

# Policy and Procedures Manual for Graduate Study

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# 1 Introduction

This manual is a reference for graduate students in the Department of Agricultural Economics and their advisors. It provides information on degree requirements, regulations and departmental policies and practices applicable to graduate study in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. The manual outlines the procedures necessary to meet degree objectives. Failure to comply with the procedures outlined in this manual is likely to delay or jeopardize a student's progress and cost the student and the University time and money.

A general set of requirements concerning admission, academic standards, residence requirements, language proficiency and other Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars (OGSPS) regulations apply to all graduate students at Purdue. These are listed in the Policies and Procedures Manual for Administering Graduate Student Programs. This departmental manual repeats some of the general OGSPS regulations, but also adds policies and procedures that are specific to graduate programs administered through the Department of Agricultural Economics.

The graduate programs in Agricultural Economics are designed to prepare students for lifelong careers of professional excellence. Students who meet appropriate standards are granted degrees. Members of the faculty view graduate study as much more than an extension of the undergraduate program and much more than the completion of courses. Students are expected to demonstrate a high level of professional growth, maturity and to conduct themselves in an ethical manner at all times. Achieving degree objectives requires the ability to integrate knowledge from formal courses, research papers and other experiences. The faculty is devoted to helping students achieve their academic, intellectual, personal and career goals.

The Agricultural Economics curriculum follows the tradition of the Land-Grant College philosophy: knowledge for the improvement of the human condition. Sound judgment, rigorous analysis and ability to define and solve problems are the goals of the professional agricultural economist. Students are expected to develop and demonstrate these skills and abilities in examinations, courses, research papers, theses and in dialogues with the faculty and other students. Ultimately, student progress and achievement are evaluated on the basis of performance, not effort. Faculty members endeavor to create a challenging environment of scholarship, creativity and freedom of intellectual inquiry. Students are encouraged to work closely with the faculty and to participate in academic activities, such as seminars, in a spirit of apprenticeship and as colleagues of the faculty

The faculty expect graduate students to take an active part in student and departmental affairs. The department welcomes student contributions to departmental policy and course and curriculum improvement. Graduate student representatives participate in many departmental working and standing committees.

## 1.1 The Graduate Committee

Graduate program policy in Agricultural Economics is implemented by the departmental Graduate Committee, under the leadership of the Graduate Chair. This committee is appointed by the Department Head, and regular members normally serve three-year appointments. The Graduate Committee reviews applications and makes admission decisions, recommends appropriate policy changes to the faculty, and exercises judgement on student petitions and requests for exceptions to Department policy.

Students who have questions about the graduate program should consult with the Graduate Chair. Students should address petitions for programs deviating from normal procedures to the Graduate

Chair, who will disseminate the petition to the Graduate Committee. Petitions to the Graduate Committee for required course replacement (core or specialty area) must be submitted by the fourth semester of registration, unless the request for replacement arises after that semester due to departmental or University changes that are explicitly outside the student's control. Lack of knowledge of the policies outlined in this manual (and/or department policies) or lack of planning on the part of the student will not be acceptable reasons for exceptions. Students always have the right to appeal a decision or ruling. Appendix A describes specific procedures for entering appeals.

## **2 Classification of Graduate Students**

### **2.1 Degree-Objective Students**

A graduate student's admission to the Department's graduate program and to the OGSPS does not constitute admission to candidacy for an advanced degree. A Master's Degree Student becomes a Master's Degree Candidate only upon approval of the Plan of Study by the Advisory Committee, the Department Head and the OGSPS Dean. The student must be registered as a Master's Candidate during the semester in which the degree is awarded.

A student admitted to the Doctoral program becomes a Doctoral Student after demonstrating competence in English composition and securing approval of the Plan of Study. The student must be a registered Doctoral Student during the semester in which the qualifying exam and preliminary/prospectus exams are taken. The Doctoral Student becomes a Doctoral Candidate upon successful completion of the preliminary and prospectus exams. The student must be registered as a Doctoral Candidate during the semester in which the degree is awarded.

### **2.2 Straight-Through PhD Policy**

A student generally will have received an MS in Agricultural Economics or the equivalent before beginning his or her PhD program. However, in some cases, students with sufficient background and ability may be admitted to the PhD program directly without first obtaining the MS degree. Such students are expected to demonstrate superior ability in economic theory and quantitative methods as well as the ability to work independently on original research.

### **2.3 MS Continuing PhD at Purdue**

MS students in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue are not automatically accepted into the PhD program. All MS candidates who wish to continue for the PhD degree in the Department must complete the full/formal application for acceptance to the PhD degree program.

### **2.4 Completion of Prior Degree**

The faculty requires students to complete the prior degree (BS or MS) before beginning the MS or PhD degree program. New graduate students must provide proof of prior degree (final transcript or diploma) before registering for their first semester at Purdue. MS students will not be permitted to register before completing the BS degree requirements.

Students admitted to the Doctoral program are not permitted to complete more than 6 hours of the PhD degree program until all requirements for the MS degree are completed. Assistantship stipends will be limited to the MS degree level until all requirements for the MS degree are met.

Requests for exceptions may be granted by the Graduate Chair upon petition by the student. This petition must be made in advance of registration for the semester in question.

## **2.5 Non-Degree-Objective Students (Post-Baccalaureate)**

Non-degree graduate students are admitted to this classification on the basis of educational services which can be extended to them in order to meet individual educational needs. This classification is appropriate for students taking courses for self-improvement on a non-degree basis, for students sponsored by employers, or for those with specialized training objectives not necessarily consistent with degree objectives.

Admission in this category does not constitute or imply preliminary admission to a degree program. The Department makes no commitment to eventually accept a non-degree student into a degree program. However, some non-degree students are subsequently accepted into a degree program. If a post-baccalaureate registrant is accepted for a degree objective program, a maximum of 12 hours of work taken on a non-degree basis may be used in the degree program. Such use is subject to the approval of the student's advisory committee and the usual procedure for Plan of Study approval. Non-degree students will be advised by the Chairperson of the Graduate Committee or his/her designee.

## **3 English Proficiency Requirements**

An English Proficiency Requirement must be completed prior to enrollment. Students whose first language is not English may meet the spoken English Proficiency Requirement in one of two ways:

1. Submit a IELTS Academic Module score of 6.5 or greater, with the following minimum section requirements: Reading 6.5, Listening 6.0, Speaking, 6.0, Writing 5.5; or a TOEFL iBT score of 4.0 or better, with minimum section scores as follows: Writing 4.0, Speaking 3.5, Listening 3.5, Reading 4.0; or a TOEFL Essentials score of 8 or more, with minimum scores of 8 in Reading, Listening, Speaking, and Writing; or the Duolingo English Test, with minimum scores of 115 in Comprehension, Conversation, Literacy, and Production.
2. Provide evidence of having received a baccalaureate, graduate or professional degree within the past 36 months at the time of recommendation for admission, from an accredited institution where English is the primary language of instruction in a country/location where English is the native language.

Applicants who are non-native speakers of English but have a permanent visa or US citizenship are not required to meet the English Proficiency Requirement.

## **4 Degree Programs**

The Department of Agricultural Economics awards two advanced degrees: the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and the Master of Science (MS).

The Doctor of Philosophy degree is awarded to students achieving the highest level of scholastic attainment. The PhD graduate program is designed to train research scientists capable of independent study and research. It is appropriate for those desiring leadership positions in government or business or faculty positions in higher education.

The MS thesis option program is research oriented and prepares students for careers in research or staff positions in business, government, or education. Students who plan to continue for the PhD degree are encouraged to select this option. The MS “non-thesis” or “professional” option, referred to as the Professional MS in International Agribusiness (PMIA), allows students to substitute additional course credits and activities in lieu of a thesis. The PMIA is currently available in-residence only. Students pursuing this option are required to acquire a research or professional “Capstone” experience by taking a special topics course of at least 3 credit hours under the supervision of a faculty member. The credits for the professional option MS degree are in the form of a special problem with a professional emphasis, which is developed in conjunction with the student’s advisor. This is generally a directed study focusing on an issue of professional interest to the student. The end product is a written document that summarizes the results of the student’s work. The instructor of record for the directed study has responsibility for evaluating the student’s performance. Only a written document is required. No oral presentation or written examination is required. The Department also offers a hybrid learning MS/MBA in Food and Agribusiness.

