

**Master of Science  
Physical Activity and Wellness Science  
Graduate Program Handbook  
2021-2022**



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
**COLLEGE OF NURSING  
AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

### **HANDBOOK OVERVIEW**

The Graduate Student handbook provides information and guidance to both students and faculty for facilitating the progression of students to degree completion. The Handbook contains policies and procedures related to the Physical Activity and Wellness Science graduate program. Additional policies and procedures are described in The University of Vermont Graduate Catalogue, other official University correspondence directed to students in all graduate programs, and the Graduate College. Students are held accountable for policies and procedures described in these official publications. Questions regarding policies and procedures should be directed to your advisor or Department Chair.

### **DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

The Department of Rehabilitation and Movement Science, subject to and consistent with the policies of The University of Vermont, reserves the right to make changes in course offerings and degree requirements as educational and financial considerations require. Students are responsible for staying abreast of current policies.

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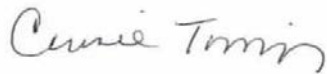
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## **PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S WELCOME**

Dear Physical Activity and Wellness Science Graduate Students,

Welcome to the University of Vermont and the Physical Activity and Wellness Science (PAWS) graduate program! You have chosen a dynamic, stimulating, and supportive place to pursue your educational interests. Our PAWS graduate program is housed in the Department of Rehabilitation and Movement Science, one of four departments within the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Faculty in PAWS are comprised of highly qualified academic and clinical faculty who teach in both undergraduate and graduate programs. As a member of our community, you will join a committed group of faculty, staff, and students who share a vision of professional learning, excellence in teaching and scholarship, and service and leadership in our profession. We look forward to helping you achieve your educational and professional goals!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Connie Tompkins".

Connie Tompkins, PhD, ACSM-EP  
Associate Professor, Exercise Science  
Director, Master of Science in Physical Activity and Wellness Science

## **DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION AND MOVEMENT SCIENCE (RMS)**

### **RMS MISSION**

To serve society by creating and sharing knowledge, by preparing graduates to provide ethical, evidence-based, and client-centered services, and by promoting inter-professional leadership and practices to enhance health-related quality of life.

### **RMS EDUCATIONAL GOALS**

The curricula of the various programs and the learning environment for students are designed to develop graduates who demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviors essential for those who participate in health promotion, and prevention and management of injury and disability.

To this end, the learning environment:

- is collaborative, provides access to-, and teaches assessment and application of the expanding body of health-related knowledge;
- enhances students' capacity for sensitive and empathetic communication when interacting with individuals of a variety of backgrounds;
- encourages faculty to serve as mentors and role models for professional excellence and service;
- enhances enthusiasm for life-long learning and on-going professional development that is supported by self-assessment;
- optimizes the use of technology to enhance learning experiences;
- promotes expression of a variety of opinions and perspectives;
- supports inter-professional interactions;
- facilitates students' capacity to utilize theoretical and research-based knowledge in their professional practices;
- enhances students' capacity to solve problems that have critical outcomes for patients and clients;
- facilitates students' ability to integrate their understanding of legal, ethical, cultural, and policy issues in decision-making;
- encourages flexible, creative, and innovative thinking so that students graduate with the ability to manage the complex systems in which they will practice.

## **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WELLNESS SCIENCE (PAWS)**

The Master's program in PAWS provides the competencies necessary to promote health and wellness, assist in reducing health risks, and improve quality of life for individuals and communities. The PAWS graduate program includes coursework related to the science underlying the relationship between physical (in)activity and chronic disease and emphasizes health interventions based on scientific data and established behavioral and learning theories. The curriculum is comprised of a cohesive set of courses pertaining to the planning, development, evaluation and dissemination of evidence-based, physical activity and wellness programming that prepares students to implement programming in a variety of settings including communities, workplaces, and schools.

### **OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of the PAWS program, graduates will be able to:

- Analyze the relationship between physical activity and the impact on human health and functioning across the life-span through a comprehensive examination of the scientific, medical, and public health literature
- Understand evidence-based, theoretical models to plan, evaluate, and translate physical activity interventions and health promotion at the individual and community levels
- Address cultural, social, behavioral, and environmental factors that affect the development and implementation of physical activity programs inclusive of all individuals
- Interpret physical activity and other health outcomes data as a tool to develop and prioritize community-based interventions, including policies, to promote physical activity

### **CURRICULUM**

All students are required to complete mandatory coursework in pursuit of the M.S. in PAWS. This coursework includes content areas met by the following courses:

