

Integrative Conservation (ICON)

PhD Program Handbook

Revised July 2025



Integrative Conservation Ph.D. Program
Center for Integrative Conservation Research
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

INTEGRATIVE CONSERVATION (ICON) PROGRAM HANDBOOK

FALL 2025

PROGRAM INFORMATION

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The Center for Integrative Conservation Research is located in Building 2130 ('Printing Building') on the University of Georgia's east campus in Athens, Georgia. The nearest bus stop to our office is the **Tucker Hall stop**; [view live bus route tracking here](#). **Parking** is available in the nearby Performing Arts Center Deck; visitors may use the kiosks in the deck to pre-pay for hourly parking. For more information, please visit [UGA Parking](#).

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Welcome | 4 |
| Center for Integrative Conservation Research | 4 |
| ICON orientation | 4 |
| Student requirements | 4-5 |
| Committee formation and ICON Representative | 7 |
| Advisor and ICON rep expectations | 7 |
| The ICON program of study | 8 |
| Year 1 | 8 |
| Year 2 | 8 |
| Year 3 | 9 |
| Years 4 & 5 | 9 |
| Assistantships and funding | 9 |
| Yearly assessment | 9 |
| Graduate School Forms | 10 |
| Website | 10 |
| Integrative mechanisms | 10 |
| ICSO Student organization | 10 |
| Life in Athens | 10 |
| Information for International Students | 11 |
| Travel and reimbursement policies | 11 |
| Appendix: | |
| A. ICON Degree Checklist | 12 |
| B. ICON Suggested Course Electives | 13 |
| C. ICON Representative Policy | 15 |
| D. ICON PhD Program Guidance to Advisors and Committees | 17 |
| E. ICON Internship Policy | 20 |
| F. ICON Research Assistantship Policy | 21 |
| G. ICON Core Research Principles and Criteria | 22 |
| H. Guidance for developing ICON dissertations that align with the Core Research Principles and Criteria | 25 |
| I. ICON Best Practices | 28 |
| J. Processes and Resources for Student Grievances | 30 |
| K. Dismissal from Graduate Status in the ICON PhD Program | 31 |
| L. USG OneSource Quickstart Guide | 33 |

I. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Integrative Conservation PhD Program at the University of Georgia

As global environmental change proceeds at an unprecedented pace, the practice of conservation is adapting to a complex set of new challenges. Responding effectively to these challenges will require the next generation of practitioners and scholars to develop expertise in specific fields and have the conceptual tools to work across disciplines. The University of Georgia's Integrative Conservation (ICON) Ph.D. program is designed to meet that need by ensuring that students gain disciplinary depth while learning to collaborate across disciplines and fields of practice to seek integrative solutions to complex conservation challenges.

Students in this program choose one of five degree objectives - *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Anthropology*; *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Ecology*; *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Forestry and Natural Resources*; *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Geography*; or *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Marine Sciences* - each will ensure that students receive rigorous theoretical and methodological training in a traditional discipline, while also working integratively at the intersections of multiple disciplines.

The Center for Integrative Conservation Research

The Center for Integrative Conservation Research (CICR) coordinates the ICON program. Students are encouraged to spend time in the Center and to use it as a space for meetings and discussions. There is limited desk space available for ICON students. Please email iconphd@uga.edu if you are interested in having desk space at CICR.

Program Orientation

This annual fall semester event gives new students the opportunity to learn about the program and to meet other students and faculty members. This meeting is required for our new, first-year students and strongly encouraged for first-year students' advisors. All continuing students and affiliated faculty are also encouraged to attend. At this meeting, program staff provide an overview of the ICON program, discuss the core research principles, explain student requirements regarding the ICON internship and committee formation, etc. Additionally, the ICON program hosts a low ropes course or similar team-building event each year. All students are encouraged to make every effort to attend both events.

Student Requirements

Students will adhere to the policies and procedures of their home departments/colleges, as well as those of the ICON program (see Appendix A, ICON Degree Checklist). This handbook covers information pertaining to the ICON program. It does not, however, cover departmental requirements or all of the regulations governing graduate education at UGA. Graduate School regulations, which govern all graduate study at UGA, are contained in the UGA Graduate School Policy Library. Links to key departmental and UGA information are provided below:

Anthropology: <https://anthropology.uga.edu/graduate-program>
Forestry and Natural Resources: <https://www.warnell.uga.edu/graduate>
Ecology: <https://www.ecology.uga.edu/degree/phd-ecology/>
Geography: <http://geography.uga.edu/enrolled-students>
Marine Sciences: <https://marsci.uga.edu/marine-sciences-graduate-handbook>
UGA Bulletin: <http://bulletin.uga.edu/>
UGA Registration information: <https://reg.uga.edu/enrollment-and-registration/registration/>
Graduate School policies: <https://grad.uga.edu/graduate-policies/>
Graduate School list of key dates and deadlines: <https://grad.uga.edu/current-students/important-dates-deadlines/>

Please note: students should route all Graduate School forms through their home unit, and not through ICON.

Global expectations of all students:

- Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior while enrolled in the graduate program and to act in a manner that demonstrates integrity and respect for others and the campus environment.
- Adherence to university policies governing research and academic conduct, non-discrimination and anti-harassment, and workplace violence:
 - Academic Honesty, <https://honesty.uga.edu/academic-honesty-policy/>
 - Non-Discrimination & Anti-Harassment Policy, <https://eoo.uga.edu/laws-policies-and-regulations/civil-rights-and-ndah/non-discrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy/>
 - Workplace Violence Policy, <https://safeandsecure.uga.edu/workplace-violence/>
 - Student Code of Conduct, <https://conduct.uga.edu/code-of-conduct/>
- Meet the academic expectations of the student's home department
- Students' rights and responsibilities, <https://conduct.uga.edu/rights-and-responsibilities/>

II. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Enrollment Requirements and Time Limits

Minimum Enrollment

All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must register for a minimum of 3 hours of credit during any semester in which they use University facilities and/or faculty/staff time. This includes semesters in which they are completing comprehensive examinations and defending their thesis or dissertation.

Continuous Enrollment Policy

All enrolled graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) credits in at least two semesters per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated. Doctoral students must maintain enrollment during fall and spring semesters (breaking only for summer semesters) until the residency requirement has been met.

All students must be enrolled for at least three graduate credits in the semester in which degree requirements are completed.

Residence Credit Requirement

The residency requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree is interpreted as 30 hours of consecutive graduate coursework that is included in the approved program of study.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence provides a mechanism for students experiencing unusual circumstances to be exempt temporarily from the continuous enrollment policy. A leave of absence requires approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Graduate School. A leave of absence will be granted only for good cause, such as serious medical and health-related issues, major financial and employment issues, pregnancy, childbirth, child care, elder care, and other significant family issues, and other major personal circumstances that interfere with the ability to undertake graduate study. An approved leave of absence does not stop the clock unless the leave is granted for pregnancy, childbirth, or adoption: time on leave counts toward any University, Graduate School, or program time limits pertaining to the degree being sought.

Time Limits

Doctoral students must complete all coursework on their approved program of study and be admitted to candidacy within six years of matriculation.

For all degrees, the six-year limit begins with the semester the student matriculated into the program and ends with the last semester before the beginning of the sixth year.

For doctoral students, the time limit to complete the dissertation and qualify for graduation is five years following admission to candidacy. After this time, the student's candidacy will be considered expired, and the student must retake the comprehensive exams and be re-admitted to candidacy in order to defend the dissertation and qualify for graduation. If a doctoral student's candidacy expires after the first week of classes in the final semester of the fifth year, the student is granted the remainder of the semester to complete degree requirements without special permission of the dean of the Graduate School.

Extension of Time

A special request for an extension of time on the six-year expiration of coursework or the five-year expiration of candidacy may be made to the dean of the Graduate School. This request must include specific reasons that the student did not complete the requirements in the time allotted by Graduate School policy. A petition of this type must include 1) a specific timeline for the completion of requirements, 2) an approved advisory committee form, if required for the degree, 3) an approved program of study and a letter of support from both the program Director of Graduate Studies and the major professor.

Advisory Committee Formation and the ICON Representative

It is very important that new students become acquainted with the ICON faculty, particularly in their area of interest, as soon as possible. All faculty are willing to talk with new students about their career interests and possible research topics. During the first semester, graduate students should meet with faculty members beyond those they have for courses, so that they can select an Advisory Committee. It is our expectation that students identify a graduate faculty member willing to serve as their major professor (advisor) prior to their first fall semester of study. Students who do not have a major professor may be dismissed from the program. No faculty member is required to serve as the major professor for any student.

ICON committees should include five faculty members, *including two faculty members from outside the student's home department and disciplinary perspective*. Students with co-advisors should count each advisor individually (i.e., students with co-advisors still only need a total of five members on their committee). The advisory committee, along with the major professor, shares responsibilities to monitor graduate student progress and guide the student toward the timely completion of their degree program. The advisory committee is charged with framing and approving programs of study, advising students on required research skills, directing and approving the comprehensive examinations, guiding the design of thesis/dissertation research projects, reading and approving the final thesis/dissertation document, and approving the final oral examination (defense).

