

# UNLV | HARRAH COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY



**Master in Hospitality Administration (MHA)**  
**Graduate Student Handbook**  
**2025-2026**



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## **Master in Hospitality Administration (MHA)**

### **Welcome From Dean Cárdenas**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the William F. Harrah College of Hospitality graduate programs. You are now part of one of the most prestigious hospitality management programs in the world – a position that comes with great opportunities as well as great responsibilities. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it!

As a graduate student you will certainly face new challenges, but you will do so in a nurturing, supportive environment. Our students work with a diverse group of faculty and students with varied skillsets and experiences. Together, we will support you as you progress academically through the program—helping you gain the latest skills, discover new opportunities, and connect with the future leaders of the hospitality business.

We will also provide you with the administrative assistance you need to reach your academic goals. The college's Office of Graduate Programs will guide you through our internal policies and processes and share regular updates about opportunities and resources available to hospitality graduate students. Plus, you'll have access to an award-winning Hospitality College Advising team, a dedicated librarian to help you navigate resources for research, and a Career Services Center that can connect you with mentorship, internship, and job opportunities. I also encourage you to get involved in graduate student organizations, such as our Hospitality Graduate Association, which often host network-building events.

I hope you enjoy your time at UNLV. If I can be of any assistance, please stop by my office located in the Dean's Suite of Hospitality Hall on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor or email me at [david.cardenas@unlv.edu](mailto:david.cardenas@unlv.edu).

Thank you for choosing the Harrah College of Hospitality.

David Cárdenas, Ph.D

Dean, William F. Harrah College of Hospitality



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**Welcome from Your Associate Dean of Research, International Programs and Graduate Affairs**

Welcome to the Master of Science in Hotel Administration! This degree will provide you with a competitive edge in the hospitality industry, enabling you to reach professional milestones beyond what an undergraduate degree can offer. It will also equip you with valuable skills for a career in hospitality education if that's your path.

The Graduate Programs Office at the William F. Harrah College of Hospitality is here to guide you throughout your studies. A faculty program advisor is available to answer any questions regarding coursework and to help you plan your professional project, which you will complete at the end of the program. The Director of Graduate Programs is also available to assist with academic advising, course registration, completing forms, and navigating processes. Feel free to schedule a Zoom or phone meeting by reaching out via email. It's a good idea to check in with one of them each semester to stay on track with your degree requirements. For contact details, visit the [Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs Staff](#).

I look forward to getting to know you, supporting you throughout the program, and celebrating with you as you graduate with your Master's in Hotel Administration!

Seyhmus Baloglu, Ph.D.,CHE

Associate Dean of Research, International Programs and Graduate Affairs

Sam and Mary Boyd Distinguished Chair

Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Marketing

William F. Harrah College of Hospitality



## William F. Harrah College of Hospitality

### Vision

Our vision is to pioneer the advancement of global hospitality through innovative education, research, and service.

### Mission

To fulfill our vision and achieve our top initiatives, our mission is to:

- Deliver resources and experiences that empower student, educator, and alumni success
- Engage in cutting-edge research that advances knowledge and moves industry forward
- Ensure our curriculum is responsive to the ever-changing needs of our constituents
- Be the model of exceptional service to our college, university, and community

### Core Values

We will lead with our core values of being inclusive, driven, empowering, and adaptive.

### Goals

1. Help students learn and grow through rigorous academics, relevant professional experiences and engaging social interactions.
2. Support and enhance faculty development, collaboration and performance.
3. Significantly increase resources to support and reward research, teaching and service.
4. Develop strong relationships and improve communications with the alumni, industry, stakeholders and community.
5. Enhance and expand facilities, resources and amenities to maintain a highly professional learning environment.
6. Establish a strong and sustainable financial structure to ensure stability and long-term success.
7. Improve the organizational and operational effectiveness of the College.

## Harrah College of Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs

The Office of Graduate Programs is located in Hospitality Hall, room 347. This office provides graduate students the guidance and support needed to meet their educational goals. To learn about the policies and processes internal to hospitality graduate programs and how to connect with staff, visit [Hospitality Graduate Programs](#).

### 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](mailto:valarie.burke@unlv.edu) or [gradassociatedean@unlv.edu](mailto:gradassociatedean@unlv.edu).

## **Graduate Faculty**

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#). For up-to-date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

## **Master in Hospitality Administration Degree Program**

The Master in Hospitality Administration is a 30-credit hour program designed to bring hospitality leaders together to learn the latest management and leadership techniques in an executive format, which is delivered entirely online. Students must choose at the time of admission one of two tracks: 1) Hospitality Management or 2) Gaming Management.

Courses for this program are taught entirely online. Students are not required to come to the main UNLV campus. Courses are offered throughout the year in five 8-week sessions. Two sessions are offered during the Fall and Spring terms and one session during the Summer term.

[Graduate Catalog – MHA](#)

## **Contact Information**

### **Executive Master of Hospitality Administration**

The Office of Graduate Programs in the William F. Harrah College of Hospitality is here to guide students through the degree program. Please reach out to our office or the Faculty Program Director with any questions or concerns.