For all master’s degrees, at least one-half of the total credits used to satisfy degree requirements must be earned while registered on the Purdue campus where the degree is to be granted. For the PhD, at least one-third of the total credits used to satisfy degree requirements must be earned (while registered for PhD study) in continuous enrollment on the Purdue campus where the degree is to be granted. Course credits obtained via online or distance learning from a campus shall be considered to have been obtained in residence on that campus.

Table 1 summarizes credit requirements for each program.

#### 4.1 MS Agricultural Economics Electives

Students should consult MyPurdue for prerequisites and consult with instructors before enrolling in advanced courses. Courses offered at the 500-level or above from outside Agricultural Economics may be used to satisfy credit requirements. Table 2 lists recommend electives for MS students.

Table 2: Recommended MS Electives

| Field                        | Basic      | Advanced               |
|------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Agribusiness                 | AGEC 53000 | —                      |
| Agricultural finance         | AGEC 52400 | AGEC 60000             |
| Benefit-cost analysis        | AGEC 60900 | —                      |
| Mathematical programming     | —          | AGEC 65200             |
| Marketing and price analysis |            | AGEC 605, AGEC 622     |
| Resource economics           | AGEC 52500 | AGEC 61600             |
| Econometrics                 | —          | AGEC 65100, AGEC 63100 |
| Trade and development        | —          | AGEC 64300, AGEC 64400 |

Table 1: MS and PhD Requirements

|  | Master of Science |                     | Doctor of Philosophy                |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
|  | Thesis option     | Professional option |                                     |
| Minimum course credits (excluding prerequisites) | 24                | 33                  | 50 (incl. acceptable MS credits)    |
| Research policy and procedures <sup>1</sup>      | 3                 | 3                   | 3                                   |
| Minimum AGECE credits                            | —                 | —                   | 18 (excl. special problems courses) |
| Core economic theory credits <sup>2</sup>        | 6                 | 6                   | 8                                   |
| Core quantitative credits <sup>3</sup>           | 6                 | 6                   | 10                                  |
| Other core required credits <sup>4</sup>         | —                 | 21                  | 2 or 3                              |
| Minimum specialty credits <sup>5</sup>           | —                 | —                   | 9                                   |
| Minimum credit at 500+ level <sup>6</sup>        | 18 <sup>9</sup>   | 30 <sup>9</sup>     | 47                                  |
| Maximum transfer credits <sup>7</sup>            | 9                 | 9                   | 30                                  |
| Minimum research credits                         | 12                | 3                   | 24                                  |
| Total credits <sup>8</sup>                       | 36                | 36                  | 90                                  |

<sup>1</sup> MS and in-residence PMIA: AGECE 60200 (3). PhD: Prior completion of master's thesis or AGECE 60200 (3).

<sup>2</sup> MS and in-residence PMIA: AGECE 51700 (3) and student's choice of AGECE 596007 (3) or AGECE 596006 (3). PhD: ECON 60600 (2), ECON 60700 (2), ECON 60900 (2), and ECON 61500 (2).

<sup>3</sup> MS: either AGECE 65000 or STAT 51200, plus AGECE 55200. In-residence PMIA: AGECE 55200 and AGECE 65000. PhD: ECON 67000(2), AGECE 65100 (3), AGECE 65200 (3), AGECE 65400 (2).

<sup>4</sup> Residential PMIA: 500+-level electives and/or AGECE 59500 (18) and a capstone project (3). PhD: ECON 60800 (2), AGECE 61800 (3), AGECE 61900 (3), or AGECE 64400 (3).

<sup>5</sup> See list of specialty areas and related courses in section 4.2. Any courses taken to satisfy core course requirements cannot also be used to satisfy specialty requirements.

<sup>6</sup> Use of course below the 500 level on a Plan of Study requires approval from the Graduate Committee. Written requests for approval should justify inclusion of these courses on a course-by-course basis. The required 47 credits may include required course credits counting towards core or specialty requirements as long as they are 500+ level credits.

<sup>7</sup> Credit for acceptable courses taken at other universities may be transferred after one satisfactory semester in residence. Undergraduate transfer credits from another university must be declared in excess for the BS degree, must be taken for graduate credit, and must be equivalent to Purdue 500- or 600-level courses. Equivalency of transfer credits to Purdue credits is determined by the OGSPS. A maximum of twelve credits may be transferred if earned as excess undergraduate credit or in post-baccalaureate status at Purdue University.

<sup>8</sup> The OGSPS requires that all courses appearing on the Plan of Study be passed with a grade of C- or better. Pass-fail grades are acceptable only for prerequisites; courses must be taken for a grade to be listed on the Plan of Study. Prerequisite courses and grades will appear on the student's official transcript.

<sup>9</sup> See list of recommended MS electives in Table 2.

## 4.2 PhD Specialty Areas

The specialty area is intended to support the thesis research and represent a concentrated study. The specialty area requires nine semester hours of graduate courses in one of the two specialty areas below. A core required course cannot be counted towards meeting minimum hour requirements in a specialty area.

- Agribusiness Management and Marketing
  - AGEC 60000 Agricultural Finance
  - AGEC 60500 Agricultural Markets and Price Analysis
  - AGEC 61900 Applied Microeconomic Theory
  - AGEC 62200 Food System Organization & Policy
  - AGEC 69000 Applied Contract Theory and Mechanism Design
- Trade, Development, and Environment
  - AGEC 60900 Applied Welfare Analysis
  - AGEC 61600 Resource Economics and Policy
  - AGEC 61800 Applied General Equilibrium Analysis
  - AGEC 61900 Applied Microeconomic Theory
  - AGEC 64300 Theory of Economic Development

## 4.3 Special Topics Courses

Advanced seminars are designed to explore the frontiers of knowledge in particular areas. They are scheduled periodically. A student may arrange for a special topic course with a faculty member. This procedure affords the student the opportunity to obtain specialized knowledge and skills in subjects that are not of interest to enough students to form a regular class. Students wishing to enroll in or foster a seminar or special topics course in a particular area should consult their advisor and the Graduate Program Chairperson.

Special topic courses are numbered AGEC 69100 or AGEC 69000. Approval of the supervising staff member must be secured prior to enrollment. The title, number of credits and supervisor's designator code must be indicated on the registration form. AGEC 69000 and AGEC 69100 will only be offered only as full-semester courses.

## 4.4 Traveling Scholar Program

PhD students are eligible to participate in the Big 10 Academic Alliance Traveling Scholar Program. This enables the student to study at one of thirteen cooperating institutions in order to take advantage of special resources available on another campus. Further information is available at <https://btaa.org/resources-for/students/traveling-scholar-program/introduction>. Students should confer with the OGSPS regarding necessary procedures.

## 5 Registration Policy and Procedures

Students are encouraged to register before the end of each semester in order to aid the Department Head and Graduate Committee Chair in curriculum planning. Courses—particularly specialty area courses—may be canceled due to low enrollment. Early registration helps ensure course offerings can be made to meet student needs. The University assesses penalties for late registration.

### 5.1 Credit Loads

Nineteen hours of course and/or research credit is the maximum registration allowed in the OGSPS. Students normally register for 12 course credits per fall/spring semester, 6 credits for summer session. The research credit load (AGEC 69800 for MS students and 69900 for PhD students) varies.

Students not on staff appointment are permitted to register for any combination of research and course credits, not to exceed 19 credits, so long as the selection accurately represents the student's research activity, and fulfills the registration requirements. Students on staff appointment should refer to the section on registration of graduate students and the associated table.

### 5.2 Auditing Classes

Students may audit classes with no participation required and no records maintained. Rates are the same as for credit courses. See <https://catalog.purdue.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=15965#classes> for complete policies related to auditing courses.

