College of Health Solutions
Arizona State University

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN OBESITY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2018-2019

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ASU Nutrition Program Homepage

MS in Obesity Prevention and Management at ASU

ASU Graduate Education Homepage

ASU Graduate Education On-Line Catalog

ASU Graduate Admissions On-Line Application

Student Code of Conduct

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I. INTRODUCTION

The faculty in the Nutrition Program at Arizona State University (ASU) in the College of Health Solutions, in collaboration with faculty across multiple disciplines at ASU, offers a Master of Science (MS) degree in Obesity Prevention and Management.

The MS in Obesity Prevention and Management is an innovative, interdisciplinary degree that draws on a wide array of expertise at ASU to integrate perspectives from the social, applied, life, and health sciences and provides advanced graduate level problem-focused, experiential training that is grounded in evidence and best practices for effective prevention and management of obesity. This degree is geared towards post-baccalaureate students and professionals who wish to advance their understanding of social, cultural, environmental, health, and psychological issues associated with obesity. The program emphasizes the complex etiology of obesity and includes courses that will enhance students' ability to work with individuals and populations at risk of obesity to develop effective strategies for prevention and management of the condition across the lifespan.

High obesity rates are associated with an array of poor psycho-social and health outcomes at the individual level and increased health care and associated costs at the societal level. Four tracks will be offered, providing each student with the ability to tailor his/her program of study to meet individual professional goals: Public Health Approaches for Behavior Change, Cultural Aspects of Behavior Change, Technological Approaches to Behavior Change and "General". The MS in Obesity Prevention and Management will help prepare a workforce that understands the multifaceted nature of the problem and is trained to develop effective solutions at the individual and population levels. Depending upon the educational and professional backgrounds of incoming students, graduates of this program will be highly qualified for employment in public/private health care and health promotion/education settings, educational and workforce enterprises, industry/corporate entities, and media/communication outlets. This program is the first such interdisciplinary degree fully focused on this topic of paramount importance.

This Graduate Student Handbook supplements the guidelines of Graduate Education at ASU. Graduate students should be familiar with and observe all requirements and procedures. These materials are available on-line.

Students completing the MS degree in Obesity Prevention and Management will:

- Critically analyze a range of causal pathways to obesity and be able to explain obesity as a complex multidimensional phenomenon.
- Demonstrate mastery of the literature related to obesity at multiple levels and domains, such as physiological, genetic, environmental, social, and psychological.
- Design and implement obesity prevention and management interventions at multiple levels.
- Possess the ability to discuss role of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention in addressing obesity at the individual and societal levels.
- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of barriers to weight loss and maintenance and best practices for obesity prevention and management in clinical and community settings.
- Demonstrate familiarity with a range of methods relevant to measuring and understanding multiple dimensions of obesity, such as methods from exercise science, nutrition, environmental science, and psychology.

II. MS IN OBESITY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A. Admission Requirements

Minimum of a bachelor's degree (or equivalent) or a graduate degree in social or health science related fields from a regionally accredited College or University of recognized standing. The following entry-level competencies are needed for admission to the program: students should have completed undergraduate level courses in statistics and psychology and ideally have completed one or more courses each in nutrition, physiology, and chemistry.

B. Coursework Requirements to complete MS degree: Minimum of 30 credit hours

	Credit Hours
Required Core Course:	
OBS 501 Obesity Prevention and Management: An Introduction	3
OBS 593 Applied Project or OBS 599 Thesis- The applied "obesity solution" project will involve designing and/or implementing an intervention for obesity prevention or management for a specific organization, group, or community	6
Subtotal:	**9**
Electives: Select remaining 21 credits from 400, 500, or 600-level NTR, EXW, PSY, HCD, HCR, IBC or BIO classes with advisor approval	**21**
TOTAL credits	**Minimum of 30**

Additional course selection will depend upon student's chosen track.

Tracks:

1. Public Health Approaches for Behavior Change
2. Cultural aspects of Behavior Change
3. Technological Approaches for Behavior Change
4. General Track

Students will select six credits from prescribed categories for each track and six credits from other categories listed in the attached table. See Appendix E.

C. Admission Procedures for MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Program

Admission to Graduate Study

Prospective students must apply online to ASU Graduate Education for admission into the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management degree program. Applications are accepted for students to begin the program in the ASU fall and spring semesters. The priority deadline to apply is February 28 each year. Applications will be reviewed after the priority deadline on a space available basis.

