



GRADUATE HANDBOOK 2018-2019

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PhD in Sustainability PhD in Sustainability (CASS Concentration)

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Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide for graduate students admitted to this degree program in the School of Sustainability (SOS) at Arizona State University (ASU). It provides information about degree requirements, resources, and policies and procedures essential to successful completion of the program.

While the handbook serves as an initial resource for answers to common questions, it is not all-inclusive of every university policy. When necessary, it provides links to review full details about policies outside the School. Students are also encouraged to consult key faculty and staff when they have questions.

In addition to this handbook, primary references for graduate students are the ASU [Academic Catalog](#), Graduate College's [Policies and Procedures Manual](#) and the School of Sustainability's [Graduate Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage, where an updated version of this handbook is posted each year.

Program Overview and Admissions

The program overview can be found on the School of Sustainability [Graduate Degrees and Programs](#) webpage. Application and admission information can be found on the School of Sustainability [Graduate How to Apply](#) webpage.

Students who have transfer work or courses taken prior to admission and want to apply those to their degree can find policy information in the [Pre-Admission and Transfer Credits](#) section of this handbook.

Role of Faculty and Staff in Advising

Student Supervisory Committee

SOS students must have at least three faculty members on their supervisory committee, per university requirements. Typically, a student's final committee will be at least one chair and two members or two co-chairs and one member. Students can have more than three people on their committee but larger committees may pose additional issues in scheduling conflicts and feedback on writing. The student must have a chair or two co-chairs confirmed before they submit their plan of study for the first time. The remainder of the committee can be formed later. See the [Milestones](#) section of this handbook for details on deadlines.

Students will first begin searching for a committee chair (also known as a faculty advisor). Students are assigned a faculty mentor before starting the program. Many will choose to ask their faculty mentor to be their chair; however, this may not be the case for all students. Students and faculty can decide this is not the best fit in which the student will need to find a more suitable committee chair. Students can form their committee by selecting faculty from the [SOS faculty list](#), [Sustainability Scientists list](#), other ASU faculty or faculty at other universities.

Graduate Faculty List

The ASU Graduate College maintains specific, pre-approved lists of faculty who can serve on a student's committee without the need for special permission. The lists are known as the "graduate faculty" lists and are located [here on the Graduate College's website](#). All students in the PhD, MA or MS in sustainability programs should use the "PhD in Sustainability" graduate faculty list. The graduate faculty list indicates an endorsement (role) that each pre-approved faculty member can hold on the committee:

- **Chair.** This endorsement means the person can be in any role: chair, co-chair, or member.
- **Co-chair.** This endorsement means the person can be a co-chair or member only. The person cannot be the sole chair unless the Graduate College grants special permission. If using someone with a co-chair endorsement, then the other co-chair must be endorsed at the full chair level or receive special permission to serve as co-chair with this person.
- **Member.** This endorsement means the person can serve as a member only unless the Graduate College grants special permission for them to serve in a higher role.

Individual Committee Participation Request

Students must submit paperwork to request special permission to add someone to their committee who is not on their program's graduate faculty list. Even if the iPOS system allows the student to add the faculty member, the student will still need to request special permission if that person is not on their graduate faculty list. If the faculty member is on the list but has a lower endorsement than the student wants for their committee, then special permission is required. For example, if the student wants to add a faculty member as their chair but the current endorsement is only for the member role, then the student must request permission.

Faculty, Instructors, and Sustainability Scientists and Scholars

A list of the school's [faculty and instructors](#) as well as ASU's [Sustainability Scientists and Scholars](#) can be found online. An overlap in these two lists may exist.

SOS Graduate Academic Success Coordinator

The Graduate Coordinator is available to students to help explain school and university policies and procedures and serves as the school's program advisor. Any question about paperwork, university policies or services should be addressed first to the Graduate Coordinator, who will answer the question or make a referral to the appropriate university office or personnel. All questions regarding coursework or research applied toward the degree should be addressed to the student's faculty mentor, chair, or supervisory committee.

The Graduate Coordinator maintains the Master List of Classes spreadsheet and updates students' individual check sheets for the annual review process and after each semester. When students need general advising, they can set up an appointment with the Graduate Coordinator through the online appointment system, which can be accessed through the [SOS Graduate Advising](#) webpage. More information about the Master List of Classes spreadsheet is in the [Resources](#) section of this handbook.

Students can contact the Graduate Coordinator by email at SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu.

SOS Graduate Committee

The School of Sustainability's Graduate Committee is comprised of several faculty who oversee the policies and procedures related to all graduate programs and certificates within the school. Led by the SOS Graduate Director, the committee reviews and makes final decisions on all admission applications, TA applications, and various other university funding applications. The Graduate Committee also reviews all student petition requests and proposed curriculum changes for any graduate-level programs and must approve before changes go forward. The Graduate Committee also oversees student annual review results, issues probation letters, letters of dismissal, and handles all appeal processes related to graduate students in the school. As university policies change and SOS grows, the committee revises policies and procedures as needed. The Graduate Director reviews all graduate faculty and individual student committee participation requests and determines if the request will go on to the Graduate College.

Curriculum Summary

Students may be admitted to the PhD in sustainability program with or without a master's degree. If admitted without a master's degree, students must complete a minimum of 84 credit hours (and have the opportunity to earn a Master's in Passing). If admitted with a master's degree, students must complete a minimum of 54 credit hours.

	Credit Hours	
	Admitted with a Master's	Admitted without a Master's
Core Courses	6	6
Foundational Courses	9*	15
Solutions Workshops	3	6
Research	12	12
Dissertation	12	12
Electives Of which, a maximum of 6 hours can be at the 400-level; 500-level or higher is graduate-level	12*	33
Total Credit Hours Required	54	84

*Assuming relevant coursework at the master's level.

Core Courses

The core courses are designed to provide students from diverse backgrounds with methods and theories for the study of sustainability. They explore the link between concepts of sustainability and systems approaches to knowledge, and develop the integrative methods needed to work across the disciplines on sustainability problems. They also provide students with a strong foundation (content knowledge, big theory, and big studies) in the main themes of the School.

Required Core Courses

Course	Title
SOS 510	Perspectives on Sustainability
SOS 520	Research Design and Methods for Sustainability

Students must take the two core courses in the first semester in the program.

Required Foundational, Workshop, and Elective Courses

Students can refer to the Master List of Classes to see approved classes for foundational and workshop classes and to see a sample of general elective classes. Refer to the [Master List of Classes](#) section of this handbook for more details.

Research

Course	Course Title
SOS 792	Research

Students must complete 12 credits of Research for the degree. SOS 792 is offered every semester for variable credits, which means students select the number of credits at the time of enrollment, usually with their committee chair or a current or prospective committee member. Typically, students take Research when preparing for the written comprehensive exam or the prospectus defense, but the course can be taken earlier. Research credits from another department (other than “SOS”) do not count toward the 12 credits Research requirement for this degree.

See the [Advancement to Candidacy](#) section of this handbook for more details.

Dissertation

Course	Course Title
SOS 799	Dissertation

Students must complete 12 credits of Dissertation for the degree. SOS 799 is offered every semester for variable credits, which means the student selects the number of credits at the time of enrollment, usually with their committee chair. Students cannot register for Dissertation credits until they achieve candidacy. See the [Advancement to Candidacy](#) section of this handbook for more details.

CASS Curriculum Summary

Sustainability doctoral students can choose to pursue the Complex Adaptive Systems Science (CASS) concentration, which is designed to train the next generation of scientists in advanced concepts and methods needed for approaching diverse phenomena in the social and life sciences. The concentration is integrated with diverse university-wide research and emphasizes the value of a complex adaptive systems perspective when seeking solutions to critical societal issues. CASS is the study of interactive and dynamic systems that learn and change over time. Students who wish to switch from the PhD in sustainability into the CASS concentration program must fill out a new application and be admitted into the program.

Students may be admitted to the PhD in sustainability with a concentration in CASS program with or without a master's degree. If admitted without a master's degree, students must complete a minimum of 84 credit hours (and have the opportunity to earn a Master's in Passing). If admitted with a master's degree, students must complete a minimum of 54 credit hours.