### 5.3 Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades are assigned if the student's work is interrupted by an unavoidable absence or other cause beyond the student's control. Students need not re-register for courses in which they received an incomplete (I). Incomplete work must be satisfied within one year of when the Incomplete was given. If the student fails to complete the course by this deadline, the grade is automatically changed to an "IF" which is never removed from the student's transcript. However, the grade of the repeated course will replace the "IF" and will be used in the GPA.

### 5.4 Research Credit

All graduate students engaged in thesis research activities are required to register for research credits in addition to courses. MS thesis option students register for AGEC 69800. MS professional option students register for AGEC 69100. PhD students register for AGEC 69900. Research credits AGEC 69800, AGEC 69900, and AGEC 69100 are all offered only as full semester courses. Any student receiving departmental financial assistance for thesis research must also register for some research credits. The research registration should correspond to the proportion of time spent on departmental activities. Likewise, any MS thesis-option or PhD student in his or her last semester must register for at least one hour of research credits, "examination only," or "degree-only" credits. See Section 11.1 for details.

Research credits for which the student receives an "Unsatisfactory" grade will not count toward satisfaction of the credit hour requirement. Two consecutive sessions of "U" grades for research registration mandate that the Department take formal action and inform the OGSPS with regard to either discontinuation or conditions for continuation of the student's graduate study.

### 5.4.1 Enhanced Documentation of Research Credits

If you are registering for any number of research credits you must complete the Research Credits form (with all signatures) and submit it via e-mail to the Graduate Coordinator before the first day of classes for the semester. You should start having conversations about what work you are going to do, for how many credits, and under what supervisor now to allow yourself ample time to get the documentation done BEFORE the first day of classes.

## 5.5 Research *In Absentia*

PhD candidates who have completed course work, the micro examination and the thesis prospectus seminar and exam may conduct thesis research *in absentia* if they meet the following conditions:

1. An agreed-upon plan with the major professor that outlines a suitable problem and method of accomplishing the research is made;
2. Time to conduct research and adequate facilities will be available for the student *in absentia*; and
3. Permission is received from the Department Head and Graduate Dean. (Involves submitting request in quintuplet on form G.S. Form 12 at least one month prior to the session for which *in absentia* registration is requested.) Candidates *in absentia* must complete their dissertation research prior to the end of the sixth semester after they pass their prospectus exam unless an extension is granted upon written petition to the Graduate Committee. Further details, including registration *in absentia* and registration in the semester of graduation, can be found in the OGSPS's Policies and Procedures Manual for Administering Graduate Student Programs.

Candidates who have a Purdue University appointment may not register for research *in absentia*. They may, however, be eligible to apply for change of duty station or research, instructional, or engagement travel. Normally, such a request will not be approved until course work, preliminary examinations, and thesis prospectus seminar have been satisfactorily completed. See the OGSPS Policies and Procedures Manual for further information on change of duty station or research, instructional, and engagement travel.

## 6 Selection of Major Professor and Advisory Committee

Incoming students are assigned a temporary major professor prior to arrival. An essential responsibility of the graduate student is to select a permanent major professor. The selection of a major professor and the thesis research area normally go hand-in-hand. In most cases, the major professor serves as the student's academic advisor, mentor and thesis research supervisor. However, the major advisor is not always the same person who will supervise a research assistant's work assignment or serve as a mentor.

The Graduate Committee Chair or designated temporary counselor will serve as the student's advisor until a major professor is selected. Students with assistantships should discuss their temporary assignment with the Graduate Chair at the time of their first registration.

Graduate students are encouraged to personally visit with faculty members about their research interests. Graduate students should expect to receive communication from the Graduate Chair to invite contact with faculty actively seeking graduate students to collaborate on research projects.

The student is ultimately responsible for selecting a permanent major professor, although the Graduate Chair may be requested to facilitate a suitable match. Departmental priorities, availability of funding, student interests and faculty preference are taken into account in approving major professor assignments.

MS students are encouraged to select a major professor by the end of their first semester in residence. They are required to choose a major professor no later than the end of their second semester in residence. PhD students are encouraged to make their selection by the end of their second semester in residence. They are required to choose a major professor and submit the Plan of Study by the end of their third semester. Students should avoid unnecessary delays in choosing their major professor because the choice of research supervisor and project will often influence the final Plan of Study. For funding implications, see Section 12.

Students with departmental graduate assistantships have special responsibilities in the selection of a thesis topic and major professor. It may be necessary in some cases to assign a student on a research assistantship to a funded project even though it is not the student's first choice for a thesis topic. This procedure is necessary to ensure financial support for the assistantship stipend and to ensure that the contractual obligations of the Department are met. Contracts, grants, and ARP-funded projects are a major source of this financing.

## **6.1 Plans of Study**

The Department requires new students to draft a tentative Plan of Study early in the first semester. The Graduate Chairperson, members of the Graduate Committee and other counselors assist the student in developing this tentative Plan of Study, which subsequently may be revised by the student and his/her advisory committee.

It is departmental policy that all graduate students prepare and file the formal Plan of Study as early as possible in their program. This is to the student's benefit, as it ensures thorough program planning and feasible scheduling of courses. The Plan of Study is completed online through MyPurdue and serves to appoint the student's major professor and advisory committee. The Plan of Study must be approved by the student, the advisory committee, the Graduate Chair, and the Dean of the OGSPS.

Preparation of the PhD Plan of Study should include designation of courses for the proposed specialty areas. Note that the OGSPS requires that all courses appearing on the Plan of Study be passed with a grade of C- or better.

The Plan of Study may require revision as the program progresses. Requests for changes are made online at MyPurdue. The major professor is responsible for obtaining advisory committee approval of changes before they are made.

The Plan of Study contains required courses, elective courses, and transfer courses. Transfer credits can be used to satisfy degree requirements, within limitations. The faculty encourages each student to develop a unique Plan of Study to meet individual academic objectives and career goals. There is no standard Plan of Study that applies to all students in Agricultural Economics.

## **6.2 Selection of the Advisory Committee**

After selecting a major professor, the student and major professor select the other members of the advisory committee. Advisory committee members should bring independent thought and

perspectives to their advisory committee roles. Advisors and students should work carefully to avoid financial or personal conflicts of interest when setting up committees. Where conflicts of interest exist, are perceived to exist, or arise in the course of research, the Graduate Chair will work with the student and the committee to find replacement committee members.

The major professor is the chair of the student's advisory committee. The advisory committee can contribute to the student's educational experience in several ways.

1. The committee reviews previous training, recommends courses (including prerequisite courses), and assists in formulating the student's Plan of Study. All committee members must approve the Plan of Study.
2. The committee confers with and advises the student regarding his or her rate of progress toward completion of degree requirements.
3. The committee advises the student in all phases of the thesis research, including subject competence, research design, procedures, analytical concepts and methods, thesis organization, and ethical conduct.
4. The committee advises the student during preparation of the prospectus document and on the appropriate time to take the prospectus and final exams. The advisory committee serves as the final examination committee for MS and PhD students, unless justification for a different examination committee has been presented to and approved by the Department Head.

The advisory committee for the MS program consists of at least three members representing the student's primary and related areas of study. The members will usually be from the Department of Agricultural Economics but may be from other Departments depending on the student's research topic. Students in the Professional MS option require only one faculty advisor, although a larger committee is permitted by the OGSPS. The majority of committee members must be Regular Graduate Faculty Members from the Department of Agricultural Economics. You may consult with your Major Professor or the Graduate Coordinator to ensure that your committee makeup is in compliance with Department and OGSPS rules.

Departmental policy requires that a PhD advisory committee consist of four members who represent the student's areas of study. Larger committees are allowable. One member on the Plan of Study must be from a Department other than Agricultural Economics.

Students in the last phases of their MS or PhD programs whose major professor will be absent from campus due to long-term assignments and/or sabbatical leave (longer than 3 months) are strongly encouraged to have a co-major professor assigned to their program. A co-major professor is usually an advisory committee member who will serve as a liaison during the original major professor's absence.

