University of Houston

Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management

Ph.D. Student Handbook

2019-2020

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UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

CONRAD N. HILTON COLLEGE OF
HOTEL AND RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT

Ph.D. IN HOSPITALITY ADMINISTRATION

I.   PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston hosts the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program in Hospitality Administration. This program is designed for students who wish to become hospitality researchers and/or professors at a research oriented university. Specifically, the program will provide students with the theoretical (conceptual) foundation, practical knowledge, research development and critical thinking skills for hospitality administration.

Hospitality Administration includes lodging, food and beverage (e.g. catering), club (e.g. private clubs), convention and event planning, airline food and beverage service, cruise ship management or any other tourism/hospitality disciplines. The topics include hospitality finance, hospitality marketing, hospitality accounting, hospitality human resources, service, and general hospitality management.

The program emphasizes flexibility, independence and inter-disciplinary study to accommodate the needs and research interests of each student from all around the world. As a requirement of the doctoral program, students are expected to obtain experience in teaching and research. Graduate faculty will mentor the students in the classroom as well as in research settings.

The Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management University of Houston is consistently rated among the top hospitality programs in the world. The College has cultivated relationships with the industry's top employers, organizations, and associations. Our graduates continue to excel and open the doors for those who follow.

II.   PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) objectives are:
- To develop teaching skills for both undergraduate and graduate levels
- To disseminate information about the hospitality industry
- To develop theory and add knowledge to the field
- To identify problems through analysis
- To identify solutions from competing for alternatives through quantitative and qualitative metrics
- To effectively communicate research outcomes
- To develop grantsmanship capabilities

III.   GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants who have successfully completed an MS in Hotel and Restaurant Management or a similar degree with an overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.2 on a 4 point scale for their last degree completed will be considered. Also, it will be recommended that the applicants have 2 plus years of experience. In addition, applicants should provide a GMAT or GRE score in their application packett. It is recommended that applicants receive the score with the upper 35th percentile.

Students who have completed a BS. with a GPA of a 3.5 or above, GMAT or GRE scores in the upper 35th percentile and with at least 10-year supervisory industry experience will be considered for conditional admittance to the Ph.D. program. These students should complete all prerequisites in order to take the Ph.D.

level classes. Based upon passing the candidacy exam, students will be allowed to enter the Ph.D. program. Otherwise, they will be allowed to complete the MS program and then be allowed to reapply for the Ph.D. program upon completion of the MS. This allows successful industry professionals to enter the Ph.D. program directly due to their exceptional industry experience and academic background.

All international students must meet the admissions requirements as specified by the University and College, attaining minimal scores on the TOEFL or have earned a degree from an accredited U.S. institution. An interview is required prior to acceptance into the program. Note: Students may be required to take additional courses to overcome any deficiencies as determined by the program director. The Graduate Faculty Committee will review each applicant's admission application packet.

IV. APPLICATION

All applicants must submit for admission:

a. A completed Graduate Application Form, University of Houston.
b. A non-refundable application/evaluation fee. Payments must be made with a credit card, a personal check or money order denominated in U. S. dollars, payable to the "University of Houston."
c. Two (2) official transcripts of all academic work, including subjects took and grades earned.
d. Official GRE or GMAT test score results and an additionally certified photocopy of the scorecard must be sent with the application.
e. Three (3) letters of recommendations.
f. A personal statement of purpose, which includes a 3-page double-spaced paper with 1-inch margins on career goals, research interests or justification of pursuing the Ph.D. program.
g. A complete Resume or Curriculum Vitae.
h. Applications are due January 10 of each year.

   In addition to the requirements listed above, international applicants are required to:
a. Send a non-refundable application/evaluation fee of $125 (international applicants).
b. International applicants must submit official TOEFL test scores (minimum 600 paper-based, minimum 250 computer-based, or 100 online-based). Students are exempt from the TOEFL if from Australia, the Bahamas, Belize, The British Isles, English-speaking Canadian provinces, the Fiji Islands, Jamaica, Liberia, New Zealand, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Trinidad, the United States, the Virgin Islands, the West Indies or Zimbabwe. Individuals lacking fluency in speaking English will be requested to take English language courses.
c. International applicants must submit a Letter of Financial Backing and a signed Statement of Understanding enclosed in the Graduate Application Form.

Transfer students will be considered for this program and will be subject to the same regulations that govern all students that transfer to the College of Hotel and Restaurant Management at the University of Houston. Students may apply to have a maximum of 9 semester hours relevant to the planned program to be transferred as long as the credits have not been applied to a previously completed degree. Only courses with a grade of "B" or better would be considered for transfer. Transfer students can request transfer of credits by providing a complete list of courses that they would like considered for transfer. The Graduate Program director will examine and approve the courses that will be transferred. Students would be required to complete a graduate petition form indicating the courses they request to be transferred along with a set of official transcripts from all Colleges attended. This petition must then be approved by the graduate program director, the associate dean of academics of the College and the dean of Graduate and Professional Studies at the University. International transcripts will be evaluated by the Office of International Admissions and transfer equivalency from non-United States colleges/universities will be determined by the Office of International Admissions.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

Category	Semester Credit Hours
Required Courses	24
Prescribed Electives	9
Free Electives	6
Dissertation	18
Other	0
TOTAL	57

The course works consists of required and elective (supporting) classes. Required courses are focused on the hospitality and tourism courses. The program includes a strong element of data analytics and research design, prepares students for careers in major research universities or research-based agencies. Free elective or supporting courses are developed to strengthen research techniques or topic knowledge important to the development of the dissertation.

