

# Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies



## Procedural Guide for Ph.D. Students

Child Development/Early Childhood Education Specialization

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## WELCOME

Child Development/Early Childhood Education (CD/ECE) is one of two doctoral degree specializations in the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies (CYAF). CYAF is part of the College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS) at UNL.

### Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies

Our Mission: Child, Youth and Family Studies is committed to enhancing the wellbeing of children, youth, adults, and families in the state, nation, and world by improving the environments in which they live and learn.



The CYAF Identity is demonstrated and applied as follows:

- ***Applied and Translational*** experiences create real-world impacts
- Complex problems necessitate ***interdisciplinary*** collaboration
- ***Respect and human dignity*** is present in every interaction
- ***Local to global engagement*** extends perspectives and impact
- ***Diversity, equity and inclusivity*** create an environment where all can experience safety, belonging, and mutual respect

During your first year in the Ph.D. program, you will make a number of important decisions. These decisions will influence not only the direction of your doctoral training but also the course of your early career. First, you begin working with your advisor(s) and the advisory committee that will direct your studies and examine your progress at several critical points during your program. Second, you will develop your tentative plan of study to identify the courses you will take as electives and supporting emphases. Third, you will begin planning for the specific skills you will develop and experiences you will pursue in preparation for your career.

This guide is intended to clarify the purposes of, and procedures associated with, each of these decisions. Ultimately, you are responsible for learning and following departmental and graduate school policies and procedures.

### **Child Development/Early Childhood Education Doctoral Specialization**

The Ph.D. program in CD/ECE is designed to prepare students to be independent scholars in research and/or education professions. To meet this objective, all students admitted to the program will have the opportunity for:

1. An intensive research experience
2. An independent teaching opportunity
3. An international engagement

***What is an intensive research experience?*** Research experience and expertise distinguishes the doctoral degree from other degrees in higher education. Doctoral students are offered many and varied opportunities to gain research experience through graduate research assistantships, working on faculty research projects, designing and carrying out research through a doctoral seminar, and thesis and dissertation research. We ensure that students experience all phases of a research project from conceptualization and design to data analysis, presenting results at a professional conference, and submitting scholarly papers to peer-reviewed journals. Our students present their work at local, state, regional, national, and international conferences and have their work submitted, accepted, and/or published prior to graduation. Because our faculty members engage in a wide range of research using a variety of methodologies, students have opportunities to conduct qualitative and quantitative research, secondary data analysis, and to use various methodologies such as survey, interview, and observation techniques. In addition, students may choose to complete a series of courses to earn relevant certificates.

***What kinds of teaching experiences will I have?*** Doctoral students are required to take a seminar in college teaching (CYAF 920), but also have opportunities for additional teaching experiences such as guest lecturing, teaching a module of a course in a topic area of interest, or working with a faculty member through a graduate assistantship. Students are mentored by award-winning faculty members in all aspects of teaching including conceptualization and

design of class experiences and assignments, lecture design and techniques, grading and rubrics, effective communication and presentation skills, and theories of teaching and learning. We encourage students to develop skills in both in-person and online teaching. We guide our students in preparing a teaching portfolio that highlights their teaching experiences and that includes a philosophy of teaching that guides their practice. The teaching portfolio helps our students be competitive on the job market.

***What are the opportunities for international engagement?*** Our doctoral students have a variety of opportunities for international engagement. Students have conducted international research, presented their research at international conferences, and have taken study tours. Each year there are several study tours sponsored by the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies and the College of Education and Human Sciences. Our faculty members have developed international collaborations and offer study tours (e.g., Brazil, India, and New Zealand). Students have traveled to conduct research in Turkey, Colombia, Brazil, and Australia.

Each year, a small group of CYAF students (graduate and undergraduate) spend 6-8 weeks at the Anubhuti schools operated by Jain Irrigation in Jalgaon, India. Students live on the campus of the Anubhuti residential school and spend most school days embedded in the Anubhuti English Medium School, which serves children living in extreme poverty. Living on the campus provides rich opportunities to engage with the students and the faculty, develop relationships, and learn about Indian culture. Students also go on excursions to awe-inspiring cultural sites.

Hosting international scholars and students also enriches our department. We have hosted scholars from China, Brazil, South Korea, and Australia, and we frequently have international visitors for shorter periods of time.

### **Program Faculty**

Faculty advising students in the CD/ECE program area include:

- Dr. Kelley Buchheister
- Dr. Dipti Dev
- Dr. Holly Hatton-Bowers
- Dr. Soo-Young Hong
- Dr. Patty Kuo
- Dr. Amy Napoli
- Dr. Rachel Schachter
- Dr. Julia Torquati

### **Program Tracks**

The CD/ECE doctoral specialization consists of two tracks:

1. Comprehensive Ph.D. program that combines a M.S. and Ph.D. into one program;

2. Ph.D. program for students with a M.S. degree.

These are described below.

<p align="center"><b>Track 1 (Comprehensive): Entering with a Bachelor's Degree</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Track 2: Entering with a Master's Degree</b></p>
<p>Exceptional students at the post-baccalaureate level are accepted into the CD/ECE PhD program.</p> <p>Comprehensive students are strongly encouraged to complete a thesis to earn their M.S. degree on the way to the Ph.D. <i>Ultimately, this decision should be made with guidance from your faculty mentor and/or supervisory committee.</i></p> <p><b>Steps for obtaining an M.S.:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. M.S. committee consists of three CYAF faculty members.</li> <li>2. Student works with committee to determine coursework and develop Memorandum of Courses (MOC).</li> <li>3. Submit MOC prior to completing 1/2 of required coursework.</li> <li>4. Complete written exam (thesis) and final oral exam (thesis defense).</li> <li>5. The Final Examination Report for Master's Degree form must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies.</li> <li>6. Refer to Master's Degree Milestones for deadline dates.</li> </ol>	<p>The master's degree may be completed at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln or another regionally accredited university or equivalent.</p> <p>Prior M.S. credits earned may count for up to 30 credits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have attained a <u>B or better</u> for any graduate level course work to be transferred.</li> <li>• All transfer courses must be approved by the student's faculty mentor and supervisory committee. Faculty may request the student provide syllabi and rationale for how the course fits within the specialization.</li> </ul>
<p align="center">The minimum amount of graduate credit for the Ph.D. is 90 semester hours, including a dissertation.</p> <p align="center">At least 45 credit hours must be completed at the University of Nebraska after the filing of the program of studies.</p>	



**Guidance for program pacing** (shading indicates window for activities)

**Track 1 Comprehensive (Entering without M.S.): Progress towards degree**

<i>Year</i>	1		2		3		4		5		6	
<i>Semester</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
File Memorandum of Courses (MOC; required before ½ of MS credits are taken)		■	■									
MS Thesis or MS Project Work (including proposal, research, and defense)		■	■	■	■	■						
Form supervisory committee (file form same semester as program of studies [POS])				■	■	■						
File POS (required before 45 credits taken)				■	■	■						
Complete Core Coursework	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Pass Comprehensive Exam (core coursework must be completed before comps)						■	■	■	■	■		
Dissertation work (proposal, research, and defense)							■	■	■	■	■	■

