in this graduate program
2. Official GRE scores for the General Examination
3. Official transcripts from any college or university from which the applicant has received a degree or taken a statistics, psychology, nutrition, physiology, or chemistry course.
4. Three letters of recommendation
5. A resume that summarizes the academic, volunteer and employment experiences of the applicant.

**Processing of Applications**
Credentials submitted by MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program applicants are evaluated by ASU Graduate Admissions and by the Graduate Committee of the Obesity Prevention and Management program. Based upon the recommendation of the Graduate Committee, applicants will be recommended for admission to ASU Graduate Admissions. Telephone interviews will be scheduled as needed.

**Admission and Denial Criteria**
No single criterion will serve as a basis for admission or denial to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program. Criteria for admission include:

- Evidence of outstanding scholarship and research potential from GRE scores and previous academic record;
- Favorable letters of recommendation commenting on the applicant’s academic and professional qualifications for graduate study.
- Professional goals which are compatible with the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program;

The decision of the Committee will be one of the following:

1. **Regular admission** - granted when the applicant meets criteria of adequate academic preparation, satisfactory and competitive grade point average and GRE scores, favorable letters of recommendation, and when enrollment limits have not been met.

2. **Denied admission** - when the applicant does not meet the necessary criteria for admission; the applicant does not rank sufficiently high to be selected for the available slots; it is deemed that the program fails to match the applicant’s needs, goals, and interests.

**D. Applied Project Committee for MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Students**

**Assignment of Faculty Advisor**
When admitted to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program, each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. The Graduate Committee or Program Director will provide the student with the advisor’s name and contact information. The faculty advisor will guide the student in selecting the chair of the Applied Project Committee.

**Selection of Applied Project Committee Chair**
Students are encouraged to begin the process of selecting an Applied Project Committee chair early in their graduate program (for example, by the end of the second semester of a full time program). The Applied Project Committee chair is identified at the initiative of the student and in consultation with the faculty identified as the potential chair, and is approved by the Program Director.

**Appointment of Applied Project Committee**
The Applied Project Committee for a student in the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program is composed of a chair and two additional members. The remainder of the committee is selected by mutual agreement of the student, the Applied Project Committee chair, and the Program Director. Students are encouraged to choose members of their committee from the School of Nutrition and Health Promotion or other Colleges/Schools/Departments where coursework has been completed. (See Appendix B for list of programs currently affiliated with the MS in Obesity and Prevention). At least one member of the committee must be from the School of Nutrition and Health Promotion.
Responsibilities of the Applied Project Committee
The Applied Project Committee approves the student’s Plan of Study (the courses required to fulfill the degree) and Applied Project proposal and provides guidance at regular intervals. The Committee also administers the Applied Project presentation and determines if the student’s work meets program expectations.

E. MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Plan of Study

Approval of Plan of Study
The MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Plan of Study should be thoughtfully and carefully planned with the Program Director and Applied Project Committee so that it meets the goals and objectives of the program and the student. Each student selects courses after consultation with the Program Director. The Plan of Study should be completed and approved by the Program Director and the Graduate Student Coordinator by the end of the second semester of full-time graduate study. A Plan of Study may include more than 30 credit hours; the exact number will be determined by program requirements and the student's Applied Project Committee. Acceptance of the proposed Plan of Study must be verified by signature of the student and Committee members. After approval, the Plan of Study is submitted to ASU Graduate Education for final approval. NOTE: all new Plans of Study have to be submitted online using the Interactive Program of Study (iPOS) form available through each student’s My ASU account (access at http://my.asu.edu).

Changes in Program of Study
Necessary changes can be initiated and petitioned by the student. The changes must be pre-approved by the student’s Applied Project Committee and ASU Graduate Education.

Performance Reviews
Master's students are required to maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA in graduate school. If the cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the student will receive a deficiency notice from the Graduate Committee and be required to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 the following semester. If the student fails to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 within the allotted time, the student may be dropped from the program. Students completing work for a course in which they received a grade of “I” must maintain continuous enrollment. Graduate students have one year to complete work for an incomplete grade; if the work is not complete and the grade changed within one year, the “I” grade becomes permanent. Additional information regarding incomplete grades can be found at asu.edu/aad/manuals/ssm/ssm203-09.html. In addition, a student cannot accumulate more than two incompletes at any given time while completing the graduate program of study.

