GRADUATE HANDBOOK

FOR THE PH.D. IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

STRATEGY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND ORGANIZATIONS CONCENTRATION

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3. Department Head Welcome Statement

Welcome to the Department of Management & Entrepreneurship in the Haslam College of Business at the University of Tennessee. We are so excited that you have joined us.

Our department is a collegial group, representing a wide variety of research areas, including strategy, entrepreneurship, organizational behavior, and organization theory. The Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations (SEO) Ph.D. program attracts students interested in attaining the highest achievement in scholarship in these areas. During your years in our program, we hope that you forge strong faculty and student connections and collaborations which help you throughout your academic career.

The SEO doctoral program is committed to high-quality scholars capable of conducting and communicating significant and original research. Through a combination of coursework, teaching, research, and enrichment experiences, you will develop the skills to be a strong researcher, instructor, and colleague. In your research, we expect impactful research findings and improved management practice. Our goal is to place students in tenure track positions at peer and aspirant research universities.

Welcome again to the Department of Management & Entrepreneurship and the Ph.D. concentration in Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or other faculty members if we can ever be of help during your time in the program and into your career!

Russell Crook
Department of Management & Entrepreneurship
August 2023
4. Introduction

Graduate School Introduction
In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK), information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students. This Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate School Policies http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog noted in the Graduate Catalog, but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out.

 Purpose of Handbook
This handbook is designed to supplement, not replace, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville’s Graduate Catalog. All graduate students are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the Graduate Catalog, which contains the official policies and procedures of the UTK Graduate School.

In this handbook, the Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations (SEO) faculty identify important standards and policies for students in our Ph.D. program. It should be noted that the standards and policies adopted by the SEO faculty often exceed those set by the Haslam College of Business (HCB) or the University. Where there is a discrepancy, the student will be held to the more rigorous departmental requirements.

Graduate Student Responsibilities
“Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university.” Students are required to be familiar with the Graduate Catalog, Hilltopics, and with the information available on the Graduate School website (http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/).

SEO Structure and Contacts
The SEO Ph.D. Program Director administers the doctoral program in partnership with the other SEO faculty members. The Ph.D. Program Director is David (Dave) W. Williams (dww@utk.edu). The staff support person is Shannon McCloud (smccloud@utk.edu; 865-974-4843). Members of the Ph.D. Program committee consist of all departmental faculty members who teach in the SEO Ph.D. program.

History of Program
The Department of Management (now Management & Entrepreneurship) offered a Ph.D. in Strategic Management from 1975 until 1998, when the department voted to put this Ph.D. program on hiatus.\(^1\) During the 2007-08 academic year, a new strategy program was designed. This program was renamed Organizations & Strategy (O&S) to emphasize the organization theory component of the program. The program was launched in the fall of 2008 with six students. To celebrate the re-launch of the Ph.D. program, UT Ph.D. in strategy graduate and prolific strategy scholar Michael Lubatkin (Professor Emeritus, University of Connecticut) visited the Department of Management (now Management & Entrepreneurship) and offered a series of seminars for our students.

\(^1\) A list of the previous Strategy Ph.D. graduates is provided in the Appendix of this document.
Since relaunching the program in 2008, the SEO program has hosted many visiting distinguished scholars. We also have hosted several research conferences including an SMS extension, the Mid-Atlantic Strategy Colloquium, a JMS-sponsored conference on meta-analysis, the BCERC in June 2023.

The first students graduated from the revitalized Ph.D. program in 2011. Donde Plowman (now UTK Chancellor) was the first Ph.D. Program Director (2007-2009), followed by Anne Smith (2009-2010), Franz Kellermanns (2010-2013), Rhonda Reger (2013-2017), and David Williams (2017-present). Starting in fall of 2017, the program was renamed to Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations (SEO) to reflect the program’s increasing focus on entrepreneurship.

5. General Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty and Graduate Students

The SEO Ph.D. Program develops doctoral students for careers as researchers, instructors, and colleagues at major research universities. Course requirements include five Ph.D. seminars that cover research in strategy, entrepreneurship, and organizations. In addition, each student completes a set of research methods courses as well as theory and methods courses designed to support their dissertation research.

Ph.D. students at the University of Tennessee collaborate closely with our faculty on research projects and activities associated with the Academy of Management, the Strategic Management Society, Southern Management Association, and the Babson College Entrepreneurship Research Conference. We expect full time commitment to the program and active participation in professional activities. At the same time, we expect students to satisfy all Department, College, and University requirements in a timely fashion.

We typically accept 2 students each year. Our expectation is that students may test the job market in the fourth year but that students will stay for five years to complete the program. Staying for the fifth year will allow the student to make progress on top tier publications to aid in that placement. Admitted students receive full financial support, which includes a tuition waiver and assistantship, to help cover living expenses for five years. Though an MBA is not a prerequisite, it or similar master’s degree such as MS in economics, sociology, or psychology is recommended. Students without a master’s degree may be required to take some background courses (e.g., accounting, finance, marketing, economics, management), depending on their previous coursework and experiences.

6. Admission Requirements and Application Procedure

For Graduate School admissions information, please see https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/. Specifics about application to the SEO program can be found in this handbook and at: https://haslam.utk.edu/management/phd/strategy-entrepreneurship-organizations.

Admission to the SEO program is open to qualified holders of bachelor’s and/or master’s degrees from accredited colleges and universities. Applicants are encouraged to apply from any field of study. Admission is largely based on the applicant’s record, overall standing compared with other applicants, and the target number of new students to be admitted to the program in a given year.
We consider an applicant’s prior academic experience, work experience, scholarly potential, and connection to faculty research topics. Additional qualities include an inquiring mind, tenacity, the ability to learn, a commitment to an intellectually-demanding program of study, and a desire for a research career as a faculty member after the Ph.D.