M.S. in PAWS 1-year curriculum\*

Fall Semester, 15 credits

EXSC 302	Evidence-based Practice in Physical Activity
EXSC 303	Physical Activity and Chronic Disease Epidemiology
EXSC 345	Exercise Assessment and Prescription
EXSC 354	Physical Activity & Wellness Promotion
EXSC 360	Physical Activity, Weight Management, and Energy Balance

Spring Semester, 15 credits

EXSC 350	Physiological Aspects of Physical Activity and Chronic Disease
EXSC 365	Activity, Disability and Health
EXSC 368	Physical Activity and Wellness Program Design
EXSC 370	Physical Activity and Wellness: Communication & Evaluation

Elective Graduate Course

Total = 30 credits

\*Although the program can be completed in 1-year, completing over a 2-year period is recommended.

#### M.S. in PAWS 2-year curriculum\*

##### Year 1

Fall Semester, 9 credits

EXSC 302 Evidence-based Practice in Physical Activity

EXSC 345 Exercise Assessment and Prescription

EXSC 360 Physical Activity, Weight Management, and Energy Balance

Spring Semester, 9 credits

EXSC 350 Physiological Aspects of Physical Activity and Chronic Disease

EXSC 365 Activity, Disability and Health

Elective Graduate Course

##### Year 2

Fall Semester, 6 credits

EXSC 303 Physical Activity and Chronic Disease Epidemiology

EXSC 354 Physical Activity & Wellness Promotion

Spring Semester, 6 credits

EXSC 368 Physical Activity and Wellness Program Design

EXSC 370 Physical Activity and Wellness: Communication & Evaluation

Total = 30 credits

Adjustments to the 2-year curriculum plan may be made on a case-by-case basis (i.e., year 1 course taken during year 2, elective course option in fall semester).

#### COURSE WAIVERS

Course waivers may be granted to students who have completed previous coursework comparable to certain required courses in the graduate program of study. In such cases, a student may petition the PAWS Program in advance and submit evidence of prior, comparable knowledge in order to waive the relevant course requirement(s). A course waiver form along with the course syllabus should be completed by the student and submitted to the program director. If the course waiver is approved, the student need not take the relevant course(s). The waived course will not appear on the transcript. Equivalent graduate level coursework, up to six credits, may be waived if approved by the graduate program director, reducing the total number of in-residence credits needed for completion of the program.

#### COURSE TRANSFER CREDITS

Formal academic courses completed at another accredited institution may be considered for course transfer credit. If approved, only the credits are transferred onto the transcript, not the grade. Students are allowed to transfer a maximum of nine total credits with approval of the PAWS program. Undergraduate courses are not accepted as transfer credits into the graduate program. In order to be considered for transfer credit, course(s) content must overlap with the required PAWS course(s) and should meet all of the following:

- Approval by UVM PAWS course instructor

- Grade of B or better
- Completed within 3 years of the time of transfer into the program

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Per requirements set forth by the Graduate College, all master's degree students are required to pass a written and/or oral comprehensive examination in their field of specialization. One re-examination only is permitted for any failed comprehensive examination. Successful completion of the comprehensive exam is a pre-requisite to conferral of the Master's degree.

The Master of Science in Physical Activity and Wellness Science comprehensive exam is designed as a project and may include both written and oral formats. The purpose of the PAWS comprehensive project is to assess the student's general knowledge and understanding relative to the objectives of the PAWS program and the student's ability to synthesize critical components of this domain. Consistent with the Graduate College policy, if students fail the comprehensive examination, one opportunity to re-take and pass the exam is allowed.

### ACADEMIC POLICIES

There are many [academic and enrollment policies](#) relevant to graduate students that can be found in the Graduate College catalogue.

### ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Each course syllabus indicates the prerequisites for enrollment in the course. Students must pass any prerequisite courses in order to gain entrance to a course. All courses must be taken for a letter grade. Under special circumstances other grades may be given. The University outlines these grade options and their definitions in the [Graduate College catalogue](#).

### COURSE GRADING SCALE

A+ 97 – 100	B+ 87 – 89	C+ 77-79
A 93 – 96	B 83 – 86	C 73-76
A- 90 – 92	B- 82 – 80	C- 70-72

Graduate students do not receive a grade of D.

Academic: Students whose academic progress is deemed unsatisfactory at any time may be dismissed from the Graduate College by the dean upon consultation with the student's department or program. In addition, students may be dismissed if they receive two grades or more below a B (3.00). Students will be dismissed from the graduate program if they fail the comprehensive examination on both the first and second attempt. A candidate for a graduate degree must complete the program with a minimum overall grade-point average of 3.00. A course may be repeated for credit only when failed and only once; only the second grade is then considered. Both grades remain on the student's transcript.

