

Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences

EXERCISE AND HEALTH SCIENCES DOCTOR OF SCIENCE PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026

FULL APPROVAL STATUS

The Exercise and Health Sciences Graduate program maintains Full Approval Status from Academic Quality Assessment and Development (AQUAD)

The Exercise and Health Sciences Doctoral Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston is accredited by Academic Quality Assessment and Development (AQUAD).

www.umb.edu/academics/cnhs

**The College maintains the right to amend published policies, procedures, and requirements at any time*

ALL STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR UNDERSTANDING AND COMPLYING WITH
ALL HANDBOOK POLICIES

Students are expected to refer often to the policies and procedures contained within the current EHS MS Handbook available on the MCNHS website as well as other links provided in the EHS MS Handbook. All students are to provide their signature that they fully understand and agree to comply with all policies and procedures set forth in the Exercise and Health Sciences Graduate Student Handbook before the end of the 1st semester in the program.

*POLICIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE; STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED VIA EMAIL IN A TIMELY MANNER
OF IMPORTANT CHANGES.

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1. Program Overview

The PhD program in the Department of Exercise and Health Sciences (EHS) is a research-oriented program with a minimum of 75 post-bachelor's degree credits or 42 credits for students entering with a master's degree obtained from accredited institutions. The program offers two concentrations: Applied Exercise Physiology and Physical Activity and Health Promotion. The 12 credits of core courses provide instruction in research design and methods, professional issues regarding ethics, health disparities, and important topics in the field of exercise and health sciences. The 6 credits of electives provide flexibility in the student's plan of study and allow students to tailor their focus to build their future professional and science career goals. The 24 research credits provide students with the opportunity to develop an original and scientifically sound research proposal that contributes to the growing science of exercise and health sciences; design and conduct a research study; collect and analyze data; defend the findings of their research and disseminate the results. Before conducting their dissertation research, students shall take their qualifying examinations upon approval of their Qualifying Examination Committee. Once the student passes the qualifying examination, they can advance to forming their dissertation committee and begin the process of developing a proposal, undertaking the research, and defending the findings.

1.1 Program outcomes

- Demonstrate a deep understanding of fundamental concepts of exercise science and/or health promotion.
- Conduct systemic inquiry and apply critical thinking to evaluate scientific literature relevant to the specialization area in exercise science and health promotion.
- Use an appropriate theoretical framework and quantitative and/or qualitative methods to acquire, analyze and interpret data.
- Disseminate scientific findings at local, national, and global levels through publications and presentations.
- Demonstrate leadership as a researcher and educator to promote physical activity and improve health in diverse populations.

2. Curriculum

2.1 Course Requirements

Core Courses: 12 credits. The following are the core courses for completion of the PhD Program:

- EHS 825 Quantitative Research Methods (3 credits)
- EHS 887 Advanced Topics in EHS (3 credits)
- NU 770 Biostatistics II: Advanced Statistical Methods in Healthcare Research (3 credits)
- NU 705 Health Disparities (3 credits).

Electives: 6 credits (minimum). In addition to the core courses, students must successfully complete a minimum of 6 credits of electives. Appendix C shows the elective courses currently available to PhD students. Electives should enhance the student's competency in their concentration area to complete the dissertation requirement and may have either content or methods focus. Electives should be chosen in

collaboration with the major faculty advisor and approved by the Graduate Program Director (GPD).

Courses offered by any department that are at the 600-level or above can be taken as electives. Courses that are 500-level or below may be taken as electives but must be approved by the GPD.

Research Credits: 24 credits (minimum). Students are required to complete a minimum of 24 research credits with the option of 1) 24 credits of Dissertation (EHS 899) or 2) 18 -23 credits of Dissertation credits and 1-6 credits of Directed Research (EHS 898) by working with the major faculty advisor on other research projects. Students are not permitted to enroll in dissertation credits before passing the qualifying examination.

Course credits related to formal coursework taken during a student's master's degree may be transferred to the total credits required for a PhD degree based on the criteria set by the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). Students should send their transcripts and relevant course syllabi to GPD for review. A minimum of 24 credits of formal coursework **MUST** be taken while in residence at UMass Boston.

Note: All credit requirements are minimum recommendations. Major faculty advisors may require their students to take master's level courses, additional, electives, and/or research credits to strengthen the student's academic and research background.

*Appendix B shows sample course schedules for EHS PhD students.

2.2 Full and part-time status

Full-time students are expected to take at least nine (9) credits per semester. Full-time continuous students should ideally complete all their coursework by the second year of study. The university considers graduate students engaged in dissertation research to be full-time students, regardless of the number of dissertation credits for which they register, providing the program director certifies they are working full-time on research.

Part-time students must carry at least six (6) credits per semester in each of the fall and spring semesters. Part-time students should complete their coursework in three to four years.

3. Major Faculty Advisor

Before entering the PhD program, incoming students should work in conjunction with the EHS faculty and GPD to identify a major faculty advisor based on research interests.

The major faculty advisor will also typically serve as the chair of the student's dissertation committee and with whom they will conduct their dissertation research. The major faculty advisor will help the student identify a focus area, advise the student on relevant coursework for their elective credits, and mentor the student on designing and conducting an original research project forming the basis of the dissertation requirement.

In certain cases, students may need to re-evaluate their plan of study and dissertation progress and discuss any changes with their major faculty advisor.

In cases where the major faculty advisor has not already been identified during the admission process, the student should identify a major faculty advisor from EHS who will serve as the chair of the student's Qualifying Examination Committee and Doctoral Dissertation Committee by the beginning of the 2nd semester.

4. EHS Graduate Faculty and Staff

4.1 Faculty

Visit [Exercise and Health Sciences Department Faculty - UMass Boston \(umb.edu\)](http://ExerciseandHealthSciencesDepartmentFaculty-UMassBoston(umb.edu)) for an updated faculty list.

