



# NREM Graduate Student Handbook

Department of  
Natural Resource Ecology & Management  
2023-2024

Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Ferguson College of Agriculture

Oklahoma State University

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## Department Head Welcome Statement

Graduate school can be a challenging but rewarding experience. It is your opportunity to immerse yourself in the study of the organisms, habitats, and ecosystems that make natural resources so exciting. You will have opportunities to work on your individual projects as well as with other graduate students on their projects. This will broaden your background and will create life-long friends and colleagues.

A major role of the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management (NREM) is to provide advanced training and instruction to graduate students in the application of the scientific method to problems in natural resource ecology and management. It is a critical component of NREM's research, instruction, and extension missions and includes problem identification, application of research methods, data collection and analysis, synthesis of results, and communication of findings through publications and presentations. The Department strives to develop the capability of students for original and creative work under the guidance of established professionals and scientists.

NREM has graduate program specializations in fisheries and aquatic ecology, forest ecology and management, rangeland ecology and management, and wildlife ecology and management. We have an active extramural grant-funding program that provides financial assistance for graduate students. We emphasize independent research and will provide opportunities for you to attend national and international scientific meetings to present your research results.

Welcome to the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Oklahoma State University. Please feel free to contact me at [jim.ansley@okstate.edu](mailto:jim.ansley@okstate.edu), or Ms. Angela Bartlett at [angela.bartlett@okstate.edu](mailto:angela.bartlett@okstate.edu), or our Graduate Program Coordinator, Dr. Craig Davis, at [craig.a.davis@okstate.edu](mailto:craig.a.davis@okstate.edu) with any questions.



R. James Ansley  
Professor and Department Head

## Graduate Handbook Introduction

The Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from established Graduate College Policies noted in the Graduate Catalog, but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out. Graduate students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university. Visit the Graduate College website at <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/> where information about admissions, regulations, forms, and financial assistance are available. Specifically, visit the current student resources page (<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/student-resources.html>). The NREM Graduate Student Handbook will provide information that is specific to being an NREM graduate student.

The Graduate College is the gateway to graduate education at OSU and contact information is listed on their webpage. Applications are submitted to the Graduate College through an online process and when completed are directed to individual departments. A faculty member must agree to act as your advisor before you are admitted to the NREM graduate degree program. Letters of offer to the graduate program will come from the Department Head. For specific questions about the application process, please contact:

Dr. Craig A. Davis  
Graduate Program Coordinator  
405-744-6859  
[craig.a.davis@okstate.edu](mailto:craig.a.davis@okstate.edu)

Ms. Angela Bartlett  
Sr. Administrative Support Specialist  
405-744-5437  
[angela.bartlett@okstate.edu](mailto:angela.bartlett@okstate.edu)

## Responsibilities of Graduate Students

- Graduate students work with graduate faculty advisors and advisory committees to devise a plan of study that allows them to develop the expertise needed to excel in their chosen career field.
- Graduate students awarded a GTA/GRA 0.50 FTE assistantship will be eligible each semester to receive tuition waivers. This is contingent upon the student submitting the online GSSI Tuition Waiver agreement <https://grad.okstate.edu/register/tuitionwaiver> to the Graduate College by the deadline prior to the start of each semester, in which they acknowledge their employment and enrollment responsibilities associated with the benefit. Tuition waivers cannot be applied to outreach type courses (e.g., AG IDEA courses).
- Graduate students work toward completion of their degree in a timely manner. A student with a 0.50 FTE assistantship is expected to devote, on average, 20 hours per week to their duties as a graduate

teaching or research assistant; the remainder of academic effort is devoted to his/her own studies and research.

