Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration
College of Education and Human Services
Western Illinois University
Macomb, IL  61455

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

This guide is designed to assist the Master’s Degree candidate in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration.

This guide outlines departmental requirements for the M.S. degree in RPTA and identifies student responsibilities for curriculum planning and degree completion.
Description of the Program

The Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration in the College of Education and Human Services, Western Illinois University, offers progressive course work leading to the Master of Science degree. Areas of advanced study include recreation administration and programming, park planning and management, outdoor and adventure education, tourism/resort planning and programming, therapeutic recreation/recreation therapy, youth services planning non-profit organization and programming. The purpose of the graduate program is to advance academic and professional competencies in critical and integrative thinking, problem solving, and social responsibility in the context of recreation, park and/or tourism through an examination of the literature, research, related coursework, and/or assistantship experiences.

This is addressed through the following areas:

A. To enlarge the student’s concepts of the role and significance that leisure plays in promoting the quality of life for all Americans.
B. To help each student develop an understanding and appreciation of the purpose and function of research as it relates to the planning, programming, and administration of leisure services.
C. To encourage each student to develop higher level academic and practical skills to be able to plan, program, and manage leisure services more efficiently and effectively.
D. To assist students in their quest to become more proficient and effective professionals in their career interest.

Program of Study

The graduate degree program in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration is designed to provide an advanced, generalist degree in the administration and delivery of services in recreation, park, tourism and human service agencies. The program of study centers upon enabling each student to gain knowledge and competency in the effective management and administration of recreation, park and human services.
Specialized elective course work can be selected to help each student accomplish his or her career goals.

A program of study consisting of a minimum of 34 semester hours including a minimum six (6) semester hour culmination option of either a thesis or professional internship. The 16 semester hour core requirements include the following courses or their equivalency as determined by the student’s advisory committee:

**CORE COURSES** (16 sh)

- RPTA 511: Measurement and Statistical Analysis (3)
- RPTA 515: Philosophy of Leisure (3)
- RPTA 522: Seminar in the Administration of Leisure Services (3)
- RPTA 526: Fiscal Management in Leisure Services (3)
- RPTA 599: Research Methods in Leisure Services (3)
- RPTA 600: Seminar in Leisure Services (1)

**CULMINATION OPTION** (6 sh)

- RPTA 601: Thesis (6)
- OR
  - RPTA 603: Professional Internship (6)

**DIRECTED ELECTIVES** (12 sh)

Electives in an interest area (12)

Students entering the program with deficiencies in professional background or not holding a degree in parks and recreation or a closely related field, may be required to successfully complete course work to include, but not limited to, RPTA 111: Introduction to Leisure Services and/or RPTA 230: Leadership in Leisure Services. Such course work should be selected with advisement from the Graduate Coordinator and taken during the first semester. Undergraduate, lower-division course work cannot be applied toward the graduate degree plan of study.
# Required Competencies

The following competencies are expected of all students for successful completion of the Master’s degree in Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration. In each case the alternatives to gain and demonstrate the competency are also indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Demonstration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Communication skills:</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Scholarly dialogue &amp; discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expresses oneself clearly</td>
<td>RPTA 515</td>
<td>Research papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>and correctly in written</td>
<td>RPTA 526</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>language and informal</td>
<td>RPTA 599</td>
<td>Proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>conversations.</td>
<td>RPTA 600</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Interpersonal skills:</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Course completion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successfully relates to</td>
<td>Requirements</td>
<td>Professional networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>anticipated internal and</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conference involvement</td>
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<td>external publics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Knowledge of</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Course completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary leisure</td>
<td>RPTA 515</td>
<td>Professional networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends and problems.</td>
<td>RPTA 522</td>
<td>Conference involvement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>RPTA 600</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Philosophy/Professional</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Course completion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics - demonstrates</td>
<td>RPTA 515</td>
<td>Professional networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>A developed professional</td>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement in professional organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophy and the ability</td>
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<td>to function as an advocate</td>
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<td>of the profession.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Research skills:</td>
<td>RPTA 515</td>
<td>Course work</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Practical research:</td>
<td>RPTA 511</td>
<td>Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reads and understands</td>
<td>RPTA 599</td>
<td>Readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contemporary studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Competency in the</td>
<td>RPTA 599</td>
<td>Course work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research process.</td>
<td>RPTA 515</td>
<td>Thesis proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Quantitative assessment</td>
<td>RPTA 511</td>
<td>Course work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Problem solving techniques:</td>
<td>RPTA 526</td>
<td>Course work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applies practical approaches</td>
<td>RPTA 522</td>
<td>Professional networking</td>
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<td>to realistic job related</td>
<td>RPTA 515</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>problems and concerns.</td>
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</table>
7. **Knowledge of resources** which might include:
   - RPTA 526 Course work
   - RPTA 522 Professional networking
   - RPTA 600 Conference involvement
   - Projects
   - Research papers

