



**MS Nutrition and Integrative
Health/Nutrition and Wellness
(General) Concentration**

**Graduate Student Handbook
2025-2026**

**Contact Information:
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome.....	4
NUTRITION FACULTY INTRODUCTION	5
GRADUATION CHECKLIST.....	6
MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN NUTRITION AND INTEGRATIVE HEALTH/NUTRITION AND WELLNESS (GENERAL) CONCENTRATION.....	7
GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS	7
SFA Graduate School Application Process	7
Structure	7
Admission Requirements:.....	8
Program Costs, Financial Assistance and Scholarships	9
AFTER ADMISSION	10
Limitation of Time.....	10
GPA Requirements.....	10
Transfer Hours	10
Degree Requirements	11
MS in Integrative and Functional Nutrition, General Concentration Curriculum	12
Degree Plan.....	12
How to Look up Course Offerings, Descriptions and Syllabi.....	16
Course Descriptions	16
Course Syllabi.....	16
Course Registration.....	16
Advising Form Instructions	16
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES	17
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES.....	17
Consider your readiness	17
Prepare for Classes	17
Graduation Deadlines	18
FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION	18
Graduate Faculty Committee.....	18
Written Comprehensive Examination Procedure.....	19
Oral Examination Procedure.....	19
GRADES	20
INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS.....	21
DISTANCE LEARNING	21
Verification of Student Identification	22

STUDENT ETHICS AND OTHER POLICY INFORMATION	22
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	24
GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND EMPLOYMENT	25
Appendix A.....	26
AUTHORSHIP OF RESEARCH PUBLICATION POLICY	26

Welcome

We are delighted that you are interested in furthering your education in the Food, Nutrition, and Dietetics program.

The Nutrition and Wellness (General) Concentration focuses on an integrative and functional approach to nutrition and wellness.

What is Integrative and Functional Nutrition?

Integrative and functional nutrition (IFN) is a subset of integrative and functional medicine. It has quickly become an exciting and emerging way to practice nutrition that is accepted by multiple authorities in the health and wellness field, including the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Integrative nutrition combines conventional care with complementary and alternative therapies. The goal is to use the most natural, least invasive treatments to achieve health.

Functional nutrition uses a systems-based approach that acknowledges every body system is interrelated. The individual is empowered to take control of their health by understanding the processes that contributed to their condition. IFN practitioners take detailed histories to determine factors that may predispose, provoke, and contribute to health problems. It recognizes that everyone has a unique biochemical physiology, genetic makeup, and experiences that require an individualized approach to optimize body functions. The whole person is addressed by focusing on nutrition, supplements, gut health, movement, sleep, stress, and reducing the toxin burden.

If approaching healthcare from an integrative and functional nutrition perspective interests you, you are in the right place.

For further information beyond this handbook and information provided on our website, please email inquiries to:

Dr. Darla O'Dwyer, PhD, RDN, LD
Dietetic Internship Director, Graduate Coordinator
Department of Allied Health Studies
dodwyer@sfasu.edu

NUTRITION FACULTY INTRODUCTION

Darla O'Dwyer, PhD, RDN, LD, Professor, MS/Dietetic Internship Director and Food, Nutrition and Dietetics Coordinator

Dr. Darla O'Dwyer is a registered dietitian and holds a PhD in food and nutrition. She has been a faculty member at SFA since 2003 and is currently serving as the dietetic internship director and coordinator for the food, nutrition and dietetics program. Dr. O'Dwyer has a passion for integrative/functional nutrition; she trained with the Kalish Institute for Functional Medicine to learn a more holistic approach to healing. Her research interests are gastrointestinal nutrition, dietary supplements and fermented foods. She helps others with digestive disorders through her online practice, Gutprofessor.com and uses this experience to teach her students clinical application and the business of nutrition consulting. She completed her BS at Sam Houston State University, MS, PhD, and Dietetic Internship at Texas Tech University.

Sarah Drake, MS, RDN, LD, Clinical Instructor II, DPD Director

Sarah Drake is a registered dietitian and director of the undergraduate dietetic program. She has worked in a variety of clinical settings as well as in food service management and wellness. Her interest areas include women's health, nutrition counseling and feeding infants and children. She weaves integrative and functional nutrition concepts into her courses. Ms. Drake received her Bachelor of Science in dietetics with a specialization in health promotion from Michigan State University, completed her dietetic internship at Loyola University Chicago and received her Master of Science in human sciences from SFA.

Justin Pelham, MS, RDN, LD, Clinical Instructor II

Justin Pelham has worked extensively in clinical dietetics with a focus on community nutrition outreach. In the hospital setting, he collaborated with the interdisciplinary team as well as counseling patients and/or families in various units such as the ICU, medical-surgical unit, women's center and oncology center. When working full time as the dietitian of Nacogdoches Medical Center, he developed a medical nutrition therapy outpatient program to better meet health care needs for the local community. He continues to practice in the clinical and community nutrition settings. Mr. Pelham completed his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science at SFA. He also participated in the highly competitive SFA dietetic internship.