Prefix and Number	Required Courses	SCH
Hotel and Restaurant Administration Core Courses (6 credits)		
HRMA 8310	Teaching Methods in Hospitality Management [a] (*)	3
HRMA 8320	Guided Research in Hospitality Industry [b] (*)	3
Research Methods Core Courses (6 credits)		
HRMA 8304	Qualitative Design in Hospitality Administration (*)	3
HRMA 8305	Grantsmanship and Technical Writing (*)	3
Data Analysis Core Courses (9 credits)		
	Two Approved Advanced Data Analysis Courses from outside or inside the College	6
HRMA 8303	Multivariate Analysis in Hospitality Administration (*)	3
Seminar Core Courses (3 credit)		
HRMA 8197	Colloquium	1
Dissertation Courses (18 credits)		
HRMA 8398	Doctoral Dissertation Research Proposal	3
HRMA 8X99	Doctoral Dissertation Research (*)	3-9

Prefix and Number	Prescribed Elective Courses	SCH
HRMA 6309	Legal Issues in Hosp. Industry	3
HRMA 7334	Pricing and Revenue Management	3
HRMA 7337	Human Resources in Hosp. Industry	3
HRMA 7341	Food and Beverage Management	3
HRMA 6343	Beverage Management	3
HRMA 6351	Lodging Operations Management	3
HRMA 7353	Services Management	3
HRMA 6361	Hospitality Marketing Analysis	3
HRMA 6366	Hospitality Management Strategies	3
HRMA 6369	Hospitality Financial Assets and Planning & Management	3
HRMA 7397	Special Topics in Hospitality Management	3
HRMA 6397	Hospitality Management and Leadership	3
HRMA 8320	Guided Research in Hospitality Industry (**)	3
HRMA 8330	The Philosophy of Hospitality Management (**)	3

Hospitality Administration- Ph.D. Degree Plan

Student Name: Student ID#:
Area of interest: Semester/year started the program:
International/Domestic: Anticipated semester/year of graduation:

Course ID	First Year- Fall Semester	Credits	Sem.	Grade	Remarks
HRMA 8303	Multivariate Analysis in Hospitality Management	3			
HRMA 8310	Teaching Methods in Hospitality Management	3			
HRMA 8197	Colloquium	1			
	Focused Course	3			
	First Year- Spring Semester				
HRMA 8304	Qualitative Design in Hospitality Management	3			
HRMA 8197	Colloquium	1			
	Data Analysis Course	3			
	Focused Course	3			
	FIRST YEAR TOTAL	**20**			

Students must take the candidacy exam after successfully completing all prerequisites and HRMA 8303 and 8304

Course ID	Second Year- Fall Semester	Credits	Sem.	Grade	Remarks
HRMA 8305	Grantsmanship and Technical Writing	3			
HRMA 8197	Colloquium	1			
	Data Analysis Course	3			
	Elective Course	3			
	Second Year- Spring Semester				
HRMA 8320	Guided Research in Hospitality Industry	3			
HRMA 8197	Colloquium*	1			
	Elective Course	3			
	Elective Course	3			
	SECOND YEAR TOTAL	**19 or 20**			

Students can take the comprehensive exam after completing all required classes except for the Dissertation Research Proposal and Research hours.

Course ID	Third Year- Fall Semester	Credits	Sem.	Grade	Remarks
HRMA 8398	Doctoral Dissertation and Research Proposal	3			
HRMA 8197	Colloquium*	1			
	Elective Course (optional)	3			
	Focused Course (optional)	3			
	Third Year- Spring Semester				
HRMA 8X98	Doctoral Dissertation Research	3-9 cr.			
HRMA 8197	Colloquium*	1			
	Elective Course (optional)	3			
	Focused Course (optional)	3			
	THIRD YEAR TOTAL	**18 or more**			
Total credits hours anticipated for a three-year full-time student:		**57 or more**			

*Note- Students will be required to enroll in Colloquium every semester, however only 9 credits will be applied towards the minimum requirements for graduation. Students cannot exceed 66 credit hours of Ph.D. courses. Although students are required to take the minimum course work for dissertation courses, it is up to the student's dissertation committee to approve the final course work plan, based on student's performance.

General Exam and Dissertation Policy

1. **Initial Advising**: An academic advisor is assigned to each student at the start of their program to assist the student in planning their studies and to provide academic direction until the student identifies a dissertation advisor and supervisory committee members.