Normally, successful Ph.D. applicants will have:

- A grade-point average of at least 3.5 in the most recently completed 60 hours of work.
- A score on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) which places the student in the top 20 percent of examinees, and generally exceeds 600 (most incoming students score between 630 and 720). In lieu of a GMAT score, applicants may submit Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) scores instead. GRE scores should also be in the top 20 percent – roughly 320-340.
- Strong recommendations from individuals who have had the opportunity to observe the applicant’s interests, abilities, and commitment to a career of scholarship.
- Clearly articulated career plans that demonstrate the need for attaining a Ph.D. degree in Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations.
- Relevant work experience.
- Clearly articulated Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations phenomena about which they are interested (a strong curiosity about how things work in Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations).

Each applicant’s entire academic and work record is reviewed carefully. Other factors often considered include motivation for pursuing an advanced degree; rigor of prior training; ability to contribute to the program’s objectives; and prior work and academic performance most relevant for study in this program. Letters of recommendation and personal statements by the candidate play an important role.

Careful attention is given to the admissions application forms (both the SEO application and the University Graduate School application). Before acceptance into the program, the applicant may be interviewed via ZOOM or invited for a personal visit to meet with the faculty and discuss the program. Once admitted, a personalized program is tailored to fit the interests of each student.

We do not accommodate non-degree, conditional, probationary, or readmission requests. Some courses may be open to students not admitted to a UTK doctoral program, but this is on an exception basis and subject to approval by the Ph.D. Program Director and SEO professor teaching the seminar. Participation in courses without admission to the program cannot exceed two SEO seminars.

7. Financial Support

Department Assistantships
The SEO Ph.D. program places heavy emphasis on the development of both research and teaching skills. Students serve as research assistants throughout the program and work closely with SEO faculty in their research efforts. Each student must serve as a teaching assistant as needed by the department and will have the opportunity to assume primary responsibility for an undergraduate class during the program. Students often begin teaching either in the summer between their second
and third years or during their third year. Before teaching their own course, we strongly advise students to sit in on the course they will be teaching in the semester before they teach it.

Students are expected to spend 20 hours a week on their assistantships, primarily focused on research with a faculty member (or members). Students who are responsible for a course are expected to spend 10 hours a week working on research with faculty and 10 hours a week on teaching. Research assistant work is not required or expected during the summer, reading days, legal holidays, or exam days, but students are expected to continue to work on research projects on which they are co-authors throughout the year. Teaching-related assignments as part of a student’s GRA (e.g., grading for your assigned GRA faculty member) should not exceed 30% of the total graduate assistantship working time over the course of the academic year and not more than 50% in a particular semester. Our intention is for students to be assigned to one to three faculty members per year and to work for several faculty members during their time in the SEO program.

A department assistantship appointment (20 hours) for students in good standing pays a stipend for twelve months and includes a waiver of tuition. The base stipend plus scholarship for most SEO Ph.D. students in 2023 is $30,300 per year; this amount could change in the future years. Scholarships are also sometimes available for highly qualified candidates on a competitive basis. Students are required to pay some fees. Also, some faculty members are involved in individual grant research projects that require research assistants. Lastly, there may be some additional money available in the form of fellowships or department special projects.

**Graduate School Assistantships and Fellowships**
In addition to graduate research assistantships awarded by the Department, there are sources of financial aid available through College and University offices for both new and returning students (see: [http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/](http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/)). There are also awards from both government and business sources for students working on their dissertations. Also, graduate students are eligible for some financial aid programs offered by the U.S. Department of Education. Contact the Office of Financial Aid for assistance with these programs (see paragraph below on financial aid).

**Employment**
The SEO Ph.D. program is a full-time program. Students may not be employed outside the department while in the program unless written permission is given. Permission is likely only when employment opportunities will enhance a student’s research skills.

**Travel Support by Department and Haslam College of Business**
All students who are on the program at national or regional conferences approved by the Ph.D. Program Director are eligible to apply for travel support from the Department of Management & Entrepreneurship and Haslam College of Business (HCB). An exception to the requirement to be on the program is when a student attends a conference to take part in job interviews. Depending on the fiscal circumstances, the Department will award up to $1500 per year for student travel. The HCB will match the Department award up to $300 if funds are available. The deadline for applying for travel support from the Department and HCB is approximately 3 weeks before the deadline to apply for the Graduate Student Travel Award (see next section). If a student is not applying for the Graduate Student Travel Award (due to missed deadline, etc.), the student may
apply for travel support from the Department and College one month before the scheduled trip. See Michelle Molter to obtain paperwork and approval of travel support. Allow a minimum of 6 weeks to apply for international travel.

Additional funding for travel is often available.

**Graduate Student Travel Award**
The Graduate Student Senate Graduate Student Travel Award is administered by the Office of the Dean of Students in cooperation with the Graduate Student Senate and the Dean of the Graduate School. Allocations from this fund are utilized to provide travel awards for University of Tennessee graduate students attending professional meetings. The awards are made on the basis of merit, not need, and allow for partial reimbursement of transportation, lodging and registration expenses.

Travel award requests must be filed online at: GSS Travel Awards | Graduate Student Senate (utk.edu).

**Loans**
Students must apply through the One Stop Express Service (http://onestop.utk.edu/loans/) for all loan programs. Loans are typically limited to U.S. citizens and certain permanent residents.

Processing time varies from one loan program to another. All students receiving financial aid are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress standards to remain eligible to receive aid. In addition, all students receiving federal financial aid must have a valid social security number.

**Veteran’s Benefits**
Veterans, reservists, and widows or children of certain deceased or disabled veterans, who have been admitted to a degree program, may apply for benefits by contacting the Veterans Resource Center (http://veterans.utk.edu/) in Room G020, Hodges Library.

