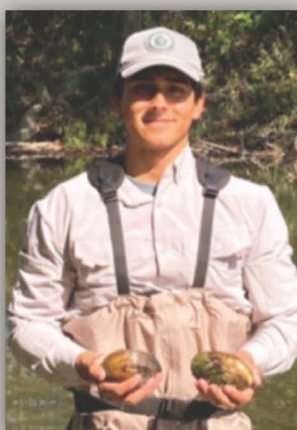
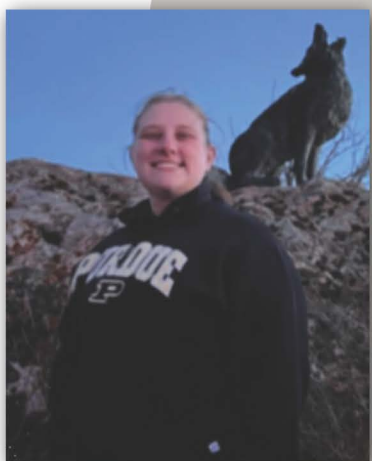


Graduate Student Handbook

2025-2026

Graduate Program
Guidelines & Resources



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Forestry and Natural Resources

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Graduate Teaching Assistant Evaluation
Research Proposal Evaluation
Candidacy Extension/Outreach Evaluation
Graduate Student Check-out

Acronyms

CV	Curriculum Vitae
FNR	Department of Forestry and Natural Resources
FY	Fiscal Year
MS	Master of Science
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory

Introduction

The objective of this handbook is to provide the policies for the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources (FNR) Graduate Program at Purdue University. FNR graduate students and faculty that advise graduate students should adhere to the policies set forth in this document for successful student progress through the FNR Graduate Program.

In addition to the FNR Graduate Program policies, all graduate programs are under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars (OGSPS). The Purdue University OGSPS maintains specific standards and requirements, which include but are not limited to filing a Plan of Study, composition of Advisory Committees, academic standards, and graduate students' responsibilities. The following document provides FNR-specific requirements, which are in addition to the OGSPS requirements.

Graduate students are admitted into the FNR Master of Science (MS) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program. General requirements for these degrees are provided below. A timing summary for degree forms and checklists are provided in Appendix A. All OGSPS forms referenced can be found on MyPurdue. All FNR forms are located in Appendix B and online at <https://ag.purdue.edu/departments/fnr/graduate/current-students.html> under FNR.

The FNR Graduate Program is administered by the FNR Graduate Program Head (i.e., Department Head) as well as the FNR Graduate Committee, which is comprised of FNR faculty members and the FNR Graduate Program Specialist. The FNR Graduate Committee is led by the committee Chair. The FNR Department Head and FNR Graduate Committee reviewed the program and established the guidelines and policies which are presented in this handbook. The current FNR Graduate Committee is comprised of faculty members, and two non-voting members: The FNR Graduate Program Specialist and A Graduate Student Council Representative.

FNR Graduate Program Committee

Name	Title	Email
Michael Jenkins	Chair, Professor of Forest Ecology	jenkinma@purdue.edu
Elizabeth Flaherty	Professor of Wildlife Ecology & Habitat Management	eflaher@purdue.edu
Jacob Hosen	Assistant Professor of the Internet-of-Things & Ecological Analytics	jhosen@purdue.edu
Tyler Hoskins	Research Assistant Professor of FNR	tdhoskin@purdue.edu
Patti Foster	Graduate Program Administration Specialist	foster43@purdue.edu
Rachel Brent	Graduate Student Organization President, MS Student	brentr@purdue.edu

Master of Science Thesis Degree Requirements

Requirements for a thesis MS degree are summarized in Figure 1. The Purdue University MS Program goal is that graduate students will be able to demonstrate five competencies (i.e., learning outcomes). How each requirement fulfills the competencies is provided in Table 2.

Credit Hours and Timeline

To obtain a thesis MS degree, a minimum of 30 credit hours must be completed. This minimum includes 24 graded course hours and six research credit hours. The 24 graded course hours must be listed on the students' Plan of Study. These courses should primarily be conducted at Purdue University, (i.e., at least 50 percent of the credits must be earned where the degree is conferred) but can include courses taken as a non-degree, generated because of an uncompleted MS or PhD program, and/or as an undergraduate student at the graduate level and were in excess of degree requirements. Transfers of course credit hours, level of course credit hours which can count towards the Plan of Study and/or degree program, registration requirements, etc. shall adhere to the guidelines set forth in the OGSPS policies. All courses on the Plan of Study must be approved by the students' Advisory Committee.

The thesis MS degree must be completed within five calendar years from admission to the MS program to the completion of the Final Examination. Extensions of this limit may be granted by the FNR Graduate Committee and Department Head upon recommendation and justification by the students' Advisory Committee.

Required Courses

Thesis MS degree students are required to complete the following three courses:

- GRAD 61200 Responsible Conduct of Research,
- FNR 50600 Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming, and
- FNR 590000 Introduction to Teaching Natural Resources.

Required courses must be listed on the students' Plan of Study.

Students who have previously earned a graduate degree from Purdue University where GRAD 61200 (Responsible Conduct of Research) was already completed as part of the Plan of Study are not required to repeat GRAD 61200. Graduate students who have previously earned a graduate degree from FNR are not required to take FNR 50600 (Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming) or FNR 598000 (Introduction to Teaching Natural Resources) again given they meet both requirements below:

1. The student has previously taken and received a passing grade in the course(s), and
2. The student's Advisory Committee deems the student has demonstrated sufficient proficiency and skills related to extension and/or teaching.

Exceptions or substitutions involving the above required courses can only be granted by the FNR Graduate Committee upon receipt of a written request from the faculty advisor for the student requesting the exception/substitution.

Additional Requirements

Advisory Committee

Every student in a degree program is required to select a graduate advisor (a.k.a. major professor) who serves as chair of their Advisory Committee and who agrees to supervise the student's graduate study, research, and writing. The graduate advisor/student relationship must be a mutually agreed upon.

Research expectations and semester evaluation

Every semester a student is enrolled in research credit hours (FNR 69800), the *Graduate Research Credit Expectations Agreement* Form must be completed and submitted to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist within the first two weeks of the semester. Additionally, every semester a student is enrolled, a *Graduate Student Semester Evaluation* Form must be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Specialist when the semester grades are due.

Proposal

Every student in a degree program is required to write a thesis research proposal. The proposal should be presented to, discussed with, and approved by the students' Advisory Committee. The format and content of the proposal will vary depending upon each student's educational objectives and the direction given by each student's Advisory Committee. The *Research Proposal Evaluation* Form must be completed and submitted to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist.

Extension/Outreach

Students must 1) complete coursework (FNR 50600 Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming), 2) develop an extension/outreach plan, and 3) produce a minimum of one deliverable. The outreach plan must include a defined target audience, clear learning objectives, and a suggestion of where and when their outreach and/or extension activity will occur. The specific deliverable(s) associated with each student's outreach and/or extension activities will vary depending upon each student's educational objectives and the direction given by each individual student's Advisory Committee. Examples of deliverables include, but are not limited to, numbered extension publications, non-technical publications, articles in popular magazines, newsletter, trade magazines, etc., posters, pamphlets, web content, social media, workshops for professional or public audiences, presentations for non-scientific audiences, and youth programming. The student will complete and submit the *Candidacy Extension/Outreach Evaluation* Form to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist.

If a waiver for FNR 50600 (Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming) course was obtained, the student is still required to meet the other policy standards including an Advisory Committee review and approval of an extension/outreach plan, an extension/outreach deliverable, and completion of the *Candidacy Extension/Outreach Evaluation* Form.

Presentation

As a graduate student in FNR, professional development is an important part of overall education. Participation in scientific and professional conferences is essential to both understanding the state of the field and building professional networks. As such, MS students must complete a presentation related to their field-of-study at a regional, national, or international conference. When the presentation was conducted this must be indicated on the *Graduate Student Semester Evaluation* Form by providing a citation.

Travel Support

To foster graduate student participation in scientific and professional conferences, FNR will provide (contingent on the annual availability of departmental funding) up to \$350 per year to cover approved travel expenses to attend one in-person conference or the fees to participate in up to two virtual conferences (not to exceed \$350 in total). Graduate advisor approval is required. Required travel expenses and fees more than \$350 should be covered by the faculty advisor's grant funding where available. Presentation of a scientific paper in oral or poster form by the student is strongly recommended as part of receiving this support.

Thesis

Each student will write and submit a thesis following the requirements set forth by the student's Advisory Committee and the OGSPS including the OGSPS *Form 9: Thesis/Dissertation Acceptance*.

