



# PhD Handbook for Construction Management

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**FLORIDA**

M.E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction Management

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## A Message from the Director of Graduate Programs and Research



Welcome to the Rinker School!

Joining the Rinker School as a PhD Degree student may be the most significant decision you made towards your future career – industry or academia. The Rinker School is the oldest continuing construction program in the country. It was accredited in 1975 by the American Council for Construction Education and the first to offer PhD degree in Construction Management (formerly, Building Construction).

Rinker School has an outsized impact in its field and is rated the top construction management program for research in the United States and across the world. We are proud to share that Rinker School alumni lead the construction industry as well as construction management programs globally.

Our top-notch faculty with advanced knowledge of construction industry, techniques, and research and development will impart the knowledge that is much needed in the construction industry, now and in the future. The numerous research awards from external agencies secured by our faculty is a true testament of the high-quality research activity conducted at the Rinker School. Through active participation and dissemination of construction research in reputed conferences globally, our Rinker faculty have made tremendous impact. Take a moment to read our faculty accomplishments and get inspired!

This PhD Degree handbook was originally developed by Dr. Ian Flood, Professor of Construction Management, to support your success and timely graduation. Therefore, use this handbook as a quick-reference guide. Feel free to contact Mr. Joseph Carroll, Rinker School Graduate Admissions Officer, or me if you have questions.

With clear goals, you are about to see a forward momentum in your career trajectory. Graduate and become one of the proud Rinker School alumni, come back and share your insights with students, and make an impact!

Go Gators!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ravi Srinivasan', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Ravi Srinivasan  
Director of Graduate Programs and Research  
M.E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction Management  
College of Design, Construction and Planning  
University of Florida

## Introduction

All new PhD students are required to read this handbook and its supporting documentation. *The student is responsible for meeting all PhD program requirements and satisfying all deadlines published in the Graduate School's academic calendar, which is available at <https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/calendar/>.*

This document sets out the procedures and policies to be followed by both prospective and admitted students seeking the Doctor of Philosophy in Design, Construction and Planning degree with a concentration in Construction Management, within the M.E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction Management (Rinker School) in the College of Design, Construction, and Planning (College of DCP). *This handbook is a supplement to the Graduate Catalog of the University of Florida's Graduate School and the Doctoral Studies Handbook of the College of DCP and should be read in conjunction with both of those publications.* Those documents and other general information on the doctoral program are available as follows:

### Resources:

- The *Graduate Catalog* is available at <https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/>.
- The **Graduate School website** is available at <https://grad.ufl.edu/>.
- The *Doctoral Studies Handbook of the College of DCP*, is available at <https://dcp.ufl.edu/academics/phd8/>.
- The **Rinker School website** available at <https://dcp.ufl.edu/rinker/>.

### Contacts:

- The Rinker School's **Director of Graduate Programs and Research** is Dr. Ravi Srinivasan. His email address is [sravi@ufl.edu](mailto:sravi@ufl.edu).
- The Rinker School's **Graduate Admissions Officer** is Mr. Joseph J. Carroll. His email address is [josephcarroll@ufl.edu](mailto:josephcarroll@ufl.edu).

### Completion of a PhD involves two main components:

1. Complete 90 credit hours of core and approved graduate level coursework. Note, up to 30 credit hours may be transferred from a prior master's degree, and an additional 15 credit hours of post-master's graduate study may be transferred from programs at approved schools offering doctoral degrees.
2. Complete and defend a high-quality original piece of research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's chosen field of study.

The two components appear straightforward, but they often involve complex systems which interplay with one another. Hence, this handbook was written to demystify the PhD process, while explaining rules and regulations which are unique to the Rinker School's doctoral program.