8. **Registration and Advising**

**Registration Procedures and Timelines**
For first-year, incoming SEO doctoral students, the Ph.D. Program Director will identify the required courses for the fall semester for the incoming student. By June 1 of each year, each second and third-year student who has not completed their coursework will identify his/her plan of courses for the coming year to the Ph.D. Program Director. The Ph.D. Program Director will review and suggest changes if needed. Students are required to receive prior approval for all coursework before enrolling in the course and must secure approval from the Ph.D. Program Director for their program of study including minor and methods courses by November of their second year. A progression checklist is provided in the Appendix.
Minimum Total Credit Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 Courses (beyond the Business Core Knowledge Requirements)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Hours</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Total Credits</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Incomplete Grades, Other Deadlines, and Readmission

The Department of Management & Entrepreneurship has adopted the guideline of three weeks from a course’s final exam for an SEO student to remove an incomplete grade, except under unusual circumstances. The Graduate School allows up to one year for completion of an incomplete, after which the incomplete will become an F.

Continuous Enrollment Requirements

Departmental policy states that students must remain in residence for the first four years of the SEO Ph.D. program. Along with residency is the requirement of continuous enrollment. The student must register continuously for MGT 600 (a minimum of 3 hours) from the time the doctoral research proposal is approved, admission to candidacy is accepted, or registration for MGT 600 is begun, whichever comes first. This includes summer sessions and the semester in which the dissertation is approved and accepted by the Graduate School. **A minimum total of 24 hours of MGT 600 is required before the dissertation will be accepted.** A student who will not be using faculty services and/or university facilities for a period of time may request leaves of absence from dissertation research per Graduate School guidelines. The request will be considered by the Graduate School upon request of the Department Head and SEO Ph.D. Program Director. All degree requirements must be completed within 8 years of beginning the Ph.D. program.

Full Time Status

In accordance with the Graduate School, a SEO doctoral student who is taking 9 hours of course credit is considered full time. **At least 6 hours of course credit is necessary to receive your assistantship and scholarship.** We expect SEO students to take at least three courses per semester during their first and second years. The SEO Ph.D. Program Director will review and approve all classes before the student enrolls in them. Failure to obtain prior approval may result in the course not counting toward fulfillment of the degree. SEO students may also be required to take a teaching effectiveness course (May) during the summer following the first year. **In all other summers, students may only take a maximum of one course per summer and devote the rest of their time to research including the summer research project, the dissertation, and research for publications.**

Selection of Advisor and Advising Committee

The Ph.D. Program Director is the advisor to each SEO student, with input by other faculty, until a dissertation advisor is selected. Once a dissertation advisor is selected, this faculty member becomes the student’s advisor. The dissertation advisor may require additional methods courses or short courses (such as those offered by CARMA) to aid in the completion of the dissertation. Students should select the dissertation advisor with whom s/he would like to work. With the dissertation advisor, a committee is formed. **We encourage students to select a dissertation committee before or during the first semester of the third year.**
**Dissertation Hours**

Course MGT 600 is reserved for doctoral research and dissertation hours. Initial registration for MGT 600 generally corresponds to the time at which a student begins to work actively on dissertation research. From this time on, students are required to register continuously for at least 3 hours of MGT 600 each semester, including summer term. A minimum total of 24 hours of course MGT 600 is required (see also the section on continuous enrollment requirements above).

**9. Degree Requirements**

The goals of the SEO Ph.D. program are to provide each student with an in-depth understanding of 1) the overall subject matter of Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations; 2) the skills required to conduct and communicate scholarly research; 3) the skills necessary to plan and instruct coursework in Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations; and 4) the expectations and demands of managing a successful career within the profession.

The program is designed for full-time, year-round study. However, differences in the amount and quality of academic preparation, and the individual nature of doctoral level programs, preclude everyone from finishing in the same amount of time. However, some guidelines can be offered. Candidates can anticipate a five-year program from entrance to completion. A more detailed description of program content follows.

**The Curriculum and Course Work**

The curriculum for the doctor of philosophy degree program consists of four types of coursework: 1) core business and basic discipline courses, 2) research methods courses, 3) courses taken within the Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations concentration, and 4) theory and methods courses taken to support the dissertation.

**Business Core Knowledge**

All Business Administration Ph.D. students must have demonstrated knowledge of business core subjects, including studies in marketing, management, finance, accounting and business policy. In addition, students may be asked to take remedial courses in mathematics and/or statistics if necessary. Students who have earned an MBA from an Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accredited institution (or received a high grade in a course similar to the HCB’s requirement) generally have met this requirement and may be allowed to waive all or most of these courses. Students who do not have a management background in industry or through academic course exposure are expected to audit the Management capstone course (BUAD 453) or another management course approved by the SEO Ph.D. Program Director during the first fall semester of the program. This will be determined on an individual basis with approval of the SEO Ph.D. Program Director and the consensus of the SEO faculty.

**Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations Concentration Curriculum - 5 courses, 15 credit hours**

The Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations curriculum is designed to provide the student with a solid foundation regarding the theory, practice, and research methods used in Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations research. Students are expected to develop a high degree of
familiarity with, and appreciation of, the many facets of Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations, including its history, current thought of the disciplines, and research traditions. In total, a minimum of 5 courses (or 15 semester hours) is required of the Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations concentration. A brief description of these five courses is listed below:

- **MGT 617 – Seminar in Macro Organizational Behavior (3)**
  Study of current theory and research in organizational behavior focused at the macro level. Attention to behavioral choice and decision making in organizations.

- **MGT 618 – Overview of Entrepreneurship Research (3)**
  Survey of entrepreneurship research and theory at various levels of analysis. Includes foundational work as well as sub-fields and special topics within entrepreneurship research.

- **MGT 619 – Micro Foundations of Entrepreneurship (3)**
  Study of individuals and teams in entrepreneurship, focusing on micro level phenomenon, such as affect, identity, and failure. Reading of foundational theories in OB, psychology, and management, as well as their application to the entrepreneurship context.

- **MGT 620 – Seminar in Organization Theory (3)**
  The primary objective of this course is to survey the major theoretical perspectives and issues studied in organization theory (OT) research. Will cover roughly 125 years of OT, from foundational theories, to classic theories of organization and a variety of emerging topics and perspectives.