**Track 2 (Entering with M.S.): Progress Towards Degree**

<i>Year</i>	1		2		3		4		5		6	
<i>Semester</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Form Supervisory Committee (file form same semester as program of studies [POS])	■	■	■	■								
File POS (required before 45 credits taken, including transfer credits)	■	■	■	■								
Complete Coursework	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
Comprehensive Exam (core coursework must be completed before comps)					■	■	■	■				
Dissertation (proposal, research, and defense)					■	■	■	■	■	■		

## ADVISING AND COMMITTEE SELECTION

### Appointment of Faculty Advisor(s)

At the time of program admission, you are assigned an advisor or co-advisors who will advise you regarding your first semester's course of study. These initial assignments are generally made based on the match between incoming students' professional and research interests and those of their faculty mentor(s). It sometimes happens that doctoral students later wish to change their advisor(s), or advisors may want to discontinue their role with a student. In this situation, the student and advisor are encouraged to meet and attempt to arrive at a mutually acceptable arrangement. The student and/or faculty member can also approach the Graduate Chair or Department Chair to facilitate resolution if necessary. Students are required to have an advisor or co-advisor from the CYAF department.

When changing advisors, you must notify the Graduate Chair by email so that the department records can be updated. Additionally, if you have already submitted your Appointment of Supervisory Committee Form to Graduate Studies, a change of advisor requires that you notify Graduate Studies and revise your form. A critical fact that students must keep in mind is that no student can progress in their program without an advisor. Hence, discontinuation from one advisor must be accompanied by realignment with another for you to continue in the program. A temporary advisor can be assigned if necessary.

### Forming the Supervisory Committee

A Supervisory Committee is established before a doctoral student has accumulated 45 credit hours, including any transfer hours but excluding research or language tools, to assure that students are under careful advisement and mentoring throughout their careers. Students complete the Supervisory Committee form as part of the program of study form and submit for approval by the Dean for Graduate Studies.

The Supervisory Committee consists of at least four resident faculty members; at least two committee members must have expertise in CD/ECE (to be determined by the advisor and CD/ECE faculty). The Supervisory Committee members are generally chosen jointly by the student and advisor on the basis of their expertise in terms of the student's research and their ability to provide help and guidance in the student's achievement of research and career goals.

All committee members must be either Graduate Faculty or Graduate Faculty Associates approved to perform specified Graduate Faculty duties. The committee must include at least one Graduate Faculty member external to the academic department or program in which the degree is to be granted but within the University of Nebraska system. If the student is pursuing a minor, the Graduate Faculty member from the minor department may serve as the outside representative.

An Appointment of Supervisory Committee form, signed by the Graduate Committee Chair, should be filed with Graduate Studies. This form names specific individuals in the following roles:

- Chair or Co-chair: The chair or co-chair of a doctoral student's committee serves as the advisor and mentor of the student. The chair or co-chair may not serve as the outside representative or a designated reader.
- Member: All members of the committee vote to allow the student into candidacy, approve an extension, and determine the outcome of the student's dissertation defense. Members may serve as the reader or outside representative.
- Reader: Two members of the committee are designated as readers. They and the chair read the draft(s) of the dissertation to determine whether the student is ready to defend. They sign the Application for Final Oral Examination if the student is approved to move forward with the defense. Special members may serve as readers. At least one reader should have CD/ECE expertise.
- Outside Representative: One member must be external to the student's major program but within the University of Nebraska system. If the student is seeking a minor, the faculty member representing the student's minor may serve as the outside representative. He or she may serve as a reader on the student's committee.
- Special Member: A faculty member from another institution outside the University of Nebraska system may serve as a fifth committee member on the student's committee. Special members may serve as readers and have voting rights for the student's committee. Only one special member may serve per committee. A special member may not serve as the outside representative.

### **Changes to the Supervisory Committee**

Changes may be made to a Supervisory Committee any time prior to the submission of the Application for Final Oral Examination using a change request form. If the Supervisory Committee chair leaves the employ of the University, retires, or is otherwise unable to serve on the Committee, Graduate Studies must be notified immediately and a change in the Committee made as follows:

- If the student has achieved Candidacy, the former chair who has left may continue to serve as co-chair of the Supervisory Committee, with approval of the departmental Graduate Committee and the Dean for Graduate Studies. A second co-chair must be appointed who is a resident Graduate Faculty member.
- If the student has not achieved Candidacy, a new chair of the Supervisory Committee who is a resident Graduate Faculty member must be appointed immediately, with the

agreement of the departmental/school Graduate Program Committee and the Dean for Graduate Studies.

- If a member other than the chair leaves the employ of the University or retires, a replacement should be appointed who is a resident Graduate Faculty member. When continuing expertise is needed and the faculty member is willing to continue serving, they may continue as a member of the Supervisory Committee, with the approval of the Supervisory Committee Chair and the concurrence of the Dean for Graduate Studies.
- Graduate faculty with emeritus status may co-chair the supervisory committees of doctoral students with a resident graduate faculty member and may continue to serve as members of committees, with approval of the graduate committee chair.

### **Working with Your Supervisory Committee**

Although exceptions exist, please be advised that most CYAF faculty have 9-month contracts. Technically, this means they are not on contract during the summer months. Faculty members often dedicate this time to their research and other personal and professional activities. Please be respectful of your committee members' time and, **unless approved by all committee members, do not schedule any committee activities (e.g., committee meetings, defenses, dissertation draft reviews) during the summer months. Advisors are asked to discourage summer committee activities.**

## COURSEWORK

### Overview of Program Requirements

The coursework required for the Ph.D. is summarized below.

		Credits (minimum)
<b>I. Coursework Related to Specialization (content courses)</b>		<b>39</b>
<i>Students are not required to take all of these courses. Courses outside of CYAF related to the specialization may also be taken to meet this requirement with approval from the Supervisory Committee.</i>		
CYAF 897A, 897D, 898, 800A, 801A	Applied experience in the Field (see notes on field placements)	3
CYAF 876 or EDPS 961	Cognitive Processes in Children Cognitive Development	3
CYAF 888	Child and Family Policy	3
CYAF 893	Special Topics in Contemporary Family Issues	3
CYAF 961	Seminar in Parent/Child Relations	3
CYAF 970	Advanced Early Childhood Education	3
CYAF 971	Seminar in Child Development	3
CYAF 973	Social Processes in Children	3
CYAF 974	Seminar in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health	3
<b>II. Departmental Coursework Required of All Doctoral Students</b>		<b>10</b>
CYAF 901	Professional Development Seminar (ProSem) (2 credits each semester for first year in the program)	4
CYAF 920	Teaching Seminar and Practicum	3
CYAF 972	Theories of Human Development and Family Relations (on campus)	3
<b>III. Research Methodology</b>		<b>15</b>
CYAF 865	Research Design and Methods	3
EDPS 941	Fundamentals of Research Design and Analysis I (preferred) Intermediate Statistics: Experimental Methods	3
EDPS 942	Fundamentals of Research Design and Analysis 2 (preferred) Intermediate Statistics: Correlational Methods	3
Electives	Additional courses selected by student and advisor(s)	6
<b>IV. Doctoral Dissertation</b>		<b>12-18</b>
CYAF 999	Dissertation Research Taken after the student has achieved doctoral candidacy.	1-6 (variable cr. hrs.)
<b>V. Additional Credits Approved by Supervisory Committee</b>		<b>15</b>
CYAF 995	Doctoral Seminar	1-6 (variable cr. hrs.)
<b>TOTAL CREDITS</b>		<b>90+</b>

