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LEISURE STUDIES PROGRAM

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

The Leisure Studies program is part of the School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology and is housed in the College of Education. We utilize both Willard Hall (the College of Education home location) and the Colvin Center for our classes and programs. In a few circumstances, courses may be offered in other buildings on campus. Elective courses will almost certainly be offered through other departments or programs and in a variety of locations. Some classes are offered at OSU-Tulsa and would require leaving the Stillwater campus in order to attend class.

As can be seen from the official OSU seal, the university is a land-grant institution—we have goals related to teaching, scholarship and extension (outreach to the state-wide community). The missions of the units directly responsible for the Leisure Studies program follow.

MISSION OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The College of Education is a community of scholars dedicated to research, teaching and service. The foundation of our work is basic and applied research which informs and improves education in schools and other settings. Excellence in teaching illustrates a commitment to continued learning, cultural diversity and use of appropriate technology. The College maintains and promotes linkages with constituents who develop, disseminate and apply knowledge. The integration of research, teaching and service advances professional education for the people of our state and throughout the world.
MISSION OF THE SCHOOL OF APPLIED HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

The mission of the School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology is to foster the development, integration and application of empirical knowledge, theory, skills and experiences to promote social, physical, psychological, educational and environmental health.

MISSION OF THE LEISURE STUDIES PROGRAM

The Leisure Studies program seeks to facilitate the learners’ personal and professional development through educational experiences guided by values, knowledge, and skills necessary for excellence in the leisure services profession.

At the Master’s level we believe we are preparing future administrators for the various types of agencies and organizations associated with the field of parks, recreation, and leisure studies. Doctoral studies at OSU are geared toward preparing well-rounded faculty members—higher education professionals who are committed to teaching, scholarship and service.

A. THE NATURE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Graduate study is different from undergraduate study in several ways. First, your classes will be smaller than those you attended as an undergraduate. Second, your participation in classes is essential for a deep and proper level of understanding. Participation is enhanced by reading related print materials, and discussing and defending your opinions. Reading and writing will become a regular part of your student life. It is expected that graduate students participate as fully as possible in departmental and professional activities. During your graduate studies at OSU it will be important for you to attend and contribute to meetings, conferences and other activities.

At OSU we offer a Master of Science degree in Leisure Studies with focus areas in Leisure Service Management and Therapeutic Recreation. In addition, we offer the Doctor of Philosophy in Health, Leisure, and Human Performance, with an option in Leisure Studies. Individual students may then tailor their plan of study to emphasize outdoor recreation, leadership, campus recreation, therapeutic recreation in clinical and community settings, and other focus areas.

FACULTY (and Staff supporting Leisure Studies)

While engaged in your graduate studies you will have opportunities to work with faculty within the Leisure Studies program and outside of the program. Outside faculty often serve as wonderful resources for specific areas of study. In the past, students have accessed faculty in many disciplines, including Environmental Sciences, Forestry, Geography, Educational Psychology, Human Sciences, Statistics, and Management.

In Leisure Studies, every faculty member has served as a practitioner before entering higher education. While pursuing a variety of interests in research and service, this team of professors works to provide excellence in the classroom. Leisure Studies faculty are: Drs. Lowell Caneday, Jerry Jordan, Donna Lindenmeier, Tim Passmore, Tyler Tapps, and Grace Chang. In addition to the program faculty, we also have Ms. Sarah Gladden as a staff member in the Program. Sarah serves as the Coordinator of the Activity Program and works closely with graduate students who teach activity classes.
Dr. Lowell Caneday, CPRP

Rank: Regents Professor, Member of the Graduate Faculty approved for chairing doctoral committees

Degrees:
Master of Science in Recreation and Park Administration – University of Wyoming (1971). Thesis: The Value of Intramural Award Systems in Selected Colleges and Universities

Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics – LeTourneau College (1970)

Work Experience:
Faculty member and administrator at OSU since 1981
Research associate, University of Minnesota
Recreation supervisor, cities in Texas and Minnesota
Dean of Students, LeTourneau College
Clerk and Ranger, Minnesota Division of State Parks
Intramural Supervisor, University of Wyoming; LeTourneau College

Research Interests:
Outdoor recreation facilities, planning, carrying capacity
Economic impacts of recreation and tourism
Environmental impacts of recreation behavior

Publications:
Over 30 national or international journal publications, 20+ state and regional journal publications, 60+ technical research reports, two books, 15 monographs
Publications may be found in Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Travel Research, SCHOLE, Parks and Recreation, Journal of Leisure Research, American Journal of Environmental Science

Presentations:
More than 80 national and international professional and research presentations

External funding: approximately $5 million in grants and contracts

Selected Professional Service:
Board of Trustees, National Recreation and Park Association
National Recreation and Parks Association Council on Accreditation for Parks, Recreation, and Tourism; Accreditation Visitor
Dr. Grace Chang, CPRP, GISP

Rank: Research Assistant Professor

Degrees:
- Doctor of Philosophy - Leisure Studies, Oklahoma State University
- Master of Science - Landscape Architecture, Horticulture, National Chung-Hsin University, Taiwan
- Bachelor of Science in Agronomy, National Chung-Hsin University, Taiwan

