Water Resources Management Program Handbook

Welcome
Welcome to the Master of Science Program in Water Resources Management (WRM) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This interdisciplinary program is intended to provide students with the background to better understand technical, economic, and social issues associated with the utilization of the Earth’s limited water supply. In choosing to enter this program, most students will be broadening their knowledge base well outside of their previous educational experiences, which can be both intimidating and exciting. Understanding the steps needed to complete your degree program will make the process seem less intimidating, so please review this handbook carefully as you begin your graduate studies, and then refer to it as you progress.

Michael J. Nicholl, Ph.D.
Director, Water Resources Management Graduate Program

Mission Statement(s)
The Water Resources Management (WRM) program in the College of Sciences at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas is a flexible, interdisciplinary course of study leading to a Master of Science degree. It is a technically and scientifically based program that blends the physical aspects of the hydrologic sciences with policy and management issues.

Purpose
The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the UNLV Graduate Catalog, as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: valarie.burke@unlv.edu or kendall.hartley@unlv.edu.

Program Faculty
Faculty must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in this program, visit the Graduate Faculty status web page.

Program Information
Master of Science in Water Resources Management

Subplan 1: Thesis Track
Subplan 2: Professional Paper Track

Contact Information
Program Website: http://www.unlv.edu/sciences/wrm/

Director
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Program Requirements
Program requirements regarding admission, coursework and culminating experience are found in the graduate catalog.

Advisory Committee Guidelines
All students in the Water Resources Management Program are required to form an advisory committee that is consistent with the policies of the UNLV Graduate College. In addition to the Graduate College policies, the committee must have at least one member whose home department is within the UNLV College of Sciences. Students are expected to consult with the WRM Program Director prior to finalizing their advisory committee.

Degree Program Benchmarks
Research Prospectus
All WRM students are required to prepare and defend a research prospectus that defines the research question and scope of work to be completed for their culminating experience. Prior to developing a research prospectus, the student is expected to have extensive discussions on the topic with their advisor. The selection of the research topic is the responsibility of the individual student, and not that of the faculty member with whom the student desires to work. In addition, a faculty member may decline to direct any project. Once a student and their advisor have agreed to the nature and scope of research needed to satisfy the culminating experience component of their degree, the student is required to prepare a research prospectus and present it to their advisory committee for approval.

The research prospectus must clearly define the research problem to be considered, explain the importance of the problem, outline the approach that will be implemented to address the problem, and predict the expected outcome. The research prospectus should be sufficiently clear that the advisory committee is able to assess if: 1) the project is feasible; and 2) the student is prepared to embark on the proposed course of research.

The format and length of each individual research prospectus will be determined by discussions between the student and their advisor. A typical research prospectus submitted by a student in the WRM Program would include a 250-word abstract, six or more pages of double-spaced text, supporting figures, formatted references, a realistic budget, and a proposed time schedule for completion.

The research prospectus should be submitted to the student's advisor as early as possible, and prior to starting the actual research. The student is required to have their advisor's approval before scheduling a meeting of their advisory committee to present and discuss their research prospectus. The nature of the presentation is up to the advisor, but typically involves a 15-20 minute oral presentation by the student. The research prospectus must be provided to the full advisory committee at least one week prior to the meeting. Following the committee meeting, the student should revise the research prospectus in accordance with suggestions from the committee. The advisory committee signals their approval of the research prospectus by signing the Prospectus Approval Form, which can be found on the UNLV Graduate College website. The signed research prospectus must be approved by first the WRM Program Director, and then the College of Sciences before it is forwarded to the Graduate College for final approval. If the student's thesis research changes in a substantive manner after the research prospectus is approved, a new Prospectus Approval Form must be submitted and approved.

Subplan 1: Thesis Track
Thesis
Students pursuing their degree in WRM through Subplan 1 are required to produce and successfully defend a research thesis as their culminating experience. The thesis must be prepared in collaboration with the student's advisor and follow formatting directions available on the Graduate College website. Every thesis is unique, and individual advisors follow their own procedure in advising students. Students are encouraged to review previous theses produced by their advisors' former students and other students in the WRM Program. There is no formal length requirement for a WRM thesis, the actual length will depend on the amount of material required to address the questions posed in the
research prospectus. The advisory committee will have final say. The thesis may be written in the form of a manuscript suitable for publication; however, the advisory committee must review and approve the manuscript before it is submitted to a journal.

Writing the thesis is the student’s responsibility, and may require multiple drafts before it is submitted to the advisory committee. Each student should be aware that their advisor has other commitments that will restrict their ability to review an individual thesis. Students should expect that their advisor will need a minimum of two weeks to review each draft of their thesis. This review and revision process may take several months. The thesis is not distributed to the other members of the advisory committee until the advisor deems it ready for their review. The advisory committee then has two weeks to review the draft and decide if it is ready to be defended. Committee members may suggest revisions and wish to see revised drafts before they concur that the thesis is defendable. The student is required to discuss suggested revisions with both the committee member and their advisor.