	Credit Hours	
	Admitted with a Master's	Admitted without a Master's
Core Courses	6	6
Foundational Courses	9* ¹	15 ¹
Solutions Workshops	3	6
CASS Foundational	3	3
CASS Mathematics	3	3
CASS Modeling	3	3
CASS Approaches	3	3
CASS Reading and Conference or Research	3	3
Research	9-12 ²	12
Dissertation	12	12
Electives Of which, a maximum of 6 hours can be at the 400-level; 500-level or higher is graduate-level	0*	18
Total Credit Hours Required	54-572	84

*Assuming relevant coursework at the master's level.

¹Some overlap between SOS foundational and CASS coursework is possible. Check the master list of classes to see if any CASS classes count as foundational. CASS coursework can also be used as general elective credits.

²Overlap between Research credits and CASS Reading and Conference or Research is allowed. If a student takes 3-credits of Research for the CASS requirement, then only 9-credits of additional Research credits are required. If the student takes Reading and Conference for the CASS requirement, then 12 credits of Research is required, per university policy.

The [Global Biosocial Complexity Initiative](#) webpage houses the current approved CASS curriculum.

Master List of Classes

The Master List of Classes is a spreadsheet that contains approved classes for each program, such as foundational, normative dimensions, methods, and solutions workshops. The list is located in the SOS Graduate Student Community site. Information about the site is located in the [Resources](#) section of this handbook. The list also has example general (or "focus area") electives. The list also has example general (or "focus area") electives. Students who wish to substitute an approved (non-core) course must receive special permission through a petition process.

Students should consult with faculty or the Graduate Coordinator on course selection for degree requirements.

Culminating Experience

Advancement to Candidacy

The advancement from PhD student to PhD candidate is a major milestone in the doctoral program. For the School of Sustainability, the candidacy procedure consists of passing a written comprehensive exam and a public defense of the prospectus (research proposal), in that order. Upon successfully completing these two items, the ASU Graduate College will issue a “letter of candidacy” to the student through MyASU.

Upon achieving candidacy, the student will have five years at most to complete the degree, as long as the total time to degree does not exceed 10 years. Those who achieve candidacy after five years in the program will have less time to complete the degree, per university rules.

Students are encouraged to enroll in SOS 792 Research credits during the semesters they prepare and take the comprehensive exam and do the prospectus defense. However, they may also continue taking other classes for degree requirements. At the time of achieving candidacy, students must not have more than two courses to complete aside from Research and Dissertation credits. After achieving candidacy, students may enroll in SOS 799 Dissertation credits.

Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam is a written exam put together and administered by the student’s supervisory committee. The supervisory committee should be diverse and not represent a single discipline or narrow field of expertise. Since the exam is unique for each student, the number of questions and the depth and breadth of knowledge required varies. Students can see examples of past exams in the SOS Grad Student Community site. Examples of types of things past students had to read to prepare for their exams can also be found in the site (example, three books, 75 journal articles and 20 book chapters).

When students have completed or are close to completing the coursework in an approved plan of study, they may request permission to take the written comprehensive examination. Students must be in good academic standing regarding GPA requirements prior to taking the doctoral comprehensive examination and have a full committee on their approved, accurate iPOS.

Based on the research statement and bibliography, each committee member will prepare relevant questions, which the committee chair will compile into a single examination. The student will have five days at most to complete the exam. The chair will email the exam and the student will answer the questions in written format and submit within five days (example: Monday, 8 a.m. the test is sent; Friday, 5 p.m. the test is due). The exam dates can include weekend days, as the Monday – Friday timeframe is just an example of a 5-day exam period.

The student must fill out Parts I and II of the [Comprehensive Exam Results](#) form and submit it with their answers to the comprehensive exam to their committee. The committee completes the remainder of the form. Each person on the committee must either physically sign the form or submit an email in lieu of a signature, indicating their participation, date of the exam, and their vote (pass, pass with minor revisions, pass with major revisions, or fail). The emails can be sent to the chair who then forwards to the Graduate Coordinator or can be sent by the student to the Graduate Coordinator at SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu.

After passing the comprehensive examination, the student should submit the form with committee signatures to the Graduate Coordinator who will report the results to the Graduate College.

Students must petition the Graduate College to retake the comprehensive exam if they fail, and reexamination must occur no sooner than three months, and no later than one year, from the original exam date. Only one reexamination will be approved.

In preparation for the comprehensive examinations, the student will prepare a short research statement (approximately 600 words) and a related bibliography for review by their supervisory committee. Students should request reading suggestions from committee members before creating the final bibliography for supervisory committee approval. The student and committee should prepare the reading lists and bibliography taking into account the following guidelines: readings should be relevant to the dissertation, but cover bodies of knowledge broader than what is required to write the dissertation. Students should select readings that demonstrate how their research relates to broader contexts of sustainability research and practice. The readings should provide insight into theory, methods, and substantive knowledge relevant to the dissertation and broader contexts.

Students should take the comprehensive examinations within one year of finishing their coursework. In order to stay on track with department milestones, students should aim to complete the comprehensive exam before December of their:

- Third year in the program, if they entered with a master's degree; or
- Fourth year in the program, if they entered without a master's degree.

Students who cannot make this milestone deadline must file a petition for more time. The petition should be filed before the Thanksgiving break in late November to ensure a decision is made on the petition prior to the end of the semester.

Prospectus Defense

In careful consultation with the supervisory committee, the student will prepare a written dissertation proposal. The format of the proposal will be determined by the supervisory committee but should include an original and meaningful research question, a summary of appropriate theory, methods, data, and knowledge, and a clear and realistic plan for completing the dissertation requirements in a timely fashion. The candidate may elect to submit the dissertation proposal in the format of a Dissertation Improvement Grant Proposal to the National Science Foundation or other appropriate funding agencies.

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation prospectus is required, and must be scheduled by the student in conjunction with their supervisory committee no later than six months after passing the comprehensive examination. The dissertation proposal defense must occur after successful completion of the written comprehensive examination. The student may petition for an extension on this deadline but an approval is not guaranteed. If one approval is given, the student should not expect to be given a second extension unless under extreme circumstances. See the [SOS Petition Process](#) section of this handbook for more details.

The student must be enrolled in at least one graduate-level credit in the semester in which the defense is done, including summer, per university rules. Students who do the defense on or before the date of spring commencement do not have to register for summer credits. Students who do the defense after the last summer session course ends but before the fall semester begins must register for fall but are not required to also be registered for summer in order to do the defense.

The defense must be open to the public but the committee will also meet privately with the candidate. The student's entire committee must participate in the defense. At least 50% of the committee must be present, including the chair. A co-chair or member can participate remotely as long as the minimum 50% is physically present. The student should discuss possible days and times for the defense with the committee well in

advance, especially if defending in spring. Spring is much busier with defenses than summer or fall. In summer, faculty typically do research and are not available to participate in defenses. The student needs to check with their own committee for availability when considering a defense date.

Defenses must take place on the Tempe campus, during business hours (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) and not occur on a university holiday. Once a date is chosen, the student needs to reserve the room. See the [Room Reservation](#) section of this handbook for more details. Upon room confirmation, the student must send a [Prospectus Defense Announcement](#) form to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks before the defense.

The student needs to complete Part I and II of the [Prospectus Defense Results form](#) and submit it to the examining committee chair at the prospectus defense. Following approval of the dissertation prospectus, signatures of the committee should be entered in Part II of the form. If a student has required revisions, then the chair will retain the form and not sign the bottom section until all revisions are approved. The Graduate Coordinator will enter the pass result into the university system after receiving all of the following from the student:

1. The completed Prospectus Defense Results form;
2. An electronic copy of the research proposal paper; and
3. An electronic copy of the PowerPoint (or similar) presentation materials used in the defense.

The computer system generates the student's candidacy letter a few days later. The student can view and download this letter from MyASU. The candidacy letter may be required in applying for future fellowships, research, or other career opportunities; therefore, the student should download the candidacy letter upon receipt and keep in a safe place.

Upon achieving candidacy, the PhD candidate has up to five years to successfully defend the dissertation but cannot exceed a maximum of ten years in the program. Those who become candidates after their fifth year in the program will have less than five years to successfully defend the dissertation, per university policy.

If the student fails to advance to candidacy within the time limit set by the Graduate College policy, the school may recommend withdrawal of the student from the PhD program.

Dissertation

All dissertations are required to meet a certain standard as a recognizable product of ASU. The student's committee, department, and the ASU Graduate College expect to see evidence of careful attention to style and format in the document that the student presents as part of their culminating experience. Students are to follow the [formatting guidelines](#) set by the Graduate College.