➤ Tracy Baynard, PhD	Tracy.Baynard@umb.edu
➤ Dana Commesso, EdD	Dana.Commesso@umb.edu
➤ Rachel Drew, PhD	Rachel.Drew@umb.edu
➤ Azizah Jor'Dan, PhD	Azizah.jordan@umb.edu
➤ Melissa Linden, PhD	Melissa.linden@umb.edu
➤ Laurie Milliken, PhD	Laurie.Milliken@umb.edu
➤ Heidi Stanish, PhD	Heidi.Stanish@umb.edu
➤ Richard Viskochil, PhD	Richard.Viskochil@umb.edu
➤ Julie Wright, PhD	Julie.Wright@umb.edu
➤ Huimin Yan, PhD	Huimin.Yan@umb.edu
➤ Tongjian You, PhD	Tongjian.You@umb.edu
➤ Nan Zeng, PhD	Nan.Zeng@umb.edu
➤ Kai Zou, PhD	Kai.Zou@umb.edu

4.2 Leadership

- Dana Commesso, EdD, *Department Chair*
Dana.Commesso@umb.edu
- Kai Zou, PhD: *Graduate Program Director*
Kai.zou@umb.edu

4.3 Staff

- Chanel Fields: *EHS Program Coordinator*
chanel.fields@umb.edu

5. Annual Review of Progress

At the end of each academic year, the EHS Graduate Program Committee (GPC) will conduct reviews of all doctoral students enrolled in the program. The annual review process will include **a)** a meeting between the graduate student and their major faculty advisor; **b)** a written and signed report of program progress agreed upon between the graduate student and their major faculty advisor; and **c)** a meeting between the graduate student and GPC.

Annual Reviews will include the following elements:

- Written self-assessment of academic progress that is prepared by the graduate student.
- Written review of graduate student academic progress that is prepared by the major faculty advisor.
- A meeting between the graduate student and major faculty advisor to discuss the review.

- Signed copies of the graduate student self-assessment and major faculty advisor review forms should be submitted to the GPD and Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) by the major faculty advisor for record in the student's file by March 31 each year.
- A meeting between the graduate student and GPC

6. Qualifying Examination

6.1 Overview

The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to allow students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, creativity, requisite skills, and ability to integrate information and critique the literature in their chosen discipline as well as in appropriate related areas. Students who successfully pass the Qualifying Examination can move on to doctoral candidacy and start developing their dissertation proposal.

Students have the primary responsibility for preparing for the Qualifying Examination and are encouraged to consult early on with their major faculty advisor about the scope and logistics of the exam.

6.2 Timing of the Qualifying Examination

The timing of the Qualifying Examination should be designated by the student's major faculty advisor but must occur after all course requirements, except for research credits, are completed in good standing. Students should communicate with their major faculty advisor to assess when the student is ready to take the Qualifying Examination. It is recommended that the exam is completed by the end of the 5th semester from their matriculation date, although it can occur earlier or later as judged appropriate by the major faculty advisor and student. The student must earn a passing grade on the Qualifying Examination to remain in the doctoral program.

6.3 Qualifying Examination Committee

Three months before the Qualifying Examination, the student should work with the major faculty advisor to form a Qualifying Examination Committee. The Committee shall consist of at least four faculty members with the student's major faculty advisor as the chair. A minimum of three members shall be EHS faculty. At least one member shall be tenured faculty at UMass Boston. An outside member is recommended but not required.

The Qualifying Examination Committee Recommendation Form must be signed by all committee members. The form should be emailed to the GPD and GPC by the student's major faculty advisor at least 3 weeks before the expected date of the Qualifying Examination.

The Qualifying Examination Committee dissolves after the student passes the exam. At that point, the student will form a Doctoral Dissertation Committee (see Section 7).

6.4 Format of the Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Examination consists of both a written and oral component.

Written Component: The student is expected to show proficiency in three topic areas:

- 1) Research methodologies and techniques (e.g., design, analysis, interpretation, application); particularly as it relates to the student's area of study.
- 2) General knowledge of the literature in Exercise and Health Sciences and the student's concentration (i.e., Exercise Physiology, Physical Activity and Health Promotion).
- 3) General knowledge of the chosen areas of study, particularly those areas delineated by the major faculty advisor.

The exam shall be taken in two days with a time limit of 5-6 hours per day. This portion of the exam is

to be taken without the use of supplemental materials unless specifically provided or authorized by the Qualifying Exam Committee. Before the written exam, the Qualifying Examination Committee chair contacts each committee member to solicit appropriate questions. Questions should be designed to comprehensively probe the student's understanding of the three topic areas.

Before the written examination students should discuss specific content areas with the Qualifying Examination Committee members. The committee chair has the responsibility of making sure that the candidate is carefully examined and that all aspects of the examination are adequately covered.

In the case of unforeseen and extenuating circumstances (weather, documented illness, etc.) the examination can be rescheduled.

Oral Component: The oral component of the Qualifying Examination may not exceed two hours. Only the student and the committee will be required to attend. The purpose of the oral examination is to provide a format within which the committee may ask the student to clarify, enhance, or otherwise further explain their responses to the written examination. The oral portion must occur within three weeks of completing the written component. Note: The oral examination is independent of the Dissertation Proposal presentation (see Section 6.2).

6.5 Grading of the Qualifying Examination

Student answers to each exam question will be graded by the committee member who develops each question. Each member of the Qualifying Examination Committee assigns a grade of "pass" or "fail" on the Examination Report. The grading rubric is attached in Appendix D. The committee may require that specific conditions be met before the "pass" recommendation becomes effective. The exact conditions and timeframe to complete the conditions must be specified on the Examination Report.

6.6 Retaking the Examination

- A student failing one or more topic areas will be allowed to retake the examination in those specific topic areas in a format to be determined by the committee.
- Students must pass all topic areas, on either the first or second test administration, before they are allowed to advance to doctoral candidacy and start developing their dissertation proposal.
- Any student who fails one or more topic areas on the second administration will be dismissed from the program.

Once the student has passed the Qualifying Examination, the "Stage 1 – Notification of Candidacy" Form (See Table 2 Below) must be completed and signed by the GPD and Dean of Graduate Studies.

7. Dissertation Procedures

7.1 Dissertation Committee Selection

As soon as the student has been admitted to candidacy, the major faculty advisor and student should work together to identify members of the dissertation committee. The members must be approved by both the EHS GPD and Dean of Graduate Studies.