Though we expect many of the advisory committee members to be affiliated with ICON, the student must designate one member as the "ICON Representative." Students should plan to select their ICON Representative as soon as possible after confirming their advisor. The ICON Representative should do more than simply review documents after they are completed; instead, they should actively work with the student and advisor in a way they all see fit to achieve the integrative component of the research. ICON Representatives should play a role in coursework selection, committee constitution, pre-proposal development, proposal writing, comprehensive exams, and dissertation writing. A student's advisor *cannot* serve as their ICON Representative. Please refer to Appendix B: **ICON Representative Policy** for more details.

Expectations of the Advisor in Relation to the ICON Representative

While the ICON Representative plays a special role on an ICON student's committee, the other committee members, and especially the student's advisor, also ensure the goals of the ICON program are met:

- Advisors should be aware of the key ICON policies and procedures as they relate to student's ability to meet both their disciplinary and ICON requirements.
- Because comprehensive exams are handled differently across units, it is the advisor's responsibility to communicate information about the comprehensive exam process to the student and committee (e.g., define time frame, question formats, etc.). Please note that the ICON program defers to the student's home department in regard to the comprehensive exam process and policy.
- Advisors are welcome to reach out to the ICON Director of Graduate Studies if ever they are unclear on procedures or want extra insight into the goals of the program.

The ICON program of study

Year 1

Students must take one core ICON course, one Ecology seminar, and one bridge seminar. The first of these, ***Integrative Conservation I (ICON 8001)*** – 4 credit hours, offered each fall, provides the conceptual and theoretical foundations for the development of an integrative perspective, critically examining the theory and practice of integrative work. This team-taught course examines impediments to integrative thinking, both between disciplines and between the academic domain and the world of practice. The Ecology seminar, ***Perspectives on Integrative Conservation and Sustainability (ECOL 8400)*** – 1-2 credit hours, offered each fall, hosts a series of lectures by conservation faculty and practitioners. The bridge seminar, ***Field Planning and Preparation (ICON 8110)*** – 1 credit hour, typically offered each spring, provides an opportunity for students to prepare for the ICON 8002 course. Specifically, students will use ICON 8110 to formulate a research question and make logistical decisions for ICON 8002 (which is normally taken in the fall of year 2).

As of fall 2022, the GradFIRST seminar (GRSC7001) will be required of new graduate students in their first year at UGA to support their transition to graduate studies. The seminar is intended to supplement discipline-specific graduate training with focused professional development and networking opportunities with faculty and other graduate students across UGA's campuses. GradFIRST seminars will be 1-credit courses (GRSC 7001) taught by UGA graduate program faculty. More information on the GradFIRST seminar series is available at <http://grad.uga.edu/gradfirst>.

Year 1 will also be dedicated to gaining a strong foundation in the students' home disciplines, and the rest of their first-year programs of study will be determined by their committees, with the goal of ensuring sufficient breadth to complement the disciplinary rigor achieved in the home department. To help guide committees, we have envisioned the ICON curriculum as a "pie" with three slices representing (1) the natural sciences, (2) the social sciences, and (3) law, economics, and policy. Students will be encouraged to take at least two courses from the suggested electives list in the 'slices' outside of their home department or discipline. A suggested course elective list is included in this handbook and on the [ICON website](#).

Year 2

Program requirements for year 2 include ***Integrative Conservation II (ICON 8002)*** – 4 credit hours, typically offered each fall, a team-taught course that challenges students to work in teams with local stakeholders on a real conservation issue. Previous 8002 classes have worked with local stakeholders in Cherokee, NC; Sapelo Island, GA; Franklin, TN; and Tybee Island, GA. The rest of year 2 is dedicated to finishing departmental course requirements and electives. Throughout the second year, students will continue to develop their dissertation proposal.

Because a key goal of this program is to train both practitioners who are comfortable in the academic world and academics who can collaborate with practitioners, students will be required to complete an internship (***Integrative Conservation Internship, ICON 8111/8111E***, 3-8 credit hours, offered fall, spring, and summer) for course credit. When possible, we encourage students to complete their internships before their third program year starts. See Appendix C: **ICON Internship policy** for more details.

Year 3

During year 3, students will solidify their plans for dissertation research and formalize their proposals as they work with their committees to ensure a proper balance between disciplinary depth and integrative learning. Students will be expected to demonstrate the application of an integrative approach, reflexivity, and communication skills in their dissertations.

Years 4 and 5

The length of a student's program will depend on his or her home department/school. During years 4 and (potentially) 5, students will complete dissertation research and write and defend their dissertation.

Exceptions to requirements in this handbook can be sought through consultation with the ICON Program Committee. Contact the ICON Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu) for further details.

Assistantships and Funding

ICON students with ICON research assistantships (ICON RAs) who are based on campus will work with the ICON Director of Graduate Studies, Program Coordinator, and CICR Director on projects and activities to fulfill their funding arrangements. Projects are determined at the beginning of each semester or academic year. The ICON RA is responsible for communicating with his/her advisor about the responsibilities he/she assumes. ICON RAs are expected to participate in regular meetings and provide updates on their assigned projects. In the event an ICON RA is not adequately fulfilling his/her responsibilities, a meeting will be arranged between the ICON Director of Graduate Studies, the student, and the student's advisor to discuss the situation and identify solutions. (See Appendix D: **ICON RA Policy** for more details.)

ICON students with departmental teaching or research assistantships will work directly with the faculty to which they are assigned to determine duties. Both TAs and RAs are expected to perform duties promptly and to a high standard. Students on non-ICON funding are responsible to the entity providing funding.

Please note – for students on assistantship – during fall and spring semesters, student fees can be automatically deducted from paychecks. Payroll deduction is not available for the summer semester, so students must pay their fees directly. For more information, please visit <https://osfa.uga.edu/costs/>.

Annual assessment

Each spring semester, students will be required to fill out an online form to facilitate their assessment by the ICON Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies will also seek out the advice of the student's advisor, and the annual report will include an assessment of duties performed as an ICON RA, when applicable. In addition, ICON students are asked to email the Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu) when milestones are reached (i.e., dissertation committee finalized, program of study approved, internship proposal developed, oral and written comps scheduled, and prospectus completed).

Graduate School Forms

All official Graduate School forms are accessible electronically at <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/forms/>.

*PLEASE NOTE: When submitting any forms to the Graduate School via Grad Status, students should manually select their **home** department or school, and not ICON, to route forms correctly.*

ICON website and listservs

The ICON website (<https://cicr.uga.edu/icon-phd-program/>) provides access to all program policies, a directory of ICON students and faculty, student news, and upcoming events. Important program-related documents can be found under the “Resources for ICON students & faculty” heading. Students are responsible for obtaining the most up-to-date copies of these documents by accessing this site.

All students will be added to the ICON-L listserv. This listserv is used to share program news and opportunities and includes students and ICON program staff. The ICON-GS listserv is a graduate student-only group; please contact the OINC chairperson for information about this listserv.

Integrative Mechanisms

Because the literature on interdisciplinary education shows that students tend to fall back into “disciplinary silos” as they progress through their programs (Hackett & Rhoten 2009), the ICON program includes a series of “integrative mechanisms” designed to encourage inter-cohort exchange throughout the program. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in all of these activities, which include but are not limited to involvement in the Integrative Conservation Student Organization (ICSO), the student-led Symposium on Integrative Conservation (SIC), engagement in CICR programming, attendance at ICON events, etc.

Student organization

ICON students are automatically considered members of the ICON student organization: The Integrative Conservation Student Organization (ICSO). This group was formed to develop and promote learning, research, dialogue, and active engagement in the area of Integrative Conservation. ICSO hosts meetings of the membership and social events throughout the year, and students are encouraged to become active participants.

Life in Athens

On-campus housing:

[University Housing](#)

Campus parking:

<https://tps.uga.edu/parking> or call (706)-542-7275

Information on Athens area restaurants, activities, and nightlife:

<https://guide.flagpole.com/>

<https://www.visitathensga.com/>

More information on off-campus housing is included in the internal ICON lab book document (ask Talley for access).

International students

The Office of Global Engagement provides a wealth of policy resources for new and current students concerning arrival, visas, 1-20 forms, and moving with family, among other topics (<https://globalengagement.uga.edu/international-students>). We also recommend that international students review the International Student Life website (<https://isl.uga.edu/>) for information on support services and programs.

Travel and Reimbursement

To seek *prior* authorization for travel and to seek travel reimbursement after your trip occurs, you will need to use the OneSource website (<https://onesource.uga.edu/>). Please reach out to Talley Vodicka (talleyv@uga.edu) with any questions about travel authorizations and related expenses (it is always better to ask questions ahead of time!) More information on travel authorizations and expense reports can be found at: https://onesource.uga.edu/Travel_Expenses/.

