

# **GRADUATE POLICY MANUAL**



**DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**

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## DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

(Revised August 2006)

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Department of Horticultural Sciences Graduate Policy Manual is to summarize those policies that frequently are encountered or misunderstood by graduate students in the Department. In addition, specific policies established by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS) and the Department of Horticultural Sciences are presented. These policies appear in the text in italics. The Policy Manual is a supplement to the Graduate Catalog and does not replace it.

### GRADUATE CATALOG

The official policies of Texas A&M University are published annually in the Graduate Catalog and updated on the Office of Graduate Studies website (<http://ogs.tamu.edu>). It is the responsibility of each graduate student to study and abide by the policies set forth in the most recently published Graduate Catalog and on the Office of Graduate Studies Website.

**The Department cannot stress enough that it is the graduate student's responsibility and duty to become intimately familiar with all policies that affect their graduate program and to correctly follow all policies in a timely manner.**

### OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) is the University office responsible for administering the graduate programs of Texas A&M University. OGS is located on main campus in the Administration Building (Room 302). All petitions, requests and proposals are turned in to OGS for final approval. Technical questions that cannot be answered at the Department level should be addressed to OGS. The Office of Graduate Studies publishes a Graduate Student Calendar every semester which gives the precise dates for all deadlines, and it should be consulted regularly. The calendar can be obtained from OGS in the Administration Building or the OGS website. The OGS also produces a Graduate Handbook that contains much helpful information.

The OGS has much of the information relative to graduate programs on their website. The OGS website can be accessed at <http://ogs.tamu.edu>. All university level forms relative to your graduate program must be obtained from the OGS website. All Department level forms can be obtained from HFSB 204 or the Department's Home Page – <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>.

### DEPARTMENT'S HOME PAGE - AGGIE-HORTICULTURE

The Department of Horticultural Sciences' website is Aggie-Horticulture. It can be accessed at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>. Aggie Horticulture contains a wealth of information about the Department, including the Graduate Policy Manual,

Biographical Sketches of all graduate faculty in the Department, and links to other useful information, such as the OGS website. You should browse Aggie-Horticulture to become familiar with what it offers.

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURE**

To maximize efficient use of funds and facilities, graduate students should move toward fulfillment of their degree requirements as rapidly as possible. They should work with their Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee to establish the courses to be taken (see section on Degree Program). The registration procedure is as follows:

1. Select the courses in consultation with your Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee.
2. You may register on-line during your designed registration period at <http://register.tamu.edu>. It is advisable to pre-register. There are stiff monetary penalties for late registration (<http://finance.tamu.edu/sbs>).

## **MINIMUM REGISTRATION AND CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION**

The Graduate Catalog and OGS website contain the latest official information on this topic. Policies specific to Horticulture graduate students or frequently asked questions are as follows:

### **Minimum and Maximum Registration**

Table 1 lists the minimum and maximum registration requirements for graduate students. It is basically a tabular interpretation of the guidelines specified in the Graduate Catalog as modified by policies set forth by the Department, COALS, and OGS.

### **Departmental Policy on Minimum and Continuous Registration**

*All graduate students in the Department (regardless of major) must maintain a continuous enrollment of a minimum of 1 credit hour per semester (fall, spring and summer) from the semester of first enrollment until the semester of graduation. The student can request a waiver based on full-time employment by Texas A&M University System (TAMUS), medical reasons, leaves of absence, etc. If a waiver is granted, the student cannot be on-campus or at an Experiment Station actively completing requirements for their degree, except for a waiver granted to full-time TAMUS employees. The Minimum Registration Waiver form (see Form 1) can be obtained from the Department (HFSB 204). This continuous registration requirement is in addition to the University requirement for continuous registration for students that have completed all course requirements (other than 684, 691 and 693) on their Degree Plan. A waiver from the University requirement can only be obtained by filing a Leave of Absence petition with the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). Any student in violation of the continuous registration requirement will have their registration blocked. The block can be removed only after the student consults with the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies, who will consult with the Chair of the Advisory Committee before removing the block. A letter of reinstatement must be sent from the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies to the Director of OGS for students blocked by OGS. If a student is allowed to register after missing continuous registration for 1 or more semesters, then they must register for 1 credit hour for each semester in violation plus the current semester.*

### **Waiver of Minimum Registration**

If you feel your situation justifies registration below that stated in Table 1, fill out a Minimum Registration Form (Form 1) and turn it in to the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies (HFSB 204) for approval before the first day of classes for that semester. Waivers cannot be granted for students on assistantships.

### **Time Limit on Course Work**

Masters degree candidates must complete their course work within seven years of the first semester registration, and Ph.D. degree candidates must complete their course work within ten years. Course work taken before these periods of time cannot be used towards the degree.

### **100 Hour Cap Rule**

Ph.D. students exceeding seven years and 100 enrolled hours will be penalized on hours enrolled in following semesters. Tuition equivalent to that of out-of-state tuition will be charged on the excess hours. This is a TAMU policy which cannot be waived by the Department.

## **MINIMUM COURSE PREREQUISITES**

### **Suggested Course Prerequisites**

The following is a list of courses most students have taken prior to starting their M.Ag., M.S. or Ph.D. graduate program. Most are accomplished by a B.S. in Horticulture, Agronomy, Biology or related sciences.

