

# Marketing Ph.D. Program Guidelines

Updated: August 8, 2023

## Program Overview

The primary purpose of the program is to train students to produce world-class research and develop publishable and influential research papers. Students are strongly encouraged to get involved in research from the very beginning of the program and to pursue research projects in partnership with faculty whom they have identified as having a knowledge base or a skill set that is relevant to a given project.

The marketing department strives to provide Ph.D. students with the resources necessary for a successful academic career. Beyond the stipend provided by the school, the marketing department provides each student with a budget for research and academic expenses such as textbooks, research software, data sets, and conference expenses.

## General Program Requirements

The marketing department requires that students maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0. In addition to the University's rules and requirements on incomplete grades, the marketing department strongly discourages doctoral students from taking incomplete grades in their courses.

Participation in the Kellogg Ph.D. program is a full-time job. It is crucial that students maintain a physical presence at the department, including during the summer months. On days when students choose to work at home or in the library, they are expected to be available for meetings with faculty during normal office hours.

Students are expected to attend all research seminars, even if the topic is not directly related to their own research interests. By attending these seminars, students gain important general skills and an understanding of the communication norms that are critical for improving their own research presentations.

Under the direction of Kellogg faculty, doctoral students work as research assistants (RAs) and teaching assistants (TAs), as they become better integrated into their department's intellectual community. This practical training is also essential to our students' professional development, preparing them as future faculty and resulting in better job placements.

As a general guideline, Ph.D. students are discouraged from performing extra work beyond the assigned RA/TA responsibilities. The generous research support is designed to provide Ph.D. students with sufficient financial resources. A limited amount of extra work may be acceptable, provided that it does not interfere with research progress. Extra work such as consulting and non-Kellogg activities is strongly discouraged and may impact both future funding and status in the Ph.D. program. In all cases of extra work, students must complete a Graduate Student Permission Work Request Form that must be signed by the faculty member hiring the student as well as by the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and then submitted to the Kellogg doctoral program office.

## **The First Two Years**

The Directors of Graduate Studies (DGSs) are the primary academic and curriculum advisors for new first-year students. The DGSs assist first-year and second-year students in course selection and provide annual feedback on their performance. The DGSs continue in an advisory relationship, but students are encouraged to identify a faculty member to serve as their primary research advisor by the end of their second year. The key program milestones are outlined in Appendix A and detailed below.

### **Coursework**

During the first two years of the program, doctoral students take a mix of courses offered by the marketing department as well as courses offered by other departments that are relevant to the students' area of expertise. Elective courses allow students to develop specialized skills to advance their specific research interests. To this end, students also conceptualize, implement, and write up a substantial research project each year, which they develop under the mentorship of a faculty member and present to the department in the fall of their second and third years.

In rare cases, students in their first and second years may sign up for independent study with a faculty member as one of the four courses. Students should work closely with the faculty member to develop a syllabus for the independent study that clearly documents its aims and expectations. The DGS must approve independent study, and no more than one independent study may be taken in a quarter.

### **Qualifying Exam**

The prelim (or qualifying) exam administered near the end of June of the first year serves a dual purpose: (1) assessing the skills of the student and (2) motivating the student to productively assemble and organize the wealth of knowledge accumulated during the first year of the Ph.D. program. The qualifying exam normally takes place during one week. Students are expected to answer a series of questions, typically written by the marketing faculty who taught the students during their first year. The format of the questions is not constrained and may include open book, closed-book, and/or oral questions.

Students earn one of four marks for each question: High Pass (HP), Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), or Fail (F). To continue in the doctoral program, a student must not fail any question and must earn a minimum of Pass on at least 75% of the questions. A student who does not achieve this standard will be given one opportunity to retake any question for which he or she received a Low Pass or Fail. Students who opt to retake should be prepared to answer different questions than were posed as part of their first prelim exam. To continue in the doctoral program, students who need to retake prelim questions must successfully reach the 75% Pass threshold before the start of the fall quarter of their second year.

### **First- and Second-Year Papers**

First- and second-year students are required to submit a research paper to the DGSs by August 31 of each year. These papers demonstrate a student's ability to identify a quality research topic and to rigorously implement the necessary research activities for bringing the idea to fruition. Students are also required to present a summary of their first- or second-year paper to the faculty in early September.

The first- and second-year papers (as well as the associated data collection and analysis) should consist of the student's original work.

Students are expected to identify two marketing faculty members to supervise the research paper. The faculty member may take an active role in the conceptualization and implementation of the work; however, the student must make clear and significant contributions to all phases of the project.

