



GRADUATE HANDBOOK 2017-2018

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Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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Purpose of the Handbook

This Handbook is a very important guide for graduate students admitted to the School of Sustainability's (SOS) Doctoral (PhD) in Sustainability program.

This handbook serves as an initial resource for answers to common questions; however, students are also encouraged to consult with the graduate program coordinator, the SOS graduate committee or any member of their graduate committee. The primary reference for graduate students on rules and regulations is the Arizona State University (ASU) [Academic Catalog](#). Each student should become familiar with the Academic Catalog and the ASU [Graduate College website](#) and policies.

Current SOS graduate students have access to the SOS Grad Student Community, an organization site in Blackboard, where they can find many items related to the content of this handbook. Students are also added to an email list to receive important information about deadlines, scholarships, jobs, workshops, and events in SOS. Students who are not receiving emails should contact SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu to be added to the list.

The policies listed in this handbook are from ASU Graduate College and the School of Sustainability. The handbook is updated annually.

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each student to understand and observe all procedures and requirements specified by the ASU Graduate College and the School of Sustainability. **It is a requirement for all students to read and understand the Graduate Handbook and the ASU Academic Catalog as well as adhere to the [Student Code of Conduct](#).** Faculty and staff provide academic advice and assistance; however, the ultimate responsibility for meeting degree and other requirements remains with the student. Students should frequently check their MyASU account. All ASU students are required to have an active ASU email.

ASU Email

Students may forward their ASU email to another preferred account. It is important that students check the ASU email account at least once per week, so they do not miss important notices. Arizona State University and the School of Sustainability conduct their business via ASU email only.

Culture of Respect

ASU is a community and a professional work environment. Graduate students are expected to treat their peers, teachers, students, staff, and members of the ASU community with respect and work with them in a professional manner. Sustainability graduate students are representatives of the School of Sustainability and the University; SOS expects its students will be good representatives who recognize that poor behavior on the part of one student impacts all by creating a negative perception of the School.

Sexual Harassment

The University prohibits sexual harassment by employees and students and will not tolerate sexual harassment that interferes with an individual's work or educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working, learning or residential environment. Additional information about sexual harassment [can be found online](#).

Academic Integrity

ASU School of Sustainability students are expected to be ethical in their multiple roles as students, researchers and representatives of the University. When in doubt about appropriate conduct, students should review [ASU Academic Integrity Policies and Resources](#) and consult an instructor or advisor to seek clarification as needed. As outlined by ASU's policy, a student may be found to have engaged in academic dishonesty if he or she:

1. Engages in any form of academic deceit;
2. Refers to materials or sources or uses devices (e.g., computer disks, audio recorders, camera phones, text messages, crib sheets, calculators, solution manuals, materials from previous classes, or commercial research services) not authorized by the instructor for use during the Academic Evaluation or assignment;
3. Possesses, reviews, buys, sells, obtains, or uses, without appropriate authorization, any materials intended to be used for an Academic Evaluation or assignment in advance of its administration;
4. Acts as a substitute for another person in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
5. Uses a substitute in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
6. Depends on the aid of others, including other students or tutors, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment to the extent that the work is not representative of the student's abilities;
7. Provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, including the unauthorized use of camera phones, text messages, photocopies, notes or other means to copy or photograph materials used or intended for Academic Evaluation;
8. Engages in Plagiarism;
9. Uses materials from the Internet or any other source without full and appropriate attribution;
10. Permits his or her work to be submitted by another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, without authorization;
11. Claims credit for or submits work done by another;
12. Signs an attendance sheet for another student, allows another student to sign on the student's behalf, or otherwise participates in gaining credit for attendance for oneself or another without actually attending;
13. Falsifying or misrepresenting hours or activities in relationship to an internship, externship, field experience, clinical activity or similar activity; or
14. Attempts to influence or change any Academic Evaluation, assignment or academic record for reasons having no relevance to academic achievement.

Students have the responsibility to understand and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.

Newly admitted graduate students will receive a "priority task" on their MyASU directing them to complete a blackboard module on academic integrity. The module consists of a PowerPoint that outlines academic integrity and students must take a quiz and pass with an 80% or higher.

The School of Sustainability has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of academic dishonesty. Penalties for unethical behavior range from failing grades to dismissal from the program. The School follows the University's [policies and procedures](#) when responding to an academic integrity complaint and determining sanctions.

Campus Safety

To report an emergency on campus, students can simply dial 911 or use one of the emergency call boxes found on campus. Non-emergency ASU Police or campus- safety matters should be directed to 480-965-3456. ASU has an opt-in, text-message alert system by which students can choose to receive a text message from ASU in times of an emergency. Students can sign up for the service online. Students are also encouraged to download the [LiveSafe](#) mobile application on their phones. For additional safety resources and contacts, such as Counseling Services, Police and Safety Escort Services, visit the [Safety Resources](#) website.

Faculty and Sustainability Scientists and Scholars

SOS students must have at least three faculty members on their supervisory committee, per university requirements. Students will first begin searching for a committee chair (also known as a faculty advisor). Most PhD students will work with the faculty member assigned to them upon starting the program; however, this may not be the case for all students. Students and faculty can decide the assignment is not the best fit in which the student will need to find a more suitable committee chair. Students often choose from the [SOS faculty list](#) or the [Sustainability Scientists and Scholars list](#) (some overlap exists between the two lists).