<u>Course</u>	<u>Semester hours</u>
<b>Horticulture</b>	
HORT 201 (General Horticulture)	3
HORT 202 (General Horticulture Laboratory)	1
HORT 306 and/or 308 (Landscape Plant Materials)	3
HORT 319 (Fruit and Nut Production)	3
HORT 428 or 429 (Greenhouse Management/Prod.)	3
HORT 325 (Vegetable Production)	3
HORT 326 (Plant Propagation)	3
HORT 481 (Seminar)	1
<b>Mathematics</b>	
MATH 141 (College Algebra)	3
MATH 142 (Calculus)	3
<b>Introductory/Inorganic Chemistry w/Lab</b>	
CHEM 101	4
<b>Organic Chemistry</b>	
CHEM 222, 227 or 228	3-4
<b>Biochemistry</b>	
BICH 303 or 410	3
<b>Entomology</b>	
ENTO 201	3
<b>Genetics or Plant Breeding</b>	
GENE 301, 310, 315, 320 or 404	3-4
<b>Plant Pathology</b>	
PLPA 301 and 303	4
<b>Plant Physiology</b>	
MEPS (formerly PPHY) 313 or 316	3
<b>Soil Science</b>	
AGRO 301	4

### **Departmental Policy on Course Prerequisites**

*All graduate students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences majoring in either horticulture (HORT) or floriculture (FLOR) must have taken or will take 6 credit hours of 200, 300, 400 or 600 level HORT courses. In the event that the student is deficient in HORT, the 6 hours must be taken at TAMU as a prerequisite of their degree. The courses must be approved by the Chair of their Advisory Committee. Any 300, 400 or 600 level courses may be applied towards the student's Degree Plan with the Chair and Committee's approval. These 6 hours of HORT courses will be in addition to the 6 hour general requirement at the 600 level for all HORT or FLOR M.Agr., M.S., or Ph.D. students. If the student is deficient in non-HORT supporting field courses (for example, chemistry, soils, plant physiology, etc.), the Chair will determine course prerequisites that need to be taken.*

*Graduate students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences majoring in molecular and environmental plant physiology (MEPS), genetics (GENE), food science and technology (FSTC), or plant breeding (PLBR) must meet the course prerequisite requirements set forth by the Interdisciplinary Faculty of that major.*

### **Courses Specified by the Graduate Admissions Process**

In addition to the above Departmental course prerequisite requirements, the graduate admissions process may specify certain courses as a condition of acceptance into the Department's graduate program. Individual Chair or Advisory Committees may also require certain courses to be taken as a prerequisite to a degree. These decisions are made based on the student's background, degree pursued and/or type of research or internship to be undertaken, and are made on a case by case basis.

## **DEGREE PLAN AND GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **Degree Plan**

The Degree Plan establishes all course work required for the graduate degree and also establishes the Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee.

The Degree Plan will list the courses that a student must complete for their degree. In addition, prerequisite courses that the committee feels are necessary to fill-in gaps in the student's previous training or education may be listed.

The official form for the Degree Plan is obtained from the OGS website (<http://ogs.tamu.edu/OGS/currentDegreePlans.htm>). An example is Form 2 in the Appendix.

### **Departmental Policy on Minimum Course Requirements**

*All graduate students in the Department must:*

- 1) regardless of major, take or have taken one graduate level statistics course per degree (i.e. one for the Masters and another for the Ph.D.; if none were taken for the Masters, then two are required for the Ph.D.). This may be satisfied by a graduate level statistics course or a graduate level experimental design/data analysis course in a subject matter department;*
- 2) regardless of major, take one 681 seminar course per degree (i.e. one for Masters and another for Ph.D.). The seminar may be in Horticulture (i.e. HORT 681) or in the student's major (i.e. MEPS 681, GENE 681 or FSTC 681). If a student transfers*

*from another major and has already taken a 681 in that major, then the 681 requirement will be waived for that degree;*

*3) All Master of Agriculture, Master of Science, and Ph.D. students majoring in Horticulture or Floriculture must take six hours of graduate level instructional HORT or FLOR courses (excluding HORT or FLOR 684, 685, 690, 691 or 693) in addition to the HORT 681 seminar requirement. Ph.D. students will be exempt from taking an additional six hours if they have already taken six hours of qualifying graduate level instructional HORT or FLOR courses during their M.S. program.*

*4) All Master of Agriculture, Master of Science, and Ph.D. students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences (regardless of major) must register for one hour of either HORT 693 (Master of Agriculture students) or HORT 691 (M.S. or Ph.D. students) during their last semester under the direction of the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies' section.*

*5) All other curricular matters are at the discretion of the student and his/her Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee, assuming the requirements of the Department and Graduate Catalog are met.*

### **Schedule of Horticulture Graduate Course Offerings**

Table 3 is a list of all graduate courses offered in the Department and the semesters in which they are projected to be offered. This table is intended for planning purposes, but due to a variety of reasons impacting faculty schedules and Departmental resources is subject to change without notice.

### **Use of Transfer Courses**

Consult the latest edition of the Graduate Catalog for the section on Limitation on the Use of Transfer, Extension and Certain Other Courses. These guidelines must be followed in preparing a Degree Plan.

### **Degree Plan Deadlines**

Degree Plans must be completed and filed with OGS: 1) prior to registration (or preregistration) for a third term for Master candidates and a fifth term for Doctoral candidates, excluding summer terms, and 2) no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination or thesis defense for Masters candidates or preliminary exam for Doctoral candidates. The student will be blocked from registering if the degree plan has not been filed by the specified semester.