Quick Guide: [Creating travel authorization and travel reimbursement requests](#)

Quick Guide: [Creating a non-travel expense report](#)

ArchPass - Many UGA systems (like OneSource) require more than your MyID and password for access. For these systems and applications, you'll need to use ArchPass, UGA's two-step login solution. Instructions on setting this up can be found at: https://eits.uga.edu/access_and_security/infosec/tools/archpass

Appendix A: ICON Degree Checklist

Steps toward degree and timeline for adequate progress

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Selection of Major Professor [End of 1 st semester] | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Final Program of Study [4 th or 5 th semester] Must be approved by Grad School before Oral Comp Exam can be scheduled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Selection of ICON Representative [End of 2 nd semester] | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Written Comprehensive Exam [4 th or 5 th semester] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Selection of Advisory Committee [End of 2 nd semester] | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Oral Comprehensive Exam [4 th or 5 th semester] All information must be provided to home department three weeks prior to desired date for oral exam. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Meeting with Advisor and ICON Rep [Before beginning of 2 nd year] | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Admission to Candidacy [End of 5 th semester] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Preliminary Program of Study [End of 2 nd semester] | <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Graduation Application [Before beginning of 8 th semester] Please note Graduate School Website for Deadline. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Dissertation Proposal Defense [4 th or 5 th semester] | <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Doctoral Dissertation Approval and Final Oral Examination [End of 8 th semester] |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Human Subjects [Yes No] If yes, IRB approval # _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Animal Use & Care [Yes No] If yes, IACUC approval # _____ | |

Program of Study Checklist

Graduate School Requirements

- 30 hours of degree credit: Must include 16 hours of course work at 8000- and/or 9000-level.
- 1-credit GradFIRST seminar (GRSC 7001) during fall or spring of the first year.

ICON Requirements

Five (5) ICON core courses (minimum of 13 credit hours) must appear on your Program of Study:

- ICON 8001 (4 hrs)
- ICON 8110 (1 hr)
- ICON 8002 (4 hrs)
- ECOL 8400 (1-2 hrs)
- ICON 8111E (3-8 hrs) The internship course may be repeated for a maximum of 16 hours of credit. If needed, students may register for internship credit during the fall following their summer internship to complete the requirement. **The internship is not intended to count toward the 16 hours of 8000- or 9000-level coursework required by the Graduate School.**

Course electives

- Minimum of five credit hours of courses that represent different epistemologies than one's home discipline. See the "Suggested Course Electives" document for the course list.

Home department requirements

- All degree requirements for home departments. See home department handbooks for additional details.

Please note that these are general guidelines; ICON defers to the student's Advisor and Departmental guidelines first. See the [Graduate School Policy Library](#) for complete details.

Appendix B: ICON Program Suggested Electives

ICON students are required to take at least 5 credit hours from departments outside their home department in courses that represent different epistemological, ontological, or methodological traditions from their core area of work. The courses listed below are "pre-approved;" other courses may also count toward this requirement given approval by your ICON rep and the ICON Director of Graduate Studies. NOTE: 1) It is possible to take more than one course from the same instructor, although you are encouraged to seek a diversity of instructors. 2) Theoretically you could take courses in your own department that represent different disciplines; however, that may not represent different epistemologies, thus we encourage you to have a frank discussion with your ICON rep and advisor and with those knowledgeable on the content of the course to make sure that these electives meet the spirit of ICON to step outside your main area of expertise. 3) We also encourage you and your committee to discuss the depth of these courses and whether they are appropriate for your program of study. Please note that the courses listed below may not be offered each year. This list is not exclusive or exhaustive; if a class is not on this list please discuss it with your ICON Representative or the ICON Graduate Coordinator.

Faculty: If you would like to nominate a course for inclusion in this list, please email the course name, number, and brief justification to iconphd@uga.edu.

Natural Sciences

ANTH 6900*: Special Topics in Anthropology (Primate Conservation) (3 hours)
ANTH 6900*: Special Topics in Anthropology (Primate Behavior) (3 hours)
ECOL 6000*: Population and Community Ecology (3 hours)
ECOL 6080*: Principles of Conservation Ecology and Sustainability (4 hours)
ECOL (BIOL) 6150*: Population Biology of Infectious Diseases (4 hours)
ECOL (FANR) 6220*: Foundations of Restoration Ecology (3 hours)
ECOL (FISH) (WASR) 6310*: Freshwater Ecosystems (3 hours)
ECOL (PBIO) (WILD) 8310: Population Ecology (3 hours)
ECOL (WILD) 8322: Concepts and Approaches in Ecosystem Ecology (4 hours)
ECOL (PBIO) (FORS) (CRSS) 8850: Terrestrial Biogeochemistry (4 hours)
GENE (ECOL) 6020W*: Biotic Responses to Climate Change (3 hours)
GEOG 6460*: Field Methods in Remote Sensing (3 hours)
GEOG 6040*: Global Environmental Change Past and Present (3 hours)
GEOG 6150*: Physical Climatology (3 hours)
GEOG 6350*: Remote Sensing of Environment (3 hours)
GEOG 6370*: Geographic Information Science (3 hours)
GEOG 8120: Seminar in Climatology (3 hours)
GEOG 8300: Multivariate Techniques in Geography (3 hours)
MARS 6810*: Global Biogeochemical Cycles (3 hours)
MARS 8050: Climate, Oceans and the Marine Biosphere (3 hours)
MARS 8160: Marine Ecology (3 hours)
FANR 6750: Experimental Methods in Forestry and Natural Resources Research (4 hours)
FANR 7620*: GIS Applications for Natural Resources (3 hours)
FANR 8400: Advanced Spatial Analysis in Ecology and Natural Resources (1-4 hours)
WILD (FISH) 8300: Structured Decision Making and Adaptive Management (1-2 hours)
WILD 8330: Landscape Ecology (3 hours)
WILD (FISH) 8360: Quantitative Conservation Science (3 hours)
WILD (FISH) 8370/8370L: Bayesian Modeling for Conservation Science (3 hours)

Social Sciences

ANTH 6085*: Conservation on a Changing Planet (3 hours)
ANTH 6490: Foundations of Ecological Anthropology (3 hours)

ANTH 6620: Methods in Sociocultural Anthropology (3 hours)
ANTH 8500: Seminar in Ecological Anthropology (3 hours)
ANTH 8515: Institutional Dimensions of Sustainability (3 hours)*
ANTH 8520: Cultural Dimensions of Biodiversity (3 hours)
ANTH 8525: Environmental Governance (1-3 hours)
ANTH 8560: Conservation and Development Practice (3 hours)*
ANTH 8630: Anthropological Research Design and Proposal Development (3 hours)
FANR 8600: Qualitative and Case-Study Methods in Natural Resources Research (2 hours)
FANR 8700: Social and Political Theory for Natural Resource Management (2 hours)
GEOG 6680*: Gender and Geography (3 hours)
GEOG 6810*: Political Ecology and Environmental Governance (3 hours)
GEOG 8305: Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods (3 hours)
GEOG 8810: Seminar in Human-Environment Relationships (3 hours)
GEOG 8910: Seminar in Geographic Thought and Methods (3 hours)
GEOG 8920: Seminar in Social Theory in Geography (3 hours)
PRTM 7900*: Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (3 hours)

Law, Policy, Economics

AAEC 8100: Nonmarket Economic Valuation Techniques and Applications (3 hours)
ECOL 8710: Environmental Law Practicum (4 hours) (not currently offered)
ECOL 8730: Environmental Policy (3 hours)
ECOL (WILD) 8750: Endangered Species Practicum (4 hours)
ENVM 6650*: Environmental Economics (3 hours)
JURI (FANR) (ECOL) 6810*: Natural Resources Law (3 hours)
FORS (ENGR) 8020: Bio-Based Economy Seminar (1-3 hours)
MARS (ANTH) 8210: Topics in Coastal Marine Policy (3 hours)

Other

ECOL 8550: Skills for Collaborative Research (1 hour)
GRSC 8200: Communicating Research and Scholarship (1-3 hours)

Please note:

Courses marked with an asterisk () denote a split-level course, i.e. offered at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and thus will not count as “graduate-only.” From the UGA Bulletin: courses numbered from 1000 to 2999 are considered lower-level undergraduate courses. Courses numbered 3000 to 4999 are considered upper-level undergraduate courses. Courses numbered 5000 to 5999 are considered professional-level courses. Courses numbered 6000 and above are considered graduate-level courses. The Graduate School requires a minimum of 16 hours of 8000-level courses in the program of study, in addition to research, dissertation writing, and directed study. Please refer to your home department/school requirements as they may require additional hours at the 8000- level or require a minimum number of graduate-only course credits.

Italicized courses denote those that are not regularly offered, but could be with adequate student interest.

Appendix C: ICON Representative Policy

Philosophy behind the Requirement of an ICON Representative

As students in the Integrative Conservation (ICON) program work towards the degree requirements of their “home” departments/schools (Anthropology, Ecology, Forestry & Natural Resources, Marine Sciences or Geography) *and* those of the ICON program, it is essential that the integrity of both programs be maintained. Doing so requires that the student, advisor, and committee members carefully consider what it means to be trained in both a specific discipline and an integrative perspective. Participating in the ICON program inevitably includes more requirements and review than a traditional degree, requiring additional coursework and necessitating different criteria for evaluating comprehensive exams and dissertations. It is critical, therefore, that at least one member of the committee has the integrative nature of the training program and research project at the core of his or her evaluative focus. The designation of one “ICON representative” on each student’s PhD committee is one of the key mechanisms by which the ICON program ensures that the integrative component of a student’s research and training is achieved in a meaningful way throughout the program of study.

What is an ICON Representative?