At a minimum, applicants to the MS Obesity Prevention and Management program are expected to meet GPA requirements as established by ASU Graduate Admissions; however, typically a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA (on a 4.0 scale) is the minimum considered for admission into the ASU MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Program. Applicants are also required to submit official notification of scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), General Examination only. Applications cannot be processed without GRE scores (see Admission and Denial Criteria for more information) or an equivalent standardized test, i.e., MCAT or LSAT.

Program Requirements

Applicants to the MS program in Obesity Prevention and Management must also submit the following information along with their online ASU Graduate Admissions application:

1. A 2-3 page application letter in which the applicant explains why he/she wants to pursue this degree and why he/she feels well prepared to succeed in this graduate program
2. Official GRE scores for the General Examination
3. Official transcripts from any college or university from which the applicant has received a degree or taken a statistics, psychology, nutrition, physiology, or chemistry course.
4. Three letters of recommendation
5. A resume that summarizes the academic, volunteer and employment experiences of the applicant.

Processing of Applications

Credentials submitted by MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program applicants are evaluated by ASU Graduate Admissions and by the Graduate Committee of the Obesity Prevention and Management program. Based upon the recommendation of the Graduate Committee, applicants will be recommended for admission to ASU Graduate Admissions. Telephone interviews will be scheduled as needed.

Admission and Denial Criteria

No single criterion will serve as a basis for admission or denial to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program. Criteria for admission include:

- Evidence of outstanding scholarship and research potential from GRE scores and previous academic record;
- Favorable letters of recommendation commenting on the applicant's academic and professional qualifications for graduate study.
- Professional goals which are compatible with the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program;

The decision of the Committee will be one of the following:

1. Regular admission - granted when the applicant meets criteria of adequate academic preparation, satisfactory and competitive grade point average and GRE scores, favorable letters of recommendation, and when enrollment limits have not been met.

2. Denied admission - when the applicant does not meet the necessary criteria for admission; the applicant does not rank sufficiently high to be selected for the available slots; it is deemed that the program fails to match the applicant's needs, goals, and interests.

D. Applied Project Committee for MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Students

Assignment of Faculty Advisor

When admitted to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program, each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. The Graduate Committee or Program Director will provide the student with the advisor's name and contact information. The faculty advisor will guide the student in selecting the chair of the Applied Project Committee.

Selection of Applied Project Committee Chair

Students are encouraged to begin the process of selecting an Applied Project Committee chair early in their graduate program (for example, by the end of the second semester of a full time program). The Applied Project Committee chair is identified at the initiative of the student and in consultation with the faculty identified as the potential chair, and is approved by the Program Director.

Appointment of Applied Project Committee

The Applied Project Committee for a student in the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program is composed of a chair and two additional members. The remainder of the committee is selected by mutual agreement of the student, the Applied Project Committee chair, and the Program Director. Students are encouraged to choose members of their committee from the College of Health Solutions or other Colleges/Schools/Departments where coursework has been completed. (See Appendix B for list of programs currently affiliated with the MS in Obesity and Prevention). At least one member of the committee must be from the College of Health Solutions.

Responsibilities of the Applied Project Committee

The Applied Project Committee approves the student's Plan of Study (the courses required to fulfill the degree) and Applied Project proposal and provides guidance at regular intervals. The Committee also administers the Applied Project presentation and determines if the student's work meets program expectations.

E. MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Plan of Study

Approval of Plan of Study

The MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Plan of Study should be thoughtfully and carefully planned with the Program Director and Applied Project Committee so that it meets the goals and objectives of the program and the student. Each student selects courses after consultation with the Program Director. The Plan of Study should be completed and approved by the Program Director and the Graduate Student Coordinator by the end of the second semester of full-time graduate study. A Plan of Study may include more than 30 credit hours; the exact number will be determined by program requirements and the student's Applied Project Committee. Acceptance of the proposed Plan of Study must be verified by signature of the student and Committee members. After approval, the Plan of Study is submitted to ASU Graduate Education for final approval. NOTE: all new Plans of Study have to be submitted online using the Interactive Program of Study (iPOS) form available through each student's My ASU account.

Changes in Program of Study

Necessary changes can be initiated and petitioned by the student. The changes must be pre-approved by the student's Applied Project Committee and ASU Graduate Education.