GRADUATION CHECKLIST

To graduate and get a diploma, you must:	Date Completed
Be admitted to a degree program.	
Submit all required credentials including: 1. official transcripts conferring the bachelor's degree from the college/university attended as an undergraduate student 2. and an official transcript showing the graduate courses you are transferring from another university.	
First Semester — Receive your advisor assignment from the graduate program coordinators. Your assignment is based on your professional interests and advisor availability (you can change your advisors at any time). A copy of the email confirming your advisor is placed in your graduate file. The coordinator introduces you to your advisor via email.	
First Semester — Upon admission, you will have a degree plan filed (see page 12). You should work with your advisor to pick the appropriate elective courses from the program. A full list of courses can be found in the SFA Catalog (select Graduate) by searching the prefixes AGRI, HDFS, HMSC, HUSC, INDS, KINE, NURS, NUTR , PCOU, PADM, SOCW. Please note that classes are not offered on a set rotation and are based on faculty availability and student needs. We do not guarantee that any specific elective course will be offered during your time in the program.	
Before Semester of Graduation - Select a committee in consultation with your advisor, who is your committee chair. The committee consists of the advisor/chair and two other members of the graduate faculty. Send each member of your committee a confirmation email and include copies of those emails in your graduate file.	
Complete all coursework, including transfer work, within six years of the time you started.	
Earn an overall GPA of 3.0 or better and a GPA of 3.0 or better in your major and minor, which are considered separately.	
Beginning of Semester before Semester of Graduation - Apply for graduation and pay all graduation fees by the deadline stated graduation instructions for graduate students .	
Last Semester —Schedule a time for your comprehensive exam and talk with your advisor and committee about the content of the exam. It is encouraged that you enroll in HMSC 5355 Literature Review in Human Sciences to help you prepare and write for your exam.	
Satisfactorily complete your comprehensive examination.	

MASTER OF SCIENCE PROGRAM IN NUTRITION AND INTEGRATIVE HEALTH/NUTRITION AND WELLNESS (GENERAL) CONCENTRATION

The Nutrition and Integrative Health Graduate Student Handbook outlines general policies and procedures regarding the completion of the MS in Nutrition and Integrative Health at SFA. Faculty members can modify certain policies and procedures to meet student needs under extenuating circumstances.

This degree does not provide 1,000 hours of supervised practice in accordance with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). For more information about that degree option, please visit [MS in Nutrition and Integrative Health/Dietetic Internship](#).

Please see the graduate school website in addition to this handbook for more information: [SFA Office of Research and Graduate Studies](#)

GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

Please submit the requirements outlined below to complete your application process for a Master of Science in Nutrition and Integrative Health General Concentration. The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is not required for entry into the graduate program.

SFA Graduate School Application Process

Apply online and be admitted to the Graduate School. The process is explained on the [SFA Office of Research and Graduate Studies](#) webpage. In addition to the application, official transcripts conferring the bachelor's degree from the college/university attended must be sent to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. Official transcripts showing additional undergraduate or graduate work received after the initial bachelor's degree must also be submitted.

For this degree path, please choose the General Nutrition and Integrative Health (GNIH) concentration when applying, not the registered dietitian (DIET) concentration.

The graduate school's minimum GPA requirement is 2.5 overall GPA. You must meet these requirements to have clear admission to the program, **note that this requirement is lower than the minimum GPA required to be admitted to the program**. Please see the section "Admission Consideration" on the following page for the program-specific requirements.

Note: Financial aid is not available until you submit all documents and obtain "clear" admission. Graduate students admitted under "probationary" status (GPA below 2.5 overall) are not eligible for financial aid. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better to be eligible for financial aid.

Structure

The degree requires a total of 36 hours of approved graduate courses including 9 hours of core courses: 6 hours of integrative and functional nutrition I and II and three hours of research methods.

Admission Requirements:

The program has a rolling entry in fall, spring, or summer. Students entering the MS program must have the following:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited United States institution
- A grade point average of at least 3.0 overall and in any graduate work already completed.
- Students with a GPA of less than 3.0 will be considered on an individual basis.
- Applicants should have a background in nutrition or related science and/or meet the pre-requisite coursework for admissions (described below).

Prerequisites for Admission Consideration:

1. Completed Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution
2. Completion of Specific Coursework (or equivalent) including:
 - Introductory Nutrition
 - Cell Biology
 - Human Physiology
 - Nutritional Biochemistry - preferred but not required
3. Graduate Statement of Purpose (1,000-word minimum):
 - How did you become interested in functional nutrition and integrative health? Establish that you have had a long-term interest in this area.
 - Discuss your experiences in the nutrition field and how these experiences have prepared you for advanced practice in the field.
 - What are your future goals and how will this degree help you achieve them?
 - What attracted you specifically to SFA and this program?
4. Resume

Program Costs, Financial Assistance and Scholarships

Answers to questions about tuition and fees, billing and payment options are available on the [SFA Student Business Services website](#) and by email at businessoffice@sfasu.edu. You also may contact the business office by phone at (936) 468-6960 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or visit the office on campus.

For an estimation of tuition costs by academic semester, state of residence and delivery method of the course, [see](#) the Tuition and Fee Plans and Rate Tables on the [SFA Student Business Services website](#). The program requires 36 hours of graduate credit. Use the Tuition and Fee Plans and Rate Tables page to determine the cost at the graduate level.

To add up the total costs using the Tuition and Fee Plans and Rate Tables take the monetary value related to the number of credit hours you take each semester. For example, in the fall semester if you take 9 hours, then add the monetary value listed for 9 hours. Then add the monetary value based on the number of hours that you take in the spring semester, and so forth.

