

# **Graduate Handbook**

**Department of Kinesiology  
Mississippi State University**

**2014-2015**

**A supplement to the  
MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Kinesiology Graduate Handbook has been developed to provide information and set forth policies and procedures pertinent to graduate study in the Department of Kinesiology. Students and faculty should be aware that this publication is a supplement to the information contained in the MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School. All students and faculty should be aware of the university's policies and procedures outlined in the MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School, which is available on the Office of the Graduate School website:  
<http://grad.msstate.edu/>

**The primary responsibility for being knowledgeable of and adhering to university and departmental policies, regulations, deadlines, and degree requirements rests with the student.**

## **SECTION 1: GRADUATE PROGRAM AREAS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY**

The master's degree program in the Department of Kinesiology is comprised of three unique concentrations: Exercise Physiology, Sport Administration, and Sport Pedagogy. Each of these concentrations act as separate programs of study, with courses specified within each particular curriculum. Students are admitted to a specific concentration and are expected to take courses within that specific curricular program.

**Exercise physiology** is broadly based on basic sciences: human anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and biology, with the primary goal being to understand how various cells, tissues, organs, and organ systems respond to challenges posed by exercise and physical training. Study in exercise physiology may center on understanding optimal performance such as that attained by elite and highly trained athletes and on performances and physiological adaptations of individuals with one or more chronic diseases. Exercise physiology has remained integrative, examining how the failure or enhancement of one physiological system can influence another. It also considers how the environment limits the body during exercise through such means as heat, cold, humidity, and altitude exposure. The exercise physiology program at Mississippi State University is designed to prepare students for careers as exercise physiologists serving in fitness centers, hospital-based wellness and clinical rehabilitation centers, schools, and universities. In addition, the program prepares students for advanced graduate study leading to the doctoral degree.

The **sport administration** program provides advanced training for students seeking leadership positions in fields such as professional sport, collegiate sport, recreational sport, sport marketing/sponsorship, sport event/facility management, ticketing operations/sales, and sport media/communication. Designed for aspiring professionals, the program seeks to balance classroom education with practical experience, as students complete an internship prior to graduation. The program also offers students a thesis option, best suited for those pursuing careers in higher education.

The **sport pedagogy** program aims to enhance the knowledge and understanding of future and practicing physical education teachers, coaches, and K-12 athletics directors. The program provides the opportunity for advanced study and research in a wide range of student interests in the teaching and coaching professions. Research, practicum and coursework experiences are designed with an emphasis on the development of coaching and teaching expertise.

## SECTION 2: STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Kinesiology is to prepare aspiring professionals and emerging scholars, conduct and disseminate research, and provide service in the areas of physical activity, exercise, and sport.

### Organization

The Department is an administrative and programmatic unit within the College of Education at Mississippi State University. The Department is composed of two divisions: Exercise Science and Sport Studies. Together, these divisions house three master's degree programs in the following concentrations:

- Exercise Physiology – Division of Applied Physiology
- Sport Administration – Division of Sport Studies
- Sport Pedagogy – Division of Sport Studies

### Governance

- The **graduate faculty** of the Department administer the graduate programs within the Department. Appointment to the graduate faculty is administered by the Dean of the Graduate School. The necessary request forms for appointment to the graduate faculty can be found on the MSU Office of the Graduate School website (<http://grad.msstate.edu/>).
- The **Departmental Graduate Committee** consists of a coordinator and four additional graduate faculty members.
- The **Graduate Coordinator** shall be appointed by the **Department Head** for an unspecified term of service.
- The term of service for graduate committee members shall be 3 years.
  - Should a graduate committee member depart the University or resign from the committee, the Department Head or the Graduate Coordinator shall appoint an interim member to complete the term of the vacated seat.

### Kinesiology Graduate Coordinator

The Chairperson of the Departmental Graduate Committee performs the following tasks:

1. Chairs the Department of Kinesiology Graduate Committee and graduate faculty meetings;
2. Maintains graduate student files with the assistance of the Academic Records Assistant;
3. Schedules and conducts at least two graduate faculty meetings per academic year (usually fall & spring semesters);

4. Conducts the daily business of the Department of Kinesiology graduate programs under the auspices of the Graduate Committee according to the Graduate Handbook of the Department of Kinesiology and the Bulletin of the Graduate School;
5. Conducts indoctrination sessions about policies and procedures related to the graduate degree programs for new faculty and students;
6. Acts as liaison between the Graduate Committee of the Department, the Executive Council of the Department of Kinesiology, and the Graduate School.