The responsibility of the ICON representative (“ICON rep”) is to help guide the student as he or she builds integrative research and strategic communication skills. The ICON rep focuses on the integrative nature of the student’s course of study, research, comprehensive exams*, and dissertation, and should be an active member in the development and implementation of all stages of a student’s program. As is stated in the “*ICON Core Research Principles and Criteria*” document, the integrative component of the ICON degree can be operationalized in a variety of ways, and the exact method/approach should be decided upon as a committee, under the guidance of the primary advisor and in consultation with the ICON rep. The ICON rep will also help the student achieve the goal of producing a dissertation that is significantly different from what could or would be produced in a single-department training program.

*Please note that the ICON rep, and the ICON program in general, defers to the student’s home department in regard to the comprehensive exam process and policy. The ICON program acknowledges that comps exams may differ across departments.

Student guidelines for selecting the ICON Representative

1. The ICON rep should be identified as early as possible in the student’s program of study. If the student has not identified an ICON rep *by the start of the second academic year*, he/she should contact the ICON Director of Graduate Studies to discuss options.
2. The ICON rep cannot be the main advisor. As the ICON graduate handbook states, an ICON committee must have five members, with two from outside the home discipline. The ICON rep is designated from among those five people. It does not matter what discipline the ICON rep is from; the critical role of this person will be to advise on course selection, proposals, presentations, dissertations, etc., *specifically with the project’s integrative component in mind*, which is an additional perspective to his/her disciplinary or methodological expertise.
3. Students should seek approval of their selected ICON rep from the ICON Director of Graduate Studies; email approval is sufficient (iconphd@uga.edu).
4. By the beginning of the student’s second academic year, the student should initiate a meeting with her/his advisor and ICON rep at which time they can all discuss a strategy for proactive involvement for the ICON rep.

Expectations of the ICON Representative

Because the program of study, preliminary exams, and other significant milestones are coordinated through the home department, the approval of the ICON rep serves as a proxy for the approval of the ICON Director of Graduate Studies. In consultation with the advisor, the ICON rep should:

- Ensure that the student is able to craft a course of study and dissertation project that will meet high standards of excellence in both the home department and the ICON program while acknowledging that being integrative doesn’t necessitate developing the same level of expertise or going into the same level of depth in multiple disciplines as the student would in their home department.
- Acknowledge the limitations and variability in topics of study that may make them more or less conducive to integrative study.

- Actively work with the student and advisor in a way they all see fit to achieve the integrative component of the research. Being integrative may look different in different departments or disciplines, and there is no one model for an integrative dissertation (the entire dissertation can be integrative, or it can be made integrative by one or two key chapters).
- Play a role in coursework selection, committee constitution, internship selection, pre-proposal development, prospectus or proposal writing, comprehensive exams, and dissertation writing.
- Be familiar with and anticipate general differences between disciplines.

Expectations of the advisor in relation to ICON Representative

While the ICON rep plays a special role on an ICON student's committee, the other committee members, and especially the student's advisor, also are important for helping achieve the goals of the ICON program.

- Advisors should be aware of the key ICON policies and procedures as they relate to student's ability to meet both their disciplinary and ICON requirements.
- Advisors are responsible for communicating information about the comprehensive exam process to the rest of the committee (define time frame, question formats, etc.).
- Also, advisors should always be encouraged to reach out to the ICON Director of Graduate Studies if ever they are unclear on procedures or want extra insight into the goals of the program.

Who can serve as an ICON Representative?

The basic criteria for faculty to become an ICON rep is continued active involvement in CICR and the ICON program to ensure a common understanding of the integrative research core principles and criteria (see "ICON Core Research Principles and Criteria"). Students should identify their ICON rep from the list of current ICON representatives below:

Jesse Abrams (*rep for Sandeelo, Sharma, Quan, Uniyal, Usman*)
 Pete Brosius
 Krista Capps
 Laura German
 Ted Gragson (*rep for Mohanachandran*)
 Jeff Hepinstall-Cymerman (*rep for Kaushik, Hofner, Matos*)
 Sonia Hernandez (*rep for Torres*)
 Nik Heynen (*rep for Balling, Julien, Sarkar, Valentine*)
 Lizzie King (*rep for Britton, Langhorn, Ubiali*)
 Marguerite Madden (*rep for Gambill*)
 John Maerz
 Don Nelson (*rep for Del Toro Orozco, DesRosiers, Park, Paul, Pitts, Rao*)
 Nate Nibbelink (*rep for Kaur, Morrow*)
 Jennifer Rice
 Susan Tanner (*rep for Tatz*)
 Bram Tucker (*rep for Gill*)
 Meredith Welch-Devine (*rep for Giri, Gregory, Najera Medellin*)
 Seth Wenger (*rep for Boone, Mital*)

We are actively seeking increased participation in the ICON program and welcome faculty to become ICON representatives. Ways faculty can become ICON representatives include:

- Co-teach the ICON 8001 or 8002 courses, or
- By nomination of the ICON Program Committee

If you are interested in becoming an ICON representative please contact the ICON Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu). Students are welcome to email iconphd@uga.edu if they have ideas regarding new potential ICON representatives.

Appendix D: ICON PhD Program Guidance to Advisors and Committees

This document is intended to help you advise your incoming and/or current Integrative Conservation (ICON) student. In designing the ICON program, we opted for having a student's program of study decided primarily by that student's Advisor, ICON Representative, and Committee rather than having a large number of required courses. However, ICON students should finish their graduate education with a novel skill set, different from traditional students in your department. What follows is an explanation of the program's goals, what courses are required, what we suggest you consider in helping students choose other courses, and what additional resources are available to enhance their educational experience.

An integrative approach

As global environmental change proceeds at an unprecedented pace, the practice of conservation is adapting to a complex set of new challenges. Responding effectively to these challenges will require the next generation of practitioners and scholars to develop expertise in specific fields and have the conceptual tools to work across disciplines. The University of Georgia's Integrative Conservation (ICON) Ph.D. program is designed to meet that need by ensuring that students gain disciplinary depth while also learning to collaborate across disciplines and fields of practice to seek integrative solutions to complex conservation challenges. Students in this program choose one of five degree objectives - *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Anthropology*; *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Ecology*; *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Forestry and Natural Resources*; *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Geography*; or *Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Marine Sciences* - each will ensure that students receive rigorous theoretical and methodological training in a traditional discipline, while also working integratively at the intersections of multiple disciplines.

Committee formation and ICON Representative

ICON committees should include five faculty members, *including two faculty members from outside the student's home department and disciplinary perspective*. Though we expect many of the students' committee members will be affiliated with ICON, the student must designate one member to function as the "ICON Representative." Students should plan to select their ICON Representative as soon as possible after confirming their major advisor. The ICON Representative should do more than review documents after they are completed; instead, they should actively work with the student and Advisor in a way they all see fit to achieve the integrative component of the research. ICON Representatives should participate in coursework selection, committee constitution, pre-proposal development, proposal writing, comprehensive exams, and dissertation writing. A student's Advisor *cannot* serve as his/her ICON Representative.

Expectations of the Advisor in relation to ICON Representative

While the ICON Representative plays a special role on an ICON student's committee, the other committee members, and especially the student's advisor, also ensure the goals of the ICON program are met:

- Advisors should be aware of the key ICON policies and procedures as they relate to students' ability to meet both their disciplinary and ICON requirements.
- Because comprehensive exams are handled differently across units, it is the advisor's responsibility to communicate information about the comprehensive exams process to the student and committee (e.g. define time frame, question formats, etc.). Please note that the ICON program defers to the student's home department regarding comprehensive exam process and policy.
- Advisors are welcome to reach out to the ICON Director of Graduate Studies if ever they are unclear on procedures or want extra insight into the program's goals.

The ICON program of study

Year 1

Students must take one core ICON course, an Ecology seminar, and a bridge seminar. The first of these, *Integrative Conservation I* (ICON 8001) – 4 credit hours, offered each fall – provides the conceptual and theoretical foundations for developing an integrative perspective, critically examining the theory and practice of integrative work. This team-taught course examines impediments to integrative thinking, both between disciplines and fields of practice. The Ecology seminar *Perspectives on Integrative Conservation and Sustainability* (ECOL 8400) – 1-2 credit hours, offered each fall – hosts a series of lectures by conservation faculty and practitioners. The bridge seminar, *Field Planning and Preparation* (ICON 8110) – 1 credit hour, offered each spring – provides an opportunity for students to prepare for the upcoming 8002 course. Specifically, students will use ICON 8110 to formulate a research question and/or make logistical decisions for ICON 8002 (which is normally taken in the fall of year 2).

Year 1 will also be dedicated to gaining a strong foundation in the students' home disciplines, and the rest of their programs of study will be determined by their committees, with the goal of ensuring sufficient breadth to complement the disciplinary rigor achieved in the home department. To help guide committees, we have envisioned the ICON curriculum as a “pie” with three slices representing (1) the natural sciences, (2) the social sciences, and (3) law, economics, and policy. Students will be encouraged to take at least two courses from the suggested electives list in the ‘slices’ outside of their home department or discipline. A suggested course electives list is available on the [ICON website](#).