An estimation of tuition and fees for 36 hours of graduate credit over a 2-year period is approximately \$16,000 to \$17,000.

The SFA Graduate Tuition and Fees are different based on your residency status. For non-resident graduate students, please look at the monetary value for border state residents and non-residents. For non-residents, the tuition is over double the amount as compared to a Texas resident.

If you are a non-resident and are interested in our program, please contact the graduate program coordinator, Darla O'Dwyer, at dodwyer@sfasu.edu.

The [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) offers scholarships for its members pursuing education in nutrition and dietetics. State affiliates also offer scholarships, for example, the [Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) offers a foundation scholarship. To find scholarships in your state other than Texas, search for your individual state affiliate using your favorite browser.

Even though SFA Online courses are affordably priced, financial aid helps. As an SFA student, you are eligible to apply for financial aid. Please visit the [Financial Aid](#) website for more information.

AFTER ADMISSION

Following admission to a graduate degree program, you must confer with the graduate advisor in the major department. As soon as possible and preferably during the first semester or summer session of enrollment, you should have a degree plan.

Thereafter, at stipulated stages, you must:

1. complete all requirements of the degree plan and apply for the degree
2. and take a comprehensive examination administered by the major department.

The guide below outlines the step-by-step procedure:

Limitation of Time

With the exception of Doctor of Education, Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Fine Arts degrees, all work on a graduate degree must be completed within six years of the time you first enroll in graduate courses, whether you take the courses at SFA or elsewhere. If you serve on active duty with the armed forces of the United States between the dates of matriculation and graduation, the six-year limitation is extended one year for each year of active duty up to a maximum extension of four years. Time limits for the EdD, PhD and MFA degrees are specified under the respective program descriptions in the [SFA Catalog](#) (select Graduate).

GPA Requirements

To remain in good standing in the Graduate School and to graduate, you must maintain a B average (3.0 out of a 4.0 scale). If you have clear admission to graduate study and your GPA falls below a B during any semester or summer session, you are placed on academic probation and will need to follow/make satisfactory progress toward the required plan of action outlined by your main advisor. If you were admitted under probationary status and your GPA falls below a B average, you will be placed on academic suspension. If you are placed on academic probation and you fail to restore an overall B GPA the following semester or summer session, you will be placed on academic suspension.

If you are placed on academic suspension, you are denied the continuation of an academic program as well as the privilege of registering for coursework. This suspension period is for one semester or one summer session, whichever follows the period when the suspension occurred. Thereafter, you revert to post-baccalaureate admission status and are permitted to take coursework not applicable toward a degree program. To be reinstated to a degree program, you must be recommended by the appropriate academic department and approved by the academic dean, the [Graduate Council](#) and the associate vice president.

Transfer Hours

With the approval of the major department and the academic dean, you may transfer from another accredited graduate school up to 12 semester hours toward a nonthesis master's degree.

Transferred work must be completed with a grade of B or better and is accepted only for credit toward a graduate degree at SFA and not for raising the GPAs you earn at SFA.

You must have earned those hours no more than six years prior to your first graduate course enrollment at SFA. Moreover, if you fail to complete work on the graduate degree at SFA before the expiration of the six years, the work is no longer applicable toward a degree at SFA. Graduate credit earned by correspondence is unacceptable for application toward the graduate degree requirements.

To transfer any credit from other institutions, you must submit an official transcript of the courses to be considered and receive the approval of the appropriate academic department and academic dean.

Degree Requirements

Coursework used to satisfy requirements for a previous master's degree (whether taken at SFA or elsewhere) may not be used to satisfy requirements for a second master's degree at SFA.

Under certain circumstances, an undergraduate student may simultaneously pursue work toward bachelor's and master's degrees.

To earn a graduate degree, you must have a major and overall GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale. The computation of the overall GPA includes all courses in the major and minor and those elective courses you selected to complete the degree requirements. In the case of repeated courses (you may repeat a maximum of six semester hours of work to raise your GPA), only the higher grades are used to compute GPAs, according to university policy. No course with a grade below C can be used to satisfy degree requirements.

Work offered for the graduate degree should be in courses numbered 500 and above. In certain circumstances, you may take a maximum of nine semester hours of 400-numbered courses carrying graduate credit toward a nonthesis degree. *You must repeat any courses you fail.*

With the exception of the MFA, no more than two Advanced Graduate Studies (HUSC 5175 and 5376) courses or a total of eight hours may count toward any master's degree without special permission from the academic dean.

In addition to satisfying all coursework for the graduate degree, you must satisfy all other requirements, as well as the final comprehensive examination and/or the thesis.

All work on a graduate degree must be completed within six years of the time you first enroll in graduate courses, whether the courses are taken here or elsewhere. For exceptions, see the statement (above) on the limitation of time.

MS in Integrative and Functional Nutrition, General Concentration Curriculum

Graduate Coursework

The MS in Integrative and Functional Nutrition, General Concentration, requires completion of 36 hours of non-thesis graduate credit.

All graduate courses are fully online or have hybrid Zoom-enabled offerings and are 3 credit hours. Students will not be required to live in the area.