## Application for Admission into the PhD Program

### Summary of Application:

1. Identify common research interests and research funding availability with a Rinker School professor who holds Doctoral Research Faculty (DRF) status.
  - a. The professor must be the one who directs PhD students as chair or co-chair.
  - b. The list of eligible Rinker School DRF is available at <https://dcp.ufl.edu/rinker/research-faculty/>.
  - c. The statement of purpose should clearly state research interests of the student and the Rinker School faculty they desire to mentor them.
2. Apply to the Doctor of Philosophy in Design, Construction and Planning.
  - a. Make sure to indicate the Construction Management concentration.
  - b. Make sure to comply with the deadlines, which are available at <https://dcp.ufl.edu/academics/phd8/phd-admissions/>.
  - c. The following materials are required:
    - i. Transcripts from all colleges and universities attended,
    - ii. A current résumé or *curriculum vitae*,
    - iii. Three letters of recommendation (academics preferred; professionals accepted),
    - iv. A statement of purpose:
      1. Will be one to two pages in length,
      2. Font will be twelve-point, Arial, Times New Roman, or Calibri,
      3. Will clearly state why the student desires to study at the Rinker School,
      4. Will clearly state the objective of earning a PhD,
      5. Will clearly state research interests of the student, and
      6. Will clearly state the professor whom the student plans to work with.
3. The graduate application is available on the UF Office of Admissions website, <https://admissions.ufl.edu>.
  - a. The application fee is \$30 and is not waivable or refundable.
  - b. Applicants should ensure they meet admissions criteria before applying.
4. Note that applicants receive admissions decisions prior to receiving funding decisions.

### GRE Requirements:

1. The GRE is mandatory for application to the PhD Program.
2. A combined score of 308 or better is required.
3. The Verbal Section score must be 140 or higher.
4. A 160 or better on the Quantitative Section is preferred.

### A note about English proficiency exams.

Applicants who are not citizens of a country where English is one of the official languages will need to submit English proficiency exam scores, unless they graduated with a degree from a university in a country where the official language is English.

1. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) are the only acceptable exams.
2. Reference <https://dcp.ufl.edu/academics/phd8/phd-admissions/> for current TOEFL and IELTS score requirements.
3. Students may substitute the University of Florida English Language Institute (ELI) exit exam in place of acceptable TOEFL or IELTS scores. To learn more about the ELI program, visit <https://eli.ufl.edu/>.

## Scholarships, Fellowships, Assistantships, and Financial Aid

Several sources of funding are available to assist students financially through the PhD program. All funds are awarded competitively. Broadly, the funding sources include:

- **Graduate School Funding.** The Graduate School Opportunity Award (GSOA), previously known as the Graduate School Fellowship, provides students with tuition assistance and a stipend. To learn more about the GSOA, and other types of funding potentially available from the Graduate School to incoming PhD students, visit <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospective-students/funding/>.
- **The Rinker Scholar Program.** This program provides faculty members from Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) schools with tuition assistance and a stipend for up to three years. The deadline for receipt of applications is December 5<sup>th</sup> for the subsequent Fall Semester. Further information on the Rinker Scholar program is available at <https://dcp.ufl.edu/rinker/academics/doctor-of-philosophy/construction-management/rinker-scholar-program/>.
- **Graduate Teaching Assistantships.** Each year, financial support is offered to eligible graduate students within the Rinker School to teach, or assist faculty in teaching, certain undergraduate courses. These are usually offered to students after they have joined the Rinker School. Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) offer tuition assistance and a stipend for one or more semesters. GTA performance is evaluated at the completion of each semester. PhD students are allowed to be a GTA for up to four years.
- **Research Assistantships.** Faculty members of the Rinker School are actively involved in research, which is often supported financially by granting agencies. This support often includes funding for Graduate Research Assistants (GRA), providing tuition assistance and a stipend for one or more years. Applicants to the PhD program interested in this source of support should contact faculty members that share a common research interest.
- **Financial Aid.** Domestic students may qualify for Federal Financial Aid. Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to see if they qualify. To learn more, visit the Office of Student Financial Affairs website, <https://www.sfa.ufl.edu/>.
- **Latin American and Caribbean Scholarship.** The Latin American and Caribbean Scholarship (LAC) is available to full-time students who are citizens of a Latin American or Caribbean country (including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands). The LAC grants Florida resident tuition to its recipients plus \$500 per year for books. There is no application for the LAC; the Rinker School of Construction Management automatically considers applicants from eligible countries during the admissions process. To learn more about the LAC, reference the UF Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships website, <https://www.sfa.ufl.edu/lac-scholarship/>.
- **Rinker School Scholarships.** The Rinker School has approximately 30 scholarship awards available each year, which typically award between \$500 to \$2,000. Applications for the scholarships can be found on the "students" section of the Rinker School website.