Students can also use faculty from these lists, other ASU faculty, or faculty at other universities as part of their supervisory committee line-up. The ASU Graduate College maintains separate, pre-approved graduate faculty lists for the [SOS PhD program](#) and the [SOS with CASS concentration PhD program](#). Faculty endorsed as “chair” can serve in any role on the committee. Those endorsed as “co-chair” can also serve as a member but cannot serve as the sole chair unless otherwise approved. Those endorsed as “member” cannot serve in any other role on the committee unless otherwise approved. Faculty who are not on the list (or who are on the list but want a higher endorsement) will need to go through a review process in which the ASU Graduate College determines if the request (for chair, co-chair, or member) is acceptable or not. Students who want to add faculty to their committee and need the review process should contact SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu to discuss the process. No one with the job title “Post-Doc” can serve in any capacity on a PhD student’s committee at ASU, per university rules.

SOS Grad Students and Grad Representatives

SOS graduate students may opt-in to have an online biography added to the department website [here](#). Questions on how to get that set up can go to SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu or current SOS graduate students can access the directions in the department Blackboard organization site.

The SOS website also has a biography page dedicated to the current [SOS graduate student representatives](#) (grad reps). Grad reps are student leaders, voted into their role by peers from their program. They serve for one year (fall and spring or spring and fall). The grad reps get to attend faculty and other high-level department meetings (an opportunity rarely extended to graduate students), are invited to special speaker events, assist in planning grad student events (location selection, meal selection, Town Hall components, etc.), talk with prospective and new graduate students (as-needed basis), and communicate the feedback from the larger student body in various platforms.

Current students interested in becoming a future rep can discuss their interest with a current grad rep and ask to be added to the ballot. Grad rep nominees must be in good academic standing and have a current

SOS bio on the website to be eligible to run for the position. Voting takes place at the end of fall and spring, as one (of the two) reps is always transitioning off as a new rep comes on.

Facilities and Reserving Rooms

The School of Sustainability is located in Wrigley Hall (WGHL). Of particular interest to graduate students is the second-floor grad lounge, which is available to provide individual and collaborative work space to students in the SOS graduate program. There is wireless access throughout the building and a data lab with computers and printers on the second floor that is available to SOS graduate students.

Access

Graduate students who have been admitted may request 24-hour access to the second floor by completing an ISAAC form at orientation.

Room Reservation

The current room reservation policy is on the School’s Policies, Procedures and Forms webpage.

Locker Policy

Lockers are available in the grad lounge on a first come, first served basis. Students will need to bring their own locks and if they are using a locker on a regular basis. Due to our increase in student population, grad students are encouraged to share lockers or not occupy a locker if they rarely use it. Additionally, students should not occupy more than one locker.

Curriculum Summary

Students may be admitted to the PhD program with either a bachelor’s or a master’s degree. If admitted with a bachelor’s degree, students must complete a minimum of 84 credit hours (and have the opportunity to earn a master’s in passing). If admitted with a master’s degree, they must complete a minimum of 54 credit hours.

	Credit Hours	
	Admitted with a Master’s	Admitted with a Bachelor’s
Core Courses	6	6
Foundational Courses	9*	15
Solutions Workshops	3	6
Research	12	12
Dissertation	12	12
Electives <i>Of which, a maximum of 6 hours can be at the 400-level; 500-level or higher is graduate- level</i>	12*	33
Total	54	84

*Assuming relevant coursework at the master’s level.

Core and Foundational Courses

The core courses are designed to provide students from diverse backgrounds with methods and theories for the study of sustainability. They explore the link between concepts of sustainability and systems approaches to knowledge, and develop the integrative methods needed to work across the disciplines on sustainability problems. They also provide students with a strong foundation (content knowledge, big theory, and big studies) in the main themes of the School.

Required Core Courses

SOS 510	Perspectives on Sustainability
SOS 520	Research Design and Methods for Sustainability

CASS Curriculum

Sustainability doctoral students can choose to pursue the Complex Adaptive Systems Science concentration, which is designed to train the next generation of scientists in advanced concepts and methods needed for approaching diverse phenomena in the social and life sciences. The concentration is integrated with diverse university-wide research and emphasizes the value of a complex adaptive systems perspective when seeking solutions to critical societal issues. Complex adaptive systems science is the study of interactive and dynamic systems that learn and change over time.

	Credit Hours	
	Admitted with a Master's	Admitted with a Bachelor's
Core Courses	6	6
Foundational Courses	9*+	15+
Solutions Workshops	3	6
CASS Foundational	3	3
CASS Mathematics	3	3
CASS Modeling	3	3
CASS Approaches	3	3
CASS Reading and Conference	3	3
Research	12	12
Dissertation	12	12
Electives <i>Of which, a maximum of 6 hours can be at the 400-level; 500-level or higher is graduate-level</i>	0*+	18+
Total	54-57+	84

*Assuming relevant coursework at the master's level.

+Some overlap between SOS foundational and CASS coursework is possible. Check the master list of classes to see if any CAS classes count as foundational. CASS coursework can also be used as general elective credits.

Master List of Classes

The Master List of Classes, a spreadsheet located in the SOS Graduate Student Community Blackboard site, has a complete list of approved courses for this program's curriculum.