Defense

The student's supervisory committee will conduct an oral examination in defense of the dissertation. Doctoral dissertation defenses are open to all members of the university community and the public. Oral defenses are to be held on an ASU campus during regular business hours to facilitate student, faculty, and public accessibility. Students are encouraged to defend the dissertation during the fall or spring semester since many faculty members are not on campus over the summer and the Graduate College has strict rules about committee members being present at the defense. The Graduate College lists tips on their website for [preparing for the defense](#).

Defense Eligibility

Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible to defend a dissertation:

- Achieved candidacy;
- Have a current iPOS on file that lists all classes and committee chair, co-chairs, and members accurately;
- Have a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of:
 - 3.25 for all classes listed on the iPOS (both undergrad and graduate-level classes);
 - 3.25 cumulative for all graduate classes taken (even if not on the iPOS);
 - 3.00 cumulative for all undergrad classes taken (that are not on the iPOS); and
- Be in good standing with the school and university.

Setting up a Defense Date

The student will continuously work with the entire committee toward a defense date. The entire committee must review the complete draft before a defense date can be determined to ensure the student is ready for the defense step. Reviews of the draft will take a least two weeks but the student should submit the draft at least a month prior to the desired defense date. Failure to provide enough review time to the entire committee may result in the postponement of the defense date or graduation term.

The defense must be held on campus during normal business hours (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) and not on an observed university holiday.

Once the committee agrees on the day and time of the defense, the student needs to reserve a room for the defense. See the [Room Reservation](#) section of this handbook for more details. Once the room reservation is confirmed, the student may move on to the next steps in the process.

At least ten working days prior to the oral defense, the student must:

1. Send a copy of their complete dissertation draft to the Graduate College thesis editor in Dropbox;
2. Schedule their defense through [MyASU](#); and
3. Submit a [Dissertation Defense Announcement form](#) to the Graduate Coordinator at SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu. The document must be in MS Word format in the event it needs to be edited for formatting purposes.

The Graduate College has very specific rules related to [steps and deadlines for defenses](#) on their website. Students are encouraged to become familiar with this information prior to their final semester. Failure to comply with these deadlines may result in a delayed graduation and the requirement of an additional semester of registration and tuition payment. The Graduate Coordinator holds a graduation exit session at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, reviewing all the steps and deadline for graduation. Students are encouraged to attend the exit session twice: the semester before they graduate and their final semester. See the [Graduation Exit Session](#) section of this handbook for more details.

Day of the Defense and After

The student's committee chair will bring the pass-fail form to the defense; the student cannot have this form until they have fully passed the defense and satisfied any revisions required by their committee and everyone on the committee has signed the form. The chair may email the completed form to the Graduate Coordinator directly. If the student has to do revisions, then the chair must still email a copy of the pass-fail form to the Graduate Coordinator and the form must indicate that the student has major or minor revisions to do. The Graduate Coordinator is required to send a copy of the pass-fail form to the Graduate College

within 10 days of the defense (even if revisions are happening), otherwise, the defense may be invalidated, resulting in the student having to start the process over again.

After the revisions are complete and approved, the chair (or one of two co-chairs) must sign the bottom of the pass-fail form to indicate that the revisions are complete and then send the completed pass-fail form to the Graduate Coordinator. Alternatively, the chair can give the completed form to the student, who would then need to submit it to the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will send the form directly to the Graduate College for processing. The final pass-fail form is due no later than 2 p.m. to the Graduate College by the date indicated on their deadlines webpage.

The student must also submit the approved, revised version of the paper to the thesis editor. This deadline is the same as the pass-fail form deadline. The student will work with the thesis editor (likely in several rounds) until the format is approved. Once the format is approved, the student must upload the format-approved version of the paper into ProQuest. Failure to meet all [Graduate College deadlines](#) on all items will result in a delayed graduation and will require the student to register for another semester (SOS 795 Continuing Registration for 1-credit) and pay tuition.

Final Grades

The Graduate Coordinator will work to get the final grades posted for classes prior to graduation. The table below indicates grades needed to pass specific classes. Any “NR” (not recorded) grade on a transcript will prevent a student from graduating.

Course	Title	Final Passing Grade
SOS 790	Reading and Conference	“Y” or “A” through “B-”, if taking for a letter grade
SOS 792	Research	“Y”
SOS 795	Continuing Registration	“Z” – this is the only class were a “Z” is the final grade
SOS 799	Dissertation	“Y”

A “Z” grade for Research and Dissertation means work is still in progress. “Z” grades are often used for these classes until the student is about to graduate and has finished the dissertation requirements and is no longer “in progress” of completing the degree.

Sharing Final Results

Students will work with the thesis editor from the Graduate College to get their paper in an acceptable format status to publish in ProQuest, the library database used around the world to archive theses and dissertation papers. Students must adhere to steps and deadlines posted on the Graduate College’s [graduation deadlines webpage](#). Missed deadlines will result in delayed graduation and another semester of required enrollment and tuition payment.

Unique Opportunities

Master’s In Passing

The Master’s in Passing (MiP) option is offered to exemplary students accepted into the PhD program without a master’s degree. Students who complete the requirements will be offered either an MA or MS in

Passing. The Master's in Passing option is not automatically available to all PhD students. To be eligible, a student must meet the following criteria, and follow these steps:

1. Complete thirty-three hours of coursework that meet the requirements for the non-thesis master's degree (*Note: courses taken before the student was admitted to the PhD program CANNOT be used on the MiP iPOS*);
2. Have a 3.25 or higher ASU GPA in all courses numbered 500 and above, as well as in all coursework that is included on the plan of study;
3. Have selected a supervisory committee;
4. Submit a portfolio for review by the supervisory committee consisting of the following work (papers should include grades received and instructor comments):
 - a. One exemplary research paper
 - b. One exemplary paper or project of an applied nature
 - c. A short paper (such as an essay or an opinion piece) or a poster
 - d. A reflective essay discussing the papers that looks back at the learning demonstrated in the pieces and forward to knowledge and skills that the student needs to develop
5. When the portfolio is approved by the supervisory committee, see the Graduate Coordinator to complete a [Master's in Passing Request form](#) and obtain all relevant signatures;
6. The student will be prompted by Graduate College to complete a MiP iPOS.
7. Apply for graduation or the MiP will not be awarded.

Students who include 30 hours from a previously awarded master's degree on their doctoral plan of study are not eligible for a Master's in Passing. Please see the Graduate Coordinator for more detailed instructions.

Concurrent Degrees

Additional information about pursuing a concurrent master's or doctoral degree with a doctoral program can be found in Graduate College's [Policies and Procedures Manual](#). Students must meet eligibility requirements, apply to, be admitted to and receive approval from both units to pursue the two programs simultaneously. Approval must also be received from ASU's Graduate College. The main benefit of pursuing concurrent degrees is the opportunity to share a percentage of credit hours between the two programs. There are many details associated with pursuing two degrees simultaneously. Students considering this option should take time to read through these details carefully and consult an advisor in both academic units. Some degrees have different tuition and program fees.

Graduate Certificates

The Graduate College's [Policies and Procedures Manual](#) outlines the many details associated with pursuing a certificate at the same time as a graduate degree. ASU has a variety of certificates to choose from, including a graduate certificate in [Environmental and Sustainability Economics](#) offered through the School of Sustainability. Students can explore possibilities using [Degree Search](#).

Students must meet eligibility requirements, apply to, and be admitted to the certificate program. Students considering this option should take time to read through these details carefully and consult an advisor in both the unit that offers the degree program and the certificate program. Some certificates have additional course and program fees.

Study Abroad

There are a number of exciting [study abroad](#) opportunities and a [Global Development Research](#) program with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that may be of interest to graduate students.

SustainabilityConnect

[SustainabilityConnect](#), a service provided by the School of Sustainability and the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability, facilitates collaboration between ASU and the community that educate students and contribute to sustainability solutions. The platform hosts information about hands-on projects, internships, and other community-based opportunities for students to enhance their professional and academic experience by applying their knowledge and skills to real sustainability challenges. Students may use the site to find or propose a project or internship, connect to other students with similar interests, get advice and assistance, or learn more about successfully completed projects.

