Integrative Conservation (ICON) PhD Program Manual

At the Center for Integrative Conservation Research at UGA
323 Holmes-Hunter Academic Building
101 Herty Drive
Athens, GA 30602
706-542-0458
icon.uga.edu
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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 that the next generation of practitioners and scholars not only develop expertise in specific fields but also have the conceptual tools to work across disciplines. The University of Georgia's Integrative Conservation Ph.D. program (ICON) 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 four 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; or Integrative Conservation with an Area of Emphasis in Geography* - 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.

General information
Students will adhere to the policies and procedures of their chosen 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 are contained in the UGA Graduate Bulletin. Links to departmental and UGA information are provided below:

- Anthropology: [https://anthropology.uga.edu/graduate-program](https://anthropology.uga.edu/graduate-program)
- Forestry and Natural Resources: [https://www.warnell.uga.edu/graduate](https://www.warnell.uga.edu/graduate)
- Ecology: [https://www.ecology.uga.edu/degree/phd-ecology/](https://www.ecology.uga.edu/degree/phd-ecology/)
- Geography: [http://geography.uga.edu/enrolled-students](http://geography.uga.edu/enrolled-students)
- UGA Registration information: [https://reg.uga.edu/enrollment-and-registration/registration/](https://reg.uga.edu/enrollment-and-registration/registration/)

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.

ICON Orientation
This half-day retreat gives new students the opportunity to learn about the program and to meet other students and faculty members. Additionally, the ICON program hosts a low ropes course or similar team-building event every fall semester. All students are encouraged to make every effort to attend both events.

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 student’s 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 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 his/her ICON Representative. Please refer to Appendix B: ICON Representative Policy for more details.

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 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 student and committee (define time frame, question formats, etc.). Please note that the ICON program 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.
- Also, advisors should feel welcome 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.

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) – 3 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 Conservation Ecology and Sustainable Development (ECOL 8400) – 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 make logistical decisions for ICON 8002 (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
Year two includes Integrative Conservation II (ICON 8002) – 3 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 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. A map of completed internships is available on the ICON website. We encourage students to complete their internship before the end of year 2. (See Appendix C: ICON Internship policy for more details).

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

**Years 4 and 5**
The length of a student’s program may 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 listed in this handbook can be sought through consultation with the ICON Curriculum Committee. Contact the ICON Graduate Coordinator (iconphd@uga.edu) for further details.

**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 monthly brown bags, workshops, peer review sessions, or reading groups.

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

**Assistantships and funding**
ICON students with departmental teaching assistantships (TAs) will work directly with the faculty member teaching the course to which they are assigned to determine duties.

ICON students with ICON research assistantships (ICON RAs) will work with the ICON Graduate Coordinator on projects and activities to fulfill their funding arrangements. Projects are determined at the beginning of each semester. It is the responsibility of the ICON RA to communicate with his/her advisor about the responsibilities he/she assumes. At the mid-point and end of each semester, the Administrative Associate and/or ICON Graduate Coordinator may request an update on ICON RA projects (generally via email). In the event an ICON RA is not adequately fulfilling his/her responsibilities, a meeting will be arranged between the ICON Graduate Coordinator, the student, and his/her advisor to discuss the situation and identify solutions. (See Appendix D: ICON RA Policy for more details.)

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 summer semester, so students must pay their fees directly. For more information please visit https://osfa.uga.edu/costs/.*

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

In addition, ICON students are asked to email the Graduate Coordinator (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).
ICON Website
The ICON website (icon.uga.edu) provides access to all program policies; information on fellowship, internship, and training opportunities; a directory of ICON students and faculty; student news and a calendar of events.

Important program-related documents can be found on the “Student Program Information” page. To access this section, please visit: http://icon.uga.edu/student/student-resources/. Students are responsible for obtaining the most up-to-date copies of these documents by accessing this site.

Location
CICR is located on UGA’s North Campus on the 3rd floor of the Holmes-Hunter Academic Building. The first floor of this building is the only floor that is wheelchair accessible; alternate accommodations will be arranged for people with limited mobility. Please contact iconphd@uga.edu for specific requests.