Students are encouraged to seek help from instructors early in a term when it appears that their performance in a course may not be satisfactory. If health or family issues are the cause of the poor performance, students are encouraged to be proactive and to work with their faculty



and academic advisor to plan for delaying assignments, making up work, or receiving incomplete grades.

Professional: Students whose professional integrity is deemed unsatisfactory at any time may be dismissed from the Graduate College by the dean upon consultation with the student's department or program. Breaches of professional integrity include, but are not limited to, violations described in the [Misconduct in Research and Other Scholarly Activities policy](#), violation of the [Code of Academic Integrity](#), and actions that violate the standards of professional practice in the discipline of study or in duties associated with an assistantship.

#### GRADE APPEALS POLICY

Students with a grievance about a course grade should follow the instructions outlined in the [UVM Grade Appeals Policy](#).

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Officially registered and matriculated students may apply for a leave of absence if they are in good academic standing according to the policies on student standards in the department and CNHS. Students are encouraged to seek a leave rather than withdraw to keep options open for returning. Leaves are for professional, academic, or personal circumstances, and are subject to approval by the department chair and, in the case of graduate students, the Graduate College Dean. A leave of absence may be awarded for a period of up to one year. The leave suspends the time limit for master's students for the duration of the leave. It does not suspend the time limit for the completion of individual courses. The time limit for master's degree completion is 5 years. Students who successfully petition for a leave of absence are expected to understand the relationship between their leave and program of study. Therefore, a petition for a leave is sought only by students who, after consultation with their academic advisor, have carefully planned a sequence of courses, understand when particular courses are normally offered, and know the date by which degree requirements must be completed. Students who take a leave of absence without a plan are not guaranteed a position in a class upon their return. When students plan to return from leave or to repeat required classes, they must notify the department chair in writing one month prior to the scheduled date of return. Students who do not enroll at the end of a leave of absence period will be considered withdrawn. The leave of absence process and procedures are outlined in the [Graduate College catalogue](#).

#### WITHDRAWAL

Students who wish to withdraw from the University must notify their chair in writing. Students who have left the University for one semester or more must write to their chair to request readmission. Graduate students must also notify the Graduate Dean's Office in writing. Students who, prior to completing enrollment for all credit requirements, do not enroll for one or more credits for a period of one calendar year and are not on an approved leave of absence are deactivated from the college. Reactivation into a program requires the approval from both the Graduate Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate College. Students are reactivated to their program only as space is available. The reactivation process and procedures are outlined on the [Graduate College website](#).

## PROFESSIONALISM

Students are expected to adhere to professional standards in both their appearance and actions in the classroom and any other course/program settings. Students must adhere to the University [Code of Academic Integrity policy](#).

## STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a student member of the University, CNHS, and the RMS Department communities, you have a variety of rights and responsibilities. Most of the information students need to understand concerning their rights and responsibilities is contained in the [University Code of Student Conduct Policy](#).

## ADVISING

All students in the program have an academic advisor. The advisor is your own personal link to the department, college, and university and can help the student navigate and understand their rights and responsibilities, the requirements of their program and university, and the services available. Although the ultimate responsibility for making decisions about educational plans and life goals rests with the individual student, the academic advisor assists by helping to identify and assess alternatives and the consequences of decisions. Advisors assist students in the development of educational plans; clarification of career and life goals; selection of appropriate courses and other educational experiences; interpretation of institutional requirements; evaluation of student progress toward established goals; and referral to and use of institutional and community support services. Students provide evaluations of their faculty advisors and such evaluations are considered in reviews for reappointment, promotion, and tenure. The CNHS Office of Student Services assumes responsibility for the evaluation process.

## COMMUNICATION

All students have an UVM email account. This is the major mode of communication utilized by faculty and staff in the department as well as official correspondence from the University. Students are expected to use their UVM email account for all UVM correspondence. Failure to read emails sent from faculty/staff, Graduate College, CNHS, or UVM does not excuse students from adhering to deadlines, assignments, requests, etc.

## FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

Student grades, letters of evaluation, attendance records, and private communications are treated as confidential materials in accordance with the requirements of the federal student records law known as FERPA. In general, the faculty follow the guidelines listed below:

1. Only those individual student records necessary for the fulfillment of teaching and advising responsibilities are kept by the faculty.
2. Student scores or grades are not displayed publicly.
3. Papers, graded exams, books, or lab reports containing student names and grades are not placed in publicly accessible places.