Final Examination

A Final Examination consists of a public seminar in conjunction with the thesis defense. For successful completion of the Final Examination, a student must at minimum:

- Submit OGSPS *Form 8: Request for Appointment of Examining Committee* prior to the examination. The examining committee must be comprised of at least three members of the graduate faculty and may or may not be identical to the Advisory Committee, and 51% of the examining committee must have "Regular" graduate faculty certification.
- Register for candidacy (i.e., "CAND") during the semester this examination is taken.
- Adhere to all the deadlines provided by the OGSPS and the FNR Graduate Committee.
- Present research in a forum open to the public. This seminar must be advertised to the Purdue University faculty and student body a minimum of two weeks in advance. (Consideration should be given for not having the oral presentation open to the public in cases where prior agreements with the research sponsor preclude the release of findings to the public for an agreed upon period of time or when prior review by the sponsor is specified in the funding agreement.)
- Defend research in an oral examination to the examining committee. The oral examination must not last more than two hours.

The Examination Committee determines if a student passes or fails the Final Examination. This decision will be submitted to the OGSPS via the OGSPS *Form 7: Report of Master's Examining Committee*. Committee certification for a master's degree requires that all members of a three-person committee concur that the student has satisfactorily completed the examination. Although only three committee members are required, if the committee has four or more members, a single member may withhold their signature of approval. If the student does not pass the Final Examination, the Examination Committee determines if the student will have additional opportunities to pass the examination. If permitted to retake the exam, a candidate must wait until the following semester or later to repeat the Final Examination.

Candidacy

Students are required to register for candidacy during the semester they defend and/or complete their degree requirements. Details regarding candidacy registration can be found at the OGSPS website. Additionally, students are required to complete the following tasks:

- submit their curriculum vitae (CV)/resume,
- FNR Placement Survey,
- OGSPS Exit Questionnaire
- exit interview with department head,
- *Graduate Student Check-out Form*.

Funding length and Departmental Assistantship Extension Requests

If funding is available, students that receive departmental assistantships to pursue MS degrees within FNR will be guaranteed two years of funding to complete their degree.

If needed, the graduate advisor of an MS student who is making satisfactory progress towards their degree may request a one-semester extension for a half-time, MS-level departmental assistantship. The request addressed to the FNR Graduate Committee must be in writing and must provide clear evidence (e.g., filed Plan of Study, manuscripts submitted, data collection completed) of satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree. The FNR Graduate Committee Chair may grant this request, pending budgetary approval by the Department Head. If FNR funding is provided the MS student will be a TA for the supported semester.

If needed, the graduate advisor of an MS student who is making satisfactory progress towards their degree may request a second, one-semester extension for a half-time, MS-level departmental assistantship. The request, addressed to the FNR Graduate Committee, must be in writing and must provide clear evidence (e.g., filed Plan of Study, manuscripts submitted, data collection completed, pending thesis defense) of satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree. Approval of the request will require evidence of satisfactory progress and availability of funds. The FNR Graduate Committee Chair may grant a well-justified request in part or in whole, pending budgetary approval by the Department Head. If funds are limited, preference for a second, one-semester extension for MS students on departmental funding will be given to students who have served as a teaching assistant in FNR courses for two or more semesters and/or have been funded for one or more semesters on funds external to the department (e.g., grants, contracts, fellowships) during their tenure in the program.

No additional extensions of departmental assistantships for MS students will be granted.

Master of Science Non-thesis Degree

Credit Hours and Timeline

To obtain a non-thesis MS degree, a minimum of 30 graded credit hours must be completed. The 30 graded course hours must be listed on the students' Plan of Study. These courses should primarily be conducted at Purdue University, (i.e., at least 50 percent of the credits must be earned where the degree is conferred) but can include courses taken as a non-degree student, generated as a consequence of an uncompleted MS or PhD program, and/or as an undergraduate student at the graduate level and were in excess of degree requirements. Transfers of course credit hours, level of course credit hours which can count towards the Plan of Study and/or degree program, registration requirements, etc. shall adhere to the guidelines set forth in the OGSPS policies. All courses on the Plan of Study must be approved by the students' Advisory Committee.

The non-thesis MS degree must be completed within five calendar years from admission to the MS program to the completion of the Final Examination. Extensions of this limit may be granted by the FNR Graduate Committee and/or Department Head upon recommendation and justification by the student's Advisory Committee.

Required Courses

Non-thesis MS degree students are required to complete the following three courses:

- GRAD 61200 (Responsible Conduct of Research),
- FNR 50600 (Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming), and
- FNR 59000 (Introduction to Teaching Natural Resources.)

Required courses must be listed on the student's Plan of Study.

Students who have previously earned a graduate degree from Purdue University where GRAD 61200 (Responsible Conduct of Research) was already completed as part of the Plan of Study are not required to repeat GRAD 61200. Graduate students who have previously earned a graduate degree from FNR are not required to take FNR 50600 (Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming) or FNR 59000 (Introduction to Teaching Natural Resources) given they meet both requirements below:

1. The student has previously taken and received a passing grade in the courses, and
2. The student's Advisory Committee deems the student has demonstrated sufficient proficiency and skills related to extension and teaching.

Exceptions or substitutions involving the above required courses can only be granted by the FNR Graduate Committee upon receipt of a written request from the graduate advisor for the student requesting the exception/substitution.

Additional Requirements

Advisory Committee

Every student in a degree program is required to select a graduate advisor (a.k.a. major professor) who acts as the chair of the Advisory Committee and who agrees to supervise the student's graduate study, research, and writing. The graduate advisor/student relationship must be mutually agreed upon.

Semester evaluation

Every semester a student is enrolled, the *Graduate Student Semester Evaluation* Form must be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Specialist when the semester grades are due.

Proposal

Every student in a degree program is required to write a Project proposal. The proposal should be presented, discussed, and approved by the student's Advisory Committee. The format and content of the proposal will vary depending upon each student's educational objectives and the direction given by each student's Advisory Committee. The *Research Proposal Evaluation* Form must be completed and submitted to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist.

Extension/Outreach

Students must 1) complete coursework (FNR 50600 Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming), 2) develop an extension/outreach plan, and 3) produce a minimum of one deliverable. The outreach plan must include a defined target audience, clear learning objectives, and a suggestion of where and when their outreach and/or extension activity will occur. The specific deliverable(s) associated with each student's outreach and/or extension activities will vary depending upon each student's educational objectives and the direction given by each individual student's Advisory Committee. Examples of deliverables include, but are not limited to, numbered extension publications, non-technical publications, articles in popular magazines, newsletter, trade magazines, etc., posters, pamphlets, web content, social media, workshops for professional or public audiences, seminars for non-scientific audiences, and youth programming. The student will complete and submit the *Candidacy Extension/Outreach Evaluation* Form to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist.

If a waiver for FNR 50600 (Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming) course was obtained the student is still required to meet the other policy standards including an Advisory Committee review and approval of an extension/outreach plan, an extension/outreach deliverable, and completion of the *Candidacy Extension/Outreach Evaluation* Form.

Presentation

As a graduate student in FNR, professional development is an important part of overall education. Participation in scientific and professional conferences is essential to both understanding the state of the field and building professional networks. As such MS students must complete a presentation related to their field-of-study at a regional, national, or international conference. When the presentation is conducted this must be indicated on the *Graduate Student Semester Evaluation* Form by providing a citation.

To foster graduate student participation in scientific and professional conferences, FNR will provide (contingent on the annual availability of departmental funding) up to \$350 per student per year to cover approved travel expenses to attend one in-person conference or the fees to participate in up to two virtual conferences (not to exceed \$350 total). Graduate advisor approval is required. Required travel expenses and fees in excess of \$350 are intended to be covered by the faculty advisor's grant funding where available. Presentation of a scientific paper in oral or poster form by the student is strongly recommended as part of receiving this support.

Project

Each student will write and submit a Project following the requirements set forth by the student's Advisory Committee.

Final Examination

A Final Examination consists of a public seminar in conjunction with an oral examination. For successful completion of the Final Examination, a student must at minimum:

- Submit OGSPS *Form 8: Request for Appointment of Examining Committee* prior to the examination. The examining committee must be comprised of at least three members of the graduate faculty and may or may not be identical to the Advisory Committee, and 51% of the examining committee must have “Regular” graduate faculty certification.
- Register for candidacy (i.e., “CAND”) during the semester this examination is taken.
- Adhere to all of the deadlines provided by the OGSPS and the FNR Graduate Committee.
- Present Project in a forum open to the public. This seminar must be advertised to the Purdue University faculty and student body a minimum of two weeks in advance. (Consideration should be given for not having the oral presentation open to the public in cases where prior agreements with the research sponsor preclude the release of findings to the public for an agreed upon period of time or when prior review by the sponsor is specified in the funding agreement.)
- Defend research in an oral examination to the examining committee. The oral examination must not last more than two hours.