Certificate:
- Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP)
- Certified Geographic Information Systems Professional (GISP)

Research Interests
- Spatial factors on environmental behavior
- Landscape ecology in human dimension
- Computer-aided recreation facilities management
- Resource management with GIS application
- Sustainable recreation environment planning & design

Professional Experience
- Research Assistant Professor at OSU since 2009
- Research Professional, OSU
- Teaching Assistant & Research Assistant, OSU
- Research Assistant, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stillwater
- Executive Editor: Journal of Landscape, Taiwan
- Planner of Recreation and Tourism Development, Taiwan

Recent Publications

Presentations
- 14 national, state, and regional research and professional presentations

Selected Professional Projects:
- Resource Management Plan of Oklahoma State Parks
- State Park Geo-Database Development, State Park Geo-database Personnel Training
- Ginsing Lake Park in Hsinchu Science Park Renovation, Vegetation GIS, and Management Plan
- Jinshan Hot Spring Recreation Area Renovation and Management Plan
- The Effect of Eco-Park on Air-Pollution Reduction
- Taipei Commune Mountain Trail Plan
- Da-Xi Harbor Tourism Management Plan
Dr. Jerry Jordan, CTRS/L

**Rank:** Associate Professor, Member of the Graduate Faculty approved for chairing committees

**Degrees:**
- Dissertation: A Task Analysis of the Role Function of Therapeutic Recreation Leaders
- Bachelor of Science in HPER - Central State University (1966)

**Work Experience:**
- Faculty member and administrator at OSU since 1984
- Faculty member and administrator at Temple University
- Assistant Director and Therapeutic Recreation Specialist for the Bureau of Research and Training in Mental Health for the State of Pennsylvania
- Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute
- Director of Recreational Therapy, Central State Community Mental Health Center
- Recreational Therapist, Central State Hospital, Norman, Oklahoma
- Recreation Specialist, Special Services, Fort Sill, Oklahoma

**Research Interests:**
- Therapeutic recreation outcomes
- Non-profit management

**Publications:**
- Project Director for 10 federal grants; 3 contracts, 1 foundation grant, 3 OSU grants
- Project Co-Director for 3 federal grants and one private foundation grant
- Twenty-two publications (primarily technical reports resulting from grants and/or consultative services)

**Presentations:**
- More than 50 national and state professional and research presentations

**Selected Professional Service:**
- Co-Executive Director - Therapeutic Recreation Association of Oklahoma
- Board of Directors, National Council on Therapeutic Recreation Certification
- National Certification Review Board, Therapeutic Recreation
- Board of Directors, National Consortium on Physical Education and Recreation for the Handicapped
- Co-Editor, Therapeutic Recreation Journal
Dr. Donna Lindenmeier

**Rank:** Associate Professor, Member of the Graduate Faculty approved for chairing doctoral committees

**Degrees**
- Doctor of Philosophy - Texas A&M University
  - Dissertation: An Investigation of Congruency of Outdoor Education Components: Environmental Education and Adventure Education
- Master of Agriculture - Recreation and Resources Development - Texas A&M University
  - Paper: A Guide to Environmental Ethics Education
- Bachelor of Science in Photocommunications / Art / English - Texas Tech University

**Work Experience:**
- Faculty member at OSU since 2005
- Faculty member at Northwest Missouri State University
- Coordinator for MOERA outdoor recreation and education area
- Environmental Education staff at Ondessonk
- Director of Bryan Summer Fun Camp - City of Bryan, Texas

**Research Interests:**
- Environmental education and recreation
- Adventure education and recreation
- Water-based recreation and lifesaving
- Adapting recreation for special populations
- Creativity and expressive recreation pursuits

**Publications:**
- One program book; 12 international, national, and state publications
- 15 technical reports and other publications

**Presentations:**
- 10 international and national presentations; 4 regional presentations; 28 state and local presentations

**Selected Professional Service:**
- National Vice President of Rho Phi Lambda
- Coordinator for Research to Practice for NRPA 2008 and 2009
- Board of Directors for: Oklahoma Recreation and Park Society; Oklahoma Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; Missouri Park and Recreation Association; and North Central Oklahoma Chapter of American Red Cross
Dr. Tim Passmore, CTRS/L

Rank: Associate Professor, Member of the Graduate Faculty with doctoral chairing status

Degrees:
- Doctor of Education – Oklahoma State University, 2002
- Master of Science – Oklahoma State University, 1993
- Bachelor of Science – Oklahoma State University, 1987

Research Interests:
- Recreational Therapy
- Mental Health – depression and exercise
- Physical rehabilitation
- Alzheimer’s disease
- Adherence to discharge recommendations
- Coverage of Recreational Therapy
Dr. Tyler Tapps

**Rank:** Assistant Professor, Member of the Graduate Faculty

**Degrees:**
- Dissertation: An Investigation into the Effects of Elastic Band Exercise Participation on the Depression Levels of Older Adults Residing in a Long-Term Care Facility
- Master of Science – Recreation: Recreation Resources Management, 2006: Northwest Missouri State University
- Bachelor of Science – Corporate Recreation / Wellness, 2004: Northwest Missouri State University