Performance Reviews

Master's students are required to maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA in graduate school. If the cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the student will receive a deficiency notice from the Graduate Committee and be required to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 the following semester. If the student fails to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 within the allotted time, the student may be dropped from the program. In addition, a student cannot accumulate more than two incompletes at any given time while completing the graduate plan of study.

All graduate students admitted to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program are subject to the general standards of academic good standing of ASU. However, academic standards do not necessarily guarantee that a student will graduate from the program. Since students obtaining a Master's degree from the ASU Nutrition Program are often placed in positions dealing with the public, they must also demonstrate the requisite qualifications for successful professional performance, including interpersonal skills, basic communication skills, appropriate professional conduct, and satisfactory performance in field experiences. Graduate students who demonstrate behaviors or characteristics that make it questionable that they can succeed in the broad field of Obesity Prevention and Management will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee within the Obesity Prevention and Management Graduate Program. The committee's review may result in a decision to disqualify the Master's student or the specification of conditions under which continued participation is permitted (e.g., probation). Students who wish to appeal the decision of the Graduate Committee may do so in writing to the Dean of ASU Graduate Education. Any exceptions to the retention and disqualification policies and procedures must be approved by the Graduate Committee.

F. Applied Project

General Procedures

In addition to planning a program of course work, graduate students also must complete an Applied Project. The Applied Project consists of original work on a specific research or practice problem. The problem is decided upon by the student in consultation with the Applied Project Committee chair. After selection of a topic, the student develops a proposal and makes a formal presentation, called the Applied Project Proposal Meeting, to the Applied Project Committee for critical review and formal acceptance (see Appendix C for the Proposal Approval form). At the time that the Applied Project proposal is accepted, an acceptance form is signed by the student and members of his or her Applied Project Committee and filed in the Nutrition Program office.

Results Meeting

A Results Meeting is scheduled with the Applied Project Committee when the project is approaching completion and, if applicable, preliminary data and/or sample analyses are complete (see Appendix C for the Results Meeting Approval form). The purpose of this meeting is to update the Applied Project Committee regarding the student's work and to approve the final steps needed (e.g., data analyses) for successful completion.

Applied Project Presentation

Students are required to defend their Applied Project in a public forum. The student will schedule the date, time, and location of the Applied Project presentation in consultation with the Applied Project Committee. An Applied Project Committee of three must be present. If an original member of the Applied Project Committee must be absent, another faculty member may serve as a substitute.

Grading of Applied Project Credits

Applied Project (OBS 593) grades are assigned as follows. A mark of Z (i.e., course in progress) will be given for all Applied Project credits taken prior to the Applied Project presentation. Once the Applied Project presentation is completed, all Z grades will be changed to Y grades (i.e., satisfactory) or E grades (i.e., fail) when the Applied Project Committee chair completes the appropriate paperwork and changes the Applied Project Z grades.

III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

A. Obesity Prevention and Management Graduate Research Assistantships

There is the possibility of financial support for graduate students through externally funded research projects. An applicant for a research assistantship must be regularly admitted to the Obesity Prevention and Management graduate degree program before being appointed. Research assistantships vary depending upon the number and types of research grants that faculty have received, and the scope and nature of work differ from project to project. There are no limits on the length of research assistantships.

B. University Financial Aid

Information regarding financial assistance opportunities is available through Graduate Education.

IV. CALENDAR FOR APPLYING TO GRADUATE PROGRAM

ACTION	WHEN
For students interested in applying to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management Graduate Program	
1. Review admission materials from **ASU Graduate Admissions** and the **Nutrition Program,** the administrative home of the Obesity Prevention and Management program (materials available on line)	As early as possible.
2. Take the GRE and have scores sent to **ASU Graduate Admissions (ASU Institution Code is 4007).**	Sufficiently ahead of time so official results are received by deadline.
3. Complete application for admission to **ASU Graduate Admissions**	Must be received by **ASU Graduate Admissions** by February 28th to be considered for priority deadline review.
4. Request three (3) letters of recommendation to be submitted online	Must be received by **ASU Graduate Education** by February 28th to be considered for priority deadline review.
5. Submit a résumé or curriculum vita – included as part of your online application to **ASU Graduate Admissions**.	
6. Submit official transcripts from any college or university from which you have received a degree or taken a MS recommended/required	
Notifications of Acceptance	
1. Notification of acceptance from ASU Graduate Admissions.	Late March or early April

APPENDIX A: TIMELINE FOR THE MS PROGRAM

(Following notification of admission)