The examining committee will render a pass or fail recommendation. This decision will be submitted by the examining committee to the OGSPS via the OGSPS *Form 7: Report of Master's Examining Committee*. Committee certification for a master's degree requires that all members of a three-person committee concur that the student has satisfactorily completed the examination. Although only three committee members are required, if the committee has four or more members, a single member may withhold their signature of approval. If the student does not pass the Final Examination, the Examination Committee determines if the student will have additional opportunities to pass the examination. If permitted to redo, a candidate must wait at least until the following semester to repeat the Final Examination.

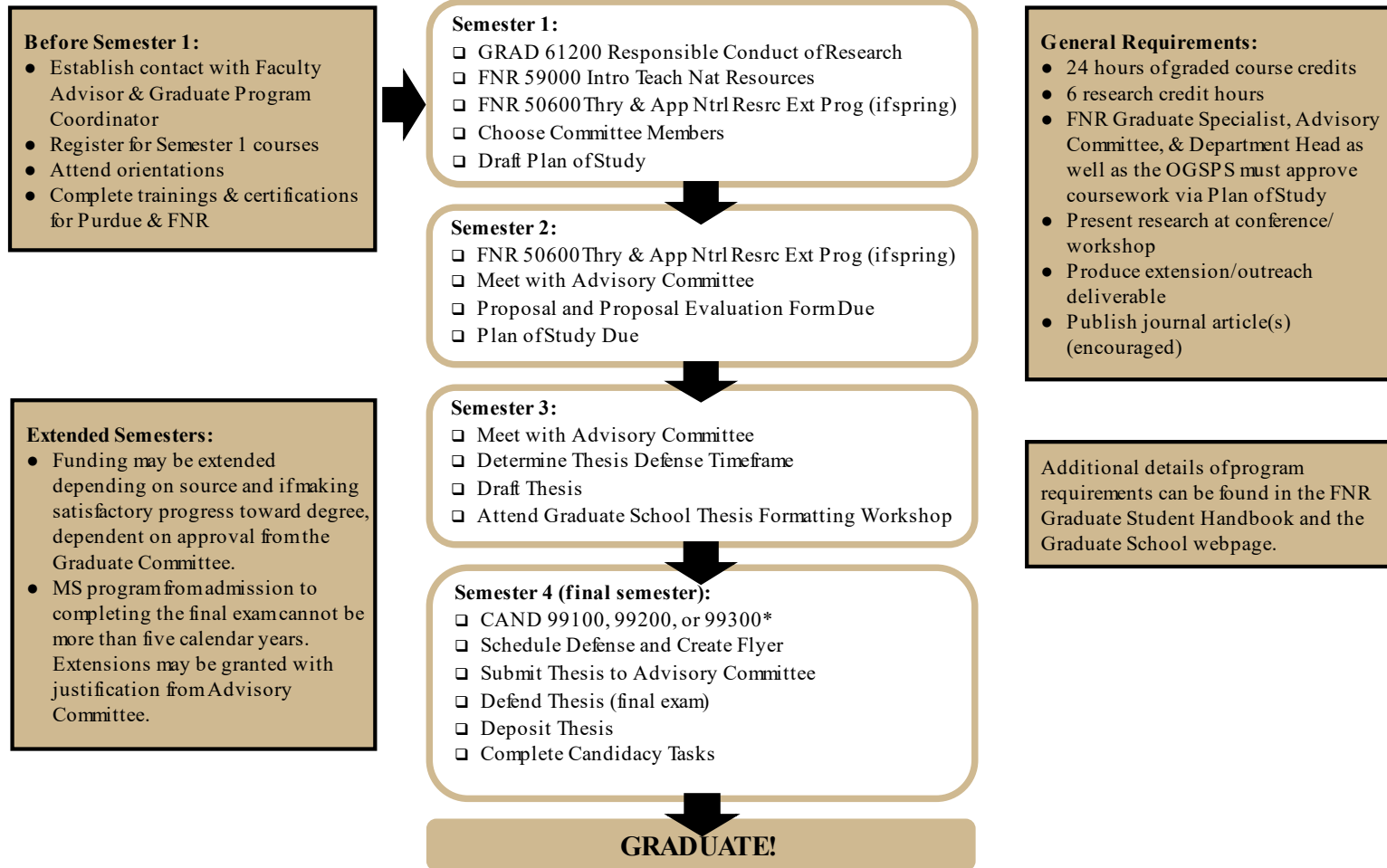
Candidacy

Students are required to register for candidacy during the semester they defend and/or complete their degree requirements. Details regarding candidacy registration can be found at the OGSPS website. Additionally, students are required to complete the following tasks:

- submit their CV/resume,
- FNR Placement Survey,
- OGSPS Exit Questionnaire
- exit interview with department head,
- *Graduate Student Check-out Form*.

FNR Graduate Flowchart– Masters Degree

Assumes four semester graduation timeline



Updated 08//2024

Learning Outcomes for FNR Graduate Students – Thesis MS Degree

Competencies:	Knowledge & Scholarship	Communication	Critical Thinking	Ethical & Responsible Research	Professionalism
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i>	<i>To identify and conduct original research, scholarship, and creative endeavors</i>	<i>To effectively communicate field of study</i>	<i>To think critically, creatively and solve problems in field of study</i>	<i>To conduct research in an ethical and responsible manner</i>	<i>To demonstrate attributes of professional development consistent with expectations within field of study</i>
24 Graded Course Credit Hours (minimum)	NA	Attend and receive a passing grade in all courses taken	Attend and receive a passing grade in all courses taken	NA	Attend and receive a passing grade in all courses taken
6 MS Research Credits (minimum)	Receive a grade of satisfactory on credits associated with the performance of research				
GRAD 61200 Responsible Conduct of Research	NA	NA	NA	Attend and receive a passing grade	Attend and receive a passing grade
FNR 50600 Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming	NA	Produce professional extension product(s) to be disseminated to the general public	NA	NA	Produce professional extension product(s) to be disseminated to the general public
FNR 59000 Introduction to Teaching Natural Resources	NA	Successfully prepare and deliver lecture or laboratory material to undergraduate or graduate students	NA	NA	Successfully prepare and deliver lecture or laboratory material to undergraduate or graduate students
Annual Meetings with Advisory Committee & Semester Meetings with Faculty Advisor(s)	Demonstrate acceptable progress towards research and <i>Plan of Study</i> requirements				
Develop Proposal	Successfully define and justify a set of objectives	Successfully write and defend proposal in a meeting with Advisory Committee	Successfully define a set of methods and analyses that will achieve the objectives	Successfully detail how proposal conforms to the standards for the responsible conduct of research	Successfully write and discuss proposal in a meeting with Advisory Committee
Present Results of Research, Teaching, or Outreach Efforts at Appropriate Venue(s)	Successfully present to a professional audience				

Competencies:	Knowledge & Scholarship	Communication	Critical Thinking	Ethical & Responsible Research	Professionalism
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i>	<i>To identify and conduct original research, scholarship, and creative endeavors</i>	<i>To effectively communicate field of study</i>	<i>To think critically, creatively and solve problems in field of study</i>	<i>To conduct research in an ethical and responsible manner</i>	<i>To demonstrate attributes of professional development consistent with expectations within field of study</i>
Participate in the Annual Departmental Symposium (optional)	Develop and present an oral or poster presentation				
Attend Professional Workshop(s) (optional)	Attend a workshop associated with the development and conduct of research	Attend a workshop associated with effective oral or written communication in the classroom or to professional audiences	Attend a workshop associated with the development of critical thinking and/or problem-solving skills	Attend a workshop associated with one or more aspects of the responsible conduct of research	Attend a workshop associated with one or more aspects of professional development
Publish Results of Research, Teaching or Outreach Efforts in Appropriate Outlet(s) (optional)	Successfully publish a peer-reviewed article				
Exhibit Excellence in Teaching, Research or Outreach (optional)	Receive an award for research, teaching, or outreach activities				
Exhibit Evidence of Leadership Potential (optional)	Serve as a reviewer or editor for professional publications or as an external reviewer for funding agencies	Present research, teaching, or outreach materials as an invited speaker or in an invited scientific article	File a patent for activities associated with research activities performed	Present or publish materials associated with the responsible conduct of research	Serve as an officer or committee member in a professional society or other organizations related to field of study
Develop Thesis	Successfully prepare a thesis for submission to Advisory Committee for review				
Final Examination	Successfully defend a thesis to Advisory Committee				

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The FNR PhD program goal is that graduate students will be able to demonstrate five competencies (i.e., learning outcomes). How each requirement fulfills the competencies is provided in Table 3. Degree requirements are outlined below for a PhD degree. These requirements are summarized in Figure 2.