**Work Experience:**
- Assistant Professor: August 2010-, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater
- Visiting Assistant Professor: August 2009 - May 2010, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater
- Adjunct Instructor: May 2009- August 2009, Oklahoma State University
- Research Associate: May 2009 – August 2009, Oklahoma State University
- Activities Program Director: 2005-2006, Northwest Missouri State University

**Research Interests:**
- Recreation associated with older adults
- Depression among older adults in long-term care
- Outdoor recreation for older adults

**Publications:**

**Presentations:**
- Multiple presentations at local, state and national level.
- Guest speaker at TRAO conference for the state of Oklahoma

**Selected Professional Service:**
- OAPHERD, Chair of Research
- Member of NRPA, ORPS, OAPHERD and TRAO
- ORPS – Special Populations Vice President Elect
Ms. Sarah Gladden, M.S.

**Position:** Leisure Activities Coordinator

**Degrees:**

Master of Science – Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Oklahoma State University (1993). Professional (Creative) Component: *Oklahoma State University Adult Undergraduate Students Recreational Leisure Needs Assessment Survey*

Bachelor of Science–Leisure Studies, Oklahoma State University (1990)

**Work Experience:**

- Dance instructor for academic Recreational Dance and Physical Education Pedagogy Rhythm/Movement classes (1998-present)
- House Director for the Farm House fraternity (1998-p and present)
- OSU Campus Recreation, manager of outdoor rental shop, ropes course instructor, and equipment room supervisor (1990-1994)
- Tutor and advisor for students with special learning needs (1988-present)
- Owner/President of The Dance Factory (dance studio) (1976-1986)

**Activity Interests:**

- Dancing: tap, country western progressive two stepping, west coast swing, hip hop and character
- Backpacking/hiking and golf
- Teaching dance for large groups at conferences and special events

**Skills and Certifications:**

- Choreographing dance routines, professional body building routines and talent events
- Designed a program for golfers called “Sports Stretch”

**Presentations:**

- Community, regional, state and national conferences, entertainment and professional presentations

**Selected Professional Service:**

- Programmer, PGA of America Rider Cup Grant (2003-2007)
B. THE GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

The program in Leisure Studies at Oklahoma State University is based on the foundation of a baccalaureate curriculum accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions under the auspices of the National Recreation and Park Association. As a result, students in the graduate degree programs are expected to fulfill the competencies encompassed in this accreditation program. In addition, OSU Leisure Studies is in full compliance with the expectations of the National Council on Therapeutic Recreation Certification for professional credentials in Therapeutic Recreation. Students at the graduate level who focus on Therapeutic Recreation are expected to comply with these standards as well. During 2010, a new avenue for accreditation of academic programs in Therapeutic Recreation has been approved and OSU is pursuing CARTE (Committee on Accreditation of Recreational Therapy Education) accreditation.

Detail on the requirements for the Master of Science degree in Leisure Studies and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Health, Leisure, and Human Performance (HLHP) with an emphasis in Leisure Studies is provided in the Appendix to this handbook. Minor adjustments may occur from year to year. However, a student is responsible for requirements in place at the time of admission and at the time of filing the individual plan of study.

The Master of Science degree in Leisure Studies at Oklahoma State University is designed as a general graduate degree with 36 hours of required courses. Applicants presenting undergraduate degrees from disciplines outside of recreation, park resources, and leisure services may be required to complete additional courses or experiences as prerequisites or within the graduate plan of study. Such requirements will be specified at the time of admission to be considered as prerequisites. The graduate advisory committee may require courses or experiences beyond the minimum of 36 hours on the plan of study to assure competency for the graduate student.

Graduates from the Master of Science degree program have been successful in a wide range of careers upon completion of the degree. These careers include campus recreation, non-profit management, therapeutic recreation, interpretive services in parks, management in municipal parks and recreation, and other branches of the profession. Selection of elective courses is an important consideration in preparation for specific career opportunities.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree in HLHP with an emphasis in Leisure Studies is designed to prepare a balanced scholar, qualified to become a productive faculty member in teaching, research, and professional service. While some graduates of the program have chosen career paths outside of the academic community, the degree program is intended to prepare faculty members in parks, recreation resources, therapeutic recreation, and leisure services.
C. THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Students may make application to graduate school through the Graduate College at any time—applications are accepted year-round. Test scores, transcripts, letters of reference, and other materials may be required as a part of the admissions process (see specifics in the Table below: “Application Process and Admissions Timeline”). Once all the required materials are in, the Leisure Studies faculty members, as a committee of the whole, review the completed application packet and make a decision about admission. All requested information is examined and all elements are important in the decision process. It is rare, for instance, for an applicant to be denied based solely on one low test score. The faculty takes into consideration all submitted materials. Thus, all pieces of your application file are important.

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are very important in the admissions decision process. The letters should address such things as: your academic capabilities, your communication skills, desire and potential for success in graduate school, and your ability to work independently. In addition, helping us to understand your knowledge and previous experience in the field is helpful.

