



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

# Optics and Photonics PhD Graduate Program Handbook

---

*Last updated **2022***

---

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Curriculum .....	1
Timeline for Completion.....	1
First Year .....	1
Second Year .....	2
Third Year .....	2
Subsequent Years .....	2
7 Year Rule – Graduation Completion Plan .....	2
Examination Requirements .....	3
Plan of Study .....	3
Qualifying Examination .....	3
Candidacy Examination .....	4
Versant Test Requirement to Enter Candidacy .....	4
Dissertation Proposal Examination.....	5
Dissertation Requirements .....	5
University Dissertation Requirements .....	5
Dissertation Advisory Committee Membership .....	5
Dissertation Progress .....	6
Review for Original Work .....	6
Dissertation Oral Defense.....	7
Annual Review.....	7
Graduate Research .....	8
Patent and Invention Policy .....	8
Research and Independent Studies .....	8
Research Policies and Ethics Information .....	8
Financial Support.....	8
Graduate Student Associations .....	9
The following the program related organizations: .....	9
Professional Development.....	9
Career Services .....	9
GTA Certificate Program .....	10
Pathways to Success Workshops .....	10
Graduate Research Forum .....	10
Graduate Excellence Awards .....	10

Job Search..... 11  
Forms..... 11  
Useful Links ..... 11  
Grad Faculty ..... 12  
Contact Info ..... 12

# Optics and Photonics PhD

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

## Introduction

The Optics PhD program requires a minimum 72 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree, of which more than 50 percent should be at the 6000 level or higher. These hours must be comprised of:

- 39 credit hours of formal course work, exclusive of independent study, satisfying the following requirements:
  - At least 30 credit hours must be Optics (prefix OSE) courses
  - At least 3 credit hours must be science and engineering graduate research methods/laboratory courses
- At least 15 credit hours of Dissertation (OSE 7980)

## Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program.

## Timeline for Completion

### First Year

Students are usually expected to take a full course load, meaning 9-12 hours, unless designated part-time by the Associate Dean. Additionally, students are required to select a dissertation advisor, get started on research, and begin drafting their Plan of Study. In the first year, students will usually spend more time on courses, in preparation for the qualifying exam, than on research. Students on research fellowships/assistantships must also meet their research obligations. By the end of their first year, full-time students are expected to take the qualifying exam. Part-time students must take the qualifying examination when the relevant core courses are completed, but not later than 24 months into the program.

Students are expected to submit their proposed Plan of Study to the Office of Academic Programs after completion of 9 hours in the program.

Before beginning their second year of full-time study, students are required to select a dissertation advisor. The dissertation advisor must be selected from the college list of approved graduate faculty and must be qualified to serve as chair of a dissertation committee. Until a dissertation advisor is selected the Associate Dean will serve as the student's academic advisor, however, the selection of a dissertation advisor must occur by the end of the second year of full-time study.

## **Second Year**

Second year students are usually expected to devote a large fraction of their time to research, while typically also taking about 6 hours of formal course work per semester. After completing the core requirements, students should take their candidacy exam by the end of the second year. Prior to scheduling a candidacy exam, the PhD dissertation advisory committee should be formed. Once committee members are selected from the approved graduate faculty, the student is responsible for completing the Request to Form PhD Advisory Committee form and submitting it to the Office of Academic Programs. The Associate Dean must approve all dissertation committees. Additionally, once formed, the dissertation advisory committee may not be changed, unless for some reason a committee member becomes unavailable due to extended or permanent absence.

## **Third Year**

After completing 24 months in the program, students should be engaged in their research. The student must begin the Annual Review progress meetings with their research advisor. Students must continue to complete the Annual Review meetings with their advisor each subsequent year to document their progress towards dissertation defense and graduation. The completed reviews must be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies via their online tool after review and comments by your research advisor. The student will be notified by Graduate Studies when the Annual Review is due each year.