- **MGT 623 – Overview of Strategic Management (3)**
  Survey of research and theory focusing on the interrelationship among strategy, structure, and performance at the organizational and industry levels. Business strategy, corporate strategy, governance, performance, environmental and industry forces, resource-based views of the firm.

Note that Special Topics and Independent Study seminars may not take the place of the seminars that are required for SEO students unless otherwise indicated and approved by the SEO Ph.D. Program Director. These courses offer students an opportunity to be exposed to other topics in SEO or to deepen their learning in a particular area after meeting the basic course requirements of the program. The end product of the student’s courses and research projects, including literature reviews, models, and/or studies generally result in papers of publishable quality to be submitted to conference proceedings or journals.

Writing is a core and fundamental part of the research career. Students will take MGT 610: Effective Academic Writing, usually in their second or third years, and MGT 6XX: Theory Writing, in their third or fourth years.
MGT 610 - Effective Academic Writing (3)
A small, highly interactive seminar course intended to help you develop the writing skills and habits necessary to publish in the top journals. It is highly interactive, positive and developmental, so that you will increase in both your confidence and ability as a writer.

Students may also be asked to take BUAD 540: Academic Writing for Doctoral Students in addition to MGT 610, and other writing courses, workshops, or exercises may be required depending on each student’s progress.

MGT 6XX – Theory Writing (3)
This course is in development for Fall 2024.

Supporting Courses – Minimum of 4 courses, 12 hours
In addition to the common program elements, the Ph.D. program requires each student to develop theoretical and methodological expertise that supports their dissertation or other research, either inside or outside of the HCB. A minimum of four courses (12 semester hours) are required.

Each student is expected to investigate course offerings across the University and develop a program of study related to his/her long-term research interests or dissertation. This program is subject to approval by the SEO Ph.D. Program Director. Specialized study programs may be tailored to each student’s interests. For example, a student may select specific courses from a single, established discipline such as anthropology, communications, psychology, psychometrics, sociology, law, or political science. In some cases, it may be possible to select courses from two or three highly-related disciplines to construct a specialized study program. Course work should be designed to provide depth in a specialized topic and be related to a student’s dissertation research.

Research Methods – Minimum of 5 courses, 15 credit hours
The Ph.D. program requires each student to master the tools and methods of basic and state-of-the-art research and to demonstrate competence in conducting such research. In the SEO program, the research methods core courses are designed to prepare all students for advanced research. Other classes may be recommended or required on a case-by-case basis, considering the student’s research interests. These might include courses in advanced econometrics, multivariate statistics, structural equation modeling, content analyses, mathematical modeling, grounded theory, and qualitative methods. Students without an adequate statistical background entering the program may be required to take Statistics 531, which will not count toward the Research Methods requirements. Students may also be required to enroll in the Math Boot Camp (ECON 581) offered by the Economics department (course begins August 1) before they begin an econometrics sequence. Additional specialized methods courses are offered by the departments of economics, education, psychology, sociology, communications, agriculture, and other areas across the university.

A list of methods courses commonly taken by SEO doctoral students will be provided to the SEO Ph.D. Program Director.
Pedagogical Coursework
Students at the end of their first year are expected to take BUAD 583, a teaching preparation seminar. It is intended to provide initial teacher education training to HCB Ph.D. students to prepare and manage a new course, manage a classroom, facilitate student learning, evaluate students and themselves, and handle challenging issues related to teaching. This course aims to increase instructor confidence and the ability to provide a successful learning environment. This course is generally offered in the May mini-term. If students are not expected to teach in the second year of their assistantship, the course may be postponed to the end of their second year with the expressed written permission of the Department Head and SEO Ph.D. Program Director. In rare cases, where doctoral students possess extensive teaching experience, the course may be waived with the expressed written permission of the Department Head and SEO Ph.D. Program Director.

Independent Research Project (Summer Research Project)
A requirement of all Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations students is an independent research project conducted after the first year of Ph.D. studies and under the direction of one member of the Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations faculty. These projects provide students with practical research experience as well as depth of knowledge in a specialized area within the SEO discipline. We expect these papers will be presented to the faculty and graduate students during a Pathways session no later than the spring of the second year.

With approval of the project’s faculty advisor, students are strongly encouraged to submit this project to a major academic conference (e.g., AOM, BCERC, SMA, SMS). This project is usually designed in the spring semester of the first year, data collection is conducted during the summer between the first and second year, data analysis completed in fall semester, and final document and presentation are completed by the end of the second year. This research project must be completed before a student can sit for comprehensive exams. An SEO faculty member needs to advise this project and sign off when it is completed.

Admission to Candidacy
Students may apply for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree after earning an average of “B” in the six SEO seminars, successful completion of comprehensive examinations, and acceptance by the student’s doctoral committee of a research proposal for the dissertation. Admission to candidacy must be approved at least one full semester prior to the date the degree is conferred (e.g., admission in the fall semester permits graduation in the following spring semester). The Admission to Candidacy form can be found on the Graduate School website.

The application for admission to candidacy must include a listing of all courses taken within each of the fields required for the degree. Graduate courses accepted from other institutions must be clearly identified. In addition, the admission to candidacy application must include the date of acceptance of the research proposal by the doctoral committee and any human subjects research (IRB) authorization required by the university. The student’s doctoral dissertation committee and the SEO Ph.D. Program Director must approve the application before it is submitted to the Graduate School.
The Dissertation
The dissertation, which consists of significant scholarly research in the student’s area of study, represents a critical development in the student’s career as a scholar. The dissertation must demonstrate that the student has acquired command of the Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations area being investigated and the ability to contribute original knowledge to the discipline. Students are encouraged to consult faculty members with whom they share research interests for advice and assistance in the formulation of dissertation topics. A minimum of 24 semester hours is required for completion of the dissertation, which must occur within three years of the student’s advancement to candidacy. Commonly, students require 30 hours to complete the dissertation.

The Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations Ph.D. program requires all students to remain in residence at UTK for the first four years of their programs. In addition, it is strongly recommended that students remain in residence until the completion of their dissertations. At a minimum, students are expected to remain in residence in Knoxville until their dissertation proposals have been approved and their data are collected. Students wishing to leave the campus prior to the completion of data collection must submit a written petition for exception to this policy. The dissertation advisor, the Ph.D. Program Director, and the Department Head must approve this petition.

Students are urged to take advantage of the thesis/dissertation program administered by the Graduate School (https://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/graduation/theses-and-dissertations/). A variety of activities are provided, including thesis/dissertation workshops on a variety of subjects. The Graduate School provides a schedule of all Graduate School workshops to be held that term. In addition, students are urged to consult the Graduate School’s information on formatting a dissertation (http://gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations/formatting/).

Dissertation Committee
The SEO faculty expects that a student will defend a dissertation proposal before December of their 4th year. Within six months of passing the comprehensive examination, the student must select a dissertation advisor, and a committee should be formed in consultation with the advisor within 12 months. The student is expected to work closely with this committee to develop a written draft of the dissertation topic and research proposal.

Serious attention should be given to the composition of the student’s dissertation committee. This committee must consist of at least four members (one chairperson and three members). At least one committee member must be from outside the student’s department; this person can be from inside or outside of the University of Tennessee. Details are provided on the Graduate School’s PhD Committee form (https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/phd-committee-form/). Please work with the SEO Ph.D. Program Director and your dissertation advisor to ensure a properly-formed committee.

It is often useful to build a committee based on the topics, methods, and other factors relevant to each student’s dissertation. As noted above, students are highly encouraged to include well-regarded outside-UTK faculty on their committee (with approval of the dissertation advisor). Any changes in the composition of the committee must likewise be approved. Once the committee signs
the research proposal, the student is guaranteed to graduate with a doctorate upon the satisfactory completion and write-up of the dissertation, even if the research fails to produce statistically significant results. For more details on selection and approval of a dissertation committee, see the Graduate Catalog.

**Dissertation Proposal Defense**
The student must defend a dissertation proposal before his/her committee at an open meeting that all interested faculty may attend. All doctoral students are required to attend all proposal defenses. For a meeting to be open there should be a general advance announcement to the faculty and doctoral students in the student’s area of study and a location chosen that will accommodate all interested parties who want to attend. The formal conduct of the defense is the responsibility of the student’s dissertation committee, with the final decision regarding the approval of the proposal resting solely with the committee. Following the proposal defense, the dissertation committee should provide feedback of substantive criticism and/or required modifications.

**Final Dissertation Defense**
Consistent with the guidelines stated above, the final dissertation defense will be made in an open meeting orally to the student’s dissertation committee and other interested faculty. All doctoral students are required to attend final defenses. Students should receive feedback from all committee members before the defense. Feedback of substantive criticisms and/or required modifications is provided to the student. The committee may stipulate minor changes to the dissertation without requiring an additional defense. The Graduate School office and the Haslam College of Business Dean must be notified prior to scheduling the final defense. The Scheduling Defense of Dissertation form is available at [Forms Central - The Graduate School (utk.edu)](http://forms.utk.edu).

**Educational Enrichment and Socialization Activities**
Several aspects of the Ph.D. program have been designed to enrich students’ learning experiences, to increase their understanding of the professional demands of their academic careers, and to expose them to a variety of research styles and topics. This is accomplished through a wide range of activities, beginning with the student’s initial orientation and continuing throughout the program.

**Pre-Orientation and Orientation**
Each entering Ph.D. student will attend a program orientation conducted by the department faculty. The orientation generally includes discussion of: 1) expectations of the faculty, 2) the relationship of the degree program to an academic career, 3) a sense of the skills and values needed to become a contributor to the profession, and 4) other topics related to personal and professional development. The purpose of this orientation is to set the standards and expectations for the program and to give entering students the opportunity to become acquainted with members of the department. In addition, all students are expected to attend new student orientations offered by the UTK Graduate School and the Haslam College of Business to learn about general procedures and policies that will affect their status as a student, and as a teacher if they have teaching responsibilities as a part of a graduate assistantship commitment.

**Seminar Series**
The department conducts a regular series of seminars, called Pathways, covering a variety of topics. The content of the series may include at least three different formats. First, some of the seminars
are for career development of students. Second, a portion of the seminars will be “brown-bag” events. These are informal sessions in which both faculty and students may discuss current issues of special interest, recent research or articles, career-related issues (e.g., publishing strategies), etc. Finally, a portion of the seminars will be used for formal presentations of research, both from faculty and students, as well as from visiting scholars. Student participation in these seminars is considered to be a vital part of the Ph.D. program and attendance is expected.

**Faculty Mentors**
In addition to the formal guidance provided by the doctoral student advisor, students entering the Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations Ph.D. Program are encouraged to develop mentoring relationships with multiple faculty members. Much tacit knowledge needed to succeed in an academic career is shared informally through these relationships.

**Student Mentors**
Although we no longer assign specific student mentors, our program is designed to be collaborative. We expect later-stage students to help earlier-stage students and students to ‘pay-it-forward’ as new students enter the program.

**Travel and Other Professional Activities**
Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to attend major annual conferences—especially the Academy of Management as well as conferences related to their field of specialty such as the Strategic Management Society and the BCERC conferences—to further their professional development. Faculty and students are also frequent participants in the Southern Management Association conference. The department will make every effort to provide at least partial funding for these conference trips for students whose work appears on the program at the conference. Budget constraints as determined by the Department Head will impact the amount of funds available for travel and specific policies involved that relate to student travel.

**Other Developmental Opportunities**
The University of Tennessee strongly encourages each of its Ph.D. students to pursue additional exposure and insight into industry issues through research projects and case studies. These may be arranged individually, or in conjunction with the interests of specific faculty members.

