

2020-2021

Program Handbook

PhD in Sustainability

PhD + CASS Concentration

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1. Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is designed to guide 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 SOS or ASU policy. When necessary, it provides links to review more complete information published elsewhere. 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, Forms and Deadlines](#) page including the [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.

2. 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.

3. Role of Faculty and Staff in Advising

A list of [the school's faculty and instructors](#) as well as ASU's [Sustainability Scientists and Scholars](#) database can be found on the SOS website. The Sustainability Scientists and Scholars page includes faculty, staff, and researchers across ASU with connections to sustainability. Not all of the people listed in these databases are eligible to supervise graduate students, so please read the sections below for clarification. Contact your graduate coordinator if you have questions.

a. Student Supervisory Committee

SOS students must have at least three faculty members on their supervisory committee, per university requirements. Typically, a student's committee will include 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 often pose additional issues in scheduling conflicts and feedback on writing. Each student must designate a chair or two co-chairs when they submit their plan of study (iPOS) for the first time. The remainder of the committee can be formed later. See the Milestones section of this handbook for deadlines.

Students are assigned a faculty mentor before starting the program; faculty mentors are available to support the graduate student with curriculum recommendations, acclimating to academic life at ASU, and finding opportunities for research and funding. Many 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 case the student will need to find a more suitable committee chair. Students are encouraged to meet with mentors they are interested in inviting to serve in a supervisory role to determine who might be most appropriate. Committees can include SOS graduate faculty, Sustainability Scientists and Scholars, other ASU faculty, faculty at other universities, and other practitioners who can lend expertise and mentorship to a student's research and writing.

b. 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 [on the Graduate College's website](#). All students in the PhD, MA or MS in Sustainability

programs should use the “Sustainability PhD” graduate faculty list. The graduate faculty lists indicate 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 selecting 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.

c. Individual Committee Participation Request

Students must request permission to add a member 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 is not endorsed for the role the student desires, special permission is also required. For example, if the student wants to add a faculty member as a chair but the current endorsement is only for the member role, then the student must request permission.

To gain permission, the student completes an [Individual Committee Member Approval Request](#). The completed form must be submitted with the faculty member’s updated CV and date of birth to SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu. The form is reviewed and must be approved by both SOS administration and the Graduate College.

If a student obtains approval to have someone serve in the role of member but later wants to change their role to a higher level, then a new request form must be submitted with an updated CV. Post-doctoral fellows may be eligible to serve on master’s committees by Individual Committee Participation Request.

d. SOS Graduate Support Coordinators

The graduate support coordinators (also called graduate coordinators or academic advisors) are available to advise students about program milestones and requirements, guide students through a range of procedures, and interpret school and university policies. The graduate coordinators also maintain a number of informational resources for students, including the Master List of Classes spreadsheet, the graduate resource website, and program handbooks.

Any question about paperwork, policies or university services should be addressed to the graduate coordinator for the student’s program. All questions regarding coursework or research applied toward the degree should be addressed to the student’s faculty mentor, chair, or supervisory committee.

Students can set up appointments with the graduate coordinator for their program through the online appointment system, which can be accessed through the [SOS Graduate Advising](#) webpage.

Students can contact the graduate coordinators directly by emailing SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu.

e. SOS Director of Graduate Studies & Program Committee

The School of Sustainability’s graduate programs are overseen by an appointed director of graduate studies and committees of faculty dedicated to the health of academic programs and student success. The committees review admission and funding applications, student petitions, and proposed curriculum changes for any graduate-level programs. The director and committees work with the graduate coordinators to review annual review results, issue probation and dismissal letters, and process appeals made by graduate students in the school. They also review requests to add faculty to supervisory committees or the graduate faculty and revise policies and procedures as needed.

4. 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.

	Credits Required	
	Admitted with a Master's	Admitted without a Master's
Core Courses	8	8
Solutions Workshops	3	6
Electives Of which, a maximum of 6 hours can be at the 400-level; 500-level or higher is graduate-level	21	48
Research	12	12
Dissertation	12	12
Total Credits Required	56	86

a. Core Courses

b. Course	Title
SOS 510	Perspectives on Sustainability
SOS 520	Research Design and Methods for Sustainability
SOS 589	Community of Scholars

The core courses are designed to provide students from diverse academic backgrounds with methods and theories for the study of sustainability. They explore links between concepts of sustainability and systems approaches to knowledge and develop integrative methods needed to work across the disciplines on sustainability problems. They also support students in identifying research questions and designing research projects.

