



THE UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

Department *of* Educational
Research Methodology

M.S. PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK

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**Department of Educational
Research Methodology**

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased that you have selected the Department of Educational Research Methodology at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro to earn your M.S. degree. This guide was developed to give you an overview of the process you will follow as a master student in the M.S. degree program. The guide covers everything from your initial admission into the Graduate School to your comprehensive exam and graduation.

It is essential that this guide be used as a supplement to the UNCG Student Handbook and the UNCG Graduate School Bulletin that was published the year that you were admitted into the M.S. degree program. Furthermore, current information from the Graduate School regarding important dates, times, and deadlines, etc., will be available in that office and on their website at www.uncg.edu/grs. It is vital to follow the correct procedures and schedules for smooth progress through the program.

This handbook for master students is focused on the policies, procedures, and expectations specific to the M.S. program of the Educational Research Methodology Department. The requirements and expectations described in these handbooks represent the minimum for all students. Depending on your interests, your master's curriculum, and professional plans, you may be required to perform work over and above the minimum. These issues are determined in discussions with your advisory.

New M.S. students are urged to read this handbook in its entirety, and to become familiar with the University's regulations and policies for graduate students as presented in the Graduate School Bulletin.

Please consult with your advisor if you have any questions or find any statements unclear. Your advisor will not necessarily remind you of each step you need to take. Students are expected to be knowledgeable of the contents of this handbook and other resources cited above as a way of taking responsibility for their progress in the program.

CURRICULUM AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

M.S. Degree Curricular Requirements

For each student admitted into the M.S. program, the degree requirements are those specified in the UNCG Graduate School Bulletin for the academic year in which the student first enrolled in the M.S. degree program. It is incumbent upon each student to become familiar with these degree requirements. The current version of the Graduate School Bulletin, as well as previous years' versions, can be accessed from <http://grs.uncg.edu/bulletin>.

An Example M.S. Course Sequence

There is no single course sequence for the M.S. degree that applies to all students. Although there is a natural sequencing of some of the required courses for the M.S. degree (e.g., 680 must be taken prior to 681, etc.), there is flexibility with respect to when some of the required and elective courses can be taken. Thus, the course sequence will not be identical for all students.

Despite the flexibility in the sequencing of courses for different students, it is often useful for students to have an example of a general sequence that can be followed in scheduling their courses. An example of a course sequence for the M.S. degree is provided below. It is stressed that this provides only an example of what a typical course sequence would look like. Variations to this example are expected to occur. In particular, the particular timing and ordering of electives are expected to vary depending on course offerings and the student's plan of study. In addition, it is possible to take more than three courses per semester, as well as courses in the summer, which will alter the sequence timeline.

YEAR 1

Fall

ERM 604* (Research Methods)
ERM 680* (Intermediate Stats)
ERM 642* (Program Evaluation)

Spring

ERM 667* (Foundations of Measurement)
ERM 681* (Design and Analysis)
Elective

YEAR 2

Fall

ERM 668* (Survey Research Methods)
ERM 600* (Validity and Validation)
Elective

Spring

ERM 675* (Data Presentation and Reporting)
M.S. Comprehensive Exam

*Indicates a required course

Schedule of M.S. Degree Activities

While progressing through the M.S. degree program, there are numerous administrative and academic activities that the student must complete in order to remain in good standing and satisfy program academic requirements. The schedule of these activities is listed below.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Year 1: Prior to First Semester	(i) Meet with assigned advisor to register for courses
Year 1: End of Spring Semester	(i) Plan of Study is approved by advisor and submitted to the Graduate School (ii) M.S. Comprehensive Exam Committee is formed (iii) Complete the Student Progress Form (iv) Complete the Student Match Form (M.S./Ph.D. students only)
Every Subsequent Spring Semester	(i) Complete the Student Progress Form
Final Semester	(i) Complete the M.S. Comprehensive Exam* (ii) Complete the M.S. Exit Survey

*While the M.S. Comprehensive Exam is typically completed in the final semester of coursework, it is possible for it to be completed prior to the final semester. The specific timing of completing the M.S. Comprehensive Exam will be determined in coordination with the student's advisor.