Resources

Arizona State University and the School of Sustainability have numerous resources for students. Below is a list that SOS feels is most beneficial for its graduate students to be aware of while pursuing their degree.

Graduate College Handbook

The Graduate College oversees all graduate programs and upholds university rules and policies. All graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with these policies in addition to specific academic unit policies. The [ASU Graduate Policies and Procedures](#) guide covers all university-level requirements.

TA/ RA Handbook

The [TA/RA Handbook](#) provides an overview of ASU policies and support services pertinent to teaching and research assistants and associates. It is designed as a resource for graduate students, their academic units and other appointing units on campus. It includes information related to:

- conditions of appointment
- types of appointment (TA/RA)
- benefits
- university policies

The teaching and research assistant/associate role is an important one to the ASU community. It provides graduate students with professional development opportunities that are unique to academia while also supporting the university's teaching, research, and service missions.

While many of the general policies and expectations also apply to graduate service assistants and graduate interns, GSAs and interns are not bound by the same eligibility requirements as TAs and RAs and do not receive the same benefits as TAs and RAs (e.g., tuition remission).

This handbook describes the general roles and responsibilities of TAs and RAs as well as policies regarding their supervision and evaluation. The appointing unit is responsible for notifying each student of additional expectations.

SOS Policies, Procedures and Forms webpage

The [SOS Graduate Policies, Procedures and Forms webpage](#) contains key information about University and School policies, procedures and related forms. SOS staff often refer students to this page for policy details and required forms.

SOS Graduate Student Community Blackboard Organization Site

The SOS graduate coordinator maintains a Blackboard site where SOS graduate students can find several resources related to their programs, milestones and overall success. Students are given access prior to orientation and then access is shut off after the student has completed or left the program. Examples of items in the site are as follows: sample comprehensive exams, prospectus proposals and PowerPoint presentations, sample syllabi, lists of past funding opportunities (scholarships, grants, fellowships) which may be open annually, the current master list of classes, the SOS Culminating Experience grant application, information on how to add a biography to the website, instructions for ordering business cards with the SOS logo on them, etc.

Sustainability Connect

[Sustainability Connect](#), a service offered by the School of Sustainability and the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability, helps to create ASU-community collaborations that educate students and contribute to sustainability solutions. The platform hosts hands-on projects, internships, and other community-based opportunities for students to enhance their professional and academic experience by applying their knowledge and skills to real-world sustainability challenges.

Career Services and Internships

The School of Sustainability has a career advisor dedicated to working with SOS students to discuss career options, resume/cover letter review, prepare for interviews, provide company and occupational research assistance, counsel on job search strategy, and other employment-related topics. To book an appointment, please visit [this website](#). Full time opportunities are posted on the School of Sustainability's internal LinkedIn group. Additional full-time, internship, and career fair opportunities may also be found on [ASU's career resource, Handshake](#).

Graduate students are encouraged to pursue internships, either for elective credit or no credit. Local opportunities are posted on [SustainabilityConnect](#). Additional opportunities may be posted in the weekly SOS graduate newsletter or the SOS graduate listserv, SOSGrad@asu.edu.

Tutoring and Writing Center

ASU provides free assistance with writing and tutoring for a variety of subjects. For complete details, visit their website [here](#).

SOS Graduate Writing Tutor

The School of Sustainability has a writing tutor dedicated to working with SOS grad students to help them improve their writing skills. For more details and to book an appointment visit [this website](#).

ASU Libraries

ASU has several [libraries](#) and an impressive online and hardcopy collections. The Tempe campus is home to the [Design and the Arts Library](#); the [Hayden Library](#) (main library on campus); the [Music Library](#); and the [Science \(Noble\) Library](#). Students can even research past theses and dissertations from around the world through the [ProQuest](#) database.

Disability Services

The [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC) serves students, who have appropriate documentation, with services such as extended time for test-taking, alternative format materials, note-taking services, etc. Students must contact the DRC before the start of each semester if they plan to utilize their services.

Policies

Time Limit

Doctoral students must complete all program requirements within a ten-year period. The ten-year period begins with the semester and year of admission to the doctoral program. Graduate courses taken prior to admission that are included on the iPOS must have been completed within three years of the semester and year of admission to the program (previously awarded master's degrees used on the Plan of Study are exempt).

Any exception to the time limit policy must be approved by the supervisory committee, the head of the academic unit and the Dean of the Graduate College. The Graduate College may withdraw students who are unable to complete all degree requirements and graduate within the allowed maximum time limits.

Enrollment and Leave Policies

The department and the university have firm policies related to students needing to enroll each semester (including summer sometimes) and paperwork needed for requesting a leave. Below are the most common enrollment issues or questions SOS graduate students have.

Registration Enrollment

Students register for classes through MyASU. If a student cannot register, then they may have a registration hold on their account, which would be noted in MyASU. If a student has a hold, they can click on the hold title and a box with additional information will appear, including contact information for resolving that specific hold.

Continuous Enrollment

Once admitted to a graduate degree program or graduate certificate program, students must be registered for a minimum of one credit hour during all phases of their graduate education, including the term in which they graduate. This includes periods when students are engaged in research, conducting a doctoral prospectus, working on or defending theses or dissertations, taking comprehensive examinations, taking Graduate Foreign Language Examinations, or in any other way utilizing university resources, facilities or faculty time.