   - Reference materials,
   - Government documents,
   - Research studies,
   - Consultants, architects and planners.

8. **Management skills:**
   - Experience Course completion
   - RPTA 522 Service involvements
   - RPTA 526 Conference involvement
   - RPTA 530 Professional networking
   - RPTA 560

   - Applies sound theories in legal awareness,
   - Fiscal management,
   - Program administration,
   - Program evaluation and area and facility management.

9. **Profession expertise:**
   - Certificates As identified by student and advisory committee
   - Projects
   - Manuals
   - Internship

   - Demonstrate competencies deemed necessary for the pursuit of given career options.

**Related Experiences**

Graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of the numerous opportunities present in the department, community and professional associations that facilitate success in a leisure service agency. Students may volunteer for a variety of involvements in the department, at Horn Field Campus and elsewhere. Such involvement includes membership in the Graduate Recreation Society (GRS) and support of the Professional Development Conference and other activities sponsored by the GRS, leadership or support roles in departmental special events, conferences or workshops, such as the Summer Camp Job Fair.

Students are strongly encouraged to become involved in scholarly and professional networks by attending, participating or presenting sessions at academic and professional conferences, workshops and conventions. Examples of state, regional and national organizations offering such opportunities include, but are not limited to: the National Recreation and Park Association, National Therapeutic Recreation Society, American Therapeutic Recreation Association, Association of Interpretive Naturalists, the Association for Experiential Education, the Wilderness Education Association, the Resort and Commercial Recreation Association, The Coalition of Education in the Outdoors, American Humanics, etc.
Graduate Advisory Committee

The Graduate Coordinator provides initial advisement for all incoming students. Each student is responsible for forming his or her Graduate Advisory Committee. This committee consists of three (3) members of the Graduate Faculty of which one, from the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration, serves as Committee Chair. The student may select an adjunct committee member from another department, another university, or a practitioner from the student’s professional area of study. The Graduate Advisory Committee serves to (1) provide advice and guidance regarding course work and related concerns, (2) supervise the student’s development of the degree plan, and (3) act as primary supervisor of the student’s culminating experience. For the student pursuing the thesis option, the Chair of the Committee shall normally serve as the chair of the thesis committee. For the student pursuing the internship option, any member of the Graduate Advisory Committee may serve as the supervisor of the internship. The Graduate Advisory Committee form (available in the RPTA Office) must be completed upon selection of committee members.

Upon selection of the chair and committee members, and the completion of the advisory committee form, the student will schedule formal meetings with his or her committee for advisement and assistance determining the appropriate course work and culminating experience. Additional meetings may be scheduled each semester, or as often as needed, to insure that the student receives timely and appropriate advice and guidance regarding the degree plan. Initiating and scheduling the meetings is the student’s responsibility.

Graduate Degree Plan

After at least nine (9) semester hours of graduate work have been successfully completed and before the completion of 15 semester hours of graduate course work, the student must apply for candidacy for the graduate degree by completing the Graduate Degree Plan. This Plan (available at www.wiu.edu/grad -- under current students/forms) will be completed under the supervision of the Graduate Advisory Committee. Upon formal completion, the Graduate Coordinator will review, sign and return it to the Committee for their signatures. A completed and signed Plan will then be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies.

The Degree Plan will include the required 16 semester hours of core course work and any courses required for remedial work or special certification as defined and approved by the student’s Graduate Advisory Committee.