### **Graduate Advisor or Chair of the Graduate Advisory Committee**

The graduate advisor serves as the Chair of the Graduate Advisory Committee. The student may request a particular faculty to serve as their graduate advisor. If the student does not have enough knowledge to make this decision, then a graduate advisor is assigned to the student prior to admission to the program. The graduate advisor should be selected based on the interest and goals of the student, workload and interest of the faculty, funding availability, and availability of facilities and equipment.

The graduate advisor plays the primary role in the development of a graduate student's program. The graduate advisor assists the student in preparation of a Degree Plan.

The student should work closely with the graduate advisor to determine that the graduate program is meeting the student's goals, and to seek advice from the advisor on problems that may develop during the course of graduate study.

### **Members of the Graduate Advisory Committee**

In addition to the graduate advisor, who functions as the Chair, Master candidates must select two faculty to serve on their Advisory Committee, and Doctoral candidates must select three faculty to serve on their Advisory Committee. At least one of the committee members must be from outside the student's Department or major.

Any member of the Graduate Faculty can serve as a committee member. Graduate Faculty in the Department of Horticultural Sciences include those faculty who hold Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor rank or a Distinguished Lecturer designation and have been approved at the Department, COALS, and University levels for inclusion as Graduate Faculty. A list of all Graduate Faculty in the Department appears in Table 2. A Biographical Sketch of all Graduate Faculty and Adjunct Graduate Faculty in the Department is available on the Department's website, Aggie-Horticulture (<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>). The Graduate Catalog contains a list of all members of the Graduate Faculty in the University. The Advisory Committee may include Texas A&M University faculty or staff that are non-members of the Graduate Faculty (such as post-doctoral Research Associates, Research Scientists, Lecturers, Research Assistant Professors, Research Associate Professors, or Research Professors), or even qualified individuals from outside the University, with special permission from the Director of OGS. Non-members of the graduate faculty must be in addition to the normal contingent of graduate faculty members on the committee.

### **Preliminary Graduate Advisory Committee Meeting**

The student should schedule an advisory committee meeting prior to the second semester's registration. The purpose of this meeting is to determine a student's level of competence, and to guide the student in developing a plan of study which meets his or her career goals. The meeting is informal and consists of an interchange between the student and the committee members. The student, with the help of the graduate advisor, should prepare a preliminary Degree Plan for discussion at the meeting, indicating possible courses to be included in the graduate program, and for the Master of Agriculture a preliminary proposal for the internship. The meeting will end with suggestions for the student on preparing the Degree Plan, internship proposal, or thesis/dissertation proposal. The committee may suggest an additional meeting at a later date to finalize the program of study and proposal if necessary.

### **THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL**

An M.S. candidate must develop a thesis proposal, and a Ph.D. candidate must develop a dissertation proposal. The proposal describes the area of research, lists the objectives of the research, and presents the methodology and approach that will be used. A cover page for the proposal is obtained from the OGS website. Guidelines for preparing the proposal can be obtained from the OGS website. If the research involves human or animal subjects, an approved form from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects or The University Laboratory Animal Care Committee for animal use must accompany the proposal. *All M.S. students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences must file a thesis proposal with the OGS prior to registration (or preregistration) for a third term, excluding summer terms. All Ph.D. students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences must file a dissertation proposal with the*

*OGS prior to registration (or preregistration) for a fifth term, excluding summer terms, for Doctoral candidates. If the thesis or dissertation proposal is not filed by this time, students will be blocked from registration.*

#### **PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION**

A preliminary examination is required for all Ph.D. students; waivers are not permitted. Refer to the latest issue of the Graduate Catalog and OGS website for details. Effective with the Fall 2006 semester, all Ph.D. students are eligible, beginning the semester after successful completion of the preliminary examination, for a one-time \$50 per month increase if they have successfully completed their preliminary examination and are employed on an assistantship. This increase will be provided from the same source of funds used to fund their assistantship during a given semester.

#### **M.S. THESIS AND Ph.D. DISSERTATION**

In the Department of Horticultural Sciences, an M.S. degree requires a thesis and a Ph.D. degree requires a dissertation. Research problems should be carefully selected by the student and their Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee to investigate areas of mutual interest with significant research potential.

The M.S. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation must be prepared according to the guidelines set forth in the "Thesis Manual", which can be accessed at <http://thesis.tamu.edu>.

One unbound copy of the thesis (M.S. students) or dissertation (Ph.D. students) on a high quality paper and two CDs, each containing one electronic copy of the professional paper in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format, will be provided to the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies by the last Friday of regularly scheduled classes during the semester in which the student intends to graduate. If these are not provided, a block will be placed on graduation.

#### **EXIT SEMINAR**

An exit seminar summarizes the major findings, experiences and accomplishments of a Master of Agriculture internship, Master of Science thesis or Doctor of Philosophy dissertation. The exit seminar is presented at the very end of a graduate student's graduate program.