- Graduate students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional, ethical, and mature manner in accordance with the educational goals and regulations of the Graduate College and Oklahoma State University. Guiding principles include respecting the rights, privileges, and property of others.
- It is the responsibility of graduate students to be informed of the regulations and policies governing their graduate education at OSU.
- Graduate students will participate annually in a progress report with the chair of their graduate committee (i.e., major professor). Students must complete the annual review form and meet with their major professor to discuss their progress toward completing their degree by December 1 of each year. The form documenting the meeting must be signed by the graduate student advisee and major professor and be submitted to the NREM Graduate Coordinator by December 31 of each year. The progress report form is available on the NREM graduate programs webpage <https://agriculture.okstate.edu/departments-programs/natural-resource/graduate-programs/>.
- Many of the University regulations are time sensitive including the Plan of Study (POS), Comprehensive Exams, graduation clearance, etc. (discussed later). Students must meet these deadlines.

## **Responsibilities of Graduate Faculty**

- Provide the appropriate intellectual guidance and academic rigor required of graduate studies through their roles as teachers, researchers, mentors, and members of student advisory committees.
- Expect professional behavior and encourage participation in professional societies.
- Foster relationships with graduate students that are professional, supportive, and ethical, in accordance with OSU policies and the professional standards of the respective discipline.
- Serve on graduate student advisory committees without regard to religion, race, nationality, disability, gender, or sexual orientation/identity.
- Provide students with clear guidelines for performance standards and expectations in all courses and required elements of the degree. To promote mutual understanding between the faculty and student, these guidelines are provided in writing and discussed.
- Graduate Faculty following periodic evaluation, offer timely and constructive feedback to students regarding their performance and degree progress.
- Graduate faculty will at least meet annually with their student advisee. This report must be signed by the major professor and graduate student advisee, submitted to the NREM Graduate Coordinator by December 31 of each year. The Graduate Program Coordinator will compile a report to submit to the Graduate College by the required deadline each year.

## Admission Requirements and Application Procedure

The first step in planning for graduate school is to research the department and University to identify faculty members with similar interests to yours. Visit our webpage at <http://nrem.okstate.edu/> to learn about the department and to visit individual faculty web pages. We urge you to contact that faculty member (or multiple faculty members) to discuss their research program and to determine if funding is available. Once you have made an initial decision, then you should visit the campus to meet the faculty members and graduate students in the program. The most important thing you can do is select a faculty member, department, and University where you fit.

Admission to our graduate program is a two-step procedure. First, you must meet the admission criteria and be admitted to the Graduate College. Then, you must be admitted to the department, which may depend on funding availability from individual faculty members. A faculty member must agree to act as your advisor before you are admitted to the NREM graduate degree program. The admission criteria for the Graduate College are posted on their web page and listed in the on-line application program.

### **For admission in NREM, we require:**

1. University transcripts
2. Graduate Record Exam (GRE)
3. 3 letters of reference
4. a curriculum vitae
5. a statement of your interest in graduate school
6. Agreement with graduate faculty member to serve as advisor

After these are received, the Graduate College will forward your application to the department. The exception to these requirements is for the Grassland Management Graduate Certificate, which does not require the Graduate Record Exam.

Students accepted in the MS program are funded for at least 2 years and PhD students are funded for at least 4 years as a twelve-month GTA/GRA appointment, dependent on satisfactory progress and funding availability. Departmental funded GRA's are required to serve as a TA for one of our lab courses at least one semester each year. Each student will be evaluated by his or her major professor each semester and unsatisfactory performance will be reported to the Department Head. We will work with the student to bring performance to a satisfactory level, but it is the responsibility of the student to meet those expectations.

If, for any reason, a student wants to withdraw from the NREM graduate program, then the student must meet with the Department Head for an exit interview to review their program and their experiences in the department.

## Students: English as a Foreign Language

All persons for whom English is a second language are required to present proof of English competency. However, an applicant who has or will have completed a baccalaureate or graduate degree from a college or university where English is the primary teaching language, and which is located in a country where English is a primary language, is not required to submit a TOEFL or IELTS score.

If required, an official TOEFL score of 79 (internet-based test) or 550 (paper-based test) is required to be submitted. The TOEFL institution code for OSU is 6546.

Alternatively, an official IELTS, academic stream, examination with a minimum overall band score of 6.5 will satisfy the English proficiency requirements for admission to a graduate program. Either examination must have been taken within the last two years.