The majority of committee members must be Regular Graduate Faculty Members from the Department of Agricultural Economics. You may consult with your Major Professor or the Graduate Coordinator to ensure that your committee makeup is in compliance with Department and OGSPS rules.

## 7 Academic Standards and Progress

### 7.1 MS Students

MS students in the Department of Agricultural Economics whose cumulative grade point average (GPA) for courses on their plans of study drops below 3.0 will automatically be put on probation. If the cumulative GPA is not raised to 3.0 or better in the following semester, the student will be dropped from the program unless the Graduate Committee grants an exception. In the case of a student without an official Plan of Study filed with the OGSPS, all courses will be counted in calculating this GPA. (The Purdue University transcript cumulative GPA will be used.) In the event that a course is repeated, the last grade received will be used in calculating the index. Note that the OGSPS requires that all credits appearing on the Plan of Study be passed with a grade of C- or better.

The MS degree will not be granted in the case of failure to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better for courses on the Plan of Study unless the Graduate Committee grants an exception. Exceptions will only be granted in the event of extenuating circumstances. Requests for exception must be made in writing to the Graduate Committee.

A student's major professor is expected to monitor student performance and progress toward degree objectives. In consultation with the student's advisory committee, the major professor has a responsibility to advise the candidate to withdraw from the program if it becomes clear that the candidate is not capable of successfully completing the degree program.

Full-time MS students must complete their programs within two years after first registration unless continuation is granted by the Graduate Committee upon written request.

MS theses and non-thesis Capstone projects must be submitted for committee consideration no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled thesis defense or Capstone evaluation.

### 7.2 PhD Students

PhD students are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better. If a student's GPA drops below this level, he or she will automatically be placed on probation. If the cumulative GPA is not raised to 3.0 or better in the following semester, the student will be dropped from the program unless the Graduate Committee grants an exception. Exceptions will be granted only in the case of extenuating circumstances. The petition for continuation in these circumstances must be submitted in writing. Note that the OGSPS requires that all credits appearing on the Plan of Study be passed with a grade of C- or better.

A student's major professor is expected to monitor student performance and progress toward degree objectives. In consultation with the student's advisory committee, the major professor has a responsibility to advise the candidate to withdraw from the program if it becomes clear that the candidate is not capable of successfully completing the degree program.

Full-time students are required to sit for the microeconomic theory qualifying examination covering the material taught in ECON 60600, ECON 60700, ECON 60900 and ECON 61500 at the first opportunity after these courses have been completed. The qualifying examination must be taken no later than within three full semesters (excluding summers) of the date when an individual first registers as a doctoral student. Exceptions may be granted upon submission of a written request to the Graduate Committee.

After passing the microeconomic theory qualifying exam, the PhD student will write a dissertation prospectus and present it during a seminar and examination. The prospectus is normally presented at the end of the student's second year (in the spring semester) or at the beginning of the third year (near the start of the fall semester). Students should expect to receive notification of PhD Thesis Prospectus Seminar date options after passing the microeconomic theory qualifying exam. For more detail on the prospectus, see Section 8.1.2.

Candidates must complete their dissertation research prior to the end of the fourth semester after they pass their prospectus exam unless an extension is granted upon written petition to the Graduate Committee.

Candidates in absentia must complete their dissertation research prior to the end of the sixth semester after they pass their prospectus exam unless an extension of this period is granted upon written petition to the Graduate Committee. Such permission will be granted only under extenuating circumstances.

## 8 Examinations

Graduate students take comprehensive examinations to test their levels of professional competence. There are two exams for the PhD degree and one for the MS degree. The evaluation of student performance on written and oral thesis examinations is guided by a set of learning outcomes. These have been designed by the faculty to assess student competency in key areas of academic and professional development.

Regardless of degree program, all written documents related to exams, including prospectus documents, dissertations, theses, and Capstone Project papers, must be submitted to the advisor and/or advisory committee in time to allow two weeks for review prior to any scheduled presentation or official deadline. All exam or deposit forms must be submitted with greater than two weeks notice to allow final filing of forms within Department and OGSPS deadlines (for example, 8:00 am on August 1st for a defense scheduled for August 15th).

### 8.1 Preliminary Examinations for PhD Students

The preliminary examination consists of two parts: a Microeconomic Theory Qualifying Examination (typically taken during the summer following the first two semesters in the PhD program) and the Preliminary and Prospectus Examination in Agricultural Economics. Any student who fails either examination twice must leave the program. Successful completion of the preliminary examination constitutes formal admission to candidacy for the PhD degree.

#### 8.1.1 Microeconomic Theory Qualifying Examination

A Microeconomic Theory Qualifying Examination is administered by the Department of Economics. This examination is given twice per year (typically in June and August). All PhD students in Agricultural Economics must pass the portions of this exam that cover the required sequence of microeconomic theory courses (ECON 60600, ECON60700, ECON 60900, and ECON61500).

Students must make every effort to progress through the PhD Program of Study in a reasonable amount of time. For this reason, students must take the Microeconomic Theory Qualifying Examination at the first opportunity after they have completed ECON 60600, ECON 60700, ECON 60900, and ECON 61500 and no later than the first opportunity after completion of four semesters

(including summer sessions) after the date that they have entered the doctoral program. Exceptions may be considered only upon submission of a written petition to the Graduate Committee.

The Microeconomic Theory Qualifying Examination is prepared by faculty in the Department of Economics and jointly evaluated by a committee of faculty in Agricultural Economics and Economics (“the grading committee”). Each written examination question is graded independently by two (or more) faculty members. This grading is done “blind” – i.e., with students identified only by number. Grades for individual questions are on a scale from 0.0 to 4.0 (in tenths), based on the following criteria:

- 4.0 Excellent, a very high quality answer
- 3.0 Good, an acceptable answer indicative of a competent graduate student
- 2.0 Fair, a passing answer
- 1.0 Poor, an unacceptable answer with some evidence of competence
- 0.0 Fail, an unacceptable answer with no evidence of competence

After the grading committee’s decision has been rendered, a student’s identity is revealed to the Graduate Program Chair. An average score of 2.0 qualifies as a pass. If a student fails the qualifying examination on his or her first attempt then he or she must retake the written exam at its next offering. Any student who does not pass the written microeconomic theory qualifying examination on the second attempt will not be permitted to continue in the PhD program.

### **8.1.2 Agricultural Economics Preliminary and Prospectus Examination**

All PhD students who have passed the microeconomic theory prelim are expected to prepare for and pass a Preliminary and Prospectus Examination in the Department of Agricultural Economics. The purpose of the Preliminary and Prospectus Examination is to assess the student’s preparation to do the proposed research and to make contributions in his/her areas of specialization. The seminar course AGECE 69200 assists in prospectus preparation and planning and should normally be added to the Plan of Study for the second year, following successful completion of the Qualifying Examination.

Students are expected to present their PhD Thesis Prospectus Seminar on one of the dates specified by the Department and should seek to secure a seminar time slot as soon as possible to facilitate committee schedules. In all cases it must be successfully presented by the end of third semester following successful completion of the microeconomic theory prelim. Students will not be registered in the fall semester of the third year unless a prospectus has been scheduled on a department PhD Thesis Prospectus Seminar date for the fall semester. Students will not be registered in the spring semester of the third year unless a prospectus has been successfully completed.

The Preliminary and Prospectus Examination will be chaired by the Graduate Program Chair or his/her designee and will rely on an Examining Committee consisting of the Graduate Program Chair (or designee), all members of the student’s PhD advisory committee, and one additional “external” examiner appointed by the Graduate Program Chair (or designee).