Required Courses (9 hours):

- NUTR 5335 Integrative and Functional Nutrition I (hybrid F2F, online, zoom livestream) - This course provides in- depth study of the metabolic processes and nutrition therapy as it relates to integrative and functional nutrition. Analysis and interpretation of research studies will be emphasized. Nutrient supplementation, elimination diets and dietary modifications as part of the therapeutic management of gastrointestinal conditions, weight management, cardiovascular disease and other nutrition-related conditions will be covered. Prerequisite: none required. To be successful, should have a nutrition course, plus anatomy and physiology. (Fall)
- KINE 5350 Intro to Research in Health & Kinesiology (3 car hrs, online) - Concepts and skills involved in understanding and analyzing research in kinesiology and health science. The course should enhance the student's ability to locate, read, comprehend and critically analyze research. Prerequisite: none required. (Fall)
- NUTR 5339 Integrative and Functional Nutrition II (hybrid F2F, online, zoom livestream) - This course provides an in-depth study of the metabolic processes and nutrition therapy as it relates to integrative and functional nutrition. Analysis and interpretation of research studies will be emphasized. The integration of nutrigenomics and dietary modifications as part of the therapeutic management of autoimmune and neurological conditions, cancer, and other conditions will be covered. Prerequisite: none required. To be successful, should have a nutrition course, plus anatomy and physiology. (Spring)

Complete 18 hours of HDFS, HMSC, HUSC, INDs, NUTR coursework as advised.

Nutrition Coursework

Course availability is based on enrollment

- NUTR 5365 Integrative Pediatric Nutrition (hybrid online, 3 car hrs) - This course provides a comprehensive exploration of pediatric nutrition through an integrative and functional lens. The course covers nutrition assessment, the microbiome's role in pediatric wellness, and evidence-based dietary and supplement interventions for common pediatric conditions such as allergies, asthma, skin disorders, digestive disorders, endocrine disorders, obesity, autoimmune diseases, and neurological disorders. By the end of the course, students will have a well-

rounded understanding of integrative pediatric nutrition and the ability to apply their knowledge, ultimately promoting better health and wellness outcomes for the pediatric population. To be successful, should have a nutrition course, plus anatomy and physiology. (Fall)

- NUTR 5321 Private Practice in Health and Wellness (hybrid online, 3 car hrs) – This course equips health and wellness professionals with the essential knowledge and skills to successfully establish and manage a private practice. Participants will explore the entrepreneurial mindset necessary for success, alongside operational requirements such as business planning and financial management. The curriculum also covers critical aspects of governmental and insurance regulations, professional legal standards, and ethical responsibilities. Additionally, students will learn to effectively leverage technology for service delivery and marketing strategies tailored to attract and retain clients. By the end of the course, participants will be well-prepared to navigate the complexities of private practice in health and wellness. (Summer)
- NUTR 5349 Women’s Health Nutrition (online, 3 car hrs) This course provides an in-depth study of the nutritional needs of women from adolescence to geriatric. The nutritional needs to support healthy menstruation will be covered. The impact of nutrition to support fertility and healthy pregnancy outcomes will be emphasized, including conditions that can negatively impact the woman and infant during gestation. The nutritional needs related to hormonal regulation through the reproductive years, perimenopause and menopause will be covered. For each topic, an in-depth exploration of the scientific literature related to the microbiome, micronutrient needs, nutrigenomics, and integrative approaches will be emphasized. A nutrition course and anatomy and physiology is needed for success in the course. (Spring)
- NUTR 5332 Public Health Nutrition (online, 3 car hrs) - Survey of food and nutrition issues pertinent to public health and consumerism. Investigation of food and nutrition assistance programs; research and analysis of current policies and goals. (Spring)
- NUTR 5329 Sports Nutrition (online, 3 car hrs) - This course will cover the role of nutrition in optimizing sports training, recovery, performance (power, intermittent, and endurance sports), and overall health. Topics will include macro- & micro-nutrients, timing of intake, and selected supplements and ergogenic aids. For each topic, the physiological and biochemical basis, level of evidence, and practical applications will be addressed. To be successful, should have a nutrition course, plus anatomy and physiology. (Fall)
- NUTR 5340 Behavior Change Theories and Practice (online/Livestream, 3 car hrs) This course explores the research, theories, and practical applications related to behavior change. With a strong emphasis on motivational interviewing techniques, students will acquire strategies to inspire and empower others. Discover how to implement evidence-based coaching skills that facilitate sustainable behavior change to promote health and wellness. May be crosslisted with NUTR 4335 Health Coaching Concepts and Skills based on instructor availability and enrollment. (Fall)

Courses approved and in development:

- NTUR 5350 Functional Nutrition Assessment (online, 3 cr hrs) – In this course, students will explore anthropometric, biochemical, clinical, and dietary assessment methods to evaluate overall health and well-being. Emphasizing the impact of diet, lifestyle, health history, and

biochemical individuality, students will learn to develop personalized nutrition and lifestyle strategies based on their assessments. The course will also cover the rationales, advantages, and disadvantages of various nutrition and functional assessment methods, examining their reliability, validity, cost-effectiveness, and practicality in both research and clinical settings. (possibly available in Fall 2026/Spring 2027, based on instructor availability.

Human Sciences Coursework

These are variable based on enrollment and faculty availability

The advisor will provide you with a list of courses that relate to your field of study.