2. **Plan of Work**: The Plan is initiated by the student and completed with their advisor and outlines the sequence of study. Fifty-seven graduate credits beyond the master degree are required, 39 in coursework and 18 in dissertation research and preparation.

3. **Annual Review**: An advisor and the student's committee prepares a review of the student's progress at the end of each academic year; goals for the following year are developed with the student.

4. **Written Candidacy Exam**: The main objective of the candidacy exam is to assess Ph.D. students' progress and confirm students' capability to proceed to the advanced curriculum. A Ph.D. student must take the candidacy exam after completing HRMA 8303 (Multivariate Analysis), HRMA 8304 (Qualitative Design) and one approved data analysis course after finishing the first year of the Ph.D. program. The student must be enrolled full-time for the semester in which the exam is administered. A student must have a minimum grade-point-average of 3.0 to be eligible for taking the exam.

   The candidacy exam will be administered once a year, in the second week of May. The exam consists of two main sections: 1) Methodology and 2) Data Analysis. The exam is scheduled for one day. The students must pass the exam before continuing the program. The standing committee will evaluate the results. The standing committee submits the recommendation to the associate dean of graduate studies.

   If a student passes the exam at a satisfactory level, the student will be recognized as a "Ph.D. Candidate" and allowed to proceed for the second year. In case of a student failing for the first time, the student is required to retake the exam in the second week of August or take appropriate courses recommended by the standing committee in the following semester and retake the exam in the following year or leave the program. If the student fails the candidacy exam for the second time, the student will not continue the Ph.D. program.

5. **Dissertation Supervisory Committee**: The student selects a dissertation advisor and committee to guide them through the dissertation research and preparation. The naming of a dissertation advisory committee is a requirement for Ph.D. Candidacy.

6. **Comprehensive Exam:** The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to evaluate Ph.D. students' progress in the academic development process, assess the need for additional coursework, and ensure the readiness to conduct a doctoral dissertation. We will set common competencies for data analytics and research methodology for all of our Ph.D. students. We will also require that their committee develop a set of competencies for the student's focus area by the second semester of their program. This will allow students to determine when to sit for their comprehensive exam. We also mandate that they pass the comprehensive exam prior to

their research proposal being approved. There is a minimum 60 day waiting period before their second attempt if they are unsuccessful in their first.

The standing and supervisory committee are responsible for writing comprehensive exam questions. Based on their approval, the student should be able to take a comprehensive exam. The student must be enrolled for a minimum of 9 hours for the semester in which the exam is administered. First, the standing committee will write questions for the research methods and data analytics section as a general area. For the focused area, each of the candidate's supervisory committee members will write one question in the focused areas of research (Total 4 focused-area questions for four hours). It is advisable that a major professor call a pre-proposal meeting among the supervisory committee in order to clarify the scope of study and extract the potential focused-area questions. The pre-proposal meeting can be scheduled before the spring break.

Students should provide copies of all responses to each committee member for evaluation. The committees will evaluate the answers within 14 business days. Then the graduate program office will be responsible for obtaining feedback from all committee members. If a student successfully passes the two areas (general and focused) of the written examination, the major professor will schedule the oral examination. The student can retake the comprehensive exams only once in case of unsatisfactory results. A second failure of the exam will result in the student dismissal from the program. The composition of the supervisory committee shall not be changed before a final decision is reached on the result of the comprehensive exam.

7. **Oral Comprehensive Exam**: Upon receiving the results of the written comprehensive exam, the oral comprehensive exam is scheduled within the next two weeks. The main purpose of the exam is to confirm the students' competency level by asking additional comprehensive questions involving an initial discussion of doctoral dissertation topics. Once the oral examination is passed, the student takes the signed original ballot to the Graduate Office and provides a copy to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. At this point, the student is allowed to register for Ph.D. doctoral dissertation credits.

8. **Doctoral Dissertation Registration**: The Ph.D. candidate is required to register for Doctoral Dissertation Research Proposal. The candidate prepares a description of the proposed research and dissertation for approval by his/her advisory committee. Upon completion of the proposal, the candidate must present a proposal defense to his or her committee for approval prior to collecting data.

9. **Dissertation Preparation**: The Ph.D. candidate is required to develop and propose an original research plan to the supervisory committee. The students are required to circulate their abstract at least 10 days prior to the proposal defense. The student's supervisory committee members are responsible for determining whether the proposal should be accepted or denied. If the proposal is accepted, the signed proposal document will be kept in the student's file in the graduate program office for future reference.

10. **ABD Status**: A doctoral student is advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, called "All But Dissertation" (ABD) status, by (a) successfully completing the required coursework, (b) passing the comprehensive examination, and (c) gaining approval of the dissertation proposal by their Dissertation Committee.