Year 2

Program requirements for year two include *Integrative Conservation II* (ICON 8002) – 4 credit hours, offered each fall – a team-taught course that challenges students to work in teams with local stakeholders on a real conservation issue. Previous 8002 classes have worked with local stakeholders in Cherokee, NC, Sapelo Island, GA, Franklin, TN, and Tybee Island, GA. The rest of year 2 is dedicated to finishing departmental course requirements and electives. Throughout the second year, students will continue to develop their dissertation proposal.

Because a key goal of this program is to train both practitioners who are comfortable in the academic world and academics who can collaborate with practitioners, students will be required to complete an internship (*Integrative Conservation Internship*, ICON 8111E, 3-8 credit hours, offered fall, spring, and summer) for course credit. We encourage students to complete their internship before the start of their third program year.

Year 3

During year 3, students will solidify their plans for dissertation research and formalize their proposals as they work with their committees to ensure a proper balance between disciplinary depth and integrative learning. Students will be expected to demonstrate the application of an integrative approach, reflexivity, and communication skills in their dissertations.

Years 4 and 5

The length of a student's program will depend on his or her home department/school. During years 4 and (potentially) 5, students will complete dissertation research and write and defend their dissertation.

*Some exceptions to requirements listed here can be sought through consultation with the ICON Curriculum Committee. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu) for further details.

Assistantships and Funding

ICON students funded on ICON research assistantships and based on campus* (known as ICON RAs) will work with the ICON Director of Graduate Studies, Program Coordinator, and CICR Director on projects and activities to fulfill their funding arrangements. Projects are determined at the beginning of each semester or academic year. The ICON RA is responsible for communicating with his/her advisor about the

responsibilities he/she assumes. ICON RAs are expected to participate in regular meetings and provide updates on their assigned projects. In the event an ICON RA is not adequately fulfilling his/her responsibilities, a meeting will be arranged between the ICON Director of Graduate Studies, the student, and his/her advisor to discuss the situation and identify solutions. ICON students with departmental teaching or research assistantships will work directly with the relevant faculty members to which they are assigned to determine duties. TAs and RAs are expected to perform duties promptly and to a high standard. Students with external funding are responsible to the entity providing their funding.

**ICON RA projects must be done in person within the state of Georgia per USG rules; remote RA work on ICON and CICR tasks is generally not allowed. ICON students may sometimes be awarded RAs to work solely on their own research, and this can be done outside the state of Georgia with advance authorization. Not all ICON students receiving ICON RAs will be offered remote, research-only RAs, and those students who do will generally be limited to either one or two total semesters of research-only ICON RA funding.*

Yearly assessment

Each spring semester, students must fill out an online form to facilitate their assessment by the ICON Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies will also seek out the advice of the student's advisor, and the annual report will include an assessment of duties performed as an ICON RA, when applicable.

In addition, ICON students are asked to email the Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu) when milestones are reached (i.e. dissertation committee finalized, program of study approved, internship proposal developed, oral and written comps scheduled, and prospectus completed).

Integrative Mechanisms

Because the literature on interdisciplinary education shows that students tend to fall back into “disciplinary silos” as they progress through their programs (Hackett & Rhoten 2009), the ICON program includes a series of “integrative mechanisms” designed to encourage inter-cohort exchange throughout the program. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in all of these activities, including workshops, annual symposia, socials, and reading groups.

Appendix E: ICON Internship Policy

Because a key goal of the ICON program is both to train practitioners who are comfortable in the academic world and academics who can collaborate with practitioners, ICON students will be required to undertake an internship, for academic credit, with a conservation organization, government agency, or other group identified as appropriate. The internship is designed to improve professional and personal skills by immersing the ICON student in collaborative work with NGO partners and local stakeholders. Building on CICR's strong links with conservation organizations, the objectives of the internship are to provide ICON students with practical experience in conservation and sustainability careers, to help them learn program management skills, and to build their professional networks. ICON students will work closely with mentors from the agency or organization. Depending on the appointment and the needs of the organization or agency, students may: collect, analyze, and present data and information on activities of the organization; communicate best practices to internal or external audiences; manage databases; draft factsheets and reports; and otherwise assist in day-to-day activities of the organization, including budgeting, personnel and risk management, and program implementation.

Internship Policy

1. Internships can occur at any time during the year, though summer is ideal as it allows for fuller immersion.
2. Students will register for 3-8 credit hours of ICON 8111E for their internship. The internship course may be repeated for a maximum of 16 hours of credit.
3. Students will maintain regular work schedules that total a minimum of 100 hours of effort over the course of the internship.
4. Students should initiate discussion of potential internships with their faculty advisors early in the ICON program. The ICON Director of Graduate Studies is available to work with students and their advisors to identify an appropriate internship if assistance is needed.
5. Students need to identify an individual from his or her internship organization who will serve as a mentor throughout the internship.
6. Prior to the internship beginning, students must create a brief proposal with the following information: name of organization/agency, types of activities and responsibilities the student will take on, and what the student hopes to get out of the experience. Internship proposals should be emailed to the ICON Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu), the internship mentor, and the faculty advisor. Faculty advisors must approve of the internship selection (email approval is sufficient). The Director of Graduate Studies will be charged with developing alternatives for students who cannot be placed in an internship for one reason or another.
7. At the end of the internship, students will prepare a brief report* (1-2 pages) describing what they did during the internship, what they learned, and where they think this experience might direct their careers in the future. Their course grade will be based on this reflection and on the recommendation of their internship mentor. Reports should be emailed to the ICON Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu). *Reports are due on the last date of final exams for the current semester.*
8. In addition to the student report, mentors will need to complete a brief evaluation form* to provide feedback on the student's duties and progress through the internship. Evaluation forms should be emailed to the ICON Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu). *Forms are due on the last date of final exams for the current semester. Because holding an Incomplete grade on a student's transcript can cause them to be ineligible for scholarships and other support, it is important that both the student report and mentor evaluation be submitted before the end of the semester in which the internship takes place. Students should communicate the importance of this requirement to their internship mentor so that there are no delays in entering a final grade for the course.*

*Students will not be assigned grades until the report and mentor evaluation forms are received. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies with any questions about the ICON internship (iconphd@uga.edu).

Appendix F: ICON Research Assistantship Policy

This policy refers to students funded by ICON and based on campus. The purpose of the ICON research assistantship (RA) is to help ensure that the creativity and participation of our funded students contribute to the ICON program and the Center for Integrative Conservation Research (CICR), and that ICON RAs gain experience through these projects and activities that strengthens their research, communication, and collaborative skills and also broadens their network of colleagues and faculty. Opportunities for participation in ICON/CICR programming are not limited only to ICON RAs. Instead, all ICON students are encouraged to find ways to participate in various activities of ICON/CICR, but ICON RAs are required to participate as part of their funding arrangements.

ICON RA projects must be done in person within the state of Georgia per USG rules; remote RA work on ICON and CICR tasks is generally not allowed. ICON students may sometimes be awarded RAs to work solely on their own research, and this can be done outside the state of Georgia with advance authorization. Not all ICON students receiving ICON RAs will be offered remote, research-only RAs, and those students who do will generally be limited to either one or two total semesters of research-only ICON RA funding.

ICON RA funding is assigned to the student, and should the student change advisors or departments, the funding remains with the student, and new arrangements between the student, their advisor, and the ICON program should be discussed. ICON RAs are awarded on a competitive basis each year. On-campus ICON RAs must register for the 1-credit hour RA lab course each fall and spring semester.

1. At the beginning of each semester, ICON RAs will be sent a list of available positions and asked to rank their top choices. ICON leadership will assign projects based on student interests and applicable skills. During the first 2 weeks of each semester, the RA agreement form will be completed. **It is the responsibility of the ICON RAs to communicate with their advisors about the responsibilities they assume at the beginning of each semester.**
2. The CICR Director, ICON Director of Graduate Studies, and Program Coordinator will serve as the main points of contact for students for their ICON RA responsibilities.
3. All ICON RAs will be expected to register for the ICON lab course and participate in lab meetings.
4. RAs will send in regular memos on their RA projects; the purpose of the memos is to communicate what progress was made each week, what is planned for the following week, and any project needs you have. Weekly memos are sent via email to the entire RA lab group. If more than one student is working on a task, they collaborate in dividing tasks and reporting to the group on weekly progress and next steps.
5. Students should work no more than 16 hours per week or the amount specified in their funding letter. The 16-hour-per-week commitment should first be allocated to ICON RA responsibilities, and the use of the remaining weekly RA hours should be negotiated between the student and faculty advisor. Preferred arrangements include the remaining RA time to be used by the student on their own research and the remaining RA time to be dedicated to advisor research that is directly related to the student's research. Work not directly related to the student's research or education should not be performed during ICON RA hours. In the event a student feels they are working more than the assigned hours, they are asked to contact the CICR Director or ICON Director of Graduate Studies about the situation.
6. In the event an ICON RA is not adequately fulfilling their responsibilities, a meeting will be arranged between the CICR Director, ICON Director of Graduate Studies, the student, and their advisor to discuss the situation and identify solutions.

