



Ph.D. in Water Resources Program Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to the Ph.D. Water Resources (WRS) interdisciplinary program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas! The program is built on an integrative curriculum and an interdisciplinary approach. It focuses on solving water-related challenges that transcend traditional academic boundaries. It is a technically and scientifically based program that blends the physical, chemical, and biological aspects of water resources with public health, policy, and management. The WRS program is designed to provide students from a wide-range of educational backgrounds an opportunity to develop into water resource professionals. Program graduates are expected to become part of a much-needed diverse, highly educated, and well-trained interdisciplinary workforce that supports water-related entities in Nevada and beyond.

This handbook is intended primarily as a guide for matriculated students, but prospective students should also review this material to better understand programmatic expectations. For further explanation of material presented in this handbook, or other information regarding the WRS program, please contact the Program Director.

Eakalak Khan, Ph.D.

Director, Water Resources Ph.D. Program

Mission Statement

The WRS Ph.D. Program prepares students from a wide range of academic backgrounds to address water-related issues of local, national, and global importance. In doing so, it supports the UNLV Top Tier 2.0 mission and goal of Research and Creative activity by attracting funded research from various agencies and industries, creating publications in front-line journals, and producing a diverse pool of high-quality Ph.D. graduates.

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: <mailto:valarie.burke@unlv.edu> or <mailto:gradassociatedean@unlv.edu>.

Program Faculty

Faculty must hold graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up-to-date information regarding graduate faculty status in the WRS Ph.D. Program, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

The WRS Ph.D. Program is interdisciplinary in nature. Membership in the WRS faculty is by application. Participating faculty come from the Colleges of Sciences, Urban Affairs, Engineering, and Liberal Arts; and the School of Public Health at UNLV, plus the Desert Research Institute. Qualified faculty from these academic units can request graduate faculty status in the WRS Ph.D. Program by contacting the Program Director.

Program Information

Water Resources Doctor of Philosophy
Concentration 1: Water Technology
Concentration 2: Water Science and Health
Concentration 3: Water Policy and Management

For further program information, visit the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#).

Contact Information

[Water Resources](#)

Program Director/Graduate Coordinator
Eakalak Khan, SEB 3134, eakalak.khan@unlv.edu

Program Main Office
SEB 3134, wrs.director@unlv.edu, 702-774-1449

Program Requirements

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

Advisory Committee Guidelines

All students in the WRS Ph.D. 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, at least two of the four advisory committee members, including the Graduate College Representative must be from outside the home College/School of the primary academic advisor. One of the four members, not necessarily the Graduate College faculty representative, must be from outside the program. Students are required to consult with the WRS Program Director prior to finalizing their advisory committee or making changes to the advisory committee. All committee members must have appropriately approved graduate faculty status and committee composition must adhere to [Catalog](#) policies.

Degree Program Benchmarks

Course Requirements

The general Ph.D. curriculum below allows students to experience both the breadth and depth of water-related knowledge and focuses on the interdisciplinary nature of the field. The course selections will be guided by the Director and faculty advisor(s) based on the following three concentrations: Water Technology, Water Science and Health, and Water Policy and Management. The course requirements for both subplans (Subplan 1: Students with Master's Degree and Subplan 2: Students with Bachelor's Degree) can be found in the [UNLV Graduate Catalog](#) and program website.

Qualifying / Preliminary Exams

In order to demonstrate mastery (breadth and depth) of knowledge in the area of their dissertation research, the student must pass a written qualifying exam. The purpose of the qualifying examination is to assess whether the student is qualified to conduct the research that they propose. The content of the examination is determined by the academic advisor and advisory committee and overseen by the Program Director. The qualifying exam must be scheduled after the student has completed at least 12 credits of coursework within the program, and prior to completion of 28 credits. The student is allowed a maximum of two attempts to pass the written qualifying exam. If the student fails the first attempt, the student will be placed on probation by the Director via the Graduate College process. The student is allowed a maximum of two attempts to pass the qualifying exam. The second attempt, if required, cannot be in the same semester as the first attempt. The student may be separated from the program if he/she is not successful after the second attempt.

The preliminary exam requires presentation of the student's planned dissertation research to their advisory committee in both written and oral formats. The student is allowed a maximum of two attempts to pass the preliminary exam. If the student fails the first attempt, the student will be placed on probation by the Director via the Graduate College process. The student may be separated from the program if he/she is not successful after the second attempt.

- The preliminary exam must be scheduled after successful completion of the written qualifying exam and prior to the student's 6th semester (summer semester excluded) of the program. The advisor-approved written proposal must be provided to all members of the advisory committee two weeks before requesting committee approval to schedule the oral defense.
- A student is considered as having advanced to candidacy after successful completion of: the qualifying exam, the preliminary exam, successfully passed the dissertation proposal, and all required didactic coursework. Only after advanced candidacy may the student enroll in dissertation credits. Please see [Catalog](#) for more information.