## **Program Requirements**

Official program requirements regarding [admission, coursework and culminating experience are found in the graduate catalog](#).



## Degree Program Benchmarks

The culminating experience course is usually completed in the final semester and is a 16-week course that runs the entire Fall or Spring semester. Students who wish to complete the course prior to the final semester must seek approval from the Faculty Program Director. However, it is not advisable to complete the culminating course prior to completing all other program courses. To register for either MHA 787 or MHA 788, students must complete and submit the Professional Paper Course Registration Form to the [Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs](#).

Students will want to complete this form prior to semester they need to enroll in the course.

Students in the Gaming Management track are required to complete the Professional Paper option. Students in the Hospitality Management track may choose to do either a Professional Paper or the Entrepreneurship course as a culminating experience.

## Entrepreneurship Class Option

MHA 787, Entrepreneurship, requires students to develop a business plan with all information required to assess the viability of a hospitality enterprise. If this course is not offered during a student's final semester, students may register for MHA 788, Professional Paper, and complete a business plan.

## Professional Paper Option

MHA 788, Professional Paper, requires students to research an industry related problem. Examples of culminating papers are: employee handbook, training manual, policies and procedures manual, budget proposal, employer survey to collect information to help with business decisions, or a current problem facing the industry with recommendations on how to move forward.

## Program Timeline

The Master in Hospitality Administration degree program usually takes students two years to complete by completing one course each eight-week session. It is important for students to work closely with the Faculty Program Director and the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs to ensure a timely graduation.

## Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the [graduate catalog](#). These policies should be read and understood prior to attending your first class.

## Annual Review Procedures

Each winter break and early spring term, graduate students are **required** to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) form. [Formerly known as the Student Annual Review]. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress, while establishing reasonable goals for the year ahead.

Faculty Advisors/Graduate Coordinators have the option to provide feedback to each student's submitted IDP and provide acknowledgement that they have reviewed the IDP.

Reported student data is shared with students' graduate coordinators and advisors to foster opportunities





for discussion about students' strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and next requirements, and mentoring plans so that students know what they need to do in order to progress successfully through their programs in a timely manner.

Students who are graduating are also required to complete the form to record their achievements. The data is used to track UNLV metrics related to the annual productivity of all students.

## Probation

If a student fails to successfully progress in their degree program, their department/school will recommend that the student be placed on probation by the Graduate College. Students on probation may be dismissed/separated from their program for failing to successfully meet the conditions of their probation by the deadline provided. Please see the [Probation and Separation](#) section of the [Graduate Catalog](#) for more information.

## Additional Program Information

### Independent Study

Students may register for MHA 681, Independent Study and Research, as one of their elective courses. This class is completed through one-on-one work with a faculty member and usually focuses on a research topic of interest to both the professor and the student.

Students must complete the Independent Study Course Registration form ([Hospitality Graduate Forms](#)) and obtain the proper signatures before being given permission to register for this course. The completed form must be submitted to the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs.

## Discipline Resources

### Style Guide

At the William F. Harrah College of Hospitality, students and faculty members use the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, affectionately referred to as the APA Style Guide. This guide dictates the overall format for content, citations and reference list, placement and titling of charts and figures, etc. All research papers are required to use the most recent publication of this guide.

### Relevant Journals

Research is an important factor in a student's graduate studies. There are many academic journals pertinent to the hospitality industry. The journals considered to be of highest value in the Harrah Hospitality College are as follows:

- Annals of Tourism Research
- Cornell Quarterly
- International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management
- International Journal of Hospitality Management
- International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research
- Journal of Travel Research





- Tourism Management

## Conferences

There are many conferences throughout the world that focus on hospitality and tourism. Faculty members and students attend conferences specific to their areas of study, but there are three that are most important in the Harrah Hospitality College:

- The annual summer conference of the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (ICHRIE) is usually held in July of each year. In addition, this organization hosts an Asia Pacific CHRIE and a Euro-CHRIE conference.
- Regional CHRIE organizations host smaller conferences throughout the year. Harrah Hospitality College faculty members and students participate in the West Federation Conference usually held in February.
- The main focus for students in the college is the annual Graduate Student Research Conference in Hospitality and Tourism, held the second week in January. This is an excellent opportunity for students to present their research with either stand-up presentations or in poster sessions. Travel to this conference is provided for master's level students on a case- by-case basis.

## Organizations/Associations

The hospitality industry has many different subindustries. There is a professional organization (or two) for each of those individual sectors. Students are encouraged to become familiar with and join the association(s) that are closely related to their areas of interest. Many of these organizations have special membership fees for students and this is a good opportunity to become involved. For a list of industry organizations, visit the [Harrah College of Hospitality website](#).

On campus, there are several student organizations – many related to the national/international industry associations. The [list of student organizations](#) is also on the college's website.