Students must take SOS 510 and SOS 520 their first semester in the program. They must take SOS 589 the first two fall semesters of their program as well.

b. Required Foundational, Workshop, and Elective Courses

Students can refer to the Master List of Classes to see approved foundational and workshop classes and to see a sampling of approved general elective classes. Refer to the Master List of Classes section of this handbook for more details.

c. Research Credits

Course	Title
SOS 792	Research

Students must complete at least 12 credits of SOS 792 Research prior to graduation, per university policy. SOS 792 is offered every semester for variable credits, which means students select the number of credits at the time of enrollment, in consultation with their committee chair. Typically, students take research credits when preparing for the 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 credit research requirement for this degree.

To enroll in these credits, students must obtain written permission from their committee chair or co-chair and attach a screenshot to a [Course Override Request Form](#) on the SOS website.

d. Dissertation Credits

Course	Title
SOS 799	Dissertation

Students must complete and list exactly 12 credits of SOS 799: Dissertation on their plans of study for the degree, per university policy. Listing fewer or more credits on the plan of study will interfere with graduation processing. SOS 799 is offered every semester for variable credits, which means the student selects the number of credits at the time of enrollment, in consultation 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.

To enroll in these credits, students must obtain written permission from their committee chair or co-chair and attach a screenshot to a [Course Override Request Form](#) on the SOS website.

e. 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 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 add the CASS concentration to their PhD program of study 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 (PhD + CASS) 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.

	Credits Required	
	with a Master’s	without a Master’s
Core Courses	6	6
Solutions Workshop(s)	3	6
CASS Fundamentals	3	3
CASS Mathematics	3	3
CASS Modeling	3	3
CASS Approaches	3	3
CASS Reading and Conference or Research	3	3
Electives	9	33*
Research	9-12**	12
Dissertations	12	12
Total Credits Required	54-57²	84

(Footnotes on next page)

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

**Overlap 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 a Reading and Conference class for the CASS requirement, then 12 credits of Research are required, per university policy.

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

5. Program Milestones

a. Major Milestones

The SOS Graduate Committee has developed a list of milestones and deadlines to keep students on track with university and department requirements. 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 a list of suggested actions students take to stay on-track, develop professionally, and find future funding opportunities. Each student's committee may have additional items they request or require of the student.

Milestone	Deadline if Entered with Master's Degree	Deadline if Entered without Master's Degree
Begin program coursework	Fall of first year	
Confirm committee chair (faculty advisor) or 2 co-chairs	March 1 of first year	March 1 of second year
Submit complete iPOS (listing all coursework and chair/ 2 co-chairs)	March 1 of first year	March 1 of second year
Complete annual review process	March 1 of every year	
Confirm full committee: 2 members (with 1 chair); or 1 member (with 2 co-chairs)	September 15 of 2 nd year	September 15 of 3 rd year
Add committee members to iPOS and submit for review	By September 15 of 2 nd year	September 15 of 3 rd year
Take and pass the written comprehensive exam	December 1 of third year (aim for mid-semester)	December 1 of fourth year (aim for mid-semester)
Defend and pass the prospectus defense; Become a PhD candidate	6 months of passing the Comp Exam	
Register for Dissertation credits	After PhD Candidacy only	
Apply to graduate	February 15 for spring graduates; June 15 for summer graduates; October 1 for fall graduates	
Pass dissertation defense	Final semester; 1-2 years after attaining candidacy	

Follow steps to publication of the dissertation	See Graduate College website for steps and deadlines
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Complete milestone details are listed throughout the handbook in related sections. For questions or clarification, students can contact the graduate coordinator at SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu.

b. Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam is a written exam created 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 on the SOS Graduate Resources site. Examples of reading lists completed by past students can also be found on 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 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.

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 suggestions from committee members before creating the final bibliography. The student and committee should consider 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.

Based on the student’s 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 [Comprehensive Exam Results](#) form can be circulated by the committee chair in email or paper form, or by the graduate coordinator via DocuSign. Each member of the committee must sign and indicate their vote for the student’s results: pass, pass with distinction, or fail. In rare cases, emails from the committee members may be accepted in lieu of signing the appropriate form.

In case of failure, the student must petition the Graduate College to retake the comprehensive exam. This petition is reviewed by the graduate committee and the Graduate College and may not be approved. Reexamination, when approved, must occur no sooner than three months, and no later than one year, from the original exam date. Only one reexamination will be approved.

Students must 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. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined in this

handbook and in the Graduate College policy manual may result in academic probation or dismissal from the program.

c. Prospectus Defense

In careful consultation with the supervisory committee, the student will prepare a written dissertation proposal. The format of the proposal is 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 all 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 defense of the dissertation prospectus is required and must be scheduled by the student in conjunction with their supervisory committee. The prospectus defense must occur no more than six months after successful completion of the written comprehensive examination. The student may petition for an extension on this deadline but approval is not guaranteed. If approval is given, the student should not expect 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 policy.