You are encouraged to seek letters of reference from professionals who can properly evaluate these qualifications and present you at your best. Ideally the letters of reference should include former faculty members and former employers. In this way the references can address your academic qualifications and your professional involvement.

Application Process and Admissions Timeline

The only difference between the application process between masters’ and doctoral applicants is the types of materials requested; the admission timelines are essentially the same. The tables delineate the necessary steps and approximate timeline for admission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLICANT ACTION</th>
<th>SEND TO</th>
<th>TIMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Applicants</td>
<td>Complete Graduate College application and submit fee (may be done on-line)</td>
<td>Graduate College <a href="http://www.okstate.edu/">www.okstate.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request two (2) official copies of transcripts of all previous course work</td>
<td>Graduate College 202 Whitehurst – OSU Stillwater, OK 74078</td>
<td>1 to 2 weeks for receipt 2 to 3 weeks to process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request official copy of GRE test scores to be sent to OSU (code 3999)</td>
<td>College of Education Graduate Records Office 325V Willard – OSU Stillwater, OK 74078 405-744-9483</td>
<td>1 to 2 weeks for receipt 1 week to process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request three letters of recommendation</td>
<td>College of Education Graduate Records Office 325V Willard – OSU Stillwater, OK 74078 405-744-9483</td>
<td>1 to 2 weeks for receipt 1 week to process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter of application and any other supporting materials</td>
<td>College of Education Graduate Records Office 325V Willard – OSU Stillwater, OK 74078 405-744-9483</td>
<td>1 week for receipt 1 week to process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSU Timeline</td>
<td>No action is taken on your application packet until all required items have been received and processed. It can take 4 to 6 weeks from receipt of ALL application materials until packet is received by the Leisure Studies faculty. It then can take another 1 to 2 weeks to act on your application, send it back through the channels and get notification to you. Begin the application process early.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Doctoral Applicants | Complete Graduate College application and submit fee (may be done on-line) | Graduate College [www.okstate.edu](http://www.okstate.edu/) | 1 to 2 weeks for receipt  
2 to 3 weeks to process |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | Request two (2) official copies of transcripts of all previous course work to | Graduate College 325V Whitehurst – OSU  
Stillwater, OK 74078 | 1 to 2 weeks for receipt  
1 week to process |
|                     | Request official copy of GRE test scores to be sent to OSU (code 3999)  
Official scores are usually not available until 2 – 3 weeks after taking the test | College of Education Graduate Records Office  
325 Willard – OSU  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
405-744-9483 | 1 to 2 weeks for receipt  
1 week to process |
|                     | Send three letters of recommendation to  
Be sure to follow up with your references to ensure timely submission | College of Education Graduate Records Office  
325 Willard – OSU  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
405-744-9483 | 1 to 2 weeks for receipt  
1 week to process |
|                     | Submit a professional resume | College of Education Graduate Records Office  
325 Willard – OSU  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
405-744-9483 | 1 week for receipt  
1 week to process |
|                     | Write and submit a Statement of Professional Goals  
Submit a sample of your scholarly writing | College of Education Graduate Records Office  
325 Willard – OSU  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
405-744-9483 | 1 week for receipt  
1 week to process |
| OSU Timeline        | No action is taken on your application packet until all required items have been received and processed. It can take 4 to 6 weeks from receipt of ALL application materials until packet is received by the Leisure Studies faculty. It then can take another 1 to 2 weeks to act on your application, send it back through the channels and get notification to you. Begin the application process early. | | |
Levels of Admission

At Oklahoma State University, the faculty may make three admissions decisions. To be recommended as “Admission Without Qualification” constitutes a recommendation of full admission to the graduate program; this decision is made when the applicant meets or exceeds all admissions criteria. Some students may be admitted as “Admission With Qualifications.” This is admission to the graduate program with conditions. One of the most common conditions stipulates that the student must earn grades of B or better in the first 12 hours of graduate coursework to become fully admitted. A student may be denied admission to the program for a variety of reasons. For students with academic records that are below admission standards yet who show potential (or for those who might want to ‘check out’ graduate school), the faculty might recommend that the student apply to OSU as a “Special Student.” A Special Student is a non-degree seeking student, and as such, is not eligible for a Graduate Assistantship or financial aid. Once admitted to the graduate program, up to 9 credit hours of graduate coursework that was taken as a Special Student may be applied toward degree requirements. More details about admission status and grade requirements may be found in the Oklahoma State University Catalog.

Transfer of Graduate Credits:

Transfer of credits may occur if a student was formally admitted to the Graduate College at another institution. A maximum of 9 credit hours may be accepted toward a Master’s degree. Doctoral students must complete at least 30 hours of their program at OSU. Please note that no more than 9 credit hours may be transferred from institutions not granting doctoral degrees.