Registration for every fall semester and spring semester is required. Summer registration is required for students taking examinations, completing culminating experiences, conducting a doctoral prospectus, defending theses or dissertations, or graduating from the degree program.

Leave of Absence

Having an approved [Request to Maintain Continuous Enrollment](#) by Graduate College will enable students to re-enter their program without re-applying to the university. Students who do not register for a fall or spring semester without an approved Request are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason may reapply for admission to resume their degree program; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program.

Add/ Drop Deadline

The Academic Calendar lists specific dates and deadlines for each semester. The School of Sustainability does not allow requests to drop courses past the add/ drop deadline. Instead, the student would need to withdraw from the course if they no longer wished to take it. SOS does not back-date course drop paperwork. However, student can fill out an Enrollment Change Request form to add a class after the deadline but would need to collect all the appropriate signatures. The Enrollment Change form can be picked up at the SOS Student Services front desk, Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Pre-Admission and Transfer Credits

Graduate students are allowed to bring in up to 12-credits taken at another institution or taken prior to admission (“pre-admission”) to their current program. The combination of pre-admission and transfer credits cannot exceed 12-credits. The department has the right to not accept all credits.

The Graduate College also requires the course work be graduate-level, have a letter grade of “B” or higher and have been done within three years of starting the program. For more details, review the [Graduate College’s Policies and Procedures manual](#).

Tuition and Fees

Students can find information on tuition and fees online. Currently, the School of Sustainability does not have a program fee for the PhD in Sustainability and uses general graduate tuition and fee rates for courses with the SOS prefix.

Financial Support

Funding is never guaranteed. Students seeking financial support should investigate all opportunities and conduct independent research on funding opportunities beyond the School. Students are responsible for finding and securing funding to pay for their education.

TAs

SOS offers Teaching Assistantships (TAs) to select students, prioritizing PhD students first. However, not all PhD students will receive a TA position and those who do receive one are not guaranteed a future TA position beyond their contractual agreement. A call for applications is sent in the weekly newsletter in spring for open positions in the following academic year and in fall for spring-only positions, if any openings exist.

TA positions come with a stipend, tuition remission benefits and health care benefits. Stipend rates and percentage of benefit coverage may vary but are specified in the offer letter. For example, PhD students who have a master’s degree (or an equivalent number of earned hours after starting the program) are paid slightly more than PhD students who do not hold a master’s degree. Students must be in good academic standing to retain their TA position or to be considered for a future open position. For additional details and regulations, see the [TA/RA Handbook](#) section of this handbook.

TA assignments are sent to confirmed TAs about a month before the semester begins. Students who apply for a TA will be notified when their application is received but will then be notified only if they are selected to be a TA. The department is not able to send periodic updates about waiting lists.

Shortly before the semester begins, the SOS course scheduler will contact TAs to set up room reservations for TA office hours for the semester.

RAs

Research Assistantships (RAs) are funding offers tied to faculty grants. Faculty are selective in whom they extend an RA offer to, usually a student whose specific skills are valuable for the research grant. A student funded with a RA is usually working for a faculty member who serves in some role on the student’s supervisory committee but this is not always the case. Students seeking RA opportunities need to contact faculty members individually. Like TA opportunities, the student must be in good standing to be eligible for this type of funding.

GSA

Graduate Service Assistant (GSA) positions can be similar to a TA or RA position in what work the student is expected to do; however, the GSA comes with a stipend only. The tuition remission and student health insurance coverage is not part of a GSA offer.

Scholarships, Grants and Fellowships

The School of Sustainability will advertise various funding opportunities as staff are made aware of them. These messages are conveyed to students through the weekly grad student newsletter or through the SOSGrad email listserv. The School also has several [scholarships](#) on its website, most of which have an early February application deadline.

The School also offers a Culminating Experience grant for graduate students who want to travel to attend professional development opportunities (workshops, conferences, meetings, etc.) or conduct research and want funding to help pay for equipment, travel expenses, registration fees, etc. For complete details, students can access the application through the SOS Graduate Student Community Blackboard site.

The [Global Development Research](#) (GDR) fellowship program is another great opportunity to fund a trip to an international location, tied to a specific project for which the student must pre-apply and be selective. The GDR fellowship is awarded to several students each year and is highly competitive, as it is open to any ASU graduate student, including international students, but the program is housed within the School of Sustainability. This program is in conjunction with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA – student government) also has several types of research and travel awards available to help students afford to participate in academic and career-related activities. For complete details, visit the [GPSA funding webpage](#).

The ASU Graduate College have several fellowships and awards available for students to apply to for funding various activities, such as attending conferences or funding for finishing their last semester of school. For complete details, visit the [Graduate College's funding webpage](#).

Student Loans

Students are encouraged to apply for [federal financial aid](#) if they need funding assistance. The required form is called the FAFSA and is free to submit.

Any questions related to student loans should be addressed to the ASU Financial Aid office. Please note that graduate-level student loans are all unsubsidized, which means you pay interest on the loans while you are in school.

SAP Form

Also, to remain eligible for student loans, student must meet specific GPA requirements and make satisfactory academic progress (pace rate) toward degree completion. A course withdrawal “W” on a transcript, even if it is a medical or compassionate withdrawal, will negatively impact the pace rate.