The defense must be open to the public, but the committee will also meet privately with the candidate at the end of the defense to discuss the work and any required revisions. The student's entire committee must participate in the defense. At least 50% of the committee must be physically present, including the chair or at least one co-chair. The student should discuss defense scheduling with the committee well in advance, especially if defending in spring. Faculty attend far more defenses in spring than other semesters and may be quite busy. In summer, faculty often travel for research and may not be available to participate in defenses.

Defenses must take place on the Tempe campus during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm) and may 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 committee chair at the prospectus defense. Following approval of the dissertation prospectus, committee signatures should be entered in Part II of the form. If a student must complete revisions, then the chair retains the form and does 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 or chair:

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.

A few days after the graduate coordinator enters the defense results into the student's iPOS, the student will receive a letter of advancement to candidacy from the Graduate College. The student can view and download this letter from My ASU. 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.

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

d. 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 comprehensive exam and a public prospectus defense, in that order. Upon successfully completing these two items and submitting the results forms to the graduate coordinator, the Graduate College will issue a letter of candidacy to the student through My ASU.

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

6. Culminating Experience

a. 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.

b. The 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 their dissertations 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](#).

i. Defense Eligibility

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

- Have 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.

ii. Scheduling a Defense

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 at 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 format editor through the iPOS;
2. Schedule their defense through [My ASU](#); and
3. Submit a [Dissertation Defense Announcement form](#) to their 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 lists 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 delayed graduation and the requirement of an additional semester of registration and tuition payment. The graduate coordinators hold graduation exit sessions at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, reviewing all the steps and deadlines for graduation. Students are encouraged to attend the exit session both the semester before they graduate and their final semester. See the Graduation Exit Session section of this handbook for more details.

c. Reporting Results

The results form (also called a pass-fail form) is sent to each student's supervisory committee via DocuSign the day before the defense. If the student has to revise their dissertation, then the chair must indicate so on the form and all committee members must sign and indicate the initial results of the defense.

After the revisions are complete and approved, the chair or co-chair must sign the bottom of the form to indicate that the revisions are complete. This will trigger the submission of the results form to the Graduate College. The final results form is due no later than 2 p.m. to the Graduate College by the date indicated on their deadlines webpage.

d. Publication

The student must also submit the approved, revised version of the paper to the format editor. This deadline is the same as the results form deadline, and is published on the Graduate College's website. The student will work with the format editors (likely in several rounds) until the format is approved for publication. 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 the aforementioned tasks will result in delayed graduation and will require the student to register for another semester (SOS 795 Continuing Registration for 1-credit) and pay tuition.

7. Unique Opportunities

a. Master's In Passing

The Master's in Passing (MiP) option is offered to exemplary students accepted into the program without a master's degree in sustainability. 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 33 hours of coursework that meet the requirements for the master's degree (*Note: courses taken before admission 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 a complete supervisory committee listed on the iPOS;
4. Submit a portfolio for review by the supervisory committee consisting of the following work (papers should include grades received and instructor comments):
 - i. One exemplary research paper
 - ii. One exemplary paper or project of an applied nature
 - iii. A short paper (such as an essay or an opinion piece) or a poster
 - iv. 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 so the Master's in Passing can be conferred.

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.

b. Concurrent Degrees

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, allowing students to earn two master's degrees in two to three years. The Graduate College's [Policies and Procedures Manual](#) outlines the 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.

c. 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. 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 these details carefully and consult an advisor in both the unit that offers the degree program and the unit that offers the certificate. Please note that some certificates have additional course and program fees.

d. Study Abroad

There are a number of exciting [study abroad](#) opportunities that may be of interest to graduate students. New opportunities are posted regularly.

e. SustainabilityConnect

[SustainabilityConnect](#), an online service provided by the School of Sustainability and the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability, facilitates collaboration between ASU and the community to educate students and contribute to sustainability solutions. The SustainabilityConnect website hosts information about 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 shared interests, get advice and assistance, or learn more about successfully completed projects.

8. Curriculum Tools and Milestones

a. Master List of Classes

The Master List of Classes is a spreadsheet that contains preapproved classes for each program that fulfill stated requirements. The list is located on the [SOS Graduate Student Resources website](#) and is maintained by the graduate coordinators. The list also contains a large number of preapproved general electives. Students who wish to take a (non-core) course not listed on the Master List toward their plan of study must receive special permission through a petition process.