## Planning Coursework

You will select your courses in collaboration with your faculty advisor(s) and supervisory committee. Generally, students are advised to complete the following courses within their **first two years** in the program in order to develop a strong foundation for their advanced studies:

EDPS 859: Required for students with no statistics background at the graduate level (comprehensive track)

CYAF 865: Research Design and Methods

EDPS 941: Fundamentals of Research Design and Analysis I

EDPS 942: Fundamentals of Research Design and Analysis II

CYAF 972: Theories of Human Development and Family Relations

All doctoral students are required to take 2 credits of CYAF 901: Professional Development Seminar (ProSem) each semester for their first year in the program.

## Transferring Coursework

UNL policy states that students are permitted to transfer in up to 30 credits for the Ph.D. Prior course work is assessed in relation to its contribution to framing a research foundation for the degree. Each course accepted must be current and relevant in relation to the desired degree. No graduate credit will be accepted from a previously awarded doctoral degree at any institution, including UNL. The final decision regarding whether prior course credit will be accepted and count towards your degree will be made by your advisor and supervisory committee.

## Program of Studies

The Program of Studies form must be filed in Graduate Studies prior to completion of half the coursework for the doctoral program. It must be filed within the same semester as the appointment of the Supervisory Committee. Any subsequent change in the program is approved by the Supervisory Committee and the action reported to Graduate Studies in writing. *The time limit on granting the doctoral degree is eight years from the time of filing the student's Program of Studies in Graduate Studies.*

For the Ph.D., at least 90 credit hours, including a minimum of 12 and maximum of 55 credits of dissertation research, must be completed. At least half of the graduate work, including the dissertation, will be completed in the student's major. The Supervisory Committee will determine what course work taken prior to filing of a Program of Studies, including credits earned toward the master's degree(s), will be accepted as part of the program. The Supervisory Committee is not obligated to reduce the doctoral Program of Studies by applying course work completed prior to its appointment.

Changes can be made to the Program of Studies via a written memo/email from the student's advisor to the Doctoral Programs Coordinator in the Graduate College, outlining the additions, deletions, or substitutions.

### Course Offering Timeline

*Note these are general patterns and subject to change. For courses outside of CYAF students are encouraged to check with corresponding department.*

Course	Typically offered
CYAF 865	Every Fall
CYAF 897A, 897D, 898	Every semester
CYAF 888	Fall/Spring
CYAF 893/895	Varies
CYAF 901	Fall/Spring
CYAF 920	Odd Springs
CYAF 942	Every Fall
CYAF 961	Odd Falls
CYAF 970	Odd Falls
CYAF 972	Even Springs
CYAF 973	Even Falls
CYAF 995	Every semester
CYAF 999	Every semester
<i>Non-CYAF Courses</i>	
EDPS 941	Every Fall
EDPS 942	Every Spring

### Guidance for Graduate Practicum at Ruth Staples Child Development Laboratory

Graduate students may wish to pursue a practicum experience at the CDL. This may include the applied experience required for degree completion. The course number used for this experience will vary based on the goals for the practicum.

- The CYAF 897A course number should only be used for graduate students interested in the curriculum of early childhood or in developing their teaching skills. Goals for the practicum would be co-developed with CDL faculty and the appropriate number of credit hours to achieve the goals will be determined. CDL faculty will supervise the 897A practicum.
- For students interested in learning more about early childhood research-related activities (e.g., assessment, observation in classrooms, etc.) these can be achieved through using the CYAF doctoral seminar (CYAF 995) or independent research experience (CYAF 898). Goals for the practicum would be co-developed with a faculty mentor (e.g., adviser, committee member) and the appropriate number of credit hours to achieve the goals will be determined. The faculty mentor will coordinate with CDL faculty. The faculty mentor will supervise the practicum.

## MASTER'S DEGREE OPTION FOR COMPREHENSIVE PH.D. STUDENTS

Comprehensive students are strongly encouraged to complete a thesis to earn their M.S. degree on the way to the Ph.D. This will help to develop strong research skills necessary for successful completion of the dissertation while building the scholarly identity of the student. *Ultimately, this decision should be made with guidance from your faculty advisor and/or supervisory committee.* Students who seek the M.S. degree will form an M.S. committee consisting of at least three CYAF faculty – including two with CD/ECE expertise.

You will work with your committee to determine coursework and develop a Memorandum of Courses (MOC), which must be submitted to the graduate school prior to completing 1/2 of required coursework. With guidance from your advisor, you will determine whether you will pursue Option A (recommended) or B to complete the requirements to earn the M.S. degree. Students should refer to Master's Degree Milestones for deadline dates. *It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to all deadlines.*

### Options to Complete the Master's Degree

**Option A** is intended for those who are preparing for careers in research and scholarly work or additional academic pursuits beyond the master's degree. Under Option A, a student must earn a minimum of 30 credit hours and present a master's thesis equivalent to 6 to 10 credit hours. At least 8 credit hours, in addition to the thesis, must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students (900 level or 800 level without 400 or lower counterparts). See guidance regarding thesis below.

**Option B** permits the completion of more intensive work in advanced courses for the thesis or minor with the addition of a scholarly project. Under Option B, at least 18 credit hours must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students (900 level or 800 level without 400 or lower counterparts). Per the Office of Graduate Studies and CYAF department guidelines, the following parameters apply to Option B:

- Student must complete a Scholarly Practice and Discovery project: CYAF 996 Scholarly Practice and Discovery (minimum 3; maximum 6 hours). Sample projects include:
  - Development of research-based online resources to support early childhood educators
  - Development of research-based early childhood Extension curriculum
  - Development of research-based guidebook to enhance early childhood educators' capacity to work with children who have disabilities
  - Coaching portfolio
- The major advisor, in consultation with the student, determines appropriateness of the scholarly project.
- A committee of three is selected by the student in consultation with advisor to consider and accept their pre-proposal, provide guidance in project development,



participate in the sharing of the project, and evaluate and approve the completed project.

- The student's project includes a focused review of literature, incorporates a theoretical framework for the work encompassed in the project, and provides practical and research-based guidance or implications for the field of child development/early childhood education.