By the third year, an Optics PhD student should be primarily involved with dissertation research and substantially done with courses except for upper level courses that are taught infrequently. Within one year of passing the candidacy exam, the dissertation proposal should be written and examined by the dissertation advisory committee. The student must ensure that The Report of Dissertation Proposal Examination form is submitted to the Office of Academic Programs once the examination is complete.

## **Subsequent Years**

After passing the dissertation proposal students should be entirely engaged in their research, writing papers, peer review journal publications and paper presentations at conferences.

## **7 Year Rule – Graduation Completion Plan**

The university policy regarding length of time to degree is 7 years (21 semesters) or less from the student's initial admit term to complete a graduate program. The Optics and Photonics PhD Program requires all graduate students to complete a Graduation Completion Plan at the beginning of their sixth year in the program, outlining the remaining milestones that they must complete to satisfy requirements for graduation. This completion plan will be reviewed at the beginning of their seventh year and evaluated for reasonable time to completion. The student and advisor are both required to sign the completion plan, and the plan requires approval by the Associate Dean of the college. The Graduation Completion Plan will be filed with Graduate Studies as an official record of the agreement.

# Examination Requirements

## Plan of Study

A Plan of Study is a listing of course work agreed to by the student and the degree program specifying course degree requirements. A specific Plan of Study, which will vary from student to student, must be formulated jointly by the student and their dissertation advisor. Additionally, it must comply with the graduate catalog current at the time of enrollment in the program, or, with permission, current at the time the plan of study is proposed or amended. Once completed, the Plan of Study must be approved by the dissertation advisor and the Associate Dean prior to the second term of full-time enrollment. For a graduate student carrying a reduced load, the establishment of a Plan of Study may be delayed up to the registration for the tenth graduate semester hour. The student may make changes in the Plan of Study at any time with approval of the dissertation advisor and the Associate Dean.

Students requesting to transfer credits from a previous institution must note those classes on the Plan of Study. Additionally, students are required to provide the appropriate documentation for transferring credits at the time of submitting the Plan of Study. Requests to transfer credits without the appropriate documentation will be denied.

## Qualifying Examination

Before students are eligible to take the candidacy examination, they must first pass the qualifying examination. The purpose of the exam is for the student to demonstrate mastery of the fundamentals of optics and photonics. The qualifying exam is an oral exam that focuses on the fundamental concepts and topics covered in the following four core courses:

- OSE 5115 Interference, Diffraction and Coherence
- OSE 5312 Light Matter Interaction
- OSE 6111 Optical Wave Propagation
- OSE 6211 Imaging and Optical Systems

The exam is waived for students earning an average GPA of 3.5 or higher in the four core courses.

The exam is held at the end of each semester. Students are expected to take the exam at the next opportunity after all the core courses have been taken and before completing 24 credit hours in the program. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the four core courses to take the exam.

The exam is administered by the doctoral qualifying examination committee, which consists of several faculty members representing the appropriate disciplines, appointed by the graduate program director or designee. The examination committee may recommend pass, not pass or conditional pass with required remedial course work.

Students have two attempts to pass the exam. Those students failing on the first attempt must retake the exam at the next attempt. Failure to take the exam at the required time will be regarded as equivalent to a failure of the exam. Students who do not pass the qualifying examination in two attempts will not continue in the program.

## **Candidacy Examination**

Students are required to successfully complete the candidacy examination before admission to full doctoral candidate status and enrollment into dissertation hours. The purpose of the candidacy exam is for the student to demonstrate his or her readiness for the PhD program through preliminary research work. The Candidacy Examination should be taken when the student is nearing the end of course work. For full time students this is normally about one year after completing the qualifying examination.

The exam is administered by the members of the student's dissertation advisory committee who are members of the optics faculty. Before students can take the candidacy examination, the first section of the dissertation advisory committee approval form, which lists the optics faculty members of the dissertation advisory committee must be signed by all members and approved by the associate dean and be on file with the college. Dissertation advisory committee membership is prescribed in the section below. External committee members of the dissertation advisory committee are not appointed until after the student has passed the Candidacy exam.