Dissertation Requirements / Culminating Experience

The culminating experience for the Doctoral of Philosophy in Water Resources at UNLV consists of a written dissertation that must be approved by the student's Doctoral Advisory Committee following a public oral

defense. The advisor-approved written dissertation must be provided to all members of the advisory committee two weeks before requesting committee approval to schedule the oral defense. The first portion of all WRS dissertation defenses consists of a public research presentation by the candidate that lasts 40-50 minutes. The presentation will be followed by a short question/answer period for the public audience. After a short recess, the candidate will be questioned by their advisory committee for a period of up to 2 hours. The committee will then deliberate and inform the candidate of the outcome. Other members of the WRS graduate faculty may participate in the committee session at the request of the advisory committee. The student is allowed a maximum of two attempts to pass the dissertation defense. If the student fails the first attempt, the student will be placed on probation by the Director via the Graduate College process. The student may be separated from the program if he/she is not successful after the second attempt.

The content and scope of the written dissertation is agreed upon by the student, advisor, and advisory committee. It is expected that the dissertation will open with a brief introduction, which is followed by three primary chapters, and a brief summary. Each of the primary chapters will be written in the form of a manuscript suitable for submission to a refereed journal in the students' area of concentration. Deviations from this format require full agreement between the student, advisor, and advisory committee at the time of the preliminary examination. All material submitted as part of the dissertation is subject to approval by the advisory committee regardless of any review conducted by an external entity (e.g., sponsor, journal, conference committee).

Preparing the dissertation is the student's duty and responsibility, and may require multiple drafts before it is submitted to the advisory committee. The dissertation defense cannot be scheduled during university holidays, weekends, or the summer unless all advisory committee members agree in advance. Upon notification of passing, it is the students' responsibility to initiate a properly prepared Culminating Experience Results form through the Grad Rebel Gateway.

Enrollment in WRS 799 for dissertation credits is allowed only after the passing of the written qualifying exam, and have successfully defended the dissertation proposal which must be approved by the Academic Advisor and committee members. Students can only enroll in dissertation credits after advanced to candidacy. Unsatisfactory progress in WRS 799 will result in the student being placed on probation, and require creation of an action plan to end the probationary status. Failure to exit probationary status will result in dismissal from the program in accordance with the policies of the Graduate College.

Program Timeline (Time-to-Degree)

The following conditions must be satisfied to obtain the Ph.D.: the completion of all coursework with minimum required GPA, completion of the proposed dissertation research, submission of a satisfactory dissertation, successful oral defense of the dissertation before the Doctoral Advisory Committee, and submission of all required Graduate College documents. The time required to complete the Doctoral of Philosophy in Water Resources varies substantially. The time required to complete the degree is typically significantly longer for part-time students. The following timelines serve as approximate guides.

Full-time students:

Recruitment of advisory committee - end of the first year

Passing of the written qualifying exam- end of the second year

Passing of the defense of the dissertation research proposal (preliminary exam) - end of the fifth semester

Submission of a draft dissertation - start of the eighth semester on

Completion of all the requirements including passing and submission of the defense of the dissertation - end of the eighth to tenth semester (the fourth to fifth year)

Part-time students:

Recruitment of advisory committee - end of the third semester

Passing of the written qualifying exam- end of the third year

Passing of the defense of the dissertation research proposal - end of the fourth year

Submission of a draft dissertation - start of the eleventh semester on

Completion of all the requirements including passing and submission of the defense of the dissertation - end of the twelfth to sixteenth semester (the sixth to eighth year)

Students must be under supervision of an advisor at all time during the program. In the event that the initial advisor

must be changed, it is the responsibility of the student in consultation with the Program Director to find a new advisor.

Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the [graduate catalog](#).

All students in the WRS Ph.D. 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 Mandatory Individual Development Plan

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, and it establishes reasonable goals for the year ahead.

Faculty Advisors/Graduate Coordinators have the option to provide feedback to each students' 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 in order to record their achievements since the data is also used to track UNLV metrics related to the annual productivity of all students.

Discipline Resources

The WRS Program is interdisciplinary in nature. Therefore, internal and external resources used by students will vary with their academic/professional objectives and the topic of their dissertation. Students are expected to consult with their advisor regarding: relevant professional organizations, journals, and technical conferences; and the writing/reference style to be used in completing their dissertation.

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, 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 Information

Last revised	Revised by	Department Vote Tally: Yes/No/Abs. (date of vote)	Changes summary
March 9, 2023	Eakalak Khan and Michael Nicholl	7/0/0 (03/13/2023)	New handbook created.
March 22, 2023	Eakalak Khan	6/0/0 (03/22/2024)	Update on directorship and minor edits for typos and clarity.