



**Master of Science in Hotel Administration (MS
HOA) Graduate Student Handbook
2026-2027**



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Master of Science in Hotel Administration (MS HOA)

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 4th floor or email me at david.cardenas@unlv.edu.

Thank you for choosing the Harrah College of Hospitality.

David Cárdenas, PhD

Dean, William F. Harrah College of Hospitality



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

The Harrah College of Hospitality Commitment

As one of the top hospitality programs in the world, we pledge to remain vigilant about the future – not just surviving the inevitable changes of the industry but also thriving amid these changes. This means providing our students with a curriculum that is adaptive, relevant, and holistic in its approach, emphasizing sustainable practices, ethical leadership, and a commitment to global perspectives and problem-solving. It also means leveraging our industry connections to bring real-world experiences into the classroom – graduating students who are highly practiced and invested in their careers.

Our Foundation

Everything we do, and aspire to do, is built on a foundation of Excellence.

Our Pillars

- Student Success
- Knowledge
- Global Leadership
- Purposeful Engagement

Our Mission

- Building unparalleled opportunities by capitalizing on our unique location in the entertainment capital of the world.
- Conducting relevant and impactful research that drives innovation, advances knowledge, and moves the industry forward.
- Offering an immersive, lifelong learning environment where students learn from renowned scholars and industry experts.
- Serving as a model of exceptional service and engagement for our diverse global community of students and stakeholders.

Our Vision

Creating global leaders who inspire unforgettable experiences.

Harrah College of Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs

The Office of Graduate Programs is located in Hospitality Hall, room 110. 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 Office of Graduate Programs Staff](#).

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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: gradassociatedean@unlv.edu.

Graduate Faculty

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

Master's in Hotel Administration Degree Program

The Master's in Hotel Administration is a 31-credit hour program that prepares students for a successful career as an upper-level executive in the hospitality industry or as an instructor/researcher in a hospitality education program. Students have an opportunity to choose from a variety of electives on topics including but not limited to hospitality education; entrepreneurship; organizational behavior; gaming; and tourism. They may further explore the industry through an internship or independent study.

The decision as to topic and format for the final project (professional paper or thesis) will be based on career goals and made through consultation with the program coordinator.

[Graduate Catalog – MS HOA](#)

Contact Information

[MS Hotel 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

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

Degree Program Benchmarks

Thesis Track

Conducting research and analyzing the results is an important part of this track and the graduate studies experience.

A graduate advisory committee is mandatory for anyone in the Harrah College of Hospitality choosing to do a thesis. The committee must be chaired by a faculty member with appropriately approved graduate

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Master's in Hotel Administration Program Handbook



faculty status standing and should include two or three additional faculty members from the Hospitality College and one faculty member from outside the college who represents the Graduate College. The members of the committee should be chosen based on their area(s) of expertise in relation to the thesis topic chosen by the student.

To confirm the members of a student's committee, the Graduate College form, [Appointment of Advisory Committee](#) must be completed via Grad Rebel Gateway.

Prior to being allowed to register for HOA 789R Thesis, a student must submit the completed HOA 789 Registration Form ([Hospitality Graduate Forms](#)) to the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs. This form must be accompanied by a three-page abstract of the student's proposed area of study, which will be placed in the student's file. The thesis committee will be on record with the Graduate College. Students can only enrolled in thesis credits after completed all other program courses and has successfully passed the thesis proposal or the thesis defense. Students who do not pass the thesis/thesis proposal defense will be placed on academic probation via the Grad College process. If students fail the second attempt, they may be separated from the program.

Prior to being allowed to register for the second term of HOA 789R Thesis, a student must submit the completed Thesis-Dissertation Proposal Defense Form ([Hospitality Graduate Forms](#)) to the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs. form indicates that the student has presented the first three chapters of his/her thesis and is ready to begin the research process. This document is placed in the student's file in the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs.

Financial Support for Thesis Research

The Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs is here to support students as they move through the research phase of their thesis. Upfront planning will ensure that all research-related costs are taken care of in a timely manner, allowing students to graduate according to schedule.

Immediately following a successful proposal defense, students should:

- Obtain approval for their research expenditures from the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs by submitting a brief request proposal with detailed budget items and a proposed timeline.
- Work closely with the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs in relation to the following:
 - Data collection and related charges (include dates for starting this procedure)
 - Participant incentives and related charges (if needed)
 - Research -related travel
 - Other research related incidentals

If students have tight deadlines and are working in a critical timeframe, they may want to begin the financial planning for their research even before the proposal defense. Students must receive prior approval for any research expenditures, which might take time. Therefore, students should work closely their Principle Investigator (Committee Chair) and the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs. In addition, students must receive prior approval for any travel for their research.

The Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs does not provide students with clerical support. This is the



responsibility of the student.