Curriculum Tools and Milestones

Check Sheet

The check sheet is an Excel spreadsheet that contains the student's specific curriculum requirements and contains fields for students to list specific classes they wish to take each semester to complete the degree. The Graduate Coordinator sends a customized check sheet to each student prior to the first semester of the program. Students can use the check sheet to map out all classes they plan to take and discuss with the Graduate Coordinator and their committee chair, if applicable, to ensure it is accurate before submitting the official plan of study (iPOS). After the student submits their iPOS, the Graduate Coordinator will attach a screenshot of it into the student's check sheet.

The Graduate Coordinator updates each student's check sheet periodically and uses it to track certain details, such as advising appointment notes. The milestones for the student's program are also listed in the spreadsheet to help remind students of the major milestones and their deadlines.

The student can see their grades in MyASU and their current iPOS in the iPOS system and should not rely on the check sheet as the most accurate record.

Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS)

The [interactive plan of study](#) (iPOS) is the student's official contract between the school and the university. It lists all the classes the student plans to take to complete the degree and indicates who is on the student's supervisory committee. Students are encouraged to use their check sheet as a rough draft before submitting the official iPOS. Students who wish to use coursework done prior to the start of the program must adhere to ASU's [pre-admission credit policy](#).

SOS requires the iPOS be submitted by March 1 of:

- The first year in the program if the PhD student already has a master's degree; or
- The second year in the program if the PhD student doesn't have a master's degree.

Failure to meet this deadline could result in academic probation for the student for violation of the school's policies. The Graduate College states that the deadline is when the student has completed 50 percent of their coursework; however, SOS intentionally has a much earlier deadline in place.

Upon approval, students are expected to keep the iPOS up-to-date by checking it at the start of each semester and making changes as needed. At minimum, students must check and update (if needed) the iPOS by March 1 each year as part of the annual review process. See the [Annual Review of Student Performance](#) section of this handbook for more details.

The iPOS must have a committee chair listed the first time the student submits it. The committee members can be added later. The student can update the courses (add and remove classes) and the committee lineup at any time unless on an approved leave of absence from the university. The committee must be faculty that are pre-approved to serve on the student’s supervisory committee. See the [Graduate Faculty List](#) section of this handbook for more details. Contact the Graduate Coordinator if you have questions.

Milestones

The SOS graduate committee has developed a list of milestones and deadlines to keep students on track with meeting university and department requirements for pursuit of this degree. The PhD programs have two distinct sets of milestones: one for those who enter the program with a master’s degree and one for those who enter the program without a master’s degree. The table below lists the major milestones followed by suggested tasks students continuously do to stay on-track, build professional development, and find future funding opportunities. The student’s committee may have additional items for the individual student to complete.

Major Milestones

Milestone	Deadline if Entered with Master’s Degree	Deadline if Entered without Master’s Degree
Start program	Fall of first year	Fall of first year
Confirm committee chair (faculty advisor) or 2 co-chairs	By March 1 of first year	By March 1 of second year
Submit complete iPOS (all coursework and chair/ 2 co-chairs)	By March 1 of first year	By March 1 of second year
Complete Annual Review process	By March 1 every year	By March 1 every year
Confirm full committee (add to the iPOS): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 members (with 1 chair); or • 1 member (with 2 co-chairs) 	By September 15 of 2 nd year	By September 15 of 3 rd year
Add committee members to iPOS and submit for review	By September 15 of 2 nd year	By September 15 of 3 rd year
Take and pass the written Comprehensive Exam	By December 1 of third year (aim for mid-semester)	By December 1 of fourth year (aim for mid-semester)
Defend and pass the oral Prospectus Defense; Become PhD Candidate	Within 6 months of passing the Comp Exam	Within 6 months of passing the Comp Exam
Register for Dissertation credits	After PhD Candidacy only	After PhD Candidacy only
Apply for Graduation	By February 15 for spring graduates; by June 15 for summer graduates; by October 1 for fall graduates	

Choose defense date with committee, reserve a room, and schedule defense (in MyASU)	See Graduate College website for steps and deadlines
Submit defense announcement form	At least two weeks before the defense date
Defend and pass the Dissertation Defense	~ 1-2 years after candidacy
Submit dissertation paper to thesis editor and follow required steps/ deadlines	See Grad College website for steps and deadlines

Complete details on milestones are listed throughout the handbook in related sections. For questions or clarification, students can contact the Graduate Coordinator at SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu.

Suggested, Continuous Actions for Success

- Attend orientation, welcome events, and the SOS Fall Retreat camping trip.
- Meet faculty and students; build networks.
- Register for core classes and pass with “B-“ or better and have a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher every semester.
- Meet with faculty mentor, chair, co-chairs, or supervisory committee at least once a semester to discuss research goals, semester goals, courses, and progress.
- Seek and apply to funding opportunities. Opportunities may come from the SOS graduate newsletter, faculty, other students, student organizations, independent research, etc.
- Compile a reading list of relevant items for the research topic (this will save time later when planning the comprehensive exam and prospectus reading list with the supervisory committee).
- Seek out conferences and other professional development opportunities.
- Consider taking a study abroad class or doing an internship.
- Participate in workshops and lectures offered by SOS and GIOS, including career development opportunities.
- Maintain an updated LinkedIn account and curriculum vita or resume at all times. The [SOS Career Advisor](#) can help with both items.

Policies

Academic Calendar and Time Zone

Students should pay careful attention to dates outlined in ASU's [Academic Calendar](#). Start and end dates for each of the sessions are included in this calendar. Assignments and assessments will not be due on observed holidays; however, due to the accelerated nature of online courses, students should not count on taking time off from studying and working on coursework due to holidays. Also, all time frames used in class follow Arizona Mountain Standard Time (MST).

Arizona does not observe daylight saving time (DST) from March through November; therefore, the time in Arizona will not align with other places that are on MST for half the year.

Time Limit

On average, most students complete the doctoral program in five or six years. Doctoral students must complete all program requirements within a consecutive ten-year period. The ten-year period begins with the semester and year of admission to the doctoral program. Graduate courses taken prior to admission that are included on the interactive plan of study (iPOS) must have been completed within three years of the semester and year of admission to the program (previously awarded master's degrees used on the iPOS are exempt).

PhD students have up to five years to complete the degree after achieving candidacy. If this five-year period will extend the total time in the program beyond ten years, then the student will have less time to complete the degree after candidacy. See the [Advancement to Candidacy](#) section of this handbook for more details.

Any exception to the time limit policy must be approved by the school and the Graduate College. The Graduate College may withdraw students who are unable to complete all degree requirements and graduate within the allowed maximum time limits. Students who have questions about a time limit petition can contact SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu for instructions.

Enrollment and Leave Policies

The academic unit and the university have firm policies related to students needing to enroll each semester (including summer sometimes) and paperwork needed for requesting a leave. Below are the most common enrollment issues or questions SOS graduate students have. Additional information can be found in Graduate College's [Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

Registration Enrollment

Students register for classes through MyASU. If a student cannot register, then they may have a registration hold on their account, which would be noted in MyASU. If a student has a hold, they can click on the hold title and a box with additional information will appear, including contact information for resolving that specific hold.

Drop/Add Deadline

The [Academic Calendar](#) lists specific dates and deadlines for each semester. The School of Sustainability does not allow requests to drop courses past the drop/add deadline. Instead, the student would need to withdraw from the course if they no longer wished to take it. A withdrawal will result in a "W" grade on the student's transcript. A "W" grade may negatively impact students receiving student loans. A "W" grade lowers the student's pace rate, which is a measurement of credit hours *attempted* versus credit hours *successfully completed*. The only way to avoid a "W" grade is to drop the class during the university's add-drop period. The School does not back-date course drop paperwork. However, student can fill out an Enrollment Change Request to add a class after the deadline, but would need to collect all the appropriate signatures. The Enrollment Change Request form can be found under the Late Drop/Add Requests section of the [Graduate Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage. The form can also be picked up at the SOS Student Services front desk, Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm.

Continuous Enrollment

Once admitted to a graduate degree program or graduate certificate program, students must be registered for a minimum of one credit hour during all phases of their graduate education, including the term in which they graduate. This includes periods when students are engaged in research, conducting a doctoral

prospectus, working on or defending theses or dissertations, taking comprehensive examinations, or in any other way utilizing university resources, facilities or faculty time.

Registration for every fall semester and spring semester is required. Summer registration is required for students taking examinations, completing culminating experiences, conducting a doctoral prospectus, defending theses or dissertations, or graduating from the degree program.