Students should consult with faculty and/or their graduate coordinator on course selection for degree requirements.

b. Check Sheet

Program check sheets are Excel spreadsheets that students can use to draft their plans of study and keep track of milestones. The graduate coordinators send each student a spreadsheet that lists program requirements and milestones before they begin the program. Students can use the check sheet to map out all classes they plan to take and discuss with their graduate coordinator and committee chair to ensure it is accurate before submitting the official plan of study.

Students can continue to update their check sheets as a quick reference in conjunction with the iPOS. Many students' iPOSes do not list which courses are taken to meet all requirements (workshops, foundational electives, general electives, etc.), so the check sheet can be quite helpful.

The graduate coordinators will also periodically update check sheets and will send updates (and any pertinent notes) to the graduate student. The graduate coordinators will use students' check sheets to track certain details about student progress and advising appointment notes.

As the iPOS platform becomes more comprehensive, check sheets may become redundant. SOS advisors and students can continue to use these resources as long as they are helpful.

c. Interactive Plan of Study (iPOS)

The [interactive plan of study](#) (iPOS) is the student's official contract with the department 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.

SOS requires the iPOS be submitted by March 1 of the student's first year in the program. Failure to meet this deadline could result in academic probation for the student for violation of department policies. The Graduate College states that the deadline is when the student has completed 50 percent of their coursework; SOS has an earlier deadline in place so the graduate coordinators, faculty chairs, and director of graduate studies have time to review plans of study before the end of spring semester.

The iPOS must have a committee chair listed when it is first submitted on March 1, and the remaining committee members must be added by September 15 of the next academic year.

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.

Students can update iPOS courses (add and remove classes) and adjust their committees 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 SOS MA and MS committees (see [the Graduate College's Sustainability PhD Graduate Faculty list](#)) or go through a [one-time review process](#) to be considered for addition to a student's committee. Contact your graduate coordinator if you have questions.

9. Policies

a. Academic Calendar and Time Zone

Students should pay careful attention to dates outlined in ASU's [Academic Calendar](#). Important dates, such as the start, end and withdrawal deadlines for each session are included in this calendar.

Assignments and assessments will not be due on observed holidays. However, due to the accelerated nature of online courses, online students should not plan to take time off from studying and coursework due to holidays.

All timeframes used in class follow Arizona Mountain Standard Time. Arizona does not observe daylight saving time from March through November; therefore, the time in Arizona will not align with other places that are on MST for half the year.

b. Time Limit

Students who enter with a master's degree typically complete the program in four years, while those who do not already have a master's degree typically finish in six. In some instances, students may need additional time to complete the culminating experience or concurrent degree programs; this time should not add more than one year to a student's program.

Per Graduate College policy, all work toward a doctoral degree must be completed within ten consecutive years. The ten years begin with the semester and year of admission to the 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 admission to the program.

Any exception to the time limit policy must be approved by the unit 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.

c. Enrollment and Leave Policies

The academic unit and university have firm policies related to continuous enrollment and requesting leaves of absence. The most common enrollment issues and questions are addressed below. Additional information can be found in Graduate College's [Policies and Procedures Handbook](#).

i. Registration & Enrollment

Students register for classes through My ASU. If a student cannot register, they may have a registration hold on their account, which would be noted in My ASU. In My ASU, the student can click on the hold title and a box with additional information about the hold will appear, including information on resolving it.

ii. 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, a student who no longer wishes to take a course will need to withdraw from it. A withdrawal will result in a "W" grade on the student's transcript. A "W" grade may negatively impact students receiving student loans and 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.

To add a class, students can fill out an Enrollment Change Request to add a class after the deadline. The student needs to collect all signatures on the form. The Enrollment Change Request form can be found under the Late Drop/Add Requests section of the [Graduate Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage and can be picked up at the SOS Student Services front desk in Wrigley Hall during regular business hours.

iii. Continuous Enrollment

Once admitted to a graduate degree or certificate program, students must register for a minimum of one credit each fall and spring (and sometimes summer) of their graduate education, including the term in which they graduate. This includes periods when students are engaged in research, writing, exams, or other work beyond the completion of coursework requirements or are in any 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.

iv. Leave of Absence

Graduate students planning to discontinue registration for a semester or more must submit a Leave of Absence request via their Interactive Plan of Student (iPOS). This request must be submitted and approved before the anticipated semester of non-registration. Students may request a maximum of two semesters of leave during their entire program. Having an approved Leave of Absence by the Graduate College will enable students to reenter their program without re-applying to the university.