11. **Dissertation Public Lecture-Presentation Defense**: The student presents and defends the dissertation in a public lecture. The results of the defense are conveyed to the Graduate School via the Defense Final Report form. Students will be required to conduct the scientific study and defend the findings of the study before the dissertation committee, faculty and students of the College, and surrounding academic communities during an open oral public dissertation defense. The student will be required to advertise and circulate their abstract at least 10 days prior to the oral defense. The memo will also include the date, time and location of the defense, and at the minimum will be provided to all faculty members in the college. Completion of the dissertation will fulfill the partial requirements for the Ph.D. degree and must be completed no later than five years after successful passing of the written comprehensive examination. Students have a maximum time of 10 years to complete all the requirements for the Ph.D. program.

12. **Submission of Approved Dissertation**: The student submits the approved dissertation electronically and must complete the paperwork required at this final stage.

13. **Graduation Application**: Apply for graduation online at http://myuh.edu/. During the "regular filing period," there is a $25.00 non-refundable application fee. There is a $50.00 non-refundable application fee during the "late filing period." The deadlines for the filing periods are published on the University's Academic Calendar. If a student does not fulfill all requirements for graduation in the semester expected, another application and fee for graduation in a future semester must be submitted.

14. **Appeal/Grievance Policy:** The grievance policy at the Conrad N. Hilton College follows that of the University s outlined in the Graduate and Professional Studies catalog website (http://www.uh.edu/grad_catalog/garr/grievance_pol.html). This applies to the redress of grievances concerning academic and instructional matters, and other issues for which there are no other existing grievances procedures.
    1. As such, every effort shall be made by the graduate/professional student and the faculty member(s) involved to settle their differences amicably and informally to redress the grievance. If appropriate or necessary, the Associate Dean of Academic Programs shall participate in this informal effort to resolve this grievance.
    2. In the event that an informal resolution is not possible, the graduate/professional student will petition the Associate Dean of Academic Programs by filing a formal written complaint within 10 working days after a mutual decision is made that the grievance cannot be settled informally. The letter should provide details regarding the complaint and redress. After receipt of the letter, the Associate Dean of Academic Programs must respond in writing within 10 (ten) working days and set up a meeting between the graduate/professional student (s), the faculty member (s) involved. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Associate Academic Dean and Graduate Program director will render a decision within 10 (ten) working days.
    3. In the event that resolution is not possible at the Associate Dean level, the Dean will respond in writing within 10 (ten) working days to set up a meeting between the graduate/professional student, the faculty/professional students, and 3 (three) faculty members. The Dean will appoint the faculty members on an ad hoc basis, and the students will be selected from the student body of the graduate students of the college. The Dean will chair this meeting and render a decision within 10 working days.

15. **Residency Requirement**: Acquiring a doctoral degree requires a strong commitment. Students who stretch out their studies are usually unable to complete them. Thus, full-time students must enroll in a minimum of 9-credit hours per semester. With the exception of credits transferred at the beginning of a student's program, all courses must typically be taken at the University of Houston. The maximum credit hours can be transferred from other institutes are nine.

16. **Human Subjects Training**: Any student preparing to collect qualitative or quantitative data for dissertation development, proposal, or doctoral dissertation MUST COMPLETE Human Subjects Training and BE CERTIFIED by the University of Houston Institutional Review Board. The Human Subjects Research Course is available through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). The course, consisting of 10 online modules, provides basic information on the ethical principles and federal regulations that protect human participants in research. Completion of CITI training ensures that researchers understand key concepts such as research misconduct, informed consent, and conflict of interest. A minimum score of 80 percent correct overall is required to obtain a certificate of completion for the CITI modules.

17. **Walking at Graduation**: To participate in the graduation ceremony ('walk'), the student must have at least obtained complete signature approval from the dissertation committee following the successful completion of the student's dissertation defense by the end of the final exam period.

Oral Defense and Dissertation Submission

1. Prior to the defense, your advisor needs to obtain a copy of the dissertation ballot (as seen below). The committee should sign off at the time of the defense and your chair will sign once the revisions are complete.
2. Once your advisor has signed the form, it must be submitted to the graduate program advisor to obtain the signatures of the dean and associate dean.
3. Next, you will submit your dissertation manuscript in electronic form to the graduate advisor for formatting review.
    a. Formatting guidelines should be followed as seen below. You may attain an example copy from the graduate office to assist you.
    b. Deadline for Spring graduation is **April 21**.
    c. Deadline for Fall graduation is **November 21**.
4. Once approved, an electronic copy needs to be uploaded to the UH library system for your dissertation to be deposited.
    a. http://vireoetd.org/vireo/support/vireo-3-0-help-videos/
    b. https://uh-etd.tdl.org/
    c. It is common to embargo the dissertation for 2 years to allow you enough time to publish your articles so you don't accidentally give the impression that you are plagiarizing yourself.
    d. Deadline for Spring graduation is **May 2**.
    e. Deadline for Fall graduation is **December 2**.
5. You can also print out a bound copy for yourself, family members, committee members, chairs, etc. at your desire. To do so, you will need to submit an electronic copy of the final dissertation along with the signature sheet to the University Copy Center.
    a. https://www.uh.edu/graduate-school/academics/thesis/
    b. This is expensive. Be prepared to pay for copies of the dissertation to be printed and bound.
    c. This is not mandatory for the graduate office and is a decision you should make with your advisor and family at your own discretion.
    d. Please make arrangements to pick up your bound copies as the Graduate Office will not be responsible for delivery. The Graduate Office will hold your bound copies for your retrieval.
6. Finally, complete the survey of earned doctorates (SED). As of 2018, the option for the Hilton College was not available.
    a. https://sed.norc.org/survey