One student organization particular to hospitality graduate students is the [Hospitality Graduate Student Association](#) (HGSA). All graduate students in the college are members. Activities, opportunities to travel to targeted conferences, and company tours are planned throughout the year by an active board.



## Harrah College of Hospitality Resources

### Office of Graduate Programs

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm

**Location:** Hospitality Hall, Room 347

**Phone:** 702-895-5413 | **FAX:** 702-895-2713

**Staff Contacts:** [Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs Staff](#)

Dedicated to “Graduate Student Success,” the Office of Graduate Programs provides support to all students as they move through their academic careers. Services include but are not limited to the following:

- Admissions and onboarding of new students.
- Tracking of graduate student progress and assistance with processing of different forms.
- Program advising.
- Assisting students through their dissertation defense: room scheduling, inviting faculty and students, and preparing forms for committee signatures.
- Graduate Assistantship assignments.

### Bob Boughner Career Service Center

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday, 7:30 am to 5 pm

**Location:** Hospitality Hall, Room 125

**Phone:** 702-895-5554

**Email:** [boughnercareerservices@unlv.edu](mailto:boughnercareerservices@unlv.edu)

Working in tandem with UNLV Career Services, the Bob Boughner Career Services Center provides opportunities for Harrah College of Hospitality students and alumni to gain access to a broad range of employers, employment information, and opportunities.

- |                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Job Announcements    | • Management Training Programs |
| • Career Shift         | • Career Link                  |
| • Hospitality Listserv | • Career Counseling            |
| • Resume Review        | • Cover Letter Review          |
| • Mentor Program       | • Career Mixer                 |

### Harrah College of Hospitality – Dedicated Research Librarian

The William F. Harrah College of Hospitality has their own dedicated research librarian, Lateka Grays ([lateka.grays@unlv.edu](mailto:lateka.grays@unlv.edu) or 702-895-2137) for students to connect as they are doing professional paper or any research that may be associated with a class. To learn more about the library resources, visit [Hospitality Graduate Student Resources](#).



## University Resources

### **The Graduate Academy: Innovative Leadership, Professional, and Career Development**

The goal of the **Graduate Academy** is to serve as a virtual resource providing support and many professional opportunities to UNLV graduate students. The Academy offers information about events and services such as graduate certificate programs, workshops, training sessions and career services. You can follow Academy activities via social media or look for regular updates on the website.

### **Alumni Engagement**

With an alumni base 150,000+ strong, the UNLV Alumni Engagement 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 Office of the Registrar, 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. It is the students' responsibility to ensure they apply for [graduation on time](#) and submit all required forms to the Graduate College. Questions regarding thesis/dissertation should be directed to the Graduate College [Student Services Team](#) and questions regarding required forms should be directed to the Graduate College [RPC Team](#).

### **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 Services**

[International Students and Scholars \(ISSS\)](#) 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.



### **The Care Center**

The [Care 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.

### **The Intersection**

[The Intersection](#) is a one-stop resource for UNLV's highly diverse student body — a comprehensive multicultural center grounded in the academic life of our students. As an intersecting campus resource, the Intersection helps ensure students, particularly first-generation and students of color, successfully navigate their academic careers. Here, all members of campus can discuss their differences, discover their similarities, and build a shared sense of belonging.

### **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 and Gateway Building PDAC Room. 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 Rights and Responsibilities**

The [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities 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.

### **Military and Veteran Services Center**

The [Military and Veteran Service Center](#) is staffed with veterans and veteran education benefits-experienced staff to assist more than 1,800 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists attending UNLV. 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](#)
- [Jean 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](#)

UNLV does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities, including admissions, on the basis of sex/gender pursuant to Title IX, or on the basis of any other legally protected category as is set forth in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 8, Section 13. Reports of discriminatory misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and/or concerns about noncompliance with Title IX or any other anti-discrimination laws or policies should be directed to UNLV's Title IX Coordinator Michelle Sposito.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached through the [online reporting form](#), by email at [titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu), by phone at (702) 895-4055, by mail at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 451062, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-1062, or in person at Frank and Estella Beam Hall (BEH), Room 555.

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 Revisions Update Log

Date of Last Revision	Revised by	Summary of Changes
<b>March 20, 2025</b>	<b>Diane Wrightman</b>	<b>Updated Associate Dean's Welcome</b>
<b>March 25, 2024</b>	<b>Diane Wrightman</b>	<b>Updated Dean's Welcome</b>
March 23, 2023	Rhonda McElroy	Just updated the dates in the handbook and office locations and phone numbers.
February 18, 2022	Rhonda McElroy	Just updated the dates in the handbook to reflect 2022-2023. No other changes were made.
March 25, 2021	Rhonda McElroy	Updated minor information throughout to ensure it is correct. Faculty handbook approved: 4/6/2021 4 Yes and 0 No.
February 20, 2020	Rhonda McElroy	Updated format and minor updates to sections throughout.
March 28, 2019	Toni Repetti	Hospitality Graduate Office contact update and culminating experience details.
April 24, 2018	Toni Repetti	Update for new subplan, college name, and contacts.