



INCM Student Manual

School of Conflict Management, Peacebuilding and Development
Kennesaw State University

Updated July 2025

*The INCM Student Handbook is updated each summer and is intended to supplement the [Graduate Catalog](#) and official [program description](#). The curriculum herein was revised in the fall of 2018 (major). Students who began the program before the fall of 2018 are under a different curriculum and catalog and, therefore, should consult the program administration with any specific degree related questions. A second, more minor, curricular revision in 2023 changed the comprehensive exam structure; students starting prior to August 2023 can update their catalog year to have one comprehensive exam instead of two.

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Introduction

The Ph.D. in International Conflict Management (INCM) at Kennesaw State University (KSU) is one of only a few such programs available in the world. Ph.D. students accepted into the program receive broad interdisciplinary training and opportunities that draw on an array of disciplines, perspectives, and approaches to the study of peace and conflict. Graduates will be able to address problems from a sophisticated knowledge base of substantive and methodological approaches. The **core** prepares them in key global competencies including: (1) intercultural dynamics of global conflict, (2) economic conflict analysis, (3) international relations, and (4) conflict management and peacebuilding theory. Methodological preparation is rigorous, including **required** and optional courses in research design, quantitative and qualitative methods, and international program evaluation.

This full-time, interdisciplinary, in-residence program is designed to meet the global demand for scholar-practitioners to address the complex array of international development, peace and state-building, conflict, and security challenges through the development and implementation of empirically based research, recommendations, and creative solutions. Ph.D. INCM graduates are prepared to compete for tenure-track university faculty appointments and a wide range of administrative, managerial, and operational positions in academic, governmental, and non-governmental agencies.

I. Admission to the Ph.D. Program

The admissions process for the Ph.D. program consists of multiple levels of review and is a highly competitive process. International students are strongly encouraged to maintain close contact with the [Graduate International Admissions office, which manages the application process and ensures all files are complete](#). The final evaluation of applicant files is conducted by the Ph.D. Program Admissions Committee after the Graduate admissions office deems the files complete. The Committee systematically evaluates the merits of an applicant's admission file holistically, considering areas of potential overlap with program and college faculty. The Committee's recommendation for an individual's admission into the Ph.D. program is based upon the Committee's collective professional judgment of the overall merits of the applicant's case in the context of (1) the quality of the applicant pool and (2) the availability of openings for doctoral student supervision with the faculty. There are a limited number of new student openings, making the selection process quite competitive. Applicants are encouraged to identify a possible dissertation topic as well as potential faculty members with whom they might work in their letter of intent.

The determination of the merits of each applicant's case focuses on key variables that are vitally important to a candidate's ability to complete successfully the specialized academic program. These factors include: (1) related undergraduate and graduate degrees; (2) academic performance and achievement in their prior degree programs; (3) professional teaching and administrative certifications; (4) verbal and writing skills; (5) quantitative and problem-solving skills; (6) evidence of leadership; and (7) other related contributions and achievements of note.

Applicants who are accepted into the program are expected to formally confirm their intent to enroll within 30 days of acceptance in order to reserve their place in the program.

Formal admission to the Ph.D. program occurs only when the student receives a signed letter of acceptance to the Ph.D. program.

Entrance Requirements

The following are entrance requirements for applicants to the Ph.D. program:

1. Earned master's degree or equivalent;¹
2. Resume or curriculum vitae (CV);
3. Statement of intent, including research interests, anticipated dissertation topic, and identified potential faculty mentor(s);
4. Writing sample (solo-authored, academic in nature);
5. Three letters of recommendation²;
6. Official transcripts;³
7. GRE scores or equivalent (e.g., GMAT, LSAT) (not required, but can be voluntarily submitted for review); and
8. TOEFL scores (as needed).

For complete entrance requirements and on-line application, please visit:

Admission Requirements - Ph.D. in International Conflict Management (kennesaw.edu),
<https://radow.kennesaw.edu/phdincm/prospective-students/admissions.php>

Please note that all international students must have their credentials evaluated by a third-party agency before their file is deemed complete and forwarded to the INCM admissions committee. This process can take considerable time, so please plan accordingly. Please also note that international students must submit materials by July 1/February 1.

Approved accredited evaluation services can be found [here](#). They must be an AICE or NACES accredited evaluation service.

Transfer of Credit

- Students are eligible to transfer a maximum of 17 graduate credit hours completed previously in an accredited graduate program at another institution into the program toward their required total credit hours.
- A course can only be transferred if the student earned a grade of "B-" or better.
- An official transcript must be sent from the graduate institution. A course syllabus may be requested in some cases where further information is needed.

¹ In exceptional cases students might be admitted with only a bachelor's degree if they demonstrate significant previous experience relevant to the field. A master's degree or equivalent is generally required in a related field, broadly defined.

² Applicants are encouraged to select individuals who can speak to your academic capabilities, ideally including faculty members at institutions where you have studied.

³ Official evaluation of all foreign transcripts is required and must accompany transcripts upon submission. Transcripts may be evaluated by one of the agencies approved by the Graduate College. Evaluations must include course-by-course and a calculation of GPA. The evaluation must come in a sealed envelope or electronically directly from the agency.

- For students receiving tuition waivers, **the 75-hour maximum for tuition waivers includes any transfer credits**. For example, if the student brings in 10 hours of credit, their maximum hours for tuition waivers would be 65.
- Applicability of transfer credits are determined by the INCM Program Director and approved by the INCM Curriculum Committee chair during the student's first semester. Accepted credit hours are conveyed to the student in writing and forwarded to the Registrar's office at the end of the first academic year.
- Courses are typically transferred into the program as INCM 9530 Related Studies in [original course title]. However, they can be transferred in using the original course prefix upon request. This may be advantageous for those students pursuing particular disciplinary or specialized concentrations. However, **a student may only have up to 17-credit hours of coursework transferred into the program toward the degree**.
- Transfer credits cannot be substituted for core courses. In some circumstances, transfer courses may be substituted for required or elective courses on a case-by-case basis determined by the Program Director and Curriculum Committee. Additional course information such as a syllabus and other related materials may be requested to make this determination. Requests for transfer credits to substitute for something in the degree program other than INCM 9530 electives must be made through a written justification submitted to the Program Director.

II. Degree Requirements

The Ph.D. in International Conflict Management is awarded to students who complete the following:

1. Maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 or higher for all coursework taken in the program.
2. A minimum of 60 course credits and a minimum of 75 credit hours of study, including all transfer credits, core, required, and elective courses.
3. Successful completion of a core comprehensive exam (see below).
4. Successful closed-door defense of a dissertation proposal within two (2) semesters of completing coursework; in some warranted circumstances, the INCM Program Director may grant an extension.
5. Successful public defense of the dissertation thesis. The candidate must follow the Dissertation guidelines (see Dissertation Process).
6. Electronically submit the final copy of the approved dissertation to the Sturgis Library using the university template. [Digital Commons Dissertations](#)
7. In addition, the responsibilities of the doctoral student entail the following:
 - a. Establish a reasonable timeline for completion of all degree requirements;
 - b. Select a dissertation chair (ideally by end of second or third semester) and committee members who will work together and provide advice on matters related to the student's course of study by their third semester in the program (be sure to complete a [chair agreement](#) form, found on the INCM website);
 - c. Monitor closely the progress toward the degree objective. Advisors and dissertation chairs assist in this, but ultimately, it is the student's responsibility

to make sure forms are filed when necessary and examinations are appropriately scheduled; and

- d. Adhere to KSU's standards of academic honesty, as per the [Graduate Catalog](#) and exhibit professional and scholarly dispositions at all times with classmates, faculty, and staff, whether in or outside of the classroom in accordance with KSU's [Codes of Conduct](#). Failure to do so can result in dismissal.