Grades of “W” (withdrawal) or “X” (audit) are not considered valid registration for continuous enrollment purposes. “W” grades are received when students officially withdraw from a course after the course drop deadline. “X” grades are received for audit courses. Additionally, students completing work for a course in which they received a grade of “I” (incomplete) must maintain continuous enrollment as defined previously.

[Leave of Absence](#)

Having an approved leave of absence by Graduate College will enable students to re-enter their program without re-applying to the university. Students may request a leave of absence for a maximum of two semesters during their entire program. This request must be filed and approved before the start of the semester in which the student wants to do the leave, e.g., before the first day of the fall semester.

A student on leave is not required to pay fees, but in turn is not permitted to place any demands on university faculty or use any university resources. Examples of utilizing university resources can be found on the Graduate College’s [Continuous Enrollment](#) webpage

Students who do not enroll for a fall or spring semester without an approved leave of absence by Graduate College have “broken enrollment” and are considered withdrawn from the university under the assumption that they have decided to discontinue their program. Students removed for this reason may reapply for admission to resume their degree program in a later cohort; the application will be considered along with all other new applications to the degree program. Although a student who has broken enrollment might be able to register for the next semester without reapplying, the Registrar’s Office will discover the lapse in continuous enrollment no later than graduation. A student who has broken enrollment cannot graduate without reapplying, being readmitted, and possibly repeating classes due to the [ASU pre-admission credit policy](#).

If a student has an approved interactive plan of study (iPOS) on file, then they submit the leave request through the iPOS system’s petition section. If the student does not have an approved iPOS on file, then a paper [Request to Maintain Continuous Enrollment](#) form is required to request the leave. Students should submit the form at least two weeks before the start of the term in which they plan to be on leave and notify the Graduate Coordinator. Failure to meet this deadline may result in a denied request or one that is not processed in time. The student’s alternative is to register for the SOS 595 or 795 Continuing Registration placeholder class, which is one credit hour, and will keep the student actively enrolled for the semester. Tuition is required for Continuing Registration but there is no course work required.

[Pre-Admission and Transfer Credits](#)

Graduate students are allowed to bring in up to 12 credits hours taken at another institution or taken prior to admission (“pre-admission”) to their current graduate program. The combination of pre-admission and transfer credits cannot exceed 12 credit hours. The school has the right to not accept all credits.

The Graduate College also requires the coursework be graduate-level, have a letter grade of “B” or higher and have been completed within three years of starting the program. For more details, review Graduate College’s [Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

SOS Petition Process

Students who wish to request special permission of the School of Sustainability may do so by completing a [SOS Graduate Petition](#) form. The form is typically used for requesting a course not listed on the [Master List of Classes](#) spreadsheet to count in a specific way. However, this form may also be used to request an extension on a milestone deadline or for general appeal requests.

Students must fill out their section, list a justification that clearly states what they are requesting and why they think it should be considered, and attach documentation to the request. Course petitions always require a syllabus from the class the student wishes to take. The completed form must be reviewed by the student's committee chair (where applicable). The student then submits the form and documentation to the Graduate Coordinator at SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu. The Graduate Coordinator will route materials for the final review and inform the student of the decision soon after.

Grade Appeal and Academic Grievance Process

If students feel there is an issue with their grade or they have an academic grievance, they should follow the university policy for [grade appeals](#) and make every attempt to resolve the grade dispute or grievance informally, as outlined in steps A through C. If a formal grade appeal or grievance is warranted, students may submit a [SOS Graduate Petition](#) for review by the School of Sustainability Graduate Director. Students should enter all pertinent information about the situation, which may include the course number, instructor of the course, and the semester and year. Student should explain the rationale for their appeal and attach any relevant supporting documentation they would like the Graduate Director to see. Students should be aware that the Graduate Director will seek instructor feedback, and the appeal may be shared with the instructor.

If an additional review is needed, it will be sent to the School of Sustainability Dean. The Dean's decision will be final, and no additional appeals will be considered beyond that point. Additional information about the process can be found on the SOS [Graduate Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

Academic excellence is expected of students doing graduate work. Failure to adhere to the policies below may result in academic probation or a recommendation to the Graduate College for withdrawal from the degree program.

The following policies pertain to doctoral students in the School of Sustainability:

- **Minimum GPA:** To be eligible for the degree and to remain in good academic standing, PhD SOS graduate students must achieve and maintain a 3.25 minimum grade-point average (GPA). Students must maintain a 3.25 cumulative GPA in the following areas:
 - 1) all courses numbered 500 or higher that appear on the transcript; and
 - 2) all courses that appear on the plan of study.

The SOS GPA policy also includes post-baccalaureate courses (undergrad classes not listed on the plan of study) taken at ASU, in which students are required to maintain at least a cumulative 3.00 GPA.

- Individual Course Grades: A grade of “C+” or lower is not allowed on any courses within a student’s plan of study. If a student receives a grade of “C+” or lower, then he or she must re-take the course or seek approval from the SOS Graduate Committee to remove the course from the plan of study.
- Research and Dissertation Grades: Per Graduate College policy, SOS 792: Research and SOS 799: Dissertation credit hours may only receive grades of “Z” (research in progress), or “Y” (research is satisfactorily complete). In order to graduate, required thesis and dissertation hours must have “Y” grades posted.
- Incomplete Grades: Incompletes are given at the discretion of the instructor of a course and should not be expected. Students granted an incomplete must complete a contract with the instructor, outlining the work required and the timeline for completion. The completed [contract](#) must be sent to the Graduate Coordinator who will obtain the Graduate Director’s signature and keep an electronic record of the contract in the student’s file. The timeline cannot exceed one calendar year, but the instructor may choose an earlier completion date.

Once coursework has been fulfilled, a grade will be assigned. The grade must be entered within the calendar year, so the student should allow a few weeks for the instructor to grade each assignment. If the student does not complete coursework within the period stipulated by the instructor (on the contract), then the student may receive an unsatisfactory or failing grade for the course.

In the case that the professor gives the student the full calendar year within which to complete the course, and the course is not complete within that time, then the incomplete will become permanent and the student will have to re-take the course if it is a required course. The School of Sustainability permits only two incompletes on a student’s transcript at any time. More than two incompletes is cause for academic probation. More than two permanent incompletes is grounds for dismissal from the program.

- Time Limit for Passing Written Comprehensive Exam: Students should take the comprehensive exam within one year of finishing their coursework.
- Retaking the Written Comprehensive Exam: Students must petition the Graduate College to retake the comprehensive exam, and reexamination must occur no sooner than three months and no later than one year from the original exam date. Only one reexamination will be approved.
- Time Limit for Defending the Dissertation Prospectus: PhD students should defend the dissertation prospectus within six months of passing the comprehensive exam. Extensions on the six-month limit must be approved by the student’s supervisory committee and the Graduate Director. The student must submit a completed SOS internal petition form to request an extension.
- Time Limit for Completing the Doctoral Degree: Doctoral students are expected to meet the School of Sustainability program milestones. Failure to do so may result in probation. The Graduate College requires doctoral students to complete all program requirements within a ten-year period. The ten-year period starts with initial enrollment in the doctoral program. In addition, the student must take the final oral examination in defense of the dissertation within five years of passing the comprehensive examinations. The defense of the dissertation must take place at least 6 months after the student has advanced to candidacy.

Annual Review of Student Performance

To ensure that students complete their degrees in a timely manner, get the most out of their experience at SOS and meet requirements of the degree and School, the Graduate Committee and student’s faculty advisors will review student progress annually. Students who are not making satisfactory progress may be dismissed from the program, according to university regulations.

The Graduate Coordinator will send the students a link to the annual review survey in February. The completed survey, plan of study and updated CV/resume are to be submitted by the student by March 1. Annual review files will be reviewed in March of each year. The Graduate Committee and the student's faculty advisor will review the following documents when assessing students' progress:

- Check Sheet (provided by the Graduate Coordinator)
- Transcript (provided by the Graduate Coordinator)
- Comments (provided by SOS faculty)
- Updated CV or resume (provided by the student by March 1)
- Completed Annual Review Survey (provided by the student by March 1)

The student's faculty advisor will provide to each student, in writing, the results of the annual review. The advisor's comments will be emailed to the student by the Graduate Coordinator by the end of the spring semester.