4. Student educational record information, including grades or grade point averages, are not shared with other faculty or staff members of the University unless their official responsibilities identify their "legitimate educational interest" in that information for that student.
5. Information from student educational records, including grades or grade point averages, are not shared with parents or others outside the institution, including in letters of recommendation, without written permission from the student. The University of Vermont FERPA Rights Disclosure can be found [here](#).

## STUDENT CONCERNS

There are many avenues available for students to discuss concerns or provide suggestions about different aspects of the undergraduate or graduate program. Students with a concern or grievance regarding any aspect of the program may refer to the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS) Student Concern Policy on the [Handbooks, Forms and Policies page](#) of the CNHS website. The RMS student representative to the Dean's Graduate Leadership Council can also take any concerns that relate to graduate education within the CNHS to that level.

Faculty also expect students to show respect to peers, professors, and other UVM community members at all times. Approach professors with courtesy and respect for their position:

1. Set up advance appointments and use office hours to discuss issues with faculty;
2. Attend all required classes and enter on time;
3. Avoid getting up and leaving the room during lectures unless there is an emergency. (We will try not keep you sitting longer than 1 ½ hours at a time.)
4. Turn off cell phones prior to coming to class, clinic, or meetings with professors or peers.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION PROCESSES

### COURSE EVALUATIONS

All faculty will provide information about how to access and complete course evaluations and the expectations for completion. Students are expected to complete the course evaluations as a demonstration of professional responsibility.

### EVALUATION OF ADVISOR

At the end of each semester all students are invited by the CNHS Office of Student Services to complete the advising survey for their advisor, who will typically be the Graduate Program Coordinator. This feedback is used to improve the advising experience and to help the Graduate Program Coordinator to develop advising skills.

### EXIT FEEDBACK

At the end of the program, the department chairperson or designee convenes focus groups to solicit feedback from students who are nearing graduation. Feedback about the program in general is sought in the spirit of continuous quality improvement. The feedback is summarized by themes and discussed by faculty after all grades are submitted. The feedback is attributed to the group of students and no individual names are attached to statements.

## STUDENT AND CAMPUS SAFETY, SERVICES, AND SUPPORT

A wide variety of services for students exist at the University, within the CNHS and in the Department of RMS. Most of these services provide information and support to both undergraduate and graduate students. In addition, the CNHS Office of Student Services provides a variety of types of assistance for students.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Vermont is committed to a policy of equal educational opportunity and welcomes individuals with diverse backgrounds and abilities. The University therefore prohibits discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of disability. Services and accommodations for students with disabilities are coordinated by three University offices:

- [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) certifies and coordinates services for students with physical disabilities (visual, hearing, mobility, and/or manual dexterity impairments), learning disabilities, and attention deficit disorders; and
- [Counseling and Psychiatry Services](#) (CAPS), part of the [Center for Health and Wellbeing](#), certifies and coordinates services for students with psychological conditions; and
- [Student Health Services](#), part of the [Center for Health and Wellbeing](#), certifies and coordinates services for students with ongoing medical conditions.

SAS provides accommodations, consultation, collaboration, and educational support services to students with documented disabilities. Among their programs and services, SAS offers: exam accommodations, meetings with disability specialists to receive advisement and advocacy around disability-related matters, eBooks, deaf and hard of hearing services, notetaking and adaptive technology. The SAS Office is located at A170 Living Learning Center. Contact at 802-656-7753 or [access@uvm.edu](mailto:access@uvm.edu). For detailed explanation of policies on disabilities, please see the [SAS website](#).

### ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

The University of Vermont provides services and programs for all students, faculty, and staff who need assistance confronting drug and/or alcohol abuse. Free and confidential assessments, referrals to on- and off-campus programs, and a variety of support groups are available. A student who needs assistance for a personal problem concerning his/her own use, or use by friends, family or associates, may approach any faculty or staff person at the university to seek help and information. All information will be held in the strictest of confidence. The UVM Alcohol and Drug Policy can be found [here](#).

### CAMPUS SAFETY

The University encourages all members of the University community to report suspicious or criminal activity to the [UVM police services](#) as soon as possible. In the event of a crime in progress or at any time there is a risk of harm to persons or property, call 911. The University uses the 911 phone number for campus emergencies. Dialing 911 from an on-campus phone will connect you to a UVM Police dispatcher. The UVM Police dispatcher can contact the necessary emergency personnel for the particular situation. From an off-campus phone or a cell

phone, dialing 911 will contact the regional 911 emergency service. If using an off-campus phone or a cell phone, crimes may be reported by calling 802-656-3473, 802-656-FIRE, or by submitting an electronic report or by text to 847411 using the keyword UVM at the beginning of your text, all of which may be done anonymously.