## First Year in the PhD Program

### Summary of First Year

Task	Timeline
1. Meet with PhD committee chair.	Must occur immediately on arrival at UF.
2. Establish a preliminary Plan of Study. 3. Enroll in Research Methods in the 1 <sup>st</sup> semester to gain knowledge and competency to write the preliminary dissertation proposal.	Must complete at start of 1 <sup>st</sup> semester.
4. Write a preliminary dissertation proposal. 5. Send the preliminary dissertation proposal to Graduate Admissions Officer.	Must complete by the end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester.
6. Establish a PhD Committee.	Must complete by the end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester.
7. Establish a comprehensive program of study.	Must complete by the end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester.
8. Prepare UF Individual Development Plan (IDP) for 1 <sup>st</sup> year, obtain signature from the committee chair. 9. <b>Send duly signed and dated IDP form to Graduate Admissions Officer.</b>	Must be completed at end of each year.

### Establish a Preliminary Program of Study

Immediately upon arrival at the University of Florida, the student shall consult with their faculty committee chair to determine the student's goals and address issues such as core courses, remedial courses, financial support, time constraints, any special circumstances that need attention, and to start working towards selection of a supervisory committee.

The first year is the foundation year and provides the student with the opportunity to complete core course requirements and to pursue general coursework to correct deficiencies and fill in gaps in their background, although other courses relevant to the student's program of study may also be taken during the first year (time permitting). Consequently, at the start of the first semester, the student must complete a preliminary program for the first year of study, in consultation with their committee chair. Reference the appendices in this handbook for additional information on courses.

### Write a Preliminary Dissertation Proposal and Establish a Supervisory Committee

As soon as possible during the first two semesters, the student, in consultation with their faculty chair, must write a preliminary dissertation research proposal and select and register their supervisory committee. The purpose of the preliminary dissertation proposal is to encourage the student to formally consider their research focus and to help select the supervisory committee. The proposal must include the following components:

- Title,
- Background,
- Aim and objectives,
- Scope of work,
- Methodology, and
- Bibliography and identification of the sources of data/information.

The supervisory committee must comprise at least four total members, including the chair, and should be structured as follows:



- The chair who must hold doctoral research faculty (DRF) status and be a faculty member of the Rinker School.
- The co-chair or first member must hold DRF status be a faculty member of the Rinker School.
- An additional member must hold either graduate research faculty (GRF) status or DRF status and be a faculty member within the College of DCP.
- One member must be an external member from a college at the University of Florida other than the College of DCP, who must hold GRF or DRF status.
- Note, a faculty member without GRF status or a person outside of UF may be appointed to a committee, if that person has a special area of expertise required for the dissertation. The committee chair must write a brief justification for adding the Special Member and obtain the potential Special Member's *curriculum vitae*. After submission to the Graduate School, the appointment of the Special Member will either be approved or denied.
- If the student has chosen a minor, then a committee member must be drawn from the unit representing that discipline. If the student has more than one minor, the committee must include a member from each unit representing those disciplines.

The supervisory committee should comprise faculty members that, collectively, provide expertise across all relevant aspects of the student's chosen field of research. Mr. Joseph Carroll will be able to confirm the DRF and GRF status of the PhD committee.