The Preliminary and Prospectus Examination will include at a minimum the oral and written presentation of a prospectus document describing the student’s detailed proposed plan of research and a review of the relevant literature that indicates the student’s potential contribution. The prospectus will be presented orally in a session open to faculty, staff and students. This open

session will be followed immediately by a closed session involving the student and the Examining Committee during which the Examining Committee may question the student regarding her/his proposed research as well as knowledge of the area(s) of specialization and appropriate tools for the analysis. The majority vote of this Examining Committee will determine whether the student has passed the exam. If the Examining Committee deems the student's performance to be inadequate, a second attempt at the Preliminary and Prospectus Examination will be allowed. Attempts beyond the second will be allowed only with approval of a petition to the OGSPS. Students will be required to successfully complete the Preliminary and Prospectus Examination within three semesters (not including summers) after successfully completing the Microeconomic Theory Prelim Exam (typically the fall semester of the student's 3rd year in the PhD program).

The student's advisory committee will direct the student in his or her preparation for the examination in conjunction with the Graduate Program Chair. Such preparation may include, for example, written or oral responses to questions the committee may pose. The PhD prospectus document must be submitted for committee consideration no less than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense, and by the specific time specified by the Graduate Program Chair or designee. The written prospectus document will be checked for originality using the iThenticate software program. The software compares the text of a student's written document to a large body of published and online sources, identifying areas in which the originality of a student's scholarship may be called into question. It is incumbent upon the student to adhere to accepted standards of scholarship and to work with his/her major professor to resolve questions regarding attribution before the final prospectus document is submitted to the committee for defense and final approval.

### **8.1.3 Department Policy Regarding Written Qualifying and Preliminary Examinations**

Solutions to written qualifying examinations or prelim examinations (including microeconomic theory exams administered by the Economics Department) will not be provided and graders will not comment on grades given or solutions to problems. It is solely up to the student to determine any errors made in his/her written exam answers and to discover the correct answers.

Any student who fails may be provided with information regarding the general quality of the answers in each section by the Graduate Chair or Prelim Chair. No information about scores may be provided.

Upon request by the student, and at the discretion of the Graduate Chair, copies of a student's written examination answers will be returned to students who have failed a written examination. This return of exams will be made under the following limited circumstances:

1. Only for students who have failed the exam for the first time and who ask for a copy;
2. Only for "clean" copies of the original exam answers with no grader marks or comments;
3. Only for personal use by the student.

Graders are instructed not to comment on the grades given to any question. Only the designated Prelim Chairperson or Graduate Chair can provide information to the student regarding the general quality of answers. The student cannot refer to any portion of his or her exam in any appeal procedure to the Prelim Chairperson of the Department Graduate Committee.

## 8.2 Final Examination for PhD and MS Candidates

A final oral examination is taken after the completion of all course work and the thesis. This exam may cover any material in the candidate's program, but usually is a defense of the thesis. In the case of PhD candidates, at least two semesters must elapse and be devoted to research between the Preliminary and Prospectus Examination and the Final Examination.

The Final Examination committee for both the MS and PhD student will be the student's advisory committee, unless a different committee is justified. Any change in the final examining committee from the advisory committee must be requested in writing to the Department Head, stating the reason. Members of the advisory committee approving the request will add their signatures.

The Final Examination committee shall consist of at least three members for MS candidates and four members for PhD candidates. The candidate's areas of study shall be represented on the examining committee.

The Final Examination committee for the Professional MS student will consist of the student's advisor or, when deemed necessary by the student's advisor and/or the graduate chair, by the advisor and any additional committee members. Any change in the final examining committee must be requested in writing to the Department Head, stating the reason. Members of the advisory committee approving the request will add their signatures.

The specific procedures for completing the all PhD and thesis-based MS examinations are as follows:

1. The student will arrange the examination date with the major professor and advisory committee through the Graduate Coordinator.
2. Arrangements for the examination (e.g., securing a room and filing OGSPS Form 8) will be made at least two weeks in advance of the examination date.

The final oral examination must be completed one week before the last day of classes of the semester in which the degree is to be awarded (i.e. no exam during "dead week"). Final Examinations must be announced two weeks in advance so that interested members of the Purdue faculty and student body may attend. Students are responsible for meeting all relevant OGSPS deadlines related to scheduling their defense and depositing their thesis; see the calendar maintained by OGSPS at [https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/embed?src=gradschoolprodev@gmail.com&ctz=America/New\\_York](https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/embed?src=gradschoolprodev@gmail.com&ctz=America/New_York) for specific dates each semester.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Purdue University OGSPS modified the policy requiring thesis and dissertation defenses to be conducted in a face-to-face modality. Online defenses remain permissible and the modality (face-to-face versus hybrid versus online) of individual defenses may be determined by the advisory committee for each exam. The Graduate Chair is available to consult on pros and cons of various modalities given individual circumstances. For more information, please see Appendix C of the OGSPS Policies and Procedures for Administering Graduate Student Programs at <https://catalog.purdue.edu/content.php?catoid=18&navoid=23283#appendix-b-conducting-remote-thesis-and-dissertation-defenses>.

## 9 Thesis Procedures

### 9.1 Thesis Preparation

All PhD candidates and thesis-option MS students are required to write a thesis. Before a thesis can be accepted by the University Library, it must be judged to be original work and free from plagiarism and errors in attribution. Typically, an electronic version of the thesis will be reviewed using special software such as iThenticate. After passing this check, the thesis must be submitted electronically to the OGSPS Thesis Office for final approval, at which time the thesis is deposited.

All theses must adhere to OGSPS formatting guidelines. OGSPS provides thesis templates at <https://www.purdue.edu/academics/ogsp/thesis/templates/>. For citation guidelines, table and figure preparation, footnotes, and equations, the student should follow the style of the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*.

A completed and corrected thesis must meet the University's specifications and must be electronically deposited with the OGSPS Thesis Office no later than the close of business (5:00pm ET) on the Wednesday of the last week of classes in the session in which their degree is to be awarded.

If the thesis is deemed to contain confidential or proprietary information that should be withheld from the public domain, students may indicate an embargo period on their Electronic Thesis Acceptance Form when depositing their thesis. For details, see <https://www.purdue.edu/academics/ogsp/thesis/records-and-thesis-resources/thesis-and-dissertation-policies-and-practices/>.

### 9.2 Publication Responsibility

Publication is an integral part of research. Thesis research is expected to be of publishable quality, but the major professor has the responsibility for determining whether the document is adequately prepared and of sufficient interest to warrant publication.

## 10 Departmental Facilities, Supplies, and Services

Graduate students in the Department of Agricultural Economics have access to a variety of research and educational facilities. It is the student's responsibility to become acquainted with these facilities and understand the procedures for using them.

### 10.1 Office Assignments

The Department attempts to provide office space in the Krannert Building for all research and teaching assistants. The Krannert Building is accessible for the disabled and has been designated a non-smoking facility. Office assignments are the primary responsibility of the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Chair. The Department Head ultimately approves all student, faculty, and staff office assignments.

Office space will be allocated on the basis of availability to individuals admitted to the OGSPS who are conducting research or serving as a teaching assistant, with the following priorities considered alongside the need to balance space available and timing of student programs/space needs:

1. PhD students who have successfully completed the preliminary examination;
2. PhD students in the process of studying for and taking the preliminary examination;

3. MS students with a completed Plan of Study who are actively working on theses;
4. PhD students who have not yet successfully completed the preliminary examination;
5. MS students who have not yet filed a Plan of Study;
6. MS students pursuing a Professional MS degree; and
7. Non-degree seeking students.

Persons admitted to the OGSPS who are paid in part or in full by other than standard assistantships may have their supervisor request special consideration in office assignment. If the request is not granted, the usual graduate student priorities will apply. A request for special consideration should be based on job requirements such as:

1. Special communication needs;
2. Special access needs (e.g., student traffic for those teaching or counseling students);
3. Special storage, security, and/or workspace needs; or
4. Special computer or terminal needs.

Office assignments for persons not admitted to the Purdue OGSPS shall be made by the Department Head.

Authorization from the Graduate Coordinator is needed for key assignment. Student offices are furnished. Students may not paint, modify fixtures, or add or remove furniture to/from offices. Any request for office modification must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator, Graduate Chair, and Department Head.