Students are strongly encouraged to start thinking about paper topics as early as possible. It is preferable for students to develop a proposal and identify a faculty advisor by the start of the winter quarter of the first and second year and to complete data collection before the start of the summer. The faculty advisor in consultation with the student will identify another faculty member who will agree to evaluate the final research paper. Students are expected to spend the summer working on their research.

### **Progress Assessment**

In September of each year, just before the start of the fall quarter, members of the marketing faculty meet to discuss the progress of each doctoral student. This includes discussion of the student's research projects, grades, work as an RA/TA, and contributions to the department's research culture. Students who have made satisfactory progress will advance to the next stage of the doctoral program. At the end of their second year, students who have passed their second-year paper requirement will be admitted to candidacy. In cases where a student's performance is unsatisfactory, the student may be placed on probation or dismissed from the program, as determined by the faculty's assessment of the aforementioned factors.

### **Year Three and Beyond**

Following the second year, students focus almost entirely on research aimed at conceptualizing, developing, and implementing a doctoral dissertation. They do so under the direction of a dissertation chair and committee (selected by the student in consultation with and after approval from the chair). The student's progress in the program for the remaining years is overseen by the dissertation chair. Students also are encouraged to work with other faculty members on additional research projects that aim for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals. Because additional coursework may be needed or prove helpful in accomplishing these research goals, students can take more classes as needed or desired after their first two years. Research is a lifelong learning process, and students are strongly encouraged to take relevant doctoral seminars offered by the department even after completion of the second year.

### **Dissertation Committee**

A student's dissertation committee must be composed of at least four faculty members, no fewer than three of whom are on the Kellogg School faculty. At least one member of the committee must be from outside the student's program. From this committee, the student will choose a dissertation chair (or two co-chairs). The committee chair and at least one other member must hold appointments in the student's program to ensure that half the committee members represent the student's program. Once the committee is formed—led primarily by the dissertation chair (or co-chairs)—it monitors progress and provides feedback.

## **Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation proposal outlines and specifies a substantive research project, discusses its significance to the development of knowledge, and explains the research methods to be used. The proposal should be submitted to the committee before a substantial part of the dissertation research is conducted. Students are strongly encouraged to start discussing potential proposal presentation dates with committee members at least three months before they expect to propose. Once students form their dissertation committee and schedule a proposal presentation date, they should notify the DGSs and the Kellogg Doctoral Program Coordinator in writing.

Students must provide their dissertation committee with a written copy of their dissertation proposal **at least two weeks** before the scheduled proposal presentation to ensure that committee members have sufficient time to thoroughly review the document. This requirement cannot be waived by the dissertation chair or committee members. If a student does not submit his or her proposal two weeks before the scheduled presentation, it is automatically cancelled and must be rescheduled. The chair(s) of the dissertation committee should announce the proposal presentation to the marketing faculty and Ph.D. students at least two weeks in advance. The above requirements are in addition to The Graduate School requirements.

All students must present their dissertation proposal to their committee before the last day of final exams in the fall quarter of their fourth year in the Ph.D. program. After reviewing the student's proposal document and taking part in the oral presentation, a student's committee provides an evaluation of Pass or Fail.

Students who earn a Pass on their proposal proceed in the program and achieve ABD status.

Students who earn a Fail are automatically placed on academic probation and granted a twoquarter extension on the proposal until the last day of final exams in the spring quarter of their fourth year. Students granted this extension who then fail to earn a Pass on their proposal will not be able to continue in the Ph.D. program.

## **Dissertation Defense**

A doctoral dissertation is a written document that describes a substantive research project, describes the methods used, presents empirical and/or analytical results, and discusses the significance of the conclusions for the development of knowledge. The specific format of the dissertation will differ depending on the dissertation chair, the dissertation committee, and the student. After submitting their completed dissertation to the dissertation committee, students defend their research during a presentation to the committee. The dissertation should be written according to University guidelines.

Students must provide their dissertation committee with a written copy of their dissertation at least two weeks before the scheduled dissertation defense (or earlier, if the committee determines it requires additional time) to ensure that committee members have sufficient time to thoroughly review the document. This requirement cannot be waived by the dissertation chair or committee members. The chair(s) of the dissertation committee should announce the dissertation defense to the marketing faculty and Ph.D. students at least two weeks in advance.

Students are strongly advised to schedule their dissertation defense well in advance of graduation (e.g., March or April for students seeking to graduate in June) to ensure sufficient time to address requests for revising the dissertation. Once all committee members have approved the dissertation, students submit the document to The Graduate School.