Please note: The dissertation is not complete until it is (1) successfully defended; (2) revised according to committee specifications; (3) uploaded to the UH library archive through Vireo; (4) approved by both the student's faculty advisor and the Graduate Academic Advisor.

Dissertation Formatting:

1. *Auxiliary Beginning*: these elements should use Roman numeral numbers for page numbers. Each item should start a new page and include the running header as prescribed by APA formatting guidelines.
   a. Title Page
   b. Signature Page
   c. Dedication
   d. Acknowledgments
   e. Table of Contents
   f. List of Tables
   g. List of Figures
   h. Abstract
      i. Although 600 words are the maximum length, nearly all abstracts should have fewer than 600 words. University microfilms will not accept an abstract exceeding 350 words and will be shortened by ProQuest (UMI) editors.
      ii. It should contain the following: (1) statement of the problem, (2) procedures and methods, (3) results, and (4) conclusions. A brief introduction of the problem may be necessary but it is important to get to the conclusions in short order. An abstract is not an advertisement or a tease. As such, it should not have statements such as, "this work made several measurements, which allowed the formation of some important conclusions." A sentence like that does no telling; the reader should not have to go elsewhere in the thesis to learn what measurements were made and what conclusions were formed.
      iii. The abstract will be made public immediately, even if the thesis/dissertation has an embargo. Please keep this in mind while writing the abstract, if there is proprietary information that should not be revealed before the embargo has expired.
2. *Body of the Paper*
   a. Chapter 1: Introduction
   b. Chapter 2: Literature Review
   c. Chapter 3: Methodology
   d. Chapter 4: Results
   e. Chapter 5: Manuscript 1 (in full)
   f. Chapter 6: Manuscript 2 (in full)
   g. Chapter 7: Theoretical Contributions & Practical Implications
   h. Chapter 8: Conclusions & Limitations and Future Research
3. *Auxiliary Ending*
   a. References
   b. Appendices
4. *Style*
   a. 1-inch margins
   b. Times New Roman
   c. Size 12 font
   d. Double-spaced
   e. APA format

STUDENT SERVICE RESOURCES

Campus Safety

The University of Houston Police Department (UHPD) strives to enable students, faculty, staff and visitors to be safe while pursuing their on-campus endeavors. The campus is situated in an urban environment, however, and so is not immune to crime. UHPD-recommended campus safety guidelines and information on reducing your vulnerability to crime are available at http://www.uh.edu/police/staying_safe.html. The Police Department's crime prevention guidelines provide additional information on staying safe: http://www.uh.edu/police/preventing_crime.html.

UH offers a security escort service, which is designed for the community members who have safety concerns and would like to have a Security Officer walk with them, for their safety, as they make their way across campus. Based on availability, either a UHPD Security Officer or Police Officer will escort students, faculty, and staff to locations beginning and ending on campus. If you feel that you need a Security Officer to walk with you for your safety please call 3-3333. Arrangements may be made for special needs.

UH Emergency Alert Notification System In a campus emergency, The University of Houston will activate the UH Emergency Alert Notification System to provide critical information. The UH Emergency Alert Notification System utilizes the following methods to send UH Emergency Alerts: • The UH Emergency Operations Center website: www.uh.edu/emergency • Emergency Management Bureau Facebook page (http://www.facebook.com/UHEMB) • Emergency Management Bureau Twitter page (http://twitter.com/UHEMB) • E-mail • Phone • SMS Text Messaging • Alertus beacons • Outdoor Warning Sirens (if shelter-in-place or lockdown action required)

Campus Student Systems

AccessUH AccessUH is your gateway to the University of Houston's information and computing resources. Log into AccessUH with your CougarNet or myUH (PeopleSoft) UserID and password and you will get immediate access to other critical systems that you use on a daily basis.

Blackboard Blackboard is a Web-based learning management system (LMS) designed to provide a space for face-to-face course supplementation. Blackboard provides many types of tools and features for enriching the learning experience by providing tools for displaying content, interacting with students, and assessing students' work.

Computer Accounts All students are required to set up a University computer account. Moreover, doctoral students are expected to have an adequate level of computer literacy. Instructions for establishing this account are provided during New Student Orientation.