Expected Time-to-Completion

For full-time students, the M.S. degree is expected to be completed within two years. Students beginning the program in the fall semester are expected to complete the M.S. Comprehensive Exam by the spring semester of their second year of enrollment. It is possible, however, to complete the degree in less than two years through: (a) taking courses during the summer, and/ or (b) taking more than 9 credit hours per semester.

According to UNCG Graduate School policy, students enrolled in an M.S. degree program must complete the degree within five years of initial enrollment. Thus, part-time students must complete the M.S. degree within this five-year timeframe. However, we strongly encourage part-time ERM students to complete the degree faster than the five-year limit.

Practicums and Internships

Students enrolled in the M.S. degree program often have the opportunity to gain practical experience in research methodology through completing a practicum or internship. While both practicums and internships serve the same goal of providing the student hands-on experience related to her or his career objectives, there are differences between the two. In ERM, the distinction between a practicum and internship is given as follows:

Practicum. A practicum is an applied field experience that is typically conducted on a part-time basis, and often in conjunction with the academic year (e.g., while taking courses). In general, practicums are applied field experiences with a high level of supervisory oversight by the sponsoring organization or mentor.

Internship. An internship is an applied field experience that is typically conducted on a full-time basis over a defined period of time (e.g., six weeks, etc.). In general, an internship in a particular organization provides a working experience that is similar that of a regular full-time employee in the organization.

Students engaged in mentored applied field experiences – whether practicums or internships – may receive academic credit for these learning experiences by registering for ERM 730 “Practicum in Educational Research and Evaluation.” This is a three credit-hour mentored experience.

MASTER PLAN OF STUDY

Purpose

The Plan of Study is an integral component to organizing your plan for the courses you will take to complete the M.S. degree. The plan of study serves three important purposes. First, the Plan of Study enables the student and the student's advisor to plan out the sequence of courses that the student will take so that the student has an understanding of when they will complete the requirements of the M.S. degree. Second, completing the Plan of Study will ensure that the courses are taken in the required order so that any prerequisites of courses are obtained on an appropriate timeline. Third, the Plan of Study serves as the documented agreement of the sequence of courses that the student is expected to complete in order to successfully complete the M.S. degree. In a sense, then, the Plan of Study serves as the shared understanding between the student, the student's advisor, and the Department of Educational Research Methodology concerning what courses the student will take, and in what order, to meet the course requirements of the M.S. degree.

When to Complete the Plan of Study

You must file a Plan of Study with the Dean of the Graduate School prior to completing 18 credit hours of graduate coursework. For students enrolled full-time in the M.S. program, this corresponds to the end of the spring semester of the first year of enrollment in the M.S. program.

Delaying the completion of the Plan of Study until after 18 credit hours of coursework violates Graduate School policy, and places your advisor and the Graduate School in the difficult position of being asked to approve a plan of study for which they had limited input.

Development of a Plan of Study

The master Plan of Study includes (at a minimum) required core courses in the educational research methodology ("major concentration"), a sequence of elective courses taken within the Department of Educational Research Methodology, and cognate courses taken in a department outside the Department of Educational Research Methodology. The Plan of Study should reflect your previous coursework and professional experiences as well as your research interests and professional goals. The Graduate School Bulletin also contains critical information regarding the plan of study.

The required Plan of Study form is provided in Appendix B. Please note, however, that your advisor may request a specific arrangement of courses within each section on the form. Check with your advisor about his/her preferred format.