The candidacy exam is comprised of written and oral portions. For the written portion, the student will be required to write a report and a comprehensive literature survey on a subject related to their eventual dissertation research topic. The exact subject matter will be determined by the committee chair and communicated to the student at least one month prior to the candidacy exam. The written report should contain between 5,000 and 10,000 words. It should roughly follow the format of a scientific journal paper, containing an abstract, an introductory section that thoroughly and historically reviews prior work in the field, where appropriate, a section that describes the students own research progress to date and a section that describes possible avenues of future research in the field. The student must make the written report available to all committee members at least one full week before the date of the oral exam.

In the oral part of the examination, the student will orally present the report, and through questioning, the committee will further probe the student's competency in the research topic. Students who do not pass at the first attempt must retake the Candidacy examination within 6 months. A student will have only two opportunities to pass. Should the student not pass on the second attempt, they will not be able to continue in the PhD program.

Students must complete eleven of the thirteen required academic courses, and be enrolled in the twelfth course during the term that the Candidacy exam is attempted before Graduate Studies will update the student to Candidate status. This means that 33 of the 39 academic hours must be completed prior to attempting the exam.

Students must pass the candidacy exam and have the candidacy and dissertation advisory committee documentation received and processed by the College of Graduate Studies prior to the first day of classes for the term in order to enroll in dissertation hours (OSE 7980) for that term. Due to the time required for processing, this means the candidacy exam must be scheduled by the Academic Calendar Dissertation Deadline Date in the term prior to updated Candidate status.

## **Versant Test Requirement to Enter Candidacy**

All optics PhD students who were required to meet TOEFL requirements for admission must pass the Versant English test with a score of at least 40 to qualify for PhD Candidacy status. Recognizing the importance of oral presentation skills to the careers of PhD level scientists and engineers, the College of Optics and Photonics would like to help all its PhD students achieve a reasonable level of proficiency in spoken English. Therefore, the college makes available spoken English classes in addition to the Versant English requiring spoken English proficiency to enter PhD candidacy.

The college will pay the fees for PhD students to take the Versant English test. Should a student fail, the college will pay for the student to take the English Accent Reduction Course offered by the UCF Center for Multilingual Multicultural Studies. A student may also elect to take the accent reduction course prior to taking the test. The college will not limit the number of times the student may take the test before reaching the required score.

However, for each student, the college will only pay for a maximum of two attempts of the exam and one Accent Reduction Course. Both the Versant English test and the English Accent Reduction course are offered spring and fall. These will be announced to student periodically, or students may directly inquire to the COP Office of Academic Programs.

## Dissertation Proposal Examination

Usually within 12 months of passing the candidacy examination, and after the student has begun research, the student must write a dissertation proposal and present it to the dissertation advisory committee for its approval. The proposal must include the research performed to date and a detailed plan of research required to complete the dissertation. Approximately two weeks after the committee receives the written report, the student will present the proposal orally to the dissertation advisory committee. After evaluation of the written and oral presentations, the committee may either accept the proposal as-is, or may require the student to revise the proposal.

## Dissertation Requirements

### University Dissertation Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

#### **The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:**

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at [editor@ucf.edu](mailto:editor@ucf.edu).

### Dissertation Advisory Committee Membership

The Dissertation Advisory Committee will consist of a minimum of four members. At least three or a majority of the committee, whichever is larger, must be full faculty members in the College and must be graduate faculty approved for doctoral advisory committee membership. See note below for definition of "full" faculty members. See the Graduate Faculty section for a list of those approved faculty members. At least one member, referred to as the "external member", must be either a faculty member in another college at UCF or be a recognized



researcher from outside the university whose research specialty matches that of the dissertation. If the external member is a UCF faculty member, he or she must be on the graduate faculty and qualified to chair dissertation in his or her own program. If the external member is from outside the university, they must be approved to serve by the College of Optics curriculum committee. Such approvals are specific to each dissertation. Further questions on the composition of dissertation advisory committees can be answered by the Associate Dean.

