

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT

Guide to

Graduate Studies Program Requirements, Policies, and
Procedures

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Laramie, Wyoming

This brief guide is presented as a supplement to the Graduate Catalog and other relevant University publications with which you should become thoroughly familiar. It is the student's responsibility to read and to adhere to all procedures and deadlines established by the Graduate School and the Renewable Resources Department.

The Department of Renewable Resources offers M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Entomology, Rangeland Ecology and Management or Soil Science. Jamie Davidson, room 2013 Ag. Building, maintains an active list of Renewable Resource Department graduate student e-mail addresses. Please be sure to get you e-mail address to this office as soon as possible so that you can be quickly and conveniently notified of important deadlines, changes in policy, jobs, seminars, etc. If you have questions regarding Renewable Resources department policy, protocol or procedures, or if you have suggestions for enhancing the Graduate Program in the department, please discuss you recommendations with your graduate program chair, Jamie, or Interim Department Head, Dr. Rich Olson.

GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GAC)

The GAC's major role is to offer guidance regarding coursework needed for your specific degree requirements and to assist you in formulating you study design and interpretation of results. **A student should select a GAC by the end of the first full semester of registration** (please note the term "full semester" refers to either the fall or spring semester). The committee is generally composed of members of the University of Wyoming Faculty. Occasionally scientists who are not part of the UW faculty may be chosen to be part of the GAC. An appointment of a non-UW faculty member should be discussed with the committee chair (i.e. your main advisor(s)) and the Department Head before an offer is made to join the committee. Students who have an off-campus research faculty member as chair must have an on-campus Renewable Resources Department academic co-chair.

An M.S. committee shall consist of no fewer than three members, including the chair. At least one member of the GAC must be a UW faculty member from a department other than Renewable Resources, and cannot hold a joint appointment in Renewable Resources.

Doctoral committees must have at least five members, including the chair(s). At least one member must be a UW faculty member from a department other than Renewable Resources, and cannot hold a joint appointment in Renewable Resources.

The GAC is the authoritative entity regarding the terms of program of study, research proposal and defense exam (i.e. there is no administrative structure that will overrule the GAC regarding the content of these items). Your GAC members will likely be useful mentors throughout your career and important sources of references for jobs. They will also be helpful advisors in helping your graduate experience to reach its potential. Therefore, it is obviously in the best interest of the graduate student to choose the GAV members wisely and keep the various members of the GAC informed regarding the progress of your program.

A petition may be filed (requiring the signatures of the GAC and the Department Head) if it is necessary to change the composition of the GAC.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

A Program of Study listing formal course work, seminars, and research and thesis hours should be developed with, and approved by, the student's GAC. Courses on degree plans will vary among students depending upon their background and career objectives. The degree plan is a contract between the student and his/her GAC. **It is in the student's best interest to have the Program of Study approved as soon as possible, therefore this should be done before the start of the second full semester.** An added benefit to filing a Program of Study in a timely manner is that doctoral students will have their graduate assistantship augmented by \$279/year from the Graduate School, based on available resources. **Students will not be eligible to receive funds managed through the department (assistantships, travel grants) beyond the start of the second long semester until their degree plan is approved and on file in the department.**

A student's program should emphasize graduate-level work, but undergraduate course work may be required to address academic deficiencies, particularly for research skills and techniques. The amount of undergraduate (4000-level) courses that will count towards the M.S. or Ph. D. degree is limited to 8 credit hours. If critical deficiencies exist, the GAC may require a student to take additional undergraduate courses that will not contribute to the graduate degree requirements.

A M.S. non-thesis option student must take at least 30 credit hours of course work. A M.S. thesis option student must take a minimum of 26 credit hours of course work and four hours of 5960: Thesis Research. A Ph.D. program requires a minimum of 72 hours of credit from UW or another approved university. This 72 hour requirement may include graduate credits earned while working toward the M.S. degree in the same area, but at least 42 hours (of the 72) must be earned in formal course work. Additional credits toward the 72 hour requirement may include additional formal course credits, 5980: Dissertation Research credits, or 5990: Internship credits. Of the course work hours mentioned above, it is desirable that a minimum of about 12 hours be selected from the discipline course offerings associated with the degree title (i.e., REWM for a degree in Range Ecology and Watershed Management, ENTO for a degree in Entomology and SOIL for a degree in Soil Science- RNEW courses count toward

applicability in all degrees offered by the department). In unique circumstances (i.e., exceptional disciplinary academic background before arriving at UW or special targeted career objectives) the GAC may allow that fewer disciplinary courses be taken at UW in lieu of other specialized coursework. Conversely, the GAC may require additional hours for the research problem, previous course work, etc. See the Graduate Catalog for further specifications regarding degree program requirements.