## **10.2 Office Supplies**

Graduate students on research assistantships and sponsored students who have made provisions for research support are provided paper and office supplies to be used in connection with their research. The Department does not furnish office supplies for course work or for non-research purposes. Requests for supplies should be made to the student's major professor, who will determine if supplies can be furnished.

## **10.3 Statistical and Computer Assistance**

During orientation, new graduate students will be introduced to the computer staff and the computing facilities that are available. During orientation students will be provided the up-to-date Dept IT/Computing Guidebook (and directed to where it, and subsequent versions, are housed on the internal shared drive for future reference). Students are expected to do their own computer programming. In special instances, assistance may be provided by faculty members and/or computer staff employed by the Department. No software is to be installed on university computers without the prior approval of the computing staff.

## **10.4 Book Purchases**

If a graduate student requires research materials which are not available on campus, the student and his/her major professor may make a request to the Department Head and/or via the appropriate channels at the Library to purchase the materials.

## 10.5 Travel

Graduate students may need to travel to complete their research or perform other departmental duties. All requests to travel on University funds or with University vehicles must be coordinated through the supervisors or major professor and the Department Business Office.

## 11 Program Termination

### 11.1 Final Semester Registration

If all degree requirements have been met before the first day of classes, students may register for “Degree Only.” Students who have only to complete their thesis defense and deposit may register for “Examination Only.” This status carries a reduced fee and requires approval of the OGSPS. Students are required to have been registered for a minimum of one hour of research in the preceding session to be eligible for this privileged registration. This option is available only once, but resets if registered for one or more credits after eight weeks. Examination Only students must submit a positive Report of Final Examination form and a Thesis Receipt by the eighth week of the semester or the privileged registration will be converted to one hour of research and additional fees will be assessed.

PhD and thesis-option MS students must register for a minimum of one research credit (AGEC 69800 or 69900) for the semester in which they expect to receive the degree, if they are not eligible to register for “degree only” or “exam only.”

Students doing research *in absentia* should inform the OGSPS and the Department of the semester in which they intend to graduate.

Early in the semester in which the student has declared he or she is a candidate for graduation, the Graduate Coordinator will receive a candidate audit from the OGSPS. This audit indicates the degree requirements completed to date by the student and the requirements yet to be completed. The graduate coordinator indicates on this form whether or not the student is or is not a *bona fide* degree candidate for that semester.

Candidacy must be declared within the four weeks of the start of the semester in which the student wishes to receive the degree, per the OGSPS published deadline.

### 11.2 OGSPS Exit Questionnaire

All degree candidates are required to complete the OGSPS Exit Questionnaire. The questionnaire is due by the last day of classes in the session of anticipated graduation.

### 11.3 Placement Services

Agricultural Economics graduates find employment in the business, government, and educational sectors. The Department aims to assist students in identifying job opportunities. The faculty has frequent contact with potential employers. Students should indicate their availability and job preferences to faculty members whose interests bring them in contact with prospective employers.

Notices of employment opportunities are available from the Graduate Coordinator and/or Graduate Chair. Graduate students are also eligible to use the University Placement Service.

## **11.4 Commencement Participation**

The Registrar issues directives and information to candidates relative to their participation in commencement exercises. Diplomas are mailed by the Registrar.

Students are to be allowed to participate in commencement exercises only if they are eligible to receive a degree upon successful completion of the courses in which they are currently enrolled. They are to be removed from the list if they do not meet these criteria. Students must have completed all coursework on the Plan of Study and the final examination scheduled in the semester in which a student wishes to be designated as a candidate to be eligible to participate in commencement ceremonies.

## **11.5 Re-Entry Procedures**

All graduate students (degree or non-degree) who have not registered for three consecutive semesters or more must file an application if they wish to be re-admitted. This is done by filing an on-line OGSPS application at least a month before classes start. The application will be processed through the departmental Graduate Committee and the OGSPS in the same way as any other application for admission. Students planning to drop out and re-enter a semester or more later should discuss their plans with the Graduate Chair. Obtaining tentative approval of the plans from the Graduate Committee can facilitate re-entry. The OGSPS's Policy and Procedures Manual for Administering Graduate Student Programs may be referred to for further details, such as re-entry in a different department or at a regional campus. Upon the recommendation of the department and on a case-by-case basis, special consideration will be given to students returning to continue their graduate studies after being called to active military service.

Course credits earned by a student whose graduate study and/or professional activity has been inactive for five years or more cannot be used on a plan of study for an advanced degree. A plan of study approved prior to such a period of inactivity is invalid. A preliminary examination passed prior to such a period of inactivity is invalid. (See Section V-A-2, VII-B-1, and VII-D-4 in the OGSPS Policies and Procedures for Administering Graduate Student Programs.) Readmission is granted by the dean of the OGSPS. The dean of the OGSPS will notify students who have been readmitted, and the readmission letter will be available to the department.

## **12 Financial Assistance for Graduate Students**

Agricultural Economics graduate students at Purdue finance their education in a variety of ways:

1. Self-financing;
2. Fellowships and traineeships offered by foreign and domestic government agencies, industries, foundations and other scholarship agencies;
3. Purdue University fellowships and Department of Agricultural Economics special awards;
4. Employment as University Residences resident assistants;
5. Departmental graduate research assistantships (for thesis or dissertation research).

## **12.1 Departmental Graduate Assistantship**

The Department has financial support in the form of assistantships for a limited number of qualified graduate students. Graduate student assistants are employees of Purdue University. These assistantships are awarded competitively and initially involve research, teaching, or extension service to the Department in return for a stipend. Students who receive funding from outside sources (see item 2 above) are not eligible for funding from Purdue. Graduate students holding departmental appointments are research assistants and are required to complete a thesis or dissertation.

The assignment of assistants to projects and the duration of assistants' appointments are subject to the availability of funds and will be decided by the Graduate Chair and Department Head.

## **12.2 Departmental and Other Awards**

On occasion, the Department provides financial support to students in the form of awards that are made possible through the generous gifts of alumni and other supporters. In addition, the Department is sometimes invited to nominate qualified students for other competitive awards at the College and University levels. Nominations for such awards are solicited from the faculty and where selection or ranking from a pool of qualified nominees is required, the Department Head or the Chair of the Graduate Program will appoint a committee to review applications and recommend awards based on overall merit and thematic match to the award program under consideration.

## **12.3 Stipend & Other Benefits**

Contact the Business Office for the current stipend level. Extra stipends may be awarded to RAs working on extramurally funded projects. Increments in these stipends may be awarded to recruit especially promising students. Students on quarter-time assistantship work 10 hours per week and half-time assistants work 20 hours per week. Unless specified otherwise, all stipends are 12-month appointments. There are 26 paydays disbursed bi-weekly per year. Notifications from the University and Department business office will keep students informed of payroll changes. Pay increases will take effect at the beginning of the month following the date of eligibility.

Assistantship stipends will typically begin on the first day on which students are required to attend orientation in the student's first semester. Continuation of assistantships depends on satisfactory academic performance (see Section 12.5). Stipends will end on the day of final deposit, unless the last day of work is clearly some other date or the assistantship has expired.

In order for Graduate Students to be on payroll for the semester start, they must be registered and in full-time status before the close of the business day before the first day of classes in that same semester. If a student is dropped from payroll due to non-compliance with student registration status requirements, they would be eligible for rehiring, subject to funding availability and employment requirements being met, in the next bi-weekly pay period following coming into compliance with registration requirements. In other words, if a student is removed from payroll due to failure to register, they will be off payroll for a minimum of two weeks. Back pay for missed days of work due to being removed from payroll because of failure to register on time will not be allowed. Extenuating circumstances preventing registration on-time may be considered for extensions by the Graduate Program Chair if they are presented in advance of the deadline and explicitly outside of the student's control. Failure to communicate before the deadline and/or failure to register before the deadline will result in removal from payroll on the first day of classes for the semester.