As stated above, the Candidacy exam is administered by the committee members who are full members of the college. Prior to scheduling the candidacy exam, these members must be identified and approved by filling out the first section of the dissertation advisory committee approval form. Upon passing the candidacy exam, the external member or members of the committee should be identified and the second part of the dissertation advisory committee approval form should be completed, approved and filed with the college.

Note on definition of "full" faculty members in the college: The college is composed of full faculty members and faculty members from other departments at UCF who hold joint appointments in the college. The easiest way to identify these is by looking at the faculty listing on the College web site. By college policy, faculty with joint appointments count as external members of dissertation advisory committees. However, they are also usually eligible to serve as dissertation chairs but in that case, committees must consist of the chair, three full members of the college faculty and another external member. Questions about the eligibility of committee members should be addressed to the associate dean.

## **Dissertation Progress**

Students are expected to successfully progress in their dissertation research each year. Upon admittance into the doctoral program, students are held to a deadline of seven years to graduate before completed courses are considered outdated and removed off the degree audit. In order to ensure students are continuously working on their dissertation, it is required that once enrolling in dissertation hours (7980) the student must continuously enroll (including summers) in dissertation hours until actual defense. For more information on the before mentioned policies, please reference the current [catalog](#).

The College of Optics has implemented a new policy that requires faculty to review the progress of their PhD Students annually once they have completed 24 months in the program. This should be done in the spring semester and completed by April 30, every year. The purpose of the process is that students and faculty should have a clear and common understanding about how each student is progressing towards the degree. The first part of the process will be for students to write a very brief report summarizing their progress towards their dissertation in the past year, providing an estimate of their cumulative progress towards their goal of writing and defending their dissertation. The report should be approximately 1 page in length. Please discuss this with your advisor before starting the process. It is desired that the process be as little burden as possible. The form to use is on the college website/PhD Handbook.

## **Review for Original Work**

The university requires all students submitting a thesis or dissertation as part of their graduate degree requirements to first submit their electronic documents through iThenticate.com for advisement purposes and for review of originality. The committee chair (adviser) is responsible for the scheduling of the review and for sharing the results with the committee. Complete the writing of your dissertation early enough in your final semester to submit to iThenticate.com and allow ample time for your committee chair and advisory committee to review the results and provide their comments to you. Your advisory committee must agree that your writing meets university requirements before your committee chair can sign your Dissertation Approval Form.

## Dissertation Oral Defense

In the semester that the student plans to graduate, he/she must discuss with their dissertation advisor. Once the dissertation advisor certifies the student is ready for graduation, the student must ensure that the university is notified by filing an online Intent to Graduate Form by logging into myUCF and navigating to the Student Center – Intent to Graduate: Apply. International students are encouraged to seek advisement from the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and the [International Services Center](#) when intending to graduate.

The announcement of the dissertation defense is due to the Office of Academic Programs at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense date. Announcing an upcoming defense can be done by completing the Dissertation Abstract and Announcement of Dissertation Defense form and submitting the form to the Office of Academic Programs. The written Dissertation needs to be provided to the committee members at least two weeks before the date of the oral defense. To avoid time conflicts among committee members, the oral defense should be scheduled well in advance. After the intent and announcement are submitted, students are responsible for meeting all additional university graduation requirements and deadlines as outlined in the academic calendar. Failure to complete a dissertation format review by the format review deadline, meet the dissertation defense deadline, or submit the dissertation by the final submission deadline will result in removal from the graduation list for that term.

The dissertation defense must be open to the public. Virtual dissertation defenses (student off-campus defenses) are not normally permitted. The dissertation defense must satisfy the following:

- The student should be present at the campus location of the public defense.
- The committee chair and all committee members should be present at the campus location of the public defense.
- However, in rare occurrences, one or more committee members (other than the chair) may be allowed to attend the oral defense via videoconferencing.

Any deviation from the above policy needs to be approved by the associate dean of Academic Programs or the college dean.

After evaluation of the dissertation and the defense, the committee may either pass the student immediately, or may require that the student carries out additional work to satisfactorily complete the dissertation.

After the defense but prior to leaving, each graduate student must attend an exit interview. Students may contact the Office of Academic programs to schedule an appropriate time.