MyUH Self Service (PeopleSoft) MyUH (PeopleSoft) will be your connection to managing a wide range of activities—checking admission status, managing and registering for courses, seeing grades, making payments, reserving parking, resetting passwords, viewing academic records and financial aid, and much more.

CougarOne Card

Students will need to obtain a CougarOne Card, the official picture identification card for the University of Houston. A fee is charged to all enrolled students each semester, and is included on the tuition and fee bill. It is recommended that all students, faculty, and staff obtain a card and take

advantage of University services. "Card Access Control" is required to enter some University of Houston campus buildings and rooms (i.e., Central Computing Site, Residential Life and Housing, Intramural Facilities, Scholars Community Program, GCSW Student Lounge, GCSW Computer Learning Center, etc.). To obtain a CougarOne Card, go to the Welcome Center (at the Parking Garage), Suite 101 – a photo identification such as a driver's license, military ID, or Passport is required. Please visit the website at: http://www.uh.edu/cougar1card/info.htm or call (832) 842-2273 for additional information about these services.

Health and Wellness Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services Over 1,276 UH students have visited CAPS in the last year. They come from very diverse backgrounds and seek our services when they are experiencing stress, hopelessness, loneliness, anxiety, depression, difficulty adjusting, relationship issues, identity questions, and a variety of other concerns.

CAPS staff members provide a safe, confidential atmosphere where you can talk about your current situation in the context of your personal history and life experiences. In order to ensure a safe environment for students to explore their personal concerns all counseling services are confidential.

A variety of services are offered including: • Daytime and after hours crisis intervention

- Individual & Couples Counseling
- Group Counseling
- Free weekly Food for Thought Workshops
- Consultation to the Campus Community

All currently enrolled students at the University of Houston are eligible for clinical services at CAPS. Initial Consultation (ICON) appointments are always free for currently enrolled UH Students. Couples counseling has a $10 fee per session, and beginning January 2, 2013, individual counseling will have a fee of $5 per session. Group counseling is always free to currently enrolled UH students.

Health Center The Health Center offers general medical services as well as several specialty clinics. The General Medicine Clinic is open to all currently enrolled UH students and faculty/staff. All Specialty Clinics services are exclusively for students, and include: • General Medicine Clinic • Men's Clinic • Orthopedic Clinic • Psychiatry Clinic • Women's Clinic • Travel Services

Student health insurance is also available through the university. More information can be found here: http://www.uh.edu/healthcenter/insurance/

Recreation Center

The Department of Campus Recreation is committed to enhance the quality of life and learning for UH students and through recreational/fitness programs, services and facilities in support of the mission and values of the University of Houston. A few of the activities offered include:

- Group fitness classes
- Personal training
- Intramural sports

- Swimming (indoor and outdoor)
- Climbing wall
- Adventure trips
- Equipment rentals

Membership to the Campus Recreation Center is included in your student fees.

Parking and Transportation

Students are required to register for parking through their Parking Self-Service account available on AccessUH. Permits will be mailed to the address selected during permit registration. If you must drive a vehicle other than the one you registered you may transfer your permit to the other vehicle. A current parking map can be found here: http://www.uh.edu/maps/#map-parking-routes

Student Parking Options:

1. Garage Permits: Vehicles displaying a student garage permit must park in the student section of the specified garage weekdays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. After 5 p.m. and all day on weekends, this permit becomes valid in student and economy lots. Annual permits expire on August 15 of the academic year issued and semester permits expire as follows: Fall-December 31; Spring-May 31; Summer-August 15 of the academic year issued. Garage permits will be declared 'sold-out' once all available student spaces have been purchased.
2. Student Permits: Valid in student or economy parking lots. Not valid in restricted resident hall parking lots, or in faculty/staff parking lots before 7 p.m. Commuter permits expire as follows: Fall/SpringMay 31; Fall-December 31; Spring-May 31 of the academic year issued.
3. Economy Permits: Valid in economy parking lots only. The economy lots tend to be further out from the center of campus. Expires on August 31st of academic year issued.

More information about parking and permits can be found at http://www.uh.edu/af-auxiliary-services/parking/

Student Support Services

Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD) The University of Houston is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for eligible students with disabilities, including students who have learning disabilities, health impairments, psychiatric disabilities, and/or other disabilities.

Students who have disabilities are encouraged to register with the Justin Dart Jr. Center for Students with Disabilities as early as possible in their academic careers. Specific documentation from qualified health care providers will be required. Documentation requirements for disability eligibility may be obtained by contacting the Center or by downloading this information from the website (www.uh.edu/csd).

Students whose disabilities may require some type of accommodations, including course load modification, exam modification, or other accommodations should contact the Center and discuss the availability of services such as readers, interpreters, or note-takers and the process for requesting accommodations. The Center for Students with Disabilities will recommend accommodations as early as possible each semester. Appropriate accommodations are determined on an individual basis through

a team approach involving the Center, the student, the Academic Accommodations Evaluation Committee, and at times instructors, as appropriate. A student who believes that an instructor has unfairly denied an accommodation request may appeal to the Director of the department, the Dean of the college, and the Provost, in that order.