A petition may be filed (requiring signatures of the GAC and the Department Head) if it is necessary to change the Program of Study.

RETENTION

Graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA. A student who falls below a 3.0 GPA has one semester to reestablish a satisfactory GPA or face loss of assistantship funding and dismissal from the department. Once accepted, a student will be allowed one probationary semester. Standards for students on fellowships or scholarships may be higher. Although a 3.0 GPA is necessary criterion for retention, steady progress toward a degree and commensurate academic accomplishments are also expected. If a student earns a D, F, or U in a course on their degree plan, it must be repeated and a C or S achieved. A GAC may write the provision into the program of study that certain classes will require at least a B (i.e. courses that are so important to the degree that at least a B level of mastery is required).

TIME LIMITS

Master's students have 6 calendar years to complete their degrees from the beginning of the first course taken that is listed on the Program of Study. Doctoral candidates have 4 calendar years after the successful completion of their preliminary examination to complete their degree.

A student has one calendar year after the final oral exam to submit the thesis or dissertation.

MINIMUM REGISTRATION

All graduate students are required to maintain continuous registration (even those without assistantships) until they complete all requirements for graduation, unless a specific leave of absence is granted to a student (in writing) by the Department Head and the Dean of the Graduate School. The Graduate School requires graduate students to be enrolled for a minimum of 1 credit hour for M.S. and 2 hours for Ph.D. candidates each fall and spring semester. Any condition that requires a higher minimum registration would supersede this Graduate College minimum registration standard. For example, students with University of Wyoming teaching or research assistantships must be registered for 9 hours during the fall and spring semesters. Additional requirements for students with loans, fellowships, visas, etc. may exist.

If a graduate student holding a graduate assistantship drops courses which result in the student being registered for less than the required minimum number of hours (i.e., 9 hours in fall and spring semesters), the student shall not be required to add additional hours or replace the dropped hours IF the student drops after the 12th class day. Said student could maintain their graduate assistant position with a memo supporting the drop signed by the department head. Please consider these and other possible

implications (e.g., some insurance programs have special enrollment considerations) when attempting to drop below the minimum hour requirements for full-time classification.

Foreign nationals should be aware that less than full-time during the spring and fall semesters may cause problems with some types of student visa requirements. Foreign nationals should be certain to never allow the time indicated on their IAP-66 or I-20 to lapse! It is usually a fairly straightforward procedure (working with International Student Services) to get the time period indicated on the form to be extended if the paperwork is started months **before** the time period has expired.

Contact the office of Graduate Studies if you have questions.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

A formal preliminary examination is required for all Ph.D. students (and in some programs M.S. students). The student will not be eligible to take the exam if the current GPA is less than 3.0. The GAC may administer the preliminary exam when the student is within approximately 6 credit hours of completing formal courses specified on the degree plan. The preliminary examination must be given no later than the semester following the completion of the formal course work on the degree plan and at least 15 weeks prior to the final defense of the dissertation.

Preliminary examinations will cover all areas within the scope of the student's doctoral program. They usually will involve a written exam from each advisory committee member, followed by an oral exam administered by the committee as a whole. A majority affirmative vote by the GAC is required for a student to pass the preliminary examination. Students who do not graduate within 4 years of their preliminary exam will be required to retake the exam.

A student's GAC and the Graduate School may grant permission for one re-examination to a student who has failed the preliminary exam. A period of at least one semester, but no more than four semesters, must elapse before the retest may take place.