### **Establish a Complete Program of Study**

The student must establish a program of study before the end of the first year of study. The committee chair and student should consult, where relevant, with other members of the committee and the Rinker School Graduate Programs when establishing the program. The program may be subsequently modified after consultation with the chair and the supervisory committee. The program of study will cover the following:

- Core courses,
- Any courses deemed necessary by the supervisory committee or the chair,
- The required elective in the College of DCP outside of the Rinker,
- Other courses required to satisfy the requirements of the PhD program and to assist the student in the pursuit of the dissertation research,
- Where relevant, the courses specified for any minor program of study being pursued by the student, and
- Any remedial English classes identified as being necessary by the supervisory committee.

### **Register for Courses**

Registration for BCN-prefix courses must be done through the Rinker School Graduate Admission Officer, Mr. Joseph Carroll. Registration for DCP-prefix courses must be done through DCP Academic & Research Administrator, Ms. Eunice Carter. Consultation with other academic units may be necessary to register for courses with different prefixes.

### **Submit University of Florida Individual Development Plan (UF IDP)**

The University of Florida Individual Development Plan (UF IDP) template is used for advising and mentoring PhD students at UF. A UF IDP must be completed in conjunction with, and approved by, a student's committee chair at the end of each academic year. The UF IDP documents a student's progress through the PhD program and strategizes how to graduate them in a timely manner. The UF Graduate School's IDP template should be used to complete the UF IDP (cf. <https://gradadvance.graduateschool.ufl.edu/planning-resources/idp/>).

## Subsequent Years in the PhD Program

### Summary of Subsequent Years

Task	Timeline
Complete all core courses.	Should be completed by the end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year.
Transfer credits from previous graduate work.	Should be completed by the end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year.
Complete the research proposal defense, take the qualifying exam, and apply for candidacy.	Should be completed by the end of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year or beginning of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year.
Research for Doctoral Dissertation	Completed after becoming a PhD candidate.
Submit UF IDP.	Must be completed at end of each academic year.
Defend the dissertation.	Should be completed by the end of the 4 <sup>th</sup> year.

### PhD Candidacy

For a student to become a candidate for the PhD degree, they must pass a qualifying exam. To be eligible to take the qualifying exam, a student:

- will have reached at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of PhD study,
- must be registered for the current semester,
- must have satisfied all core courses including, where relevant, all required minor courses, and

The purpose of the PhD Candidacy is to test the knowledge of the PhD student and determine if they are ready to advance with their doctoral studies. The requisite knowledge is not just methodology and research planning but the knowledge surrounding the student's topic.

### Preliminary Candidacy Work

To become a PhD candidate, a student must pass written and oral examinations. Prior to the exams, the student must present their proposal to their committee. Following the preliminary oral presentation, the student's committee chair will send the student's proposal documents to the committee members requesting questions for the written portion of the candidacy exam.

### Written Portion of the Candidacy Exam

Each member will send the committee chair a set of questions (and a few sub-questions). Usually, each committee member's questions should take no more than eight hours (i.e., a typical working day). The questions may include data for the student to analyze. For example, the student's committee has four total members. This means, the chair may consolidate all the questions and send it to the student at 8 AM on Monday. Assuming all four committee members have submitted their respective questions to the chair, the written answers are due to the chair by 8 AM Friday. All questions must be answered exclusively by the student.

### Oral Portion of the Candidacy Exam

Upon receiving the student's written responses to their committee's questions, the chair forwards the responses to the committee. An oral presentation is then scheduled within two weeks of the completion of the written portion of the candidacy exam. During the oral examination, the student responds succinctly to each of the member's questions (via a presentation). The student will also need to answer any additional questions the members may have.

After the oral examination, the student's committee meets together, without the student present, to discuss to whether the student is ready to become a PhD candidate. The necessary forms must be ready for the committee to sign.

### **Transfer of Credits**

The number of credits that can be transferred will affect the number of courses that will have to be taken to complete the PhD program. Therefore, credits should be transferred prior to a student's qualifying exam. For a more detailed description of the transfer process and guidelines, refer to the DCP *Doctoral Studies Handbook*.