Services are provided to student athletes who have disabilities at the Athletics/Alumni Center, in addition to the main Center office. The staff may be reached at Athletics Department at (713) 743-9254.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) conducts psychological and learning disability assessments. There may be a waiting list and/or a charge for these services.

The University of Houston campus is accessible via ramps, curb-cuts, free inner-campus disabled parking, Braille signs, TTY's, etc. Attendant Care Services are available through the University Health Center by calling (713) 7435112. Students who identify barrier problems should bring those to the attention of the Section 504/ADA Coordinator at the Office of Affirmative Action at (713) 743-8835, and/or the Justin Dart Jr. Center for Students with Disabilities.

Women and Gender Resource Center

The mission of the Women and Gender Resource Center (WGRC) is to promote gender equity, gender justice, and student success at the University of Houston through advocacy, education, empowerment, and support services. More information can be found at their website: http://www.uh.edu/wgrc/

Resources provided include: • Information and referral services • Mother's Rooms and lactation information • Free supplies • Computers • Library • Dress for Success: member organization that provides business attire to women in need

Graduate Student Parent Resources Parenting and going to school simultaneously is difficult to juggle. Both can be full-time jobs, and this is often overwhelming, especially for single parents. Many college parents are forced to delegate their time between parenting, academics, employment, family commitments and a host of other responsibilities. However, UH has resources in place to help you succeed: • Children's Learning Center (CLC): Children's Learning Center (CLC) provides a nationally accredited exemplary early childhood program that supports the student, staff, and faculty of the University of Houston (UH). The Children's Learning Center has two convenient locations on campus with a combined capacity of 221 children.

Student Support Services
There is a wide array of support services sponsored by a variety of campus offices and facilities. This section describes some of these services and resources.

UH GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES AND QUICK LINKS:
Please visit http://www.uh.edu/students/index.php for details regarding multiple resources available to students at University of Houston.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR:
http://catalog.uh.edu/index.php

TUITION, FINANCIAL AID, PAYMENT DUE DATES, AND REFUNDS:
Information about these programs are available through the University of Houston Office of Student Business Services at http://www.uh.edu/about/offices/enrollment-services/student- businessservices/.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS):
More information about University of Houston services are available at http://www.uh.edu/caps/.

STUDENT LIFE RESOURCES/WELLNESS:
A great education extends beyond the classroom. At the University of Houston, we support your success with wellness programs, counseling services, a professional police service and much more. The University of Houston also offers specialized programs for international students and students with disabilities. More information is available at http://www.uh.edu/student- life/resources/.

SCHOLARSHIPS:
Information about scholarships is available on the UH Scholarship page (http://www.uh.edu/financial/undergraduate/types-aid/scholarships/)

FORMS

Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

Ph.D. Dissertation Committee Composition Approval Form

Student name: _____ UH ID: _____

Semester and year of entrance into graduate program: ———————————————

Semester and year of anticipated graduation: ————————————————————

*It is requested that the following members be appointed to constitute
the Doctoral Committee for the above-named student. By signing below they have agreed to
serve. Note: If committee members are outside of UH, please fill out and return the included
additional permission form.*

Committee Chairperson: (Also sign at the bottom to indicate approval of the committee)

_____   _____
Printed Name   Signature

_____   _____
Co-chair Printed Name (if applicable)   Signature

Additional Committee Members: (At least three committee members are required)

_____ _____ _____
Printed Name   Signature   Institution if other than UH

_____ _____ _____
Printed Name   Signature   Institution if other than UH

_____ _____ _____
Printed Name   Signature   Institution if other than UH

Committee Approval Signatures:

Approved: _____ _____
              Committee Chairperson   Date

Approved: _____ _____
              Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies   Date

Approved: _____ _____
              Dean, Hilton College   Date

Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

4450 University Drive, Room 227
Houston, Texas 77204-3028

Request for External Faculty Member to Serve on the Dissertation Committee

Dissertation Committee for: _____

Nominated Professor: _____

Nominator:_____

University Affiliation: _____   Email Address: _____

Academic Rank or Position Title:_____

Nominator's Reason for Requesting Appointment:

Please Attach Nominee's C.V.
(If not listed on CV Please attach Nominee's Membership on Ph.D. Advisory Committees

Signatures

_____
External Faculty Member   Date

_____
Dissertation Chair   Date

_____
Assoc. Dean for Research & Graduate Studies   Date

_____
Dean of the College   Date

Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership
UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

Candidacy Examination Ballot

Written Examination Date: _____

Student Name: _____   UH ID: _____

Student Email: _____

To be completed after the written exam

General Area: Data Analysis and Research Methods

Data Analysis:

_____	_____	_____	_____
Exam Committee	Date	Pass	Fail

_____	_____	_____	_____
Exam Committee	Date	Pass	Fail

Recommendation:

Research Methods:

_____	_____	_____	_____
Exam Committee	Date	Pass	Fail

_____	_____	_____	_____
Exam Committee	Date	Pass	Fail

Recommendation:

Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

Comprehensive Examination Ballot

Written Examination Date: _____

Oral Examination Date: _____

Student Name: _____   UH ID: _____

Student Email: _____

Student's Major Area: _____

To be completed after the Oral exam

_____	_____	_____	_____
Chair Professor	Date	Pass	Fail
_____	_____	_____	_____
Committee Member	Date	Pass	Fail
_____	_____	_____	_____
Committee Member	Date	Pass	Fail
_____	_____	_____	_____
External Committee Member	Date	Pass	Fail

Recommendation:

Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

PhD Dissertation Proposal Ballot

Student Name: _____ UH ID: _____

Student Email: _____

Title:

_____

_____

_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I request approval of the attached dissertation topic, which is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Hospitality Administration.

Committee Members:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies: _____

Dean's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Conrad N. Hilton College of
Global Hospitality Leadership

UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

Ph.D. Dissertation Ballot

Oral Defense Date:

Student Name:

Title of Dissertation:

Above mentioned individual has completed requirements of Ph.D. dissertation in both written and oral format.

_____	_____	_____	_____
Chair Professor	Date	Pass	Fail
_____	_____	_____	_____
Committee Member	Date	Pass	Fail
_____	_____	_____	_____
Committee Member	Date	Pass	Fail
_____	_____	_____	_____
External Committee Member	Date	Pass	Fail

In case of failure of defense, please specify recommendation:

Dissertation Title

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the

Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management

University of Houston

In partial fulfillment of a Ph.D. in Hospitality Administration for the University of Houston.

Candidate's Name

Month Year

Dissertation Title

A Dissertation Presented to
the Faculty of the
Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management
University of Houston

Approved by:

_____

Dennis Reynolds, PhD
Dean, Conrad N. Hilton College

_____

Ki-Joon Back, PhD
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies

_____

First Name Last Name, PhD
Dissertation Chair

_____

First Name Last Name, PhD
Dissertation Committee Member

_____

First Name Last Name, PhD
Dissertation Committee Member

_____

First Name Last Name, PhD
External Dissertation Committee Member

Ph.D. Candidate's Name
Month Year

Ph.D. DISSERTATION TEMPLATE

Avatar Profile Design:

Evaluating the Impacts of Avatar Design on Source Credibility and Community

Engagement

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the

Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management

University of Houston

In partial fulfillment of a PhD in Hospitality Administration for the University of Houston.

Elizabeth A. Whalen

October 2018

Avatar Profile Design: Evaluating the Impacts of Avatar Design on Source Credibility and Community Engagement

A Dissertation Presented to
the Faculty of the
Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management
University of Houston

Approved by:

_____
Dennis Reynolds, PhD
Dean, Conrad N. Hilton College

_____
Ki-Joon Back, PhD
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies

_____
John Bowen, PhD
Dissertation Chair

_____
Juan Madera, PhD
Dissertation Committee Member

_____
Cristian Morosan, PhD
Dissertation Committee Member

_____
Seyhmus Baloglu, PhD
External Dissertation Committee Member

Elizabeth Whalen
October 2018

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Donald P. Wyman, who has been my editor-in-chief for over twenty-three years.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. John T. Bowen, for the privilege of working with him throughout my PhD program. Dr. Bowen's expertise has been a paramount part of my successes. His knowledge, skills, expertise, and insight have been invaluable tools in shaping my future research potential. I appreciate his guidance and support in completing this dissertation and I could not have asked for a better advisor.

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Abstract

Consumer communication is increasingly moving to online digital spaces. Online consumption communities have become pivotal areas for consumer to consumer and consumer to business dialogues that influence strategic decision making for the organization and behavioral decision making for the consumer. With the increasing influence of online communities in the consumer marketplace, it is important to promote sustainable, healthy, and active communities. Despite the importance of these communities on decision making and other beneficial outcomes such as loyalty, advocacy, and innovation, neither researchers nor practitioners fully understand how the groups function and how to influence active engagement within the community.

This research investigated the influence of avatar profile design on non-member community engagement through a series of experiments. In examining non-members, results provide insights into community norming behaviors in design. Avatar profile decisions for handle choice and profile picture do not negatively impact the credibility perceptions of non-members. Similarly, additional information categories added to profiles by the community do not have a negative impact. These results provide evidence that the focus of avatar profile design norms should be internally adjusted without the concern of alienating new potential members.

Furthermore, the study shows differences in community engagement intentions as a result of risk perceptions and inquiry type. Online communities serve to reduce uncertainty for functional performance but do not mitigate perceptions of financial risk. Also, hedonic interactions are more likely to promote active community engagement than utilitarian exchanges. Based on these results, communities should promote open-ended hedonic exchanges between members in order to increase engagement behaviors.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Practitioners and researchers recognize significant….