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 in the [Graduate College's Policies and Procedures Handbook](#).

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, found in the [Graduate College Policies and Procedures Handbook](#).

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.

d. Pre-Admission and Transfer Credits

Credit hours completed at ASU or at another regionally accredited U.S. institution or international institution officially recognized by that country, before the semester and year of admission to an ASU graduate degree program, are considered pre-admission credits.

With the approval of the academic unit and the Graduate College office, students may include a maximum of 12 graduate-level credit hours with grades of “B” or better that were not used towards a previous degree. Preadmission credits must have been taken within three years of admission to the ASU degree or certificate program to be accepted. Accelerated Bachelor’s/Master’s programs may use a maximum of 12 pre-admission credits which may include up to a maximum of 12 hours shared between the Bachelor’s and Master’s program. Students in accelerated programs should contact their advisor to ensure proper sharing of credit hours. For more details, review the Graduate College’s [Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

e. Grades

Students must reach out to their instructors for any classes where grades have not been entered or where they do not match the passing grades listed below. Incorrect grades can delay or prevent conferral of a degree. The graduate coordinator will work with the scheduler to post grades prior to graduation in cases where faculty are unable to post them. 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 culminating experience requirements and is no longer “in progress” of completing the degree.

When a student takes Research or Dissertation in multiple semesters instead of one semester for six credits, then the grade may appear as “Z” instead of a final “Y” grade until after the student has passed the dissertation defense. After the graduate coordinator receives all culminating experience items required of the student, the final grades for Research and Dissertation credits will be processed. Note that items received after the deadline may result in delayed graduation.

f. 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.

g. SOS Petition Process

Students who wish to request special permission or exemption from School of Sustainability policy may do so by completing a [SOS Graduate Petition](#) and following instructions for submission listed on the [SOS Graduate Policies Procedures and Forms website](#). The form is typically used for requesting to add a course to the plan of study that is not currently approved to fulfill degree requirements. However, this form may also be used to request the extension of a milestone deadline or for general requests to appeal SOS policy.

h. Grade Appeal and Academic Grievance Process

If students feel there is an issue with their grade or they have an academic grievance, they should reference the [university policy for grade appeals](#) and make every attempt to resolve the grade dispute or grievance informally. If a formal grade appeal or grievance is warranted, students may submit a [SOS Graduate Petition](#) for review by the chair of a program's sub-committee. If necessary, the sub-committee chair with the graduate director who serves as the dean's designee. Students should enter all pertinent information about the situation, which may include the course number, instructor of the course, and the semester and year. Students should explain the rationale for their appeal and attach any relevant supporting documentation they would like the sub-committee chair and graduate director to see. The chair and graduate director may seek input from the SOS Graduate Committee or one of the program-specific subcommittees. Students should be aware that instructor feedback on the grade appeal or situation will be gathered as part of the review process.

If unresolved, the graduate director may refer the case to an academic grievance hearing committee to review the case formally. The sub-committee will meet with the student and the instructor in an attempt to resolve the differences. At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee will send its recommendations to the dean. The dean will inform the student of the decision. Additional information about the process can be found on the SOS [Graduate Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage under the grade appeal section.

10. Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

a. Grade Point Averages

Graduate students must maintain the following minimum grade point average (GPA) requirements in order to maintain satisfactory academic progress and graduate:

- The **iPOS GPA** must be 3.25 or higher and includes all courses that appear on the student's approved iPOS. The iPOS GPA includes all courses that appear on the student's approved iPOS.
- The **Overall Graduate GPA** must be 3.25 or higher. The Overall Graduate GPA includes all courses numbered 500 or higher that appear on the transcript after admission to the graduate program. This includes shared coursework if enrolled in an approved accelerated bachelor's/master's program.
- The **Cumulative GPA** must be 3.00 or higher. The Cumulative GPA includes all courses completed at ASU the graduate career, including undergraduate courses.

Grades lower than a "B-" cannot appear on the iPOS but will be included when calculating the Overall Graduate and Cumulative GPAs. Courses with an "I" grade cannot appear on the iPOS.

b. 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 dismissal from the degree program.