Academic Probation Policy

A student may be placed on academic probation if:

1. The student's cumulative GPA in all courses numbered 500 and above and in all work specifically included in the plan of study falls below the 3.25 GPA requirement as outlined in the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy section;
2. The student's cumulative GPA for all post-baccalaureate courses taken at ASU falls below 3.00;
3. The student receives a "C+" or lower in a course on their plan of study;
4. The student has more than two incompletes on their transcript since starting the program; or
5. The student fails to complete the program within specified time guidelines and does not meet milestones specified in the graduate handbook.

Students will be notified by email when first placed on probation and will be required to complete a Probation Agreement with their faculty advisor or the Graduate Committee. Students on probation must meet monthly with their faculty advisor or the Graduate Committee member handling their probation agreement to ensure satisfactory progression. A student placed on probation will remain on probation until performance improves and requirements have been met. Students have one semester to advance to good standing before termination is considered. The Graduate Committee will notify the student in writing when he or she advances to good standing.

A student may be recommended for withdrawal from the graduate program if:

1. The student is on academic probation because his or her GPA has fallen below the 3.25 GPA as outlined in the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy section or below 3.00 for all post-baccalaureate courses taken at ASU, and the student fails to bring the GPA to required levels by the deadline specified in the Probation Agreement;
2. The student receives a "C+" or lower grade while on academic probation for any reason;
3. The student has more than two permanent incompletes since starting the program;
4. The student fails to meet milestones specified in the graduate handbook; or
5. The student fails to meet conditions stipulated in their Probation Agreement.
6. The student fails to adhere to the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Students will be notified by email if they are being recommended for withdrawal from the program.

A student may appeal any action concerning academic probation and withdrawal by petitioning the Graduate Committee within 10 business days, using the [SOS Graduate Petition](#) form. Approval of petitions is not guaranteed.

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each student to understand and observe all procedures and requirements specified by the ASU Graduate College and the School of Sustainability. It is a requirement for all students to read and understand the Graduate Handbook and the ASU Academic Catalog and to adhere to the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Faculty and staff provide academic advice and assistance, but the ultimate responsibility for meeting degree and other requirements remains with the student. Students should frequently check their MyASU account.

ASU Email

All ASU students are required to have an active ASU email address. Students may forward their ASU email to another preferred account. It is important that students check their ASU email at least once per week, so they do not miss important notices. Arizona State University and the School of Sustainability conduct their business via ASU email only.

Culture of Respect

ASU is a community and a professional work environment. Graduate students are expected to treat peers, teachers, students, staff, and members of the ASU community with respect and to work with them in a professional manner, both in person and online. Sustainability graduate students are representatives of the School of Sustainability and the university. SOS expects its students to be good representatives who recognize that poor behavior by one student impacts others by creating a negative perception of the school.

Sexual Harassment

The university prohibits sexual harassment by employees and students and will not tolerate sexual harassment that interferes with an individual's work or educational performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, learning, or residential environment. Please visit ASU's [Sexual Violence Awareness and Response](#) site to learn more about rights and responsibilities, how to report an incident and how to get immediate assistance and confidential support.

Student Code of Conduct

The [Arizona Board of Regents \(ABOR\) Student Code of Conduct](#) sets forth the standards of conduct expected of students who join the university community. Students who violate such standards will be subject to disciplinary sanctions in order to promote personal development, protect the university community, and maintain order and stability on campus.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a fundamental value because violations of it cause harm to students and their peers, the university, and future employers, clients, or patients. ASU School of Sustainability students are expected to be ethical in their multiple roles as students, researchers, and representatives of the university. When in doubt about appropriate conduct, students should review [ASU Academic Integrity Policies and Resources](#) and consult an instructor or advisor to seek clarification as needed.

Newly admitted graduate students will receive a “priority task” in MyASU directing them to complete an online module on academic integrity. The module consists of a PowerPoint that outlines academic integrity and students must take a quiz and pass with an 80% or higher.

As outlined by ASU policy, a student may be found to have engaged in academic dishonesty if, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or academic or research assignment (including a paid research position), he or she:

1. Engages in any form of academic deceit, such as fabricating data or information;
2. Refers to materials or sources or uses devices (e.g., memory cards or drives, computer disks, audio recorders, camera phones, text messages, crib sheets, calculators, solution manuals, materials from previous classes, or commercial research services) not authorized by the instructor for use during the Academic Evaluation or assignment;
3. Possesses, reviews, buys, sells, obtains, or uses, without appropriate authorization, any materials intended to be used for an Academic Evaluation or assignment in advance of its administration;
4. Acts as a substitute for another person in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
5. Uses a substitute in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
6. Depends on the aid of others, including other students or tutors, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment to the extent that the work is not representative of the student's abilities;
7. Provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, including the unauthorized use of camera phones, text messages, photocopies, notes or other means to copy or photograph materials used or intended for Academic Evaluation;
8. Engages in [Plagiarism](#) (the act of taking work or ideas, passing them off as one's own and not giving credit to the source);
9. Uses materials from the Internet or any other source without full and appropriate attribution;
10. Permits his or her work to be submitted by another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, without authorization;
11. Claims credit for or submits work done by another;
12. Signs an attendance sheet for another student, allows another student to sign on the student's behalf, or otherwise participates in gaining credit for attendance for oneself or another without actually attending;
13. Falsifying or misrepresenting hours or activities in relationship to an internship, externship, field experience, clinical activity or similar activity; or
14. Attempts to influence or change any Academic Evaluation, assignment or academic record for reasons having no relevance to academic achievement.

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, academic transactions and records. Possible sanctions for academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to the following: appropriate grade penalties, loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal.

Students have the responsibility to understand and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. The School of Sustainability has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of academic dishonesty and follows the university's [policies and procedures](#) when responding to an academic integrity complaint and determining sanctions.

Tuition, Fees and Financial Support

Financial Support

Funding is never guaranteed. Students seeking financial support should investigate all funding opportunities within and beyond the School. Students are responsible for finding and securing funding to pay for their education.

Teaching Assistantships

SOS offers Teaching Assistantships (TAs) to select students, prioritizing PhD students first and MA/MS students next. However, not all PhD and MA/MS students will receive a TA position. Those who do receive one are not guaranteed a position as a TA beyond their signed funding agreement. Each spring, a call for applications will be sent in the weekly newsletter for open positions in the following academic year. Spring-only positions will be advertised in fall. MSUS students are not considered for TA positions within the School of Sustainability.

TA positions come with a stipend, tuition remission, and health insurance benefits. Stipend rates and percentage of benefit coverage may vary but are specified in the offer letter. For example, PhD students who have a master's degree (or an equivalent number of earned hours after starting the program) are paid slightly more than students who do not hold a master's degree or are in a master's program. Students must be in good academic standing and perform successfully in their TA role to retain their TA position or to be considered for a future open position. For additional details and regulations, see the [TA/RA Handbook](#).

TA assignments are typically made about a month before the semester begins. Confirmation of a student's assignment will also include important reminders and next steps to prepare for their assignment. Students who apply for a TA will be notified when their application is received, but will receive further notifications only if they are selected to be a TA. The department does not send periodic updates about the status of those on the application list for a TA position.

Research Assistantships

Research Assistantships (RAs) are typically funding offers tied to faculty grants. Faculty are selective in whom they extend an RA offer to - usually a student whose specific skills are valuable for the research grant. A student funded with a RA is most often working for a faculty member who serves in some role on the student's supervisory committee, but this is not always the case. Students seeking RA opportunities need to contact faculty members individually.

RA positions come with a stipend, tuition remission, and health insurance benefits. Stipend rates and percentage of benefit coverage may vary but are specified in the offer letter. For Like TA opportunities, the student must be in good standing to be eligible for this type of funding. For additional details and regulations, see the [TA/RA Handbook](#).

Graduate Service Assistantships

The work expected for Graduate Service Assistant (GSA) positions can be similar to a TA or RA position; however, the GSA comes with a stipend only. The tuition remission and student health insurance coverage are not included in a GSA offer.

Scholarships, Grants and Fellowships

The School of Sustainability will advertise various funding opportunities as staff are made aware of them. These messages are conveyed to students through the weekly grad student newsletter or through the

SOSGrad email listserv. The School also has several [scholarships and grants](#) on its website, most of which have an early February application deadline.

The School offers Culminating Experience grants for graduate students who want to travel to attend professional development opportunities (workshops, conferences, meetings, etc.) or conduct research. These grants can help pay for equipment, travel expenses, registration fees, etc. For complete details, students can access the application through the SOS Graduate Student Community Blackboard site.