All graduate assistants in the Department are twelve-month employees of the University. Benefits-eligible graduate students receive 22 days of vacation per year, accrued at the rate of two days per month except for the months of March and September. Graduate assistants should not assume that they are automatically on vacation during academic holidays such as semester breaks, spring break, etc. Rather, days off must be approved in advance by the assistantship supervisor. Purdue University does not pay for terminal vacation which may have accrued upon completion of the degree. Purdue University also has a policy allowing two weeks sick leave for benefits-eligible graduate students and 15 days per year military leave for eligible students.

Graduate staff members are entitled to leaves of absence which include vacation, sick leave, FMLA, bereavement, jury and witness duty, and military leave. All leaves must be requested using the Success Factors system. More detailed information on leaves of absence can be found in the Graduate Staff Employment Manual at <https://www.purdue.edu/academics/ogsp/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/graduate-student-employment-manual.pdf>.

Graduate staff members are exempt from tuition and fees except for registration and service/graduate staff fees.

Graduate staff may purchase tickets to athletic, social and cultural events at staff rates.

Graduate staff members are entitled to the use of Department and University facilities and equipment in carrying out assistantship duties. This includes secretarial service for approved projects (typing of the thesis is not included). Requests for facilities should be made through the major professor or supervisor.

Graduate staff with less than three-quarter-time appointments are not granted campus parking or driving permits. However, for those living 1.3 miles from campus, commuter permits are available.

Graduate staff members are not entitled to social security, retirement, life insurance, tenure, sabbatical leave or other fringe benefits of the academic, administrative, or clerical staff.

## 12.4 Outside Employment & Reportable Outside Activities

Outside employment beyond the half-time RA/TA/fellowship is strongly discouraged. In the event that you wish to pursue alternate employment, you are expected to resign from your position or request to take a leave of absence from employment to pursue that outside opportunity. The Graduate Chair can assist you with proper planning for planned leaves from your RA/TA role, such as to pursue an internship. In rare and unusual cases where outside employment, including in the form of an internship, are being pursued concurrent with your department RA/TA/fellowship, the following conditions need to hold for approval to be considered:

- You must be familiar and in compliance with Purdue's policies on outside employment; see <https://www.purdue.edu/policies/ethics/iiib1.html>.
- The outside activity must not be in conflict with your work at Purdue.
- The outside activity cannot exceed 10 hours per week.
- Prior to undertaking such activities, you must obtain written documentation of your advisor's approval (both RA/TA advisor and thesis/dissertation advisor if they are different) and the graduate chair's approval. Entering into such activities before receiving approval is prohibited and will result in denial of the request and possible termination of employment.

- Prior to undertaking such activities, you must file a reportable outside activity form through PERA and obtain approval; for details, see <https://www.purdue.edu/vpec/resources/faqs/conflict-of-commitment-and-reportable-outside-activities/>.
- You must be in good standing as a RA/TA eligible full-time student with the department and have filed RA/TA forms and research credit hour forms with satisfactory reports in the semester preceding the request. These forms must be continued to be filed by the requested deadlines with satisfactory performance during the outside activity to remain employed as an RA/TA on the discretionary funding source of a willing faculty member.
- All conditions related to your RA/TA/fellowship employment remain in effect, including but not limited to maintenance of satisfactory progress towards degree and RA/TA work performance.

## 12.5 Performance

Assistantships are awarded partly on the basis of academic merit. Graduate assistants are expected to maintain high standards of performance in their academic activities as follows:

- MS students
  1. Students holding assistantships in AgEcon are required to register for 12 credit hours of coursework and maintain a cumulative grade index of 3.0 or better. Academic performance below this level will result in automatic review and possible loss of assistantship. A thesis is required.
  2. Assistantship funding for MS students is limited to 4 semesters plus 1 summer session from the date of entry into the program, unless an extension is granted. Funding is ultimately governed by the offer letter and signed contract; please refer to your individual contract for start/end contract dates.
  3. MS students enrolled in the professional option are not eligible for research assistantship support.
- PhD students
  1. Students holding assistantships in Agricultural Economics are required to register for 12 credit hours of coursework and maintain a cumulative grade index of 3.0 or better. Failure to maintain the level of performance will result in automatic review and possible loss of assistantship.
  2. Failure to pass a preliminary exam will result in automatic review and possible loss of assistantship.
  3. Funding is ultimately governed by the offer letter and signed contract; please refer to your individual contract for start/end contract dates. Funding for PhD Students generally continue for up to 4 years from the date of entry into program, unless an extension is granted. Requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to the Graduate Program Chair.

## 12.6 Duties

Students holding graduate appointments are temporary employees of the Department and Purdue University. They are expected to be familiar with and adhere to University procedures and policies and to use University property and facilities with good judgment, and to conduct their classroom and research activities in an ethical and responsible manner.

The terms of student employment or funding usually include employment during the summer months. During this period students are expected to be on campus and regularly available (e.g. in the office) as well as in communication with their faculty supervisor. Federal labor laws forbid one to receive a paycheck from a public institution such as Purdue while not performing the duties of his/her job. On occasion, a research assistant assignment may require a student employee to be away from campus for an extended period of time for data collection or other project-related activities. In such cases, students are required to file a request for a paid status research leave or Change of Duty Station with the Department business office. Travel for conference attendance or other professional activities and for vacation are also allowable reasons to be away from the campus community. Again, the proper approval should be sought through the business office before taking such leaves, even if the student is self-funding travel to a professional event. In the case of approved professional travel, students are expected to submit via on the online system for travel approvals at least two weeks prior to travel.

If a student is away from campus without approval or is found to be not performing the duties of his or her work assignment, then the Department reserves the right to terminate the student's employment immediately. In the case of a serious personal matter that may arise, the Business Office can help the student file appropriate paperwork to acknowledge events. Latitude may be given to be away from campus as needed. The key is for the student to communicate clearly with the major professor, the graduate coordinator or chair, and/or the Business Office Staff.

It is possible that a work assignment and a thesis topic may coincide, but this is not guaranteed. The first priority for assigning RAs is to projects that are extramurally funded; non-tenured faculty requests for assistance receive second priority; the quality of the faculty project proposal and a matching of student faculty interests receive the third priority. Students may wish to seek faculty with funded projects in choosing their major professor. However, if a student selects a faculty member without funding, the student will be asked to perform assistantship tasks for a different faculty member or temporarily remain on Department funding while a suitable paid assistantship can be found. Unless a work assignment and thesis topic coincide, the student will be asked to perform non-thesis related tasks at an average rate of 10 hours per week for a quarter-time assignment and 20 hours per week for half-time assignments in return for the assistantship. In those rare instances when a research assistant changes to the professional MS program, the student must forfeit the assistantship as soon as the decision is made.

Assistantship work is reviewed formally every semester. If the Department's review of assistantships indicates that the assistantship work of the student is unsatisfactory, the assistantship will be placed on probation. A second unsatisfactory assessment of assistantship work will result in the termination of the assistantship.

## 12.7 Registration Policies for Graduate Assistants

To be eligible to hold a graduate staff appointment during any session, an individual must be enrolled as a graduate student in a degree program and be registered as a full-time student.

## 13 Mentoring

The Department of Agricultural Economics recognizes that mentoring involves more than formal feedback on a student's research assignment. We also recognize that what is an effective mentoring environment for one person will not be an effective mentoring environment for another person. Thus, we have a flexible structure for establishing and encouraging mentoring in the Department. Each fall we conduct a formal orientation program at which time the graduate chair meets with new graduate students and, in addition to discussing other aspects of being a new graduate student at Purdue, discusses the importance of professional development, opportunities for professional development, expectations and ways to develop professional mentoring relationships. The Department values mentors' efforts as a part of the good citizenship component of professional activity and encourages and supports multiple forms of mentoring. The flexible nature of this aspect of mentoring is deliberate as it is recognized that a poorly matched mentor/mentee relationship can be unproductive and even harmful.

