

Expectations for 5th Year Graduate Students in Evolutionary Anthropology

Charles Nunn, Director of Graduate Studies

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

- 1. Research Expectations:** You will spend this year focusing on your research and identifying postdoctoral opportunities. Ideally, the majority of data collection and analysis will be completed, along with major analyses, and you will shift to focusing on writing up your chapters. If you have not been doing so already, it is important that you start finishing research projects that you started at Duke, including dissertation chapters, and submit them to journals for publications. This demonstrates that you can complete what you started, and thus will help you land a postdoc or other job. If you are seeking publication of papers that will also appear 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).
- 2. Postdoctoral Research Planning:** Although you will feel pressure to focus on your dissertation, you also need to continue to pursue potential postdoc opportunities; you already began to consider this in your 4th year, and this year your goal will be to finalize those plans. Discuss options with your advisor, and take opportunities to connect with potential postdoctoral advisors and employers to let them know your interest. It takes time to set-up postdoctoral funding or land a job; getting a head start can increase your chances of success. Plan to attend conferences and workshops that can help you network with faculty who might serve as advisors or employers, and get to know the postdocs and graduate students in labs that interest you to determine whether the lab is a good fit for your interests and approach (and to learn about the mentoring style, community, and funding streams in that lab).
- 3. Structure of Your Dissertation: We strongly recommend that you write up chapters as publishable units. Writing up a long “monograph” that has to later be edited into separate papers will waste time, and is not necessary.** You should plan on at least 3 core chapters that reflect scientific findings equivalent to separate research publications, and an Introduction and Discussion / Conclusion chapters. Your advisor and committee may provide additional suggestions relevant to your particular set of projects and goals. At the start of the semester, please review the requirements for your dissertation at the Departmental level and the Graduate School (see section 9 and Appendix 1 of the [“Requirements For The Ph.D. Degree In Evolutionary Anthropology,”](#) and the [Graduate School](#)). Throughout this year, keep in touch with Elaina to inform her of your plans so that she can be sure you are completing the many necessary steps towards a successful completion.
- 4. Funding Alert! We guarantee five years of support; thus, at the start of this 5th year, you have one year to complete your dissertation.** Note that this support runs only through the Spring Semester. If you plan to finish in the summer after your 10th semester, you need to discuss this with your advisor and the DGS immediately to establish a source of funding for

late completion. Similarly, if you think you will need to spill over into your sixth year, discuss this with your advisor and DGS very early in your 5th year, and keep the DGS informed of any changes to your plan from that point forward.

5. **Departmental Seminar:** As part of your defense, you will need to schedule a full-length EATS presentation. Before the start of your fifth year, touch base with the organizers of EATS to ensure you get a spot. Coordinate with your committee so that the presentation aligns with the defense immediately after.
6. **Committee Meeting:** Your dissertation defense will serve as your required committee meeting for the year. However, you may wish to hold an extra meeting, and you should definitely stay in touch with your committee throughout the year, including arranging individual meetings to receive feedback on specific elements of your research. Your committee is here to help you! Make use of them.
7. **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.
8. **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 Graduate Students in Evolutionary Anthropology” (i.e. the equivalent document for 1st years).
9. **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 far from your immediate areas of interest.
10. **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.
11. **Duke 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!

12. **Funding Opportunities:** In your 5th year, you will be shifting your attention to funding your postdoc research. Discuss options with your advisor, and start to learn how to search non-Duke sources of funding.
13. **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, including those who have defended their dissertations (we need this information for departmental assessments). **If you have not finished, we will be especially looking for evidence that you are (1) successfully funding your dissertation research and (2) starting to submit, and ideally publish, scientific papers related to your dissertation.** You should also be starting to settle into an academic community and scientific society outside of Duke, with poster and oral presentations at meetings of that society.
14. **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. Especially 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. However, we also emphasize that your main focus will be research this year: your job applications will be enhanced by evidence of service, but to only a minor extent. In contrast, research accomplishments are paramount when you enter the job market, so allocate your time judiciously. We do ask you to list your service activities on your yearly review.
15. **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.
16. **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. 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!

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.