Credit Hours and Timeline

To obtain a PhD degree, a minimum of 90 credit hours must be completed. At least one-third of the 90+ credits required for the PhD degree must be from Purdue University West Lafayette Campus, which may be either graded course hours or research credit hours. If a student has completed a master's degree, this minimum includes 24 graded course hours. If a student has not completed a master's degree and begins the PhD program with only a baccalaureate degree, this minimum includes 36 graded course hours. These minimum graded course hours must be listed on the student's Plan of Study. Courses should primarily be conducted at Purdue University but can include courses taken as a non-degree student, generated as a consequence of an uncompleted MS or PhD program, and/or as an undergraduate student at the graduate level and were in excess of degree requirements. Transfers of course credit hours, level of course credit hours which can count towards the Plan of Study and/or degree program, registration requirements, etc. shall adhere to the guidelines set forth in the OGSPS policies. All courses on the Plan of Study must be approved by the student's Advisory Committee. A minimum of 15 research credit hours is required.

If a student has completed a master's degree, a maximum of 30 credit hours taken to complete the master's degree also can be counted toward the 90-credit hour total with permission of the student's Advisory Committee members. The number of hours that count towards the 90-credit hour total is dependent on the number of credit hours completed in the master's degree (e.g., if the student completed 24 hours in their master's degree only 24 hours may count towards the 90-credit hour total). A PhD student will need to complete 24 graded course hours in addition to any courses transferred from a MS degree.

The PhD degree must be completed within eight calendar years from admission to the PhD program to the completion of the Final Examination. Extensions of this limit may be granted by the FNR Graduate Committee and/or Department Head upon recommendation and justification by the student's Advisory Committee.

Required Courses

PhD degree students are required to complete the following three courses:

- GRAD 61200 (Responsible Conduct of Research),
- FNR 50600 (Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming), and
- FNR 59000 (Introduction to Teaching Natural Resources).

Required courses must be listed on the student's Plan of Study.

Students who have previously earned a graduate degree from Purdue University where GRAD 61200 (Responsible Conduct of Research) was already completed as part of the Plan of Study are not required to repeat GRAD 61200. Graduate students who have previously earned a graduate degree from FNR are not required to take FNR 50600 (Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming) or FNR 59000 (Introduction to Teaching Natural Resources) again given they meet both requirements below:

1. The student has previously taken and received a passing grade in the course(s), and
2. The student's Advisory Committee deems the student has demonstrated sufficient proficiency and skills related to extension and/or teaching.

Exceptions or substitutions involving the above required courses can only be granted by the FNR Graduate Committee upon receipt of a written request from the graduate advisor for the student requesting the exception/substitution.

Additional Requirements

Advisory Committee

Every student in a degree program is required to select a graduate advisor (a.k.a. major professor) who acts as the chair of their Advisory Committee and who agrees to supervise the student's graduate study, research, and writing. The graduate advisor/student relationship must be mutually agreed upon.

Research expectations and semester evaluation

Every semester a student is enrolled in research credit hours (FNR 69900) the *Graduate Research Credit Expectations Agreement* Form must be completed and submitted to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist within the first two weeks of the semester. Additionally, every semester a student is enrolled, the *Graduate Student Semester Evaluation* Form must be completed and submitted to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist when the semester grades are due.

Proposal

Every student in a degree program is required to write a dissertation research proposal. The proposal should be presented to, discussed with, and approved by their Advisory Committee. The format and content of the proposal will vary depending upon each student's educational objectives and the direction given by each student's Advisory Committee. The *Research Proposal Evaluation* Form must be completed and submitted to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist.

Extension/Outreach

Students must 1) complete coursework (FNR 50600 - Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming), 2) develop an extension/outreach plan, and 3) produce a minimum of one deliverable. The outreach plan must include a defined target audience, clear learning objectives, and a suggestion of where and when their outreach and/or extension activity will occur. The specific deliverable(s) associated with each student's outreach and/or extension activities will vary depending upon each student's educational objectives and the direction given by each individual student's Advisory Committee. Examples of deliverables include, but are not limited to, numbered extension publications, non-technical publications, articles in popular magazines, newsletter, trade magazines, etc., posters, pamphlets, web content, social media, workshops for professional or public audiences, seminars for non-scientific audiences, and youth programming. The student will complete and submit the *Candidacy Extension/Outreach Evaluation* Form.

If a waiver for FNR 50600 (Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming) course was obtained, the student is still required to meet the other policy standards including an Advisory Committee review and approval of an extension/outreach plan, an extension/outreach deliverable, and completion of the *Candidacy Extension/Outreach Evaluation* Form. See Section 4.3 for procedure to obtain a waiver.

Presentation

As a graduate student in FNR, professional development is an important part of overall education. Participation in scientific and professional conferences is essential to both understanding the state of the field and building professional networks. PhD students must complete a presentation related to their field of study at a national or international conference. When the presentation is conducted this must be indicated on the *Graduate Student Semester Evaluation* Form by providing a citation.

To foster graduate student participation in scientific and professional conferences, FNR will provide (contingent on the annual availability of departmental funding) up to \$350 per student per year to cover approved travel expenses to attend one in-person conference or the fees to participate in up to two virtual conferences (not to exceed \$350 total). Graduate advisor approval is required. Required travel expenses and fees more than \$350 are intended to be covered by the faculty advisor's grant funding where available. Presentation of a scientific paper in oral or poster form by the student is strongly recommended as part of receiving this support.

Preliminary Examination

The objective of the Preliminary Examination is to evaluate the breadth and depth of a student's knowledge, to ascertain how well they can apply that knowledge, and to determine whether the examinee is qualified to progress to candidacy. The examination should be comprehensive in nature (i.e., the focus should not be exclusively on the student's area of research). The examinee must have filed an approved Plan of Study and have satisfied all or most of the Plan of Study coursework at the time of the examination. Additionally, the examination should be completed at least three academic semesters prior to the Final Examination (i.e., two semesters between the Preliminary and Final Exams).

The student should submit OGSPS *Form 8: Request for Appointment of Examining Committee* prior to the examination. The examining committee is comprised of the students' plan of study committee. All members of the committee are to be notified of the scheduled examination.

The examination can only be taken twice, but only once per semester (if failed, the preliminary examination may be taken the following semester). Except in cases of voluntary withdrawal from the committee by a member, the composition of the examining committee cannot be changed after a failed examination without the expressed, written permission of the FNR Graduate Committee Chair.

The examination must have a written and oral component. The written component:

- must be completed at least two weeks prior to oral component.
- need not be restricted to the subject matter of the dissertation research.
- must be completed within a seven-day period.
- must be promptly graded and returned to the student by members of the examining committee.

The student may be permitted to use outside materials to answer questions (at the discretion of the individual examiners). The student's graduate advisor may not limit or constrain the subject matter content of the questions submitted by the examining committee or in any manner alter the instructions to the student by members of the examining committee. The FNR form entitled *PhD Candidacy Preliminary Examination Evaluation – Written* needs to be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Specialist at the completion of the examination.

The oral examination:

- must not last more than two hours. Note, the meeting associated with the oral examination may last longer than two hours as the committee deliberates but the examination of the student may not last longer than two hours. If additional time is deemed necessary for the oral examination, the examination can be continued at a later date and time.
- need not be restricted to the subject matter of the dissertation research.
- can contain follow-up questions from the written examination.
- is open to all faculty on campus. Faculty not on the student's committee can participate as non-voting, *ad hoc* members of the examining committee.

The FNR form entitled *PhD Candidacy Preliminary Examination Evaluation – Oral* needs to be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Specialist at the completion of the examination.

Possible outcomes of the Preliminary Examination include:

1. Failure (student may be dismissed from graduate program)
2. Conditional failure (specified conditions must be met before examination is retaken)
3. Pass (student becomes a PhD candidate)

The Examination Committee determines if a student passes or fails the preliminary examination. This decision must be a majority approval. If the committee has four or more members, a single member may withhold their signature of approval. This decision will be submitted to the OGSPS by the examining committee via the OGSPS

Form 10: Report of the Preliminary Examination. If the student does not pass the examination, the Examination Committee determines if the student will have additional opportunities to pass the examination.

Dissertation

Each student must write and submit a dissertation following the requirements set forth by the student's Advisory Committee and the OGSPS including the OGSPS *Form 9: Thesis/Dissertation Acceptance*.

Article submission

All students admitted to the FNR PhD degree program are strongly encouraged (but not required) to submit an article to a journal for publication prior to the PhD Final Examination.