The following steps are a suggested sequence for determining your plan of study:

1. Look over the information regarding the Plan of Study for master's degrees in the Academic Regulations chapter of the Graduate School Bulletin.
2. Work with your advisor to develop a proposed Plan of Study.
3. As appropriate and/or as guided by your advisor, check with any other relevant faculty member for additional recommendations.
4. Once you have the approval of your advisor, complete the final copy of your Plan of Study, incorporating any changes recommended by any other consulting faculty, and obtain the signatures of your advisor on the form. Submit the completed form to the Departmental Administrative Associate, who will process it through the appropriate offices for approval (Departmental Chair or Director of Graduate Study, Dean's Office, and Graduate School).

Making Changes to a Plan of Study

If you find that a change in your Plan of Study is necessary and/or desired, consult with your advisor. If your advisor agrees with the change, submit the Master Plan of Study Revision to the Departmental Administrative Associate for processing through the appropriate offices.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Purpose

The purpose of the M.S. comprehensive examinations is to give you and the faculty information regarding your progress in the program. Through preparing for and taking these exams, students gain a comprehensive view of the field and are able to integrate and synthesize their learning from various courses with their practical experiences.

The examinations are constructed by your comprehensive exam committee members (3 faculty members, one of which is your advisor) and administered through the Department of Educational Research Methodology. You are responsible for arranging your comprehensive exams with your advisor and committee members.

When to Take the Comprehensive Examination

Comprehensive exam may be taken after a student has successfully completed any corequisites and a minimum of three-fourths of the coursework contained in the program of study. Also, it is expected that, with the exception of ERM 730 (Practicum in Educational Research and Evaluation), the student has removed any provisions, incompletes, or special conditions attached to previous coursework and has completed all corequisites before scheduling the comprehensive exam. The comprehensive exam is administered during specified time periods towards the end of the fall and spring semesters. You should consult with the Departmental Administrative Associate to obtain the specific dates for the semester in which you plan to take the comprehensive exam.

Examination Content

The master comprehensive examination allows the demonstration and evaluation of student skills and abilities related to knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of material in the major, cognate, and research areas, as well as the generalizability of these abilities to new problems and situations. The examination is not designed to evaluate specific courses *per se*, but rather is focused on a broader perspective of in-class and out-of-class learning and experiences.

Preparation for the examination is done in consultation with your advisor and other comprehensive exam committee members. Committee members vary in the amount of guidance they provide regarding preparation for any particular question(s), and are not required to provide any direction. They may seek information from you that allow them to tailor questions specific to your research and practice interests, or they may elect to write more generic questions. It is the Department's practice that questions are not to be received ahead of time. Prior to beginning the exam, you will be requested to sign a statement that you have complied with Departmental and University honor code policies.

The comprehensive examination consists of two components:

1. **Written Examination.** The written component of the examination will consist of a two-to-three day take home assessment that is essentially a "work sample" in which the student may be asked to provide a brief review of the literature, a thorough analyses of data that are provided and a complete summary and discussion of results. The department will meet and decide the final format of the written exam. The advisor will meet with the student at the beginning of the semester in which the exam is to be taken and discuss how the exam format and how the student should best prepare for the exam.
2. **Oral Examination.** The oral component of the examination will follow not earlier than two weeks, and not more than four weeks, after the written component is completed. The purpose of

the oral examination is for the student to discuss his or her answers and to respond to any questions that the committee may have over any additional topics.

Evaluation of the Examination

For an unsatisfactory evaluation, corrective action will be determined by your comprehensive exam committee members. This corrective action should be detailed in a written contractual program approved by and supervised by your advisor. Corrective action may include retaking the unsatisfactory portion(s) of the examination and/or completing additional work as required by the department. If a student fails a majority of the exam sections, the student will need to retake the entire written examination. You cannot retake comprehensive exams in the same semester that you originally took the exam, and only one re-examination is allowed. It is important to stress that comprehensive exams are designed to help you identify both your strengths and weaknesses that could be crucial later in your career.

POLICIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE M.S./Ph.D. PROGRAM

M.S./Ph.D. Student Matching Process

A primary goal of the M.S./Ph.D. program is to engage students in an active line of research that aligns with the student's professional and scholarly interests. To facilitate this, ERM students in the M.S./Ph.D. program enter into a matching process at the end of their first year of study in ERM. The intent of the matching process is to match each ERM student in the M.S./Ph.D. program with an ERM faculty member having professional and/or research interests that align with those of the student.

