Exercise and Nutritional Sciences, PhD

Are you interested in reducing the physical, social and economic costs of poor nutrition and sedentary lifestyles as a way of promoting health and well-being? Learn to integrate multiple disciplines of health sciences, and develop and test effective physical activity and nutrition programs for all segments of society.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Exercise and Nutritional Sciences
With integrated disciplinary contexts, the PhD in exercise and nutritional sciences curriculum trains scholars and leaders to address health problems and helps meet the increasing demand for the development of effective physical activity and nutrition programs for all segments of society. The mission of the program is to train research scholars to conduct high impact, interdisciplinary research in exercise and nutrition sciences. In contrast to programs that divide nutrition science and exercise science into separate specializations, the exercise and nutritional sciences program integrates exercise and nutrition research with health promotion research using a problem-centered rather than a pure disciplinary approach.

Students work collaboratively with an approved mentor from the beginning to the end of the doctoral program, and focus their research on one primary area of interest: metabolism and physiology, behavioral and population health sciences, or biomechanics and motor control. Students and faculty conduct high-quality, use-inspired research that promotes healthy lifestyles intended to reduce the physical, social and economic costs of unhealthy living. While many healthy lifestyles are studied, the emphasis is on the promotion of physically active living and sound nutrition. Students engage in research at every stage of the program through research practicums, translational research teams, research seminars and colloquia, and dissertation research.

The program is four years of full-time study after earning a master's degree. The program also accepts part-time students.
At a Glance

- **College/School:** College of Health Solutions
- **Location:** Downtown Phoenix campus

Degree Requirements

89 credit hours including a dissertation

**Required Core (6 credit hours)**
- EXW 640 Analysis of Variance for Exercise and Wellness (3)
- EXW 645 Advanced Applied Methods and Analysis (3)

**Required Research (12 credit hours)**
- EXW 700 Research Methods (3)
- EXW 701 Advanced Research Methods (3)
- EXW 780 or NTR 780 Practicum (6)

**Elective Research (15 credit hours)**

**Professional Development (5 credit hours)**
- EXW 691 or NTR 691 Seminar (3)
- EXW 784 Internship (2)

**Focus Area (9 credit hours)**

**Electives (30 credit hours)**

**Culminating Experience (12 credit hours)**
- EXW 799 or NTR 799 Dissertation (12)

Additional Curriculum Information

Students tailor a course of study in either nutrition and health or physical activity and health. Within these areas, students are expected to focus their study in a specific thematic area. There are three focus areas to choose from:

- behavioral and population health sciences
- metabolism and physiology
- biomechanics and motor control

Courses in the focus or thematic area are determined by the student and supervisory committee. Up to six but not more than nine credit hours in the focus area may be taken from a program outside the nutrition, exercise science and health promotion programs.

Professional development courses include a teaching internship (EXW 784) to help prepare students in exercise and nutritional science to become teaching faculty, and a seminar course taken over three
semesters (EXW/NTR 691) that addresses career opportunities and preparation for faculty or professional positions in the nutrition, exercise and health promotion fields.

When approved by the student's supervisory committee and Graduate College, 30 credit hours from a previously awarded master's degree are allowed to be used for this degree.

**Admission Requirements**

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the College of Health Solutions.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a master's degree in any field from a regionally accredited institution, and prefer that a data-based research thesis has been completed.

Applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, and applicants must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. GRE scores (verbal, quantitative and writing)
4. letter of intent
5. professional resume
6. three letters of recommendation
7. teaching or research assistantship application
8. writing sample (six to 10 pages)
9. an oral interview with program faculty (via Skype or Zoom) prior to acceptance
10. proof of English proficiency

**Additional Application Information**

An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency regardless of current residency. Applicants must submit a TOEFL score unless the requirements for an exception have been met. Details are available at [https://admission.asu.edu/international/graduate/english-proficiency](https://admission.asu.edu/international/graduate/english-proficiency).

The letter of intent should indicate research or scholarly interest, primary program area, statement of career goals and name of a potential faculty mentor from the list of approved faculty mentors.
Prerequisites
All applicants must have taken a graduate-level research methods and a graduate-level research statistics course prior to admission. Students are expected to take a pretest in research methods and research statistics the summer prior to enrolling.

It is expected that students admitted to the program have documented academic training and a strong interest in exercise science, nutrition science or health promotion. Thus, depending on the student's academic training, background, scholarly interests and focus area, a student may be asked to take undergraduate courses as deficiencies prior to, or concurrently with, graduate course enrollment.

Pathways through program
Two pathways through the program are available to students depending on their funding source, full-time via TA/RA funding or part-time self-funded. With both pathways, the intent is to involve and embed students in ongoing research as well as in-class study throughout their stay.

Students should see the program website for application deadlines and admission terms.

Application Deadlines

Fall

Career Opportunities

Graduates of the program are prepared for research careers in research-intensive universities, governmental agencies and health-related research positions in private industry. Students are strongly encouraged to pursue postdoctoral research opportunities upon graduation.

Career examples include:

- consultant
- dietitian and nutritionist
- entrepreneur
- exercise physiologist
- health educator
- health scientist
- lecturer
- postsecondary biomechanics teacher
- postsecondary exercise science teacher
- postsecondary nutrition teacher
- professor
- research scientist

Contact Information