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, 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 regards to 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 Graduate Coordinator 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, dissertation, 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 Graduate Coordinator; 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 Graduate Coordinator. 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 students’ ability to meet both their disciplinary and ICON requirements.
- Advisors are responsible for communicating information about the comprehensive exams 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 Graduate Coordinator 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:

- Pete Brosius (*rep for DePuy*)
- Krista Capps
- Laura German (*rep for Unks, Chappell, Brownson*)
- Ted Gragson (*rep for Morris*)
- Jeff Hepinstall-Cymerman (*rep for Upadhaya, Ganguly, Hallemeyer*)
- Sonia Hernandez
- Nik Heynen (*rep for Howard, Will, Clause, Gujarathi, Gancos Crawford, Cox, Ortiz*)
- Lizzie King (*rep for Bonney*)
- John Maerz
- Don Nelson
- Nate Nibbelink (*rep for Padgett-Vasquez, Heisel, McGreavy, Horton, Vercoe, Kosen*)
- Cathy Pringle
- Jennifer Rice (*rep for Fragomeni, Mertzlufft, Guy, Gambill*)
- Julie Velasquez Runk (*rep for Gibson, DeMoss*)
- Meredith Welch-Devine (*rep for Ayscue, Hecht, Lear*)

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 Graduate Coordinator (iconphd@uga.edu). Students are welcome to email iconphd@uga.edu if they have ideas regarding new potential ICON representatives.