### **Option A: The Master's Thesis**

To carry out a thesis project, you will work hand-in-hand with your advisor, and closely with your committee. You should work with your advisor to create a format that works best for your thesis. Typically, the thesis includes the following sections: introduction, comprehensive literature review, methods, results, and discussion. At the suggestion of your advisor, you may wish to share drafts (or a section) of your proposal with other committee members, especially if they have expertise in the content area or methods you plan to use to conduct your study. In most cases, however, your advisor will provide the majority of the feedback for your proposal revisions. You may need to write several drafts before your advisor considers your thesis ready for your committee to read.

### **The Proposal Meeting**

To propose your thesis, you will schedule a formal proposal meeting with your committee. Plan for 1.5-2 hours for the meeting. Advance scheduling is highly recommended because it is very difficult to identify a time that works for you and all of your committee members on short notice. Scheduling in the summer can be especially challenging because most faculty are on 9-month appointments and thus may not be available for meetings during the summer months. You are strongly advised to schedule your meeting during the fall or spring semester of the academic year. **Faculty members with 9-month appointments are not required to attend committee meetings or read drafts during the summer.**

You must give your committee a minimum of two weeks before the meeting to read your proposal unless other arrangements have been made. Send your committee members an electronic version of the thesis proposal in Microsoft Word. Committee members may provide you with feedback before the meeting or at the meeting, depending on their preference. Your advisor may ask you to prepare a brief (10-15 minute) PowerPoint presentation summarizing the key points covered in your proposal document to be shared with your committee at the meeting. Proposal meetings are intended to be supportive, but you will be asked challenging questions related to your proposed project and you should be prepared to thoughtfully answer them. After your meeting, expect to make revisions and provide the committee with a summary of the feedback you received, and if applicable, an update of any crucial changes in your research plan. You must have committee approval of your proposed research before seeking Human Subjects Approval.

Before beginning data collection, you must have Human Subjects Approval through the University Institutional Review Board approved or exempted.

### **Final Oral Examination**

When you and your advisor feel you have finalized the full draft of your thesis (including the results and discussion), you should set up a meeting of your committee for your “Oral Examination” meeting (aka. Thesis Defense). It is your responsibility to schedule this meeting and arrange for a room. Again, remember that you must give your committee a minimum of two weeks before the meeting to read your proposal. It is the student's responsibility to begin the process for making their thesis defense public. Please submit the [Dissertation and Thesis Defense notification form](#) at least 3 weeks prior to the defense date. The notification will go out to the CEHS website, social media and in hometown news releases.

Once you have scheduled the meeting, print your Final Examination Report. Your advisor will sign Part 3 of your form to indicate approval of the preliminary thesis and planned examination procedure. Complete Parts 1 through 5 — except signatures in Part 4, and ignore Part 5 if non-thesis. Submit your Final Examination Report with signatures to Graduate Coordinator in the CYAF department office. The Graduate School must receive a copy at least three weeks prior to your scheduled thesis defense.

Bring your Final Examination Report Form to your thesis defense for signatures in Part 4. At this meeting, you'll present your research and defend your findings. The defense is similar to the proposal meeting, but focuses on the actual conduct of the study, the results, and your discussion of your findings. Your committee will ask questions about your research. The questions will critique the thesis in the same way that editors and reviewers critique journal article submissions. In answering the questions, it is ok to defend and explain your research to the committee. However, you should also be able to admit weaknesses in your thesis when they are identified and modify your position as necessary. Defending the thesis is your responsibility. Even though your committee may ask very difficult questions, they are committed to your success. When weaknesses are identified, the committee members will also likely make recommendations. The goal of this process is to help make your final revised thesis the best it can be.

At the end of the defense, you will be asked to step outside the meeting room so that the committee can confer in private to discuss recommended and/or required changes and decide whether or not you have passed. When you return to the room you will learn the results of this brief meeting. You may need to do some additional work, requiring an additional meeting before your committee members will sign the Final Examination Report Form. Be sure to schedule your defense so that you have additional time afterward to complete revisions before the final copy of the thesis is due to Graduate Studies. Alternatively, your committee may only request some minor changes and sign at the meeting. You will then need to submit

your final thesis to the Master's Programs Coordinator at the Graduate School to officially complete your M.S. degree.

### **Graduate School Policies and Deadlines**

It is critical that you follow the procedures and deadlines established by the Graduate School if you want to graduate. The established dates and requirements are not flexible. Please review the Graduate School website “Doctoral Degree Milestones” for deadlines and policies for the master’s degree: <https://graduate.unl.edu/academics/program-steps/doctoral-degree-steps-to-completion>

## THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

### Introduction

The Comprehensive Exam (“comps”) is a major milestone in the journey to obtaining a Ph.D. Successful completion of the Comprehensive Exam means that you have officially entered into Doctoral Candidacy and have achieved “ABD” status (aka “All But Dissertation”). Your preparation for the Comprehensive Exam will come through course work and individual study. You are eligible to begin the comps process **after** you have completed your required doctoral coursework and **prior** to the initiation of your doctoral research. The Comprehensive Exam is an intense professional development experience that will require you to devote sufficient time and energy to its completion.

### Critical Competencies

The Comprehensive Examination is not intended to be a repetition of course examinations and/or course content. Rather, this is an intellectual and competency-based exercise that will allow you to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the field, demonstrate your ability to synthesize course work and content on relevant topics, and critically evaluate knowledge in the field. The product of a Comprehensive Exam should demonstrate both the breadth and depth of your knowledge and your abilities to integrate and apply material in multiple formats. You will be evaluated on your scientific writing skills and your ability to demonstrate critical thinking and to integrate and apply material.

### Timing of the Comprehensive Exam

You are eligible to begin the comps process **after** you have completed your required doctoral coursework. You must pass the Comprehensive Exam **prior** to the initiation of your doctoral research.

### Format of the Comprehensive Exam

For all students pursuing a doctoral degree within the CD/ECE specialization, the comps requirement is fulfilled by a written comprehensive exam. Typically, the Comprehensive Examination requirement is fulfilled by completing a synthesis and critique of research on a specific topic. Students, in consultation with their advisor and committee, may also complete a literature review, measurable objectives, methodology and potential impact and outcomes for a grant RFP.

The topic for your written comprehensive examination is determined and approved by your advisor and your Supervisory Committee, and is designed to complement your unique plan of study and career goals. As such, you will have input into the topic selection and the specific topic(s) of the written examination will be unique for each student and based on his or her professional interests, goals, and identified areas for growth.

## Starting the Process

Initial discussions of the Comprehensive Examination occur within the context of the student-advisor mentoring relationship, and are generally also discussed with the student's supervisory committee. Once a format is identified, you will develop a detailed outline of your project and share this with your advisor and committee. At this stage, your faculty mentors may provide guidance and advice regarding modifications. However, after your plans for the comprehensive exam is approved by your committee, you are expected to work independently and will not receive feedback from faculty on your writing or ideas. You are required to submit your completed Comprehensive Exam to your factor mentor(s) **no later than 12 weeks** from the date your proposal was approved.