All graduate students admitted to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program are subject to the general standards of academic good standing of ASU. However, academic standards do not necessarily guarantee that a student will graduate from the program. Since students obtaining a Master's degree from the ASU Nutrition Program are often placed in positions dealing with the public, they must also demonstrate the requisite qualifications for successful professional performance, including interpersonal skills, basic communication skills, appropriate professional conduct, and satisfactory performance in field experiences. Graduate students who demonstrate behaviors or characteristics that make it questionable that they can succeed in the broad field of Obesity Prevention and Management will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee within the Obesity Prevention and Management Graduate Program. The committee’s review may result in a decision to disqualify the Master's student or the specification of conditions under which continued participation is permitted (e.g., probation). Students who wish to appeal the decision of the Graduate Committee may do so in writing to the Dean of ASU Graduate Education. Any exceptions to the retention and disqualification policies and procedures must be approved by the Graduate Committee.
F. Applied Project

General Procedures
In addition to planning a program of course work, graduate students also must complete an Applied Project. The Applied Project consists of original work on a specific research or practice problem. The problem is decided upon by the student in consultation with the Applied Project Committee chair. After selection of a topic, the student develops a proposal and makes a formal presentation, called the Applied Project Proposal Meeting, to the Applied Project Committee for critical review and formal acceptance (see Appendix C for the Proposal Approval form). At the time that the Applied Project proposal is accepted, an acceptance form is signed by the student and members of his or her Applied Project Committee and filed in the Nutrition Program office.

Results Meeting
A Results Meeting is scheduled with the Applied Project Committee when the project is approaching completion and, if applicable, preliminary data and/or sample analyses are complete (see Appendix C for the Results Meeting Approval form). The purpose of this meeting is to update the Applied Project Committee regarding the student's work and to approve the final steps needed (e.g., data analyses) for successful completion.

Applied Project Presentation
Students are required to defend their Applied Project in a public forum. The student will schedule the date, time, and location of the Applied Project presentation in consultation with the Applied Project Committee. An Applied Project Committee of three must be present. If an original member of the Applied Project Committee must be absent, another faculty member may serve as a substitute.

Grading of Applied Project Credits
Applied Project (OBS 593) grades are assigned as follows. A mark of Z (i.e., course in progress) will be given for all Applied Project credits taken prior to the Applied Project presentation. Once the Applied Project presentation is completed, all Z grades will be changed to Y grades (i.e., satisfactory) or E grades (i.e., fail) when the Applied Project Committee chair completes the appropriate paperwork and changes the Applied Project Z grades.

III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A. Obesity Prevention and Management Graduate Research Assistantships
There is the possibility of financial support for graduate students through externally funded research projects. An applicant for a research assistantship must be regularly admitted to the Obesity Prevention and Management graduate degree program before being appointed. Research assistantships vary depending upon the number and types of research grants that faculty have received, and the scope and nature of work differ from project to project. There are no limits on the length of research assistantships.

B. University Financial Aid
Information regarding financial assistance opportunities is available through Graduate Education http://graduate.asu.edu/financing
### IV. CALENDAR FOR APPLYING TO GRADUATE PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For students interested in applying to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Graduate Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Review admission materials from **ASU Graduate Admissions** and the **Nutrition Program**, the administrative home of the Obesity Prevention and Management program (materials available online) **As early as possible.**

2. Take the GRE and have scores sent to **ASU Graduate Admissions** (ASU Institution Code is 4007). **Sufficiently ahead of time so official results are received by deadline.**

3. Complete application for admission to **ASU Graduate Admissions**, online at [www.asu.edu/graduate/admissions](http://www.asu.edu/graduate/admissions) **Must be received by ASU Graduate Education by February 28th.**

4. Request three (3) letters of recommendation to be submitted online at [www.asu.edu/graduate/admissions](http://www.asu.edu/graduate/admissions) **Must be received by ASU Graduate Education by February 28th.**

5. Submit a résumé or curriculum vita – included as part of your online application to **ASU Graduate Admissions**.

6. Submit official transcripts from any college or university from which you have received a degree or taken a MS recommended/required