Upon entering ERM, students enrolled in the M.S./Ph.D. program are assigned an initial advisor who assists the student with the planning of academic activities and courses for the first year. In the spring semester of the first year of study, M.S./Ph.D. students complete the Student Match Form and based on the information provided in this form the student is assigned to their "matched" advisor. In some instances, the initial faculty advisor will be the same person as the matched advisor, but in other instances they will differ. The resulting matched advisor serves as the student's primary academic advisor, and as such has the responsibility of serving in an advisory capacity for the student's academic program of study and comprehensive exam.

While the assignment of a matched advisor is intended to facilitate the student's engagement in research, it does not preclude the student from engaging in research activities facilitated for ERM faculty who are not the student's matched advisor. Students may engage in research under the mentorship of, or in collaboration with, multiple ERM or UNCG faculty provided that such research activities support the student's plan of study.

Matriculating from M.S. to Ph.D. Degrees

A student admitted to the M.S./Ph.D. program must first complete the M.S. degree requirements. Upon completing the M.S. degree requirements, the student must apply for graduation from the M.S. degree program. Upon completing the requirements for the M.S. degree and passing the M.S. comprehensive examination, the student is required to apply for graduation from the M.S. program. It is the student's responsibility to formally apply for graduation as soon as possible after receiving notification of successfully passing the M.S. comprehensive examination. The student must graduate and receive the M.S. degree prior to formal admission to the ERM Ph.D. program. Having successfully applied for graduation, and with approval from the ERM Department, the student will automatically matriculate into the Ph.D. degree program. Note that matriculation into the Ph.D. degree program does not require an application to the Graduate School.

In accordance with UNCG policy, a given course can only satisfy requirements for one degree. Thus, courses taken while enrolled in the M.S. degree cannot count towards the Ph.D. degree.

Although M.S./Ph.D. program spans the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, the two degrees are completed consecutively. Upon completing the M.S. degree, matriculation into the Ph.D. component of the program requires formal departmental approval. Thus, successful completion of the M.S. degree does not guarantee matriculation into the Ph.D. component of the program. Departmental approval for matriculation into the Ph.D. component is based on a range of factors related to the student's likelihood of successfully completing the Ph.D. component in a manner that is consistent with the mission and core values of ERM.

Switching from the M.S. Program to the M.S./Ph.D. Program

On occasion, students enrolled in the M.S. degree program (but not the M.S./Ph.D. program) program seek admission into the M.S./Ph.D. program so that they can continue onto the Ph.D. program after completion of the M.S. degree and benefit from the lower number of required credits of the M.S./Ph.D. program compared to completing the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees separately. Students enrolled in the M.S. degree program may apply for admission to the M.S./Ph.D. degree program prior to completion of the M.S. degree. While this option is open to M.S. students, it is important to recognize that the application to the M.S./Ph.D. program is being considered along with all of the other external applicants for that year, and thus the application is reviewed and considered in the same manner as all other applications for that year. As such, the application to the M.S./Ph.D. program must occur by the M.S./Ph.D. application deadline (currently January 15). Although some of the application documents from the application to the M.S. program may be used again (such as undergraduate transcripts and GRE scores, if still valid), letters of reference and statement of purpose may need to be revised to address the mission and requirements of the M.S./Ph.D. program. In applying to the M.S./Ph.D. program, it is expected that students have successfully completed the following ERM courses: ERM 604, ERM 680, ERM 681, ERM 642, and ERM 667. If these requirements have not been met, then an explanation of the surrounding circumstances must be included in the application to the M.S./Ph.D. program.