Any student who receives a financial aid hold (seen in MyASU) for GPA or pace rate violations will be instructed to contact their program's advisor to fill out a [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\) plan](#). The graduate coordinator will work with a student who must complete a SAP plan form. The form must be completed prior to the next term. Submitting the form after the semester begins may result in delays in receiving funds or receiving a lesser amount. The Financial Aid Office must approve the SAP form; therefore, the graduate coordinator cannot guarantee the SAP plan will grant the student another loan disbursement.

SAP plans are reviewed on an annual basis after the spring semester. A student who is still in violation may have to fill out another SAP form with the graduate coordinator.

Advising

SOS Graduate Committee

The School of Sustainability's graduate committee is comprised of several faculty who oversee the policies and procedures related to all graduate programs and certificates within the School. Led by the SOS graduate director, the committee reviews and makes final decisions on all admission applications, TA applications, and various other university funding applications. The graduate committee also reviews all student petition requests and proposed curriculum changes for any graduate-level programs and must approve before changes go forward. As university policies change and SOS grows, the committee revises policies and procedures as needed. The graduate director reviews all graduate faculty and one-time student committee participation requests and determines if the request will go on to the Graduate College.

Student Supervisory Committee

Each student will have a supervisory committee overseeing their doctoral research, although building the committee takes time. The committee must consist of at least three faculty members whose research areas varies to align with the department policy of student committees being interdisciplinary, which is reflective of the subject of sustainability. The supervisory committee is led by the committee chair (also known as the student's faculty advisor or faculty chair) or by two co-chairs. The rest of the committee consists of committee members. Everyone on the committee reviews and approves the coursework listed on the student's plan of study. The committee creates the student's comprehensive exam, following basic guidelines set up by the SOS graduate committee, and determines if the student passes the exam, prospectus and dissertation. See the [iPOS section](#) of this handbook for additional details on committee eligibility and review process.

Graduate Academic Success Coordinator

The graduate coordinator is available to students to help explain department and university policies and procedures. Any question about paperwork, university policies or services should be addressed first to the graduate coordinator, who will answer the question or make a referral to the appropriate university office or personnel. All questions regarding coursework or research applied toward the degree should be addressed to the student's faculty chair or supervisory committee.

Check Sheet

The Graduate Coordinator sends each student an Excel spreadsheet before they begin their program. The spreadsheet lists department requirements (core, foundational, workshop, elective classes, etc.). Students can use the check sheet to map out all classes they plan to take and discuss with the Graduate Coordinator and their committee chair to ensure it is accurate before submitting the official plan of study.

The Graduate Coordinator will update each student's check sheet periodically and also uses it to track certain details, such as advising appointment notes. The milestones for the student's program are also listed in the spreadsheet to help remind students of the major milestones and their deadlines.

Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS)

The [interactive plan of study](#) (iPOS) is the student's official contract between the department and the university. It lists all the classes the student plans to take to complete the degree and indicates who is on the student's supervisory committee.

SOS requires the iPOS be submitted by March 1 of the first year in the program if the PhD student already has a master's degree; by March 1 of the second year in the program if the PhD student doesn't have a master's degree. Failure to meet this deadline could result in academic probation for the student for violation of department policies. The Graduate College states that the deadline is when the student has completed 50 percent of their coursework; however, SOS intentionally has a much earlier deadline in place.

The iPOS must have a committee chair listed the first time the student submits it. The committee members can be added later. The student can update the courses (add and remove classes) and the committee lineup at any time unless on an approved leave of absence from the university. The committee must be faculty that are pre-approved to serve on SOS PhD committees (see [this list](#)) or go through a 1-time review process to be considered for the specific student's committee. Contact the Graduate Coordinator if you have questions.

Master's In Passing

The Master's in Passing (MIP) option is offered to exemplary students accepted into the PhD program without a master's degree. Students who complete the requirements will be offered either an MA or MS in Passing. The Master's in Passing option is not automatically available to all PhD students. To be eligible, a student must meet the following criteria, and follow these steps:

1. Complete thirty-three hours of coursework that meet the requirements for the non-thesis master's degree (*Note: courses taken before the student was admitted to the PhD program CANNOT be used on the MIP iPOS*);
2. Have a 3.25 or higher ASU GPA in all courses numbered 500 and above, as well as in all coursework that is included on the plan of study;
3. Have selected a supervisory committee;
4. Submit a portfolio for review by the supervisory committee consisting of the following work (papers should include grades received and instructor comments):
 - a. One exemplary research paper
 - b. One exemplary paper or project of an applied nature
 - c. A short paper (such as an essay or an opinion piece) or a poster
 - d. A reflective essay discussing the papers that looks back at the learning demonstrated in the pieces and forward to knowledge and skills that the student needs to develop
5. When the portfolio is approved by the supervisory committee, see the graduate coordinator to complete a [Master's in Passing Request form](#) and obtain all relevant signatures;
6. The student will be prompted by Graduate Education to complete an MIP iPOS.
7. Apply for graduation or the MIP will not be awarded.

Students who include 30 hours from a previously awarded master's degree on their doctoral plan of study are not eligible for a Master's in Passing. Please see the Graduate Coordinator for more detailed instructions.

Advancement to Candidacy

The advancement from PhD student to PhD candidate is a major milestone in the doctoral program. For the School of Sustainability, the candidacy procedure consists of passing a written comprehensive exam and a public defense of the prospectus (research proposal). Upon successfully completing these two items, the ASU Graduate College will issue a “letter of candidacy” to the student through MyASU.