Individuals view mentoring in many ways, but we see it as a purposeful relationship that is established between two individuals with the aim of helping one of those individuals to grow and develop to his or her fullest potential. In this guide the term mentor may be used when referring to the role a faculty member plays when working with a graduate student. Mentoring refers to interactions that are intended to support the development of the graduate student. It may overlap with the process of academic advising and research supervision, but is a broader concept and extends well beyond issues directly related to degree objectives and requirements.

While mentoring is often viewed as a hierarchical relationship of teacher-student, successful mentoring consists of a two-way relationship in which both parties learn and grow through their interactions. Such relationships may be formed between an experienced faculty member and a less experienced student, or between peers who guide, counsel, and support each other. In some cases an individual may have several mentors at the same time.

Some objectives of mentoring include

- Facilitate recruitment of new graduate students through a demonstrated commitment to providing a supportive atmosphere that encourages student development;
- Contribute to graduate student morale and motivation, by creating a sense of community and shared purpose;
- Retain graduate students by helping them become more familiar with the Department's culture, increasing their rate of learning, and helping them to become aware of departmental, college and university resources;
- Foster a cooperative network by helping new graduate students meet and network with other graduate students, faculty members and staff, including individuals inside and outside the Department;
- Connect graduate students with important opportunities, such as conferences, workshops, grants, teaching opportunities and training programs; and
- Increase the flow of accurate and timely information through the Department.

## **14 Academic Integrity, Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR), and Ethical Behavior**

### **14.1 Ethical Behavior and Conduct**

One of the primary learning outcomes for the graduate program in the Department of Agricultural Economics is that students will be able to recognize ethical behavior and conduct their research in an ethical and responsible manner. At minimum, students must meet or exceed expectations related to ethical conduct based on evaluations of their thesis and thesis defense by their graduate advisory committee.

MS and students receive exposure to RCR topics through their enrollment in AGECE 60200 and AGECE 69200, respectively. Students collecting primary data through surveys or experiments also must successfully complete the online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course for Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research prior to collecting data.

Per OGSPS requirements, the final MS thesis will be checked for originality using the iThenticate software program. The software compares the text of a student's written document to a large body of published and online sources, identifying areas in which the originality of a student's scholarship may be called into question. It is incumbent upon the student to adhere to accepted standards of scholarship and to work with his/her major professor to resolve questions regarding attribution before the final thesis is submitted to the committee for defense and final approval.

### **14.2 University Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

University policy on academic dishonesty is clear: academic dishonesty in any form is strictly prohibited. Anyone found to be cheating or helping someone else cheat will be referred directly to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for disciplinary action. Penalties are severe and may include dismissal from the University. The risks associated with cheating far outweigh the perceived benefits. Academic dishonesty includes citing someone else's work as your own, using "cheat sheets" or sharing your answers with someone else. Information regarding your rights and responsibilities as a student is contained in the Purdue University Code of Conduct, available at <https://catalog.purdue.edu/content.php?catoid=13&navoid=16335>.

### **14.3 Acknowledgements Sections of Theses and Dissertations**

Research is often a highly collaborative activity and, as a result, publications, including theses and dissertations, are the product of multiple collaborators. This collaborative effort is most evident for theses and dissertations where the work is presented as a collection of research papers with "co-authors." At a minimum, all theses and dissertations are a collaboration between the supervisor and a student. However, theses and dissertations are generally regarded as single-author documents despite possible teaching, research, and outreach collaboration. It is expected that many of the key ideas, contributions, experimental designs, data analysis and interpretations provided in a thesis or dissertation originated with the student-author. Any work that has not been solely authored by a student should be identified within the thesis or dissertation. Author(s) of the original material should be credited for their contributions. These contributions may come in the form of text, tables, figures or some combination thereof. Any work presented in the thesis that arises from the contributions of others should be identified as such within the "Acknowledgements" section of the thesis. In some cases, a committee may require a "Co-Authorship Declaration." Note that when co-authored work is presented as part of the thesis or dissertation, a student is equally responsible

for all portions that appear in the thesis or dissertation and should generally be prepared to defend all of the data, results and conclusions appearing in the thesis or dissertation, regardless of the source.

## 15 Harassment Policy

Consistent with Purdue University policy, the Department of Agricultural Economics maintains a strict policy regarding anti-harassment. We are committed to maintaining an environment that recognizes the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding and mutual respect; and encourages its members to strive to reach their potential. Harassment in the workplace or the educational environment is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated. We are committed to maintaining an educational and work climate for faculty, staff and students that is positive and free from all forms of harassment, including harassment toward individuals with legally protected status for reasons of race, gender, religion, color, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information or disability and harassment toward individuals for other reasons such as sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status or parental status.

Graduate students are encouraged to report incidents of harassment. Retaliation against faculty members, staff members or students for reporting or complaining of harassment, for assisting or participating in the investigation of a complaint of harassment, or for enforcing this policy is strictly prohibited. OGSPS Guidelines and Administrative Procedures for Handling of Incidents Involving Harassment are described in Appendix E. The Purdue University policy on Harassment is described in detail at <https://www.purdue.edu/policies/ethics/iic1.html>.

## 16 Appendix A

Graduate Council Document 91-C: Graduate Students' Right to Appeal

Graduate students, like all students officially enrolled at Purdue University, are subject to all University regulations. At the same time, their rights as individuals and as students are duly protected. Graduate students who feel that their rights have been violated by a disciplinary decision may seek redress through the Campus Appeals Board, according to procedures specified in Part 5, Section III, E, 2, e, of Academic Regulations and Student Conduct, which is issued annually. Graduate students who wish to appeal decisions concerning matters of academic standards may seek redress according to procedures specified in Part 5, Section III, E, 2, e, of Academic Regulations and Student Conduct and to the procedures detailed below which have been established in accordance with the authority thereby delegated to the Graduate Council.

### 16.1 Appeals of Academic Matters

1. Graduate students who wish to appeal grades received in regular course work may do so only through the grade appeals system as described in Part 5, Section III, E of the Academic Regulations and Student Conduct handbook.
2. Decisions by departmental graduate examination committees whose appointment does not require approval by the dean of the OGSPS (including various departmental examining committees such as those for qualifying examinations) must be appealed within the relevant departments, rather than through the grade appeals system or to the Graduate Council. The initial appeal must

be filed with the department head charged with supervising the relevant graduate program. The appeal must be in writing, must specify the grounds for the appeal, and must be filed within 30 days after the issuance of the disputed decision. Upon receipt of such appeal, the department head shall appoint a committee to hear the appeal and to make a determination. Unless the student appeals further to the department head, the appeal committee's decision shall be final. In the event a student chooses to appeal to the department head, such appeal must be in writing and must be delivered to the department head within 10 days of the issuance of the appeal committee's determination. For those matters so appealed to the department head, the decision of the department head shall be final.

3. Appeals of decisions by graduate examination committees whose composition has been authorized by the dean of the OGSPS shall be handled by the following procedures. a. The initial appeal must be filed with the department head charged with supervising the relevant graduate program. The appeal must be in writing, must specify the grounds of the appeal, and must be filed within 30 days of the issuance of the decision of the examining committee. The department head shall forward the appeal to the departmental graduate committee with instructions to consider the case and provide the head with a written recommendation. Upon receipt of such recommendation, the head shall make a determination and, in writing, so inform the student.

b. If the student chooses not to accept the decision of the department head, he or she may request, in writing, within 10 days of the issuance of the determination of the departmental appeal, that the dean of the OGSPS appoint a review board. Such a board shall be composed of five persons chosen at random from among current voting members of the Graduate Council. Council members serving on the advisory or examining committee of the student, Council members serving on the student's departmental graduate committee, and Council members otherwise judged by the dean of the OGSPS to be interested parties shall be ineligible to serve on the review board. The review board shall consider the case and report its recommendation to the dean of the OGSPS, whose decision shall be final.

Intent: Procedure 3.b., above, means that a master's student who fails a final examination, or a doctoral student who is terminated for failing either the preliminary examination or the final examination, after having exhausted departmental appeals, may appeal to a specially constituted panel of the Graduate Council.