

Milestones for 3rd Year Graduate Students in Evolutionary Anthropology

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Welcome back to your third year in our Ph.D. program! This document serves as a brief introduction to the key academic milestones for your next year.

1. **Academic Requirements:** Your academic requirements should now be completed, and you should phase out formal coursework, except under the advice or approval of your Ph.D. Committee. Start to focus more on research, including data collection but also analysis and writing of manuscripts. It is also a good time to plan on publishing findings from research underway and thus far completed; discuss that possibility with your advisor and plan a course of action.
2. **Individual Development Plan (IDP):** Before the start of the Fall Semester, complete the [“Second Year Students and Beyond” IDP and associated Action Plan](#) for the next academic year. This will be revisited at least once during the academic year (typically at the start of spring semester). The advisor and student fill out their sections of the IDP separately, discuss those sections in a follow-up meeting, and jointly outline steps to advance the student’s research and career goals in the Action Plan. Upon completion, the IDP and Action Plan is shared with the DGSA and retained in the graduate student’s records.
3. **Dissertation Proposal and Preliminary Examination: Your defense must take place by the end of the 5th semester, as required by the Graduate School.** Set your committee meeting and prelims defense before the 5th semester starts. It is best to not wait until too late in the 5th semester to complete this important requirement, as it can be tricky to both convene your committee and arrange a date for your EATS presentation; give yourself some leeway in case of unexpected problems or scheduling conflicts. Your preliminary exam involves a full-length EATS presentation. Before the semester starts, please coordinate a presentation date that with the EATS coordinators. We refer you to the [“Requirements For The Ph.D. Degree In Evolutionary Anthropology,”](#) section 8, for more information on what is required.
4. **Committee Meeting:** Remember that you must meet with your committee in every academic year following your proposal defense. If you completed your proposal defense in the 4th semester, be sure to arrange a separate meeting with the full committee this academic year, as required by our program. Have your Ph.D. advisor email Elaina following the committee meeting so that she can keep track of committee meetings.
5. **Research Expectations.** Continue to pursue research, with a focus on your thesis projects but including some additional projects (or wrapping up earlier projects). If you have not been doing so already, your 3rd year is a good time to start to learn about the publishing process. Consider projects from your first 2 years at Duke to turn into manuscripts for publications. If you are seeking publication of manuscripts that you also intend to include in your dissertation, be sure to discuss those plans with your committee, and share the drafts to be submitted with committee in time for the members to provide feedback (e.g., two weeks before you plan to submit the manuscripts).
6. **Responsible Conduct of Research:** Be sure you are keeping up with the training sessions in the [Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\)](#) from the Graduate School. Students in the Non-Medical Sciences are required to complete 12 hours of such training during their first 4 years of study by attending general Graduate School RCR Forum events (all-day events offered each fall during orientation, GS711) or Departmental RCR Forum events (generally two hours each) (GS712). Check

the [schedule of RCR events](#) and emails from the Graduate School to find details on those held during the semester.