Upon achieving candidacy, the student will have five years at most to complete the degree, as long as the total time to degree doesn’t exceed 10 years. Those who achieve candidacy after five years in the program will have less time to complete the degree, per university rules.

Comprehensive Written Exam

When students have completed or are close to completing the coursework in an approved plan of study, they may request permission to take the written comprehensive examination. Students must be in good academic standing regarding GPA requirements prior to taking the doctoral comprehensive examination and have a full committee on their approved, accurate iPOS. PhD comprehensive examinations are administered by the student’s supervisory committee. The supervisory committee should be diverse and not represent a single discipline or narrow field of expertise.

The student must fill out Parts I and II of the [Comprehensive Exam Results form](#) and submit it to the examining committee chair for completing of the additional Parts and signatures from the examining committee. The form must be submitted with the student’s exam answers.

In preparation for the comprehensive examinations, the student will prepare a short research statement (approximately 600 words) and a related bibliography for review by their supervisory committee. Students should request reading suggestions from committee members before creating the final bibliography for supervisory committee approval. The candidate and committee should prepare the reading lists and bibliography taking into account the following guidelines: Readings should be relevant to the dissertation, but cover bodies of knowledge broader than what is required to write the dissertation. Candidates should select readings that demonstrate how their research relates to broader contexts of sustainability research and practice. The readings should provide insight into theory, methods, and substantive knowledge relevant to the dissertation and broader contexts.

Based on the research statement and bibliography, each committee member will prepare relevant questions, which the committee chair will compile into a single examination. The student will have five days at most to complete the exam. The chair will email the exam and the student will answer the questions in written format and submit before five days later (example: Monday, 8 a.m. the test is sent; Friday, 5 p.m. the test is due). The exam dates can include weekend days. The student must submit the results form with the exam answers. The supervisory committee will review the written responses and will assign any of the following designations: pass as written, pass dependent on satisfactorily rewritten or revised questions, retake, and fail.

Students should take the comprehensive examinations within one year of finishing their coursework. Students must petition the Graduate College to retake the comprehensive exam if they fail, and reexamination must occur no sooner than three months, and no later than one year, from the original exam date. Only one reexamination will be approved.

After passing the comprehensive examination, the student should submit the form with committee signatures to the graduate coordinator who will report the results to the Graduate College.

Since the exam is unique for each student, the number of questions and the depth and breadth of knowledge required varies. Students can see examples of past exams in the SOS Grad Student Community site in Blackboard. Examples of types of things past students had to read to prepare for their exams can also be found in the site (example, three books, 75 journal articles and 20 book chapters).

Students who entered the PhD program with a master's should aim to complete the comprehensive exam before December of their third year in the program, to stay on track with department milestones. Students who entered without a master's should aim to complete the exam before December of their fourth year in the program, per department milestones.

Prospectus Defense

In careful consultation with the supervisory committee, the candidate will prepare a written dissertation proposal. The format of the proposal will be determined by the supervisory committee but should include an original and meaningful research question, a summary of appropriate theory, methods, data, and knowledge, and a clear and realistic plan for completing the dissertation requirements in a timely fashion. The candidate may elect to submit the dissertation proposal in the format of a dissertation improvement grant proposal to the National Science Foundation or other appropriate funding agencies. An oral examination in defense of the dissertation prospectus is required, and will be scheduled by the supervisory committee no later than six months after a student passes the comprehensive examination. The dissertation proposal defense should occur after successful completion of the comprehensive examinations. Also, the student must be enrolled in at least one graduate-level credit in the semester in which the defense is done, including summer, per university rules.

The defense will be public but the committee will also meet privately with the candidate. The student's entire committee must participate in the defense. At least 50% of the committee must be present, including the chair. A co-chair or member can participate remotely as long as the minimum 50% is physically present. The student should discuss possible days and times for the defense with the committee well in advance, especially if defending in spring (much busier than fall). Once a date is chosen, the student needs to reserve the room. Upon room confirmation, the student must send a [Prospectus Defense Announcement form](#) to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks before the defense.

The student needs to complete Part I and II of the [Prospectus Defense Results form](#) and submit it to the examining committee chair at the prospectus defense. Following approval of the dissertation prospectus, signatures of the committee should be entered in Part II of the form. If a student has required revisions, then the chair will retain the form and not sign the bottom section until all revisions are approved. Then the student will need to send the completed form, an electronic copy of the research proposal paper and an electronic copy of the PowerPoint (or similar) presentation materials used in the defense to the Graduate Coordinator. Upon receipt of these three items, the Graduate Coordinator will enter the pass result into the university system, which will generate the letter of candidacy a few days later. The student can view and download this letter from MyASU.

If the student fails to advance to candidacy within the time limit set by the Graduate College policy, the School may recommend withdrawal of the student from the PhD program.

Dissertation

All dissertations are required to meet a certain standard as a recognizable product of ASU. The student's committee, department and Graduate Education expect to see evidence of careful attention to style and format in the document that the student presents as part of their culminating experience. Please follow the

[formatting guidelines](#) set by Graduate Education. For more information on dissertation style, students should consult the *Format Manual* and their committee chair.