## Annual Review

The College of Optics and Photonics requires that all doctoral students complete an Annual Review to measure the progress achieved. This must be completed at the end of each year and be reviewed and approved by the student's advisor and submitted to the Graduate Program Office. The first part of the process will be for students to write a very brief report summarizing their progress towards their dissertation in the past year, providing an estimate of their cumulative progress towards their goal of writing and defending their dissertation. The report should be approximately one page in length. Please discuss this with your advisor before starting the process. It is desired that the process be as little burden as possible. The form to use is on the college website/PhD Handbook. Students must continue to complete the Annual Review meetings with their advisor each subsequent year to document their progress towards dissertation defense and graduation. The completed reviews must be submitted to the Office of Academic Programs for the student's permanent record.

## Graduate Research

As a graduate college for optical science and engineering education and research, the research activities of COP faculty span the spectrum from basic science to prototype development. Additionally, the faculty vigorously pursue joint research projects with industry, academia, and government laboratories. The main facilities of the COP are housed in a state-of-the-art 96,000-foot building dedicated to optics and photonics research and education.

For more information on research in the discipline including a list of research areas, groups, laboratories and publications visit the [Research webpage](#) on the [College of Optics and Photonics website](#).

The COP faculty collaborate closely with other UCF research units, including the Center for Nanoscience and Technology, the Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences, the Advanced Materials Processing and Analysis Center (AMPAC), the Institute for Simulation and Training (IST), and the Florida Solar Energy Center. Several COP faculty hold joint appointments in these and other UCF departments, including Departments of Physics,

Chemistry, Mechanical Materials and Aerospace Engineering, and the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, which facilitates access to the outstanding facilities in these units and encourages interdisciplinary research.

## Patent and Invention Policy

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and to (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. For further information on UCF's Patent and Invention policies, students are encouraged to reference [graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/](http://graduatecatalog.ucf.edu/) > Policies > General Graduate Policies.

## Research and Independent Studies

It is the policy of the College that research or dissertation hours (OSE 6918, 7919 or 6908) are graded either "S" or "U" and these do not affect a student's grade point average. Independent studies are not usually taught in the College. For an independent studies course to be approved, the instructor must supply a detailed syllabus, list of learning outcomes and expectations for the student, along with an assessment and grading methodology. Independent studies are usually graded with a letter grade and hence do count in the program of studies. However, students should remember that there is a maximum of 12 hours of research or independent studies that can count toward the PhD.

## Research Policies and Ethics Information

UCF's Office of Research & Commercialization ensures the UCF community complies with local, state and federal regulations that relate to research. For polices including required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval when conducting research involving human subjects (e.g. surveys), animal research, conflict of interest and general responsible conduct of research, please see the website: [research.ucf.edu/](http://research.ucf.edu/) > Compliance.

## Financial Support

The College of Optics and Photonics works to provide students the opportunity to fully engage themselves in research education. Doctoral students are typically funded by a mixture of research assistantships, and external, university and college fellowships. The fellowships are awarded to students in the form of an assistantship. In addition to fellowships, students typically receive tuition remission covering 100 percent of their fees.

As with any type of employment, a large responsibility of ensuring continuance of the position rests with the student. This section is meant to briefly cover the requirements for securing funding and renewing an assistantship. Students are encouraged to reference the current graduate catalog and contact the Office of Academic Programs with additional questions.

- Students must meet the expectations of their dissertation advisors in order to maintain funding. If, at any time, students do not meet the expectations of their dissertation advisor, funding can be canceled.
- Students must maintain good academic standing with a graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher each term. If a student's term or program GPA falls below 3.0, funding will not be available until the student's status returns to good academic standing (GPA of at least 3.0).
- University financial resources are to be used to support full-time, degree-seeking graduate students who maintain good academic progress. Therefore, students not enrolled full-time and/or in a probationary status due to a low GPA are not eligible for funding.

## Graduate Student Associations

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. To learn more or get involved, please visit [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/).