#### **Departmental Policy on Exit Seminar**

*All graduate students in the Department, regardless of major, must present a final exit seminar (not for course credit) on the final results of their internship and professional paper for M.Ag. students, or their thesis or dissertation research for M.S. and Ph.D. students. These seminars must be announced by the graduate student between 1 to 2 weeks in advance of the seminar by placing fliers in mailboxes and posting on bulletin boards on all floors of the HFSB. The exit seminar must have open attendance. The scheduled time for the exit seminar is determined by the student and graduate advisor, and is often held just prior to the final examination. Alternatively, the exit seminar may be presented as a part of the Department's seminar series during the last semester of the student's graduate program.*

#### **MINIMUM GRADE POINT RATIO (GPR)**

Graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point ratio (GPR) of 3.000 on both the courses on the Degree Plan and on all graded graduate (600) and advanced undergraduate (300, 400) courses eligible to be applied toward a graduate degree. The cumulative GPR is calculated from all graded (excludes S/U) courses taken at Texas A&M University that are eligible to be used on the Degree Plan (i.e. all 300, 400 and 600 level courses). The University policy and method of calculation of the GPR is described in detail in Graduate Catalog.

### **Departmental Policy on Minimum GPR**

If a graduate student's GPR falls below 3.000, then the following Departmental policy details the procedures that are followed.

*All graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point ratio (GPR) of 3.000 or greater. Any student whose cumulative GPR falls below a 3.000 will be allowed the next semester in which they are enrolled to raise their cumulative GPR to or above a 3.000. For students on an assistantship or fellowship, funding for that semester will be allowed only if justified to the satisfaction of the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies, Department Head, Executive Associate Dean of COALS, and Director of OGS. A letter of justification for continued funding is forwarded from the Chair of the Advisory Committee, through the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies, and to the Department Head. The Department will then make a recommendation to the Executive Associate Dean of COALS and Director of OGS for a final decision.*

*If the student's cumulative GPR is not raised to 3.000 or above after the next semester of enrollment, or if the student's cumulative GPR falls below 3.000 in any subsequent semester (i.e. if a student ever has two semesters with a cumulative GPR below a 3.000, whether the semesters are consecutive or not), the Chair and Advisory Committee will be asked to recommend if the student should be allowed to continue their graduate program. A written recommendation as to the future of the student's graduate program will be sent from the Chair, through the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies, and to the Department Head. If the student is allowed to continue, all graduate assistantship and fellowship funding will be terminated immediately, unless extraordinary justification is presented. The Department will then make a recommendation to the Executive Associate Dean of COALS and Director of OGS for a final decision.*

*If, after the second violation, the student's cumulative GPR is not raised to 3.000 or above after the next semester of enrollment, or if the student's cumulative GPR falls below 3.000 in any subsequent semester (i.e. if a student ever has three semesters with a cumulative GPR below a 3.000, whether the semesters are consecutive or not), the graduate student will be terminated from the graduate program immediately, unless extraordinary justification is provided by the Chair, through the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies, and to the Department Head. The Department will then make a recommendation to the Executive Associate Dean of COALS and Director of OGS for a final decision.*

## **ELEMENTS OF A MASTER OF AGRICULTURE PROGRAM**

### **Internship**

All M.Ag. students must devote a minimum of three consecutive months full-time, or its equivalent, to an internship experience. The internship is selected in cooperation with their Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee and approved by the Associate

Head for Research and Graduate Studies. In the interest of broadening a student's experiences, advisory committees are discouraged from approving internships at the student's family business or at a firm at which the student is currently or formerly employed. Along this same reasoning, advisory committees are discouraged from approving internships that allow students to remain on campus.

### **Professional Paper**

The professional paper is based on the internship experience and has three main parts: preliminary pages, the text, and, supplementary pages.

1. Preliminary Pages (in the following order)
  - a. Title page
  - b. Approval page (Form 3 in Appendix)
  - c. Abstract (the first numbered page, iii)
  - d. Dedication page (optional)
  - e. Acknowledgment (optional)
  - f. Table of Contents
  - g. List of Tables (if more than one table is used)
  - h. List of Figures (if more than one figure is used)
2. Text (normally requires the following)
  - a. Introduction (problem studied at internship site)
  - b. Review of Literature
  - c. Objectives (for the problem-solving experience)
  - d. Results
  - e. Conclusions and/or Recommendations
  - f. Additional Internship Experiences
3. Supplementary Pages (in the following order)
  - a. Bibliography, references or literature cited
  - b. Appendices (if needed)
  - c. Vita

### **APPROVAL AND FILING OF PROFESSIONAL PAPER**

- a) During their final semester, Master of Agriculture students are required to enroll, in addition to any other course requirements, in one hour of HORT 693 under the direction of the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies.
- b) The Head will only sign the signature page after the paper has been cleared by the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies. The Head may designate the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies as an alternate signatory.
- c) One unbound copy of the professional paper on a high quality paper and two CDs, each containing one electronic copy of the professional paper in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format, will be provided to the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies by the last Friday of regularly scheduled classes during the semester in which the student intends to graduate. If these are not provided, a block will be placed on graduation.

### **ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

#### **Types of Assistantships and Fellowships**

The following graduate assistantships are available: Graduate Assistant Research (GAR), Graduate Assistant Teaching (GAT), Graduate Assistant Non-Teaching (GANT), Graduate Assistant Extension (GAE) and Graduate Fellowship (GF). Assistantships and fellowships are awarded by the Department, College, University, endowments or sponsoring agencies. Assistantships require a work commitment, such as teaching undergraduate laboratory sections or working in a research laboratory. Fellowships do not require a work commitment and are more comparable to a scholarship.

### **Competitively Awarded**

All graduate assistantships and fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis. Those awarded for a given semester will be for the specified academic semester only. Those awarded for multiple semesters or for the duration of the student's graduate program are contingent on continued satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant as well as their overall graduate performance and availability of funds.