III. Academic Requirements

Full-Time Load

The basic unit of all college classes is the semester credit hour. The full-time load for a full-time Ph.D. student is 9-12 semester hours (fall and spring) with up to 6 additional credit hours in the summer semester for up to 24 credit hours per year. Funded students must take a minimum of 1 credit hour in the summer. Students in the **dissertation phase** (i.e., have completed all coursework and are registering for INCM 9900 only, and/or those students who have successfully defended a dissertation proposal) are eligible to register for a reduced load and remain at full-time status for program funding and F-1 visa purposes, although students are still held to the continuous enrollment policy (see below). Please be aware that full-time status for financial aid purposes may be different. Students must consult with the financial aid office to determine the rules related to full-time status in the dissertation phase of graduate coursework. **Students who have reached the degree requirement of 75 credit hours (including transfer credits) are no longer eligible for tuition waivers.** In addition, a student enrolled in less than 9 credit hours is ineligible to hold a graduate assistantship through the program unless they are in the dissertation phase (see above). A wide range of helpful information can be found in the [RCHSS Graduate Student handbook](#), available via the INCM website.

The 9 semester credit hours are required until the dissertation phase because anything less than that does not constitute **normal progress**. Not making normal progress in the program is grounds for dismissal. Exceptions can be made by the Program Director in some special circumstances. All INCM PhD students are expected to submit an annual review portfolio every April to demonstrate that they are making normal progress. This portfolio should include an updated academic CV according to the [KSU template](#) as well as other materials requested by the program (including course grades, evidence of completion of degree requirements, contributions to the INCM program, etc).

Residency for INCM Ph.D. candidates (i.e., in the dissertation phase) is not required but strongly encouraged since a scholarly community and direct mentoring are essential to timely completion of the dissertation. However, if a student resides outside of the U.S. during this time, they will be ineligible to hold a graduate assistantship as per state and federal work guidelines. Eligibility to hold an assistantship outside of the state of Georgia is based on duration and residency; eligibility determination is made by the [Human Resources](#) office and the [International Student and Scholar Services](#) within the Division of Global Affairs.

Time Limit

A student who does not complete all requirements for the Ph.D. by the end of the seventh year of study, unless they have taken a leave of absence(s) or been granted an extension, is considered to be withdrawn from the program.

Students may apply for a [limited extension](#) of degree eligibility for an eighth year, if for good reasons they anticipate that they will not earn their Ph.D. by the end of their seventh year. This application must be approved first by the student's advisor, then by the Program Director, School Director, and finally by the Graduate School. Only courses in which credit has been earned within 10 years of the date of admission will be counted for degree credit, excluding transfer credits. Some exceptions may be considered by the administration such as extended military service, although these determinations must be pre-approved.

Leave of Absence

Refer to the Kennesaw State University, [Graduate Catalog](#). The form for requesting a Leave of Absence can be found [here](#). Students who wish to withdraw from the program should inform the PhD director and the Graduate College in writing.

Continuous Enrollment

- Students enrolled in a Graduate degree program must register for at least one course in at least one semester per academic year in order for the original program requirements for their degree to remain unchanged unless a Leave of Absence has been approved.
- If dissertation, thesis, capstone or project courses comprise 50% or more of a student's credit hours in any semester, they must be continuously enrolled every semester, including summer, thereafter until satisfying the requirements of the student's program. One credit hour is sufficient for summer enrollment.⁴
- Students who have completed all coursework and are planning to submit a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree should register for dissertation hours consistent with a realistic appraisal of the amount of remaining dissertation work and required faculty involvement.
- Students are not eligible to receive thesis, dissertation or project guidance nor use campus resources during any term for which they are not registered.
- If a student has completed all degree requirements and will no longer require any of the campus resources or faculty time, the student may request an enrollment waiver (leave of absence) from the Graduate College.
- Graduate students must be registered for at least one semester hour in the semester, or proceeding semester, they plan to graduate.⁵

Withdrawal from Courses

Students may withdraw from one or more courses any time before the last three weeks of the semester. To completely or partially withdraw from classes at KSU, a student must withdraw online using [Owl Express](#). Students who officially withdraw from courses before mid-

⁴ Continuous enrollment policy subject to change based on Graduate College policies.

⁵ Minimum credit hour enrollment policy is set by Graduate College; see Graduate Student handbook.

semester will receive a “W” in those courses and receive no credit. They will not, however, suffer any academic penalty. Students who simply stop attending classes without officially withdrawing usually are assigned failing grades. The only exceptions to these withdrawal regulations will be for instances involving unusual circumstances that are fully documented. Students may appeal to the Academic Standing Committee for consideration of unusual circumstances.

Funded students on a program graduate assistantship who drop below 9 credit hours in any semester due to a course withdrawal will immediately lose their assistantship until the student returns to full-time status (9-12 credit hours per semester).

INCM 9550 – Related Course Directed Study

Students are eligible to take INCM 9550 – Related Course Directed Study beginning in the summer semester preceding their second year of study. Students are eligible to take **no more than two** three-credit hour Directed Study courses over their entire course of study, **with no more than three credits** of Directed Study permitted per semester, unless exceptions are approved by the student’s dissertation chair and the program and school directors. Students are only permitted to take a Directed Study if the topics they want to pursue are germane to the INCM program, link to the student’s dissertation research,⁶ and if there is no available course closely approximating the topic(s) desired. This will be determined in consultation with the supervising faculty and Program Director and/or School Director.

Students must work with their supervising faculty to complete the [Registrar's Office Directed Study Form](#) and return it no later than 2 weeks before the end of the previous semester. The syllabus must be sent to the INCM Director prior to submitting for DocuSign. After the form is approved, the Office Manager will work with the Registrar to have the course added for the semester requested.

ARCHE Program

KSU students are able to take classes through [ARCHE](#) which is a consortium of universities in the Atlanta area. Students must apply through the cross registration site at their [home university](#) and get approval by the PhD director as well as by the hosting institution (this is often based on available space). **ARCHE credits count as transfer credits**, and so are factored into the 17 maximum transfer credits allowed to students. If a student wishes to take an ARCHE course students should contact the PhD director well in advance of the registration deadline with an explanation of what course they wish to take, a description of the course, and the relevance of that course to their program of study. Students should make the case for how the course fulfills a gap that is not offered by the INCM program or other KSU graduate offerings.

IV. INCM Graduate Teaching or Research Assistantships (GTA/GRA)

⁶ INCM 9550 is not a substitute for INCM 9900 (Dissertation Research credits). Students who wish to begin research for their dissertation should consult their dissertation advisor and may enroll in INCM 9900 if they have met the necessary requirements.

Graduate students with funding from the INCM program will be hired on year-long contracts, renewable for up to four years provided the student remains in good standing. Those with funding from other sources can be hired on a one or two-semester contract through the Graduate College or [Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) or other departments on campus.