A Note about Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships (GAs) are often available to incoming students who start in the fall semester. There are three types of graduate assistantships available in connection with the Leisure Studies program. First, in the Leisure Studies program, both MS and Ph.D. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) are sought to teach in the Leisure Activity area. Thus, we often look for students who have skills in areas such as golf, racquetball and tennis, backpacking and hiking, rock climbing, recreational dance, weight training, physical fitness, self-defense, and bowling. Doctoral GTAs are expected to teach at least one theory course (or have other teaching experience) in the undergraduate curriculum during their tenure at Oklahoma State University.

Second, Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) are available through externally funded research projects in conjunction with Leisure Studies faculty members as principal investigators on grants and contracts. GRAs typically have the opportunity to be directly involved in research, data collection, publication, and other roles associated with assignments appropriate to the external funding.
Third, additional Graduate Assistant (GA) positions often are available through the Campus Recreation program (Intramural/Recreational Sports and Outdoor Adventure). These positions have specific job descriptions associated with individual assignments. While Campus Recreation is located in the Colvin Center, in the same building as the Leisure Studies academic program, the funding sources and supervision for the GA positions is different from that for the GTA or GRA roles.

Assistantships are competitive and are typically awarded by March of each year, to begin in the upcoming fall semester. A sample application is included in the Appendix. Periodically there are GTA/GRA/GA positions that begin in the spring semester.

D. POST ADMISSION INFORMATION

Upon admission into the graduate program in Leisure Studies, students will be assigned a temporary advisor. This person is usually the Graduate Coordinator of the program. You will meet with this person upon your arrival to campus, and the two of you will develop a Trial Plan of Study. This Trial Plan of Study will guide you in course selection and timing until you develop your Plan of Study Committee (Committee).

Academic Standing: Minimum Grade Requirements

A GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (B) is required to maintain good standing as a graduate student and meet requirements of a degree. A course with a grade below “C” may not be used as part of the minimum number of hours required. Grades below B are considered below acceptable standards for a graduate student. Any student who receives a grade below B will receive a letter of warning from the Graduate College. If a student’s overall GPA drops below 3.0, the student is subject to being placed on strict academic probation and is required to earn a minimum grade of B during the next semester of full time enrollment or 2 semesters of part-time enrollment or the student may be dismissed from the program and/or the Graduate College.

The Graduate Committee

Your committee determines and approves your Plan of Study (coursework) and oversees your culminating project—Professional (Creative) Component, Thesis or Dissertation. A minimum of three faculty members are required for a Master’s degree Committee and a minimum of four faculty members (with one member from outside the College of Education) are required for doctoral Committees. Whether for the Master of Science or the Doctor of Philosophy, all LEIS graduate committees must have a majority of the members from the Leisure Studies faculty. Therefore, two or more LEIS faculty members are required on Master of Science committees.

For doctoral committees, once a candidate has been admitted into the program, the admissions committee will assign a temporary advisor from among the Leisure Studies faculty members based on common research interests. By the third semester of enrollment in the doctoral program, the student should form an Advisory Committee that may or may not include the temporary advisor. The role of the Advisory Committee is to guide students in selection of coursework and a Plan of Study (to be filed prior completion of the 28th credit hour), and to prepare them for qualifying exams. The Advisory Committee is composed of a minimum of four faculty members holding graduate faculty standing at Oklahoma State University. Two members of the Advisory Committee may be selected by the student from among the eligible LEIS faculty members. One member of the Advisory Committee will be assigned by the LEIS faculty.
member of the Advisory Committee must meet the Graduate College definition of an “outside member” of the committee as a graduate faculty member from a department or program outside the student’s major field of study (option within the Ph.D.) and the LEIS requirement as a faculty member outside the College of Education.

**NOTE**: By Graduate College policy, only those faculty members who hold Graduate Faculty membership and are approved to chair doctoral committees may serve as Committee Chairs for doctoral committees. A faculty member who holds Graduate Faculty membership may serve as Dissertation Advisor, with oversight from the Committee Chair. Thus, for some students, Committee Chairs also serve as dissertation advisors; for others, the Dissertation Advisor and Committee Chair are two different people.

For Master’s degree committees, a faculty member who holds Graduate Faculty membership may serve as Committee Chair as well as Thesis Advisor. This is a common arrangement, although there are times when it makes sense to have one faculty member serve as Committee Chair and another faculty member serve as Thesis Advisor. Typically, the Committee Chair and Dissertation/Thesis Advisor come from one’s program of study (in this case, Leisure Studies).

An Affiliate Graduate Faculty Member may serve as a non-voting member of a graduate committee. Those faculty members who hold Affiliate Graduate Faculty Status may not serve as a Committee Chair or Thesis/Dissertation Advisor. In addition, an Affiliate Graduate Faculty member may not vote on any actions related to a graduate student Committee (i.e., they do not vote to pass or not pass a student at defense).

**COMMITTEE SELECTION**

**Selecting a Committee Chair**

The Committee Chair will oversee your overall progress toward graduation. She/he will work with you to ensure that Graduate College rules and guidelines are followed and that you are aware of various deadlines. Typically, your Chair is someone with whom you feel comfortable and share some professional interests. The selection of a Committee Chair should occur after some thought. It is recommended that students interview faculty as part of this process. The student and Chair may work together to select other Committee members.