HMSC 5355 Literature Review in Human Sciences (online, 3 cr hrs) - Provides in-depth investigation in research related to child and family development, nutrition, family and consumer sciences, and interior design. (suggested to take in last semester to prepare for the comprehensive exam)

Graduate electives (9 hours)

As advised in AGRI, HDFS, HMSC, HUSC, INDS, KINE, NURS, NUTR, PCOU, PADM, SOCW

The advisor will provide you with a list of courses that relate to your field of study.

Degree Plan

GRADUATE DEGREE PLAN

Student Name:	John Doe
Campus ID (CID):	1234567890
Candidate Degree for:	M.S. ▾
Major/Program:	Nutrition and Integrative Health ▾
Total Hours for Degree:	36



STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
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JAMES I. PERKINS
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

***Transfer Courses not to exceed 12 hours. Courses included must be taken within 6 years of graduation date.**

List courses required to be completed for the degree. The distribution of courses must comply with the requirements of the Graduate Bulletin under which the student intends to graduate. Any desired changes to a degree plan, which deviate from approved curriculum, must be pre-approved and include a "course substitution" form.

This form will be submitted to the Academic Unit Head and, after approval, will be emailed to coegrad@sfasu.edu for review and approval by the Dean. After final approval, the student will receive a final copy of their degree plan.

***Student is responsible to submit a Graduation Application by required deadline. Degree will not be conferred without application.**

How to Look up Course Offerings, Descriptions and Syllabi

1. Go to the A-Z menu on the main [SFA website](#).
2. Click on C, Classes, Schedule of
3. Choose the term, then the department. Choose course level: graduate. Then Class search. All graduate courses will have a 5000 number. You cannot take undergraduate courses (000 or below).
4. If there is a course that you are interested in, click on the course number to see if it has any pre-requisites. If it doesn't list a pre-req, just know that some courses at the graduate level only allow majors. **Please let your advisor know what course you are interested in and they will reach out to the faculty.**

Course Descriptions

You can find course descriptions by going to the [SFA Catalog](#) (select Graduate). Then click Course Offerings on the left-hand menu bar. Then select the prefix, for example, KINE, then filter.

Course Syllabi

Here is how to find syllabi on the SFA homepage.

1. Go to the A-Z menu on the main [SFA website](#).
2. Click on C and go to Course Information
3. Choose the semester the course was last offered
4. Scroll to the department (NUTR, KINE, etc.)
5. Click on the course number to access the syllabus. If you click on the professor's name, then it will pull up their vitae.

Course Registration

Upon admission to the university and program, you will be sent a welcome email from the Nutrition and Integrative Health Graduate coordinator connecting you to your graduate advisor. Your advisor will complete an advising form from through mySFA.

Advising Form Instructions

Here are the instructions to approve your advising form:

1. Log into mySFA and click on the advising tab (third tab).
2. The first big box is called "My Advisor" and has a link, "For Completed Advising Forms, click here."
3. Click on the link, it will take you to another page where you are able to approve and view the advising forms.

After fulfillment of all departmental advising requirements, you may register for SFA Online courses by web or phone. Information regarding registration is on the [registration page](#).

The registrar posts [registration dates](#) online every semester. Normal registration hours are 6 a.m.–10 p.m. Monday through Friday. To register for classes or add/drop classes, log on to [mySFA](#).

Class meeting time, place and instructor information is available in the [Schedule of Classes](#).

Bills are mailed only when students preregister. If you register during delayed registration, you must promptly pay your bills at the Business Office (Room 204) of the Austin Building or with a Visa or MasterCard by calling (936) 468-6960. Failure to do so may result in your courses being dropped. You may add/drop courses during the registration period.

If you have registration questions, call (936) 468-1370.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program learning outcomes (PLO's) are statements that help measure students' knowledge and skills. The following are the measurable PLO's required in this program. These PLO's will be assessed in various courses and tabulated using university assessment software.

Program Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the program, students will be able to:
Evaluate research and apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature in nutrition and dietetics practice
Justify programs, products, services and care using appropriate evidence or data
Incorporate critical-thinking skills in overall practice

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Consider your readiness

Seriously consider your ability to complete an online program or course before you enroll. Online courses are not easy. The reading, assignments and tests are just as difficult as those in campus-based courses. In addition, successful online course completion requires you to be self-disciplined enough to log in regularly, focus on your assignments and complete your work by scheduled deadlines.

Obviously, technology plays a big role in online learning. To be successful, you must have easy access to a computer and the internet. You must also be proficient in a variety of computer-related skills, such as Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint and email.

Read the [SFA Catalog](#) (select Graduate) thoroughly. Be sure you select the graduate catalog for the academic year in which you began your study.

Prepare for Classes

- **Order books.** You may purchase textbooks and materials for your online courses through the website of [SFA's Barnes and Noble bookstore](#). The bookstore can ship your books to your home or hold your books on campus.
- **Know your Brightspace username and password.** Your Brightspace username is your mySFA username. If you do not know your mySFA username, visit the [Find Your mySFA Username and Campus ID](#). Your Brightspace password is your mySFA password.

- **Brightspace Support.** Please see the [Brightspace Support Website](#) for helpful videos on how to navigate the system and to request help.