### **Research for Doctoral Dissertation**

Before reaching candidacy, a student may register for DCP 7979, Advanced Research, for up to 12 credit hours in the fall and spring semesters and 9 credit hours in the summer semester. If a student is registered for DCP 7979 in the semester in which he/she applies for candidacy, and candidacy is awarded by the midpoint of the semester, then those credit hours may be counted as DCP 7980, Research for Doctoral Dissertation.

Once a student has achieved candidacy, he/she is eligible to register for DCP 7980, Research for Doctoral Dissertation. At least 15 credit hours of DCP 7980 are required for completion of the degree. However, all 15 credits may not be taken at once. A PhD candidate may register for up to 12 credit hours of DCP 7980 in the spring and fall semesters and up to 9 credit hours in the summer. A PhD candidate must be registered for DCP 7980 in their final semester, with a minimum of 3 credit hours in a spring or fall semester or 2 credit hours in a summer semester.

The candidate is required to maintain continued contact with the chair and the committee members when conducting dissertation research work. The committee should meet on a regular basis to ensure proper progress. The committee may recommend the candidate be dismissed from the doctoral program if the candidate is found to be exerting insufficient effort or interest in his/her dissertation research.

The dissertation must represent high quality original research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's chosen field of study. The work, or parts thereof, should be worthy of several publications in refereed journals. The dissertation must be solely the product of the candidate's research, organization, and writing. All assistance external to the committee, such as the use of an editor, must be approved by the chair.

### **Register for Courses**

The same procedures as the first year apply. Reference that section of this handbook.

### **Submit University of Florida Individual Development Plan (UF IDP)**

The same procedures as the first year apply. Reference the first year section of this handbook and the UF Office of Graduate Professional Development's website (<https://gradadvance.graduateschool.ufl.edu/planning-resources/idp/>).

### **Final Dissertation Defense**

At the point in time that the dissertation is substantially complete, a copy of it shall be submitted to each committee member for review and comments, and the candidate will request the scheduling of the final defense. If the committee considers the candidate ready to defend, then the defense will

be scheduled. The deadlines for submitting the first and final submissions of the dissertation to the Graduate School can be found at <https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/calendar/>.

The first submission of the dissertation *must* follow the Graduate School's required format, be created inside their template, and *must* be submitted following their instructions, as detailed at <https://grad.ufl.edu/academics/editorial/tools/help>.

All members of the supervisory committee must be present at the defense. Guests are allowed but must not participate in any way during the defense. Up to two hours shall be allocated for the defense. The defense will begin with a multimedia presentation by the student and will conclude with questions from the committee to the candidate. The committee will vote on whether to award the doctoral degree to the candidate, based on the written dissertation, the candidate's presentation, the candidate's responses to the questions, and the candidate's provisional satisfaction of all other requirements of the PhD program.

Passing the final defense indicates that the committee is confident that the dissertation represents high quality original research that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's chosen field of study, and that the work, or parts thereof, is worthy of publication in refereed journals. The possible outcomes are:

- *Pass with no or minor revision.* No revision or very minor revisions to the dissertation are required and the revised dissertation needs only be reviewed by the chair.
- *Pass with major revision.* Major revisions to the dissertation are required. The dissertation must be re-submitted and reviewed by the committee before the candidate can graduate. In special cases another defense of the dissertation may be required.
- *Fail.* The candidate is dismissed from the PhD program.

## **Additional Student Responsibilities**

### **General Responsibilities**

The student is responsible for being informed about, and observing all, program regulations and procedures. The student must be familiar with the general regulations and requirements of the *Graduate Catalog*, the PhD program requirements of the College of DCP, and the offerings and requirements of the Rinker School PhD program, as laid out in this document. Rules are not waived for reasons of ignorance. Any exceptions to the policies stated in the *Graduate Catalog* must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

The admissions officer is available to advise on routine matters such as registration, preparation of forms, interpretation of university policies, tracking credit hours, etc. The director of graduate studies and research can also provide this assistance and is the final point of approval for all student-related requests within the Rinker School. However, students are ultimately responsible for meeting regularly with their committee members (who are their primary resource for academic advisement and overall academic guidance throughout the doctoral program) and satisfying all requirements and deadlines of the program.