**Changing Committee Members**

The Committee serves at the student’s request and the goal of the Committee is to facilitate a student through his/her coursework and research. Thus, it is the student’s responsibility to choose Committee members wisely. If for any reason, a Committee member can no longer serve (e.g., they leave the university), or if the student desires to change the Committee in any way, the student should pick up a “Change of Committee” form from the Graduate Coordinator to initiate the process. This form is available online at the Graduate College website.

**Function of the Committee**

As mentioned earlier, a student’s Committee works to facilitate the student’s progress toward her/his degree. The Chair works most closely with the student on many program-related tasks; Committee members are more involved at the research phase. Some Committee members prefer to be actively involved in all aspects of the research effort, while others prefer to be most
involved at the Proposal and Defense stages of research. Students are encouraged to talk with their Committee members up front to ensure full understanding of level of desired involvement.

**PLAN OF STUDY**

A Plan of Study should be completed as soon as is practical; this occurs in conjunction with your Committee Chair. For masters’ students, the Plan of Study **must** be filed **no later than prior to completion of the 17th graduate credit hour of enrollment.** For doctoral students, the Plan of Study **must** be filed **no later than prior to completion of the 28th graduate credit hour of enrollment.**

You and your Committee Chair will then schedule a meeting of your Committee to review, discuss and approve your Plan of Study. In that meeting, you will prepare the appropriate online forms for distribution and be ready to explain how your Plan of Study supports your professional goals. A preliminary idea about a thesis or special project topic may also be presented.

For the Master of Science degree, students will complete either a (1) thesis or (2) a creative component. In Leisure Studies, the faculty prefers to define the creative component as a Professional Component.

Upon approval, the student and all Committee members sign the Plan of Study form and the student delivers the form to the Graduate College. Copies of all forms and communication should be kept by the student. This Plan of Study is your contract with the university outlining what is required for degree completion. With your Committee’s approval, you may amend your Plan of Study up until the time you graduate.

**Comprehensive and Qualifying Examinations**

Masters’ students in the graduate program prior to fall 2011 who choose to do a Professional (Creative) Component rather than a Thesis are required to take comprehensive exams. Those Master of Science students admitted for the fall 2011 and beyond are required to complete a comprehensive examination whether their plan of study includes a thesis or a Professional (Creative) Component. All doctoral students take qualifying exams. Due to the comprehensive nature of the exams, they are taken during the last semester of coursework and prior to the Research Proposal meeting. “Comps” (the term commonly used to describe Masters’ level comprehensive exams) consist of a set of questions solicited from Committee members that represent the breadth of coursework and professional knowledge gained while in the degree program. Responses require an in-depth understanding of the discipline, critical thinking, and the ability to apply, integrate and synthesize the material with one’s professional aspirations. Similarly, the “Quals” (the term often used to describe Doctoral level qualifying exams) are equally in-depth and broad based. The qualifying examination is designed to assess the student’s preparedness or qualification to enter the research phase of the doctoral degree.
Masters’ level students should plan to enroll in one credit hour of independent study or thesis hours for one semester in which two major programmatic tasks will be completed:

1. Preparation of the research proposal for the thesis or professional (creative) component, and
2. Completion of the comprehensive examination.

Students should meet with their Committee Chair well ahead of time to discuss potential topic areas of the exam and to develop a preparation and study plan. It is common for students to study for two to three months prior to taking the exams. Comprehensive and qualifying exams are written exams and students are graded on each question. Should a student fail a question, she/he may re-take that item to better demonstrate her/his knowledge base. Comps or qualifying exams may be taken for a total of two times; if after two attempts, a student is unable to pass the exam, he/she will be dropped from the program. In addition to the written exam, a student may be asked to clarify items in an oral exam.

**Exam Format and Questions**

Students may take comprehensive or qualifying exams by hand or on a university-approved computer—this is agreed upon by the student and her/his Chair prior to the exam. In the Leisure Studies graduate program master’s level comps are held for a minimum of four hours; doctoral students have a minimum of eight hours of exams. Typically, students will answer 4 of 5 questions covering specific topics. Topics commonly include statistics, research methods, history and philosophy of leisure, social psychology, trends and issues, legal and ethical issues, and professional/interest issues. Masters’ level students are asked to relate much of their responses to their anticipated area of professional employment. Doctoral students are asked to relate their responses to their anticipated positions in higher education.

Once comprehensive or qualifying exams have been passed, the student will then begin work in earnest preparing his/her proposal for the Professional (Creative) Component, Thesis, or Dissertation.

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**E. THE CULMINATING SCHOLARLY PROJECT**

All graduate students will complete a culminating scholarly project. For masters’ students this will be either a Professional (Professional (Creative) Component) or a Thesis. For doctoral students, this is a Dissertation. Students are encouraged to begin work on their culminating project early in their studies. Oftentimes, ideas for a culminating project are explored and partially developed as a part of a research methods course. Actual finalization of the proposal for the Professional Component will occur during enrollment in an independent study. Similarly, finalization of the proposal for the thesis or dissertation will occur during enrollment in LEIS 5000 Thesis or LEIS 6000 Dissertation credit.