**Teaching and Research Responsibilities**
In addition to their coursework responsibilities, Ph.D. students have responsibilities as developing teachers and researchers. The program is designed to provide students with meaningful experiences in both of these areas and to create an appropriate balance between the time demands of the two. Because different students enter the program with different levels of expertise and with different needs in these two areas, each student’s program must be determined on an individual basis. However, some general guidelines may be stated. Students have twenty hours per week that must be assigned for teaching and/or research duties. Students are not to be assigned to one faculty member for the duration of their doctoral studies.

**Teaching**
One goal of the Ph.D. program is to provide each student with the opportunity to develop classroom instructional skills. Thus, students will be responsible for planning, conducting and administering
undergraduate Management, Strategy, or Entrepreneurship courses during their tenure in the program. This experience is important for the Ph.D. student, and the goal of excellence should be pursued at all times. While it may seem at times that a monumental effort is required of the Ph.D. student to contribute effectively in a number of areas, including teaching, this effort is expected as a component of the overall Ph.D. experience.

The scheduling of teaching assignments is occasionally unpredictable due to variations in the department’s resources and course demands from one academic year to the next. Therefore, it is impossible to guarantee specific assignments or course loads for the entire Ph.D. program. However, the following schedule is the departmental goal whenever possible. New students are expected to attend the teaching preparation seminar (BUAD 583) that is conducted in May every year. A departmental goal is to allow students time off from teaching, typically in the first and second year, to allow them greater time to concentrate on research. We also aim to provide fourth and fifth-year students with flexibility in teaching schedules to provide the opportunity to participate fully in on-campus interviews during the job hunt semester. Currently, teaching is typically 4 courses in 3 years (3 courses across years 3 and 4 and 1 course in year 5). Depending upon departmental teaching needs, summer school teaching may be substituted for regular semester sections. Efforts will be made to address the teaching interests of individual Ph.D. students.

Research
The Ph.D. program is also set up to provide students with meaningful, on-going research experiences. While each student’s research program will differ due to interests, abilities, and faculty assignments, the following schedule is the goal of the program.

During the first year, each student will typically be assigned as a research assistant to two to three faculty members. As such, first year students will participate in the on-going research projects of assigned faculty members, typically joining the project in the current stage of progress. The primary goal at this stage is to simply introduce the student to the research process and provide some initial hands-on experience. Data collection, cited references creation, coding of data, or library research are tasks that a first-year SEO student may be required for GRA work. SEO students will receive feedback on the quality of research assistance to faculty during their annual review. There is no expectation that students will continue working on these projects after the assigned semester is completed, although sometimes the student’s contributions will merit co-authorship. Students and faculty are encouraged to discuss whether an assignment is strictly for learning purposes or if co-authorship may be earned, and how.

In subsequent years, the student should become more of an equal partner in faculty research. The student may become involved in more than one research project and should take more initiative in such projects. Research assignments will be made to accommodate students’ interests whenever possible, and the goal is increasingly for the student to see projects through from start to finish in order to observe the entire research process from conceptualization to writing papers. It is anticipated that conference presentations and co-authored publications will result from these projects. Typically, doctoral students should attempt to focus on a small number of high-quality research projects with a higher probability of publication in premier journals rather than spreading their research efforts across too many research projects. Most doctoral
students find that they cannot manage more than two to four high quality projects at one
time.

Finally, during the third through fifth years, the student will increasingly focus upon his/her
dissertation research. While other projects may be completed during this time, it is expected that
the student’s energies will be primarily directed toward completion of the dissertation.

Both students and faculty view twenty hours per week devoted to research as the minimum
required effort. Work beyond the basic requirements may lead to co-authorships that will
considerably enhance job prospects, but students have to make a substantial intellectual
contribution to warrant co-authorship. Research assistants should inquire about authorship early
in a project. Conducting research with faculty begun during a research assistantship is expected
to continue after the assistantship in order to earn co-authorship, and will not count against
current assistantship hours of the student when he/she is assigned to a new faculty member.
However, the continuation of the project is at the discretion of both the faculty and the
student. Please note the working on projects during assistantship hours will not
automatically qualify the student for co-authorship on projects.

If you are formally assigned to faculty members who are asking less than twenty hours per week of
research time, seek out another faculty member to fill in the rest of the time. Do not try to slide by;
it will hurt you on the job market if you cannot demonstrate the research skills learned from
completion of high-quality research papers, including the editorial review process of top tier
journals.

Be proactive in your research work. A faculty member’s job is “entrepreneurial.” You should
develop self-starting work habits now. Don’t quit if a problem arises. Seek out creative solutions.
Ask others for advice. Call experts in other departments or universities. Set weekly meetings with
your faculty member to review your work and ask questions.

Do not commit to more projects than you can reliably handle. One completed, high-quality project
is better than unreliable behavior and a poor effort on several projects.

When you make an appointment with a professor, please remember professors are very busy. Be
on time. Be efficient and use their time effectively. If the professor is late, please wait a reasonable
time and email/text if you need to reschedule. If you cannot make the meeting, please email or call
as soon as possible. Do not cancel meetings unless you have a very good reason.

Your research assistantship is an integral part of our program. You are working as a research
assistantship for the education more than the money. The experience is not just a job. It is the
foundation of your career because it is a mentor/apprenticeship relationship that imparts skills and
attitudes that will affect your ability to publish and teach.
10. Examinations

Comprehensive Exams
Prior to admission to Candidacy, the student must pass a comprehensive exam in Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations.

The SEO Comprehensive Exam, a field exam, will be given after the student has successfully completed all of the core course work in the Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations discipline area. This exam normally lasts for two days (approximately 8 hours per day) and covers important dimensions of theory, thought, and research in the area of Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations. Students may develop a list of references of the materials covered in the core courses and other relevant references. Other than this list of references, the exam is closed book.