The Principal Investigator (Committee Chair) is responsible for the accountability of any financial incentives given to survey participants. He/she must purchase the gift cards, etc., confirm that they are all distributed, and provide a final report verifying receipt of the cards to the IRB. Please review the Incentives for Human Research Subjects Policy ([Policies and Regulations](#)) for more information.

The Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs will assist students with the following in relation to the final defense of the thesis.

- Scheduling a room for the defense.
- Inviting graduate faculty, graduate students, and other appropriate guests to the defense and sending out an electronic copy of the thesis.
- Preparation of the Thesis Approval Form (printed in color with thesis title and spaces for committee signatures).
- Preparation of Culminating Experience Results Form Copies of all completed forms for student and student file Delivery of forms to the Graduate College.

Professional Track

Students in the Professional Track will select an industry related problem to research and write a professional paper as their culminating experience in their final semester of the program. A student in this track will select a chairperson who can provide guidance on the chosen topic based on his/her expertise.

Prior to registering for HOA 788, Professional Paper, a student must secure a chairperson. Once a chairperson is selected, students must complete and submit the Professional Paper Course Registration Form ([Hospitality Graduate Forms](#)) to the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs. Students will want to complete this form prior to semester they need to enroll in the course.

Program Timeline

The Master's in Hotel Administration is a one to one-and-half year program for students who complete it as a full-time student. For students in the Professional track, it is possible to complete the program in one year (fall, spring, summer). It is important that students work closely with the Faculty Program Director and the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs to ensure timely completion in this program.

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.

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, 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

Additional Program Options

Internships

Students may register for HOA 783, Internship, as one of their elective courses. It is the student responsibility to secure his/her own internship, which can be paid or unpaid. In addition, students must complete the Internship form ([Hospitality Graduate Forms](#)) and obtain the necessary signatures before being given permission to register for the course. The completed form must be submitted to the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs.

International students must meet the requirements for CPT to be eligible for an internship experience. The requirements for CPT are outlined at [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\) and Occupational Practical Training \(OPT\)](#). International students should contact the Hospitality Office of Graduate Programs to discuss the process before securing an internship or registering for HOA 783.

Some students who did not complete any internships during their undergraduate studies or have no prior work experience in the hospitality industry may have a conditional requirement to complete an internship, which will have been documented at the time of admission into the program. Students who have this condition should complete their internship experience during the Summer term.

Independent Study

Students may register for HOA 781, Independent Study, 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 this guide.

Important Journals

Research is an important factor in a student's graduate studies. There are many academic journals pertinent to the hospitality industry. Several journals that are commonly published in and used by members of the Harrah College of Hospitality 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 College of Hospitality.

- 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 College of Hospitality 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 first week in January. This is an excellent opportunity for students to present their research with either oral presentations or poster sessions. Travel funds to attend are provided for master's level students on a case-by-case basis.

Organizations/Associations

The hospitality industry has many different components, and there is a professional organization 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. A list of many of the industry



organizations is on the [Harrah College of Hospitality's 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 is particular to 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

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 or 702-895-2137) for students to connect as they are doing their thesis or professional paper research. She will also assist students with any research needed for a class project. 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](#).

Institutional Engagement and Experience

The vision of the [Institutional Engagement and Experience](#) is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission is to provide leadership and support for UNLV's engagement mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment*. This Office is housed under the Division of Human Resources and 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.

Graduate Appeals and Issue Resolution

The Office of Graduate Student Services at the Graduate College assists graduate and professional students with addressing concerns and overcoming personal, academic, or financial challenges that might hinder their ability to be successful in their program. The office also provides information and student-centered issue-resolution services and offers guidance, information, and assistance when regular channels have failed to provide graduate students with the information they need to solve problems. Please see website for more information: <https://www.unlv.edu/graduatecollege/appeals-issue-resolution>

UNLV Global and the Office of International Student and Scholar Compliance

[International Student and Scholar Compliance \(ISSC\)](#) 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 Revisions Update Log

Date of Last Revision	Revised By	Summary of Changes
May 11, 2018	Gael Hancock	No changes
February 19, 2020	Rhonda McElroy	Updated formatting and minor updates to various sections.
March 21, 2021	Rhonda McElroy	Update minor information throughout handbook. Faculty handbook approval: 4/6/2021, 4 Yes and 0 No
February 18, 2022	Rhonda McElroy	Updated the handbook dates to 2022-2023 and program credit hours to 31 as well as minor changes of time to degree.

Date of Last Revision	Revised By	Summary of Changes
March 23, 2023	Rhonda McElroy	Updated dates and minor changes to phone numbers and room locations.
March 25, 2024	Diane Wrightman	Updated Dean's Welcome
March 20, 2025	Diane Wrightman	Updated Associate Dean Welcome
March 25, 2025	Ozgur Ozdemir	Updated dates, links, vision, mission, purpose and minor changes in the document.