

Appendix F

Nutrition MS Plan B Option Guidance

Credit requirements

The Plan B Nutrition Master's degree has a minimum of 30 credits, comprised of 14 graduate level course credits in Nutrition, 6 credits in a minor or supporting field outside the major, and a combination of 10 additional credits of graduate-level coursework and/or independent study credits (NUTR 8695) that form the basis of a Plan B project. The Plan B project should involve a combined total of approximately 135 hours (the equivalent of a minimum of 3 independent study credits) of work. Additional coursework can include up to 7 additional credits. The independent study form and instructions (NUTR 8695) can be found on our website.

<http://fscn.cfans.umn.edu/graduate-programs/student-forms>

Purpose of the Plan B project

The purpose of the Plan B project is to advance students' knowledge of a specific research topic/issue/problem, become familiar with the tools of research or scholarship in Nutrition, complete a project under the direction of his/her adviser, and present the results of the project effectively by writing a Plan B paper.

Plan B project scope

A Plan B project is similar to the Plan A thesis but involves less research. The student's adviser specifies both the nature and extent of the coursework and project work. Plan B projects can be based on original research, secondary data analysis, qualitative data analysis (e.g., focus group/individual interviews), and systematic or comprehensive, narrative literature reviews. If the project is a literature review, the topic should be broad enough to generate a sizable literature base from which to select relevant research.

Projects can be exploratory studies intended to 1) provide proof of concept, preliminary or feasibility data, 2) test methods or data collection instruments, or 3) generate hypotheses that will be tested in future studies. Plan B projects should be based on validated scientific methods and be systematic and rigorous in their design. Plan B projects should not be based on opinion pieces, marketing literature, minor case studies, or literature reviews based on a limited number of original research articles or other review articles.

The final oral examination committee should be consulted early in the student's degree period to provide direction and approve the scope of the project. The committee is given the Plan B paper to review two weeks prior to the final defense. Previous Plan B papers are available for review in the FScN Library, room 220. See Sue Winkelman in the reception office, room 225A, to check out items.

Plan B paper

The Plan B paper may have similar content categories as a thesis. Suggested sections of the paper include 1) a table of contents, 2) abstract/introduction, 3) comprehensive background literature review to fully justify the need for the research, 4) materials and methods, 5) results, 6)

discussion including strengths and limitations, 7) conclusions and if appropriate applications/implications for future research and/or practice, and 8) references. If the Plan B paper is based on a published paper or a paper submitted for publication or intended to be submitted, it may include 1) a table of contents, 2) an introduction chapter, 3) a background/literature review chapter, 4) the published or submitted paper as its own chapter, 5) a conclusion chapter, and 6) references. If the Plan B paper is based on a published, submitted for publication or intended to be submitted systematic review, it may include 1) a table of contents, 2) an introduction chapter, 3) the published or submitted systematic review paper as its own chapter, 3) a conclusion chapter, and 4) references. Suggested formatting guidelines include double spacing, 1 inch margins, and a 12 point font. References can be formatted according to APA or AMA guidelines using reference manager software.

Completion of the Plan B project

The Department requires a copy of the Plan B paper. Advisers will not sign the Final Examination Report form after the final oral defense for Plan B MS students until they receive the final, revised copy of the student's Plan B paper. The adviser should ask other committee members to sign the Report form, but retain the form until he or she receives the final, revised copy of the Plan B paper. The student can submit an electronic or hard copy to his or her adviser. A hard copy (spiral-bound) of the Plan B paper should be forwarded to the Program Coordinator (Nancy Toedt) to be stored in the Department. The Graduate School does not require a copy of the Plan B paper, but it can be archived in the Digital Conservancy if the student requests.