Final Examination

After research has been completed and the dissertation written and presented to the committee, a final oral examination must be held in which the candidate defends the dissertation and demonstrates to the examining committee the capabilities for which the PhD degree is to be awarded. At least two academic semesters must elapse between the Preliminary and Final Examinations. A Final Examination consists of a public seminar in conjunction with the defense of their dissertation. For successful completion of the Final Examination, a student must at minimum:

- Submit OGSPS *Form 8: Request for Appointment of Examining Committee* prior to the examination. The examining committee must be comprised of at least four members of the graduate faculty and may or may not be identical to the Advisory Committee, and 51% of the examining committee must have "Regular" graduate faculty certification.
- Register for candidacy (i.e., "CAND") during the semester this examination is taken.
- Adhere to all of the deadlines provided by the OGSPS and the FNR Graduate Committee.
- Present research in a forum open to the public. This seminar must be advertised to the Purdue University faculty and student body a minimum of two weeks in advance. (Consideration should be given for not having the oral presentation open to the public in cases where prior agreements with the research sponsor preclude the release of findings to the public for an agreed upon period of time or when prior review by the sponsor is specified in the funding agreement.)
- Defend research in an oral examination to the examining committee. The oral examination must not last more than two hours.

The Examination Committee determines if a student passes or fails the final exam. This decision will be submitted to the OGSPS by the examining committee via the OGSPS *Form 11: Report of the Final Examination*. Each member of the examining committee must indicate approval or disapproval and sign the form. No more than one dissenting vote is acceptable in certifying a candidate to receive the Ph.D. degree. If the student does not pass the Final Examination, the Examination Committee determines if the student will have additional opportunities to pass the examination. If permitted to redo, a candidate must wait at least until the following semester to repeat the Final Examination.

Candidacy

Students are required to register for candidacy during the semester they defend and/or complete their degree requirements. Details regarding candidacy registration can be found at the OGSPS website. Additionally, students are required to complete the following tasks:

- submit their CV/resume,
- FNR Placement Survey,
- OGSPS Exit Questionnaire and the Earned Doctorate Survey
- exit interview with department head,
- submit the *Graduate Student Check-out Form*.

Funding Length and Departmental Assistantship Extension Requests

If funding is available, students who receive departmental assistantships to pursue PhD degrees within FNR will be guaranteed three years of funding to complete their degrees.

If needed, the graduate advisor of a PhD student who is making satisfactory progress towards their degree may request a one-semester extension for a half-time, PhD-level departmental assistantship for the student. The request addressed to the FNR Graduate Committee must be in writing and must provide clear evidence (e.g., filed Plan of Study, passed preliminary examinations, manuscripts submitted, completed data collection) of satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree. The FNR Graduate Committee Chair may grant this request, pending budgetary approval by the Department Head. If FNR funding is provided the MS student will be a TA for the supported semester.

If needed, the graduate advisor of a PhD student who is making satisfactory progress toward their degree may request a second, one-semester extension for a half-time, PhD-level departmental assistantship for the student. The request addressed to the FNR Graduate Committee, and must provide clear evidence (e.g., filed Plan of Study, manuscripts submitted, data collection completed, pending dissertation defense) of satisfactory progress toward the completion of the PhD dissertation. Approval of the request will require evidence of satisfactory progress and availability of funds. The FNR Graduate Committee Chair may grant a well-justified request in part or, pending budgetary approval by the Department Head. If funds are limited, preference for a second, one-semester extension request for PhD students on departmental funding will be given to students who have served as a teaching assistant in FNR courses for two or more semesters and/or have been funded for one or more semesters on funds external to the department (e.g., grants, contracts, fellowships) during their tenure in our degree program.

If needed, the graduate advisor of a PhD student who is making satisfactory progress towards their degree may request a third, one-semester extension for a half-time, PhD-level departmental assistantship for the student. The request addressed to the FNR Graduate Committee must be in writing and indicate that the student made satisfactory progress toward the imminent completion of their PhD dissertation. This statement must be signed by the student's complete Advisory Committee with a clear indication of each member's agreement or disagreement with the statement. Approval of a request will require imminent degree completion and availability of funds. The FNR Graduate Committee Chair may grant a well-justified request in part or whole pending budgetary approval by the Department Head. If funds are limited, preference for a third, one-semester extension request for PhD students on departmental funding will be given to students who have served as a teaching assistant in FNR courses for two or more semesters and/or have been funded for one or more semesters on funds external to the department (e.g., grants, contracts, fellowships, etc.) during their tenure in our degree program.

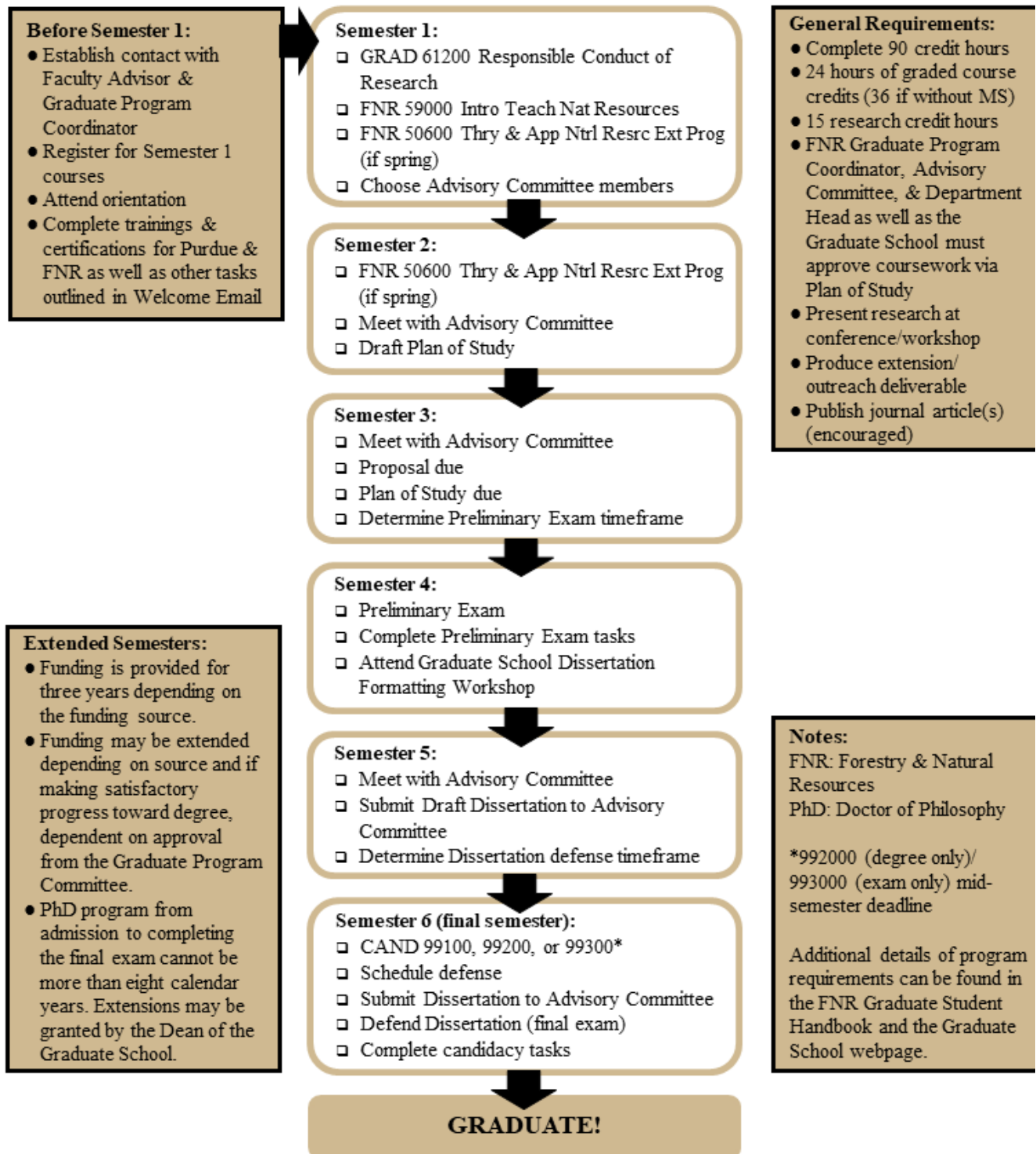
No additional extensions of departmental assistantships for PhD students will be granted unless the student meets the exceptions below.

Due to the extra coursework and mentoring required of students entering the PhD degree directly after completion of a Baccalaureate degree, special exceptions for a fourth, one-semester extension of departmental funding can, at the discretion of the Department Head, be made for such students. Recognizing that additional time may be required to complete the degree program of such students, it is expected that the advisors of these students will make every effort to obtain funds external to the department (e.g., grants, contracts, fellowships, etc.) to support at least a portion of the assistantship needs of the student. Evidence of such efforts or lack thereof will be considered when decisions regarding a fourth extension for such students are made. No accommodation for a fourth extension will be made for students who have completed an MS degree prior to entering the FNR PhD program.