Graduation Deadlines

- **Beginning of Semester Prior to Semester of Graduation** - Apply for graduation and pay all graduation fees by the deadline (see [graduation instructions for graduate students](#)). Complete diploma application.
- Meet Graduate School deadlines.
- Exhibit professional challenging attitudes toward the rigors of academic performance indicative of graduate education.
- Develop a personal timeline for completion.

FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Each degree program has a culminating requirement for a student's final semester or summer session of work. A nonthesis degree requires a comprehensive examination over the major field, and some programs specify a final requirement such as passing a national test or completing a capstone course.

When you enroll in a program, the program's graduate advisor or school director provides a written description of the culminating requirement and how to qualify for and pass (or reattempt) it. You must be registered during the semester or summer session in which you satisfy the culminating requirement.

The examination committee comprises graduate faculty members appointed by the relevant department. The deadline for reporting the results of your comprehensive examination or other culminating requirement can be found on the [Office of Research and Graduate Studies](#) website, Graduate Students & Faculty, Important Dates. If you fail to satisfy the culminating requirement within the time frame or the maximum number of retakes specified by the graduate program or allowed by Graduate School policy, you are not awarded the degree.

Graduate Faculty Committee

Students form a committee composed of three graduate faculty members as early as possible but at the very latest by the beginning of the last semester of study.

The committee may include one faculty member from outside the Department of Allied Health Studies with the approval of your major advisor. Your committee serves as the comprehensive examination committee. In some circumstances, exceptions may be made.

If you wish to change a committee member, you must submit a written request to your major advisor, who will evaluate the merit of your request and make a final decision. If you wish to replace your major advisor, you must submit a written request to the unit head of the Department of Allied Health Studies, who will evaluate the merit of the request and make a final decision.

Written Comprehensive Examination Procedure

It is suggested that you enroll in HMSC 5355 Literature Review in Human Sciences the last semester. This course will walk you through the steps in completing the writing portion of the comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam procedures will be as follows - In the last semester of coursework, a take-home comprehensive exam will be completed over two weeks. A three-person committee will develop a writing prompt that encourages the application of knowledge gained from the courses in the program. A 15–18-page paper (exam) covering the information from the question prompts is required and must include a reference list in APA format (reference list is not included in the page count).

The paper should reflect the knowledge gained in the graduate program including both knowledge of content and mechanics (APA formatting). The paper should reflect your ability to locate, synthesize and apply research to your field.

It is expected that your exam is edited and free from major grammatical errors, uses APA formatting, includes in-text citations, incorporates paraphrased information more than quotes, and meets any other requirements outlined by the three-person committee.

You and your major advisor will work together to select the dates and times to write the paper during a specific two-week period.

Once the paper has been submitted to D2L/Brightspace by the required time, the graduate advisor will forward an electronic copy of the paper to all committee members for evaluation within two (2) days of completing the exam. Not uploading the paper by the required deadline may result in a failed attempt at the comprehensive exam.

Ethical behavior during the comprehensive examination process will be exhibited. Any suspicion of cheating will be investigated with the potential of examination failure. [The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity \(HOP 04-106\)](#) outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled at SFA.

It is the student's responsibility to meet with each committee member at the beginning of the semester in which the paper will be completed to discuss the topics for the paper. This information may be broad or specific, but it can help guide the paper's content.

Oral Examination Procedure

All nonthesis students must take an oral exam on-site or via technology (for example, Brightspace software or teleconference). The major advisor will schedule the oral exam within seven to 10 days following the completion of the written paper.

You must score from a 3 (Acceptable) through a 5 (Substantially Developed) on the examination rubric for each item. See the rubric in Appendix B.

The committee discusses the student's performance on the written and oral exams privately and decides on a passing or non-passing grade. The major professor notifies the student of the results within 24 hours after the oral examination is completed. Results are either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Once the composite written/oral examination is passed, all forms will be completed by the graduate advisor and submitted to the school director and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

If one or more sections of the composite written/oral exam are not passed, the student will be notified of which section (written and/or oral) was. The failed section(s) must be revised/repeated and the committee decides whether both written and oral components need to be repeated. The major advisor then works with the student to reschedule the written and/or oral examination(s). One repeated effort on the comprehensive exam (written and/or oral) during the same semester is allowed and counts as one attempt.

A failed attempt on the repeated written and/or oral exam requires a conferral with the major advisor. Remedial course work will be discussed to be taken the following semester at the student's own expense and future rescheduling of the second and final opportunity for the comprehensive examination (the second and final opportunity includes a written paper/oral examination and one repeated effort of written and/or oral if needed). The second and final opportunity for the comprehensive examination does not take place during the semester in which the exam was first attempted. A contract for remedial work is developed by the major advisor and signed by the student, the major advisor, and the unit head of the Department of Allied Health Studies. Failure to pass the second and final opportunity for examination results in dismissal from the program and no degree awarded.

Once the student has successfully completed and passed their comprehensive exam, the Report of Comprehensive Final Examination form will be signed by all committee members and sent to the College of Education and Graduate School contacts.

GRADES

A — Excellent
B — Average
C — Fair
D — Poor, not applicable as credit toward a graduate degree
P — Passing
W — Withdrawn
WF — Withdrawn failing
WH — Withheld
WP — Withdrawn passing
QF — Quit failing
F — Failing

A grade of **A** for a semester gives you four grade points per semester hour; **B**, three grade points per semester hour; **C**, two grade points per semester hour; and **D**, one grade point per semester hour. A grade of **D**, however, makes the course ineligible for application toward a graduate degree.