Satisfactory academic progress includes:

- Satisfy all requirements of the graduate program as outlined in this handbook.
- Maintain continuous enrollment each fall and spring semester of the program.
- **Grade Point Averages:** Maintaining minimum iPOS, Overall Graduate, and Cumulative GPAs as outlined in the preceding section of this handbook.
- **Individual Course Grades:** Grades lower than "B-" are not allowed for any courses listed on a student's plan of study. If a student receives a grade of C+ or lower, then they must re-take the course or receive permission to remove and replace the course in their 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:** 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.
- Meet all **program deadlines**, including:
 - **Time Limit for Passing the Comprehensive Exam:** Students must take the comprehensive exam within one year of finishing their coursework.
 - **Retaking the 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 and Passing the Dissertation Prospectus:** PhD students must defend the dissertation prospectus within six months of passing the comprehensive exam.
 - **Time Limit for Completing the Doctoral Degree:** Most students complete the doctoral program in five or six years. Failure to complete the program within six years may result in probation or dismissal from the program. 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. The Graduate College withdraws students who are unable to complete all degree requirements and graduate within the allowed maximum time limits.

c. Academic Probation Policy

A student may be placed on academic probation if they meet any of the following criteria:

- The student does not meet GPA or grade requirements as outlined in the satisfactory academic progress policy;
- The student does not meet grade requirements as outlined in the satisfactory academic progress policy;
- The student has more than two incompletes on their transcript since starting the program;
- The student does not meet milestones specified in the graduate handbook by the deadlines expressed therein; or
- The student fails to complete the program within the time to completion specified in the graduate handbook.

Students will be notified by email when placed on probation and may be required to complete a probation agreement with their faculty advisor or the graduate committee. Students typically have one semester to advance to good standing before termination is considered. The student will be notified in writing if/when

they advance to good standing. Failure to return to good standing within the time limit set in the probation letter may result in dismissal from the academic program.

A student may be dismissed from a graduate program with or without first being placed on probation if:

- The student is on academic probation because their GPA has fallen below the minimum 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 letter;
- The student receives a lower grade than what is required while on academic probation;
- The student has more than two permanent incompletes since starting the program;
- The student fails to meet milestones specified in the graduate handbook;
- The student fails to meet conditions stipulated in their probation letter; or
- The student violates terms of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Students will be notified by email and letter (sent to the student's listed mailing address) 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.

d. 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 placed on probation or 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.

NOTE: Annual Review procedures are being evaluated and may change this year. Any changes will be communicated to students in advance of the review rollout date listed above.

e. Suggested, Continuous Actions for Success

- Attend orientation, welcome events, and the SOS fall camping trip.
- Meet faculty and students; build networks.
- Register for core classes and pass with "B-" or better; maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher.
- 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 items relevant to research topic (this will save time later when planning the comprehensive exam reading list with the supervisory committee).
- Seek out conferences and other professional development opportunities.
- Consider taking a study abroad class or completing 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.

11. 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. All students are required to read and understand the Graduate Handbook and ASU's [Graduate Policies and Procedures](#) 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 My ASU page for notifications about enrollment, billing and financial aid, and other reminders.

a. 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 frequently, so they do not miss important notices. Arizona State University and the School of Sustainability conduct their business via ASU email only.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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 and in associated learning environments.

e. Academic Integrity

The School of Sustainability takes academic integrity seriously and requires students to:

1. have a good understanding of [what academic integrity is](#) and [why it's important](#);
2. understand what types of activities and behaviors violate the [student honor code](#) and [ASU's academic integrity policy](#) as well as have an awareness that [resources](#) exist to help prevent academic integrity violations; and
3. [report all academic integrity violations](#) as soon as they arise.

Each college/school has an [academic integrity officer](#) who can address questions related to academic integrity. If there are questions, students should reach out to officers from the college/school that offers the course students have questions about.

Newly admitted graduate students will receive a “priority task” in My ASU 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.

f. Community of Care

To maintain a community that promotes healthy, happiness, and safety for all of its members, ASU has mandated [Community of Care](#) training for all students, faculty, and staff. The modules provide information on health and safety, our behavior expectations and resources available should you or someone you know need support. **Community of Care: Welcome Sun Devils** is a series of videos created by students to address our shared values, community expectations, and code of conduct. **Community of Care: Coming to Campus** reviews ASU’s response to COVID-19 and provides information about a healthy and safe return to campus. To complete these two training modules, you can log in to canvas.asu.edu and select the courses from your dashboard, or sign up at links.asu.edu/communityofcare.

12. Tuition, Fees and Financial Support

a. Tuition and Fees

Students can estimate [tuition and fee costs](#) online. In addition to tuition, students are responsible for paying a number of required student fees. Currently, the School of Sustainability does not charge an additional program fee for this program, which uses general graduate tuition and fee rates for courses with the SOS prefix. Some courses have additional course fees and courses offered by other departments may charge a different tuition rate. Tuition and fees are set by the Arizona Board of Regents and are subject to change.