**The Research Proposal Meeting**

Prior to data collection or implementation of the project, a meeting of the Committee is required to approve the project proposal. For master’s level students, by the beginning of the third semester of coursework, you should convene a Research Proposal meeting to present the first three chapters of your Thesis, or the first three sections of your Professional (Creative)
Component. Doctoral students will generally convene the Research Proposal meeting by the beginning of their fifth semester of coursework.

Research in Leisure Studies frequently includes contact with human subjects as part of the research process. As a result, you will need to discuss a couple of topics with your advisor. These include (1) Responsible Conduct of Research and (2) Institutional Review Board. Certification of completion of mandatory compliance with federal regulations is required. This certification may be completed through an online modular course.

When writing the research/project proposal, a student works primarily with his/her thesis or dissertation advisor. The process usually entails a series of drafts of the proposal. Sufficient time should be provided for the advisor to respond to submitted material. The student is responsible for following the required format and writing style (APA, current edition).

The student may seek input from other Committee members about the research/project proposal to take advantage of specialized knowledge and expertise of the Committee. This may be accomplished with informal discussions, holding a pre-proposal meeting to fine-tune a topic or circulating the proposal to Committee members for comment.

Proposals consist of a thorough and nearly complete draft of Chapters or Sections 1-3 (Introduction, Review of Literature, Methods and Procedures). Once the advisor and student are satisfied with the proposal, a formal meeting is held with the Committee. The Committee should have the proposal for a minimum of ten working days before the meeting. The student will contact all members and arrange a location for the meeting.

The proposal meeting consists of a brief oral presentation by the student about the selection of the research or project topic, and the procedures and methods to be used in the study/project. The proposal meeting may be open to the public at the discretion of the committee chair in consultation with the student. The Committee questions the student probing for clarification and depth of understanding of the topic. The Committee evaluates the study/project and consensus is reached on the research or project (Professional Component) to be conducted. Following a successful defense of the doctoral dissertation proposal, doctoral students are officially admitted to doctoral candidacy.

Culminating Projects: Professional (Creative) Component, Thesis and Dissertation

As noted earlier, a student may choose to conduct a Professional Component rather than a Thesis. Thesis students complete 30 credit hours of coursework and 6 credit hours of research. Those who choose the Professional Component for completing the master’s degree requirements complete 34 credit hours of courses and 2 credits of Professional Component. The Professional Component is no less rigorous than a thesis, although it tends to be more applied in nature. For example, a student might choose to write a substantial grant proposal, design and evaluate a wheelchair basketball program or develop curriculum materials for an outdoor education program.
The Professional (Creative) Component. The Professional Component is an opportunity for Masters’ degree-seeking students to focus in-depth on one aspect of the profession that is of interest to them. While it is taken for fewer credits than the Thesis, the Professional Component is no less rigorous. The primary difference between the Thesis and Professional Component is that the Professional Component typically is of an applied nature, while the Thesis is a formal research project.

The Professional Component process follows the same steps as the process for the Thesis or Dissertation. This means that students must first choose a topic and have a project in mind before beginning work. The development of the topic is commonly done in conjunction with the student’s Committee Chair.

Once the project topic has been identified, the student then develops the Professional Component proposal. This project proposal is expected to be thorough and detailed.

Section 1: Introduction presents opening material to introduce the reader to the topic. Also included in the Introduction is a statement of purpose or intent (“the purpose of this project is to…”). Another item found in the Section 1 is a statement about the significance of the effort and any assumptions, limitations or delimitations of the project. Finally, in Section 1 the student may include definitions of terms to assist the reader in fully understanding the project.

It is crucial that the proposal clearly states what the product or professional component will be.

Section 2: Review of Related Literature of a Professional Component project proposal consists of background material and a review of literature. This information comes from a combination of written materials such as might be found in research journals and professional materials which would likely be drawn from professional periodicals. Additional material may be found at the agency or office related to the proposed project. This review of literature or background should be thorough and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the literature and material related to the topic. This is this section that provides the context for the entire project and it is critically important.

Section 3: Methods and Procedures of a Professional Component proposal should include an explanation of the step-by-step procedures and methods utilized to develop and implement the project. Included in this section would be the names and contact information of individuals who will be utilized in the development and implementation of the event and report. A timeline of activities will be included, as well any written scripts and other information utilized to develop, implement and evaluate the project.

References should always be included with a research or project proposal. This helps your Committee to ensure that you have, indeed, reviewed the needed literature and provide additional guidance.

These three sections (and the References) constitute the Professional Component project proposal. Again, the student develops these three sections with the assistance of his or her advisor. Once the proposal is considered
ready, the student convenes her or his Committee and presents the proposal to the Committee in an open meeting. The Committee will ask questions for clarification and to assess the student’s true understanding of the efforts she or he is about to undertake. The student is then asked to leave the room and the Committee approves or disapproves the project proposal. The next step is to actually do what was proposed, evaluate the efforts and write the final report.

Once the project is completed the student finishes the Professional (Creative) Component report. This will include the development and presentation of the final product previously proposed and approved by the committee.