A grade of **WH** is assigned only when the completion of the work is not possible because of circumstances beyond your control. A grade of **QF** is assigned only when you quit attending classes without officially dropping the course. In the case of awarding a **WH** grade, the work must be completed within a calendar year or the grade automatically becomes an **F**.

To graduate, you may not discard any courses in the major or the minor to improve your GPA.

All courses, except those repeated, in the major and minor are computed in the GPA. You cannot use a course with a grade below C to satisfy your degree requirements. You may repeat a maximum of six semester hours of work to raise the GPA. In the case of these repeated courses, the higher grades are used only to compute GPAs, according to university policy.

You may take electives outside the major and minor, and only those you select to complete the degree are counted in your GPA.

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS

Each year, the university welcomes international students into the graduate program. In recent years, a close and cooperative educational program was developed between SFA and sister universities in China, Korea and Japan.

If you are an international student, please visit [The Office of International Programs \(OIP\) website](#).

This program is 100% distance/online, and this delivery method, vs. a face-to-face delivery, may impact your status. Please contact the OIP for further details and to find out if this program is right for you.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Graduate course modalities are offered in a hybrid (face-to-face/Zoom Livestream) format or are delivered fully online. The courses with Zoom Livestream options are taught in classrooms with Zoom capabilities, equipped with microphones and cameras that track the movement of the instructor and students in the classroom, and the instructor and students can see those attending via Livestream.

All faculty at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) must be certified through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at SFASU before being approved to develop or teach fully-online distance courses.

Students will be charged an additional \$33 per credit hour for web-based courses in addition to the standard tuition rate.

Students who do not live in the Nacogdoches area and do not have convenient access to the Steen library or campus computer labs will need a computer with internet access (preferably high speed) to complete work associated with the MS/DI program. Students will also need word processing and presentation design software. Students can download Office 365 through mySFA.

Please use the course evaluation tool to provide feedback about the course instructor's online delivery methods to help the faculty continuously improve the format.

Please see the section Prepare for Classes for information on Brightspace, our learning management system.

Verification of Student Identification

SFA verifies student identity using two-factor authentication (a secure username and password, plus an additional push-based authentication via mobile app, phone, or token), as well as through proctored examinations. You will be provided a username and instructions to access mySFA (the university's secure web portal), where you will establish a password.

Distance education students must use login credentials issued to and known only to them to access all computer systems, including mySFA, the student information system, registration system, electronic mail, library systems, learning management system, and associated instructional content systems. SFA uses a single sign-on authentication system for added security.

For exams, the university uses Honorlock (on-demand proctoring service), which will require students to show identification.

STUDENT ETHICS AND OTHER POLICY INFORMATION

Class Attendance and Institutional Absences

See [HOP 02-102 for the University Class Attendance Policy, Institutional Absences \(HOP 04-110\)](#), and the policies in this handbook.

Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity

This policy ([HOP 04-106](#)) prescribes the standards of conduct students are required to adhere to as a student of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA).

Student Appeals

A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity ([HOP 04-106](#))

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy

This policy ([HOP policy 02-206](#)) outlines the guidelines for course grades and withheld grades.

Withdrawal from the Program and University

Students who withdraw from the DI program will need to notify the director in writing. The student will also need to withdraw from the university. Withdrawal from the university procedures can be found [Office of the Registrar's](#) website. There are deadlines for withdrawing and the student may have additional consequences related to loss of financial aid, insurance coverage and academic status. Transcripts will not be released until there are no outstanding balances on the account. Please see [Student Business Services](#) for balances and refund procedures.

Leave of Absence

Students will send a formal request in writing to the director for extended leave (considered 1 semester) from the MS/DI program due to illness or life-threatening illness/death in the immediate family. If the student was enrolled and it is after the 12th class day, the director will confer with the student, school director, preceptors, and/or graduate faculty to determine the necessity for a WH ([HOP policy 02-206](#)) in 1 or more graduate courses. If competencies and hours are missed in supervised

practice, the director and preceptors involved will formulate a plan with the student to fulfill unmet competencies and supervised practice hours. According to the WH policy, students will have up to 1 year to fulfill the requirements determined by the director, student, and/or graduate faculty. Students must notify the director of their progress and when they will return to the university. Deviating from the schedule can delay the student by as much as 12 months given the rotation of graduate course offerings and site availability. Please also see the Maximum Amount of Time policy.

Institutional Absences

This policy ([HOP 04-110](#)) outlines the expectations of students to attend all scheduled class sessions. It also outlines the parameters for institutional absences and the responsibilities of students and faculty.

Student E-mail

To enhance student services, the University and director will use your SFA email address for communications (OR another verified email account). Students may go to MySFA online to confirm their email address. Please check your email on a regular basis. If students have problems accessing their email account or with any tech support issues, please call 936-468-4357 or email helpdesk@sfasu.edu

Access to Personal Files

Students may inspect and review their education records upon request to the appropriate record custodian. Students should submit to the record custodian or an appropriate University staff person a written request that identifies as precisely as possible the record or records they wish to inspect. The record custodian or an appropriate University staff person will make the needed arrangements for access as promptly as possible and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Access must be given in 45 days or less from the receipt of the request. Except where pre-empted by a specific provision of FERPA or a request for official copies of Student's transcript is requested, a Student's right to access and/or request a copy of his or her Educational Records, a Student's right of access or to copies such records is co-extensive with the Student's right to access records under the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA). This is outlined in [FERPA HOPS Policy 04-108](#).