To be eligible as a GTA/GRA, qualifications are as follows:

- Have completed the requirements for an undergraduate and graduate degree;
- Have applied for and been fully accepted to the INCM program;
- Have maintained a 3.0 grade point average in any current/previous graduate coursework;

The student's advising guide from the Owl Express Student Information System should be used to verify the GPA requirement prior to every application packet submission.

Types of Assistantships

Kennesaw State University has two main categories of graduate assistantships: Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistant (GRA); a third category of Graduate Program Assistant (GPA) is also available in other programs. Below are descriptions of each.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) is the term used at KSU to refer to graduate assistantships with a primary job duty of instruction. KSU has two categories of GTAs - Teacher of Record (TOR) and Teaching Assistant (TA). GTAs should enroll in INCM 9605 Graduate Teaching or GRAD 9001 College and University Teaching or the approved equivalent prior to or concurrent with their first teaching experience.

- Teacher of Record (TOR) are the primary instructors for an undergraduate course. They may teach a maximum of 6 credits each semester. Teacher of Record GTAs are responsible for instruction and management of their courses. Whenever possible, fourth year students will be placed as TORs.
- Teaching Assistant (TA) GTAs assist faculty members with teaching. GTA Teaching Assistant responsibilities vary greatly and may include, but are not limited to:
 - Teaching a small section of a course
 - Holding office hours and meeting with students
 - Assisting with the grading of homework, exams, and/ or written assignments
 - Administering tests or exams
 - Assisting a faculty instructor with large lecture classes by teaching students in laboratory or discussion sessions

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA): Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) is the term used at KSU to refer to graduate assistantships that work on campus in research-related positions. These research positions primarily exist in academic departments as well as some research centers and institutes. GRAs gain the experience of working alongside faculty members on cutting edge research. GRAs are generally funded through competitive faculty grants and contracts. GRA responsibilities vary greatly and may include, but are not limited to:

- Collecting, coding, and/or analyzing data;

- Conducting literature reviews or library research;
- Preparing materials for submission to funding agencies and foundations;
- Writing reports; or
- Preparing materials for IRB review.

Generally, research assistants work under the supervision of an individual faculty member or center director. Work on research which is directly and solely applicable to the student's thesis or dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the master's or doctoral degree is not permitted. Research assistants should also not be engaged in work unrelated to their academic program or that does not further their educational experience and objectives. GRAs should not expect authorship on any faculty research unless negotiated in advance. The GRA must make significant scholarly contributions to the project to be considered an author. If, for example, a GRA assists a faculty member with a literature review for a publication, the GRA should expect to be acknowledged in the publication's acknowledgment's section for their contribution to the project, but not listed as an author.

NOTE: Graduate Assistant positions are considered exempt employees of the university, which means they are to utilize content knowledge that requires at least a bachelor's degree, and as a result are paid as exempt professionals. Under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), exempt work is performed by (a) executives/administrators and (b) professionals, and is paid on a salaried basis regardless of the specific number of hours worked in a given week. As such, Graduate Assistants may not have a primary job duty consisting of work that would be classified as non-exempt under the FLSA. There are no benefits (sick time, vacation days, medical/dental, etc.) for Graduate Assistants.

GRAs/GTAs may have mandatory training and/or orientation sessions organized by the Graduate College and/or the program.

While funded students are on year-long contracts, if funding allows there may be opportunities for summer GTA/GRAs for unfunded students. Depending on the work tier, these are eligible for up to 6 credit hours of waived tuition (not to exceed the 24 semester credit hour maximum per year). Limited summer stipends are determined in the Spring semester based on a competitive application/proposal process through the program, College, or Graduate College.

GTA/GRAs who are in the dissertation phase, can register for a reduced credit load still be eligible for assistantships, but those GTA/GRAs can only qualify for tuition waivers if they have less than 75 credit hours.

Hiring Procedures

Once the student has been selected for hiring by the supervising faculty member, the graduate student's responsibilities in the hiring process are:

1. Discuss the Contract with the hiring faculty member before signing. The student should make sure they understand:
 1. what the project entails;

2. what are the expectations, tasks, and duties;
 3. what are the learning objectives;
 4. how often they will meet with the faculty member; and
 5. how they will be assessed/evaluated.
2. Confirm the start and end dates on the Contract as well as the number of hours required.
 3. Once you have signed the Contract, the faculty member will also sign and then submit the paperwork to The Graduate College. It is the faculty member's responsibility to submit the hiring paperwork, not the student.
 4. Attend orientation with The Graduate College and any orientations or trainings designated by the department or supervising faculty member.
 5. Follow up with Human Resources (HR) if they require you to process in with their office.
 6. Make sure your tuition waiver is applied before the payment deadline for the semester.
 7. All GAs are charged for mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). You will receive information about how to request a waiver of the SHIP if you have your own qualifying health insurance. You must follow up with the waiver process to ensure that the charge is waived from your student account.
 8. For steps 4, 5, 6, and 7 above, you will receive an email once your Contract has been processed that indicates the timing on these steps.

NOTE: Given limited Program resources, funded students that go onto Academic Probation are not guaranteed their funding when they return to good standing. Additionally, funding can be lost due to insufficient degree progress, poor prior assistantship evaluations, lack of available program budget, and/or failure to maintain professionalism or direct violations of the code of conduct. Student funding is reviewed each spring as part of the annual review process.

Financial Aid

Kennesaw State University is committed to ensuring that a post-secondary education is accessible to qualified graduate students. In order to accomplish this commitment, the financial aid office subscribes to the following goals to assist students in paying for their educational investment:

- Evaluate the family's financial ability to pay for educational costs;
- Distribute limited resources in an equitable manner; and
- Provide a balance of gift aid and self-help aid.

A wide variety of financial aid programs from scholarships, grants, employment, and loans are available to help students with educational costs. Most awards are based on financial need while some are awarded in recognition of merit or achievement.

For more information, visit the Financial Aid Office, view the website at financialaid.kennesaw.edu, call our automated telephone system at (770) 423-6074, fax at (470) 578-9096, email at finaid@kennesaw.edu, or write to:

Office of Student Financial Aid
Kennesaw State University
585 Cobb Avenue, NW MD #0119
Kennesaw GA 30144-5591

V. Program of Study

The Program of Study for the Ph.D. in International Conflict Management is planned to span two or three years of consecutive coursework plus a dissertation phase, for a total of 75 hours of course credits. On average, the degree program takes 4-5 years to complete. Students will be required to complete the following core, required, and elective courses:

Core

INCM 8001: Theories of International Conflict: International Relations Approaches
INCM 8002: Theories of International Conflict: Economic Approaches
INCM 8003: Theories of International Conflict: Socio-Cultural Approaches
INCM 8004: Theories of International Conflict: Peace and Conflict Studies Approaches

Required

INCM 8000: Comparative Approaches to Knowledge in Conflict Management, Peacebuilding and Development
INCM 8005: Professional Knowledge for the Ph.D.
INCM 9101: Fundamentals of Research Design
INCM 9102: Quantitative Methods
INCM 9103: Qualitative Methods
INCM 9600: Dissertation Proposal Seminar

Students are also **required** to take the following:

One Advanced Research Methods Course (3 credit hours required)

Peacebuilding and/or Development course work from approved list (6 credit hours required)

Electives and Related Studies (including Transfer Credits)

At least 25 credit hours required

Dissertation Research

INCM 9900: Ph.D. Dissertation Research (**up to** 15 credit hours required)

Comprehensive Exams

Core Comprehensive

The Core Comprehensive Exam is offered each January, typically spanning the weekend prior to the first week of classes. A make-up exam, if needed, may be offered during Spring Break. Students beginning the program in the fall should expect to take it after their third semester in the program. Students beginning the program in the spring should expect to take it after their second semester. Students who do not complete all four core courses in their

first year of study may be delayed in completing the core comprehensive exam.