The Thesis or Dissertation. The Thesis or Dissertation is an opportunity for a graduate student to delve in-depth into one specific research question that is of interest to him or her. The research study may be quantitative or qualitative in nature, and may relate to an existing research study being conducted by a faculty member. The master’s thesis may be a replicated study, while a doctoral dissertation is expected to be original research that contributes to the literature in the discipline.

To begin, students must first choose a topic and have a project in mind. The development of the topic is commonly done in conjunction with the student’s research advisor and may be an outgrowth of work undertaken in one or more graduate classes.

Once the project topic has been identified the student then develops the research proposal. This research proposal is expected to be thorough and detailed. The proposal will begin with Section 1: Introduction, which presents opening material to introduce the reader to the topic. Also included in the Introduction is a statement of the problem, the significance of the topic, and hypotheses or research questions. The researcher will need to include a list of assumptions, limitations or delimitations of the research to be undertaken. Finally, in Section 1 the student should include definitions of terms to assist the reader in fully understanding the research effort.

Section 2: Review of Related Literature of a thesis or dissertation proposal consists of background material and a review of literature. The review of literature is a review of previously published research studies, as well as related theses and dissertations. The student will include the theoretical frameworks utilized in the study, information about any instrumentation to be used, and similar information. This review of literature or background should be exhaustive, thorough and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the literature and material related to the topic. This is this section that provides the context for the entire project and it is critically important.

Section 3: Methods and Procedures of a research proposal should include an explanation of the step-by-step procedures and methods utilized to develop and implement the research. Included in this section is information about sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection methods, and anticipated statistical testing procedures.

References should always be included with a research or project proposal. This helps your Committee to ensure that you have, indeed, reviewed the needed literature and provide additional guidance.

These three sections (and the References) constitute the research proposal. Again, the student develops these three sections with the assistance of his or her research advisor. Once the proposal is considered ready, the student convenes her or his Committee and presents the proposal to the
Committee in an open meeting. The Committee will ask questions for clarification and to assess the student’s true understanding of the efforts she or he is about to undertake. The student is then asked to leave the room and the Committee approves or disapproves the project proposal.

If a student is conducting research where data will be collected from people (human subjects), before conducting the research, the student will complete and submit the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval for Use of Human Subjects form. Approval from the IRB can take from 2 to 4 weeks; once approval is gained, data collection may begin.

It is important to understand that IRB approval is a distinctly separate process from approval of the thesis or dissertation proposal. Under normal circumstances the student will complete and submit the IRB application following approval by the advisory committee of the research proposal. If modification of an earlier IRB application is necessary, or a new IRB application is required, those applications will occur after approval of the research proposal. Prior IRB approval for data collection in no way obligates an advisory committee to approve the research proposal.

Once the data are collected and the analyses are completed the student begins writing the final two sections of the thesis or dissertation. Section 4: The Results is where you will present the results of your efforts. This section of the report is a presentation of the research questions and analyses.

Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations is where you have an opportunity to discuss what you learned and put the information into context. In this section, you will relate your findings to the review presented in Section 2 and present conclusions about what you learned from this effort. Finally, recommendations for future research are offered.

THE DEFENSE

Finally, the Committee the student convenes his/her Committee when the student is ready to defend his/her Professional Component report or Thesis/Dissertation. The project or thesis/dissertation defense meeting will be advertised and is an open meeting. It consists of a presentation by the student, followed by questions from the Committee. Following all questions, the student and guests are asked to leave the room while the Committee deliberates. Consensus is ideal, but if consensus cannot be reached a majority decision of the voting members will be taken. The Chair of the Committee submits a report of the Committee action to the Graduate College following the defense. This completes the degree requirements for the student.

At the defense, members of the advisory committee will be asked to approve or disapprove the actual defense by signature. This approval form reflects the consensus or actual vote representing the committee’s decision. It is the responsibility of the chair of the advisory committee to deliver this form to the Graduate College. In addition, the advisory committee will be asked to sign a “signature page” to accompany the final thesis or dissertation when submitted. Members of the advisory committee may sign this page at the defense or defer until final review of the edited document.

DEADLINES, FORMS AND OTHER REQUIRED PAPERWORK

Students are responsible for knowing about and following all university, Graduate College, and program deadlines and paperwork requirements. This information is updated frequently on the
university website, may be found in the University Catalog, and may be obtained from the Graduate College at their website:

www.gradcollege.okstate.edu

Some of the required paperwork (all with deadlines) includes:

(1) Application materials
(2) Financial aid applications
(3) Employment applications
(4) Trial Plan of Study
(5) Official Plan of Study
(6) Updating of Plan of Study
(7) Draft of thesis, dissertation or report submitted to Graduate College for format approval
(8) Institutional Review Board approval for research
(9) Doctoral only – Admission to doctoral candidacy Upon approval of the dissertation proposal by the advisory committee
(10) Application for diploma
(11) Final semester verification Varies for domestic and international students; filed at the start of the final semester
(12) Graduation clearance Filed at the start of the final semester

All forms are available on the Graduate College website [http://gradcollege.okstate.edu]