ACTION	WHEN
1. Contact Temporary Advisor (as assigned) and seek advice for course selections.	As soon as possible
2. Meet with Program Director and faculty advisor to select Applied Project chair.	Second semester enrolled or after completion of 9 credit hours
3. Select Applied Project Committee in consultation with Applied Project chair.	Second semester enrolled
4. Submit Plan of Study planned in consultation with Program Director through My ASU.	Upon selection of Applied Project Committee or completion of 12 hours
5. Begin preliminary discussion regarding Applied Project with Applied Project Committee.	As early as possible but no later than 2 semesters prior to graduation.
6. Submit proposal for Applied Project to Applied Project Committee Chair. Schedule Proposal Meeting with Applied Project Committee[2]. (Appendix C)	At least 2 semesters prior to planned graduation date.
7. Begin Applied Project.	At least 2 semesters prior to planned graduation date.
8. Schedule Results Meeting with Applied Project Committee.	As completion of project approaches.
9. Schedule a date, time, and room for Applied Project presentation.	At least 10 working days prior to presentation
10. Conduct the Applied Project Presentation[1]. A complete draft of Applied Project must be distributed to Applied Project Committee at least 10 working days prior to presentation.	At completion of Applied Project draft
11. Apply for graduation.	During last semester of graduate program.

[1]NOTE: Coursework and Applied Project must be completed within six [6] years of enrollment in the first course listed on the Plan of Study.

[2] Faculty in the Department of Nutrition and other OBS units are typically on an academic-year contract, meaning they are on salary only from the beginning of the fall semester through the end of the spring semester. Some faculty may receive summer funding through research grants or for teaching summer session courses. Proposal meetings, Results meetings, and Applied Project presentations should not be scheduled during the summer unless there is confirmation of the availability of all committee members well in advance of the scheduled date.

APPENDIX B APPLIED PROJECT FACULTY [1]

SUGGESTED PROGRAMS FROM WHICH STUDENTS MAY CHOOSE APPLIED PROJECT ADVISOR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS*

- Nutrition
- Exercise and Wellness
- Kinesiology
- Psychology
- School of Human Evolution and Social Change

*Applied Project advisor and committee members can be selected from various programs and departments depending upon students' area of interest and with approval from the faculty advisor and the Program Director. At least one member of the committee must be from the College of Health Solutions.

APPENDIX C: APPLIED PROJECT APPROVAL FORM

Student's Name: _____

Applied Project Title: _____

Proposal Meeting Date: _____

Committee Approval: _____, Chair _____
(*List names in left column, members sign on right*)
_____ _____
_____ _____

_____ _____

Data Results Meeting Date: _____

Committee Approval: _____, Chair _____
(*List names in left column, members sign on right*)
_____ _____
_____ _____

_____ _____

Applied Project Presentation Date: _____

Committee Approval: _____, Chair _____
(*List names in left column, members sign on right*)
_____ _____
_____ _____

_____ _____

APPENDIX D: ADMISSIONS AND APPLYING

Admission Steps

Prospective students must apply to Arizona State University Graduate Admissions for admission to the MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program.

Required Materials:
Submit all required ASU Graduate Admissions application materials. This includes the Graduate Admissions Application, which can be completed on-line, and official transcripts from any college or university from which the applicant has received a degree.

- Three letters of recommendation, including at least one from an employer or work supervisor.
- A résumé that summarizes the applicant's academic, volunteer, and employment experiences.
- A 1-2 page, typed, double-spaced, personal statement addressing the following: significant professional responsibilities held; professional goals and reasons for desiring to enroll in this program; strengths that will ensure success in this program and in reaching professional goals; and personal research interests as specifically as possible.
- GRE test scores

Application Deadline:
Credentials submitted by MS in Obesity Prevention and Management program applicants are evaluated by ASU Graduate Admissions and by the Graduate Committee of the Obesity Prevention and Management program. To ensure consideration, all applicant materials for fall admission should be received by February 28th.