## Consumer Behavior Specialization

Consumer behavior researchers tend to focus on psychological aspects of a consumer's decision-making process and to collect data through laboratory studies and field experiments.

Four courses serve as the core foundation for the behavioral doctoral curriculum. The primary purpose of these courses is to teach skills. This involves reading and reviewing published research that reflects the different theoretical models, methodological perspectives, and research philosophies that are applied in marketing as well as in related fields. While each of these four courses has a primary emphasis, the courses are interrelated, with each touching on more than one core skill. Note that although the four core consumer behavior courses are offered every year, their content changes from year to year. Consequently, students are expected to take these courses in their first *and* second years.

- **Theory Building (MKTG 531-1).** The course introduces the principles of theory building in social science research, distinguishes between theory-building research and research with other aims, and provides an opportunity to develop the ability to conceptualize and devise research that builds theory.
- **Methods and Data (MKTG 531-2).** This course focuses on three topics: (1) how to formulate and test interaction effects with continuous and discrete factors in experimental designs, (2) how to perform meta-analyses of multiple papers as well as single (e.g., your own) papers, and (3) how to conduct and interpret mediation analyses. Techniques that facilitate reproducible manuscripts by integrating text, data analyses, and statistical outputs are emphasized.
- **Developing Impactful Consumer Research (MKTG 531-3).** Taking a problem-solving approach, this course examines how psychological insights inform and solve real-world consumption problems, and how real-world problems provide new psychological insights. Via an empirical deep dive, the course also discusses published data, what one can/cannot infer, how to make objective conclusions, and ways to enhance substantive impact (e.g., employing observational data, field studies, choice data, and/or programmatic experimental designs).
- **Current Topics in Consumer Behavior (MKTG 531-4).** This course introduces students to new topics and approaches in consumer behavior research. As such, the topics will change from year to year, and students will be challenged to further develop the theoretical model proposed in the papers. Besides being relevant to marketing students, this course is likely to be of interest to graduate students in psychology, communication studies, and education.

In addition to taking the behavioral courses described above during both their first and second years, behavioral students are encouraged to take (typically during the second year) one doctoral seminar offered by the quantitative marketing faculty. Beyond the marketing courses, doctoral students are encouraged to take courses in departments outside of marketing such as psychology, organizational behavior, sociology, statistics, anthropology, education, philosophy, communication studies, and economics.

## Quantitative Marketing Specialization

Quantitative marketing researchers draw on theories of behavior from across the social sciences to analyze data from observational and archival sources as well as field experiments via

advanced statistical and econometric techniques. The marketing department offers four doctoral level quantitative courses each year. Three of the courses serve as the core foundation for the quantitative doctoral curriculum and are taken in the first year. The first three courses below are all taken in a student's first year. The fourth course, MKTG 552-N, is taken in the second, third, and fourth years, with meetings that are spread over the fall, winter, and spring quarters each year.