### Notifications of Acceptance

1. Notification of acceptance from ASU Graduate Admissions. **April 30th**
APPENDIX A: TIMELINE FOR THE MS PROGRAM
(Following notification of admission)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contact Temporary Advisor (as assigned) and seek advice for course selections.</td>
<td>As soon as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Meet with Program Director and faculty advisor to select Applied Project chair.</td>
<td>Second semester enrolled or after completion of 9 credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Submit Plan of Study planned in consultation with Program Director through My ASU.</td>
<td>Upon selection of Applied Project Committee or completion of 12 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Begin preliminary discussion regarding Applied Project with Applied Project Committee.</td>
<td>As early as possible but no later than 2 semesters prior to graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Submit proposal for Applied Project to Applied Project Committee Chair. Schedule Proposal Meeting with Applied Project Committee. (Appendix C)</td>
<td>At least 2 semesters prior to planned graduation date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Begin Applied Project.</td>
<td>At least 2 semesters prior to planned graduation date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Schedule Results Meeting with Applied Project Committee.</td>
<td>As completion of project approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Schedule a date, time, and room for Applied Project presentation.</td>
<td>At least 10 working days prior to presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Conduct the Applied Project Presentation. A complete draft of Applied Project must be distributed to Applied Project Committee at least 10 working days prior to presentation.</td>
<td>At completion of Applied Project draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Apply for graduation.</td>
<td>During last semester of graduate program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹NOTE: Coursework and Applied Project must be completed within six [6] years of enrollment in the first course listed on the Plan of Study.

²Faculty in the Department of Nutrition and other OBS units are typically on an academic-year contract, meaning they are on salary only from the beginning of the fall semester through the end of the spring semester. Some faculty may receive summer funding through research grants or for teaching summer session courses. Proposal meetings, Results meetings, and Applied Project presentations should not be scheduled during the summer unless there is confirmation of the availability of all committee members well in advance of the scheduled date.
APPENDIX B APPLIED PROJECT FACULTY

SUGGESTED PROGRAMS FROM WHICH STUDENTS MAY CHOOSE APPLIED PROJECT ADVISOR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS*

- Nutrition
- Exercise and Wellness
- Kinesiology
- Psychology
- School of Human Evolution and Social Change

*Applied Project advisor and committee members can be selected from various programs and departments depending upon students’ area of interest and with approval from the faculty advisor and the Program Director. At least one member of the committee must be from the School of Nutrition and Health Promotion.
APPENDIX C: APPLIED PROJECT APPROVAL FORM

Student’s Name: ___________________________________________________________

Applied Project Title: _______________________________________________________

Proposal Meeting Date: _____________________________________________________

Committee Approval: ____________________________, Chair ________________
(List names in left column, members sign on right)
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Data Results Meeting Date: ________________________________________________

Committee Approval: ____________________________, Chair ________________
(List names in left column, members sign on right)
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Applied Project Presentation Date: _________________________________________

Committee Approval: ____________________________, Chair ________________
(List names in left column, members sign on right)
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

January 2015
APPENDIX D: ADMISSIONS AND APPLYING

Admission Steps
Prospective students must apply to Arizona State University Graduate Admissions for admission to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program.

Required Materials:
Submit all required ASU Graduate Admissions application materials. This includes the Graduate Admissions Application, which can be completed on-line, and official transcripts from any college or university from which the applicant has received a degree.

- Three letters of recommendation, including at least one from an employer or work supervisor.
- A résumé that summarizes the applicant’s academic, volunteer, and employment experiences.
- A 1-2 page, typed, double-spaced, personal statement addressing the following: significant professional responsibilities held; professional goals and reasons for desiring to enroll in this program; strengths that will ensure success in this program and in reaching professional goals; and personal research interests as specifically as possible.
- GRE test scores

Application Deadline:
Credentials submitted by MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program applicants are evaluated by ASU Graduate Education and by the Graduate Committee of the Obesity Prevention and Management program. To ensure consideration, all applicant materials for fall admission must be received by February 28th. For spring admission, submit all program-requested materials by September 30.

Notification of Acceptance
Based upon the recommendation of the Graduate Committee, applicants will be recommended for admission to ASU Graduate Education by the Program Director. Notification of acceptance to this graduate program is usually given within two months of the admission deadline.