### **Graduate Application Deadlines**

*Two soft deadlines for evaluation of graduate program applications occur each year, September 15 each fall and January 15 each spring. Applications received by that date will be given full consideration by the Department's graduate application evaluation committee (GAEC) for open assistantships.*

- i.) The GAEC will consist of all full and associate members of the graduate faculty in the Department of Horticultural Sciences.
- ii.) Assignment of teaching assistantships will be based on the strength of the qualifications of the student and their suitability to teach the courses associated with the available slot. Although students will be assigned to assist with a given course or courses, the need to change course assignments to accommodate budget changes, undergraduate curriculum changes and other considerations may exist. Students assigned to a given course will be independent of whether or not their advisor instructs the course(s). There will be an attempt to minimize shifts in teaching assignments, in order not to over burden students with preparation of new lesson/lab plans nor faculty with retraining student teaching assistants each semester.
- iii.) Attraction of the highest quality students for graduate research and quality instruction in the classroom will be the first priorities, along with a fair and equitable rotation of assistantships to various programs in the department including due consideration of faculty participation in undergraduate and graduate classroom instruction, student organization advising, and departmental service.

Individual faculty seeking to recruit individual students for grant-funded assistantships may request evaluation of students' applications outside of the general departmental application deadlines. Evaluation of the applications for these students will follow our previous model of an ad hoc evaluation committee of six faculty members from related fields to those areas of interest indicated by the student in their statement of purpose. These committee members will be appointed by the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies at the request of the faculty member(s) interested in recruiting the students.

### **Minimum GPR and GRE**

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences requires all students on assistantships and fellowships to have a minimum entrance GPR of 3.000, maintain a minimum graduate GPR of 3.000, and have a minimum GRE of 500 verbal + 500 quantitative.

Any exceptions must be justified to the Executive Associate Dean of COALS for approval.

### **Minimum Registration - Full-Time Status**

Graduate students on **any level** of assistantship or fellowship funding must register for full-time course load. For the fall and spring semesters, full-time status is 9 credit hours. Full-time status for summer semesters has varied between 3 and 6 hours during the past few years, thus students should consult the latest graduate catalog and the OGS website for the current policy. Full-time registration cannot be waived for students on assistantships or fellowships. Full-time status may also be required for certain scholarships, insurance coverage, or loan eligibility and these requirements should be investigated when less than full-time enrollment is being considered.

### **Time Limit on Assistantships**

As a general policy, appointment to a graduate assistantship or fellowship will not be granted to persons who go beyond 24 months of full-time graduate study or equivalent at the Master's level, and 36 months of full-time graduate study or equivalent at the Doctoral level. Extensions can be granted with approval of the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies. Full-time graduate study is defined as 9 or more credit hours in a fall/spring semester and 6 or more credit hours during the summer. Each student's performance is reviewed each semester by their supervisor for that semester. Continuation as a graduate assistant will be contingent on a satisfactory evaluation. The length of Fellowships varies, and is specified when the Fellowship is awarded.

### **Medical Benefits**

Graduate students on  $\frac{1}{2}$  time (20 hour/week) or greater assistantships receive full medical benefits nearly equivalent to that of full-time faculty and staff, after 90 days for new employees (students should consult the appropriate agency or university personnel office to obtain the latest rules relating to employment and benefits). The benefits can be extended to their spouse and dependents for an additional fee. At this time, graduate students on fellowships do not receive medical benefits.

### **Outside employment**

According to the Payroll Office, if a graduate student is on a 20 hour per week or greater teaching or research assistantship they cannot be employed in any other capacity on-campus. The Payroll Office conducts computer checks of all students for additional employment on-campus on a semesterly basis, and actively enforces this policy. Off-campus employment is not restricted by the Department unless a conflict of interest is involved. Any potential conflicts of interest between on-campus and off-campus employment should be reported immediately to the Department Head.

### **Training & Safety Documentation**

*Each graduate student is responsible to provide evidence of the introductory laboratory safety training course to the Main Administrative Offices of the TAMU Department of Horticultural Sciences prior to beginning employment with the Department.* For those students working in greenhouses or nurseries, a Texas Department of Agriculture Pesticide Handler's Card is required before beginning work in the greenhouse or nursery. Training for pesticide handlers certification is offered in the Department on a regular basis and students should consult with the office staff to determine the next available training date. Graduate students are periodically required by TAMUS, COALS, the Department, or their graduate advisors to obtain additional safety and employment related training. Documentation of all such training should be provided to appropriate personnel in the Main Administrative Offices of the Department.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Wherein possible, all students should be encouraged to obtain a minimum of one semester's teaching experience as a teaching assistant in an undergraduate laboratory section during their tenure at Texas A&M University. Effective with the Fall 2006 semester, all graduate students are eligible, beginning the semester after successful completion of the Center For Teaching Excellence Graduate Teaching Academy Fellow program, for a one-time \$25 per month increase if they have successfully completed the GAT Fellow program and are employed on an assistantship. This increase will be provided from the same source of funds used to fund their assistantship during a given semester.

## **NONRESIDENT TUITION EXEMPTIONS**

The following conditions allow a non-resident of the State of Texas to obtain a non-resident tuition waiver as a result of House Bill (HB) 1147. Current information on this topic can be found in the appendix of the most current catalog in "Rules and Regulations for Determining Residence Status" which can be obtained through OGS.