## Evaluation of the Written Comprehensive Exam

Your primary advisor will coordinate the grading of the comprehensive examination by the Supervisory Committee. Each member of the Supervisory Committee shall have opportunity to evaluate and provide feedback on your work. Supervisory Committee members shall be permitted at least three weeks to provide their feedback. Supervisory Committee members shall report a grade of "pass," "fail," or "rewrite." The decision on the exam shall rest with the majority vote. A tie vote shall be considered a negative decision. The Supervisory Committee shall decide on procedures relative to "rewrites." Committees can determine the number of rewrites acceptable or appropriate for the student.

## Application for Candidacy and Continuous Enrollment

After you have passed your Comprehensive Exam (and at least 7 months before your dissertation defense) you must submit the Application for Admission to Candidacy Form and coordinate getting necessary CYAF and CEHS signatures before forwarding to the Doctoral Programs Coordinator in the Office of Graduate Studies.

Once candidacy is achieved, you must register for **at least one credit hour each fall and spring** until you graduate, even after meeting the total dissertation hours required by the program. **Failure to register will result in termination of candidacy and program.** You do not need to register for summer unless required by their department during an assistantship, for a student visa, to defer student loans, or for Health Center access. Academic Leave can, for eligible students, provide an exception to the continuous registration requirement. Please consult the Office of Graduate Studies to discuss this option.

## DISSERTATION

Although your dissertation may feel like an ending point, bringing years of training and effort to a close, we encourage you to think of your dissertation as a launching point for future scholarship. Ideally, dissertation research should provide you with hands-on, directed experience in the primary research/evaluation methods of your discipline and prepare you for the type of research that will be expected of you during your professional career. Your Ph.D. dissertation should: (a) reveal your ability to analyze, interpret, and synthesize information; (b) demonstrate your knowledge of the literature relating to the project and acknowledge prior scholarship underlying the dissertation; (c) describe the methods and procedures used; (d) present your results in a sequential and logical manner; (e) discuss fully and coherently the meaning of the results; and (f) demonstrate your ability to convey information clearly through writing.

### The Dissertation Proposal

With support and guidance from your faculty advisor, you will draft the Introduction/Literature Review and Methods chapters of your dissertation. Your advisor may suggest that you first draft a brief concept paper and circulate it among your committee members to approve the general concept prior to developing the full proposal. For a full proposal, you will describe your research questions, the rationale for those questions, your procedures, and your proposed analyses for your dissertation study. You will likely write several drafts before your mentor considers it ready for your committee to read. There is no specified length for the dissertation proposal. See Preparing a Dissertation for formatting required by Graduate Studies: <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees/guidelines>.

When you and your advisor feel you are ready, you will schedule a formal proposal meeting with your committee. As with the MS thesis, advance scheduling is highly recommended due to the busy schedules of your faculty committee members. You are strongly advised to schedule your meeting during the fall or spring semester of the academic year. Scheduling in the summer can be particularly difficult because most faculty are on 9-month appointments and thus are generally not available during the summer months.

You are required to give your committee a minimum of two weeks before the meeting to read your proposal unless you have specifically made other arrangements with them. Please send committee members an electronic version of your proposal in Microsoft Word. All Committee members will read the proposal and meet together to share their approval or suggest improvements for the study. Committee members may provide you with feedback before the meeting or at the meeting, depending on their preference. Your advisor may ask you to prepare a brief (10-15 minute) PowerPoint presentation summarizing the key points covered in your proposal document to be shared with your committee at the meeting. Proposal meetings are intended to be supportive, but you should expect to be asked questions related to your proposed project and you should be prepared to thoughtfully answer them. After your

meeting, expect to make corrections and provide the committee with summary of the feedback you received, and is applicable, an update of any crucial changes in your research plan.

The dissertation proposal constitutes a contract between you and your supervisory committee. Should you wish to change the dissertation substantially, written agreement must be obtained from the supervisory committee.

**You must receive approval from your Committee before proceeding to secure IRB approval or collecting any data!!!**

### **Academic Residency Requirement**

All students must ensure that they satisfy UNL's academic residency requirement before they schedule their dissertation defense (i.e., final oral examination). Academic residency requires that you enroll in a specified number of hours related to the degree within a specific timeframe. Details regarding the requirements are below:

For a student beginning a doctoral program:

- With a bachelor's degree: The requirement is 27 hours of graduate work within a consecutive 18-month period, and 15 of these 27 hours must be taken after receiving a master's along the way or completing 30 hours.
- With a master's degree: The requirement is 27 hours of graduate work within a consecutive 18-month period.
- As University staff or a person employed full-time in their major field: The requirement is 24 credit hours of graduate work within a consecutive two-year period, and 12 of these 24 hours must be taken after receiving a master's along the way or completing 30 hours.

### **Dissertation Readers**

At least 2 weeks prior to the planned dissertation defense, you must send a copy of the dissertation to the two designated "Readers" of the dissertation for review. At least one reader should have CD/ECE content expertise. This will be a complete dissertation document with Abstract, Table of Contents, and chapters for an Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results and Discussion, References, and Tables and Figures as necessary. If the Readers believe the dissertation is ready for defense, they will sign the application for final oral exam. You will then submit it to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense date.

## **The Dissertation Defense (i.e., Final Oral Examination)**

A meeting will be held (a minimum of ten) working days after each supervisory committee member receives a copy of the proposal), attended by all members of the supervisory committee. At this meeting, you will defend the proposal as a contribution to the body of knowledge in the field.

Per the Graduate School guidelines, the final examination (dissertation defense) for the doctoral degree is oral and open to the University community and the public. Your Supervisory Committee determines the structure and length of the meeting. The Graduate School states that the examination may be devoted to the special field of the dissertation or to the Candidate's general knowledge, or it may be designed to test judgment and critical powers. The Oral Exam must be announced. To do so, provide the CYAF Communications Associate with the scheduled defense date, a head shot, and the dissertation abstract.

At the defense meeting, you will present your dissertation research and defend your findings. Your committee will ask many questions about your dissertation study. The questions will critique your work and evaluate the depth and breadth of your knowledge. You should prepare for this important meeting and be ready for questions – answering the questions is your responsibility. Your committee will identify weaknesses as well as strengths of your work and make recommendations for things to do differently. Be sure to take notes (or have a designated note-taker) so that you have a detailed record of the meeting and proposed changes.

All persons who attend the defense may be present during the dissertation presentation and general questioning. However, this is followed by a closed questioning portion of the examination for which all persons except the Candidate, Supervisory Committee, and invited faculty must be excused. The final oral examination over the dissertation may be waived only with the consent of the Dean for Graduate Studies. At the end of the defense, you will be asked to step outside the meeting room so that the committee can meet briefly in private to settle on a set of recommended and/or required changes and decide whether or not you have passed. When you return to the room you will learn the results of this brief meeting. Possible outcomes include the following:

- The committee agrees unanimously that you have passed and the Report of Completion is signed by all committee members present for the defense.
- The committee agrees unanimously that you have passed but requires specific revisions before signing the Final Examination form.
  - Alternatively, the committee agrees unanimously that you have passed, but makes an “omnibus motion” giving the advisor the authority to approve required revisions. All committee members except the advisor sign the Report of Completion at the meeting. The advisor signs the Final Examination form after approving required revisions.