Several UGA buses stop right outside of the Holmes-Hunter Building at the Arch stop, including East-West, Family Housing, Milledge Avenue, and ORBIT. For information on UGA bus routes, please visit the UGA Transit site (http://www.transit.uga.edu/route.html).

Life in Athens
According to areavibes.com, the cost of living index for Athens-Clarke County is 92, compared to a national average of 100. City-Data.com has a wealth of demographic, economic, climate, and other data about Athens. For information on Athens area restaurants, activities and night life, check out Flagpole Magazine’s Guide to Athens, http://guide.flagpole.com/.

Contacts
Dr. Sonia Hernandez
Graduate Coordinator, Integrative Conservation PhD Program
Professor, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources and the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study
iconphd@uga.edu
706-296-3909

Dr. Nate Nibbelink
Director, Center for Integrative Conservation Research
Professor, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
cicrdirector@uga.edu
706-542-9853

Talley Vodicka
Administrative Specialist, Center for Integrative Conservation Research
talleyv@uga.edu
706-542-0458

ICON website: http://icon.uga.edu/
ICON twitter: @UGAICON
ICON YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTkhwx7GV9nKKkA8iinQyzA
Appendix A: ICON Degree Checklist

Please note that these are general guidelines; ICON defers to the student's Advisor and Departmental guidelines first. Graduate School forms are available online at: https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/forms/

Steps toward degree and timeline for adequate progress†

- 1. Selection of Major Professor [End of 1st semester]
- 2. Selection of ICON Representative [End of 2nd semester]
- 3. Selection of Advisory Committee [End of 2nd semester]
- 4. Meeting with Advisor and ICON Rep [Before beginning of 2nd year]
- 5. Preliminary Program of Study [End of 2nd semester]
- 6. Dissertation Proposal Defense [4th or 5th semester]
- 7. Human Subjects [Yes No]
   - If yes, IRB approval #__________
- 8. Animal Use & Care [Yes No]
   - If yes, IACUC approval #__________
- 9. Final Program of Study [4th or 5th semester] Must be approved by Grad School before Oral Comp Exam can be scheduled
- 10. Written Comprehensive Exam [4th or 5th semester]
- 11. Oral Comprehensive Exam [4th or 5th semester] All information must be provided to Graduate Coordinator’s office three weeks prior to desired date for oral exam.
- 12. Admission to Candidacy [End of 5th semester]
- 14. Doctoral Dissertation Approval And Final Oral Examination [End of 8th semester]

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.

ICON Requirements
Five (5) ICON core courses (minimum of 12 credit hours) must appear on your Program of Study:
- ICON 8001 (3 hrs)
- ICON 8110* (1 hr) *only for students enrolling in 2015 or later. Not required for 2018/19 cohorts.
- ICON 8002 (3 hrs)
- ECOL(ICON) 8400 (2 hrs)
- ICON 8111/8111E (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.)

Course electives
- Minimum of two (2) additional graduate-level courses (6 hours total). See “2015-2016 Integrative Conservation Suggested Electives.”

Home department requirements
- All degree requirements for home departments. See home department handbooks for additional details.
Appendix B: 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 (rep for Kumar)
Laura German
Ted Gragson (rep for Morris, Seigerman)
Jeff Hepinstall-Cymerman (rep for Hallemeier)
Sonia Hernandez
Nik Heynen (rep for Gujarathi, Gancos Crawford, Cox, Ortiz, Beauvais)
Lizzie King
John Maerz (rep for Miles)
Don Nelson (rep for Rao)
Nate Nibbelink (rep for McGreavy, Vercoe, Kosen, Morrow)
Cathy Pringle
Jennifer Rice (rep for Gambill, Hohbein, Evans)
Julie Velasquez Runk (rep for Foster, Rasquinha)
Meredith Welch-Devine (rep for Hecht, Bozeman, Hsiung, Nelson)

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.
Appendix C: ICON Internship Policy

