

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.S. THESIS DEGREE IN KINESIOLOGY

Department of Kinesiology  
School of Public Health and Health Sciences  
University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass)

### Graduate Faculty

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## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.S. THESIS DEGREE IN KINESIOLOGY

### I. Admission

Faculty in the Department of Kinesiology have varied research interests. A prospective student MUST secure permission to work with a specific advisor PRIOR to acceptance into the program. Graduate advisors are listed in 4 general areas, although many professors work in more than one:

<b><u>Physiology</u></b> <i>Muscle, Molecular &amp; Cardiovascular Physiology, Energy Metabolism</i>	<b><u>Physical Activity</u></b> <i>Fitness, Wellness, Health, Physical Activity Measurement Interventions</i>	<b><u>Biomechanics</u></b> <i>Biomechanics</i>	<b><u>Movement Neuroscience</u></b> <i>Motor Control, Neuroscience</i>
Edward Debold Jane Kent Mark Miller	Sofiya Alhassan Amanda Paluch Katie Potter John Sirard Christine St. Laurent	Katherine Boyer Wouter Hoogkamer Sarah Roelker	Richard van Emmerik Douglas Martini Christine St. Laurent

The M.S. thesis program at UMass Amherst consists of 36 total credits. The 36 credits are composed of 27 credit hours of course work and 9 thesis research credit hours [KIN 698A Thesis Proposal (3 credits) and KIN 699 Master's Thesis (6 credits)]. The advisor (committee chair) and at least 2 other UMass graduate faculty members comprise the thesis committee. A proposal presentation to the thesis committee is required and open to the public. Upon completion of the thesis document, the student must successfully complete an oral defense of their thesis research, also open to the public.

### Sponsorship / Funding

Sponsorship indicates a commitment on the part of a faculty member to serve as academic advisor, and to provide research training and financial support (Research Assistantship, when available) to a student. Department policy for the master's thesis option program is to accept only those students who can be supported through assistantships for teaching (TA) and/or research (RA). Graduate Assistantships (TA or RA) include a stipend during the academic semesters, health insurance and a waiver of tuition and most fees. Normally, a student making satisfactory progress towards their M.S. thesis degree would be supported with funding for two years. Although some funding is available for the summer term, graduate assistantships are not guaranteed for the summer term. Prior to admission, a prospective student should correspond (phone or e-mail) with a potential faculty advisor concerning possible sponsorship for the M.S. If prospective students inquire before submitting an application to the Graduate School, they should send the potential faculty advisor a resume, summary of previous relevant course work, research experience, and transcript(s) (if available). A face-to-face meeting with a prospective faculty advisor (on campus and/or meeting at a conference or other off campus site) is strongly encouraged.

## II. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER'S THESIS PROGRAM (36 total credits)

Requirements (see text following table for more details)	Credits
SPHHS 600	1
Statistics course	3
KIN 602 (Conducting Research in Kinesiology)	3
KIN 891 (Graduate Seminar)	1 (x4)
KIN Journal Club	1 (x4)
KIN 500 – 800 level course (Inside area)*	3
KIN 500 – 800 level course (Outside area)*	3
KIN 500 – 800 level course <b>or</b> Cognate course**	3
KIN 500 – 800 Independent study course	3
KIN 698A (Thesis Proposal)	3
KIN 699 (Thesis)	6
Total credit hours	36
<p>* Within the Kinesiology department, there are 4 areas of research (Biomechanics, Exercise Physiology, Movement Neuroscience, Physical Activity and Health). Inside area refers to student's primary research area of concentration within the department and outside area refers to the other three areas within the department.</p>	
<p>** Cognate course can be taken in any department on the UMass Amherst campus. This course, taken in a Department outside Kinesiology, should enhance the breadth of knowledge and skills found in the main area of study.</p>	

**NOTE:** Incoming students can transfer in **3 credit hours** of a graduate level course they completed during the undergraduate training that was NOT used to satisfy a previous degree requirement. The course needs to be approved by the GPD. It is preferred that the transfer course be in a STEM discipline, although the GPD will consider exceptions if the course relates to the students proposed research or career plan.

### Required Pre-Requisites

The Department of Kinesiology requires Master's students to be well-rounded in basic areas within the field. All incoming M.S. students are required to have 1 year of Human Anatomy and Physiology prior to starting the program.

Note: Acceptable UMass course for Human Anatomy and Physiology is KIN 270 and KIN 272.

**English Proficiency:** Applicants whose native language is not English must demonstrate English proficiency. Applicants are required to provide an official score report. For more details consult the [International Applicants page](#).

**Progress evaluation:** At the beginning of each calendar year (January) the M.S. thesis student will submit an [Annual Progress Report](#) to their advisor. The M.S. advisor will schedule a meeting with the student to review and evaluate the report, make suggestions for improvement, and evaluate progress toward the M.S. degree as Satisfactory, Marginal, or

Unsatisfactory. The Annual Progress Report will then be sent to the GPD by the student's advisor and will become a permanent record in the student's folder.