The [Global Development Research \(GDR\)](#) fellowship program is another great opportunity to fund a trip to an international location. Funding is tied to a specific project for which the student must pre-apply and be selected. The GDR fellowship is awarded to several students each year and is open to any ASU graduate student, including international students, but the program is housed within the School of Sustainability. This program is highly competitive and is provided in conjunction with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The [Graduate and Professional Student Association \(GPSA – student government\)](#) also has several types of research and travel awards available to help students participate in academic and career-related activities.

The ASU [Graduate College](#) has several fellowships and awards that students may apply to for funding various activities, such as attending conferences or finishing their last semester of school.

[Student Loans and Need-Based Grants](#)

Students who require funding assistance are encouraged to apply for [federal financial aid](#) if they are eligible (US Citizens and Permanent Residents). The required form is called the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) and is free to submit. Any questions related to student loans should be addressed to the [ASU Financial Aid](#) office. Please note that graduate-level student loans are all unsubsidized, which means the students pay interest on the loans while they are enrolled in school.

[SAP Review](#)

Also, to remain eligible for financial aid, students must meet specific GPA requirements and make satisfactory academic progress (pace rate) toward degree completion. A course withdrawal “W” on a transcript, even if it is a medical or compassionate withdrawal, will negatively impact the pace rate.

Any student who receives a financial aid hold (seen in MyASU) for GPA or pace rate violations will be instructed to contact their program to fill out a [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\) Review](#). The Graduate Coordinator will work with any student who must complete a SAP review form prior to the next term. Submitting the form after the semester begins may result in delayed funds or receiving a lesser amount. The Financial Aid Office must approve the SAP form; therefore, the Graduate Coordinator cannot guarantee the SAP plan will grant the student another loan disbursement.

Satisfactory Academic Progress is reviewed on an annual basis after the spring semester. A student who is still in violation may have to fill out another SAP form with the Graduate Coordinator.

[Employer Reimbursement/Tuition Assistance](#)

Students are encouraged to speak to their employers about eligibility for tuition assistance or reimbursement. If assistance is available, important questions to ask include:

- Does the employer pay tuition up front or after grades are posted?
- If grades are required, what percentage of the course is covered for each grade (A, B, C, etc.)? Is there a minimum grade required for reimbursement?

- How soon will the employer reimburse the student after grades are posted?
- Is there a maximum amount the employer will pay for tuition per year?
- If there is a cap, is it calculated on a calendar or fiscal year?
- If the cap is per fiscal year, when does that year begin and end?
- Will the employer pay for additional fees or expenses such as books?
- What documentation is required after the course is complete?

ASU Employment

Some students seek employment at ASU to help pay for their education expenses or may already be employed by ASU. Not all employment positions provide a tuition benefit, so students should ask questions as needed. ASU offers a [qualified tuition reduction program](#) for certain types of positions. Additionally, students can explore employment through the [Careers at ASU](#) page.

Graduation

Graduation Exit Session

The SOS Graduate Coordinator co-facilitates a meeting at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, focusing on graduation. The meeting focuses on procedures, deadlines and helpful tips for completing all items on time. Information on graduation ceremonies is also part of the session. Different sessions exist based on culminating experience type.

Students graduating within the next year are invited to the session. Students may attend one or more exit sessions. Sessions are held shortly before the graduation application deadlines in fall and spring.

Apply to Graduate

Every student is required to [apply for graduation](#) in the semester in which they plan to complete their degree or certificate. The university lists the graduation application deadline on the [Academic Calendar](#). Students can apply after the deadline but will have to pay a late fee in addition to the graduation application fee. A separate application is required for each degree or certificate program. It's important for students to make sure their mailing address is correct prior to applying for graduation so the diploma gets mailed to the correct address.

Students are encouraged to attend a graduation exit session to learn about all items required for their program and unit in order to graduate on time. Students cannot apply to graduate if they are not in good standing or have issues on the interactive plan of study (iPOS).

Commencement and Convocation

There are two main ceremonies during graduation week, each requiring separate RSVPs. Diplomas are sent to the student's mailing address (the one listed when applying to graduate) after the degree has been conferred, which may take up to six weeks after the end of the semester. The doctoral diploma cover is distributed at commencement; the master's diploma cover is distributed at convocation. Students do not receive the diploma at commencement or convocation.

- Commencement is the university-wide graduation ceremony (the graduate students' ceremony is separate from the undergraduates' ceremony), facilitated by the President of the University.
- Convocation is the School of Sustainability graduation ceremony. Graduates walk across the stage in front of a smaller audience.

The School of Sustainability Student Services Center will send additional information about graduation directly to graduation-eligible students. Additional information can also be found [here](#). There are also [special interest and cultural convocations](#) in which a student can participate.

Graduation regalia (gown with tassel, gown and hood) is required for all students to participate in these ceremonies and are not provided by ASU. These items are available to purchase either on campus or online. Students are responsible for ordering, purchasing and picking up their regalia.

Campus Safety

To report an emergency on campus, students can simply dial 911 or use one of the emergency call boxes found on campus. These call boxes can be identified by their blue light. Non-emergency ASU police or campus safety matters should be directed to 480-965-3456.

ASU Alerts and information about life-threatening situations such as a major fire or armed suspect on campus are sent via three methods:

- [ASU LiveSafe](#) mobile app
- Email to all ASU student, faculty, and staff accounts
- Text message using the mobile phone numbers listed on your MyASU profile

Best practices include completing your student profile with your mobile telephone number, enabling push notifications on your phone, and turning on location services. GPS data may provide ASU police more information if you report an incident or make a call, and it will allow you to receive geo-fenced advisory messages.

Facilities and Reserving Rooms

The School of Sustainability is located in Wrigley Hall (WGHL). Of particular interest to SOS graduate students is the second-floor graduate student space, which provides individual and collaborative work space, wireless access, a data lab, and a kitchen. SOS graduate students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves when utilizing this space.

Access

Graduate students who have been admitted may request 24-hour access to the second-floor grad lounge by completing an ISAAC form at orientation.

Locker Policy

Lockers are available in the grad lounge on a first come, first served basis. Students will need to bring their own locks if they are using a locker on a regular basis. Due to an increase in student population, grad students are encouraged to share lockers or not occupy a locker if they rarely use it. Additionally, students should not occupy more than one locker.

Room Reservation

The current room reservation policy is on the school's [Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage.

Resources

Arizona State University and the School of Sustainability provide numerous resources to assist students. The following list includes some of the [many resources](#) that may be beneficial for graduate students while pursuing a degree.

SOS Graduate Advising

The School of Sustainability Student Services Center is open to all sustainability students and provides quality academic advising and support services to promote student success. Find office hours and schedule an appointment on the [Graduate Advising](#) webpage.

MyASU Portal

[MyASU](#) is an interactive, customized portal to a diverse range of student services, from financial aid to academic advising and course registration. Through the site, students can access their ASU email account and online course materials. MyASU also serves as a portal to the ASU Library and the source for downloadable software.

Sun Card

The [Sun Card](#) is Arizona State University's official photo ID card. Students may [upload a photo](#) and either pick up the Sun Card in the Sun Devil Card Services Office or have the Sun Card delivered by mail. Students will be charged \$25 for the card. A Sun Card is required to access some locations on campus, particularly the Graduate Lounge/Kitchen in Wrigley Hall.

Housing

There is some housing available at the Tempe campus for graduate students, which can be found under [Upper Division Housing](#) on the University Housing site. However, most graduate students live off campus and the [Off Campus Housing](#) webpage has helpful information for students seeking housing options.

Health Services and Insurance

ASU [Health Services](#) provides a number of services focused on the health and well-being of students, including [student health insurance](#). International students are automatically enrolled in the ASU student health insurance plan. All other students must take steps to enroll in an insurance plan (if desired). Students can register through the Campus Services section of their MyASU page.

ASU Parking and Transit Services

Students can find information about parking permits and rules about parking at other campuses on the [Parking and Transit Services](#) webpage.

Campus Amenities

The hub of student life at the Tempe campus is the [Memorial Union](#) (MU). Students can find restaurants, live music, a gaming lounge, bank automated teller machines (ATM), and much more.

SOS Graduate Student Handbook

This handbook is an important resource for students. The graduate handbook is available on the school's [Graduate Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage.

SOS Policies, Procedures and Forms Webpage

The School of Sustainability's [Graduate Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage contains key information about school policies, procedures, and related forms. SOS staff will often refer students to this page.