- One committee member dissents. The dissenting member files a letter of explanation in Graduate Studies, but you are approved for the degree and a Report of Completion is signed accordingly.
- More than one member dissents. You fail to pass the final oral exam. The committee files a report on the failure in Graduate Studies, indicating what you must do before attempting another examination. You may attempt a final oral exam only once per term.

The Supervisory Committee reports the results of the final oral examination on the Final Examination Form. You will give your signed form to Lisa King, who will obtain the remaining required signatures and forward to the Graduate School for processing. You will then need to submit your final dissertation to the Doctoral Programs Coordinator at the Graduate School to officially complete your Ph.D. degree.

**It is the student's responsibility to begin the process for making their dissertation defense public. Please submit the [Dissertation and Thesis Defense notification form](#) at least 3 weeks prior to the defense date. The notification will go out to the CEHS website, social media and in hometown news releases**

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

### Purpose and Benefits of the Graduate Assistantship (GA)

Graduate assistantships are offered by the Department as funds are available. Assistantships are competitively awarded and typically require 14 to 20 hours of work per week. Graduate assistants are required to register during the fall and spring semesters if employed as a GA during that time, but not in the summer. Graduate assistantships should be broadly conceptualized as professional development experiences for the student that confer benefits to the student as well as the faculty supervisor. Assistantships provide an opportunity for mentoring between faculty and students that enhance students' development of scholarship in the areas of teaching and research. As such, in addition to helping the faculty member, they are critical for assisting the student in building a strong foundation for later career development.

Tuition remission of up to 12 hours per semester of appointment is provided as a benefit of eligible assistantship employment. Some GAs provide summer tuition remission. Assistantships also provide reduced fee basic individual student health insurance. If a student resigns or the assistantship is terminated during the semester before 120 days of service have been completed, all tuition benefits will be lost. The student is then responsible for paying the total tuition cost and health insurance premium.

To be eligible for benefits, an assistantship must meet all of the following criteria:

- The appointment is continuous for 4 full months within the semester.
- The stipend meets the minimum requirement set by the Office of Graduate Studies.
- The assistantship or combination of assistantships in one or more departments totals at least 13.33 hours and no more than 20 hours per week.

### Funding Priorities

Full-time doctoral students (registered at least 9 credit hours, or 1 credit hour after establishing candidacy) in residence (physically on campus) are prioritized for assistantship funding during their first four years in the program. Students in years 5+ of enrollment must submit a request for funding to the Graduate Chair. Students who have received poor performance evaluations in prior years will not be prioritized for assistantship funding.

### GA Responsibilities

As a GA, you are responsible for completing a plan of work for each semester with the supervising faculty person to whom you are assigned and submitting that plan to the Graduate Coordinator. You will be expected to complete assignments specified within the plan of work and participate in an evaluation session at the mid-point and conclusion of each semester with the faculty supervisor. Responsibilities specific to the different types of assistantships are below.

Teaching Assistant (TA) Responsibilities (see [graduate teaching assistant handbook](#) for details):

- Work cooperatively with supervising faculty and other teaching assistants to accomplish the tasks set out by the TA assignment.
- Give adequate attention to the teaching role by conscientious efforts in planning, preparing, and implementing TA assignments.
- Take advantage of orientation and training opportunities offered as professional development; use the library and other services provided by Graduate Studies on teaching and learning.
- Engage in reflective evaluation of teaching activities.

Research Assistant (RA) Responsibilities:

- Learn the research methods and ethical dimensions of the discipline.
- Maintain integrity in collecting, analyzing, and presenting research data.
- Preserve the data collected during experiments or noted during research to avoid future confusion or disputes about access or ownership.
- Recognize that the faculty advisor is responsible for monitoring the accuracy, validity, and integrity of the student's research. Careful, well-conceived research reflects favorably on the student, the faculty advisor, and the University of Nebraska.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the faculty advisor's professional activities and research prior to presentation or publication, in accordance with existing practices and policies of the discipline.

### **Performance Evaluations**

At mid-semester and again at the close of each semester, the supervisor of graduate assistantship evaluates the quality of the GA's work. The faculty member and GA are encouraged to discuss the evaluation together, prior to signing or submission to the Department Chair. A poor GA evaluation (i.e., overall performance rating of 1) may result in termination of assistantship and/or jeopardize future assistantship awards.

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

CYAF conducts an annual review of doctoral students in order to evaluate each student's progress, identify areas for improvements, and proactively address concerns so corrective action can occur. Suggestions for further growth and opportunities to develop appropriate scholarly skills will be made to allow for outstanding student accomplishments to be brought to the attention of the faculty.

### Evaluation Process

1. Each spring, students are asked to submit to a Sharepoint folder the following documents:
  - a. CV
  - b. List of accomplishments over past year, progress toward graduation goals, and any concerns/problems/challenges to meeting graduation goals.
2. GA Supervisor evaluations will be added to the SharePoint folder.
3. Advisors/Mentors are tasked with writing an annual report of each of their doctoral advisees/mentees documenting each student's:
  - a. Annual progress made toward graduation goals as well as accomplishments; and
  - b. Noting any personal and/or professional concerns that are challenging progress toward graduation goals.
4. Annual letters become part of each student's permanent file.

You will be responsible for uploading these documents into your CYAF Box folder annually by April 15. Evaluations of assistantship performance (submitted by assistantship supervisors) will be added by the graduate program's administrative assistant prior to faculty review. A letter summarizing results of the student's annual review will be generated by the primary advisor. A copy of the letter will be placed in the student's permanent department file. You will meet with your faculty advisor(s) to discuss the results of the evaluation. Students have the right to respond to the evaluation letter within 5 working days of receipt. Letters will be reviewed by the Graduate Executive Committee and included in the student's file along with the annual review letter.

## CHANGE OF DOCTORAL SPECIALIZATION

Although infrequent, students sometimes determine that the specialization program in which they are studying is not the best fit and that a different specialization is more appropriate for their professional growth. You may not transfer in the first semester of the program or after having submitted a Plan of Studies form to the Office of Graduate Studies. Provided these conditions are met, change in specialization within CYAF is possible. Students should be aware that continuing financial support is not guaranteed to students transferring specializations. In addition, be aware that you cannot progress in any doctoral program without a faculty advisor. In seeking to identify a new faculty advisor you are encouraged to carefully consider the following:

- The number of students the faculty member is already working with;
- Connection between the faculty member's research program and student research interests;
- The faculty member's working relationship with other advisees and the demands on their time that may make them less available to mentor you;
- The types of opportunities you will have:
  - What kinds of research experiences will you get?
  - Will there be publication opportunities? Grant writing opportunities?
  - What kinds of opportunities will you get to apply your knowledge in the service of others or in a policy context?