Any MS student who has received funds from a departmental assistantship toward the completion of their degree from FNR must reapply for admission to the department if they wish to be considered for departmental funding to pursue a PhD in FNR. It is highly recommended that MS students complete a MS degree before applying to a PhD program in FNR. For any student that completes a MS degree in FNR and subsequently is selected to receive departmental funding to pursue a PhD in FNR, a maximum limit of 6 years of departmental funding will be allowed (pursuant to the criteria stated in this document regarding the period of funding and extension requests for MS and PhD students in FNR).

FNR Graduate Flowchart – PhD Degree

Assumes six semester graduation timeline



Updated 01/2023



Forestry and Natural Resources

Learning Outcomes for FNR Graduate Students – PhD Degree

Competencies:	Knowledge & Scholarship	Communication	Critical Thinking	Ethical & Responsible Research	Professionalism
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i>	<i>To identify and conduct original research, scholarship, and creative endeavors</i>	<i>To effectively communicate field of study</i>	<i>To think critically, creatively and solve problems in field of study</i>	<i>To conduct research in an ethical and responsible manner</i>	<i>To demonstrate attributes of professional development consistent with expectations within field of study</i>
24 Graded Course Credit Hours (minimum)*	NA	Attend and receive a passing grade in all courses taken	Attend and receive a passing grade in all courses taken	NA	Attend and receive a passing grade in all courses taken
15 PhD Research Credits (minimum)	Receive a grade of satisfactory on credits associated with the performance of research				
GRAD 61200 Responsible Conduct of Research	NA	NA	NA	Attend and receive a passing grade	Attend and receive a passing grade
FNR 50600 Theory and Application of Natural Resource Extension Programming	NA	Produce professional extension product(s) to be disseminated to the general public	NA	NA	Produce professional extension product(s) to be disseminated to the general public
FNR 59000 Introduction to Teaching Natural Resources	NA	Successfully prepare and deliver lecture or laboratory material to undergraduate or graduate students	NA	NA	Successfully prepare and deliver lecture or laboratory material to undergraduate or graduate students
Annual Meetings with Advisory Committee & Semester Meetings with Faculty Advisor(s)	Demonstrate acceptable progress towards research and <i>Plan of Study</i> requirements				
Develop Research Proposal	Successfully define and justify a set of research objectives	Successfully write and defend proposal in a meeting with Advisory Committee	Successfully define a set of research methods and analyses that will achieve the research objectives	Successfully detail on how research conforms to the standards for the responsible conduct of research	Successfully write and discuss proposal in a meeting with Advisory Committee
Written Preliminary Examination	Successfully demonstrate writing competency for PhD candidacy				
Oral Preliminary Examination	Successfully demonstrate oral competency for PhD candidacy				

Competencies:	Knowledge & Scholarship	Communication	Critical Thinking	Ethical & Responsible Research	Professionalism
<i>Learning Outcomes:</i>	<i>To identify and conduct original research, scholarship, and creative endeavors</i>	<i>To effectively communicate field of study</i>	<i>To think critically, creatively and solve problems in field of study</i>	<i>To conduct research in an ethical and responsible manner</i>	<i>To demonstrate attributes of professional development consistent with expectations within field of study</i>
Present Results of Research, Teaching, or Outreach Efforts at Appropriate Venue(s)	Successfully present to a professional audience				
Participate in the Annual Departmental Symposium	Develop and present an oral or poster presentation				
Attend Professional Workshop(s)	Attend a workshop associated with the development and conduct of research	Attend a workshop associated with effective oral or written communication in the classroom or to professional audiences	Attend a workshop associated with the development of critical thinking and/or problem-solving skills	Attend a workshop associated with one or more aspects of the responsible conduct of research	Attend a workshop associated with one or more aspects of professional development
Publish Results of Research, Teaching or Outreach Efforts in Appropriate Outlet(s) (optional)	Successfully publish a peer-reviewed article				
Exhibit Excellence in Teaching, Research or Outreach (optional)	Receive an award for research, teaching, or outreach activities				
Exhibit Evidence of Leadership Potential (optional)	Serve as a reviewer or editor for professional publications or as an external reviewer for funding agencies	Present research, teaching, or outreach materials as an invited speaker or in an invited scientific article	File a patent for activities associated with research activities performed	Present or publish materials associated with the responsible conduct of research	Serve as an officer or committee member in a professional society or other organizations related to field of study
Develop Dissertation	Successfully prepare a dissertation for submission to Advisory Committee for review				
Final Examination	Successfully defend a dissertation to Advisory Committee				

*A minimum of 24 graded credit hours is the minimum if already has an MS degree. A minimum of 36 graded course hours is needed without a master's degree.

Graduate Advisory Committees for MS and PhD Students

The student and the graduate advisor are responsible for the selection of an Advisory Committee. The duties of the Advisory Committee are to assist a student in the preparation of their Plan of Study and to offer advice to the student while in the graduate program. The committee consists of the graduate advisor and other members of the graduate faculty as defined by the OGSPS. MS students are required to have a minimum of three committee members while PhD students are required to have a minimum of four committee members.

Because it is crucial for Advisory Committee members to bring independent thought and decision-making to their Advisory Committee roles, the OGSPS strongly recommends that graduate advisors, graduate students, and other individuals involved in the Advisory Committee selection process strive to avoid appointments where there may be potential conflicts of interest. Advisory Committee appointments of spouses/partners, partners in business, or those with financial conflicts of interest connected to the graduate student, for example, should be carefully reviewed and alternatives considered.

Members of the committee need not be faculty with whom the student has taken coursework; however, at least 51% of the committee members must have “Regular” graduate faculty certification at Purdue University (see OGSPS definitions for “Regular” versus “Special” appointment). The Advisory Committee appointment request is made on the same OGSPS form and at the same time as the Plan of Study request for approval.

All students pursuing a graduate degree in FNR (non-thesis MS, MS, or PhD) must have at least one member of their Advisory Committee who is external to FNR. An external committee member can be defined as:

- an individual who does not have a majority appointment in FNR,
- an individual from another department at Purdue University, or
- any individual who is not employed by Purdue University.

When employed by FNR, Post-doctoral Researchers, Research Faculty, Administrative Professional Staff, or any other FNR employees do not qualify as external committee members under this policy.

All external committee members that do not have a “Regular” Graduate Faculty appointment must request a “Special” appointment as member of the Graduate Faculty to serve on the Advisory Committee. The OGSPS “Special” Faculty Appointment Request will be prepared by the FNR Graduate Program Specialist. Before the request can be completed, the graduate student will need to submit to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist: 1) a current CV of the person seeking the “Special” appointment and 2) a statement of rationale why the person is the best choice for the committee. If approved, the OGSPS will assign a graduate faculty identifier to the appointee.

When setting meetings for their Advisory Committees, note that most faculty are on 9-month academic-year appointments (from mid-August to early May). Therefore, every effort should be made to confine committee meetings, preliminary exams, and thesis defenses to the academic year. The only exception should be when it is urgent that students receive feedback on their research or complete their degree in the summer

Changes in the Advisory Committee

Changes to the Advisory Committee must be submitted electronically via the myPurdue portal. Each request for a change must be accompanied by a rationale and be signed by the student and each committee member whose status is affected by the request.

Cumulative Grade Index

Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average (GPA, i.e., grade index) drops below 3.0 (A= 4.0) will be notified in writing that they have one semester to re-establish a minimum 3.0 cumulative index. Note, academic standing is not addressed during the summer semester. Should they fail to improve their cumulative index to 3.0 during the probationary semester, they will be dropped from the graduate program. However, students who feel their case involves extenuating circumstances may appeal to the FNR Graduate Committee for

an additional semester on probation. A performance review (see Section 4.3) will then be conducted by the Graduate Committee. No further appeal will be allowed if the cumulative index has not reached 3.0 at the end of the second probationary period. Students on graduate assistantships will continue to receive support for the first probationary semester only. Once a graduate assistantship is terminated for any reason, there is no assurance of renewed support even if the student achieves the cumulative 3.0 index during the second probationary semester. If a student's cumulative GPA drops below 3.0 in their final semester, approval for graduation should go to the department head pending recommendation of FNR Graduate Committee.