The dissertation committee shall consist of at least four members. Three members of the committee shall be tenured/tenure-track faculty members in EHS. At least one member shall be tenured faculty at UMass Boston. The dissertation committee shall also include a member who is external to EHS. The external member may come from any other UMass Boston department or school, or from outside of the university. When there is uncertainty about whether an individual is sufficiently independent of the candidate's program to serve as the external member, the GPD in consultation with the major faculty

advisor shall determine the nominee's eligibility.

The following are UMass Boston's OGS requirements for the qualifications of faculty to chair dissertation committees: Must be a full-time faculty member and must have: 1) A doctoral degree (typically a PhD or EdD, but in some instances a degree such as a JD, MD, or DBS may be appropriate); and 2) A record of scholarship and/or professional achievement within a period of five years before the formation of any dissertation committee that the faculty member chairs. All Non-EHS committee members (both internal and external to UMB) are required to submit a copy of their curriculum vitae to the GPD for their review and approval.

Once the committee has been selected, the "Stage 2 – Notification of Proposed Dissertation Committee" Form (See Table 2 Below) needs to be submitted by the PhD candidate to the GPD and Graduate Program Coordinator. Any potential external committee members who are from outside of UMass Boston must submit their curriculum vitae to the GPD. The GPD will then submit it to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval.

7.2 Dissertation Proposal

Once a student is advanced to candidacy, they will develop their dissertation research question(s) and write a proposal for their intended research.

The written proposal will consist of the three dissertation chapters: **1) Introduction** (include specific aims, rationale, and hypotheses, **2) Background/Literature Review** (include significance and innovation), and **3) Study Design and Methods**. Specific requirements for the dissertation proposal including the format will be developed in consultation with the major faculty advisor and dissertation committee, based on the focus of the intended research. A dissertation committee member's expertise may be involved during the proposal development process; however, it is the dissertation chair's role to guide the student through the process. It is suggested the student engage the committee early on and provide specific aims and basic methodology. This can be done in various formats including individual or group meetings, or sending email documents with proposed ideas.

During the oral proposal defense, the student will present their proposed research to the dissertation committee. The presentation should include the background of the issue(s), methods, and rationale for their methodological choices. The presentation is expected to last approximately 30-45 minutes. Next, the committee will ask the candidate questions and clarifications as necessary. The candidate will then be excused from the room and the dissertation committee will discuss any revisions needed and the status of the proposal defense. The committee will evaluate whether the student has adequate knowledge of the content area and the relevant methodologies. Committee members must come to a consensus and sign the "Stage 3 – Notification of **Proposal Acceptance**" Form (See Table 2 Below).

The options for approving the proposal are as follows: 1) approve ("A"), 2) approve with reservations ("AR"), or 3) do not approve ("N").

Students who are "approved" have up to 2 weeks to make any minor revisions recommended by the dissertation committee. Revisions may require the committee to re-read sections of the proposal for approval or may just be handled between the candidate and their major faculty advisor. In some cases, the oral presentation may need to be redone. These exact conditions will be determined by the dissertation committee. Students who receive a "do not approve" on their dissertation proposal did not

demonstrate a cohesive literature review, research questions, and/or methodologies in their written proposal document or during their oral defense. Students are allowed to re-propose their dissertation one time. Students who do not pass the re-proposal are dismissed from the program.

7.3 Research Compliance

All research involving contact with human subjects or animals must be approved by the campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) or the campus Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Data collection cannot start until appropriate IRB or IACUC approvals have been obtained. Forms and information about IRB or IACUC Review can be obtained from [Office for Research and Sponsored Programs](#). Students are advised to consult with the IRB or the IACUC early in the process.

7.4 Dissertation – Execution Stage

Following approval of the dissertation proposal, the student can begin IRB or IACUC application process. Once IRB or IACUC approval is obtained, the dissertation procedures and methods can commence. It shall be the responsibility of the dissertation committee to supervise the project's execution. The dissertation document shall follow the format required by the OGS ([https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/admissions/graduate-students/UMass_Boston_Dissertation_Thesis_Submission_Standards_\(Final-February-2025\).pdf](https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/admissions/graduate-students/UMass_Boston_Dissertation_Thesis_Submission_Standards_(Final-February-2025).pdf)). The student can use either the traditional format or the multi-Monograph (alternative format) to organize the sections of their dissertation. The results of the research shall be presented in a manuscript-ready format including two or more separate papers that are ready to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. The student is expected to submit at least one of these papers to a journal before defending their dissertation; the paper must be under peer review to meet this requirement.

7.5 Final Oral Defense

The final oral defense will be primarily concerned with, but not necessarily limited to, the candidate's dissertation. This examination shall be scheduled when all dissertation committee members agree that the dissertation is sufficiently complete to undergo defense (with at least 2 weeks to review and approve the written document). However, approval of the dissertation, passing the defense, and/or recommending the degree, is not implied by scheduling this examination. **At this time, the “Stage 4 – Notification of Intent to Defend Dissertation” Form (See Table 2 Below) needs to be signed and approved by the dissertation committee chair, GPD, and Dean of Graduate Studies.** This form should be completed by March 1st for spring graduation.

Students are required to deliver a public oral presentation (open to faculty, students, and staff) on their research. This presentation is expected to last approximately 45 minutes and should cover brief background and introduction, methods, results, and conclusions. Once the presentation is complete questions can be asked by the invited members. After the completion of this session, the guests will be excused, and committee members will be allowed to ask questions. Next, the student will be excused while the committee deliberates. Each committee member must vote either “approve” or “disapprove”.

If all committee members cast positive votes, the student shall be deemed to have passed the final oral examination. If there is one negative vote, the degree will be held up pending satisfactory resolution by the student of the objections of the dissenting member of the committee.

Any revisions or changes should be completed within a 2-week timeline. Once all members have agreed to “approve”, the “Stage 5 – Results of Dissertation Defense” form (See Table 2 Below) should be signed. This process and form should be completed by March 15th.

7.6 Process and Deadlines for Dissertation Submission

Final submission:

By 11:59 PM (EST/EDT) on the dates below, you must submit a copy of your defended and revised thesis/dissertation, approved in full for content by your program, to the Office of Graduate Studies via the [UMass Boston Scholar Works website](#).