7. **Teaching Assistantships:** Remember that you are required to gain teaching competency during your time in our program. That can be achieved by serving as an Instructor of Record for a Summer Session course (please consult with Dr. Leslie Digby if that is of interest), or through serving as a Teaching Assistant for two semesters. If you are a Teaching Assistant, please refer to advice provided in the “Academic Orientation for New 1st Year Graduate Students in Evolutionary Anthropology” (i.e., the equivalent document for 1st years).
8. **Departmental Seminar and Annual Presentation to the Department:** In addition to your coursework and teaching responsibilities, all graduate students are expected to attend the weekly Evolutionary Anthropology Talk Series (EATS), and **to give at least one short or full-length seminar or organize one discussion during the academic year** (as noted [here](#), and note that the yearly “what I did last summer” EATS does not count toward this requirement). EATS is held on Fridays from 11:45 to 12:45, and food is often provided. To the maximum extent possible, please plan your coursework around EATS, and plan to attend all EATS seminars, even when the topic appears to be outside your immediate areas of interest.
9. **Lab Policies and Expectations:** At the start of the year, review lab policies, and set expectations with your advisor for how often you will meet or otherwise receive feedback. Issues to discuss involve fieldwork, authorship, project funding, lab and field safety, expectations regarding email and other communication, and the advisor’s and student’s responsibilities.
10. **Resources:** Remain aware of the many resources available to you at Duke: the [Career Center](#), the Grad School’s [Professional Development Resources](#) (including their new tool, [Duke OPTIONS](#)), [graduate student groups](#), the Certificate in College Teaching (and the [Certificate Program](#) more generally), the [Women’s Center](#), and many more!
11. **Funding Opportunities:** Refresh your knowledge of funding options at Duke and elsewhere, and make a plan for grant applications and fellowships for the academic year. Fellowships generally provide a stipend for you, enabling you to have a break from TA duties, while grants are intended to fund research activities. The Graduate School website provides a [list of funding opportunities, including both fellowships and grants](#). These and additional sources are available on the [departmental webpage](#).
12. **Departmental Evaluation of Students:** As you plan your year, remember that all graduate students will be required to submit a summary of their academic activities at the end of the spring semester. Plan to type up a formal document following the template provided that addresses each of the requested pieces of information, and share that document with your advisor for feedback before submitting it to the DGS. The faculty will discuss each student’s progress individually and identify any concerns or provide advice. The DGS will provide feedback to the students shortly after this meeting.
13. **Service to the Department, University, and Beyond:** Continue to contribute to the department via service opportunities, which encompasses volunteer (i.e., non-compensated) time devoted to support our intellectual community. As you enter your 3rd year, consider more advanced service activities that will help you learn about the life of faculty governance, such as serving as the graduate student representative at the faculty meetings or on the Graduate and Professional Student Council. If you haven’t already done so, consider also service to your non-Duke communities, such as academic societies; in addition to helping you find academic communities, this kind of service can help you network as you search for postdoctoral positions. We do ask you to list your service activities on your yearly review.

14. **Mental and Physical Health:** A Ph.D. can be a particularly challenging process, with many bumps in the road to completion, and the sense that one could always be doing more to advance the research. It is important to be aware of this potential for stress, and to take stock of your mental and physical health throughout your Ph.D. career. For assistance with mental health issues, please refer to Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS), which has the mission of enhancing “strengths and develop abilities to successfully live, grow and learn” (<https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/caps>). Exercise and wellness activities are also important; consider joining the gym, and participating in activities there, including group activities and trips off campus that will help you meet others across the university in a social setting. If you have concerns about your own or others’ health or wellbeing, and are not sure where to turn, you may consider filing a report through [DukeReach](#). These reports can be made anonymously. If you experience harassment, discrimination, or find yourself confronted with toxic behavior from anyone affiliated with Duke, the [Graduate School Interactive Reporting Guide](#) can help you find the most appropriate course of action based on your exact situation.
15. **Academic Connections Across Duke!** Be aware that a number of other programs exist in which you may find additional academic growth and connection, including the [University Program in Ecology \(UPE\)](#), [Duke Institute for Brain Sciences \(DIBS\)](#), [Duke Global Health \(DGHI\)](#), and [Bass Connections](#). In addition, other departments and schools can offer such connection, including [Biology](#), the [Nicholas School of the Environment](#), and [Psychology & Neuroscience](#). The Biology department, for example, has a regular seminar series, and multiple other topically-focused discussion and seminar series. Get involved, and it will pay off for your research and network of collaborations (and friends) here at Duke!
16. **Go to Conferences:** In addition to connections across Duke, remember to branch out to your broader academic community by attending conferences. You will need to figure out the conferences that are right for you, but the American Association of Physical Anthropologists is the most common society with a conference among our faculty (the department typically clears out for the conference every spring). Also, there is a regional conference that may interest you, the [Mid-Atlantic Bioanthropology Interest Group](#). They have a yearly meeting. Funding is available for travel through the Graduate School website for one conference per year after your preliminary examination (if you are presenting), at this [link](#).

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact the DGS (Charles Nunn) or the DGS Assistant (Elaina Cossin). We are here to help you through any challenges you face, and look forward to seeing how your research develops – and helping it to flourish – in your time at Duke.