### **Departmental Graduate Committee**

The Departmental Graduate Committee is responsible for the conduct and administration of the Department's graduate concentrations. The committee formulates policies and procedures relevant to the Department's graduate programs within the guidelines established by the Graduate School and the graduate faculty of the Department of Kinesiology. In addition, the Department's Graduate Committee is responsible for the following:

- Maintaining records and monitoring matriculation of each graduate student through graduation insuring compliance with established policies and procedures;
- Assisting in recruitment of graduate students to graduate concentrations;
- Reviewing new course proposals;
- Evaluating old and new areas of specializations;
- Evaluating and monitoring seminar course offerings;
- Assisting graduate faculty to maintain credentials appropriate for their graduate appointment and involvement in the graduate program.

## SECTION 3: ADMISSIONS PROCESS

### Admission to Master's Degree Programs

The following items are required in applying to master's degree programs in the Department of Kinesiology:

1. A completed MSU Graduate School application form
2. Official transcripts from all institutions attended since high school
3. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores
4. Three professional letters of recommendation; at least two individuals providing letters should be in a position to specifically comment about the applicant's academic ability (e.g., former professors)
5. A written statement of purpose, which should highlight the applicant's qualifications, abilities, and academic/professional background; the statement should reflect a strong sense of career direction relevant to the program the applicant is seeking to enter.
6. A resume/curriculum vitae

The admissions process is competitive. Positions within the programs are limited, and more individuals may apply than are able to be accepted. Competitive applicants will usually have a GPA of 3.0 or better in their final 60 undergraduate hours as well as scores of 145 or greater on the verbal and quantitative reasoning sections and 3.5 or greater on the analytical writing portion of the GRE exam. An applicant's statement of purpose, letters of recommendation, and professional experience are also considered in the admissions process.

Application deadlines for graduate study at Mississippi State University are as follows:

<b>Applying for</b>	<b>Domestic Deadline</b>	<b>International Deadline</b>
Fall Semester	July 1	May 1
Spring Semester	November 1	October 1
1st Summer Term	April 1	March 1
2nd Summer Term	May 1	March 1

Because of the competitive nature of admissions, it is recommended that individuals apply as far in advance of a deadline as possible. Students who wait until near the application deadline to apply may find there are no remaining spaces available in the program.

An international student applying for admission must score a minimum of 550 PBT (213 CBT or 79 iBT) on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or a minimum of 6.5 on the International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) in addition to meeting all other admission criteria.

### **Changing Concentrations After Being Admitted to the Department**

If a student wishes to change concentrations after having been admitted to a master's degree program in the Department of Kinesiology, the student must write a new statement of purpose that provides a detailed rationale about why he/she wishes to change concentrations. The student must also obtain a letter of support from his/her current advisor and a prospective advisor in the new concentration the student wishes to enter. The new statement of purpose and letters of support should be submitted to the graduate coordinator via email. The student's request will be reviewed by the graduate committee at its next regularly-scheduled meeting.

### **Unclassified Admission**

Students may obtain unclassified admission status following the procedures outlined in the MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School. Individuals admitted with unclassified status are able to take graduate courses, but they must obtain permission to receive an override from the instructor of any course they wish to take. Students should realize that faculty members are under no obligation to provide overrides to unclassified students. Further, students should realize that there is no guarantee that they will be officially admitted to a graduate program after spending one or more semesters as an unclassified student.

## **SECTION 4: SELECTING AN ADVISOR AND PROGRAM OF STUDY**

### **Selecting an Advisor and Committee**

After being admitted to a master's degree program, each student must contact a graduate faculty member to ask if he/she is willing to serve as his/her advisor (the advisor is also referred to as a "Major Professor"). Ideally, the student should select an advisor whose research aligns closely with the student's interests. Students should meet with their advisors regularly each semester to ensure that they are adequately progressing toward degree completion. A student may change his/her advisor if there is agreement between all parties involved (i.e., the student, the former advisor, and the new advisor).

In addition to an advisor, master's degree students must have two additional faculty members serve as committee members. The student's advisor ("Major Professor") and committee members will be noted on the "Committee Request" form, which can be printed off from the Graduate School website (<http://grad.msstate.edu/forms/>). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is completed correctly and that all necessary signatures are obtained.