### Additional Course Requirements

Students who score at least 42 on the combined Reading and Listening portions of the internet based TOEFL, with a score of at least 20 in each section, are not required to enroll in any remedial coursework.

Students who score less than this on the Reading and Listening portions of the internet based TOEFL (irrespective of the score on the written portion) are required to enroll in ENGL 0003 during their first semester. ENGL 0003 carries a grade of S/U and may not be used toward minimum degree requirements. Students must enroll in ENGL 0003 each semester until a grade of S is earned.

Students who score at or above the minimum score(s) on the Reading and Listening portion of the internet based TOEFL, but less than 22 on the Writing portion, are required to enroll in ENGL 4893\* at some point in their studies. ENGL 4893\* carries graduate credit and may be used toward minimum degree requirements and a grade of B or better in this course is required. Both ENGL 0003 and ENGL 4893\*, as applicable, must be listed on the student's Plan of Study.

Students who have completed the IELTS or the paper based TOEFL have different requirements.

For additional information and the latest updates on the TOEFL, please visit <http://www.ets.org/toefl>

For additional information and the latest updates on the IELTS, please visit <http://www.ielts.org/>

### Financial Support

Most of our graduate students are supported through either Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) or Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA). The GRA is typically available through extramural funding although some departmental funding is available in select circumstances. The GTA is limited to our department and is typically for a single semester at a time. We use the GTA funding for students who specifically want to gain teaching experience. Our financial packages are competitive within Oklahoma State University and with peer institutions. Full details on the financial packet are included in your offer



letter from the department head. A confidential background check is required for employment as a GTA and GRA.

## Fellowships

Several competitive Distinguished Graduate Fellowships (DGF) are available through the Graduate College, Ferguson College of Agriculture (FCA), and the Department. Graduate College Fellowships can be found on Current Students Resources webpage of the Graduate College Website <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/student-resources.html>. A typical DGF provides an additional stipend of \$2,500 per year.

The Graduate College annually awards Williams Distinguished Graduate Fellowships to the Departments. NREM also awards Afanasiev DGF for MS and PhD students working in management of forest and woodland habitats. The general criteria for earning a DGF are based on grade point average, progress in your program, involvement in outreach or departmental activities, publications, and presentations at national meetings.

There are also several additional scholarships available including the Sally Jo Bible scholarship, the Jesse Burton Memorial Graduate Scholarship, and the Graduate Fisheries Scholarship. The criteria for each of these scholarships can be found on our webpage at <https://agriculture.okstate.edu/departments-programs/natural-resource/graduate-programs/>.

## Employment

A graduate research or graduate teaching assistantship is a half time 0.5 FTE position (approximately 20 hours per week). The work may, or may not, be directly related to your independent research program. Typically, a large part of your responsibility is to work on your project, but your major professor may also ask for help on other projects as well. Taking classes does not count as part of your workload.

Faculty members are usually flexible about time off, but you MUST contact them and arrange for vacations before you make final plans. Fieldwork and responsibilities in your program take precedence over vacations.

Graduate students have University holidays when the University is officially closed but do not have time off between semesters or on spring break. It is very important that you clear any vacation time with your major professor. You will generally not have enough time for outside employment after fulfilling the GRA or GTA responsibilities and taking classes.

## Student Health Insurance

Student Insurance is available to eligible students attending Oklahoma State University-Stillwater campus.

- The plan is provided by United Health Care.
- The plan is administered by OSU Human Resources, 106 Whitehurst, and (405) 744-5449.

**For more information on the student insurance plan please visit** United Health Care Student Resources.

## OSU Travel Policies

Travel policies and procedures at OSU are numerous and complex. The best way to make sure you are complying with the OSU regulations is to consult Ms. Terre Butler, Sr. Financial Assistant in NREM, **BEFORE** you travel. Ms. Butler's office hours are **Monday-Thursday; 8:00-4:30**. You may contact Ms. Butler by email at [terre.butler@okstate.edu](mailto:terre.butler@okstate.edu) or she can be reached by phone at 405-744-6342. Her office is located at 013A Ag Hall. It is very important that you adhere to OSU travel policies.