Additional expenses not covered by tuition and fees include the admissions application fee, immunizations, student ID card, textbooks, any equipment needed to access course materials, convocation regalia and the graduation application fee.

b. Residency for Tuition Purposes

Students who wish to be considered Arizona residents for lower tuition rates will have to work with the University Registrar to see if they qualify and to learn what paperwork and procedures are necessary to change their status to resident. The Registrar has an entire site dedicated to [Residency for Tuition Purposes](#).

c. 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.

i. Teaching Assistantships

SOS offers Teaching Assistant (TA) positions to select students, prioritizing PhD students first and MA/MS students next. 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. Annual reviews must be submitted by March 1 of each year in order to be eligible for TA funding.

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.

Students who hold TA positions in other departments or schools must send a copy of their signed offer letter to the graduate coordinator so their tuition and health insurance coverage can be waived by the university. Failure to do so may result in the student being billed for tuition and insurance.

ii. Research Assistantships

Research Assistant (RA) positions may be funded by the School of Sustainability or tied to faculty-earned grants. Students who receive RA positions from the school will be assigned to a faculty member, usually because of a match between the student's skills and the faculty member's needs.

When faculty have grant funds to hire a student as an RA, they will select a student whose specific skills are valuable for the research grant. An RA most often works for a faculty member who serves on their supervisory committee, though this is not always the case. Students seeking RA opportunities should contact faculty members individually to seek out these positions. Please contact your graduate coordinator with any questions about this process.

RA positions provide a stipend, tuition remission, and health insurance benefits. Stipend rates and percentage of benefit coverage vary, but should always be specified in the offer letter. Students must be in good academic standing to be eligible for this type of funding. For additional details and regulations, see the Graduate College's [TA/RA Handbook](#).

Students who hold RA positions in other departments or schools must send a copy of their signed offer letter to the graduate coordinator at sosgradadvisign@asu.edu each semester so the coordinator can enter their tuition waiver and health insurance coverage. Failure to do so may result in the student being billed for tuition and insurance.

iii. 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. Tuition remission and student health insurance coverage are not included in a GSA offer.

iv. Scholarships, Grants and Fellowships

The School of Sustainability advertises funding opportunities throughout the year via the SOSGrad email listserv. The School also has a general scholarship, fellowship, and grant application for both current and incoming graduate students on the [scholarships and grants](#) page of the SOS website. The general application for SOS awards is due February 10 of each academic year for current students and March 16 each year for incoming students.

The School offers culminating experience grants for graduate students who wish 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, please access the application through the [SOS Grad Resources Site](#).

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

The ASU [Graduate College](#) offers several fellowships and awards to fund conference travel and dissertation completion. Most of these awards require the student to be nominated by their school or college. Please see the individual award information for more details and contact your graduate coordinator if you have questions.

v. 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 or Permanent Residents) and need funding assistance. The required form is called the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) and is free to submit. When students fill out a FAFSA, they are also automatically considered for need-based grant awards. Any questions related to student loans should be addressed to the ASU Financial Aid office. Please note that all graduate-level student loans are unsubsidized, which means students accrue interest on the loans while they are enrolled in school.

vi. SAP Review

To remain eligible for student loans, students must meet 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 My ASU) 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.

vii. 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?

viii. 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.

Management Intern is a generic title for a wide variety of jobs. Click on the job link to read about the specific job duties and qualifications. These jobs often include health insurance and tuition reduction benefits.

13. Graduation

a. Exit Advising Session

The SOS graduate coordinators co-facilitate a meeting about graduation at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, shortly before the graduation application deadlines. The meetings focus on procedures, deadlines and helpful tips for completing all steps of the graduation process on time. Information on graduation ceremonies is also included.

All students are welcome to attend, though student graduating within one year are the target audience. Students may attend more than one exit session if desired.

b. Applying to Graduate

Every student is required to [apply for graduation](#) the semester in which they plan to complete their degree (including MIP) or certificate. The university lists graduation application deadlines on the [Academic Calendar](#). Students can apply after the deadline but will have to pay a late fee. A separate application is required for each degree or certificate program. It's important that students update their mailing address in My ASU 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 will not be able to apply to graduate if they are not in good standing or have issues on the interactive plan of study (iPOS).

c. Completing Program Requirements

In order to be approved for graduation, all students must meet the following requirements. Failure to meet these requirements will delay or prevent graduation.

- Update the iPOS to ensure all program requirements are met and the correct committee members are listed (this can't be changed after a defense is scheduled);
- Complete any course requirements for incomplete classes required by the plan of study and classes taken in the final semester;
- Ensure all grades listed on the transcript meet university requirements, including grades for research and culminating experience courses;
- Pass the final thesis or scientific paper defense and submit all related paperwork;
- Check My ASU for any remaining fees or holds and remedy them.