In the event that an advisor feels that a student is making unsatisfactory progress towards their degree, the advisor will first organize a meeting with the student. Following that meeting, the advisor will fill out an "unsatisfactory progress report form." On the form, the advisor will indicate what areas the student is not making progress in and will propose what corrective actions can be taken. This will be sent to the GPD and the student. The student, GPD, and advisor will then have a formal meeting to discuss what corrective actions can be taken and to determine a timeline for those actions to be completed. Once agreed upon, the student, advisor, and GPD will sign off on the action plan. At the end of the timeline, the student's progress will be reassessed and at that point, if they are still making unsatisfactory progress, they may be asked to leave the program.

### **III. SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR THE M.S. PROGRAM**

- By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of the 1<sup>st</sup> year, the student should develop a thesis topic in conjunction with their advisor, and begin to prepare a thesis proposal. The student, in consultation with their advisor, should identify the membership of their thesis committee. Potential committee members should be consulted concerning their interest and availability to serve. The committee should be formed before the thesis proposal.
- The student's advisor will send an e-mail to the GPD with the names, affiliations and role (e.g., Chair, two Members) of the proposed committee. The GPD then submits the proposed committee to the Graduate School for approval.
- The student should register for thesis proposal credits (KIN 698A, 3 credits), normally in year 2. As part of the proposal preparation, an Informed Consent Document must be written and approved by the University-level Institutional Review Board, as appropriate. Be aware that this approval process may take considerable time (e.g., 3 to 6 weeks).
- The proposal must include Chapter I (Introduction), Chapter II (Literature Review), and Chapter III (Methods).
- When the student is ready to propose, the student's advisor needs to send an email notifying the GPD.
- Before the student commences work on the thesis, the proposal must be presented and approved by the thesis committee. The thesis proposal will be presented in an open forum where all graduate students and faculty from the department are invited to attend. At least two weeks prior to the proposal date, copies of the proposal document must be presented to the thesis committee, unless another arrangement has been granted by the committee. At the same time, a copy of the proposal document, a short abstract, and announcement flyer will be sent to the Departmental Academic Program Manager to be uploaded to OneDrive.
- Except for preliminary pilot data, data collection (or secondary data collection with approval by committee) for the thesis should not begin until the thesis committee has approved the thesis proposal. Throughout the period when the data are being collected and analyzed, the student should keep the thesis committee informed of progress.
- Thesis credits (KIN699, 6 credits) should be taken at the appropriate time in consultation with the student's advisor, and may be spread over two semesters.
- When the student is ready to defend, the student's advisor needs to send an email notifying

the GPD.

- The student is required to send their thesis document to Departmental Academic Program Manager at least two weeks prior to their defense. The Academic Program Manager will load the document onto OneDrive and a shareable link will be created.
- The final thesis will be presented in an open forum where all graduate students and faculty from the department are invited to attend. At least two weeks prior to the defense date, copies of the thesis document should be presented to the thesis committee.
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## **M.S degree milestone checklist**

### Thesis Committee

- **Advisor sends email to GPD appointing thesis committee (cc: Academic Program Manager)**
- Academic Program Manager sends signed memo to Graduate School announcing thesis committee

### Thesis Proposal

- **Advisor sends email to GPD that student is ready to propose at least 2 weeks before proposal date (cc: Academic Program Manager)**
- Academic Program Manager sends student Room Reservation Form
- Student returns Room Reservation Form – Thesis proposal scheduled
- Flyer posted, emailed, and uploaded to Box as soon as the room has been reserved and the title of proposal is known
- Student sends copy of proposal to Academic Program Manager to be distributed to department
- **Advisor sends email to GPD that the proposal has been passed and that all edits to the proposal have been made (cc: Academic Program Manager)**
- Student uploads final version of proposal to OneDrive

### Thesis Defense

*NOTE: It is department policy that students should defend their thesis at least 4 weeks before the final Graduate School deadline of when the Degree Eligibility Form is due. This form cannot be signed by GPD and Department Chair until defense has been passed, all corrections have been made to the thesis document and final version uploaded to ScholarWorks.*

- **Advisor sends email to GPD that the student is ready to defend at least 2 weeks prior to defense date (cc: Academic Program Manager)**
- Academic Program Manager sends student Room Reservation Form (usually takes 1 – 2 weeks to process the request)
- Student returns Room Reservation Form – Thesis defense scheduled

- Flyer posted, emailed, and uploaded to OneDrive as soon as the room has been reserved and the title of the thesis is known
- Student makes any required changes to the Thesis document based on committee feedback.
- **Advisor sends email to GPD that the thesis defense has been passed and that all edits/revisions have been made (cc: Academic Program Manager)**
- Student uploads copy of thesis to OneDrive
- Academic Program Manager sends a signed memo to Graduate School that M.S. thesis defense was passed
- Student uploads final version of thesis to OneDrive