Thesis Defense
The student may schedule their thesis defense to occur a minimum of two weeks after the committee has concluded that the draft thesis is defendable. The thesis defense cannot be scheduled during university holidays, weekends, or the summer unless all committee members agree in advance. The composition of the committee shall not be changed to facilitate scheduling during these periods. The student is required to notify the WRM Program Director of the defense and post clearly visible notices advertising the defense in the building where their advisor’s office is located. These notifications must occur at least one week in advance of the thesis defense.

Students in the WRM Program are required to follow all requirements for the thesis defense stated in the Graduate Catalog. The first portion of all WRM thesis defenses is open to the public. Each defense will begin with an introduction by the advisor that includes a concise explanation of the examination procedure. The student will then give an oral presentation that summarizes their thesis. The presentation should be about 25 minutes in length and may not exceed 45 minutes. The public audience will be invited to ask questions following the presentation. At the end of this brief discussion period, the public audience will be excused and the advisory committee will proceed with their examination of the candidate. After completion of this question and answer period, the student will be dismissed, and the examination committee will evaluate the student’s performance with the advice and consultation of any other graduate faculty members that may be present. After completing their deliberations, the committee should discuss their conclusions with the student and record the outcome on the Culminating Experience Form, found on the Graduate College website. The student should prepare this form and provide it to their advisor prior to the thesis defense. If the outcome of the thesis defense is passing, the student must make any needed changes to the thesis and submit the final document to the Graduate College.

Subplan 2: Professional Paper Track
Students in the WRM Program who are seeking their degree under Subplan 2 (Professional Paper) are required to follow the same procedures as for Subplan 1 (Thesis) with the following differences:

1. The scope of work required to complete a Professional Paper is expected to be considerably less than for a typical Thesis. The credit requirements in the degree program should be used as a rough guide; an approved Thesis counts for 6 credits of the degree program and an approved Professional Paper counts for 3 credits.
2. The advisory committee may choose to have an open or closed defense of the Professional Paper.
3. Copies of the approved Professional Paper are submitted to the advisor and the WRM Program Director, the Graduate College is not provided with a copy.

Program Timeline
The time required to complete the Master of Science degree in Water Resources Management (WRM) is highly variable. Many students in the WRM Program are seeking their degree part-time or are admitted with conditions that must be met before they proceed with their coursework and/or
research. Both of these scenarios will extend the time required to complete the degree. Students who intend to finish in four semesters should plan on meeting the following timetable.

Recruitment of advisory committee - end of the first semester
Successful defense of the research prospectus - end of the second semester
Submission of a draft thesis or professional paper - start of the fourth semester

**Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines**
UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the graduate catalog.

All students in the WRM Program must adhere to the UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity provided in the graduate catalog. This policy applies to all academic endeavors, including preliminary drafts.

In accordance with Nevada Law (NRS 200.650), students are prohibited from recording meetings or discussions without the full consent of the involved parties.

**Annual Review Procedures**
Each spring term, graduate students are required to complete the Graduate Student Annual Review survey. This survey will be sent by the Graduate College to the student’s Rebelmail account. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress while setting goals for the year ahead.

**Discipline Resources**
The WRM Program is interdisciplinary in nature. As such, outside resources used by students will vary with their academic/professional objectives and the topic of their Culminating Experience. Students are expected to consult with their advisor regarding: professional organizations, important journals, professional conferences, and the writing/reference style to be used in completing their culminating experience (Thesis or Professional Paper).

**University Resources**

**Academic Success Center**
The goal of the Academic Success Center is to help students do well academically and complete they studies on time. They offer or will refer you to such programs and resources as tutoring, advising, skills testing, career exploration and more. They guide students every step of the way to the many established resources created to ensure they complete their educational goals. Learn more about the programs and services the center currently offers.

**Alumni Association**
With an alumni base 90,000 strong, the UNLV Alumni Association offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

**Commencement Office**
Located in the UNLV Registrar’s Office, the commencement office is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College.

**Office of Diversity Initiatives**
The vision of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to provide leadership and
support for UNLV’s diversity mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment*. This Office also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**
The DRC is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

**Office of International Student and Scholars**
International Students and Scholars (ISS) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

**Jean Nidetch Women's Center**
The Jean Nidetch Women’s Center is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women’s Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

**UNLV Libraries**
UNLV Libraries has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

**Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)**
The Graduate & Professional Student Association serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

**Office of Student Conduct**
The Office of Student Conduct is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Conduct collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the *UNLV Student Code of Conduct* by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

**Office of Veteran Services**
The UNLV Office of Veteran Services is staffed with veterans and GI Bill-experienced staff to assist more than 1,000 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.
The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office
The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

Writing Center
This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the Online Writing Lab (OWL) page.

University Policies and Procedures
Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:

- Academic Integrity
- Activation for Military Service
- Change of Address
- FERPA/Privacy Rights
- Health Insurance - Mandatory
- Jeanne Clery Campus Safety and Security Report
- Proof of Immunization
- Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects
- Rebelmail Policy
- Student Conduct Code
- Student Computer Use Policy
- Title IX

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the Graduate Catalog:

- Academic Calendar
- Academic Policies
- Admission and Registration Information
- Degree Progression Policies & Procedures

In addition, the Graduate College website contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.

Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.

Handbook Information

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