### **Competitive Scholarships**

A scholarship is one, which is designated as competitive by the institution, whose sum either singularly or in combination with other competitive scholarships totals the amount of \$1000, that is publicized and open to all students including Texas residents; and which has been selected by the institution to be a basis for the waiver of nonresident tuition charges.

### **Faculty and Dependents**

Teachers, professors, and research associates who are employed at least one-half time on a regular monthly basis by a Texas institution of higher education are entitled to register themselves, their spouse, and their children in a Texas institution of higher education by paying the tuition and fees required of Texas residents.

### **Assistantships and Fellowships**

Teaching assistants, research assistants, and graduate assistants non-teaching who are employed at least one-half time at a Texas institution of higher education and whose job duties are related to teaching or research in an academic program associated with their field of study are entitled to register themselves, their spouse and their children in the employing Texas institution of higher education by paying the tuition and fees required of Texas residents.

### **Provisions for Improper Registration for Tuition Purposes**

HB 1147 requires that if a student falsely registers as a resident student when he or she is actually a nonresident, the student has 30 days from the date of notification by the University to pay the amount he or she should have paid as a nonresident. If the individual fails to make a timely payment as required by law, the individual is not entitled to receive a transcript or to receive credit for courses taken during the time the individual was falsely registered as a resident student.

### **Nonresident Tuition Exemption Form**

*Blank forms can be obtained from HFSB 204 and must be completed each semester.* The form is completed by the student, signed by their employer, then signed by the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies. If the student is employed by the Department of Horticultural Sciences, the form is filed and processed in HFSB 204

before fees are to be paid. If a student is employed by another department, the form should be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies.

### **Establishing Texas Residency**

The ideal solution is to be declared a Texas resident. This determination is made by the Registrar in the Office of Admissions and Records. You should contact the Registrar directly if you have questions.

### **HOLIDAYS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS ON ASSISTANTSHIPS**

Graduate students on assistantships are considered part-time employees of TAMU, TAES or TCE. As such they are entitled only to time off during official University holidays and do not accrue vacation time or sick leave. However, students on GAR or GAT may make arrangements with their supervisor to take time off during non-University holidays; but this must have their supervisor's approval and they must make up the work missed either before or after the time gone.

### **PERSONAL COMPUTER USE IN GRADUATE STUDENT OFFICES**

Graduate students may use their personal computers in their assigned offices and laboratories, but TAMU, TAES, TCE and the Department assume no liability for theft or damage to the computers. Only Department / University owned computers are eligible to be connected to the Departmental computer network. This restriction is a result of potential liability, security, and labor issues related to the connection of the personal computers to the Departmental network. Appeals for exceptions to this policy should be made to the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies. If an exception is granted, unrestricted access to the computer will be granted to the Department's System Analyst for purposes of maintaining security and risk management of the Departmental network. Any computers connected to the network must be equipped with up-to-date virus protection software. In addition, all users regardless of who owns the computer are subject to university guidelines for computer usage (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/append5.htm> and <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rules22.htm>).

### **SIGNATURES**

All petitions, degree plans, thesis/dissertation proposals, requests for final exams, change of major, drop/add forms, late registration, minimum registration forms, etc. require Departmental approval. The current Department Head has designated that all requests and forms be signed by the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies. If the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies is not available, then the Head can sign in their place. **The final copy of the thesis/dissertation is signed by the Head, or at his designation the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies.** Many items also require Dean's approval. Dean's signatures are obtained from the Dean's Office in room 113 of the Administration Building.

### **BLOCKS**

Blocks (such as registration blocks) placed on the student by the Department can only be removed by the Department Head or Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies. Blocks placed by other units within TAMUS (Deans Office, OGS, Parking and Transit, Fiscal Office, etc.) can only be removed by that unit.

## **GRADUATE RECORDS CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Graduate Records in the Department offices are confidential and as such you are not allowed access to your complete graduate folder without permission of the Department Head or Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies. If you would like to view any of the information in your folder, you may ask the Associate Head's Administrative Assistant, who will make you a copy when time permits. Confidential letters of reference, evaluations, etc. will not be copied if the prospective student has signed a waiver of the right to view those documents.

### **FINAL COMMENT:**

Every attempt is made to meet the needs of individual students. You are encouraged to discuss your goals and objectives fully with your Graduate Advisor, Advisory Committee, Department Head, or Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies. Solicit the help of the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies if Department, College or University policies are unclear or if you feel a policy is in conflict with your objectives. Suggestions for changes, additions or deletions to all policies are appreciated. Your views and suggestions are taken seriously by the Department and have a real impact on formulating Departmental policies. Therefore, please speak up when you feel it is appropriate. Communication is the key to a successful graduate program.

**TABLE 1 - Minimum<sup>Z</sup> and Maximum<sup>Y</sup> Registration Requirements**

	Each Fall and Spring Semester		For Entire Summer <sup>x</sup>	10-Week	SSI / SSII
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Max
Assistantship (research/teach)					
1) State Funds	9	13	? <sup>x</sup>	10	5/5
2) Grants/Contracts	9	13	? <sup>x</sup>	10	5/5
Fellowship	9	16	? <sup>x</sup>	14	7/7
International Students					
1) Self Supported	9	16	1	14	7/7
2) Government Support	9	16	1	14	7/7
Self-supported					
1) On-Campus entire or portion of semester	1	16	1	14	7/7
2) In Absentia Registration	1	16	1	14	7/7
3) Off campus registration	1	16	1	14	7/7
4) Full-time Employee <sup>w</sup>	0	4	0	4	4/4
Thesis/Dissert. cleared by Thesis Clerk by 1st class day	0	0	0	0	0

<sup>Z</sup> All graduate students must maintain a minimum continuous enrollment of 1 credit hour each fall, spring and summer (all 10 weeks) semester(s) from the semester of first enrollment until the semester of graduation, unless 1) a Leave of Absence is granted, 2) a Minimum Registration Request is granted (for example, full-time employees), or 3) thesis or dissertation is cleared by Thesis Clerk before the start of the semester of graduation.