**For students wishing to change specialization programs within CYAF, the following process must be followed:**

1. Students must meet with their advisor in their current program to discuss a desire to switch programs.
2. Student must meet with advisor they desire to work with if the transfer is approved.
3. Student must submit a formal letter to the graduate education Chair indicating the reason for transfer and, in the letter, identify a new advisor in the specialization are they intend to switch to.
4. The student's letter and original graduate application file is reviewed by program faculty in the area in which the student wishes to transfer (CD/ECE or GFHWB);
5. If approved (and if the identified chairperson agrees to serve as the new advisor), [a formal transfer form](#) is signed by student, grad faculty chairperson, new committee chair/advisor and former advisor.
6. The form remains in student's file.

## PROBATION AND TERMINATION

High quality graduate education depends upon the professional and ethical conduct of the participants. Faculty members and graduate students have complementary responsibilities in the maintenance of academic standards and the creation of high-quality graduate programs. Excellence in graduate education is achieved when both faculty and students are highly motivated, possess the academic and professional backgrounds necessary to perform at the highest level, and are sincere in their desire to see each other succeed.

Students who do not adhere to university expectations of professionalism or maintain satisfactory progress may be subject probation, be terminated from a degree program, or be denied permission to continue graduate studies at the University. Upon termination from a graduate degree program and/or dismissal from the Graduate College, students may apply for admission to another degree or admission as a non-degree-seeking student only with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. No student on probation may receive a Graduate degree.

For all graduate students at UNL, probation or termination recommendations may be made under the following conditions:

- Violations of the [Student Code of Conduct](#);
- Failure to satisfy [Scholastic Grade Requirements](#);
- Failure to pass the comprehensive examination or final degree examinations; or
- Failure to master the methodology and content of one's field in a manner that is sufficient to complete a successful dissertation.

Although rare, program termination may occur if a student fails to satisfy conditions required for removal of probationary status.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

### Overview

Doctoral students in candidacy are required to maintain active status through continuous registration from the time they advance to candidacy until they graduate. In the event that a student is unable to continue active participation, the student must complete an Academic Leave of Absence to temporarily suspend his or her graduate studies and the pursuit of a degree. However, before taking a leave, you should explore alternatives, discuss the impact on their plan of study with the graduate chair and their faculty advisor, and develop a strategy for completing the degree program. You may be better served by alternatives that maintain your enrollment and eligibility for student services.

### Graduate Studies Policies

An Academic Leave of Absence may be granted to students for illness or injury, to provide care or assistance for family and dependents, to meet military service obligations, or for other personal reasons. A leave can be used to suspend study for one semester up to a full academic year during which the student is not expected to make progress toward their degree. The one-year time limit can be extended for military service or in other cases subject to approval by Graduate Studies. A leave can be granted for current and/or future semesters only, not for prior semesters.

Students granted a leave are not required to register for any credit hours for the period covered by the leave. With no enrollment, no tuition and fee costs are accrued during the leave. The time limit for reaching candidacy or for completing the Ph.D. is extended only by the number of semesters the student is on leave. For Ph.D. students in candidacy, an approved leave satisfies the continuous enrollment requirement. Students returning from an approved leave do not need to be readmitted.

### To be eligible for academic leave, you must:

- Be a doctoral student in good standing (3.0 or above), with at least one semester of prior graduate enrollment at UNL.
- Be admitted into candidacy by Graduate Studies.
- Get approval from your graduate program.
- Have no course enrollments for the duration of the leave. If you are already enrolled during the leave, you must officially withdraw from courses.
- If you are an international student, you must get approval from the International Student and Scholars Office (ISSO). SEVIS updates may be needed and immigration regulations may restrict eligibility; ISSO can help to identify other possible courses of action.

## **Implications of Taking a Leave**

While you are on academic leave you should expect to make no academic progress. A student on leave cannot: 1) Take qualifying examinations for advancement to candidacy or final examinations for the degree (although language competency examinations are allowed); 2) File a thesis or dissertation; 3) Make extensive use of faculty/staff time or resources (except for planning a return from leave); or 4) Receive academic credit for work done during the leave at another institution (unless approved in advance by the faculty advisor and Graduate Studies).

If you have federal financial aid or loans it is your responsibility to consult the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid and/or your loan agency before applying for a leave, to determine how a leave could affect aid, eligibility to defer loan repayment, and loan status.

While on leave you cannot be registered for classes and you will not receive the benefits, services, and eligibility associated with registered-student status. This includes having fellowships, a graduate assistantship and associated benefits (e.g., tuition remission, student health insurance and services at the University Health Center, @unl.edu email address), and access to the UNL Campus Recreation Centers or other campus facilities (e.g., research laboratories, equipment, and other controlled-access campus facilities).

## **Procedures**

You should consult your faculty advisor and the department's graduate chair to determine whether a leave is the most appropriate course of action. If you decide to take a leave, you must submit a completed Academic Leave of Absence form to Graduate Studies with the required signatures. Upon approval by Graduate Studies, an email notification with a copy of the signed form is sent to the student, graduate chair, and faculty advisor. To extend an approved leave, you must notify the graduate program chair and your advisor at least four weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the leave terminates. An extension requires approval of the department and ISSO if you are an international student.

Students on academic leave must notify Graduate Studies of their intent to return in writing, to [graduate@unl.edu](mailto:graduate@unl.edu), at least four weeks prior to the end of the leave. The Master's or Doctoral Specialist in Graduate Studies will notify the CYAF graduate chair and your faculty advisor of your intent to return.



## CONDUCTING HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

### Required Training in the Protection of Human Subjects

All personnel involved in the conduct of exempt and non-exempt human participant research must receive training in the protection of human participants as required by federal law (hotlink to <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/common-rule/index.html>). Training in the protection of human participants is first accomplished through completion of a web-based training program, the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI). All doctoral students in CYAF will complete their CITI training in the first semester of their enrollment in CYAF 901: Professional Development Seminar.

### Definition of Social Science and Behavioral Research

In CYAF, most of the research you will be involved in (and conduct yourself with the guidance of your faculty mentor!) is social and behavioral research. UNL's IRB specifies the following: "Social science and behavioral research includes all research performed with intent to develop generalizable knowledge (i.e., test a hypothesis and draw conclusions) about behaviors, attitudes, and interactions among and between individuals, groups, and cultures. Generally, this category of research has no intent of producing a diagnostic, preventive, or therapeutic benefit to the participant who is not seeking nor expecting a health benefit from the research. There may, or may not, be any prospect of direct participant benefit associated with this category of research." According to the IRB, types of research involving human participants that may fall under the social science and behavioral research category include, but are not limited to:

- Qualitative social science research
- Ethnographic research
- Oral History research
- Observational research
- Survey research
- Education research
- Criminal justice research

**Before beginning ANY data collection for ANY project, you must have your research protocol approved (or exempted) by the UNL Institutional Review Board.**

**Failure to follow this requirement will result in disciplinary action by both the IRB and the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies.**

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Conferences and Travel Funding

An important part of your development as a scholar is learning to share your work in professional contexts with your disciplinary peers. You are strongly encouraged to talk with your faculty mentor about their membership in professional organizations and the conferences that they attend. As a doctoral student, you should be submitting abstracts and seeking to present posters or talks at national or international conferences each year while you are in training. This helps to build your CV, provide a pathway to manuscript publication, develop your breadth and depth of knowledge in your field, and make connections with future mentors and/or colleagues.