### **Grades and Credits**

Students must complete at least 90 credit hours of graduate level coursework (including those transferred from other programs) and maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0/4.0. If the student's GPA falls below 3.0, he/she will be placed on probation, and then must correct the situation by the end of the following semester. If the GPA is not raised to at least a 3.0/4.0 by the end of the following semester, the student may be dropped from the PhD program. All graduate level courses must be passed with at least a "B" or "S" grade. All undergraduate level courses must be passed with at least a "C" or "S" grade. Note, ***grades of "B-" and "C-" are consider failing, for graduate and undergraduate courses respectively, by the Rinker School's PhD program.***

A failed course must be retaken the next semester it is offered. Failed attempts of a course do not count towards the total credit hours. Grades of "I" (incomplete) received during the preceding term should be removed as soon as possible. Grades of "I" carry no quality points but become punitive after one term. All grades of "H", "I", and "J" must be removed prior to the midpoint of a student's final term. Note, that some of the above requirements go beyond those of the UF Graduate School.

## **Appendix I: Core Courses**

The core courses are the foundation of the student's program of study in terms of understanding how to pursue research work. A student must complete the following courses as soon as possible on entry to the PhD program and pass with at least a B grade or equivalent. Any deviation from this set of courses must be requested using Form 1 and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

### **Core College of DCP courses**

Reference the DCP Doctoral Studies Handbook for the full list of required DCP-prefix courses. The student's committee chair may require the student to take additional courses as necessary.

### **Construction Management Courses**

Students must take at least 15 credit hours of BCN prefix graduate coursework to receive the Construction Management concentration.



**Form 1: Request to Substitute Courses**

Student Name:		UFID #:	
Academic Year:			
Course to be Substituted:			
Replacement Course:			
Reason for change:			
Approved by Rinker School Director of Graduate Programs and Research:	Signature:		Date:
Approved by DCP PhD Program Director:	Signature:		Date:

## Form 2: Supervisory Committee

Student Name:				UFID #:		
<b>Committee Structure (require at least 1, 2, 3 and 4):</b>				<b>Approval of Preliminary Proposal:</b>		
#	Position (check one in group)	Institute	Unit	Faculty Name:	Signature:	Date:
(1)	<input type="checkbox"/> -Chair a.	UF	Rinker School			
(2)	<input type="checkbox"/> -Co-Chair a.	UF	Rinker School			
	<input type="checkbox"/> -Member a.	UF	Rinker School			
(3)	<input type="checkbox"/> -Member a. or b.	UF	Rinker School or DCP			
(4)	<input type="checkbox"/> -External Member b.	UF	x.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> -Minor & External Member b.	UF	x.			
(5)	<input type="checkbox"/> -Member a. or b.	UF	y.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> -Minor Member a. or b.	UF	z.			
(6)	<input type="checkbox"/> -Member a. or b.	UF	y.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> -Minor Member a. or b.	UF	z.			
	<input type="checkbox"/> -Special Appointment c.	v.	w.			
Note: a = DRF status; b = GRF status; c = hold PhD; v = PhD Awarding Institute; w = relevant to required area of expertise; x = outside College of DCP; y = any Unit; z = outside the Rinker School						
<b>Preliminary Dissertation Proposal (1 to 2 pages) Type in the white spaces</b>						
Title ( <i>keep it short and to the point</i> ):						
Background ( <i>1 or 2 paragraphs</i> ):						
Aim and Objectives:						
Scope of Work ( <i>short paragraph</i> ):						
Methodology ( <i>1 or 2 paragraphs</i> ):						
Bibliography and Identification of the Sources of Data/Information:						
Approved by Director of Graduate Programs and Research				Signature:		Date:





**M.E. Rinker, Sr. School of Construction Management**  
P.O. Box 115703 University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611-5703PH: 352.273.1150

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