Any modification of the Plan, after it has been approved by the Graduate Advisory Committee and the Graduate Coordinator and filed with the Office of Graduate Studies, requires formal petitioning that includes the consent and approval of the Graduate Advisory Committee. Only upon satisfactory completion of all academic course work and approved culminating
experience, as they appear on the approved Graduate Degree Plan, will the degree, Master of Science in Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration, be awarded.

- The degree plan must be typed neatly and include all data requested.
- Do not fill in the date submitted.
- Courses should be listed sequentially by course number, not by semester taken.
- Electives within the department should be inserted in the degree plan in order by course number.

**Graduate Credit Transfer**

A student, who believes that previous graduate course work may be equivalent to and qualify for a core course, should discuss this with his or her Graduate Advisory Committee. A maximum of nine (9) semester hours of approved graduate credit from an accredited institution may be transferred. Students may petition the University’s Graduate Council, with the approval of the Graduate Advisory Committee, for additional hours to be accepted from other accredited institutions. All petitions must include official transcripts recording the transfer courses and, when possible, a course syllabus must be reviewed by the Graduate Advisory Committee. No course credit may be transferred unless a grade “B” was received for that course.

All requests and decisions pertaining to credit transfer must first be discussed with the Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate Advisory Committee members. Upon its approval the request is to be signed by the Graduate Coordinator and then forwarded to the School of Graduate Studies.

**Independent Study/Research**

When special needs exist for which regular course work is unavailable, the independent study course, RPTA 490(G): Independent Study (1-3, repeatable to 8) can be considered; RPTA 590: Research in Leisure Services (1-3, repeatable) may be used for elective study related to the thesis or special project. Independent study projects may be requested by the student or suggested by a member of the graduate faculty. Students interested in a special focus should contact the Chair of his or her Graduate Advisory Committee or the Graduate Coordinator early in the semester. Such independent study course proposals must be approved and reflected on the Graduate Degree Plan.
GRADUATE FACULTY
The following Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration faculty are members of the Graduate Faculty and are eligible to chair advise students and chair thesis committees:

Dr. Dale Adkins, Re.D., Indiana University, Professor and Department Chair
Office: Currens Hall 400A, 309/298-1584, email: kd-adkins1@wiu.edu

Dr. Nick DiGrino, Ph.D., Texas A & M, Professor and Dean of the College of Education and Human Services
Office: Horrabin Hall 117, 309/298-1690, email: BN-DiGrino@wiu.edu

Dr. John Hemingway, Ph.D., University of Iowa, Associate Professor
Office: Currens Hall 404D, 309/298-1715, email: j-hemingway@wiu.edu

Dr. Michael McGowan, Re.D., Indiana University, Professor
Office: Currens Hall 411A, 309/298-1579, email: ML-McGowan@wiu.edu

Dr. Donald McLean, Ph.D., University of Waterloo, Professor
Office: WIU QC 286A, 309/762-9481, email: DJ-Mclean@wiu.edu

Dr. Katharine Pawelko, Ph.D., University of Maryland, Professor
Office: Currens Hall 404A, 309/298-1720, email: KA-Pawelko@wiu.edu

Dr. Daniel Yoder, Ph.D., University of Illinois, Professor & Graduate Coordinator
Office: Currens Hall 401A, 309/298-1541, email: DG-Yoder@wiu.edu

Dr. Dean Zoerink, Ph.D., University of Minnesota, Professor
Office: Currens Hall 413, 309/298-2698, email: DA-Zoerink@wiu.edu

Associate Graduate Faculty (cannot chair a committee)

Dr. Marcia Carter, Re.D., Indiana University, Associate Professor
Office: WIU QC 220B, 309/762-9481, email: MJ-Carter@wiu.edu

Dr. Minsun Doh, Ph. D., Texas A & M University, Assistant Professor
Office: Currens Hall 404C, 309/298-3247, email: m-doh@wiu.edu

Dr. Michael Lukkarinen, Ph.D., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Assistant Professor
Office: Currens Hall 404B, 309/298-1517, email: md-lukkarinen@wiu.edu

Dr. Rob Porter, Ph.D., University of Georgia, Assistant Professor
Office: Currens Hall 403C, 309/298-2990, email: r-porter@wiu.edu

Dr. Paul Schlag, Ph. D., University of Georgia, Assistant Professor
Office: Currens Hall 404E, 309/298-1726, email: p-schlag@wiu.edu