Faculty who teach the first-year core seminars or their designated proxy (INCM 8001, 8002, 8003, 8004) write, administer, and evaluate the Core Comprehensive typically by a student's second or third semester in the program. The Core Comprehensive consists of one integrative question drawing on material from all four core seminars. A student has from 9:00 am Friday morning until 5:00 pm Monday evening to complete a 5,000-word essay (word count based on narrative only; double-spaced, 12-point font, Arial or TNR, one-inch standard margins) that should be fully referenced using a consistent citation style. The focus of the answer should be on the application and integration of course material. The exam is take-home, formatted in the style of a journal article. This is a strictly individual exam, not intended for collaboration. SCMPD faculty, using a standardized rubric, will evaluate the written response.

Students are expected to take the comprehensive exam after their second or third semester in the program depending on program start date. Students who are expected to take the exam will be notified about the exam in the fall prior to the January exam. Students scheduled to take the exam who do not sit for the exam will be considered to have failed the exam. In exceptional, documented cases, students can obtain prior approval to take the exam during the make-up period instead. Students who experience extenuating, documented circumstances during the exam should communicate with the program immediately and such cases will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Students who miss the exam without communication and without approval will have failed the exam and will be expected to re-sit the exam, in accordance with standard policy, at the next offering, typically during Spring Break, which will count as their second allowed attempt.

Students are expected to return their exams promptly at the end of the examination window. Students who do not turn in the exam on time will have a one percentage point deduction for every one minute the exam is late. This means an exam that is submitted 20 minutes late would have a maximum score of 80.

All exams will be scanned for academic integrity ([see KSU student policy](#)). Exams that are deemed to violate academic integrity or use AI and associated technologies will be considered a failed exam.

Two randomly selected faculty teaching INCM required courses anonymously (double-blind) review each written response. If they are in agreement (i.e., both score as passing, or both score as failing), the student will be determined to have passed or failed and summative feedback will be shared with the student. If there is significant disagreement between the two graders (i.e., one passes, one fails), a third and final grader will be brought in. Upon receipt of the third evaluation, a decision will be rendered (i.e., pass or fail). If a student is sitting the exam for the first time and does not earn a passing grade, they will be offered the chance to re-sit the exam over spring break or the next time it is officially offered (i.e., January of the following year). If a student is sitting the exam for the second time and does not earn a passing grade, they will be dismissed from the program.

The faculty evaluating the Core Comprehensive are responsible for providing the completed

rubric and feedback letter to the Program Director and the Program Coordinator for the student's file.

Registration

The Office of the Registrar is the central administrative office responsible for registering students, maintaining the permanent academic records, administering the Regents' Testing Program Policies and test registration, performing degree audits, enforcing the academic policies of the university, and generally ensuring that students' academic issues are dealt with accurately and professionally. Requests for data from the computerized student record system are approved by this office. All registration for Ph.D. courses at Kennesaw State University is conducted over the web at: <http://registrar.kennesaw.edu/> and students are responsible for meeting the registration deadlines set by the registrar's office. Note that delays in registration may result in course being cancelled due to being undersubscribed; thus, students should register at the start of the registration window except in exceptional circumstances.

If a student would like to enroll in a class outside of the INCM program, they should 1) consult the PhD Director to determine if the course in question might fit their program of study. If the course is approved by the PhD Director, the student should 2) Consult with the relevant Graduate Program Director (GPD) in charge of the program in which the course is offered. Students should NOT enroll in classes outside of INCM if these two conditions have not been met, as there may be issues related to prerequisites, cohort-based restrictions, etc, that could hamper student success.

VI. Program Summary Chart

Ph.D. in International Conflict Management

Core Seminars & Required Courses	35 hrs.
Electives and Related Studies	25 hrs.
Transfer Credits	0-17hrs.
Dissertation	9 - 15 hrs.
Total Credit Hours – Ph.D.	75 hrs.
Anticipated Completion Time	3-7 years

VII. Degree Objectives

By the end of the INCM PhD program, students will be able to:

1. Explain the theoretical and historical foundations of conflict management, international relations, economics of conflict, and intercultural dynamics of conflict.

2. Evaluate and apply concepts and theories of international conflict management to real world practice.
3. Reflect intercultural competency through socio cultural analysis of a conflict context.
4. Assess and conduct research using quantitative and qualitative methods.
5. Independently design, conduct, and defend research contributing to the field of international conflict management.

VIII. Program Requirements

Program Curricular Focus

The Ph.D. program has one curricular focus: International Conflict Management. However, depending on their career objectives, students are encouraged to develop a disciplinary or topical focus or both. **In many fields, 18 credit hours of coursework in a single graduate discipline is required to demonstrate disciplinary or topical foci, and/or teaching capacity.** Students have the flexibility in this program to focus their electives to create their own concentration area to demonstrate such expertise. The interdisciplinary nature of the program in combination with its focus on rigorous methodological training and praxis-relevance provides an ideal basis for allowing students to tailor the curriculum to meet their unique research interests and career objectives. As such, the program offers students an opportunity to examine current theories, research, and practice in conflict resolution/management, international relations, intercultural dynamics of international conflict management, and economics of conflict. The emphasis in these areas makes up the four core courses in the program.

Attendance at Program Relevant Events and Colloquia

Students at all stages of study are strongly encouraged to attend all program events as part of their overall educational and professional development including dissertation defenses. They are also expected to be actively involved in planning, interacting, and presenting (when appropriate) at these events. Attendance at program-related events is considered as part of the annual review process as well as when making funding decisions. Students should plan to attend at least two SCMPD-related events per semester to foster professional connections and build community.

Student Travel

All full-time Ph.D. students are eligible to apply for travel support through the Ph.D. program for up to five years if they have been accepted to present research or serve as a roundtable panelist at an academic conference or professional meeting. **Travel support (up to \$800) is contingent on the availability of funds each budget year. SCMPD does not have funds to support dissertation research travel.** Any INCM student planning to travel internationally **must** complete the [Foreign Research Country Questionnaire](#) and [Student Release While in Foreign Country](#) and submit them to the Office Manager. These forms are located on the INCM website under [Resources](#). Students must register all international travel with the university regardless of the location and funding source. Further, if traveling to a high risk destination, travel plans must be vetted through the [International Risk Management Advisory Board \(IRMAB\) in the Division of Global Affairs](#). Risk management plans must be submitted at least 60 days prior to proposed travel. Please see information at the [Office of Global Safety and Security](#) website.

*Please see the Student Travel Policy at
<https://radow.kennesaw.edu/conflict/resources/general.php>

IX. Funding and Progress

INCM Program Funding

Students are evaluated each year as part of the annual review process to determine their progress toward degree and eligibility for continued funding (if applicable). Funded students are expected to work and be enrolled (one credit hour minimum) during the summer unless they complete and submit a Leave of Absence form to the Graduate College.

NOTE: Program funded students that go onto Academic Probation are not eligible for funding while on probation, but may be considered for funding after they are once again in good standing.