The student's supervisory committee will conduct an oral examination in defense of the dissertation. Doctoral dissertation defenses are open to all members of the university community. Oral defenses are to be held on an ASU campus during regular business hours to facilitate student, faculty, and public accessibility. Students are encouraged to defend the dissertation during the fall or spring semester since many faculty members are not on campus over the summer and Graduate Education has strict rules about committee members being present at the defense. Tips on [preparing for the defense](#) can be found online.

The student will continuously work with the entire committee toward a defense date. The entire committee must review the complete draft before a defense date can be determined to ensure the student is ready for the defense step. Reviews of the draft will take at least two weeks but the student should submit the draft at least a month prior to the desired defense date. Failure to provide enough review time to the entire committee may result in the postponement of the defense date or graduation term.

Once the committee agrees on the day and time of the defense, the student needs to reserve a room for the defense. At least ten working days prior to the oral defense, the student must send a copy of their dissertation for format evaluation to thesis editor and schedule their defense through [MyASU](#). The student must also send a [Dissertation Defense Announcement form](#) to the graduate coordinator at least two weeks before the defense. Please consult the Graduate College's [Graduation Deadlines and Procedures](#) Website and the [10 Working-Day Calendar](#) on this site.

Graduation

Graduation Exit Session

The SOS graduate coordinator co-facilitates a meeting at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, focusing on graduation requirements for the university and the department. The meeting focuses on procedures, deadlines and helpful tips for completing all items on time. Information on graduation ceremonies is also part of the session. Different sessions exist based on culminating experience type.

Students graduating within the next year are invited to the session. Students may attend one or more exit sessions. Sessions are held shortly before the apply to graduate deadline in fall and spring.

Apply to Graduate

Every student is required to apply for graduation in the semester in which they plan to complete their degree or certificate. The university lists the graduation application deadline on the [Academic Calendar](#). Students can apply after the deadline but will have to pay a late fee in addition to the graduation application fee. A separate application is required for each degree or certificate program.

Students are encouraged to attend a graduation exit session to learn about all items required for their program and unit in order to graduate on time. Students cannot apply to graduate if they are not in good standing or have issues on the interactive plan of study (iPOS).

University Policies – Defense and After

The defense must be held on campus during normal business hours and not on an observed university holiday. After the defense, the student must submit the dissertation paper to the thesis editor for the format review process. If revisions were required by the committee, then the approved revised version is what needs to go to the thesis editor. The signed pass-fail form must be submitted to the Graduate College. The

format review will not start until the pass-fail form has been received. The format review may require multiple rounds of reviews before being approved. Once approved, the student must upload the final document into ProQuest. Each of these items have specific deadlines, which are posted on the [Graduate College's website](#) along with a link to ProQuest. Failure to meet all deadlines on all items will result in a delayed graduation and will require the student to register for another semester (SOS 795 Continuing Registration for 1-credit) and pay tuition.

Final Grades

The final passing grade for Research (SOS 792), Dissertation (SOS 799), Reading and Conference (SOS 790) is Y (satisfactory). A “Z” grade is given for continuing registration (SOS 795). Reading and Conference (SOS 790) may be taken for a letter grade if approved by the instructor. A “Z” grade will be given assigned to Dissertation and Research until the student successfully completes all graduation requirements. At the end of the student’s last semester, those “Z” grades will be changed to “Y”, with the exception of Continuing Registration, which always has a “Z” grade.

Commencement and Convocation

These are two separate ceremonies during graduation week, each requiring separate RSVPs. Diplomas are sent to the student’s address (the one listed when applying to graduate) after the degree has been conferred, which may take up to six weeks after the end of the semester. The doctoral diploma cover is distributed at commencement; the master’s diploma cover is distributed at convocation. Students do not receive the diploma at commencement or convocation.

Commencement is the university-wide graduation ceremony (the graduate students’ ceremony is separate from the undergraduates’ ceremony), facilitated by the President of the University. This typically occurs on the Monday of graduation week. Additional information for Commencement can be found at [ASU Commencement](#) and is provided by the University Ceremonies Office.

Convocation is the School of Sustainability graduation ceremony. Graduates walk across the stage in front of a smaller audience. This typically occurs on the Thursday of graduation week. The School of Sustainability Student Services Office will send additional information for convocation directly to graduation-eligible students.

Alumni 101

An informational session held twice a year for students who are graduating to learn about life after graduation. Key topics include the following: Career Services, ASU Alumni Association, SOS Alumni Chapter involvement, giving back to ASU and SOS, and remaining engaged with your Alma Mater. More information can be found at [ASU Alumni Association](#).

Milestones

The SOS graduate committee has developed a list of milestones and deadlines to keep students on track with meeting university and department requirements for pursuit of this degree. The PhD programs have two distinct sets of milestones: one for those who enter the program with a master’s degree and one for those who enter the program with only a bachelor’s degree. The current list of milestones are located in the SOS Graduate Student Community Blackboard site.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Academic excellence is expected of students doing graduate work. Failure to adhere to the policies below may result in academic probation or a recommendation to Graduate Education for withdrawal from the degree program.

The following policies pertain to the PhD in Sustainability:

- **Minimum GPA:** To be eligible for the degree and to remain in good academic standing, PhD SOS graduate students must achieve and maintain a 3.25 minimum grade-point average (GPA).