Examples of ICON RA projects:

ICON leadership will identify opportunities for engagement before the beginning of each academic semester. Examples of projects may include (but are not limited to): Social media management and communications support (e.g. soliciting content and posting to the CICR and ICON social media accounts); Event coordination (e.g. planning and executing monthly and/or annual research symposium, speaker events, alumni engagement activities, and community-building events); and CICR research support (e.g. supporting faculty with literature reviews related to event facilitation or strategic initiatives, or assistance with faculty research facilitation initiatives (e.g. Catalytic Conversations)).

Appendix G: ICON Core Research Principles and Criteria

Philosophy: ICON students strive to cross disciplinary lines, epistemologies and worldviews to give full and balanced space to understanding complex problems from multiple perspectives. This reflects a recognition that:

- Each discipline and epistemology highlight certain dimensions of a research problem while leaving others out. Integrative research utilizes multiple ways of approaching a problem to highlight more than one dimension of its complexity, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the problem.
- When problems are sufficiently complex, it may become impossible to unify the views from multiple perspectives into an integrated whole, requiring that space be made for dissonance and incommensurability.
- Addressing complex socio-environmental issues involves trade-offs no matter what course of action (or inaction) is taken. Integrative research sheds light on the trade-offs that occur in past, present, and future negotiations of complex socio-environmental challenges, providing a more comprehensive understanding of what is lost and what is gained through particular policies or practices.
- Integrative also means that there is a plurality of strategies for the generation and communication of knowledge, and a plurality of audiences. This exchange of knowledge is not one-way from the researcher to the end users; rather the development of knowledge should be a partnership, a dialogue, and an iterative process that shapes and directs the research agenda along the way.
- Both conservation and academic research have a history of colonialism, racism, and hubris. Integrative conservation research and practice should recognize this history, be carried out with humility, and contribute to social justice.
- Reflexivity in knowledge production is an essential element of integrative research and includes critical reflection on the power relations involved in knowledge production and how one's own positionality shapes knowledge production and exchange.

Integrative research values pluralism of perspectives brought to an issue, as opposed to (a) a suite of distinct studies of different parts of a given system (multi-disciplinary studies often fall into this category), or (b) assimilation/synthesis across various parts of a system, which tackles all the complexities of an issue through one unifying analytical approach.

Below are three core principles for integrative research that ICON students should carefully consider as they develop their prospectus and their dissertation, and four criteria that must be met for a dissertation to be considered integrative. Effectively applying these principles and criteria requires an ongoing dialogue with the major advisor, ICON representative, and committee members.

Core principles of integrative research¹:

- *Complexity:* Human and natural systems are inextricably linked, complex systems subject to large uncertainties. All models and analytical tools for understanding conservation and sustainability issues engage in some form of simplification of complexity, and none provide a comprehensive picture. It is critical to acknowledge the limitations and uncertainties inherent in studies of these complex systems.
- *Pluralism:* Conservation and sustainability issues, and the trade-offs they entail, are experienced and understood from a variety of perspectives. Each perspective highlights certain dimensions and obscures others, yet knowledge encounters often play out on uneven ground with certain ways of knowing privileged over others. Integrative research deliberately seeks out and incorporates alternative knowledges and experiences that are not traditionally captured in

¹ Derived from McShane et al. (2011).

academic research or particular research traditions. Better formulation of problems can occur when new ways of understanding are developed collaboratively and iteratively with the input of multiple voices and multiple perspectives. Diligence is necessary to ensure that all voices, particularly those of historically marginalized groups, are heard, understood, respected and effectively incorporated in a pluralistic dialogue.

- *Context*: Analytical tools and methods should be applied with sensitivity to the historical, political, economic, institutional, and social contexts in which research and decision-making occur. There are no panaceas or one-size-fits-all solutions, nor are there necessarily solutions with long-term staying power. Decisions and strategies will have to be revisited as new knowledge emerges, and as the social, political, economic, and ecological contexts change. Context shapes not only how we and others behave and make decisions but also the meaning of our research and the potential consequences of our findings.

Criteria for integrative research:

1. *Multiple epistemologies*: The doctoral research of ICON students should demonstrate the application and interface of multiple perspectives and/or worldviews, and actively engage questions of the (in)commensurability and (in)completeness of distinct epistemologies. There are multiple levels at which this can be done, depending on the specific research problem. The engagement of multiple perspectives should be evident throughout the dissertation, from problem framing to literature review, research questions, and methodology.
 - a. Problem framing: Integrative problem definition means defining problems through multiple epistemologies or lenses, illustrating the differences between epistemologies, and considering the implications for understanding and/or addressing the problem. In recognition of calls to decolonize² knowledge production and conservation, this means being intentional about questioning dominant assumptions about environmental conditions and their causes. It might also include framings that are intentional about balancing or exploring synergies between environmental and social justice concerns.
 - b. Literature review: Integrative research includes reviewing the literatures relevant to the problem that stem from distinct epistemological perspectives. It means doing so not just in ways critical of other perspectives, but in ways that demonstrate an appreciation of alternative framings and explores in a balanced way the questions that emerge through attempts to simultaneously engage divergent framings of a problem (including whether they are in fact commensurable).
 - c. Research questions: To design research questions in an integrative way means asking questions from divergent epistemological or disciplinary framings, and/or designing research questions that can only be answered by engaging methods and theories from diverse disciplines.
2. *Mixed methods*: An integrative methodology means employing mixed methods from diverse disciplines to answer one or more questions, triangulating methods when addressing a single (integrative) research question, and using multiple methods to explore the interface between diverse perspectives. This may be done to illustrate how bringing multiple perspectives to bear on a problem confounds or clarifies the nature of the problem; to illustrate the roots of misunderstanding so as to facilitate efforts at bridging diverse camps; to demonstrate incommensurability in a way that gives due credence to divergent perspectives but acknowledges trade-offs; or any other aims relevant to the problem context and framings. It may also mean shifting from traditional methods of one-sided data collection to methods of

² While decolonization has multiple definitions and applications, Tuck and Yang (2012) define it as something which “brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life”; they discourage use of the term as a metaphor for broader human and civil rights or social justice efforts.

knowledge exchange, partnership and co-production³.

3. *Communication and reflexivity*: Effective engagement with multiple epistemologies and using multiple methods to interface between diverse perspectives means students must be in continuous dialogue with other fields of knowledge and practice, and are expected to extend the dialogue among lay audiences and/or with historically marginalized groups. The aims may vary and include clearly communicating scientific evidence to the public, challenging dominant paradigms by inviting a target audience to expand the scope of its current understanding, co-producing knowledge to bring marginalized perspectives and interests to the fore, or even “making room and moving over” (Latulippe and Klenk 2020). Core competencies for effective communication include critical reflection on one’s own positionality and the power relations involved in environmental knowledge production (i.e., reflexivity), and humility in how scientific authority is wielded in different contexts. It also likely involves acknowledging the ‘incompleteness’ of the message being delivered and demonstrating openness to alternative framings of the problem as well as heeding calls to break down barriers between researchers and researched (e.g., Klenk 2018). As students pursue their dissertation research, they will be responsible for developing and implementing a plan for communication related to their research topic and demonstrating how it was achieved at the completion of the dissertation research.
4. *Relevance to practice*: Students should strive to design their research program with the relevance to practice in mind. This involves an intentional engagement with communities, practitioners, or decision-makers outside of academia. There are several ways to do this, including (but not limited to) have the dissertation directly inform or facilitate decision-making or policy-development; engage with practitioners or other non-academics to develop a research program that addresses real world problems; or collaborate with historically marginalized groups to address issues of concern to them.

References

Nicole Klenk (2018) From network to meshwork: Becoming attuned to difference in transdisciplinary environmental research encounters. *Environmental Science and Policy* 89: 315-321.

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Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1(1): 1-40.

³ Klenk (2020) argues for a form of transdisciplinarity centered on “attunement to difference”, in which research is evaluated by “the relations that compose it and the obligations it calls forth, rather than solely on pre-determined values.”

Appendix H: Guidance for developing ICON dissertations that align with the Core Research Principles and Criteria

As explained in the ICON handbook, ICON students are expected to conduct research and develop dissertations that adhere to the program's Core Research Principles and Criteria (Appendix F). However, to date, there has been limited guidance about what, concretely, students need to do to satisfactorily meet these criteria. This may result in unnecessary frustration and anxiety for students and also makes it hard to assess whether the ICON program as a whole is meeting its objectives. To address this, the ICON program committee has proposed a series of formal "checkpoints" to help guide students in meeting the objectives for multiple lenses and methodologies, for communication, and for reflexivity. These will be evaluated by the student's ICON representative, and if issues are identified the representative will work with the student to make necessary adjustments. None of this is intended to increase the total workload on the student but rather to provide greater structure, support, and clarity in meeting the existing requirements. Our goal is for everyone to meet all of these checkpoints successfully.

Multiple Lenses and Methodologies

In alignment with the ICON Core Research Principles and Criteria, the ICON dissertation research is expected to incorporate different lenses and methodologies and comprise an integrative approach to the research. Lenses are considered different when they are premised on different notions of the nature of reality (ontology); what constitutes a valid way of creating knowledge (epistemology); and what is valued (axiology). Methodologies are the research processes that are used to create knowledge from the perspective of a given lens. An integrative research approach includes a vision for how the knowledge gained through different lenses and methodologies will be considered in relation to one another to afford deeper insights.