<sup>Y</sup> Requests to exceed the maximum registration requires a petition approved by the Department and OGS.

<sup>X</sup> Minimum summer enrollment requirements for students on assistantships and fellowships have varied in recent years, please consult the OGS website for the current policy.

<sup>w</sup> Full-time employees must fill-out a Minimum Registration Form if 0 credit hours registration is chosen.

**TABLE 2 - Graduate faculty listed by area of specialization and degrees that can be obtained under their direction. Degrees obtained under the direction of off-campus faculty, require a co-advisor on campus for the student's benefit while they are on-campus completing coursework.**

**Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture Faculty** (Floriculture or Horticulture Degrees Offered)

On-Campus

Michael Arnold  
 Fred Davies  
 Tim Davis  
 James Johnson  
 Dan Lineberger  
 David Reed  
 Terri Starman  
 Doug Welsh  
 Don Wilkerson  
 Jayne Zajicek

Off-Campus Experiment Station

Raul Cabrera (Dallas)  
 Wayne Mackay (Dallas)  
 Brent Pemberton (Overton)  
 Yin-Tung Wang (Weslaco)

**Olericulture and Vegetable Breeding Faculty** (Horticulture Degree Offered)

On-Campus

Marla Binzel  
 Greg Cobb  
 Sam Cotner  
 Frank Dainello  
 Stephen King  
 Creighton Miller  
 Bhimu Patil  
 Leonard Pike

Off-Campus Experiment Station

Kevin Crosby (Weslaco)  
 Daniel Leskovar (Uvalde)  
 John Jifon (Weslaco)

**Pomology and Fruit Breeding Faculty** (Horticulture Degree Offered)

On-Campus

David Byrne  
 L. J. Grauke (adjunct, co-chair)  
 Leo Lombardini  
 George Ray McEachern  
 Tommy E. Thompson (adjunct, co-chair)

Off-Campus Experiment Station

none

**TABLE 2 - continued**

**Plant Physiology Faculty** (Plant Physiology Degree Offered)

<u>On-Campus</u>	<u>Off-Campus</u>
Marla Binzel	John Jifon (Weslaco)
Greg Cobb	Daniel Leskovar (Uvalde)
Fred Davies	
Stephen King	
Hisashi Kiowa	
Creighton Miller	
David Reed	

**Genetics or Plant Breeding Faculty** (Genetics or Plant Breeding Degree Offered)

<u>On-Campus</u>	<u>Off-Campus</u>
David Byrne	Kevin Cosby (Weslaco)
Greg Cobb	
Stephen King	
Creighton Miller	
Leonard Pike	

**Food Science and Technology Faculty** Food Science and Technology Degree Offered)

<u>On-Campus</u>
Luis Cisneros
Al Wagner

**DEGREES OFFERED THROUGH THE DEPT. OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES<sup>Z</sup>**

	<u>M.Ag.</u>	<u>M.S.</u>	<u>Ph.D.</u>
Genetics		X	X
Floriculture	X	X	
Food Science and Technology	X	X	X
Horticulture	X	X	X
Plant Breeding		X	X
Molecular & Environmental Plant Sciences		X	X

<sup>Z</sup> M.Ag=Master of Agriculture -Non-Thesis, Internship required

M.S. = Master of Science - Thesis required

Ph.D. = Doctor of Philosophy - Dissertation required

**TABLE 3. Projected course offerings by the Department of Horticultural Sciences.**

COURSE # AND TITLE	2006-2007			2007-2008			2008-2009			2009-2010			2010-2011		
	F	Sp	Su	F	Sp	Su	F	Sp	Su	F	Sp	Su	F	Sp	Su
<b>HORT</b>															
601 Nutrition of Horticultural Plants				LL						LL					
604 Applied Physiology of Horticultural Plants		DR						DR						DR	
605 Internet Technology for Horticulture			DL			DL			DL			DL			
608 Plants for Landscape Design	MA			MA			MA			MA			MA		
630 Post-harvest Biology, Physiology and Genetics of Plants															
640 Phytochemicals in Fruits and Vegetables to Improve Human Health				BP						BP					
644 Food Quality		LC						LC							
681 Seminar	S			S			S			S					
689 Urban Horticulture				JZ											
689 Methods & Techniques in Extension Horticulture Programming															
689 Physiological & Molecular Basis for Plant Stress Response	HK & LL						HK & LL						HK & LL		
689 Molecular & Biological Tools in Plant Breeding				SK			SK			SK					
689 Citrus and Subtropical Fruits	BP						BP								
689 Greenhouse Operation and Management	TS			TS			TS			TS			TS		
690 Theory of Research					MA						MA				

**ABBREVIATIONS:** MA= Michael Arnold, LC= Luis Cisneros, SC = Samuel Cotner, FD= Frederick Davies, DL= Daniel Lineberger, SK = Stephen King, LL = Leonardo Lombardini, BP = Bhimu Patil, DR= David Reed, HK = Hisashi Kiowa, TS = Terry Starman, JZ= Jayne Zajicek, S=staff