In the event of a life-threatening emergency:

1. Activate the emergency medical system by dialing 911
2. Provide first aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) immediately if appropriate, and if qualified;
3. As soon as feasible, contact the department chairperson.
4. Within 72 hours of any incident, complete and submit an incident report form.

In the event of a fire:

1. Pull the fire alarm.
2. If it is safe to do so, close any door that could contain the fire.
3. Exit the building.
4. Find the nearest campus phone in a safe location and call 911. Give the UVM emergency dispatcher the exact location, nature of the fire, and your name.

Students are responsible for following faculty instructions. If there is an accident or illness, students should report immediately to faculty who will assist them in completing an incident report. If students believe a hazard exists, they should report the hazard to their instructor. If the instructor takes no action to correct the situation, students should notify Risk Management directly (x63242 or [risk.management@uvm.edu](mailto:risk.management@uvm.edu)).

Supplemental information to the code of rights and responsibilities on fire, personal safety and health hazards can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

A [Student Conduct Incident Report](#) documents potential violations of [University policy](#). If you have witnessed an incident which you believe has violated University policy, please fill out and submit an incident form. You can do this on-line or by contacting the [Center for Student Conduct](#), [Police Services](#), or your [Residence Director](#).

The University adopts the Campus Safety and Security: [Clery Act](#) policy to facilitate full compliance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (the "Clery Act").

CAT Alert is UVM's rapid emergency notification system. Cat Alert's goal is to help keep UVM as informed and safe as possible during emergency situations. Sign up for Cat Alerts [here](#).

CENTER FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

The [Center for Health & Wellbeing](#) offers a wide range of services to support your mind, body, and soul while you're at UVM. The staff at the center does this by providing high quality,

prevention-oriented student health care, mental health services, and a vigorous program of outreach and education. Care is offered at several locations on campus.

#### COUNSELING AND PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES (CAPS)

[CAPS](#) offers a variety of services to the UVM community including short-term individual counseling, urgent needs counseling, group counseling, outreach and education, psychiatry, referrals, and consultation services.

#### DEAN'S GRADUATE COUNCIL

Each year students are selected to represent RMS graduate students at the Dean's Graduate Council. These representatives offer recommendations/suggestions to enhance/continually improve the learning experiences of graduate students within the college.

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION AND NON-HARASSMENT

The University adheres to Vermont State and federal laws that ensure equal opportunity in educational programs and activities and non-harassment. There are numerous relevant policies accessible through the UVM website. Procedures for investigating and resolving discrimination complaints can be found in the [Equal Opportunity in Educational Programs and Activities and Non-harassment policy](#). The Discrimination & Harassment policy can be found [here](#) the Sexual Harassment & Misconduct can be found [here](#).

#### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) SUPPORT

UVM offers a full range of [information technology support](#) regarding IT services, policy and compliance issues.

#### LIBRARY SERVICES

The mission of the University of Vermont Libraries is to further the creation, application, and dissemination of knowledge by providing access to information resources and education in their use. The [Dana Medical Library](#) provides reference services to PAWS students through a liaison library faculty member who is available to assist students in accessing information. UVM library services are easily accessed both on and off campus.

#### STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

PAWS students can get information about financial services by contacting the counselors at [Student Financial Services](#).

#### WEB LINKS

Other helpful web links are listed below:

Academic calendars <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/academic-calendars>

Career Services Office <https://www.uvm.edu/career>

Center for Academic Success <http://www.uvm.edu/sss/>

CNHS Student Services [https://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/student\\_services](https://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/student_services)

Graduate Catalogue <http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/>

Graduate College Homepage <https://www.uvm.edu/graduate>

Graduate College Policies (all) <http://catalogue.uvm.edu/graduate/academicenrollment/>  
Graduate Student Senate <https://www.uvm.edu/gss>  
Mosaic Center for Students of Color <https://www.uvm.edu/mcsc/>  
Office of International Education <https://www.uvm.edu/oie>  
Registrar's Office <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar>  
RMS Department Website <https://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/rms>  
Tutoring Center [https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/tutoring\\_center](https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/tutoring_center)  
UVM Policies (all) <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/?Page=alphalist.php>

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HANDBOOK CONTENTS**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The purpose of this handbook is to inform PAWS students, faculty, and staff of academic policies, standards and procedures that impact student progression and program completion. I have reviewed the student handbook, understand its content, am aware of its location, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in it.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to the PAWS Program Director: 310 Rowell Building, 106 Carrigan Drive, Burlington, VT 05405-0068