Checkpoint 1: Use of multiple lenses and methodologies in the dissertation prospectus

Expectations for students: As part of the dissertation prospectus (or research proposal that is reviewed by the student's committee), students should meet with their ICON representative to discuss how their proposed dissertation research incorporates multiple lenses and methodologies and, as a whole, comprises an integrative approach to the research. This is an opportunity for the student (a) to self-evaluate and articulate how multiple lenses and methodologies have been incorporated into the proposed research and (b) to consider how knowledge created from different lenses will be related to one another (i.e., how the body of knowledge created in the dissertation will be *integrative*).

Evaluation: The ICON representative will evaluate the proposed use of multiple lenses and methodologies as part of the prospectus defense/research plan approval. If the ICON rep determines that the prospectus needs improvement to meet expectations of multiple lenses, methodologies, and their integration, they will work with the student and advisor to make the necessary revisions.

Checkpoint 2: Use of multiple lenses and methodologies in the final dissertation

Expectations for students: As part of the final Conclusions chapter of their dissertation, students are expected to reflect on their use of multiple lenses and methodologies in their work, and explain how their integrative approach yielded insights beyond what would be gleaned by using a single lens. This is particularly important when the "integrativeness" of the dissertation involves different approaches used *among* chapters rather than *within* chapters. The student is encouraged to seek feedback from their ICON rep and advisor on a draft of the concluding chapter prior to the dissertation defense. Note that the Conclusions chapter also is where the students document their reflexivity (see below), so this chapter effectively does double duty.

Evaluation: As part of the dissertation defense, the ICON rep will evaluate the use of multiple lenses and

methodologies in the dissertation. The ICON rep will consider both the concluding chapter and the dissertation as a whole.

Communication

The ICON core research principles and criteria state that students will be responsible for developing a plan for communication related to their research topic, and for documenting the plan's implementation through the completion of the dissertation research. For evaluation purposes, we focus on the plan, rather than the documentation of the plan's implementation. We expect the student to make a good-faith effort to implement the plan and to communicate with their committee about the implementation, but there will be no formal assessment of implementation success.

Checkpoint: Communication plan

Expectations for students: Students will develop a plan for a communication product or process¹ related to their research topic, which engages with one or more non-academic audiences. Audiences may be highly specific (e.g., community partners of the research, an influential organization) or broad (e.g., the general public as reached via a web page or social media), or both. Students are encouraged to be creative, and products are by no means limited to uni-directional forms of communication. The communication plan should be *strategic*. It should articulate specific aims that the communication seeks to achieve (for the student as well as for the audience or other interests). The plan should also explain why the proposed format, style, and content of the communication product were chosen to achieve those aims. Reflexivity (discussed further below) is needed to perceive how other parties' motivations, aims, and ways of understanding may differ from one's own, and to conduct the communication plan responsibly in light of those factors. It is recommended that the plan be incorporated into the dissertation prospectus as a dedicated section, but it can also be a stand-alone document. In developing the plan, the student is encouraged to work collaboratively with their ICON rep, advisor, and ideally their intended audience or others with relevant expertise within and outside the ICON community.

Evaluation: The ICON rep will evaluate the communication plan as part of the prospectus defense (or earlier, if preferred by the student). If the rep determines that the plan and/or its rationale do not meet the above expectations, they will work with the student and advisor to guide them in making necessary changes.

Reflexivity

Reflexive thinking considers how our presence, positionality, identities and perspectives can affect others and also influence our own experience and understandings. Practicing reflexivity is a way to increase awareness and responsibility regarding one's positionality, power relationships, disciplinary biases, tacit assumptions and values, and the blind spots this may create. It also needs to be cultivated by reading and partnering outside of one's discipline, questioning one's assumptions, and through proactive efforts to seek alternative understandings of - and understand diverse voices on - the topic of study.

Checkpoint: Reflexivity in dissertation conclusions chapter

Expectations for students: As ICON students plan, conduct, analyze, and document their dissertation research, they are expected to read, cite and proactively engage with ideas and writings outside of their home discipline, including ones that challenge their own assumptions. They should also gain an understanding of the histories of the places where, and topics on which, they conduct research. The understandings they acquire through this

¹ A product might be a policy brief, a website, podcast, film or other form of communication with non-academic audiences. A process might include a workshop to share findings in socially appropriate medium and explore implications, an interactive artistic project (community theater performance, public art installation, etc.), multi-stakeholder roundtable, or a facilitated visioning/planning/decision process.

reading outside their disciplinary niches should be reflected in the literature they cite, the questions they ask and/or the methodologies they employ. Students are also encouraged to use this understanding to reflect on their own assumptions and knowledge practices, and iteratively improve upon them - with an eye to minimizing any harm that may otherwise be done. This should happen throughout the dissertation process, and ICON reps are expected to encourage the student to engage in reflexivity from an early stage, including during comprehensive exams and/or the drafting of the prospectus. Students are expected to formally document their self-reflections in the final Conclusions chapter of their dissertation. With regards to positionality, power relationships, disciplinary biases, and tacit assumptions and values, students are encouraged to discuss: insights gained from their self-assessments; how that awareness influenced their research process; and implications for the knowledge they generated, research products or potential impacts of their research.

Evaluation: The ICON rep will evaluate the student's portrayal of their reflexivity and its implications for their research based on the Conclusions chapter plus any follow-up in the oral defense. Because the Conclusions chapter can take many forms, students are encouraged to share a draft of the chapter with their ICON rep in advance, so the ICON rep and the student can align their expectations and avoid any surprises.

Appendix I: ICON Best Practices

A living document meant to communicate shared expectations among the student, the advisor, and the ICON representative (ICON rep). If you have questions or suggestions for edits please contact the Director of Graduate Studies (iconphd@uga.edu).

Types of questions ICON reps should ask

This is a menu of questions to be asked throughout the program of study, but not all will apply to each student's program of study, and not all dissertations will look the same. This list, while developed for ICON reps, can and should be used by students as they progress through their research. Please ask these questions throughout the program of study.

1. What is your integrative question driving the research (all ICON projects should have an integrative question)
2. What makes this an ICON research question/dissertation? How does this differ from a traditional [e.g. Geography] research question/dissertation?
3. What does your home discipline miss about this research/research question?
4. What courses outside of your home discipline can you take to help your research?
5. Is there a paragraph in the proposal describing how this research is integrative?
6. What is the strategic communication component?
7. Does this go beyond a critique? If so, what are you proposing?
8. Is the dissertation integrative beyond the context, setting, or field? Is the research itself integrative, over and beyond a socio-ecologically complicated setting? (i.e. working in a socio-ecologically complicated setting or issue does not equate to doing integrative research)
9. Which lenses or epistemologies does the dissertation engage? Based on the epistemologies used, what's being illuminated and what's being left out?
10. Does the dissertation have a chapter that talks about the struggle to be integrative? Or, in writing at least one chapter of the dissertation, do you plan to be integrative?
11. How does your research reach beyond academia?
12. Are you using terms ("ecological," "political ecology," etc.) in ways that experts in those fields would agree with your usage?
13. How would somebody from a different perspective/discipline hear the same question you are asking?
14. What motivated/ inspired the integrative nature of your project?

Common habits of highly integrative students

1. Proactively interact with faculty outside of the home department/school
2. Take courses outside of the home discipline
3. Read deeply the theory and methods from the different epistemologies they would like to engage (inside and outside their home discipline/unit)
4. Draw on several fields to answer research question (because the question demands it)
5. Go to seminars across campus
6. Attend other professors' lab groups, if possible
7. Be a resource, not just a consumer (in terms of lending your skills to others, in line with mentoring others, etc.)
8. Talk openly/often about your work with people across campus and outside of UGA, non-academics, people from NGOs
9. Ask questions
10. Take interest in the passionate debates in other departments - wrestle with understanding the ideas at the forefront of others' fields. It will help you understand their discipline more and make your work more relevant to their way of thinking.

Dissertation Advice for Students

1. “Walk in the shoes of another discipline”
2. ‘Multiple epistemologies’ is meant to be broader than just bridging the natural/social science divide
3. Describe what you tried to do, and why it did or didn’t work. Include narrative in the Introduction and/or Conclusion, because the knowledge of what went wrong can be helpful to others
4. Make epistemologies talk to each other, even if they don’t agree
5. Being integrative may look different in different departments/disciplines
6. There is no one model for an integrative dissertation (the whole document can be integrative, or a dissertation can also be made integrative by one or two key chapters)
7. Try to deeply understand the sharpest critiques or things that may be at odds with your own perspective/problem-framing
8. Discuss your strategic communication efforts!

How to Develop and Implement a Plan for Strategic Communication and Reflexivity

1. Identify specific ways in which your work will call for (or benefit from) communication with other fields of practice, with lay audiences, and/or with historically marginalized groups.
2. Seek opportunities to employ reflexivity (critical reflection on one’s own positionality and the power relations involving environmental knowledge production)
3. Demonstrate humility in how you wield scientific authority in written and oral communications
4. Acknowledge in your work the ‘incompleteness’ of the message being delivered. Demonstrate openness to alternative framings of the problem.
5. Demonstrate how your strategic communication plan was achieved at the completion of the dissertation research (generally in the discussion/final chapter of your dissertation).