**FORM 1 - Example of the form used to request registration below the minimum.**

<b>Minimum Registration Request</b>	
<b>Department of Horticultural Sciences</b>	
<p>All graduate students are required to maintain continuous enrollment during their graduate program.</p>	
<p>Fill out this form if you wish to register for hours below the required minimum of 1 credit each semester. Students on assistantships and fellowships cannot register below the minimum required. You may also use this form to request a leave of absence. Submit the completed form to the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies prior to the first day of classes for each requested semester.</p>	
Semester _____	Credit Hour Request _____
<b><u>STUDENT INFORMATION</u></b>	
NAME _____	MAJOR _____
CLASSIFICATION _____	DEGREE SOUGHT _____
LOCAL TELEPHONE _____	
<b><u>JUSTIFICATION</u></b>	
_____ Student's Signature	_____ Graduate Advisor's Signature
Approved:	
_____ Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies' Signature	_____ Date



**Form 3. Example of professional paper approval page.**

**TITLE OF PROFESSIONAL PAPER IN BOLD CAPS**

A PROFESSIONAL PAPER

By

(Insert name of student here)

Approved as to style and content by:

---

Dr. (Insert name), Department Head

---

Dr. (insert name), Committee Chair

---

Dr. (insert name), Committee Member

---

Dr. (insert name), Committee Member

**Form 4. Example of research proposal title page for thesis, dissertation, or record of study.**



**OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
PROPOSAL TITLE PAGE FOR  
THESIS, DISSERTATION, OR RECORD OF STUDY**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I submit for approval the following research proposal for my: (check one)  thesis  dissertation  record of study.

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Tentative Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

There are compliance issues that must be addressed if graduate students are performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards, and recombinant DNA. Students involved in these types of research must check with the Research Compliance Division, Office of the Vice President for Research at 979-845-8585 to ensure that they have met all compliance responsibilities. Additional information can also be obtained at <http://vpr.tamu.edu/policy.html>.

A copy of appropriate research compliance approval form must be attached when proposal is submitted.

**Approval Recommended:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Signature  
 Committee Chair \*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Name  
 Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_ Student's I.D. Number  
 (Member)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_ Mailing Address  
 (Member)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Member) (Member)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Approval  
 (Member)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **For the Office of Graduate Studies**  
 (Department Head OR Intercollegiate Faculty Chair)\*

\* I certify that all research compliance requirements have been addressed prior to submission of this proposal

**Form 5. Example title page for a thesis from OGS.**

*Second page in ETD file*

*Double space title.* THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTIONS *Title is in all capital letters.*  
FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

A Thesis  
by  
JOHN PHILIP SMITHERS *Name is in all capital letters.*

*Submittal statement is single spaced.* Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Degree is in all capital letters.*  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Charles Doakes	<i>Names do not include the title Dr. or Prof.</i>
Committee Members,	John J. Anderson	
	David Benner	
	Harold B. Morton	
Head of Department,	Darla J. Marsh	

December 20XX *Date is month and year of graduation.*

Major Subject: Educational Administration

*NOTE: There are NO signatures on this page. The "Approval of Written Thesis" form to be signed is available at Thesis Office website.*

## **Graduation Checklist**

The following is a general list of items adapted from OGS recommendations (the Department does not imply that this is everything a student needs to do) that a student will need to complete in order to graduate. Students are expected to refer to the current Graduate Catalog (see OGS website) for issues related to your specific degree.

1. Apply for graduate by the deadline published on the OGS website.
2. Order your academic regalia by the published deadline.
3. Familiarize yourself with the OGS deadline calendar and meet all deadlines.
4. Run a degree audit on <http://myrecord.tamu.edu>. Discuss any concerns with your advisor, the Associate Department Head for Graduate Studies, or OGS as appropriate.
5. Finalize your degree plan. Submit any petitions needed to correct deficiencies. Confirm that any incomplete grades have been changed to letter grades or back to an incomplete.
6. Schedule your final oral exam by the posted OGS deadlines.
7. Advertise the location, time and date of your exit seminar within 1 and 2 weeks of the seminar and notify the Department of such.
8. Submit your thesis or dissertation to the Thesis Office by the posted OGS deadlines.
9. Submit an unbound hardcopy of your thesis or dissertation and two disks, each with a pdf version of your thesis or dissertation, to the Associate Department Head for Research and Graduate Studies by Friday of the week before final exams in the semester you intend to graduate.
10. Clear your academic record. Confirm that all incomplete grades have been converted to the appropriate grades.
11. Satisfy all financial obligations with Texas A&M University.
12. If you plan to continue for another graduate degree at TAMU, submit a Letter of Intent to the OGS.

**Byline**

This version of the Graduate Policy Manual for the Texas A&M University Department of Horticultural Sciences was revised and updated on 29 August 2006 by Michael A. Arnold, Sharon Duray, and Laverne Addison from the original versions written by David Wm. Reed. All materials in this departmental graduate policy manual are subordinate to policies set forth by Texas A&M University and the TAMU Office of Graduate Studies as well as all local, state, and federal regulations. Please forward suggestions and corrections to this manual to the attention of the Associate Head for Research and Graduate Studies, Texas A&M University, Department of Horticultural Sciences, TAMU 2133, College Station, TX 77843-2133.