### **Program of Study**

Each concentration within the department provides a curricular outline for a program of study. The student has the opportunity, in conjunction with his/her advisor and committee, to make substitutions in the program of study. The student's program of study will be noted on the "Graduate Program of Study" form, which can be accessed on the Graduate School website (<http://grad.msstate.edu/forms/>). Any substitutions to the standard curriculum must be noted in a "Change to Graduate Program of Study" form and accompanied by a letter from the student's advisor, signed by all committee members and the departmental graduate coordinator (the letter should be addressed to the Dean of the Graduate School). It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all forms are completed correctly and that all necessary signatures are obtained.

## **SECTION 5: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Students should be familiar with the academic performance guidelines outlined in the **MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School** (see the section entitled “Graduate School General Degree Completion Requirements” in the table of contents and, specifically, the subsection entitled “Grades and Degree Completion”), which is available on the Graduate School website: <http://grad.msstate.edu/>. Students who do not meet the requirements for degree completion outlined in the Bulletin will be dismissed from the graduate program. Students who are dismissed may appeal their dismissal by following the appeal procedures outlined in the Bulletin (see the subsection entitled “Academic Probation, Dismissal, and Appeal”).

## **SECTION 6: DEGREE COMPLETION**

Each of the master's degree concentrations in the Department of Kinesiology offer three concluding options: (1) a thesis, (2) a directed individual study, or (3) an internship. Each student should pursue a concluding option (in consultation with his/her advisor and committee members) that coincides with their academic/professional goals and interests. Students who pursue the directed individual study option or the internship option must also successfully complete comprehensive exams prior to graduation.

### **Thesis Option**

A thesis is an original research project of substantial complexity and quality completed by the student as the culmination of his/her program of study. Students should select a research topic and conduct the study in close consultation with their advisor and committee members. The steps involved in completing a thesis include: (1) obtaining approval from the advisor and committee members for a research proposal, (2) obtaining any necessary approval from the university Institutional Review Board, (3) collecting data, (4) analyzing data, (5) writing the thesis, (6) oral defense of the thesis, and (7) final submission of the approved thesis to the MSU Library. Students should refer to the MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School for specific thesis requirements and be familiar with the university's thesis formatting guidelines (<http://library.msstate.edu/thesis/index.asp>). Students receive six graduate credit hours in their program of study for successful completion of a thesis.

### **Directed Individual Study (DIS) Option**

Like the thesis option, a DIS will also involve a student working with his/her advisor and committee members to conduct a research study. However, while still requiring a substantial level of rigor and quality, the DIS may be somewhat smaller in scale than a thesis. The steps involved in completing a DIS include: (1) obtaining approval from the advisor and committee members for a research topic prior to registering for DIS credits, (2) obtaining any necessary approval from the university Institutional Review Board, (3) collecting data, (4) analyzing data, and (5) writing/presenting the research results to the satisfaction of the student's advisor and committee members. Because the DIS may only constitute three graduate credit hours in the student's program of study (as opposed to six for the thesis), students who pursue the DIS option must complete three additional graduate credit hours (these hours must be approved by the student's advisor and committee). In addition, students who pursue the DIS option must successfully complete comprehensive exams prior to graduation.

### **Internship Option**

The internship option will involve a student gaining practical work experience in an area related to his/her professional goals and interests. The internship will require a minimum of 280 hours of documented work over a minimum of 10 weeks, completed in a position in which the student has not worked previously (i.e., if the student is currently working as a graduate assistant (GA), the internship must be done in an area that is different than the student's GA position). The specific duties to be performed during the internship must be approved by the student's advisor and committee members. The student will register for three credit hours of KI 8710 while completing his/her internship. For students in the exercise physiology and sport pedagogy concentrations, the KI 8710 hours will be supervised by the student's advisor. For students in the sport administration concentration, the KI 8710 hours will be supervised by the faculty member that is supervising SS 4396 undergraduate interns in that particular semester.

### **Comprehensive Examinations**

Students who pursue the DIS option or internship option must successfully pass written comprehensive exams prior to graduation. Students will select five courses from their program of study from which to receive comprehensive exams. The comprehensive exam session, which takes place once per semester (including once during the summer), begins at 8:30 AM and concludes at 5:00 PM. In order to successfully pass comprehensive exams, students must receive a passing evaluation on their responses from the exams in all five courses. As noted in the MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School, students must be within six hours of graduation or in their final semester of coursework (absent DIS or internship hours) to participate in the comprehensive exams. The application form to take comprehensive exams can be found on the Kinesiology departmental website (<http://kinesiology.msstate.edu/comps/>).