Please see the related sections of this handbook and contact your graduate coordinator for more information on each requirement listed above.

d. Commencement and Convocation

There are two main ceremonies during graduation week, each requiring separate RSVPs:

- Commencement is the university-wide graduation ceremony (the graduate students' ceremony is separate from the undergraduates' ceremony), facilitated by the President of the University. Degrees are conferred at this ceremony.
- Convocation is the School of Sustainability graduation ceremony. Graduates walk across the stage in front of a smaller audience. Hoods are already worn since degrees are conferred at Commencement. 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 students can participate.

Graduation regalia (cap 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.

e. Diploma and Transcripts

ASU mails diplomas shortly after the conferral date, provided that there are no holds preventing the generation of the diploma (e.g. no pending graduation application on file, a balance on the student's account, or missing grades).

If a graduate needs verification of program completion in the interim before the diploma is received, they may submit a [Graduation Letter Request](#) to obtain an official letter stating that the requirements of the program have been met. The website also includes a directions on completing an Enrollment Verification form if this is something required by any hiring agencies.

Students may also request their unofficial or official [transcripts](#) on My ASU. Transcripts will not show that the degree is completed until the degree conferral date, which can be found on the [Academic Calendar](#).

14. 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 My ASU 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.

15. Facilities and Room Reservations

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 workspace, wireless access, a printer, a data lab, and a kitchen. SOS graduate students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves when utilizing this space. Procedures are subject to change. The most current procedures can be found on the [SOS Graduate Resources website](#).

a. Access

Graduate students may request 24-hour access to the second-floor grad lounge by completing an ISAAC form at orientation. To request the form after orientation, please contact the graduate coordinators at SOSGradAdvising@asu.edu.

b. Locker Policy

Lockers are available in the grad lounge on a first come, first served basis. Students must 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.

At the end of each spring semester, the grad lounge is cleaned. Students who wish to keep their items in lockers over the summer must label the appropriate locker with their name. Unlabeled lockers will be cut open and cleaned. Items left in the grad lounge may be removed or discarded. Please contact the graduate coordinators with any questions.

c. Room Reservations

The current room reservation policy and procedures are on the school's [Policies, Procedures and Forms](#) webpage on the 'Reserving Space in Wrigley Hall (WGHL)' section of webpage.

16. 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. This information is subject to change. The most current information can be found on the [SOS Graduate Resources website](#).

a. 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.

b. My ASU Portal

[My ASU](#) 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. My ASU also serves as a portal to the ASU Library and the source for downloadable software.

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. 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 My ASU page.

f. 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.

g. 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.

h. SOS Graduate Student Handbook

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

i. 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.

j. 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.

k. 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).

l. Canvas

Arizona State University provides online courses and course material through a Learning Management System (LMS) called [Canvas](#).

m. SOS Graduate Student Resources Site

The school's graduate coordinator maintains a [Google site](#) where SOS graduate students can find resources related to their programs, milestones, funding, courses, and more. Examples of items on the site include:

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

n. SOS Grad Students and Grad Representatives

SOS graduate students may opt to have an online profile added to the School of Sustainability [Graduate Students and Representatives](#) webpage. Instructions are available on the SOS Graduate Student Resources 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.

o. Graduate Academic Support Center

ASU provides free assistance with writing and offers tutoring in a variety of subjects, including statistics. 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.

p. 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 [My ASU](#).

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.

q. ASU Mobile App

The [ASU Mobile App](#) provides access to features such as My ASU, 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.

r. Technical Support

Students can use ASU's IT Knowledge Base and find answers to frequently asked questions through the Service tab on My ASU. 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.

s. Software

ASU students can access and use powerful software applications for free through [MyApps](#), which can be accessed online or through My ASU. 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.

t. Student Accounts

Students can use the Finances tab in My ASU 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 My ASU, email sbs@asu.edu, or call 1-855-278-5080.

u. 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](#).

v. 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, 8:00am-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](#)

w. Wellness

ASU and the School of Sustainability are committed to the health and wellness of our graduate students. The Graduate and Professional Students Association (GPSA) has compiled a one-page guide to [Graduate Wellness Resources](#) that includes information about financial, social, emotional, and physical health and wellness resources available to ASU students. The ASU Graduate College has also compiled a list of [10 Best Practices in Graduate Student Wellbeing](#) to help you care for yourself through increasing academic rigor and demands.

x. Veterans Services

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

y. 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.

z. 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.

aa. 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.

ab. 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](#)