Eligibility and Renewal of INCM Assistantships

To be eligible for an INCM assistantship, a student must:

For First-Year Students:

- Be accepted into the INCM program and receive a recommendation by the INCM Program Admissions Committee to be considered for funding based on the Committee's applicant rank ordering.

For Second-, Third- and Fourth-Year Students:

- Successfully complete the first year of study.
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA. Should a student's grade point average fall below 3.0 (academic warning/probation), the assistantship will be terminated. If a student earns less than a C in a course, no matter the overall grade point average, the student will no longer be eligible to hold an assistantship.
- Receive a recommendation for new or continued funding from the INCM Progress and Funding Committee between the first and second year of study.
- Receive a positive evaluation of their Annual Review portfolio at the end of years two and three;
- Receive positive performance evaluations from the supervisor(s) of previous assistantship assignments.
- Maintain professionalism at all times including cordial interactions with university faculty and staff, the community, and adhering to the student code of conduct and academic integrity.

Funding Beyond the Fourth Year:

- In exceptional circumstances and when additional INCM program funding is available, students may be eligible to compete for additional semesters of funding. This is more

common regarding summer assistantships. Students may also be able to serve as a TOR. Note that TORs are processed through the Graduate College and are paid in accordance with GRA/GTA funding tiers and receive tiered tuition waivers; they are not the same as standard adjuncts.

Decisions on continued funding and types of assistantships are made on a competitive basis based on a comparative evaluation of students' performance both academically and in completing their assigned assistantship duties. This is done by the Program Director in consultation with Program Faculty and the School Director as well as the INCM Progress and Funding Committee.

Additional Funding Opportunities

External Funding from the Graduate College at KSU

Students that are not funded through the INCM program are encouraged to apply for funding directly from the Graduate School. For more details on Graduate School funding policies, please visit: <https://gradassistantships.kennesaw.edu/>

External Funding from Outside KSU

Competing for external funding is part of the professional development of doctoral candidates. Receiving a competitive external fellowship is an honor that stays with students throughout their career and can improve their professional prospects. Therefore, all Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to seek external financial support in the form of dissertation fellowships and grants to cover the dissertation related expenses. The [Office of National and International Scholarships and Fellowships](#) is one on-campus resource. Please note that when students receive external funding, this funding will replace the equivalent amount of internal funding. This will allow us to reallocate internal funds to help fund more students.

INCM Program Progress

The INCM Progress and Funding Committee is responsible for evaluating the performance and progress of all current first-year INCM students. This evaluation takes place each May and December for students completing their first full year of study. Please note, if a student temporarily withdraws from the program or takes an approved leave-of-absence during their first year of study, the student will be evaluated alongside the cohort under evaluation in the year the student returns to the program.

The committee develops a ranking of all first-year students, based on specific criteria (see below). This ranking is used in funding decisions for the following academic year. Students who have not used their full four years of funding continue to receive funding unless they drop below acceptable progress in the program (see above). Other students, however, may also be awarded funding on a rank-order basis, if additional funds are available.

The committee assesses whether any students have failed to make reasonable progress toward the Ph.D. and these students are terminated from the program. Students may also have the option of applying to the MSCM program if circumstances warrant.

The evaluation process is based on one primary criterion and several secondary criteria.

Primary Criterion: Precise course grades from all classes taken (on a 100-point scale). Assignment grades will be requested from teaching faculty as a secondary criterion as needed.

Secondary Criteria:

Updated Curriculum Vitae (CV) since entering the program;

Cover Letter, including a reflective narrative discussing your achievements and progress over the last year. Students should discuss: (a) Research focus/Dissertation topic and potential dissertation chair, (b) Potential career path/Steps taken toward professional goals, (c) Contributions made to the INCM Ph.D. program (including participation in program activities, service to student organizations, etc), (d) Learning accomplishments/outcomes. (Each sub-section of the Cover Letter should be no more than 250 words in length). Students should also document that they have met with potential faculty mentors.

Assessments conveyed in comments (both written and oral) from members of the faculty with whom the student has had contact; the quality of participation in interdisciplinary student-faculty seminars and research conversations; work on research and articles being prepared for submission to scholarly publications; performance as a research or teaching assistant; presentations at professional meetings; applications for external funding for research; research and writing of the dissertation proposal and the dissertation; and any teaching experience.

Evidence of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. Students are expected to maintain professionalism at all times while representing the INCM Ph.D. program and SCMPD including cordial interactions with university faculty, staff, fellow students, the community, and adhering to the student code of conduct and academic integrity. Violations will be noted and will affect funding decisions and eligibility for continuance in the program.

The Progress and Funding Committee reserves the right to add additional evaluation criteria as necessary. These additions will be announced to affected students several months in advance of the review period.

Grades and GRA/GTA evaluations (as applicable) will be provided directly to the committee by faculty unless otherwise notified, but students are responsible for submitting their CV and cover letter. The deadline to submit your CV and a cover letter is announced during the academic semester by the Office Manager.

When considering each student, the committee will identify both praiseworthy and problematic items, and will formulate initial recommendations concerning them. In any single case, five possible options may be considered: (1) commendation for work well done; (2) acknowledgement of satisfactory if not exemplary progress; (3) issuance of a written concern informing the student that improvements in performance are required, along with suggestions as to what should be done to achieve improved results, (4) a decision to deny the student renewed financial assistance, or (5) a decision to terminate

altogether the student's enrollment in the University as a degree candidate in the INCM program. All students will receive a letter indicating the results of the review of progress.

After the first year, students are expected to complete an annual review process each April that will include completion of a standard template and an academic CV, along with evaluations from any GRA/GTA supervisors in the year under review and a one-page progress report submitted to and signed by the dissertation supervisor.

Proceeding to Candidacy

Students are considered PhD “candidates” once they have completed mandatory coursework, successfully passed the comprehensive exam, and defended their dissertation proposal.

Students must enter candidacy within two semesters of completing course work or may be dismissed from program for insufficient progress toward the degree. Student’s dissertation advisor applies for the student to advance to candidacy using the [Application to Candidacy](#) form on the Graduate

Dissertation proposals must include timeline for completion of Ph.D. within two years of proposal defense.

All Ph.D. candidates must submit a 1-page progress report to their chair and the Funding and Progress Committee every year if funded or seeking funding. This should be signed and included in the annual review portfolio submitted each April.

- i. Report states progress in relation to timeline specified in their proposal
- ii. Report must be endorsed by advisor, or advisor may submit separate report
- iii. Students may amend or extend their proposal timeline (e.g., to accommodate student life events), with the approval of their committee

All INCM Students not making timely progress receive a warning. If the student does not demonstrate significant progress by the next period of review, the student may be dismissed from the program. Funded students should aim to complete their dissertations by the end of their fourth year.

A student must be making satisfactory progress and in good standing academically to be eligible for continued or new financial support.

X. Academic Policies

Please note that the specific policies outlined in this manual are intended as a guide for this particular program of study. In addition to these policies, students must follow the policies of the Graduate College as well as University policies.

Students are held to the catalog they matriculate under, but if they decide to move to an updated catalog, they must complete the [Change of Catalog Year](#) form on the Graduate College student forms page.

For additional information, please refer to the [Graduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate College](#).

Expectations for Satisfactory Graduate Level Student Performance

Graduate students are expected to earn grades of at least “B” in their coursework toward their degree. For graduation, a graduate student must have earned a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0 in all graduate course work.