Submission Dates:

- April 20 for a May degree date
- July 20 for an August degree date
- December 1 for a December degree date

Before the final submission, the **format** of the thesis must have been approved in full by the Office of Graduate Studies format editor and must have been authorized by this advisor in writing to submit the final version of the thesis. [See here for the most up to date Standards for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations](#). **Please carefully read this document before your thesis defense, pay attention to the Materials Needed for Submission and Working with Format Editor. If possible, before your defense,**

- Introduce yourself to your format editor by email (optional). Feel free at this time to ask any questions you may have about format. Your editor will be Carol Cullen (carol.cullen@umb.edu).
- Email the format editor a copy of your Signatory Page to obtain approval of its format before seeking the actual signatures. Follow the sample page in the Standards. Please be attentive to the details of the signatory page, particularly the name and title of each committee member.

More Information:

[Standards for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations at the University of Massachusetts Boston](#)

Table 2. Required Documentation and Recommended Deadlines for Completing the Dissertation

Forms	Required Paperwork	Recommended Deadline
Qualifying Examination Committee Recommendation Form	Qualifying Examination Committee Recommendation Form	After all course requirements, except for research credits, are completed in good standing No later than the end of Year 3
Stage 1:	Notification of Candidacy (After passing the qualifying examination) https://www.umb.edu/media/umass-boston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-1-Form.pdf	End of Semester 5 (Fall semester).
Stage 2:	Notification of Proposed Dissertation Committee	End of Semester 5 (Fall semester).

	https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-2-Form.pdf	
Stage 3:	Notification of Proposal Acceptance https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-3-Form.pdf	End of Semester 6 (Spring semester).
Stage 4:	Notification of Intent to Defend Dissertation https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-4-Form.pdf	8 th semester; Contact GPD/GPA at least 10-14 business days before the defense date.
Stage 5:	Results of Dissertation Defense https://www.umb.edu/media/umassboston/content-assets/academics/pdf/Stage-5-Form.pdf	By March 15 th (for a May graduation date) of the 8 th Semester. <i>August 1 deadline for the Summer degree</i> <i>December 1 deadline for the December degree.</i>

8. Policies and Procedures

8.1 Academic Standing and Progression

A student must maintain a cumulative average of at least 3.0 during their studies. The computation of the grade point average will include all graduate and upper-level undergraduate courses (taken as a matriculated student) that are eligible to count toward the student's graduate degree or certificate program. Grades for any courses taken at UMass Boston as a non-matriculated student but later transferred into the program are also included in the calculation of the GPA; grades for courses transferred into the program from other institutions are not calculated into the GPA. Graduate students with a cumulative GPA lower than 3.0 will not be eligible to graduate until they raise their GPA to a 3.0.

8.2 Satisfactory or Reasonable Progress, Academic Probation, and Academic Dismissal

A student must make satisfactory or reasonable progress toward completion of a degree program within the university's policy on time limits for that degree. A student who is not making satisfactory or reasonable progress is subject to probation and dismissal upon the recommendation of the graduate program director to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Graduate probation and dismissal decisions are based on the criteria stated below. Individual graduate programs may establish more stringent quality standards, which are stated in the program section of the Graduate Catalog and enforced for all students in that particular program.

1. Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 will automatically be placed on

academic probation and are not considered to be in good standing academically. Both the student and their graduate program director will be notified of this probationary status.

2. A student who in any two semesters, consecutive or otherwise, has semester grade point averages of below 2.8 is subject to academic dismissal for failure to make satisfactory progress, upon recommendation by the program director to the Dean of Graduate Studies.
3. Any graduate student who has accumulated four (4) or more INC or IF grades will be considered not to be making satisfactory progress toward the degree, will be placed on probation, and will normally be barred from registering for additional classes until the INC/IF grades are cleared.
4. Students may also be placed on probation for failure to meet program requirements upon the request of the graduate program director.

While on academic probation, a student shall be ineligible to hold office in any recognized student organization or recognized professional association or to represent the university in any sense on or off campus. Students on probation will normally not be allowed to hold a graduate assistantship. Students will be removed from academic probation either when their cumulative grade point average meets or exceeds 3.0 or upon approval of a formal request by the relevant graduate program director to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

A student who has been placed on academic probation in any two semesters, consecutive or otherwise, will automatically be dismissed from the program and the University. The dismissal decisions will be initiated by the Office of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Registrar's Office, after reviewing transcripts of graduate students who, based on approved program criteria, are subject to dismissal. The Office of Graduate Studies will then refer cases for dismissal to the appropriate Graduate Program Director for review and recommendations. A recommendation for dismissal can be waived by the Graduate Program Director upon request to the Dean of Graduate Studies. A request for a waiver should include the basis for the recommendation and the terms for successful continuation in the program. Final dismissal decisions will be made by and communicated to the affected graduate student, the Graduate Program Director, and the Office of the Registrar by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Graduate students may appeal dismissal decisions in writing to the Graduate Program Director. The Graduate Program Director in consultation with their dean who support reinstatement for the student will forward a written recommendation, stipulating the terms for successful continuation in the program, to the Dean of Graduate Studies who makes a final determination as to whether to rescind the dismissal. In addition, the Dean of Graduate Studies may add further stipulations to the reinstatement. All students for whom the dismissal is rescinded automatically remain on academic probation. Failure to meet any terms identified within the probationary letter will result in automatic dismissal without recourse to appeal.

8.3 Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

It is the express policy of the university that every aspect of graduate academic life, related in whatever fashion to the university, shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner by graduate students. For complete information on university policy in this area, see [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, cheating on examinations, submitting written material that is the work of others, purchasing papers over the internet, or seeking unauthorized

use of computer files of a faculty or staff member or other student(s).

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, furnishing false or inaccurate information, disruptive conduct, or theft and damage to university property.

Should a faculty member suspect a student of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty, the faculty member will notify the EHS student in writing of the charges and inform him/her of his/her rights and responsibilities as outlined in the [University's "Procedures for Academic Dishonesty"](#). The faculty member should meet with the EHS student to discuss the alleged violation within ten (10) days of incident. If the issue is not resolved at this meeting, the faculty member will notify the EHS student in writing within ten (10) days of the meeting, and copy the Dean of Graduate Studies, Graduate Program Director, and the Department Chair.