This examination allows the student to demonstrate: 1) familiarity with the literature, 2) ability to communicate original evaluations and ideas, 3) ability to formulate and evaluate research, 4) ability to integrate information across subject areas, and 5) knowledge of current publications in the field. Exam material will not be limited to students’ course work, but will cover current literature, talks by distinguished scholars and brown bag seminars, and other experiences that are a part of the student’s Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations doctoral program. Students will be expected to have mastered all fundamental principles relevant to the field.

The SEO Ph.D. Program Director is responsible for overseeing the design, administration, and evaluation of the comprehensive exams. The Ph.D. Program Director schedules and administers the exams. The exam will be given in late May or early June, before the BCERC. All research-active Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations faculty have the option to participate in developing potential exam questions and grading the examination. Students typically will be informed of the outcome of the exams within four to six weeks of the date the exam is given. Grades are determined by consensus of the faculty and consist of pass with distinction, pass, pass with qualifications, or fail. A pass with qualifications rating may be used by the faculty to require further work from students exhibiting marginal exam performance on all or part of the exam. Such work is determined by the faculty and may include additional study for a second administration of a similar exam, completion of additional courses, independent study, or preparation for and delivery of designated written or oral assignments.

11. Standards, Problems, and Appeals

Evaluation Procedure and Frequency
Each Ph.D. student’s educational progress will be monitored continuously throughout his/her program by faculty members who have direct contact with the student either through courses or teaching/research assistantships. In addition, each student will receive an annual, formal review to assess his/her performance to date. First and second year students will also have an informal review about their progress in coursework, assistantship, and submissions to academic conferences at the end of the fall semester. This process will include the Department Head, the SEO Ph.D. Program Director, and all other faculty involved in the doctoral program. It will proceed in four steps.
First, each student will be asked to complete a self-evaluation survey designed to measure his/her educational accomplishments and activities and to provide the faculty with a more complete picture of his/her progress. This may include more than a course progress report and up-to-date CV.

Second, the faculty will evaluate each student’s progress, either via electronic means (e.g., email, electronic surveys) or in-person meetings. The faculty will evaluate each student based on their interaction with the student, as a graduate research assistant, co-author, student in their seminar, or other relevant program activity.

Third, the Ph.D. Program Director will consider each student’s progress based upon a) the evaluations of SEO faculty with whom the student has worked on their research assistantship, b) the student’s academic performance throughout the academic year, and c) the student’s self-evaluation. The result of this formal evaluation is an assessment of the student’s progress in the program and specific recommendations with respect to future management of the student’s program. If necessary, the faculty will meet to develop the formal evaluation.

Finally, these recommendations will be conveyed to all students in writing before the beginning of each academic year (by July 31st). The additional first and second year student informal reviews will typically be conducted no later than January 1st of each year.

**Procedure for Removal of Incomplete**
All incompletes should be removed by three weeks after the end of the course. Any coursework remaining in a state of incomplete will be noted in the annual evaluation. For an incomplete course, after the course is finished, SEO Ph.D. students and faculty members should put in writing what is required to complete the course. This communication should be relayed to the SEO Ph.D. Program Director. Any coursework remaining in an “incomplete” status beyond one year becomes an F.

**Adequate Progress toward Degree**
Adequate progress toward an SEO Ph.D. degree is gauged by meeting the benchmarks for continued assistantship funding. After the first year, a summer research project is undertaken. The summer research project and all SEO coursework must be completed before a student can sit for comprehensive exams. After the second year (in May or early June), comprehensive exams are taken. During the third year the dissertation advisor is selected, the dissertation committee is selected, and substantial progress is made on the dissertation proposal. Before December of the fourth year, the dissertation proposal is defended. During the fourth or fifth year, the dissertation is defended and the student is credentialed. A fifth year should be expected. Appendix A summarizes the key milestones for adequate progress.

**Terms of Probation**
In keeping with the Ph.D. requirements from the HCB, a graduate student in the HCB whose grade point average falls below 3.0 will be placed on probation for one semester. A student on probation will be dropped from the program unless his/her cumulative graduate grade point average is 3.0 or higher at the end of the probationary period. The probationary period is defined as the next semester’s course work as established by the degree program.
**Termination from Program**

It is fully expected that a student who enters the program will complete the degree requirements. The faculty is committed to achieving that goal with every student. However, it may become apparent that sufficient progress is not being made despite faculty and student efforts. In this case, a termination decision may have to be considered.

A student’s termination from the program will be based upon both objective and subjective criteria. Concerning the objective criteria and consistent with the requirements of the HCB, a Ph.D. student whose overall GPA falls below a 3.0 shall be placed on probation. A student on probation shall be dropped from the program unless his/her GPA is 3.0 or higher at the end of the probationary period (defined as the next semester’s course work). However, maintaining an overall 3.0 GPA does not guarantee that the student will be allowed to continue in the doctoral program. Departmental expectations are that a 3.5 GPA should be maintained in the student’s Strategy, Entrepreneurship, and Organizations courses, and failure to achieve this grade point may cause the student to be placed on departmental probation. We expect A’s in the core seminars; B’s are signal that there is a problem, and C’s may affect funding. As well, we expect quality work for research assistantships, which also may be factored into termination from the SEO program. In addition, failure to pass the comprehensive exams twice will lead to automatic dismissal from the program.

In case of continued unsatisfactory performance, the student will be put on probation for a semester and will lose funding for up to a semester. Funding can be withdrawn at any time of the semester once the student is put on probation. If performance concerns are fully addressed to the satisfaction of the SEO Ph.D. Program Director and the Department Head, the student will regain funding after the probationary period, which can last up to one semester. Continued unsatisfactory performance on part of the student beyond the probationary period will lead to the termination from the program. The termination will require more than 50% agreement of the members of the Ph.D. Program Committee.

In addition, please note that the *Graduate Catalog* states that a student’s continuation in the program is determined by the consideration of subjective factors as well. Consequently, the faculty will also undertake a subjective appraisal of the student’s progress and potential, including such factors as creativity, independent thinking, scholastic leadership, and the ability to conceptualize and carry out research.