Whenever a graduate student’s cumulative INCM program graduate grade-point average drops below 3.0, that student is placed on academic probation. While on probation, the student is not eligible for funding, is not permitted to apply for Ph.D. candidacy, cannot receive and out of state tuition waiver, and cannot obtain a graduate degree.

Graduate students can have their probationary status removed by raising their INCM program cumulative grade-point average to at least 3.0.

INCM graduate students will be dismissed from the INCM program under any of the following conditions:

- While on probation, the term GPA is less than 3.0;
- Not clearing probation after two semesters;
- Achieving a semester GPA of less than 2.0 in any semester;
- Receiving a final grade of “F” in any course.

Students who receive a C in a core or required course are not **required** to retake the course, but they must be able to pass the comprehensive exams, which build on the material covered in these courses.

All INCM students are expected to follow the KSU Code of Conduct, including upholding general professional behavior and abiding by the highest standards of academic integrity. Faculty and staff will follow appropriate procedures as outlined by the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity should there be question of student misconduct or plagiarism. [Office of SCAI Information](#)

Grading Policies

Issuance of grades and formulation of individual attendance policies are the prerogative of the instructor. There is, however, a limit to the number of excused absences a student may take during a single course. The student should practice careful judgment in deciding how these absences should be used in one semester – whether for conference attendance or for other university-sanctioned/sponsored activities. It is highly unlikely that a student can succeed in any Ph.D.-level course where he/she has missed a large number of weekly course sessions.

Students are encouraged to meet with professors early during a semester to ensure they are making satisfactory progress in their courses. Faculty must provide feedback to students about their progress prior to the last published day to withdraw without academic penalty. Grades are

expected to conform to those listed below. Any deviations must be approved by the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Registrar.

The following are the final grades included in the determination of the scholastic grade point average (students should note that professors may provide specific grades on a 100- point scale for courses to the First-Year Progress and Funding Committee):

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Grade</u>
“A” Excellent	4.0
“B” Good	3.0
“C” Fair*	2.0
“D” Poor	1.0
“F” Failing	0.0

*** Grades of “Fair” (and below) are not acceptable for Ph.D. courses and are not considered making normal progress. These will not be counted as credit toward the degree.**

I: incomplete grade. The grade of “I” will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond the student’s control, is unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Incompletes cannot be provided to students who simply fail to meet course requirements in a timely fashion. If a student struggles to satisfy course requirements on time, they should drop the course instead of requesting an incomplete.

The grade of “I” must be removed by the end of the next semester or term, *for example: I’s given in a Spring Semester must be removed by the end of the Summer Semester*. The grade of “I” will not be included in the calculation of the student’s scholastic average at the end of the semester in which the grade of “I” is received. Upon completion of the outstanding requirements within the specified time limit, a final grade of “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” or “F” will be assigned in the course on the basis of the student’s total performance, and the grade will then be included in the calculation of the student’s cumulative grade point average. If the outstanding work is not completed by the end of the following semester or term, then the “I” will be changed to an “F” and calculated into the student’s cumulative grade point average. An “I” cannot be removed by reenrolling in the course. Please see the Graduate College [policy](#) for additional details.

W: indicates that the student was permitted to withdraw from the course without penalty with the approval of the program director and registrar within the first 28 working days (including registration days) of the semester. Withdrawals without penalty may be permitted after the official withdrawal period in hardship cases only with approval of the registrar. A course in which the grade of “W” has been assigned will not be included in calculating the student’s scholastic average.

S: indicates that credit has been given for completion of degree requirements other than

academic course work. The use of this grade is approved for dissertation hours, student teaching, clinical practicum, internship and proficiency requirements in graduate programs.

U: indicates unsatisfactory performance or progress in an attempt to complete degree requirements other than academic course work. The use of this grade is approved for dissertation hours, student teaching, clinical practicum, internship and proficiency requirements in graduate programs.

NR: indicates that no grade was reported.

Grade Appeals

Students have the right to appeal their grade. Please see the University's policy on grade appeals in the university graduate catalog at:

<https://catalog.kennesaw.edu/content.php?catoid=60&navoid=4496>

Before filing a formal appeal, students are strongly encouraged to contact the faculty member for clarification and discussion of the grade received.

Food Provisions

Meals are not provided as part of the regular INCM course offerings. Students must make their own arrangements during scheduled class breaks. Faculty are encouraged to make accommodations in course schedules where long classes carry over mealtimes (e.g., an extended break period, brown bag working lunches, etc.).

Email Usage Standard and Procedures

All students are assigned a KSU email address and are expected to check it regularly. The program will use this official email address in our correspondence with you regarding program updates, calls for GRA applications, and upcoming events or opportunities. If you are not receiving emails from the program, please consult with the Office Manager to ensure you are on the list.

The Email Usage Standard and Procedures governs the use of @kennesaw.edu e-mail Accounts.

Account Acceptable Use:

Policies and regulations that apply to other forms of communications at the University also apply to electronic mail. In addition, the following specific actions and uses of university e-mail accounts are inappropriate:

1. Use of e-mail for private, non-University, matters.
2. Concealment or misrepresentation of names or affiliations in e-mail messages.
3. Alteration of source or destination address of e-mail.
4. Use of e-mail for commercial or private business purposes.
5. Use of e-mail for organized political activity or political solicitation.
6. Use of e-mail to harass or threaten other individuals.
7. Use of e-mail that degrades or demeans other individuals.
8. Use of e-mail to transmit external account numbers or credit card information.

No one shall deliberately alter or attempt to conceal their true return mail address, or the origination location of the message. No one shall deliberately set forth to interfere with the reception of e-mail by an individual. No one shall deliberately set forth to intercept or receive, and/or view another individual's email without that user's consent.

E-mail correspondence and associated attachments may be considered official university records and, as such, may need to be retained based on guidelines established by the Board of Regents. It is the responsibility of the sender and recipient of these e-mail messages to determine the required retention period, to comply with applicable policies and procedures regarding record retention, and to preserve these e-mail records either electronically or in printed form with all of the associated header and transmission information. No e-mail, in any form, shall be retained for longer than its established retention cycle, unless directed to do so by the KSU Department of Archives and Records Management.

International Taxes

International students are responsible for working closely with the International Services and Tuition Classification team as part of the Office of Finance and Accounting, Reporting and Compliance department to complete all tax related requirements. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of country specific tax requirements.

The International Services and Tuition Classification team will assist with (<http://www.kennesaw.edu/finance/international/aboutus.html>):

- Ensuring that Kennesaw State University complies with all Internal Revenue Services (IRS) and United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) guidelines relating to payments made to international visitors, students, and scholars.
- Validating immigration status with the USCIS Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program, an inter-governmental information service initiative;
- Reclassifying students from out-of-state status to in-state status for tuition payment purposes; and
- Providing the campus community and all of its international guests with confidentiality, courteous service, and efficient processing of information.

XI. Dissertation Process

Dissertation Committee Selection

Students should formally identify a dissertation committee chair by the end of their third semester of study in the program and should submit evidence of initial conversations with potential chairs as part of their first-year review. Students may ask any Kennesaw State University faculty member in the Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences or within their dissertation discipline, to serve as their dissertation chair, however, the dissertation chair must affiliate with the School of Conflict Management, Peacebuilding and Development and the INCM program and get graduate faculty status to remain as the dissertation chair. Any faculty member serving on a dissertation committee must have graduate faculty status. Students should select a chair based on the faculty member's expertise in the area of research that is of interest to the student and based on an appropriate level of trust,

collaboration, and mentorship between the faculty member and the student. A document with short blurbs about faculty research areas and expertise is available for students on the INCM website or by request from the INCM program coordinator. Once a chair has been determined, faculty and student should complete and submit the chairing agreement form, found on the INCM website under “Resources.”