Sanctions for plagiarism or academic dishonesty may include, but are not limited to, a zero (0) for the assignment, course, or both, and other sanctions up to dismissal, per University policy.

The University has a special concern for incidents in which persons are subject to harassment because of membership in a protected class. Such incidents damage not only individuals but also the free and open academic environment of the University. If no sanction is imposed, the charges are considered dismissed. The student will be notified regarding next steps in the process by the Office of Graduate Studies. Students are encouraged to utilize Student Services as a resource during this process. Cheating EHS students are honor-bound to maintain ethical practices when taking an examination. If an EHS student's behavior signifies that s/he is cheating during an examination, as defined under the "Academic Honesty" section of the Code of Student Conduct, the EHS student will be asked to surrender the examination and meet with the faculty member as specified below.

8.4 Graduate Grading Policy

For graduate students, the university has used a system of letter grades that are equivalent to numerical "quality points," according to the following table:

Letter Grade	Quality Point Equivalent
A	4.00
A-	3.70
B+	3.30
B	3.00
B-	2.70
C+	2.30
C	2.00
F	0.00

The quality points for each grade are multiplied by the number of credits for the course, and the totals for all courses are added; this result is the student's cumulative quality point figure. The cumulative quality point figure is divided by the number of cumulative credit hours carried; this result is the student's cumulative quality point average. Graduate students may also be given grades of "NA" (Not Attending), "Inc" (Incomplete), "Y" (In Progress), "SAT" (Satisfactory), "AUD" (Audit). Explanations of these grades appear below.

*The lowest passing grade for a graduate student is a "C." Grades lower than "C" which are submitted by faculty will automatically be recorded as "F." This graduate grading policy also applies to graduate students enrolled in undergraduate courses.

The instructor of a class has full responsibility for grading and is the best judge of student performance; there may, however, be instances in which a graduate student believes that a grade has been assigned unfairly. In such cases, the student should discuss the grade with the instructor. If they are unable to resolve the issue between them, the student should make a written request to the graduate program director asking for a formal meeting among the three parties to explain, discuss, and/or reconsider the grade. Although the graduate program director serves as mediator in this meeting, the faculty member remains the final authority for any grading decision.

8.5 Not Attending (NA)

The Not Attending (NA) grade signifies that, although a student registered for a course and appeared on the class roster, the student never attended the class. The NA grade is not a substitute for dropping or withdrawing from a course. A student is still responsible for all tuition and fee charges for courses designated NA on their record. The NA grade has no effect on the student's cumulative grade point average.

The NA grade designation may be replaced on a student's record by a "W" (withdrawal), provided that the student submits a withdrawal form to the Office of the Registrar before the withdrawal deadline.

8.6 Incomplete (INC)

The grade incomplete (INC) is reported only where a portion of the assigned or required class work, or the final examination, has not been completed because of serious illness, extreme personal circumstances, or scholarly reasons at the request of the instructor. If your record is such that you would fail the course regardless of your missing work, you will fail. Permission of the instructor must be obtained and the Incomplete Grade Contract must be completed. If you are receiving the grade of incomplete (INC), you are allowed up to one year in which to complete the course. The new grade must be submitted to the Registrar by the grading deadline for that semester depending on the grading deadline set by faculty member. The grade for any course not completed by this deadline will be converted to the grade of 'IF'.

8.7 Seven-Year Limitation on Period to Earn a Degree

University policy indicates that all graduate students must earn their degree within seven years of the date of matriculation into the program of study in the Manning College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

8.1a Exceptions to the credit minimum must be made in consultation with the student's advisor. Changes will affect the student's program of study and expected date of graduation.

8.1b The student must petition their GPD for an exception to the minimum credit policy.

8.1c Exceptions will be made in special circumstances and may be granted for one semester only.

8.1d If an exception is granted by the GPD, the student will be notified in writing and requested to meet with their advisor to file a new program of study and expected date of graduation.

8.1e Graduate students who fail to complete their program of study within seven years will be placed on registration hold by the university registrar and may be subject to dismissal by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

8.8 Request for Extending Seven-Year Limitation

Graduate students may seek an extension of the seven-year time limitation to complete their program of study because of extenuating circumstances one time during their program of study.

8.1a Graduate students must be in good academic standing and not on probation to be considered for an extension.

8.1b Graduate students must file a petition for an extension on the deadline to graduate in writing to the GPD who will forward the request to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The petition request should include all relevant information including a clear statement of the reasons for the request, the extenuating circumstances, and a revised plan of study with a new date of graduation.

8.1c A signature of the graduate student's academic advisor of record must accompany the petition for extension containing the revised program plan at the time of the request.

8.1d The Dean of Graduate Studies will notify the graduate student of the decision in writing.

8.9 Leave of Absence Policy

A student who has been accepted into a graduate program is expected to remain in continuous enrollment until graduation, either full-time or part-time. However, if circumstances arise that cause an interruption in graduate study, a student may apply for a leave of absence (LOA). Leaves of absence are generally granted only in cases of substantiated illness or disability of the student or family member, military service, or one semester maternity or paternity leave. A student should document the basis for the leave.* A leave of absence must be approved by the graduate program director and the Dean of Graduate Studies using the form available [here](#).

- Leaves of absence are granted in yearly increments, and students may not be granted more than three years total LOA.
- Time spent on leave approved by OGS does not count toward the Statute of Limitations (SOL). The “SOL clock” is stopped for the period of the leave.
- Students on LOA will not be covered by the health insurance plan until they return to registration
- Students on LOA do not pay the program fee while on leave and a leave of absence does not make a

student eligible for student loan deferments.

* If a student is providing medical information on another person as the basis for a medical leave of absence, the student must have the permission of that person to release the information.

8.10 Full-time and Part-Time Enrollment

The faculty intends to be flexible with students' needs to balance the demands of graduate study with the obligations of work and family. Doctoral candidates engaged in dissertation research may be considered full-time students for some purposes regardless of the number of dissertation credits for which they register, provided their graduate program director certifies that they are working full-time on dissertation research. Students seeking financial aid should be certain to obtain detailed information about full-time and part-time status requirements from the Office of Financial Aid Services.