Appendix J: Processes and Resources for Student Grievances

Your progress as a graduate student depends, in large part, on a positive and fruitful relationship with your advisor and committee members. At times, those relationships can be conflictive. We wanted to send a reminder that there are several resources and procedures that are available to you if you are experiencing a tense relationship with your advisor or another authority figure. However, depending on the nature and severity of the conflict, the process to get you help may differ and we cannot outline all those scenarios here. Nonetheless, we thought it wise that you are aware that:

1. First, we are here to help. Both Talley Vodicka and I (Dr. Jesse Abrams) want to hear from you and prefer that you reach out before problems impact your productivity and your enthusiasm and passion for your work. Please feel free to reach out. My cell is 404-981-1707, and I welcome communications. The sooner we hear about a problem, the better we can help.
2. We have created an anonymous Google form on which you can air your grievances. To formulate an effective response, we need details to be as specific as possible, while retaining your anonymity. [Please access it here](#). This is not limited to problems with your advisor or committee but can also be used to mention issues with ICON or CICR for which you do not feel comfortable approaching us directly. In the spirit of finding solutions, we appreciate respectful and constructive comments.

Procedurally, if you are experiencing a problem with your advisor that you feel cannot be resolved through discussion with him/her/they, a graduate advisor can become your de facto advisor. As you belong to an interdisciplinary program, you may choose whether ICON or your unit's grad advisor is the best person to help. Either way, we can either mediate a path forward with your advisor, or we can supervise you and help you find another suitable advisor.

There are several other resources on campus to help with conflict resolution:

- The UGA Ombudspersons are a group of people with whom you can have a confidential conversation, who are trained about University procedures for conflict and who can point you to the next steps to take without fear of retaliation. Read more here https://ombuds.domain-account.com/about_ombuds/
- The EEO office is there to address specific issues of discrimination and harassment. The Office is not required to pursue an investigation if the person who presents a complaint does not want it (with the exception of safety) <https://eoo.uga.edu/> One benefit of making a complaint to this office is that if there is a pattern of behavior (i.e. multiple complaints made to EEO - even if they are not pursued) it strengthens the case for action.
- The Office of Student Care and Outreach also has a lot of advice about the right procedures and resources that a student can access. I have used them countless times on behalf of students, and they also function in confidence <https://sco.uga.edu/>

Behind all of these services are people who really care about student wellbeing and success. It may seem intimidating to reach out to a stranger, but in lieu of talking to Talley and I, I encourage you to take the steps and benefit from their experience and expertise.

Appendix K: Dismissal from Graduate Status in the ICON PhD Program

Dismissal from the ICON program is a separate process from dismissal from the student's home unit. Dismissal from the ICON program does not automatically result in the student's dismissal from the home unit's graduate program. For information about the dismissal policy from each of the home units, please contact the home unit Director of Graduate Studies. A student that is dismissed from the home unit is automatically dismissed from the ICON program.

1. Students may be dismissed from the ICON program at the end of any semester or term if they have not made sufficient academic progress to warrant continuation of study, have not met their responsibilities, have not met their admittance stipulations, or have not maintained accepted standards of conduct. These conditions include students who:

- End two consecutive semesters with a cumulative GPA below 3.0.
- Fail to pass the written or oral comprehensive examination or the final oral examination after consideration of examination repeats or remedial work the student's advisory committee has recommended.
- Fail to make acceptable progress in their dissertation project; this may be determined, in part, by information from the annual written evaluation of the student by the major professor or by recommendations from the student's advisory committee.
- Fail to gain approval of their dissertation.
- Were admitted provisionally and then failed to meet the specified admission conditions within the specified time frame.
- Were dismissed from their home unit's graduate program.

2. Dismissal Procedure:

- The major professor, a member of the student's advisory committee, or any other faculty member who has relevant information may initiate the process by bringing the facts to the attention of the Director of Graduate Studies.
- The student involved will be notified in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies within 7 days that dismissal is being considered. The Director of Graduate Studies will also notify the student's home department Director of Graduate Studies and major professor (if applicable). The student may provide a statement or additional details in written format to the Director of Graduate Studies, and/or request a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to provide information.
- The Director of Graduate Studies will then report back to the Graduate Affairs Committee, and the Graduate Affairs Committee will then meet to decide if a student should be dismissed from the ICON program. The CICR Director can temporarily replace a faculty member on this committee if in the Director's judgment this would lead to a fairer process.
- The Graduate Affairs Committee may recommend dismissal or other academic measures, such as a probation or development of an improvement plan, as it deems appropriate, after it reviews the facts and circumstances. A majority vote of the GAC is required for the dismissal from ICON, or any other remedial action, to be approved. Following the GAC vote, the Director of Graduate Studies will work with the student's home department to decide on and finalize written notification for the student, with one of the options below selected:
 - No Action,
 - Remedial measures required (with details included),
 - Dismissed from ICON, but given option of degree change to stay in home unit, or
 - Dismissed from ICON and home unit.
- The student involved is notified in writing when a determination has been made.

- The Graduate School will then be notified in writing of the dismissal and the reason for the dismissal.

3. Appeals Process

- Students may appeal dismissals as per the UGA Graduate School appeals procedure (Graduate School Dismissal Policy: <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/probation-and-dismissal/>)

4. Students should acquaint themselves with all applicable Board of Regents, University of Georgia, and ICON Program policies, including, but not limited to the following:

- Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy: https://eoo.uga.edu/civil_rights_NDAH/cr-ndah/
- Prohibited Amorous Relationships: https://eoo.uga.edu/About/things_to_know/#:~:text=The%20University%20System%20of%20Georgia,or%20evaluates%20in%20any%20way
- Workplace Violence: <http://safeandsecure.uga.edu/workplace.html>
- Handbook for ICON Program: <https://cicr.uga.edu/icon-phd-program/#icon-resources>
- Code of Conduct: <https://conduct.uga.edu/code-of-conduct/>
- Academic Honesty: <https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>

Violations of these policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the University.

Adoption: October 31, 2018

Graduate Assistants

OneUSG Connect Quick Start

ONESOURCE.UGA.EDU

One USG Connect Employee Self Service site will be your one-stop-shop for all your employee information. You can access OneUSG Connect on the OneSource homepage at onesource.uga.edu.

Log In to OneUSG Connect

You can access OneUSG Connect on the OneSource homepage at onesource.uga.edu.

Click the **OneUSG Connect** drop-down to access the system.

When prompted, log in using your MyID and password.



Verify and Update Your Personal Information

From **OneUSG Connect Employee Self Service**, click the **Personal Details** tile.

Verify your address, contact details, emergency contacts, and additional information.

You can [edit the information](#), or contact your HR representative if the information is incorrect.

Verify and Update Your Direct Deposit Information

From **OneUSG Connect Employee Self Service**, click the **Payroll** tile then click the **Direct Deposit** tile.

Verify your direct deposit account information is correct.

Click **Edit** to make any necessary changes.

Click **Add Account** to add a new account. You can have a maximum of 6 direct deposit accounts.

You can submit direct deposit account changes once a day and you will receive a confirmation email any time you make changes.

Sign Up for an Electronic W-2

To receive your W-2 electronically, you need to sign up in OneUSG Connect Employee Self Service.

You must opt in before **December 31** of the current year. Consent only needs to be provided once.

To opt in, visit **OneUSG Connect Employee Self Service** and click the **Payroll** tile then click the **Taxes** tile.

Click the **W-2/W-2c Consent** link.

Click the box to **Check here to indicate your consent to receive electronic W-2 and W-2c forms**.

Click **Submit**.

Add W-4 and G-4 Information

W-4: Access the OneUSG Connect Employee Self Service and navigate to the Taxes tile. Select W-4 tax information and enter the appropriate withholdings. The [OneSource Training Library](#) serves as an additional resources to assist in navigation and making the appropriate entries for tax withholding.

G-4: Access the OneUSG Connect Employee Self Service and navigate to the Taxes tile. Select G-4 tax information and enter the appropriate withholdings. The [OneSource Training Library](#) serves as an additional resources to assist in navigation and making the appropriate entries for tax withholding.



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OneUSG Connect

Graduate Assistants

OneUSG Connect Quick Start

Review Your Pay Stub

Graduate students are paid on the last business day of the month. For a list of pay dates, please view the [OneUSG Connect Payroll Calendars](#) on the UGA Payroll website.

From **OneUSG Connect Employee Self Service**, click the **Payroll** tile then click the **Pay** tile.

To view a pay stub, click the arrow next to the appropriate pay date. A Monthly Pay Advice job aid to help you understand the information on your paycheck can be found in the OneSource Training Library on the [Quick Reference Materials for Employees](#) page.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

- For more detailed instructions on adding/updating direct deposit information and other HR/Payroll tips, please see the [OneSource Training Library \(training.onesource.uga.edu\)](#) under OneUSG Connect HR/Payroll topics >Employee Self Service > [ESS for Graduate Assistants](#).
- For questions or issues, contact **OneUSG Connect Support** at: oneusgsupport@uga.edu or at 706-542-0202 (option 1).
- **Online version:** https://onesource.uga.edu/faculty_and_staff_guide/ under *Employee Checklists* and click on the *Graduate Assistants Quick Start*.



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