The following are the program related organizations:

- [CREOL Association of Optics Students \(CAOS\)](#)
- [Optical Society of America, Student Chapter](#)
- [International Society for Optical Engineering, Student Chapter](#)
- [The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, Photonic Society, Student Chapter](#)

## Professional Development

As students progress in their academic career, the University of Central Florida also provides many opportunities for professional development. The following is a listing of several organizations offering outstanding development opportunities.

### Career Services

- **Career Expo**  
Held in the fall and spring, this event provides the opportunity for employers to discuss internship, career, and employment opportunities with University of Central Florida students and alumni.
- **Internship Job Fair**  
Provides the opportunity for employers to discuss internship, career, and employment opportunities with University of Central Florida students and alumni through the Internship.
- **Fair and Spring Career Expo**  
Statewide Job Fair Joint effort from all Florida universities to provide the opportunity to Florida students to meet with employers and discuss internship, career, and employment opportunities.
- **Employment Prep Fair**  
Held prior to each Career Expo, this event provides students with the opportunity to meet with employers to learn more about job search techniques, resumes, interviewing, and negotiating job offers. Employers are available to critique resumes and offer practice interviews. This event is designed to better prepare students for success at Career Expo.
- **Externship Information Sessions**

Provide students with information on how to participate in winter and spring externships. The Externship Program offers students the opportunity to shadow an employer in their professional area of interest to learn more about the career field as well as the organizations culture, products, and services.

- **Career Panels**

Provide students with opportunities to hear employers talk about potential careers and jobs relative to their majors. These employer panels are ideal for anyone considering a major or already declared in a major relevant to the panel's professional field.

## **GTA Certificate Program**

Students receive group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning staff and experienced UCF professors, as well as textbooks and materials. GTAs will attend a 12-week, non-credit program.

Topics include: 1. Presentation skills and practice 2. Balancing the many roles of TAs 3. Course design and management 4. Delivery of instruction, teaching strategies 5. Learning differences among students 6. Instructional technology (hands on) 7. Giving assessment and soliciting feedback 8. Building a peer support network 9. Professional survival skills, ethics, legal issues.

## **Pathways to Success Workshops**

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit [graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/).

## **Graduate Research Forum**

The [Graduate Research Forum](#) is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster and best oral presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition. The Research Forum is usually held in the spring semester. Students may contact the college or the College of Graduate Studies for more information.

## **Graduate Excellence Awards**

Each year, the College of Graduate Studies offers graduate students who strive for academic and professional excellence the opportunity to be recognized for their work. The award categories include the following:

**Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant** – This award is for students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record)

**Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching** – This award is for students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

**Award for the Outstanding Dissertation** – It recognizes doctoral students for excellence in the dissertation. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's dissertation. Excellence of the dissertation

may be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field.

For the nomination process and eligibility criteria, see [graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/](http://graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/).

## Job Search

UCF's Career Services department offers a wide range of programs and services designed to assist graduate students. These services include evaluation and exploration of career goals, preparation for the job search and job search resources. To learn more, visit their website at [career.ucf.edu/](http://career.ucf.edu/).

For specific services or resources provided by the academic program, please contact the graduate program director or academic advisor.

## Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)  
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)  
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)  
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

## Useful Links

- [Optics and Photonics PhD Website](#)
- [The College of Optics and Photonics Website](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers](#)
- [International Society for Optical Engineering](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Optical Society of America Student Chapter](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)

- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

## Grad Faculty

For a full list of CREOL faculty, [please visit our website](#).

An up-to-date list of Graduate Faculty and Graduate Faculty Scholars in the College of Optics and Photonics can be found at: <https://graduate.ucf.edu/graduate-faculty/#cop>

## Contact Info

- **Patrick LiKamWa**  
Associate Dean for Academic Programs  
CREOL 209  
Phone: 407-823-6816
- **Ashley Rivera Mercado**  
Graduate Admissions Coordinator  
CREOL 208  
Phone: 407-823-4726
- **Lawrence Lipe**  
Graduate Admissions Specialist  
CREOL 208  
Phone: 407-823-6986