### Preparing for Graduation

- Student obtains signatures from thesis committee and turns in signed copy of thesis signature page to Academic Program Manager (see DocuSign procedure below)
- Academic Program Manager sends original signature page to Graduate School
- Student uploads thesis to ScholarWorks
- Student turns in completed [MS-Thesis Degree Checklist](#) and unofficial transcripts to Academic Program Manager at least 2 weeks prior to Graduate School Graduation Deadline
- GPD conducts degree audit at least two weeks prior to Graduate school graduation deadline
- Student turns in completed [Master's Degree Eligibility Form for Thesis Students](#) with signatures from Department Chair and GPD at least 1 week prior to Graduate school graduation deadline.
  - NOTE: GPD and Department Chair *cannot* complete this form until final version of thesis is uploaded to ScholarWorks
- Student turns in binding receipt for thesis (2 copies required – advisor approved version) at least 1 week prior to Graduate School Graduation Deadline

### **Graduate School Requirements**

In addition to Kinesiology requirements, students must satisfy all Graduate School requirements. The University confers degrees three times a year (February, May and September) and sponsors one formal graduation ceremony held in late May.

- For a February degree, all paperwork submitted to the Graduate School by mid-December;
- for a May degree, all paperwork submitted to the Graduate School by mid-April;
- for a September degree, all paperwork submitted to the Graduate School by end of August.

**September degree recipients of a preceding year, February degree recipients, and May degree applicants are eligible to participate in the May graduation ceremony.**

[Contact the Graduate Student Service Center at the Graduate School for exact dates.]

Other helpful resources are the [Graduate School Handbook](#) and [Graduate School Degree Requirements, Guidelines for Master's Thesis and Doctoral Dissertations](#), both

found online at the Graduate School web site <http://www.umass.edu/gradschool>.

For the Graduate School, all candidates must satisfy the following requirements:

- Complete all course work
- Submit Master's Degree Eligibility Form signed by the student, the Graduate Program Director, and the Department Chair
- Thesis Committee appointed by the Graduate Dean (recommended by GPD)
- Thesis Proposal received by Graduate School
- Thesis Defense passed (Must be scheduled and passed with changes requested by the thesis committee made before deadline date)
- Signature page. One signature page must be given to The Graduate School. Two options.
  - Hardcopy with wet signatures. Student prints out their blank signature page on high quality paper (100-130 g/m<sup>2</sup>). Student obtains signatures of committee members in **black** ink. The original signature page and full Thesis document is turned into the graduate school by the student. A copy of the signed signature page is given to the Kinesiology Academic Program Manager. Please check with the Graduate Student Service Center for up-to-date information on this process or additional details.
  - DocuSign. Signatures for the title page will be obtained by DocuSign. The Academic Program Manager will prepare your signature page in DocuSign and distribute to your committee for their signatures. The completed page will be added to your full Thesis/Dissertation document by the Academic Program Manager. Then it is ready for you to submit to the Graduate School.

## **Submission Dates for Graduation**

### Items due 2 weeks before Graduate School Graduation Deadline

- 1) Student submits a copy of his/her unofficial transcript to the front office either in-person or via email to the Graduate Program Assistant
- 2) Student completes final degree checklist and submits checklist to front office.

### Items due 1 week before Graduate School Graduation Deadline

- 1) An email from student's advisor to GPD stating that student has completed all revisions to his/her thesis/project and have finished all requirements for degree
- 2) Student sends final version of thesis to Graduate Program Assistant
- 3) Student uploads final version of thesis to [ScholarWorks](#) and email confirmation forwarded to Graduate Program Assistant
- 4) Signature page signed by all committee members (see section above for details)
- 5) Student submits completed [Master's Degree Eligibility Form](#) to front office
- 6) The department requires that students submit a receipt for two bound copies of their thesis. Most students use either [Grey Seal Bindery](#) or [Amherst Copy & Designworks](#) to get their work bound.

### Example timeline

If the Graduate School deadline is April 10<sup>th</sup> (for May graduation) below is a breakdown of the dates that student must meet and the rationale.

Date	Items Due	Rationale
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Last day to defend thesis.	It is department policy that graduate students must defend at least 4 weeks before the final Graduate School deadline (April 10 <sup>th</sup> in this example). This gives students time to complete their final edits and revisions to their thesis. This deadline also gives students enough time to make final edits, upload the document to ScholarWorks and submit signature page.
March 27 <sup>th</sup>	Items needed 2 weeks before Graduate school deadline (see above)	On this date, GPD will begin conducting degree audits for every student who will be graduating. This includes going through Degree Checklists and unofficial transcripts to confirm that the student has completed all degree requirements and is indeed ready to graduate. If there are errors on the Degree Checklist or if there are missing pieces, the form will be sent back for revisions. This gives the Graduate Program Administrator a week to proof the documents and a week for the GPD to review the documents and sign off on them.
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Items needed 1 week before Graduate school deadline (see above)	This is to enable both the GPD and the Department chair enough time to sign the Degree Eligibility form and the student to submit all remaining documents.