Overview
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. If needed, students may register for internship credit during the fall or spring semester following their summer internship to complete the requirement.
2. Students will register for 3-8 credit hours of ICON 8111 (if on-campus) or ICON 8111E (if off-campus) for their internship. The internship course may be repeated for a maximum of 16 hours of credit. Departmental credit is available if needed (e.g. ANTH 8111 or 8111E). If departmental credit is needed, please contact your departmental graduate coordinator assistant to request the course and cc iconphd@uga.edu.
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 Advisor early in the ICON program. The ICON Graduate Coordinator is available to work with students and their advisors to identify an appropriate internship.
5. Prior to the internship, 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 Graduate Coordinator (iconphd@uga.edu) and Faculty Advisor. Faculty Advisors must approve of the internship selection (email approval is sufficient). The Graduate Coordinator will be charged with developing alternatives for students who cannot be placed in an internship for one reason or another.
6. Each student will be paired with an individual from his or her internship organization who will mentor that student throughout the internship.
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 Graduate Coordinator (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 Graduate Coordinator (iconphd@uga.edu). Forms are due on the last date of final exams for the current semester.

*Students will not be assigned grades until report and mentor evaluation forms are received. Contact the graduate coordinator with any questions about the ICON internship (iconphd@uga.edu).
Date: 

Name of the intern: 

Name of the mentor: 

The internship started on and was completed on 

Organization/Location: 

Describe the responsibilities, projects, and tasks of the intern: 

Did the intern complete a minimum of 100 hours of effort over the course of the internship? 

What are the intern’s strengths? 

What are the areas for improvement? 

Please assess the intern’s performance by marking an “X” in the categories below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional skills</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate with colleagues and/or stakeholders</td>
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<td>Manage multiple tasks</td>
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<td>Collect data</td>
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<td>Analyze data</td>
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<td>Develop reports and other products for diverse audiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use creativity and innovation to solve problems</td>
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Please provide any additional comments about the intern’s performance. 

Thank you for providing your feedback. Please return this form to iconphd@uga.edu
The purpose of the ICON research assistantship is to help ensure that the creativity and participation of our funded students contributes 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.

An ICON RA is defined as any student funded by an ICON research assistantship and does not apply to any ICON student funded by other university, department, or external sources (e.g. Presidential Fellowships, departmental funding, and external grants). 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.

1. At the beginning of fall semester, ICON RAs will be sent a list of available positions for the new academic year and asked to rank their top choices. 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 and Administrative Specialist will serve as the main points of contact for students for their ICON RA responsibilities.

3. All ICON RAs will be expected to participate in the monthly RA meetings.

4. Students should work no more than 16 hours per week, or the amount specified in their funding letter. The 16 hours-per-week commitment should first be allocated to ICON RA responsibilities, and the total number of hours of ICON RA and advisor-related activities may not exceed the specified maximum hours of work. The use of remaining weekly RA hours should be negotiated between the student and faculty advisor. Preferred arrangements include: remaining RA time to be used by the student on their own research; 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 Graduate Coordinator about the situation.

5. In the event an ICON RA is not adequately fulfilling their responsibilities, a meeting will be arranged between the CICR Director, ICON Graduate Coordinator, the student, and their advisor to discuss the situation and identify solutions.

Examples of ICON RA Positions:
ICON leadership will identify opportunities for engagement before the beginning of each academic semester. Examples of projects may include (but are not limited to):

- Research Brief Assistant: in charge of soliciting content, editing, and coordinating the Integrative Conservation research briefs
- CICR Program Assistant: supports CICR initiatives such as development, annual events, etc.
- ICON Program Assistant: supports graduate recruitment, conducts exit interviews, assists with other ICON program initiatives as needed
- Events Assistant(s): plans monthly events for the ICON and CICR communities
Appendix E: ICON Core Research Principles and Criteria

**Philosophy:** Being integrative is more than being multidisciplinary; it means crossing disciplinary lines, epistemologies and/or worldviews to give full and balanced space to understanding complex problems from multiple perspectives. In striving to do so, it should be recognized that:

- Each discipline and epistemology highlights 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 assesses 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 audiences and strategies for communication of the knowledge created. This exchange of knowledge is not one-way from the researcher to the end users; rather the development of knowledge is from the start a partnership, a dialogue, and an iterative process that, in fact, shapes and directs the research agenda along the way.