In consultation with their dissertation committee chair, students should identify additional faculty members that they would like to join their committee. As soon as possible, but typically by the end of the second year, students should have identified all members of their dissertation committee. Students and their dissertation chair should work with committee members to complete the relevant forms on the INCM website indicating agreement for committee service. Once completed, these and a dissertation committee approval form (that lists all committee members) from the Graduate College should be submitted to the office manager for signatures.

Dissertation Committee Composition

The Dissertation Committee must have a minimum of three (and a maximum of five) faculty members, including the Chair. The interdisciplinary nature of this program suggests that dissertation committee members will likely come from different disciplines and, in some cases, from other colleges or institutions. Three members of the committee must be KSU faculty.

Faculty outside of the program may serve on a committee with the approval of the Committee Chair. Faculty outside KSU may also serve with the approval of the Committee Chair. However, participation by non-program faculty is limited to one member of the committee although exceptions can be granted by the Program Director. All committee members (including external members) must be graduate faculty. If a potential committee member does not have this status, he or she needs to petition the Graduate School to obtain it, using the KSU Graduate College [Request for Appointment to Graduate Faculty](#). Once the committee is selected, the student completes the [Request for Approval of Ph.D. Dissertation Committee](#) and obtains appropriate faculty signatures.

NOTE: Once the dissertation committee is finalized, it is highly irregular for the committee membership to change. Should there be extenuating circumstances that warrant a change in membership, however, a new committee approval form should be submitted.

Dissertation Proposal

Defending one’s dissertation proposal early will assist significantly in completing the Ph.D. in a timely fashion. Students are therefore strongly encouraged to select their dissertation advisor by the end of their third semester in the program and to defend their proposals in the semester following the completion of coursework and comprehensive examinations. In all cases, students are required to defend their dissertation proposals within two semesters of completing coursework. Students are responsible for providing written justification for any excessive delays in progress toward the defense of their proposal. Students who do not meet this requirement may be terminated from the program.

Once the committee has agreed that the proposal is ready to defend, the dissertation chair

should file the request to schedule a proposal defense form (found on the INCM website), which includes the date and the name of the surprise reviewer.

The purpose of the proposal and defense is to:

1. Demonstrate the student's ability to design a research project. The design must reflect the student's learning from his or her coursework and methods training.
2. Develop a plan for producing Ph.D.-level research. Such research must be methodologically robust, build on previous research in the field, and make a new contribution to knowledge.
3. Demonstrate the student's ability to produce Ph.D.-quality writing and to defend his or her ideas orally.

The narrative portion of the proposal should be between 8,000-10,000 words (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography and appendices), and the proposal should include the elements described below.

Essential elements of the INCM dissertation proposal include:

1. One-page executive summary.
2. Research proposal. The student will submit a detailed plan for his or her research that addresses the following points:
 - i. Review of the literature as it pertains to the topic and informs the research.
 - ii. Justification for new research (i.e., how this project will add to existing knowledge in a meaningful way). This should include not just an explanation of how the dissertation will break new ground, but also how the data gained will be useful in the academic, practice or policy arenas.
 - iii. Key question(s) to be addressed or hypothesis/es to be tested.
 - iv. Description of methods to be used to answer the question(s) or test the hypothesis/es and reasons for using these methods.
 - v. Description of data to be gathered and how it will be collected and analyzed. This should include plans related to Global Safety and Security if international travel is involved as well as plans for IRB proposal submission if human subjects are involved.
 - vi. Limits or possible shortcomings of the approach used.
 - vii. Timeline for dissertation research and thesis completion.
 - viii. A contingency plan in case of emergency or unforeseen events
3. References. The student will submit a bibliography of sources related to his or her research topic.
4. Appendices. As needed, students are encouraged to also include appendices detailing their instruments of investigation and any other additional documents they deem appropriate.
5. Faculty are required to run the proposal through iThenticate/TurnItIn and students must produce original research in a dissertation and must self-cite if/when appropriate if they are building on previous work.

Proposals are defended orally, in closed proceedings, to give students practice for their ultimate Ph.D. defense. The defense takes place before a committee of at least two professors (Chair and one committee member) **and one examiner external to the student's dissertation committee** (“surprise reviewer”), to provide an outside perspective. The external examiner is selected by the dissertation committee in consultation with the Program Administration if/when necessary.

Proposals receive one of the following marks following the defense (see below). Marks are accompanied by specific comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal and note areas that can be further improved, even for proposals receiving no revisions. Although a committee may decide to accept a proposal with qualifications, those revisions must be addressed to the committee’s satisfaction prior to submitting paperwork to the Graduate College, as the College form only allows for approval or disapproval.

1. **The proposal is accepted.** The proposal is interesting and feasible in its current form. It seems likely to produce high-quality results if executed according to plan. Student writing and oral defense exceeds expectations.
2. **The proposal is deemed unsatisfactory.** The proposal shows considerable deficiencies in theoretical frame, methodological rigor, and/or feasibility to implement the design. The student is required to provide extensive revisions, in consultation with her/his committee, and to defend the new proposal following the process outlined above. Students are only permitted to defend a new/revised proposal once. Should the new/revised proposal still be deemed unsatisfactory, the student is terminated from the program.

Upon successful completion of the dissertation proposal defense, the dissertation chair will inform the Graduate College of the outcome using the [Dissertation Proposal Approval Form.](#)

Dissertation & Defense

Document Specifications and Guidelines for the Dissertation

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in International Conflict Management at Kennesaw State University indicates that the holder has completed doctoral-level graduate training in research under academic supervision and has submitted a dissertation that the examiners have declared to be a significant contribution to knowledge that demonstrates the author’s capacity to carry out independent research.

General Reflections:

A Ph.D. dissertation is generally a lengthy, formal document that argues in defense of a particular thesis. The research performed to support a thesis must be both “original” and “substantial” and the dissertation must show it to be so. Dissertations are often grounded in theory and tend to follow the scientific method, i.e., defending a thesis (and any derived hypotheses) based on evidence collected. The integration of theory, the definition of concepts,

and the analysis of the evidence are at the heart of the work. A dissertation often concentrates on principles: it derives best practices, and states lessons learned, and not merely the facts behind them. In general, every statement in a dissertation must be supported either by a reference to published scientific literature or by original work. Moreover, a dissertation does not merely repeat the details of critical thinking and analysis found in published sources; it uses the results as fact and refers the reader to the source for further details.

Faculty are required to run the penultimate draft of any dissertation through

iThenticate/TurnItIn and students must produce original research in a dissertation and must self-cite if/when appropriate if they are building on previous work.

Dissertation Format:

Dissertations that fulfill the general requirements outlined in the general description above can take a number of forms (e.g., program evaluation, case study, policy analysis, comparative analysis, etc.) as long as they are original, grounded in theory, employ the scientific method or related appropriate approach, and draw generalizable conclusions that advance a particular field of knowledge. Dissertation research usually starts with a problem, dilemma, paradox, enigma, or puzzling question. The particular form a dissertation takes is determined by the underlying problem or question and must be justified as the most appropriate way to solve the problem or answer the question. For instance, a student who intends to complete a program evaluation must explain why this particular format will generate the most effective evidence in defense of the thesis. Irrespective of the specific format, all Ph.D. candidates must undertake quality dissertation-type projects that are original, theoretically grounded, and methodologically rigorous. The dissertation must make a substantial contribution to international conflict management. Dissertations should never be methods-driven, but rather the methods employed ought to be the most appropriate for answering the question(s) that inform the research topic.