Protection of Privacy

Once accepted into the MS/DI program, students are asked written permission to share their contact information with appropriate parties. Files pertaining to the MS/DI program will be kept on a password-protected computer. Students will have access to their own personal file upon written request, except for confidential reference letters. In the event there is a performance issue in question, the director will have the authority to share portions of the file with the Standards Committee and/or a specific preceptor related to the case. This will aid in making a decision regarding the eligibility of the student to continue in the program.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. SFA has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of all students, including those enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs. This is outlined in [FERPA HOPS Policy 04-108](#). The policy includes a description of information considered directory information that may be disclosed without prior written consent unless the student notifies the registrar in writing to the contrary by the twelfth-class day of a regular semester or the fourth-class day of a condensed semester. The

Office of the Registrar provides additional information to faculty, staff, students, and parents to promote compliance with FERPA, and all employees are required to complete FERPA training upon hire. University policy 2.10 requires that all university employees, including student employees, with access to student education records repeat Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training annually. The Registrar and Human Resources are responsible for the deployment of this training. SFA protects the privacy of usernames and passwords via the means listed above.

Probation, Suspension, and Readmission

To remain in good standing in Graduate School and to graduate, a student must maintain a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (B average). During any semester or summer session that the grade point average falls below a B, the student with clear admission to graduate study will be placed on academic probation; the student with probationary admission will be placed on academic suspension. A student placed on academic probation and failing to restore an overall 3.0 (B) average the following semester or summer sessions will be placed on academic suspension. A student placed on academic suspension is denied the continuation of an academic program as well as the privilege of registering for coursework. This suspension period is for one semester or one summer session, whichever follows the period after which the suspension occurred. Thereafter, the student will revert to post-baccalaureate admission status and will be permitted to take coursework not applicable toward a degree program. To be reinstated to a degree program, the student must be recommended by the appropriate academic department and approved by the academic dean, the Graduate Council, and the Dean of Graduate School.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Stephen F. Austin State University offers a wide variety of student involvement opportunities and student support services. Additional information about student support services, including health services, counseling, housing, and financial services, is available through the university website, [Information for Current Students](#)

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. See the [Students with Disabilities and Disability Services](#) website.

Student Wellness and Well-Being

SFA values students' overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc. See the [Student Wellness and Well-Being](#) website.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students' mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub” Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching

Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub

936.468.4008

thehub@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202,

<https://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/clinics-labs/counseling-clinic>

936.468.1041

Crisis Resources:

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

Other Resources

The [Handbook of Operating Procedures \(HOP\)](#)

The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby), www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents,

936.468.7249

dos@sfasu.edu

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND EMPLOYMENT

Some graduate assistantships are available across campus. For more information, refer to the [Assistantships and Employment Guide](#). The Food, Nutrition and Dietetics program offers 1 graduate teaching assistantship position every 1-2 years. This position requires some face-to-face teaching responsibilities and, therefore, the student must live near the SFA campus. If interested, please contact the graduate program coordinator, Darla O’Dwyer, at dodywer@sfasu.edu.

Appendix A

AUTHORSHIP OF RESEARCH PUBLICATION POLICY

Graduate students are encouraged to engage in research during their coursework or of their final research projects as soon as possible after project completion or graduation for maximum benefit to the industry and/or research community. If you complete a research project with a faculty member, you are required to fill out the form on the next page.

The Graduate School's goal is to recognize the research efforts of student researchers in relation to the effort expended and the nature of the project. Professional guidance and effort are also recognized, especially when student projects are a component of larger or longitudinal work.

Normally papers are drafted by the student and revised by the professors involved in the project. Authorship in such cases includes the student as first author, with one or more professors as joint authors.

The final manuscript must be accepted by a professor in the student's major and submitted for publication **within one year** of the research project's completion. If the student fails to submit publication copy in a timely manner, the professor has the authority to prepare the publication incorporating the student's work. In such instances, the professor is recognized as the primary author with the student's input recognized as appropriate.

This policy reflects the general philosophy and intent of the school. Note that individual professors may have differing personal policies. Students are encouraged to discuss the topic of authorship with their examining/graduation committee members before beginning research projects and to utilize the following form when appropriate.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

Stephen F. Austin University Department of Allied Health Studies

SFA's Nutrition and Integrative Health program has a strong commitment to the dissemination of research findings for the advancement of the profession. At the same time, the school desires to properly recognize the efforts of all researchers.

To meet these publication goals, all student research associates are asked to indicate agreements between thesis committee members and other faculty members who may have guided or participated in research projects. It is understood that many projects may be combined with others, and that significant time may pass before publication.

Title of Research Project

I agree to publish the research findings within one year of research project completion and with an authorship priority as listed below:

First or Primary Author

Contributing Author

Contributing Author

Contributing Author

Agreed deadline to submit to professor of major:

Student

Contributing Author

Date

Professor of Major