8.11 Registration Procedures

Both newly accepted and currently enrolled students must begin the course registration process by conferring with their graduate program directors. New student registration is scheduled by each individual graduate program. Currently enrolled degree-seeking (matriculated) students register, using WISER, during the advanced registration periods beginning in April (for the fall semester) and November (for the spring semester). An "add/drop" period, usually five days in length, is provided at the beginning of each semester for students wishing to make changes in their schedules. All changes must be approved by the appropriate faculty member and graduate program director.

- **Maximum Credit Load**

A graduate student may register for up to 12 credits during the fall and spring semesters. Any student who wishes to register for more than the maximum credit load must secure written permission from the graduate program director and program coordinator.

- **Retaking Courses**

A student may repeat any course, provided the student has not taken and passed a more advanced course for which it is a prerequisite. The course may be repeated regardless of the grade received, but there may be only one such repetition per course. If a student repeats a course, both grades will appear on the student's transcript, but only the second grade will be computed in the student's cumulative average. Students must get approval from the program director and program coordinator.

- **Adding or Dropping Courses**

During the "add/drop period"—usually five days at the beginning of each semester—a student may add, drop, or change courses without penalty; that is, no entry will be made on the student's permanent record. No courses may be added after this period. Please note: a student enrolled in only one course and wishing to drop that course must either pay the program fee to remain active in the program or withdraw from the program. Students must notify the program coordinator before making any course adjustments.

- **Withdrawing from Courses**

After the add/drop period, a student may withdraw from a course by completing a course withdrawal form before the withdrawal deadline noted for each term in the academic calendar.

Withdrawal forms are available from the Graduate Registrar and must be submitted to that office by the published deadline. A grade of W will appear on the student's transcript for a course the student has withdrawn from. Students are to get approval from the graduate program director and program coordinator.

8.12 Withdrawing from the University

The effective date of withdrawal from the university is that on which all forms are completed, signed, and returned to the One Stop Student Service Center. The last day students may withdraw is the last day of classes of the semester. Students withdrawing receive a W for each course in which they are enrolled. Failure to complete a withdrawal form will result in the recording of the grade of F (failure) for all courses at the end of the term. To withdraw from the university, a student must do the following:

1. Consult with the graduate program director and coordinator.
2. Receive clearance from any university office in which financial charges have been incurred.

8.13 Program Continuation

All degree-seeking graduate students must maintain continuous registration also known as a program fee until the degree sought by the student is formally awarded. Students may register for the program fee (CAS 800) on the WISER online registration system. Continuous registration must also be maintained even when a student is on a leave of absence from the program.

Continuous registration requires a fee to be paid to maintain matriculation. If for any reason a student does not register for courses or dissertation credits, he/she must maintain continuous registration per semester. https://www.umb.edu/bursar/tuition_and_fees#program_fee

Failure to register before the registration deadline for the semester for which the student is registering may result in late fees and be classified as inactive.

8.14 Readmission

Graduate degree candidates must maintain continuous registration, either by enrolling for course, thesis, capstone or dissertation credits; or by paying a program fee. Any student who has failed to maintain continuous registration and who wishes to resume their pursuit of the degree must apply for readmission, and will be subject to the policies and requirements in effect at the time of readmission. The applicant must complete a readmission application form and pay readmission and all back program fees before the application will be considered. Before the applicant can be readmitted, the application must be approved by the appropriate program director and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The deadline for readmission applications is one month before the beginning of the semester for which application is being made.

Readmitted students must meet the program requirements that pertain at the time of their readmission. Courses older than seven years at the time of readmission cannot be used toward the degree, except with the prior written permission of the graduate program director at the time of readmission. In addition, it is within the program director's discretion to disallow any previously taken courses from counting toward the readmitted student's degree program.

Any student wishing readmission should contact their Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Registrar for further information. Eligibility for readmission is limited to students who were in good standing at the time of their withdrawal and who are still in compliance with the statute of limitations policy governing the completion of the degree.

8.15 Graduate Assistantships

The University offers a limited number of graduate assistantships in teaching or research to qualified students. Applicants for admission to graduate programs and currently enrolled students should consider applying. These graduate assistantships, which range from 0.5 to 1.0 FTE require weekly service in the areas of teaching, research, or administrative support. In return, the University pays a stipend and provides a tuition waiver and a waiver of a certain percentage of the fees. Students may obtain more information about assistantships by contacting the GPD. General information about assistantships is also available from the OGS.

8.16 Graduation Requirements and Procedures

Graduate students must consult the individual program descriptions in the [Graduate Student Bulletin for complete information regarding graduation requirements](#).

In general, graduate students are eligible for graduation if they complete the following:

- The required number of credits as designated in their program of study and all dissertation requirements as designated in their program of study.
- Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all required UMass Boston courses excluding electives.

8.17 Filing for Graduation

In order for a student to graduate, an application must be completed online through WISER by the dates published on this website (<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/graduation/applying/>), and followed the procedures outlined by the Office of the Registrar.

More information: <https://catalog.umb.edu/content.php?catoid=49&navoid=7876>

9. Degree Requirements

9.1 Foreign Language Requirements

Each academic program may establish foreign language requirements for its own advanced-degree candidates. The program determines both the number of foreign languages and the level of competence required. A foreign language is defined for this requirement as a language other than the candidate's native tongue, in which there is a significant body of literature relevant to their academic discipline. The term "foreign language" does not include computer languages.

9.2 Doctoral Candidacy and Dissertation Requirements

As soon as possible after the student has been admitted to candidacy, the graduate program director of the candidate's program shall recommend a dissertation committee to the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education. The dissertation committee shall consist of at least three members. At least two members of the committee shall be faculty members in the candidate's program. Ordinarily, the dissertation committee shall also include a member who is external to the candidate's program. The external member may come either from within the university or outside of the university. When there is uncertainty about whether a nominee is sufficiently independent of the candidate's program to serve as the external member, the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education shall determine the nominee's eligibility. The graduate program director will be responsible for any additional nominations that may be necessary. On a case-by-case basis, graduate program directors may appeal to the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education to approve a dissertation committee consisting of three faculty members in the candidate's program. Additional resource guides for the formation of dissertation committees and formatting of dissertations are available [online](#).

The Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education is asked to provide the Graduate Studies Committee with a report annually on both the number of cases in which an exception is made to permit dissertation committees to be made up entirely of faculty in the candidate's own program and, more generally, on how well the dissertation committee system is functioning.

9.3 Policy on Qualifications of Chairs and Members of Dissertation Committees

Qualifications of faculty to chair dissertation committees:

1. To qualify to chair a dissertation committee, a faculty member must be a full-time faculty member and must have:
 1. A doctoral degree (typically a PhD or EdD, but in some instances a degree such as a JD, MD, or DBS may be appropriate); and
 2. A record of scholarly publications and/or professional achievement within a period of five years prior to the formation of any dissertation committee that the faculty member chairs.
2. Individual programs may establish additional criteria for eligibility of faculty to chair dissertation committees.
3. Individual programs are to provide graduate students each year with the names of faculty who are qualified to chair dissertation committees.

Qualifications of faculty and/or outside professionals serving as members of dissertation committees:

1. Members of dissertation committees must have an appropriate terminal degree (typically a PhD or EdD, but in some instances a degree such as a JD, MD, or DBS may be appropriate).
2. A record of scholarly publications and/or professional achievement within a period of five years prior to the formation of the dissertation committee.
3. Individual programs may establish additional criteria for eligibility of faculty to serve on dissertation committees.
4. Students establish dissertation committees with the advice and approval of their graduate program director and Dissertation Chairperson.

It shall be the responsibility of the working dissertation committee to approve the dissertation project, to supervise its execution, and to arrange for the final examination of the student, including public notice. This final examination, which must be at least partly oral, will be conducted by the dissertation committee and will be primarily concerned with, but not necessarily limited to, the candidate's dissertation. This examination shall be scheduled when all dissertation committee members agree that the dissertation is sufficiently complete to undergo defense; approval of the dissertation, passing the defense, and/or recommending the degree, however, are not implied by scheduling this examination. Most programs require the student to deliver a public lecture on their research, usually on the day the final oral examination takes place. The final oral examination itself is attended by the candidate, the committee, and any invited guests. Only the committee members may vote. If all committee members cast positive votes, the student shall be deemed to have passed the final oral examination. If there is one negative vote, the degree will be held up pending satisfactory resolution by the student of the objections of the dissenting member of the committee; final program approval is represented by the signature of the graduate program director. If two or more members cast negative votes, the candidate will be informed that they have failed the examination.

The graduate program director will supply documentation to the Office of Graduate Studies of each of the following stages in a doctoral student's progression. Those marked with an asterisk must be approved in writing by the Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education or their delegate:

1. Declaration of intention to take qualifying exam(s)
2. Acceptance to candidacy
3. Formation of dissertation committee*
4. Acceptance of dissertation proposal
5. Declaration of intention to defend dissertation
6. Successful defense
7. Completion of the dissertation according to the university's guidelines for dissertation preparation*

9.4 Graduation Requirements and Procedures

The College recognizes master's students eligible for graduation in May, August and December.

Graduate students must consult the individual program descriptions in the [Graduate Student Bulletin for complete information regarding graduation requirements](#).

In general, graduate students are eligible for graduation if they complete the following:

The required number of credits as designated in their program of study and all thesis or practicum requirements as designated in their program of study.

Have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all required UMass Boston courses excluding electives.

9.5 Filing for Graduation

In order for a student to graduate, an application must be completed online through WISER by the dates published on this website (<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/graduation/applying/>), and followed the procedures outlined by the Office of the Registrar.

More information: <https://catalog.umb.edu/content.php?catoid=49&navoid=7876>

10. Appendices

Appendix A. Further information

Frequently asked questions

<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/registration/frequently-asked-questions/>

Graduate Students Resources

<https://www.umb.edu/admissions/graduate-students/graduate-students-assistantships/graduate-student-resources/>

Graduate Students Assistantships

<https://www.umb.edu/admissions/graduate-students/graduate-students-assistantships/>

Academic calendar

<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/academic-calendar/>

Graduation Policies

<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/graduation/>

Graduate Student Forms

<https://www.umb.edu/registrar/forms/graduate/>

Office of the Bursar

<https://www.umb.edu/bursar/>

Appendix B. PhD Course Progression (Example)

Entry to PhD with an MS Curriculum/Course Progression

Semester	Courses (Credits)
Semester 1 (Fall)	EHS/NU 825-Advanced Research Methods (3) EHS/NU 770- Biostatistics II (3) EHS 887- Advanced Topics in EHS (3)
Semester 2 (Spring)	NU 705 Health Disparities (3) Elective (3) Elective (3)
Semester 3 (Fall)	EHS 898 Directed Research/EHS 899 Dissertation (6)
Semester 4 (Spring)	EHS 898 Directed Research/EHS 899 Dissertation (6)
Semester 5 (Fall)	EHS 898 Directed Research/EHS 899 Dissertation (6)
Semester 6 (Spring)	EHS 898 Directed Research/EHS 899 Dissertation (6)
Total Credits	42

Entry to PhD with a BS Curriculum/Course Progression (Example)

Concentration (For MS Only)	Applied Exercise Physiology	Physical Activity and Health Promotion
Semester 1 (Fall)	EHS630 Advanced Fitness Assessment (3) EHS685 Advanced Exercise Physiology (3) NU760 Biostatistics I (3)	EHS630 Advanced Fitness Assessment (3) EHS685 Advanced Exercise Physiology (3) NU760 Biostatistics I (3)
Semester 2 (Spring)	EHS625 Quantitative Research Methods (3) Concentration Course I (3) Concentration Course II (3)	EHS625 Quantitative Research Methods (3) Concentration Course I (3) Concentration Course II (3)
Semester 3 (Fall)	Concentration Course III (3) EHS825 Advanced Research Methods (3) NU770 Biostatistics II (3) EHS887 Advanced Topics in EHS (3)	Concentration Course III (3) EHS825 Advanced Research Methods (3) NU770 Biostatistics II (3) EHS887 Advanced Topics in EHS (3)
Semester 4 (Spring)	NU705 Health Disparities/NU757 Social and Behavioral Determinants of Health (3) Elective (3) EHS 898 Directed Research (3)	
Semester 5 (Fall)	Elective (3) Elective (3) Elective (3) EHS 898 Directed Research (3)	
Semester 6 (Spring)	EHS 899 Dissertation/ EHS 898 Directed Research (9)	
Semester 7 (Fall)	EHS 899 Dissertation (9)	
Semester 8 (Spring)	EHS 899 Dissertation (6)	
Total Credits	75	