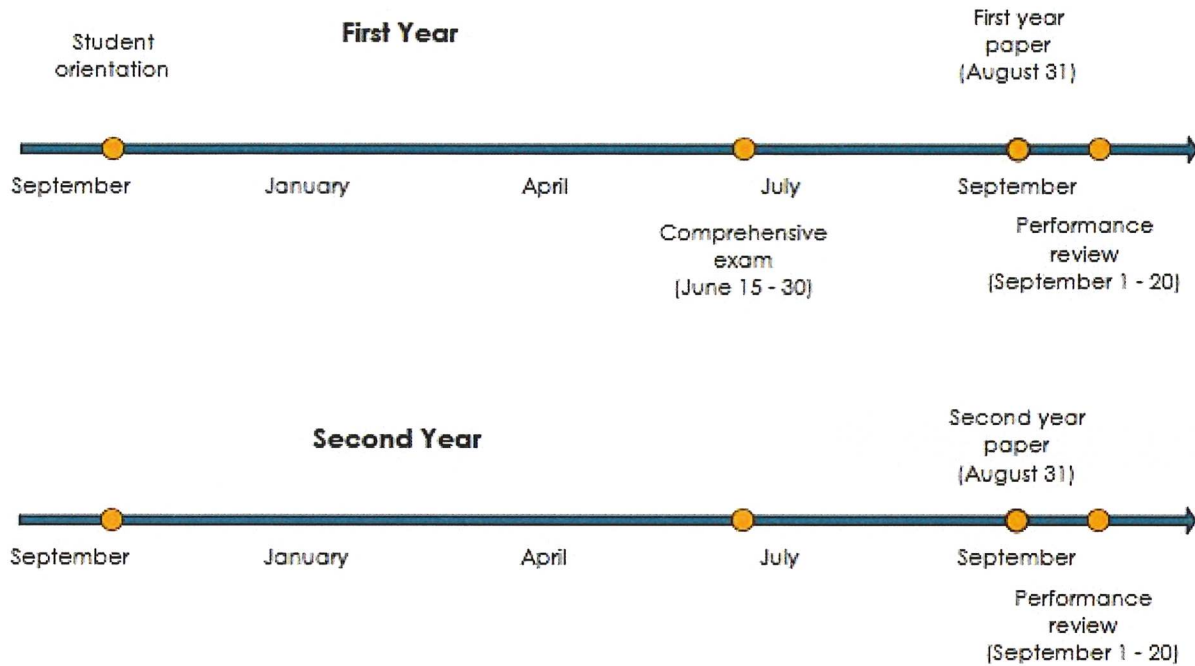
- **Introduction to Theory and Empirical Methods (MKTG 551-1).** This survey course introduces students to substantive and methodological issues in quantitative marketing. The course covers substantive issues such as pricing, advertising, peer effects, and word of mouth, as well as issues pertaining to methods of causal inference. The readings are multidisciplinary and include topics from marketing, psychology, microeconomics, operations management, and macroeconomics.
- **Statistical Modeling (MKTG 551-2).** This course delves deeply into statistical modeling. The topics covered in the course alternate from year to year. In odd years the course is on Bayesian methods and computation, and in even years the course is on applied and computational statistics. Marketing applications include conjoint analysis, choice models, data minimization, and perceptual maps among others.
- **Structural Modeling (MKTG 551-3).** This course provides a foundational understanding of static and dynamic discrete-choice models, with applications drawn from quantitative marketing and economics. The course takes a "hands-on" approach to research, with class consisting of a mix of lectures, discussions of articles, and hands-on empirical analysis.
- **Topics in Quantitative Marketing (MKTG 552-N).** This seminar exposes students to quality research in areas related to quantitative marketing. Students present papers of their choosing and faculty coordinate discussions. The goal is to help student learn about areas related to their research, gain experience presenting and discussing papers, and to develop new ideas for research through interactive discussion. Students in their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> years are required to enroll. Students in their 5<sup>th</sup> year and above are encouraged to enroll, but any student on the job market is excused from enrolling.

In addition to the courses offered by the marketing department, first year students are required to take the first and third courses in the Microeconomic Theory sequence and all three courses in the Econometrics sequence offered by the economics department. After the first year, students are encouraged to build their expertise through coursework in departments related to marketing including computer science, economics, operations research, and statistics.

Starting in the summer quarter following the second year and any time thereafter, quantitative students may work as an intern for up to one quarter, subject to the approval of the DGS. Students are required to write a paper documenting their experience. Students who request this opportunity may request an extension of their second-year paper, subject to the approval of the DGS. Any potential compensation and visa issues involved in such an internship must be worked out with The Graduate School and Kellogg independently of the marketing department.

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## Appendix A: Key Milestones (First and Second Year)





## **Appendix B: Nondiscrimination Statement**

Northwestern University does not discriminate or permit discrimination by any member of its community against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, or any other classification protected by law in matters of admissions, employment, housing, or services or in the educational programs or activities it operates. Harassment, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on any of these characteristics is a form of discrimination. Further prohibited by law is discrimination against any employee and/or job applicant who chooses to inquire about, discuss, or disclose their own compensation or the compensation of another employee or applicant.

Northwestern University complies with federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination based on the protected categories listed above, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX requires educational institutions, such as Northwestern, to prohibit discrimination based on sex (including sexual harassment) in the University's educational programs and activities, including in matters of employment and admissions. In addition, Northwestern provides reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants, students, and employees with disabilities and to individuals who are pregnant.

Any alleged violations of this policy or questions with respect to nondiscrimination or reasonable accommodations should be directed to Northwestern's Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, [equity@northwestern.edu](mailto:equity@northwestern.edu).

Questions specific to sex discrimination (including sexual misconduct and sexual harassment) should be directed to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equity, 1800 Sherman Avenue, Suite 4-500, Evanston, Illinois 60208, 847-467-6165, [TitleIXCoordinator@northwestern.edu](mailto:TitleIXCoordinator@northwestern.edu).

A person may also file a complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights regarding an alleged violation of Title IX by visiting [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html) or calling 800-421-3481. Inquiries about the application of Title IX to Northwestern may be referred to Northwestern's Title IX Coordinator, the United States Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, or both.

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