Other circumstances which may cause termination from the program may include failure to make satisfactory progress toward admission to candidacy based upon successful completion of coursework, the annual review process, failure to successfully complete necessary comprehensive exam or failure to secure a dissertation committee that meets UTK Graduate School qualifications.

**Academic Honesty**

Any knowing breach of standards of academic honesty is grounds for termination from the program.

**Human Subjects**

Students are expected to complete all training necessary to conduct human subjects research at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) maintains a number of
online training courses to get certified (http://irb.utk.edu/training/). Failure to complete this training or conducting research without IRB approval constitutes an ethical and academic honesty violation that may lead to removal from the program. Even if ultimately “exempt” from detailed IRB evaluation, each must be reviewed by the IRB prior to the initiation of any data collection.

**Appeals Process**
The student handbook, *HillTopics*, available on the university website, and published and distributed annually, contains statements of UTK standards of conduct and of all disciplinary regulations and procedures. Normally, grievances should be handled at the departmental level through the student’s faculty mentor, the Ph.D. Program Director, and the Department Head. Further appeal may be made to the dean of the Graduate School, the Graduate Council, and the Chancellor. The by-laws of the University provide that an individual of the University who feels that he or she may have a grievance against the University shall have the right to appeal through the appropriate Chancellor or Vice President to the President of the University. A copy of the appeals procedure is available in the Office of Graduate Admissions and Records.

**12. Exceptions to this Handbook**

All requests for exceptions to the requirements outlined in this handbook must be presented in writing to the Ph.D. Program Director. Changes to this handbook also may be suggested by writing to the Ph.D. Program Director.
13. Appendix

Appendix A ...................................... SEO Student Progression Planning Form

Appendix B ....................................... Pertinent Graduate Student Web Pages

Appendix C ...................................... UT Strategy / O&S / SEO Ph.D. Recipients

Graduate School Forms may be found at: http://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/
Appendix A: SEO Student Progression

A progression form will be provided to each student each semester to track their progress in the program. The basic elements of this form are as follows.

**SEO Seminars (6 courses, 18 credit hours)**
MGT 617 - Seminar in Macro Organizational Behavior
MGT 618 - Overview of Entrepreneurship Research
MGT 619 - Micro Foundations of Entrepreneurship
MGT 620 - Seminar in Organization Theory
MGT 623 - Overview of Strategic Management

**Other Required Courses:**
BUAD 583 - Teaching Preparation Seminar (1 credit hour)
MGT 610: Effective Academic Writing (3 credit hours)
MGT 6XX: Theory Writing (3 credit hours)

**Methods and Statistics (5 courses, 15 credit hours)**
MARK 611 - Research Foundations
STAT 537 – Statistics for Research I
STAT 538 – Statistics for Research II
MGT 6XX – Qualitative Data Analysis
AREC 524 – Econometrics Methods OR
SOCI 631 – Advanced Quantitative Methods

**Theory and Methods Supporting Courses (4 courses, 12 credit hours)**
These courses should be pre-approved by the Ph.D. Program Director.

**Summer Research Project** (to be presented at a major academic conference during the 2nd year)

**Comprehensive Exams** (to be taken by June 5 of the 2nd year)

**Dissertation Proposal Defense** (to be completed before December of the 4th year)

**Dissertation Defense** (to be completed by April of the 5th year).
Appendix B: Pertinent Graduate Student Web Pages

- Center for Global Engagement, [https://cge.utk.edu/](https://cge.utk.edu/)
- Haslam College of Business, [https://haslam.utk.edu/](https://haslam.utk.edu/)
- Counseling Center, [http://counselingcenter.utk.edu/](http://counselingcenter.utk.edu/)
- Department, [https://haslam.utk.edu/management](https://haslam.utk.edu/management)
- Funding, Fellowships, Assistantships for Graduate Students, [http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/](http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/)
- Graduate and International Admissions, [http://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/](http://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/)
- Graduate Catalog, [http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog](http://tiny.utk.edu/grad-catalog)
- Graduate School, [http://gradschool.utk.edu/](http://gradschool.utk.edu/)
- Graduate Student Appeals Procedure, [student-appeals-procedures.pdf - Google Drive](http://student-appeals-procedures.pdf)
- Graduate Student Senate, [http://gss.utk.edu/](http://gss.utk.edu/)
- Housing, [http://housing.utk.edu/](http://housing.utk.edu/)
- International House, [https://ihouse.utk.edu/](https://ihouse.utk.edu/)
- ITA Testing Program, [http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/](http://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/)
- Library Website for Graduate Students, [http://libguides.utk.edu/graduate?_ga=2.17599609.1520599880.1500900043-827924673.1467377461](http://libguides.utk.edu/graduate?_ga=2.17599609.1520599880.1500900043-827924673.1467377461)
- Office of Equity and Diversity, [http://oed.utk.edu/](http://oed.utk.edu/)
- Office of Information Technology, [http://oit.utk.edu/](http://oit.utk.edu/)
- Office of Multicultural Student Life, [Home - Multicultural Student Life (utk.edu)](http://libguides.utk.edu/graduate?_ga=2.17599609.1520599880.1500900043-827924673.1467377461)
- Research Integrity and Assurance, [http://research.utk.edu/compliance/](http://research.utk.edu/compliance/)
- Student Conduct and Community Standards, [http://studentconduct.utk.edu/](http://studentconduct.utk.edu/)
Appendix C:
UT Strategy, O&S, and SEO Ph.D. Recipients

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Notes:
The program changed from a D.B.A. to Ph.D. effective Fall 1985.
The Strategy Ph.D. program did not admit new students after 1998.
The Organizations and Strategy (O&$S$) Ph.D. Program was launched in Fall 2008.
The O&S Ph.D. Program was renamed Strategy, Entrepreneurship, & Organizations (SEO) in Fall 2017.