Notification of Acceptance
Based upon the recommendation of the Graduate Committee, applicants will be recommended for admission to ASU Graduate Admissions by the Program Director. Notification of acceptance to this graduate program is usually given within two months of the admission deadline

APPENDIX E: Course Options

COURSE	TITLE	TRACKS			
		Public Health Approaches to Behavior Change	Cultural Aspects of Behavior Change	Tech Approaches for Behavior Change	General Track
CORE COURSE (3 Credits)					
INTRODUCTORY COURSE (Required course)					
OBS 501	Obesity Prevention and Management: An Introduction	3	3	3	3
ELECTIVE COURSES (21 Credits)					
STATISTICS (Select one 3 credit course from the list below)					
EXW 501	Research Statistics	3	3	3	3
PSY 515	Quantitative Research Methodology and Statistics I				
PSY 532	Analysis of Multivariate Data				
PSY 536	Statistical Methods in Prevention Research				
HCD 501	Health Behavior and Statistical Tools in Health Environments				
HCR 569	Applied Principles of Data Management & Inferential Statistics in Healthcare Research				
RESEARCH METHODS (Select one 3 credit course from the list below)					
NTR 500	Research Methods in Nutrition I	3	3	3	3
NTR 500	Research Methods Nutrition I				
NTR 501	Research Methods in Nutrition II				
PSY 555	Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research				
PSY 591	Advanced Theory and Practice of Food Research III				
CONCEPTS IN BEHAVIOR CHANGE (Select one 3 credit course from the list below)					
CPY 676	Social Bases of Behavior	3	3	3	3
EXW 542	Health Promotion (Theories for Behavior Change)				
IBC 634	Strategies and Techniques for Behavior Change in Primary Care				
KIN 522	Exercise Psychology				
PSY 591	Psychology of Eating				
PSY 591	Current Topics in Social Psychology				
PSY 550	Advanced Social Psychology				
PSY 551	Continuation of PSY 550				
NTR 503	Behavior Change	3	3	3	3
TRACK ELECTIVES (pick six credits from prescribed categories for each track and six credits from any two other categories)					
BEHAVIOR CHANGE INTERVENTIONS					
NTR 503	Designing Health Behavior Change Interventions			3	
EXW 598	Motivational Interviewing				
HCD 510	Interdisciplinary Approaches to Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles				
HHE 510	Design and Health				
TECHNOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE					
EEE 598	Personal Sensors for Mobile Health Applications			3	
PSY 438	Introduction to Human-Computer Interaction				
CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE					
ASB 510/SSH 510	Health: Social and Biocultural Theories		3		
ASB 462/SSH 404	Medical Anthropology: Culture and Health				
BIO 494	History and Evolution of Food				
ESS 514	Urban and Environmental Health				
AGB 598	Global Food Strategy			ASB 510/S	
PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACHES FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE					
NTR 527	Policies, Environments, and Obesity Prevention	3	3		
NTR 533	Politics, Ethics, and the American Diet				
PAF 591	Public Policy and Health				
HCD 521	Law and Health Promotion				
HCD 521	Law and Health Promotion				
HCD 511	Health Economics, Policy, and Payment Models				
HCD 511	Health Economics, Policy, and Payment Models				
EPIDEMIOLOGY					
NTR 598	Nutritional Epidemiology	3			
EXW 642	Exercise Epidemiology				
HCR 550	Principles of Epidemiology for Healthcare				

COURSE	TITLE	TRACKS			
		Public Health Approaches to Behavior Change	Cultural Aspects of Behavior Change	Tech Approaches for Behavior Change	General Track
TRACK ELECTIVES – CONTINUED (pick six credits from prescribed categories for each track and six credits from any two other categories)					
NUTRITION AND EXERCISE & WELLNESS					
NTR 550	Advanced Nutrition in the Life Cycle				3
NTR 548	Advanced Community Nutrition				
BIO 494	History and Evolution of Food				
NTR 539	Global Nutrition				
NTR 537	Evidence-Based Nutrition				
EXW 538	Obesity, Exercise, and Health				
EXW 544	Fitness/Wellness Management				
EXW 535	Advanced Exercise Assessment and Prescription				
EXW 598	Obesity Perspectives and Prescription				
BIO 598	Nutrition, Exercise, Chronic Disease, and Society				
PHYSIOLOGY AND METABOLISM					
NTR 541	Advanced Macronutrient Metabolism				3
KIN 530	Exercise Physiology				
KIN 536	Fuel Metabolism				
BIO 598	Obesity: Physiology to Pathophysiology to Treatment				
BIO 598	Molecular Basis of Diabetes and Obesity				
TOTAL CORE		**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**
TOTAL ELECTIVES		**21**	**21**	**21**	**21**
TOTAL APPLIED PROJECT OR THESIS CREDITS		**6**	**6**	**6**	**6**
TOTAL CREDITS		**30**	**30**	**30**	**30**