We recognize that attending conferences is expensive and can create a financial burden for students. Several resources are available to help students defray the costs associated with attending and presenting their work at professional conferences (e.g., air travel, hotel, conference registration, meals). These include the following:

CYAF offers travel grants for graduate students to present at Scholarly Meetings. Students may receive up to \$200 in funding per academic year. To request funding, please send an email to Catia Guerrero. CEHS also offers travel grants to encourage and support graduate student presentations at regional, national, or international conferences. Awards will be made based on the merit of the request, the relative merit of the conference, the student's academic progress, and the availability of funding. The maximum amount awarded to one individual is \$350. Information about CEHS travels funds is found:

<https://cehs.unl.edu/documents/cyaf/gradStudentTravelGrants.pdf>.

Students whose mentor(s) has an IANR research appointment are eligible to apply for the Larrick/Whitmore Graduate Student Travel Grants Program. The maximum award is \$400 and is awarded on a competitive basis. Students may only receive one travel grant per degree program (1 for M.S. and 1 for Ph.D.). Additional information about this resources is found here: <https://ard.unl.edu/larrickwhitmore-graduate-student-travel-grants>. To determine if you are eligible for this grant please speak with your mentor.

Travel awards are also available to students through the Office of Graduate Studies. These awards provide support for student travel to present at professional conferences as well as student travel for work directly related to dissertation/thesis projects. You may request up to \$1,500 per academic year. Students submit a completed application & supporting documentation at least one month prior to the proposed trip. Important details regarding eligibility, application requirements, and deadlines can be found here:

<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/funding/travel-awards>.

## **Preparing Future Faculty Program**

The Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program at UNL is a professional development opportunity for advanced doctoral students whose career goals include pursuing a faculty position. You will learn about faculty roles and responsibilities (research/scholarship, teaching, service) and gain direct knowledge of the diversity of higher education institutions (large public research, liberal arts, comprehensive, private religious, etc.) through a structured mentoring experience with partner institution mentors.

Advanced doctoral students are selected by procedures internal to each participating department. Once selected, Fellows are enrolled in GRDC 900A, 900B, and 900D (for a total of 3 credit hours), earning 2 credits for participation in an on-campus seminar offered during the summer pre-session. During the fall semester, each Fellow engages in structured mentoring activities at a partner campus with a faculty member in the Fellow's own discipline. The additional one credit is awarded at the end of the fall semester, after completion of the mentoring experience. Fellows may opt for a spring mentoring activity at a second campus.

If you are interested in the PFF program, please review additional details the PFF website (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/professional-development/preparing-future-faculty>) and discuss with your advisor. Students wishing to be recommended for the program should then contact the CYAF Graduate Chair.

## **Campus-Wide Workshops for Teaching Assistants**

The Office of Graduate Studies offers workshops on teaching and professional development topics throughout the year. All workshops are offered in-person on City Campus and will also be available simultaneously via Zoom. Teaching workshop topics vary each semester, but topics may include inclusive teaching and diversity statements, teaching online, teaching statements and portfolios, and understanding student motivation. Professional Development workshops generally focus on CVs/resumes and cover letters, interviewing, Individual Development Plans, wellness and time management, and more. For more information, see: <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/professional-development/ta-workshops>.

## **Institute for International Teaching Assistants**

International graduate students for whom English is not their native language and who expect to receive instructional assignments must successfully complete the Institute for International Teaching Assistants. The Institute prepares international graduate teaching assistants from various UNL departments to teach American undergraduates. Participants attend a two-week intensive training program that focuses on instructional strategies, classroom management and active learning, English pronunciation and intonation, and cross-cultural communication. Morning sessions are devoted to teaching and language development, while the afternoon sessions consist of micro-teaching practice where participants receive immediate feedback on their teaching skills from ITA faculty, undergraduate students, and ITA

peers. Applications are not accepted from students. Students who will need to participate in their training should contact the Graduate Chair, who will complete and submit the ITA Institute application on behalf of the student. Additional information can be found here: <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/professional-development/ita>.

### **UNL Research Fair**

The UNL Research Fair is a campus wide celebration of research and creative activity. Since 2000, the Research Fair has been a chance to celebrate faculty success, showcase student work and engage in professional development. The Research Fair is held each semester, with faculty and postdoc events in the fall, and graduate and undergraduate activities in the spring. Each event is tailored to UNL's research priorities and broader campus interests. Students may present posters that they have prepared and presented (or will present) at other professional conferences. This is an excellent opportunity to make connections on campus, share your work, and practice your presentation skills. Please see the Office of Sponsored Program page for more details: <https://research.unl.edu/researchfair/>.

### **ORED Grant Writing Workshop**

UNL's Office of Research and Economic Development offers a grant writing seminar, "Write Winning Grant Proposals," each spring semester (<https://research.unl.edu/grant-writing-seminar/>). This free seminar is offered each year primarily for UNL faculty. However, if spots are available, graduate students are welcome to attend. The seminar addresses practical and conceptual aspects important to the proposal writing process, including idea development, identification of appropriate granting agencies, how to write for reviewers, and tips and strategies of proven value in presenting an applicant's case to reviewers. Students and faculty who have attended this program in the past have found it extremely beneficial.

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PH.D. STUDENT SUCCESS

**Places to look for information when you aren't sure what to do, when to do it, or where to go to get it done:**

Departmental website: <https://cehs.unl.edu/cyaf/resources-graduate-students/>

UNL Office of Graduate Studies: <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/home> and  
<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/degrees>

UNL Registrar: <https://registrar.unl.edu>

**Help with writing or research, statistical support, or the design of posters and other materials:**

Writing Center: <https://www.unl.edu/writing/home>

NEAR Center: <https://cehs.unl.edu/edpsych/near-center/>

Pixel Lab: <https://cehs.unl.edu/cehs/pixel-lab/>

University Libraries: <https://libraries.unl.edu>

**When your technology fails you:**

ALTC: <https://cehs.unl.edu/cehs/information-technology/>

Husker Tech: <https://its.unl.edu/huskertech/>

**When you need to attend to your physical and mental well-being:**

Campus Recreation and Outdoor Education: <https://crec.unl.edu>

Health resources: <https://cehs.unl.edu/cyaf/health-resources/>

**Living in Lincoln, NE:**

<https://www.lincoln.ne.gov>

## IMPORTANT FORMS

**Link to Forms for Master's Degree Completion:**

<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/degrees/masters>

**Link to Forms for Ph.D. Degree Completion:**

<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/degrees/doctoral>