Graduate College Policies and Procedures Manual

The Graduate College oversees all graduate programs at ASU and upholds university and graduate program rules and policies. All graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with Graduate College's [Policies and Procedures Manual](#) in addition to those specific to the academic unit.

TA/RA Handbook

The [TA/RA Handbook](#) provides an overview of ASU policies and support services pertinent to teaching and research assistants and associates. It includes information relating to:

- Conditions of appointment
- Types of appointment
- Benefits
- University policies

The teaching (TA) and research (RA) assistant/associate role is an important one to the ASU community. It provides graduate students with professional development opportunities that are unique to academia while supporting the university's teaching, research, and service missions.

While many of the general policies and expectations also apply to graduate service assistants (GSA) and graduate interns, GSAs and interns are not bound by the same eligibility requirements as TAs and RAs and do not receive the same benefits as TAs and RAs (e.g., tuition remission).

Blackboard/Canvas

Arizona State University provides online courses and course material through a Learning Management System (LMS). Over the next year, the university will be transitioning from the current [Blackboard](#) LMS to [Canvas](#). During the transition, students may have courses in both Canvas and Blackboard. Using MyASU to access courses will direct students to the correct platform. Any courses that have moved to Canvas will also be available through the Canvas Mobile app.

SOS Graduate Student Community Organization Site

The school's Graduate Coordinator maintains an organization site in Blackboard (Canvas in the future) where SOS graduate students can find resources related to their programs, milestones, and overall success. Students are given access prior to orientation. Examples of items on the site include:

- Sample comprehensive exams, prospectus proposals, and PowerPoint presentations;
- Lists of funding opportunities (scholarships, grants, fellowships) that may be available annually;
- Current Master List of Classes spreadsheet;
- SOS Culminating Experience Grant application;
- Information about how to add a biography to the website; and
- Instructions on how to order student business cards.

SOS Grad Students and Grad Representatives

SOS graduate students may opt to have an online biography added to the School of Sustainability [Graduate Students and Representatives](#) webpage. Instructions are available in the SOS Graduate Student Community site (see previous section for details).

The page also features the current SOS graduate student representatives (grad reps). Grad Reps are student leaders elected by their peers. They serve for one academic year (fall to spring or spring to fall). They are also liaisons between the graduate student community and the faculty and administration of the School of Sustainability. They communicate feedback from the student body, attend faculty and high-level department meetings, and are invited to represent the graduate student community at special guest events. Grad reps also assist in planning graduate student events and communicate with prospective and new graduate students.

Current students interested in becoming a future rep can discuss their interest with a current grad rep and ask to be included in the next election. Grad rep nominees must be in good academic standing and have a current SOS bio on the website. Voting takes place at the end of each fall and spring semester, as one (of the two) reps from each program is always transitioning off as a new representative is elected.

Tutoring and Writing Center

ASU provides free assistance with writing and offers tutoring in a variety of subjects. For complete details, please visit [University Academic Success Programs](#). Students are strongly encouraged to meet with a graduate writing tutor while drafting major deliverables such as proposals, presentations, and papers to ensure they meet the standards expected of graduate students.

SOS Graduate Writing Tutor

The School of Sustainability has a writing tutor dedicated to working with SOS graduate students to improve writing skills. For more details and to book an appointment, please visit the [Graduate Writing Help](#) webpage.

ASU Libraries

ASU has several libraries and hosts impressive online and hardcopy collections. The Tempe campus is home to [Hayden Library](#), the main library on campus, as well as the [Design and the Arts Library](#), the [Music Library](#), and the [Noble Science Library](#). Students can research past theses and dissertations through the ProQuest database, request documents from other libraries around the world, or search online article databases. Hayden Library also provides free creative equipment and tools through [mkrservices](#) and [mkrstudio](#). Online access is available through [MyASU](#).

The ASU [Digital Repository](#) is home to scholarly papers and theses in addition to cultural heritage materials, historical photographs, and music performances. The School of Sustainability [Graduate Culminating Experiences](#) collection offers open access to student capstone and applied projects.

ASU Mobile App

The [ASU Mobile App](#) provides access to features such as MyASU, email, maps, and library resources. Students can also access maps and find out about campus events and athletics. Students can download the app from the Apple app store or from Google Play.

Technical Support

Students can use ASU's IT Knowledge Base and find answers to frequently asked questions through the Service tab on MyASU. Students also have access to 24/7 technical support via chat, and [getprotected.asu.edu](#) provides information to reduce online vulnerability to viruses, malware, and phishing attacks.

Software

ASU students can access and use powerful software applications for free through [MyApps](#), which can be accessed online or through MyASU. All students may get a free license to Microsoft Office for use on a personal computer. Students also have access to [Cloud Storage](#) on Google Drive, Dropbox for Education and OneDrive for Business through their ASU account. Software and technical requirements may vary for individual courses.

Student Accounts

Students can use the Finances tab in MyASU to access information about student accounts, including account charges, financial aid, and scholarships. For assistance, students are encouraged to contact [Student Business Services](#). They can answer questions about tuition and billing, student refunds (including financial aid disbursement), receipt and payment processing, support for past due accounts, third party sponsorship assistance, and Perkins Loan repayment. Students may also submit questions through the Service tab in MyASU, email sbs@asu.edu, or call 1-855-278-5080.

Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides services to qualified students with disabilities on all ASU campuses. Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should [contact the DRC](#).

Counseling Services

ASU [Counseling Services](#) offers professional counseling and referrals for all members of the ASU community, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, student status, religion, ability, size, or financial situation, personal concern, or previous counseling. Support is available 24/7 and no appointment is necessary. First appointments are free, and fee waivers are available for ongoing services.

During business hours (Mon-Fri, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Arizona time):

- Visit or call any of the [four campus locations](#)

Outside of business hours:

- Call EMPACT's 24-hour ASU-dedicated crisis hotline at (480) 921-1006

For life-threatening emergencies:

- Dial 9-1-1

To search for community mental health providers:

- Use the [ASU Community Link](#)

Veterans Services

The ASU [Pat Tillman Veterans Center](#) provides services specifically for all students who are current or former U.S. military.

International Student and Scholars Center

[The International Student and Scholars Center](#) (ISSC) provides a variety of services for ASU's international population of students, scholars and faculty.

Graduate and Professional Student Association

The [Graduate and Professional Student Association](#) (GPSA) is ASU's student government. GPSA is a great way for students to get involved on campus and serve the campus community. GPSA has several grants for which students may apply at different times of the year. GPSA's "GradAd" email listserv is a way for students to buy and sell items, look for roommates, promote or find volunteer opportunities, etc.

Career Services and Internships

The School of Sustainability has a career advisor dedicated to helping SOS students discuss career options and perform company and occupational research. The advisor also assists with resumes and cover letters, interview preparation, job search strategy, and other employment-related topics. To book an appointment, please visit the [Sustainability Career Advising](#) site. Full time opportunities are communicated through the School of Sustainability's internal LinkedIn group. Additional employment, internship, career fair, and mentorship opportunities are available through ASU's career resource, [Handshake](#).

The school also offers a Job Shadowing Program, which allows students to shadow SOS alumni in their jobs for a day. Information is sent out in fall and spring to students about how to participate in the program.

Graduate students can also pursue [internships](#), either for elective credit or no credit. Local opportunities are posted on [SustainabilityConnect](#). Additional opportunities may be communicated in the weekly SOS graduate newsletter or on the SOS graduate listserv, SOSGrad@asu.edu.

Contacts

Students may sometimes need to contact other offices on campus for assistance. This is a partial list of offices that provide useful resources for students.

[Emergency Services](#)

To report an emergency, dial 911

To reach ASU Police, dial 480-965-3456; press 1 for dispatch

ASU Emergency Information line 1-844-864-8327

[Graduate College](#)

Interdisciplinary B, Suite 285

480-965-3521

Grad-gps@asu.edu

[Graduate and Professional Student Association](#) (GPSA)

Center for Family Studies (CFS) Building

480-727-9870

gpsa@asu.edu

[Office of the University Provost](#)

Fulton Center, Suite 420

[Contact Form](#)

[Sustainability Specialist, ASU Librarians](#)

Rene Tanner

Hayden Library

Rene.Tanner@asu.edu

480-965-7190

[University Technology Office](#)
480-965-6500 or 1-855-278-5080
[Contact form](#)