Students must maintain a 3.25 cumulative GPA in the following areas: 1) all courses numbered 500 or higher that appear on the transcript, and 2) all courses that appear on the plan of study.

The SOS GPA policy also includes post-baccalaureate courses (undergrad classes not listed on the plan of study) taken at ASU, in which students are required to maintain at least a cumulative 3.00 GPA.

- **Incomplete Grades:** Incompletes are given at the discretion of the instructor of a course and should not be expected. Students granted an incomplete must complete a contract with the instructor, outlining the work required and the timeline for completion. The completed [contract](#) must be sent to the graduate coordinator who will obtain the graduate director's signature and keep an electronic record of the contract in the student's file. The timeline cannot exceed one calendar year, but the instructor may choose an earlier completion date.

Once coursework has been fulfilled, a grade will be assigned. The grade must be entered within the calendar year, so the student should allow a few weeks for the instructor to grade each assignment. If the student does not complete coursework within the period stipulated by the instructor (on the contract), then the student may receive an unsatisfactory or failing grade for the course.

In the case that the professor gives the student the full calendar year within which to complete the course, and the course is not complete within that time, then the incomplete will become permanent and the student will have to re-take the course if it is a required course. The School of Sustainability permits only two incompletes on a student's transcript at any time. More than two incompletes is cause for academic probation. More than two permanent incompletes is grounds for dismissal from the program.

- **Individual Course Grades:** A grade of "C" is not allowed on any courses within a student's plan of study. If a student receives a "C", then he or she must re-take the course or seek approval from the Graduate Committee to remove the course from the plan of study.

The following policies pertain to the doctoral program only:

- **Time Limit for Passing Written Comprehensive Exam:** Students should take the comprehensive exam within one year of finishing their coursework.
- **Retaking the Written Comprehensive Exam:** Students must petition Graduate Education to retake the comprehensive exam, and reexamination must occur no sooner than three months and no later than one year from the original exam date. Only one reexamination will be approved.

- Time Limit for Defending the Dissertation Prospectus: PhD students should defend the dissertation prospectus within six months of passing the comprehensive exam. Extensions on the six-month limit must be approved by the student's supervisory committee and the graduate director. The student must submit a completed SOS internal petition form to request an extension.
- Time Limit for Completing the Doctoral Degree: Doctoral students are expected to meet the School of Sustainability program milestones. Failure to do so may result in probation (see below). Graduate Education requires doctoral students to complete all program requirements within a ten-year period. The ten-year period starts with initial enrollment in the doctoral program. In addition, the student must take the final oral examination in defense of the dissertation within five years of passing the comprehensive examinations. The defense of the dissertation must take place at least 6 months after the student is advanced to candidacy.

Performance and Annual Review

To ensure that students complete their degrees in a timely manner, get the most out of their experience at SOS and meet requirements of the degree and School, the Graduate Committee and student's faculty advisors will review student progress annually. Students who are not making satisfactory progress may be dismissed from the program, according to university regulations.

Annual Review

The graduate coordinator will send the students a link to the annual review survey in February. The completed survey, plan of study and updated CV/resume are to be submitted by the student by March 1. Annual review files will be reviewed in March of each year. The Graduate Committee and the student's faculty advisor will review the following documents when assessing students' progress:

- Check Sheet (provided by the graduate coordinator)
- Transcript (provided by the graduate coordinator)
- Comments (provided by SOS faculty)
- Updated CV or resume (provided by the student by March 1)
- Completed Annual Review Survey (provided by the student by March 1)

The student's faculty advisor will provide to each student, in writing, the results of the annual review. The advisor's comments will be emailed to the student by the graduate coordinator by the end of the spring semester.

Probation Policy

A student may be placed on academic probation if:

1. The student's cumulative GPA in all courses numbered 500 and above and in all work specifically included in the plan of study falls below the 3.25 GPA requirement as outlined in the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy section;
2. The student's cumulative GPA for all post-baccalaureate courses taken at ASU falls below 3.00;
3. The student receives a "C" or lower in a course on their plan of study;
4. The student has more than two incompletes since starting the program; or
5. The student fails to complete the program within specified time guidelines and does not meet milestones specified in the graduate handbook.

Students will be notified by email when first placed on probation and will be required to complete a Probation Agreement with their faculty advisor or the Graduate Committee. Students on probation must meet monthly with their faculty advisor or the Graduate Committee member handling their probation agreement to ensure satisfactory progression. A student placed on probation will remain on probation until performance improves and requirements have been met. Students have one semester to advance to good standing before termination is considered. The Graduate Committee will notify the student in writing when he or she advances to good standing.

A student may be recommended for withdrawal from the graduate program if:

1. The student is on academic probation because his or her GPA has fallen below the 3.25 GPA as outlined in the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy section or below 3.00 for all post-baccalaureate courses taken at ASU, and the student fails to bring the GPA to required levels by the deadline specified in the Probation Agreement;
2. The student receives a “C” or lower grade while on academic probation for any reason;
3. The student has more than two permanent incompletes since starting the program;
4. The student fails to meet milestones specified in the graduate handbook; or
5. The student fails to meet conditions stipulated in their Probation Agreement.

Students will be notified by email if they are being recommended for withdrawal from the program.

A student may appeal any action concerning academic probation and withdrawal by petitioning the Graduate Committee within 10 business days, using the [SOS petition form](#). Approval of petitions is not guaranteed.