ERM students currently enrolled in the M.S. program may apply to the M.S./Ph.D. program during the fall semester of their second year of enrollment to facilitate being able to be enrolled in the M.S./Ph.D. program in the ensuing Spring semester (e.g., begin the M.S./Ph.D. program in January). In order to be considered for admission to the M.S./Ph.D. program with a Spring semester start date, the student's application must be formally submitted early in the Fall semester (e.g., prior to October) to allow appropriate time for review. No student will be considered for Spring admission without being strongly supported by the student's advisor. Applying to the M.S./Ph.D. program does not guarantee admission to the program. Admission decisions will be made by the ERM faculty and will be based on many components including the recommendation of the advisor, performance of the student in the M.S. degree program, availability of funding, evidence of self-directed scholarly initiatives, and any other evidence of promise for success at the doctoral level.

Students enrolled in the M.S. program who have questions concerning application to the M.S./Ph.D. program should consult with their advisor.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students enrolled in any ERM program are expected to meet ERM and UNCG standards of conduct and academic integrity. UNCG policies and procedures related to student conduct and academic integrity can be found on the website of the UNCG Dean of Students Office (<http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/>).

Student Conduct

Students enrolled in ERM programs are held to the standards of the UNCG Student Code of Conduct, which asserts that students are to uphold the principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility to support a peaceful and productive environment. These principles apply to all student behavior, including all interactions with other students, staff, and faculty. Any behavior that is not consistent with these five principles of a peaceful and productive environment constitutes a violation of the UNCG Student Code of Conduct. Violations of the UNCG Student code of conduct can result in formal allegations of the violation, conduct hearings, and student sanctions that include suspension or expulsion from the University.

A more comprehensive description of the UNCG Student Code of Conduct can be accessed at <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/student-code-of-conduct/>

With specific reference to ERM, all students enrolled in an ERM degree program are expected to uphold the five principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility within all components of their interactions with the ERM community, including other ERM students, ERM staff, and ERM faculty. Any ERM student failing to observe these principles is in violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Allegations of an ERM student being in violation of the Student Code of Conduct will follow the procedures and policies outlined in the UNCG Student Code of Conduct.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity applies to student conduct in relation to all academic experiences of UNCG students, either on campus or off campus. ERM students are expected to engage in academic experiences in a manner that is honest, trustworthy, fair, and respectful. Any act or behavior related to the student's academic experiences that are not consistent with these values reflects a violation of the academic integrity. Particular violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to,

Cheating: Copying from another student or using unauthorized materials in completing academic work and/or exercises.

Plagiarism: Representing the words or work of another as one's own. This includes copying work of others and failure to cite references.

Misuse of Academic Materials: The intentional tampering of University materials to make them inaccessible to others (e.g., alteration of passwords, distribution of educational materials, etc.).

Falsification: The intentional false representation of data, research, reports, academic activities (e.g., the completion of practicums and internships), submitting false reasons for missing classes or participation in course exercises, submitting previously conducted work to meet the requirements of another course.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally helping others to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

A more thorough description of these five violations of academic integrity is provided in the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy, which can be accessed at <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>

Allegations of violations of academic integrity will follow the procedures and policies documented in UNCG Academic Integrity Policy. Violations of academic integrity can lead to sanctions that include grade-related action, suspension, or expulsion from the University.

MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS

At the end of the spring semester of each year of enrollment in ERM, each student must complete the Student Progress Form. The purpose of the Student Progress Form is to document the student's progress towards completion of the degree program in which the student is enrolled, to inform appropriate alterations to the student's academic plan, and to establish a plan for the upcoming year's academic activities (e.g., courses, practicums, internships, research). It is the student's responsibility to complete the Student Progress Form in coordination with her/his advisor. Failure to complete the Student Progress Form by the designated due date can jeopardize a student's good standing in the program.

FUNDING

Full-time M.S. students are eligible for funding, although funding is not guaranteed. Funding can come from several sources, including (but not limited to) ERM departmental funding, grants and contracts held by ERM faculty, scholarships, and other UNCG departments and administrative offices. The potential for funding is dependent upon available funding sources.