THESIS/DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal represents a contract between the student and his/her GAC. **The student should work with his/her advisor to develop the research proposal and should submit it to the GAC for approval before their third full semester of study.** A title page must be signed by the student, by all members of the GAC, and by the Department Head, must be signed by the student, by all members of the GAC, and by the Department Head. One copy of the proposal with signed title page must be submitted to the Renewable Resources Department Head. Copies should also be given to members of the GAC. Research involving human or animal subjects requires additional special approval forms. **Students will not be eligible to receive funds managed through the department (e.g., assistantships, travel grants) beyond the start of their third long semester of study until their research proposal is approved and on file in the department.**

The narrative of the research proposal should be about 10 double-spaced pages in length and should contain:

- A. Justification and rationale: Summarize previous research on the subject, provide specific literature citations, and identify particular problems that your study will help resolve.
- B. Statement of hypothesis: Specify questions your research is designed to answer.
- C. Procedure: Describe the statistical design and identify the methods of data collection and analysis to be used to definitively answer your hypothesis statements.
- D. Time line: Set targets of when different components of the data collection, analysis and presentation of findings will be accomplished.

The GAC should approve the proposal before the student begins the research. In some cases the nature of the study may require that the research begin before the proposal is approved. In such cases it is very much in the best interest of the student to understand the subtleties of the research objectives and methods so that misunderstandings between the student and the graduate advisor are less likely. The student should report regularly (i.e. at least once or twice a year) to the advisor and to the advisory committee regarding research progress in order to avoid last minute surprises or misunderstandings and to gain approval of any redirection.

THESIS/DISSERTATION PROTOCOL

Deadline dates for filling the thesis/dissertation are announced each semester by the Graduate School.

The research project should be designed to produce a publishable product for a referred journal.

Students are encouraged to organize the documents into chapters which represent stand-alone publications.

A polished draft of the thesis/dissertation in proper format should be delivered to the GAC for review only after the student and the committee chair has agreed upon technical and editorial content.

Committee members have the right to reject documents with grammatical errors or papers that fail to meet high standards of scientific style. Signatures can be obtained on the thesis/dissertation only when changes recommended by the committee have been incorporated.

FINAL EXAMINATION

Although the final oral exam tends to focus on the thesis, dissertation, or M.S. non-thesis professional paper, additional issues may be addressed as a follow-up to the preliminary exams (Ph.D. candidates or as an outgrowth of the discussion of the student's research, coursework or professional activity. The final exam is to be scheduled only after the GAC agrees that the thesis, dissertation, or professional paper is ready for defense. All students must schedule a final Thesis or Dissertation defense seminar in conjunction with the final oral exam (see Seminar section below).

A student must make formal degree application to the Graduate School before the final oral exam can be scheduled. The degree application and fee must be registered in the University in the semester in which the final examination is taken. A student's GPA must be at least 3.0, and there must be no unabsolved grades of unacceptable grade (e.g. D, F, X or perhaps C, see the program study section for more explanation) for any course on the program of study.

A majority affirmative vote by the GAC is required for a student to pass the final examination.

DEFENSE SEMINAR

All students will present a Final Thesis or Dissertation Research Seminar prior to the final examination. The final defense seminar must be approved by the department head at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled date. The student should post the date and time of the seminar in the Agriculture Building and should distribute copies of the seminar announcement to all Renewable Resource faculty, graduate students, and staff at least one week in advance of the scheduled date. The Graduate Advisory Committee will administer the final oral examination after the seminar audience has been excused.

SUBMISSION OF THESIS AND DISSERTATIONS

To meet deadlines for graduation, students need to begin the final defense process months in advance. Due to the size of this department, faculty normally serves on a number of graduate committees, both as advisors and as committee members. Thus, faculty members often have multiple proposals, thesis, and dissertations to review each semester, typically near the end of the semester. The student should allow adequate time for review of these documents and sufficient time for corrections to be made.

Students should be in close contact with advisory committee members so that travel schedules, etc. can be accommodated and planning adjusted accordingly. It is the student's responsibility to initiate and to coordinate this process. Professional courtesy dictates that ample time be allowed for each step in the process if academics standards are to be maintained. It is inappropriate for students to pressure their GAC members to short-circuit this process to meet graduation deadlines.