The graduation index includes all grades earned in 500- and 600-level courses while enrolled as a graduate student, plus undergraduate-level courses approved on the Plan of Study (at the request of the graduate advisor). Neither 10000- nor 20000-level courses may appear on a Plan of Study. No more than a total of six 30000- or 40000-level course credit hours. Courses on the Plan of Study must be a passing grade (i.e., C- or better) with the exception of 30000- or 40000-level courses or transfer credits must be B- or better. Note, if the transfer credits are from an institution on quarters and not semesters, quarter credits are considered three-quarters of a semester credit (e.g., a four quarter hour course could transfer for three semester hours).

Graduate course credits earned while an undergraduate at Purdue University or other accredited institutions of higher learning may be applied toward an advanced degree if these credits are in excess of any requirements for the baccalaureate degree. Such credits must be certified as available for graduate credit by the institution from which the student received his/her baccalaureate degree, but will be accepted only if:

- the student had junior or senior standing when taking the course,
- the student received a grade of B or better (work taken under the pass/not-pass option is not acceptable),
- the course was designated as a graduate course.

Research Credit Hours

All thesis MS and PhD students are required to complete satisfactory research credit hours (FNR 698 or FNR 699, respectively). The student also is expected to earn "Satisfactory" (S) grades for research credit hours. For every semester that students are enrolled in research credit hours, they and their faculty advisors must complete the *Graduate Research Credit Expectations Agreement Form* and submit it to the FNR Graduate Program Specialist. This form details the tasks the student should complete to receive an S grade. Two consecutive semesters of "Unsatisfactory" (U) grades for research credit hours mandate that the department conduct a performance review (see Section 4.3) and inform the student and the OGSPS with regards to discontinuation or conditions for continuation of the student's graduate study.

Waivers and Performance Reviews

If a student or faculty advisor would like to waive one of the FNR program requirements outlined in this handbook, a formal request must be submitted to the FNR Graduate Committee. The request should be a letter written by their faculty advisor (and/or the student's Advisory Committee). The letter should be addressed to the Graduate Committee and provide the rationale as to why the student should be exempt from the requirement. The Graduate Committee will then review and vote to approve the request. The student and faculty advisor will then be notified of the decision.

If a student is on their second semester of probation or has received two Us for research credit hours, the student performance should be reviewed by the Graduate Committee. The student, faculty advisor, and/or the student's Advisory Committee will submit documentation of the student's performance to the Graduate Committee for review. The faculty advisor and/or the student's Advisory Committee should write a letter to the Graduate Committee outlining the student's performance and indicate their desired outcome regarding the student's status within the FNR degree program.

If a conflict of interest exists for a member of the Graduate Committee, they will not participate in the voting for either waiver decisions or performance reviews. A majority vote is required for waivers and performance review outcomes. In the case of a tie vote, the Department Head will be asked to review and vote. If an equitable decision cannot be determined for a performance review outcome, the Department Head as well as additional members of the FNR faculty may be included in deliberations. Additionally, the OGSPS may be contacted to provide advice to determine the most suitable outcome for all parties involved.

FNR Ombudsperson

Within the FNR Graduate Program, the Department Head, Graduate Committee Chair, and the Graduate Program Specialist may all act as an ombudsperson. Additionally, there is an FNR student ombudsperson. The student ombudsperson is selected through the FNR Graduate Student Council, and their nominee is submitted to the FNR Graduate Committee to confirm the nominee is in good academic and programmatic standing.

An ombudsperson is an informal, neutral, and, in most cases, confidential resource for new and continuing graduate students to raise questions or share concerns about any aspect of their graduate experiences. An ombudsperson is able to provide advice, inform students about university resources, make referrals, offer options, and seek explanations. However, the ombudsperson does not file formal complaints nor keep formal records of visits. An ombudsperson is unable to formally advocate for the students in university matters.

Note, university policy requires cases of alleged research misconduct be reported to the Research Integrity Office or the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research and Partnerships, depending upon the nature of the allegation. Likewise, they must report situations in which students and others are in imminent risk or danger. They are mandatory reporters of sexual harassment and sexual violence allegations regardless of service or assistance requested.

An ombudsperson's role is to hear reports of issues involving a graduate student as an objective third party, serve as a clearinghouse for information pertaining to possible options for addressing complaints, and facilitate communication between affected parties to attain a mutually acceptable resolution.

If the ombudsperson is contacted by a student with a complaint, the ombudsperson should:

- meet with complainant to garner a preliminary evaluation of the situation. At the initiation of the meeting, the complainant should be made aware that the ombudsperson is required to report any disclosure of alleged harassment or discrimination. If so disclosed, it must be reported to the Department Head and subsequently to the Office of Institutional Equity, Office of the Dean of Students, or Office of the Vice President for Ethics and Compliance.
- determine:
 - scope of the problem,
 - needs of the complainant (i.e., "What would you like me to do?") and potential courses of action (i.e., what options are available?), and
 - whether involvement from the Department Head or the FNR Graduate Committee Chair is needed (due to legal issues).
- inquire of the complainant what they consider the best way to proceed.
- make initial recommendations that outline a plan of action to address the problem.
- facilitate components of the plan of action (e.g., facilitate a meeting of student and Advisory Committee).
- schedule follow-up meetings to evaluate progress.
- request permission to expand the group of informed individuals if the plan of action is not working.

Student and Graduate Advisor Relationship

The interaction between a graduate student and their graduate advisor is one of the most important relationships at a university. Academic productivity, professional development, and attitudes towards oneself and others can be influenced, sometimes dramatically, by the status of relations between student and advisor. Creating and maintaining a positive student-advisor relationship is to be encouraged and valued by both parties.

There is no substitute for frequent, open dialog between students and advisors in establishing and maintaining good working relationships. On occasion, however, communication may falter, or other issues may impede programmatic progress and personal growth for either a student or an advisor. In those circumstances, an impartial third party (ombudsperson) may be needed to serve as a sounding board, a facilitator of dialog, or a/an mediator/arbitrator of acknowledged disputes.

FNR Stipend Levels for Funded Graduate Students

The following stipend levels apply for all funded graduate students pursuing the:

- MS degree should receive at a minimum, a stipend at the appropriate fiscal year (FY) (July 1 - June 30) rate for MS-level departmental assistantships, if they have completed an undergraduate degree at the bachelor's-level or higher.
- PhD degree should receive at a minimum, a stipend at the appropriate FY (July 1 - June 30) rate for PhD level departmental assistantships, if they have completed an undergraduate degree at the bachelor's-level or higher.
- Integrated Bachelor of Science and MS program, if receiving a stipend, must be paid at a minimum of the current FY (July 1 - June 30) departmental standard for MS students and stipends for these students cannot exceed the upper limits set by the OGSPS

All FNR graduate students who transfer from one degree program to another (MS to PhD or PhD to MS), while enrolled in a graduate degree program in FNR, will have their stipend level altered to reflect the appropriate FY (July 1 - June 30) departmental stipend rates for the new degree at the beginning of the semester subsequent to the official change in degree status, regardless of funding source.

Stipend levels can be set independently if funded by a fellowship provided as a consequence of special endowments (e.g., van Eck), Interdisciplinary Programs (e.g., Ecological Sciences and Engineering, Computational Interdisciplinary Graduate Program, PULSe), or which fall under the dictates of outside funding agencies (e.g., GAANN) for MS and PhD as long as they do not fall below the minimum levels provided for departmental assistantships for the same degree or exceed the upper limits set by the OGSPS. Supplementation of assistantship stipend levels from departmental or external funding sources will be allowed only within the context of current university policies and must be approved by the FNR Graduate Committee Chair and subsequently by the Department Head.

Any student supported by departmental stipend funds must be classified as a student in the FNR Graduate Program using the corresponding departmental code for admission and registration; and must adhere to all policies and procedures established by the FNR Graduate Committee.

Graduate Assistantship

Assistantships are offered to graduate students based on the employment needs of the department to fill both research and teaching needs. These assistantships provide graduate students with a half-time employment opportunity to earn a small salary and to have some specified portion of their tuition expenses covered. A graduate assistantship should be viewed as a half-time professional position that can facilitate and enhance a graduate student's overall educational experience.

Although they often can appear to be the same thing, being a graduate student pursuing a degree and being an employee holding a graduate teaching or research assistantship are separate responsibilities. The following section provides clarification on being a graduate student versus a graduate student employee. Additional

information regarding graduate student employment policies, payroll procedures, and benefits can be found in the Graduate Staff Employment Manual.

Funding for Graduate Research and Teaching Assistantships

Nearly all graduate students in FNR are supported by graduate research and/or teaching assistantships during their time in the program. Funds supporting graduate teaching and research assistantships come from different sources. The three primary funding sources in FNR are departmental, external, and endowment. Typically, the funding source dictates the required assistantship job duties. For example, funding for teaching assistantships will nearly always come from the department or university to support delivery of courses. Funding for research assistantships will most often come from outside research grants (i.e., external) that a faculty member has received to deliver specific research products for federal, state, or private organizations. Gifts or endowments from outside donors also can support graduate teaching or research assistantships depending on the wishes of the donor. Graduate students should know and understand the source of funding that supports their assistantship.