Typically, dissertations in the INCM program range between 175-300 pages and a minimum of 50,000 words; submissions shorter than this are more in line with Master's Theses requirements.

Style:

Doctoral dissertations are required to be written in English. Students should consult the appropriate style manuals and professional journals and their major professors to determine the most appropriate style within their area of research. The dissertation must be certified as substantially free of errors and ready for publication before it is submitted to the Graduate College. Typically, dissertations are formatted in APA or Chicago style in the program. The Graduate College has developed a [template](#) that students are expected to use for their dissertations starting in Spring 2025. Please refer to previously published dissertations in the program as a guide and refer to reputable guides such as Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

Strict timelines are in place for the submission of all dissertation related documents. Doctoral candidates are required to adhere to these timelines. The Registrar is over graduation services. Students must petition to graduate prior to their defense. Timelines can be found [here](#). The Graduate College has their own specific deadlines for student defenses in order for students to have their name in the program and receive graduation tickets. Timelines are dependent on the

academic calendar each year and are communicated by the Graduate College and/or the INCM program administration to student KSU email addresses.

While the dissertation committee may offer suggestions for revision, the Ph.D. student is ultimately responsible for review of the dissertation manuscript for adherence to all appropriate style guidelines.

The Dissertation Defense

After each dissertation committee member agrees that the dissertation is ready to move to final defense, the student consults with the chair and other committee members to schedule a date for the final defense. At this point, the chair should coordinate the signing of the “agreement to hold a final defense” form, available on the INCM website. The dissertation chair should also submit a copy of the dissertation abstract to the Program Director and Program Coordinator at least **14** days prior to the final defense. The student will also provide a final draft of the dissertation to each of the dissertation committee members *at least 30 days before the defense*. This final draft must be complete in all respects and editorially acceptable for final approval at the time of the defense. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in a delay of the defense.

The defense is posted as a public hearing and may be attended by other members of the University community and by others from outside the University. The INCM program will notify the Kennesaw faculty electronically of the date and provide an abstract with the electronic notification. As of 2025, dissertation defenses will also be posted on a Graduate College calendar. Information on this process will be shared by the Graduate College.

As arranged by the dissertation chair, the dissertation committee meets before the scheduled defense to discuss the dissertation and procedures for the defense. Whenever possible, the defense should be scheduled in a room that will accommodate visitors comfortably. The chair establishes matters of protocol prior to the actual defense. Faculty and any others who sit in as an audience for the defense are required to defer to the dissertation chair’s judgment concerning matters of protocol.

The public defense provides a formal opportunity for the Ph.D. candidate to present his or her research questions, design, methods, findings, and conclusions to those in attendance. Generally, this presentation by the candidate will last from between 25-45 minutes. The dissertation committee then formally questions the doctoral candidate about the work he or she has completed along with any additional questions or input from the audience. Generally, the formal question session will last between 35-45 minutes.

Procedural Guidelines for Dissertation Defense

Generally, dissertation defenses do not exceed two hours in duration. Once the candidate has completed their public presentation, the audience has time to ask questions. The dissertation chair can then dismiss the audience in order to conduct a private questioning of the candidate or allow the audience to remain. The committee then excuses the candidate and deliberates on the results of the defense in private. The defense outcome is recorded and shared with the candidate both verbally and in writing.

Generally, immediately following the announcement to the candidate of the results of the dissertation committee's deliberations, the candidate may expect the dissertation committee to make suggestions for final edits. It is the responsibility of the student to make personal written notes about the suggested revisions and, subsequently, to complete all edits.

The dissertation chair completes the [Dissertation Defense Outcome form](#) signifying any additional edits or final changes that need to be made in the dissertation document. This form should be sent to the INCM director or Office Manager to run through Docusign so that all relevant parties (including the dissertation committee) can sign. The dissertation committee should also complete the dissertation defense rubric and upload it to the INCM assessment portal.

In the event a student does not successfully defend, he/she may re-defend within six months of the initial defense. A candidate may have only ONE additional attempt to defend and to pass the defense of the dissertation. Failure to re-defend within six months or failure to pass the second dissertation defense results in the candidate's dismissal from the program without the awarding of the Ph.D. degree.

Copyright of Dissertation

Candidates may choose to copyright their dissertation when submitting their final copy to the Sturgis Library (http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/submit_research.html). Regardless of whether the Ph.D. student copyrights the dissertation, the candidate is responsible for complying with all current copyright laws and regulations governing inclusion of another's work in his or her work.

Publishing Manuscripts Drawn from the Dissertation

Ph.D. students frequently collaborate with faculty who have made substantive contributions to the dissertation. In all cases, however, the author of the dissertation should be listed as the first author on any paper and/or publication based primarily on the dissertation research that is submitted for publication. Published work may be used as chapters in the dissertation upon committee and program approval. Contributions regarding co-authorship need to be clearly distinguished so that the committee can evaluate the candidate's contribution.

Dissertation Awards

Graduate students are also advised that numerous professional organizations present competitive awards for outstanding dissertation research. Upon completion and approval of the dissertation, Ph.D. students should consult with their dissertation chair and/or committee members about requirements and submissions for such awards.

XII. Commencement

Awards and Hooding

During Commencement, the Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences conducts a Doctoral Hooding Ceremony.

The Dean/Associate Dean of Graduate Programs announces the names of doctoral candidates and dissertation chairs, along with the titles of dissertations. The title of the candidate's dissertation study is provided in the official Program provided the student met the deadlines for defending and submitting all paperwork. The entire dissertation will be published on *Digital Commons*, the digital repository for scholarly work at Kennesaw State University <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/dissertations/>

Regalia

Doctoral [regalia](#) are available in the KSU Bookstore and may be purchased or rented. The regalia will be featured on the KSU Bookstore website in advance of graduation.

Graduation Procedures

Students must follow [graduation procedures](#) as outlined by the university.

Procedural Checks

Students should check with the Registrar to ensure no grades of "Incomplete" remain on their transcript, that they have completed all program requirements all fees are paid, and that they are on the graduation clearance list. These checks ensure the graduation process will go smoothly. Students can also check most of this information online.

XIII. Forms for Students and Faculty

These forms are available for completion and download:

<https://radow.kennesaw.edu/conflict/resources/general.php>

Form Title	When Completed
Approval for Directed Study or International Experience	during the semester prior to enrolling in the course
Dissertation chairing agreement	by end of third semester
Dissertation Defense Outcome Form	following dissertation defense
Intent to Take Leave of Absence	as necessary
Petition to Graduate	see dates above (complete via Owl Express)
Request for Appointment to Graduate Faculty	as needed once dissertation committee members are selected
Request for Approval of Ph.D. Dissertation Committee	no later than end of 4th semester of study
International Travel Risk Form	Submit at least 60 days in advance of planned travel, ideally as soon as you have a plan for travel to ensure you have time for review and approval.
Request for Change in Dissertation Committee Membership	as necessary
Readmission Request Form	at least 6 weeks prior to semester in which you wish to enroll