The timeline for funding of M.S. students is limited to a maximum of two years. With approval of the ERM Department Chair or the student's academic advisor, the timeline of funding may be extended beyond two years.

Receiving funding is contingent upon being in good academic standing and fulfilling all roles and responsibilities associated with being an ERM student. Acceptable academic status reflects all aspects of student academic progress and conduct. Roles and responsibilities of ERM students include, but are not limited to, completing relevant administrative documents (e.g., plan of study, Student Progress Form, and Student Match Form for M.S./Ph.D. students) by the specified deadlines and complying with all UNCG policies of student conduct and academic integrity.

TERMINATION FROM PROGRAM

Students are admitted to full graduate status or provisional status for a specific degree program in a specific term. If the admitted applicant **does not** register for the term specified in the application, the admission may be subject to subsequent review which may include termination from the program. Students may not be admitted to and graduate from the same degree or certificate program in the same academic term.

REVIEW—SALIENT ELEMENTS OF THE MASTER DEGREE REQUIREMENT

1. Each student is assigned an advisor at the time of admission. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the assigned advisor concerning registration for courses.
2. Complete the Student Progress Form in the spring semester of each year of enrollment.
3. File an approved program of study in the Graduate Office prior to completing 18 credit hours.
4. Document the residency requirement during the course of full-time study.
5. Satisfy all course requirements in the program of study with grades of "B" or better.
6. Satisfactorily complete written and oral comprehensive examinations and any additional work specified by your graduate committee.
7. File the application for graduation and pay graduation fee in the Graduate School within seven days after the start of classes in the term in which degree will be earned. Please be aware that this deadline is enforced rigidly for the May and December commencements.
8. Pay all accounts owed to the University and turn in all keys. Diplomas of students owing money to the University will be held until the account is cleared.

Note 1: The Calendar of Events is printed in the Graduate School Bulletin. The student is responsible for meeting all deadline dates listed therein.

Note 2: The Graduate School Bulletin contains vital information on rules concerning hours required for a degree, use of transfer and extension credits, requirements for continuing in Graduate School, etc. You must be familiar with all Graduate School requirements.

Note 3: The necessary forms used throughout your master program can be found on the ERM website.

APPENDIX A

Resources

1. Jackson Library owns a generous selection of reference books, on-line searchers, journal articles, books, etc., needed for your literature review and research. New students are strongly encouraged to attend an orientation session at the library early in their first semester at UNCG. <http://library.uncg.edu>
2. The Nicholas A. Vacc Counseling and Consulting Clinic provides testing materials and videotaping equipment that could be necessary in your research. Located at 220 Ferguson Building. cedclinic@uncg.edu
3. Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) gives access to audio-visual material that could be helpful in professional presentations, conferences, and teaching. Located at 134 McIver Building. <http://www.uncg.edu/tlc>
4. Information Technology Services (ITS) provides access to microcomputers, printers, and software, as well as microcomputer training and assistance. Enables students to network other universities and institutions and provides several statistical software packages. Operates computer labs on campus, conducts free workshops on variety of topics (e.g., Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SPSS, SAS). Located in the Mossman Building. <http://www.uncg.edu/irc>
5. Statistical Consulting Center enables students to get help in data collection procedures, data entry, and statistical analysis. Located at 383 Bryan Building. <http://www.uncg.edu/mat/sta/consulting.html>
6. Office of Research Compliance holds workshops on grant writing, has information on wide variety of funding sources. Any proposal for funding is routed through the Office of Research Compliance, located at 2718 Hall for Humanities and Research Administration Building (HHRA). <http://www.uncg.edu/orc>
7. Graduate Student Association (GSA) sponsors activities of interest to graduate students and provides Professional Development Funds for conference presentations and conference attendance. Application forms are available in the GSA office. There also are funds for dissertation expenses. Most awards are on a first-come/first-serve basis, and funding is limited. <http://www.uncg.edu/student/groups/gsa/index.html>