Appendix C. PhD Elective Courses

Elective Courses		
EHS 410/610	Exercise and Aging	3
EHS 620	Pediatric Exercise	3
EHS 440	Health Fitness Management	3
EHS 635	Project and Program Management	3
EHS 645	Leadership and Communication	3
EHS 350/650	Obesity and Weight Management	3
EHS 670	Designing Exercise and Health Promotion Interventions	3
EHS 675	Principles of Public Health	3
EHS 480/680	Clinical Exercise Physiology	3
EHS 682	Exercise Metabolism	3
EHS 685	Applied Exercise Physiology	3
EHS 710	Physical Activity Intervention, Chronic Disease and Disability in Aging	3
EHS 731	Body Composition Assessment	3
EHS 740	Human Motor Control and Movement Dysfunction	3
EHS 745	Theoretical Foundations of Health Behavior	3
EHS 772	Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention	3
EHS 775	Statistical Methods for Epidemiology	3
EHS 783	Neuromuscular Aspects of Exercise in Obesity and Cancer	3
EHS 784	Cardiovascular Aspects of Exercise in Clinical Populations	3
EHS 786	Exercise Endocrinology and Metabolic Disorders	3
EHS 787	Neurovascular Exercise Physiology in Health and Cardiovascular-Related Disease	3
EHS 790	Professional Skills & Grant Writing for Exercise Science	3
Writing/Communication		

MBAACM 681	Analytical Writing in Management	3
MBAACM 682	Oral Communication for Managers	3
MBAACM 684	Written Communication for Managers	3
Leadership		
MBAMGT 683	Leadership Management in the 21st Century	3
MBAMGT 680	Management of Health Organizations	3
NURSNG 765	Leadership and Management in Health Care	3
DISRES 621	Negotiation	3
Biology		
BIOL 607	An Introduction to Computational Data Analysis for Biology	3
BIOL 612	Advanced Cell Biology	3
BIOL 615	Immunology	3
BIOL 650	Scientific Communication	3
BIOL 674	Cell Signaling	3
BIOL 675	Advanced Molecular Biology	4
BIOL 693	Seminar in Neurobiology	3
Health-Related Courses		
NURSNG 705	Health Disparities	3
NURSNG 741	Health Policy I	3
NURSNG 742	Health Policy II	3
MBAMGT 681	The Health System and Health Policy	3
GERON GR 611	Health and Physical Changes in Aging	3
Research Methodology-Related Courses		
NURSNG 721	Program Evaluation	3
NURSNG 770	Biostatistics II: Advanced Statistical Methods in Healthcare Research	3

NURSNG 780	Epidemiological Methods	3
PSYCH 775	Qualitative Methods in Psychological Research	3
PAFG 645	Program Evaluation	3

Appendix D: Qualifying Examination Grading Rubric

	DO NOT PASS		PASS		
EVALUATION CRITERIA	UNACCEPTABLE - 1	INCOMPLETE - 2	PROFICIENT - 3	EXEMPLARY - 4	NOTES
A. Knowledge of topic and main components of research	Inaccurate, irrelevant and/or misinterpreted content; misuse of terminology and citations; gross misinterpretation of content; inability to formulate novel and/or significant hypotheses; lack of understanding of research ethics.	Many inaccuracies and some misinterpretation of content; improper use of terminology and citations; misinterpretation of content; hypotheses are not significant or not novel or incorrectly formulated; understanding of research ethics is insufficient.	Nearly all information presented is accurate and relevant; proper use of terminology and citations; demonstrates understanding of content; hypotheses are for the most part novel, significant and correctly formulated; satisfactory understanding of research ethics.	All information presented is both accurate and relevant; proper use of terminology and citations; insightful interpretation of content; all hypotheses are novel, significant and correctly formulated; excellent understanding of research ethics.	
B. Ability to understand and analyze information	Invalid judgments based on evidence provided; indefensible conclusions.	Merely recalls information; lists and defines, but fails to synthesize, analyze, evaluate the knowledge, detect patterns, or apply knowledge.	Nearly all judgments are valid and based on evidence; conflicting positions interpreted reasonably well; examples and literature support arguments; content synthesized well for the most part; ideas tend to flow logically; analysis of material is accurate and conclusions are defensible; exhibits clear thinking and conceptualization.	Valid judgments based on evidence; precise interpretation of conflicting positions; exemplary use of examples and literature to support arguments; synthesis of content is clearly evident; logical flow of ideas; analysis of material is insightful and conclusions are fully defensible; convincing; exhibits advanced thinking and conceptualization.	
C. Effective communication	Spelling, grammar and usage clearly interfere with meaning; difficulty maintaining style; difficulty with sentence structure; no sense of audience; writing and/or spoken communication is unacceptable for doctoral level; organization is unclear or confusing; generally off point and unfocused.	Spelling, grammar, and usage errors detract from credibility; simplistic sentence structure and style; difficulty with maintaining scholarly tone; limited sense of audience; writing and/or spoken communication is inappropriate for doctoral level.	Writing style is competent, and sentence structure is sound; generally appropriate for audience; clear and largely complete with a somewhat scholarly tone; writing and spoken communication is generally appropriate for doctoral level.	Sophisticated writing style and advanced sentence structure; appropriate for audience; overall clear, thorough, and scholarly tone; writing and spoken communication unmistakably appropriate for doctoral level; organization is fully logical and readily apparent; all key points supported by data; examples and arguments properly referenced; key points are highlighted; appropriate use of examples.	A non-passing score in the "effective communication" criterion can be addressed through the requirement that specific conditions be met before the "pass" recommendation becomes effective, as determined by the committee, as long as there are strong scores in criteria A and B. The exact conditions and time-frame to complete the conditions must be specified on the Examination Report. .