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- and inter-disciplinary studies often fall into this category), or (b) assimilation/synthesis across various parts of a system (often called transdisciplinary), which tackles all the complexities of an issue through one unifying analytical approach.

ICON students are expected to be engaged in research and training that attempts to examine complex problems from multiple disciplines and worldviews. In order to ensure that ICON students are able to craft a course of study and dissertation project that will meet the goals of integrative research in the ICON program, students should demonstrate how the most relevant core principles and criteria are integrated into their research (listed below). This should be accomplished through ongoing dialogue with the major advisor, ICON representative and committee members.

**Core principles of integrative research:**

- **Complexity:** There are three key elements of complexity: (1) Human and natural systems are inextricably linked; (2) Any important environmental and developmental issues will always involve uncertainty; (3) All models and analytical tools for understanding conservation and development issues engage in some form of simplification of complexity, and none provide a comprehensive picture.
- **Pluralism:** Conservation and sustainability issues, and the trade-offs they entail, are experienced and understood from a variety of legitimate perspectives. At the root of many long-standing disputes are differing models, metaphors, and ways of understanding the complexity of socio-environmental systems. Each perspective highlights certain dimensions and obscures others. 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 the voices of all affected parties are heard, understood and respected. Integrative research deliberately seeks out and incorporates alternative knowledges and experiences that are not traditionally captured in academic research.

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Context: Analytical tools and methods should be applied with sensitivity to the 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 agents behave and make decisions, but it also shapes the meaning of our research, and the potential consequences of our findings.

Criteria for integrative research:

1. Multiple theoretical framings: The doctoral research of ICON students should demonstrate the application and interface of multiple perspectives and/or worldviews, and actively engage questions of the commensurability and completeness of distinct framings. 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 – from problem framing to literature review, research questions and methodology. This may mean the following:
   a. Problem framing: Integrative problem definition means defining problems through multiple lenses or perspectives, and illustrating the differences between them and what these differences give rise to.
   b. Literature review: At the level of literature review, integrative research means 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 methodology: 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.

3. Strategic communication: In addition to striving to evolve along integrative lines, students are required to engage in strategic communications with other fields of practice and with lay audiences in ways that are effective in reaching them and inviting them to expand the scope of their current framing or understanding of problems. To do so effectively, integrative researchers must understand how these audiences currently frame problems so as to communicate effectively in ways that challenge without alienating, while also acknowledging the 'incompleteness' of the message being delivered and demonstrating openness to alternative framings of the problem. As students pursue their dissertation research, they will be responsible for developing and implementing a plan for strategic communication related to their research topic and demonstrating how that 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) the goal of having the dissertation directly inform or facilitate decision-making or policy-development; engagement with practitioners or other non-academics in the development of the research program to address real world problems; collaboration with communities in addressing issues of concern to them.

Note: These guidelines apply to ICON students beginning on or after August 2013. Adherence to these guidelines by students admitted into the ICON program before 2013 is encouraged to the fullest extent possible, but not required.
Appendix G: 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 graduate coordinator. 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 fail 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 Graduate Coordinator.
   • The student involved will be notified in writing by the Graduate Coordinator within 7 days that dismissal is being considered. The Graduate Coordinator will also notify the student’s home department Graduate Coordinator and major professor (if applicable). The student may provide a statement or additional details in written format to the Graduate Coordinator, and/or request a meeting with the Graduate Coordinator to provide information.
   • The Graduate Coordinator 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 Graduate Coordinator 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:
     o No Action,
     o Remedial measures required (with details included),
     o Dismissed from ICON, but given option of degree change to stay in home unit, or
     o 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:

- Prohibited Amorous Relationships [https://eoo.uga.edu/focus-on/are-there-any-prohibited-amorous-relationships-among-university-community-members](https://eoo.uga.edu/focus-on/are-there-any-prohibited-amorous-relationships-among-university-community-members)
- Workplace Violence [http://safeandsecure.uga.edu/workplace.html](http://safeandsecure.uga.edu/workplace.html)
- Code of Conduct [https://conduct.uga.edu/content_page/code-of-conduct](https://conduct.uga.edu/content_page/code-of-conduct)
- Academic Honesty [https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/](https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/)

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

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