Graduate students cannot be paid to perform teaching functions as part of a research assistantship, and they cannot be paid to conduct research as part of a teaching assistantship.

Graduate Research Assistantships

The following provides the general guidelines for graduate research assistantships.

- Graduate students holding a half-time research assistantship are responsible for conducting research activities under the supervision of their graduate advisor for up to 20 hours/week.
- As the supervisor of the research assistantship, the graduate advisor may assign the graduate student employee any research-related duties within the 20 hours/week limit. The research duties assigned by the graduate advisor may or may not be related to the graduate student's thesis research. Most FNR graduate students are fortunate to have their assigned research assistantship duties align with their thesis research. However, this is not a requirement.
- The supervisor of the research assistantship and the graduate research assistant should have a clear understanding in writing about the duties that comprise the 20 hours/week job responsibilities. Clear weekly or monthly performance targets should be established for the research assistantship duties by the supervisor at the beginning of the semester, and job evaluations between the supervisor and graduate research assistant should be scheduled throughout the semester.
- Some confusion can arise when a graduate student's assigned research assistantship duties and thesis research are the same effort. It often can be difficult in these cases to distinguish between the graduate advisor serving as the employment supervisor of the 20 hours/week research assistantship duties, and as the graduate advisor providing advice to the student about completing their thesis research. Therefore, care should be taken by the graduate advisor to separate as clearly as possible the student's responsibilities under their 20 hour/week assistantship and what is being advised to advance the student's thesis research beyond the assistantship. When clear lines are not established, it is easy for the graduate advisor to inadvertently assign more work than the maximum 20 hours/week permitted under the research assistantship. For example, if an FNR graduate student has a half-time (20 hours/week) assistantship and is registered for six credit hours of FNR 69900, they may be expected by their graduate advisor to work 20 hours/week for the graduate research assistantship and another 18 to 30 hours for their FNR 69900 course. One credit hour of research generally involves about three to five hours of effort per week. Likewise, some activities that the student engages in as part of their research or educational goals outside of the 20 hours/week assistantship may not be directly supporting of the graduate advisor's research program (see Section 7.5).

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

The following provides the general guidelines for graduate teaching assistantships.

- Graduate students holding a teaching assistantship are responsible for conducting their teaching assistant duties under the supervision of the assigned course instructor(s) for up to 20 hours/week. A student's graduate advisor is generally not involved in supervising teaching duties unless they are also an instructor for the course.
- As the supervisor of the teaching assistantship, the course instructor(s) may assign any teaching-related duties that they choose within the 20 hours/week limit.
- The course instructor(s) and the graduate teaching assistant should have a clear understanding in writing about the duties that comprise the 20 hours/week job responsibilities. Clear weekly or monthly performance targets should be established for teaching assistant duties, and job evaluations between the course instructor(s) and graduate teaching assistant should be scheduled throughout the semester.
- At the end of every semester that a student holds a teaching assistantship, the *Graduate Teaching Assistant Evaluation Form* must be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Specialist when grades are due.

Simultaneously Holding Graduate Teaching and Research Assistantships

Depending on the funding source, some graduate students will only hold a research assistantship during their time in FNR. In some situations, a graduate student may simultaneously hold during one semester (or over successive semesters) a quarter-time (10 hours/week) teaching assistantship and a quarter-time (10 hours/week) research assistantship. In these cases, the student is expected to work 10 hours/week on teaching assistant duties and 10 hours/week on research assistant duties. However, the 10:10 time split does not necessarily need to be followed the same way every week. There may be weeks when teaching assistant duties dominate and weeks when research assistant duties dominate. As long as a total of 20 hours is not exceeded and on average 10 hours/week over the semester is spent on teaching assistant duties and 10 hours/week is spent on research assistant duties, the dual appointment is being delivered properly.

Graduate Student Activities Outside of an Assistantship

Outside of the 20 hours/week research or teaching assistantship obligations, graduate students are free to pursue whatever academic activities they wish to enhance their graduate education. These activities may include collaborations with faculty, staff, or other graduate students to pursue other lines of research, publish papers from previous work, pursue ideas and studies unrelated to their graduate advisor's lab, or any other activities the student believes enhances their education or career development.

Graduate students do not need permission from their graduate advisors to pursue activities that enhance their graduate education or career development. However, in pursuing these other academic activities, students are also responsible for ensuring that this additional activity does not interfere with their 20 hours/week research or teaching assistantship responsibilities, coursework, or progress on their thesis research. See Conflicts of Commitment link below for additional details. If outside activities become productive enough that a student wishes to have them contribute towards their FNR degree requirements, approval by their graduate advisor and Advisory Committee will be needed.

Although graduate assistantships require up to 20 hours/week of work, students should be aware that being a successful graduate student requires investing substantial time in completing their coursework and conducting their thesis research that extends far beyond the time demands of a teaching or research assistantship. This is time spent solely as a graduate student.

Students should be careful when accepting consulting fees or other paid jobs that this outside employment does not violate university policies related to their assistantship, or possibly any federal policies for international student visas they might hold. Any perceived or actual conflicts of interest or commitment between outside activities and the university need to be avoided as well. Students should always notify their graduate advisor about any outside employment or activities. Purdue University policy on Outside Activities is included in the Graduate Staff Employment Manual (p. 22):

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT, OTHER OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES, AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST Purdue employees may not engage in outside employment and other outside activities that would conflict with their University duties. Graduate student employees are required to file a Disclosure of and Application for Permission to Engage in a Reportable Outside Activity form before engaging in any reportable outside activities. Such outside activities include employment and connections with business enterprises, public offices, professional associations, educational institutions, and foundations (see the definition of a reportable outside activity in policy III.B.1.) In addition, graduate student employees are required to complete a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement for any business enterprise activities in which the employee expects to derive a profit from any University contract or purchase (see the definition of financial conflicts of interest in policy III.B.2). For additional information and the University's policies on these topics, refer to the following: 1. Individual Financial Conflicts of Interest (III.B.2) 2. Conflicts of Commitment and Reportable Outside Activities (III.B.1)

The link to the Reportable Outside Activity form and Responsible Conduct of Research is provided below.

As with any general guidelines, there may be situations where the above information does not provide sufficient guidance for a particular situation. In these cases, graduate students should work with their graduate advisor and if needed the FNR Department Head to get clarification on unique circumstances.

Some of the above issues will intersect with mentoring responsibilities by graduate advisors, required outside activities disclosures, and responsible conduct in research. The following links provide additional information on these issues:

- Mentoring and Reporting: <https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/academics/mentoring-reporting.html>
- Conflicts of Commitment and Reportable Outside Activities: <https://www.purdue.edu/policies/ethics/iiib1.html>
- Responsible Conduct of Research: <https://www.purdue.edu/policies/academic-research-affairs/s20.html>

FNR Program Requirements and Timing

Throughout program:

- Every semester
 - Start* – FNR Form: Research Credit Hours Expectations
 - End* – FNR Form: Graduate Student Semester Evaluation
- After TA appointment – FNR Form: Graduate Teaching Assistant Evaluation

OGSPS(GS) Plan of Study submission

- MS – end of second semester
- PhD – end of third semester

Proposal

- Completed at least one year prior to the semester of degree completion
- FNR Form: Research Proposal Evaluation
- Timing:
 - MS – within the first year
 - PhD – within the initial 1.5 years

Preliminary Examination (PhD only)

- Completed one year prior to the date of defense
- GS Form 8: Request for Appointment of Examining Committee (due one month prior to examination)
- GS Form 10: Report of the Preliminary Examination

Final Examination

- Register as CAND 99100, 99200, or 99300
- GS Form 8: Request for Appointment of Examining Committee (due one month prior to defense date)
- Create defense announcement flier (due 2.5 weeks prior to defense date)
- *GS Form 7: Report of Master's Examining Committee*
- *GS Form 11: Report of the PhD Final Examining Committee*
- GS Form 9: *Thesis/Dissertation Acceptance*
- Thesis/Dissertation formatting review and deposit

Program completion

- Graduate Student Check-out Form
- CV/Resume
- FNR Form: Candidacy Extension/Outreach Evaluation
- FNR Placement Survey (Qualtrics)
- GS Exit Questionnaire Certificate of Completion (completed prior to thesis/dissertation deposit date)
- GS Earned Doctorate Survey (PhD only; completed prior to thesis/dissertation deposit date)
- Register for commencement (must be completed mid-semester of the last semester)
- Exit interview with Department Head
- Thesis/Dissertation PDF submitted to FNR