The student should schedule time for the following sequence of steps:

1. Student submits draft of document to major professor. Allow at least 2 weeks for review.
2. Major professor returns draft to student for revision. Normally, several drafts will be required to produce a document acceptable to the GAC.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 until major professor agrees to send document to Graduate Advisory Committee. Allow 2 weeks for GAC review.
4. Student makes formal application for the degree in the Office of Graduate Studies. Applications must be submitted within the first week of the semester in which the final examination is to be taken. See Graduate School Bulletin for deadlines.
5. After each member of the GAC has approved the document's general form and content, the major professor requests permission from the Graduate School to conduct the final oral exam.
6. Student posts defense seminar announcement at least one week in advance of the proposed final oral exam date.
7. Upon approval of the Graduate School, the thesis/dissertation seminar is presented, and the final defense is held.
8. Students passing the final oral exam may be required to make additional changes to the thesis/dissertation document before the GAC gives final approval. A student who fails the final defense may request permission to retake the final exam after a 6-month waiting period.

9. Student submits the thesis/dissertation complete with GAC and Department Head approval signatures.

PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH

Students are encouraged to submit findings from their research to referred journals and should discuss order of authorship with their major professor and with relevant parties early in their program. Scientific publication will greatly enhance a student's career opportunities and are an important return on investments of faculty, departmental, and University resources into graduate education.

A final bound copy of the thesis/dissertation should be submitted to the department for use in the departmental library. It is good form that a bound copy also is given to each member of the GAC.

In many cases, the grants and contracts which support a student's project stipulate timely publication of research results. Faculty members responsible for acquiring these funds may, therefore, have professional and/or legal obligations to publish. Data collected from research sponsored by grants, assistantships, and departmental projects are the property of the Department of Renewable Resources. The major professor may assume control of research results and make a final decision on re-directing authorship for students who do not make a reasonable attempt to publish within six months of their defense. Students may publish portions of their thesis/dissertation prior to the final oral exam.

OTHER RENEWABLE RESOURCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Copy and fax machines are for Renewable Resources department business only; they are not for any student's class work or personal use. Use of University mail services of long-distance phone calls for personal matters is prohibited. Use of secretarial staff or equipment for work related to degree plans, proposals, dissertations, thesis, or professional papers is also prohibited. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with rules pertaining to use of University vehicles and equipment. Personal use of University vehicles is strictly prohibited and is a violation of State law.

All faculty, staff and graduate students have assigned mailboxes. If you are going to be out of town for several days, please arrange for someone to retrieve the mail from your box and store it. If you will be gone for an extended time period, please leave a forwarding address with your advisor and your advisor's secretary so that your mail can be sent to you.

Parking regulations are strictly enforced on campus. Failure to pay fines can result in registration blocks, denial of permission to conduct the preliminary exam and defense, withholding of transcripts and diplomas, etc. Be sure to familiarize yourself with current rules and protocol.

GRADUATE STUDENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Renewable Resources Department will contribute up to \$300/academic year to defray costs associated with students attending professional meetings to present research papers. The Graduate School will also usually contribute up to \$300 for this purpose as long as funds are available.

SUMMARY OF DEADLINES

The following is a general outline of steps and time sequence a student must follow to be awarded a graduate degree through the Renewable Resources Department.

1. Select GAC and submit Plan of Study before the beginning of the second full semester.
2. Finalize a research proposal with advisor's assistance before the start of the third full semester.
3. Begin research after GAC approves proposal.
4. Ph. D. students take preliminary examination within 6 coursework hours of completing formal degree plan course work, or within one semester thereafter.
5. Make formal application for degree to the Graduate School according to schedules issued each semester by the Graduate School office.
6. Submit draft of thesis, dissertation document to advisor for evaluation and input.
7. Present polished draft of thesis/dissertation to GAC only after major advisor agrees the document is ready.
8. Schedule final defense after GAC has approved document (the Graduation/Title Form must be filed by the deadline set by the Graduate School (approximately midterm-check Graduate School schedule) for the semester in which graduation is planned.
9. Advertise defense seminar.
10. Pass final oral exam.
11. Submit thesis/dissertation to the Graduate School.
12. Schedule an exit meeting with the Department Head.
13. Develop a time-line with your major professor for submitting journal article's resulting from the graduate research. It is highly desirable that the manuscripts resulting from your research be submitted within 6 months of final examination.

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It is necessary that each graduate student sign and turn in this form to Jamie Davidson before the end of their first semester.

I have read, understand and agree to conform to the Graduate Studies Program Requirements, Policies and Procedures outlined in the Graduate School Bulletin and the Renewable Resources Department Graduate Student Guidelines.

Signature

Date

Print Name