### Travel policies you need to know:

- **In-state (Oklahoma)** travel does not require a travel request. In-state travel reimbursement takes place after your travel has occurred. Please email or see Terre regarding your in-state travel reimbursement.
- **Out-of-state** travel requests **MUST** be submitted two weeks prior to traveling. Failure to submit a request prior to traveling out-of-state may result in non-reimbursement. If you are traveling out-of-state and all expenses are provided for you, a travel request must still be completed prior to your trip.
- **Out-of-Country** travel requests **MUST** be submitted four weeks prior to traveling.
- **Receipts** for all expenses to be claimed are required for reimbursement.

## Registration and Advising

### Types of Courses and Course Credit

Graduate level courses at OSU are typically either 5000 or 6000 level courses. In some instances, 4000 level courses can be used and they are designated with an asterisk (\*) in the course catalog and include a "G" section for graduate students. Courses are selected by the students and advisory committee to meet the specific interests of the student. The Graduate College has specific requirements. For example, no more than 9 hours of NREM 5030 can be used for fulfillment of coursework credit hours. The Graduate College section in the OSU catalog delineates the course credit information.

### Minimum Number of Hours Required for Full-time Status with and without Assistantships

Students, while on either a GTA or GRA, are required to take a minimum of six credit hours during the fall and spring semesters and two credit hours in the summer session. You can take up to a maximum of 12 credit hours in a given semester. These credit hours can include NREM 5000 (MS students) or NREM 6000 (PhD students) while you are conducting research. Students can take courses that are NOT included in their plan of study (previously, courses had to be on the plan, but this no longer true), but everything that is on plan MUST be completed.

When enrolled for graduate credit, while on either a GTA or GRA, out-of-state and in-state tuition is waived once a student has completed the online GSSI Tuition Waiver agreement <https://grad.okstate.edu/register/tuitionwaiver> but fees must still be paid.

PhD candidates (following successful completion of comprehensive, or preliminary, exams) are considered full-time status with enrollment of two credit hours.

Students not receiving a graduate assistantship (GRA or GTA) are required to enroll in five credit hours for full time student status.

## Selection of Advisor and/or Advisory Committee

You will not be accepted into the NREM Graduate Program without an NREM faculty member agreeing to be your major professor. The next step is to form an advisory committee and you should begin forming an advisory committee the first semester you are on campus. The purpose of the advisory committee is to support your research endeavors, help you select appropriate coursework, act as mentors during your graduate program, review your thesis/dissertation, and ensure high quality research and Extension programs.

You should plan on meeting with your committee in a formal setting at least once a year but should communicate with them on a one-to-one level throughout your program.

**For M.S. Students:** Your advisory committee must be comprised of at least three members; all may be within the NREM department. While your advisor is from NREM, your other committee members may either be from within or from outside the NREM department.

**For Ph.D. students:** Your advisory committee must be comprised of at least four members, one of whom must be from outside the NREM department (but must be currently employed by OSU). The Graduate College does not count Adjunct faculty as outside committee members.

## Degree requirements specific to the department or program

NREM offers Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degrees, and a Graduate Certificate in Grassland Management. The degrees are in Natural Resource Ecology and Management.

### Master of Science (MS)

There are two avenues to earn a MS degree in NREM:

1. Plan I – Students in this plan will complete a thesis reporting original research. Thirty (30) – 36 credit hours are required and are comprised of 24-30 credit hours of coursework, 1 credit of which must be NREM 5020 – Research and Presentation Seminar and six (6) credit hours of

satisfactory research hours (NREM 5000). A maximum of 36 credit hours can be waived through graduate research or teaching assistantships.

**For MS students, EXACTLY 6 credit hours of NREM 5000 are to be included on your Plan of Study.**

A research proposal must be accepted by the Advisory Committee and approval forms must be submitted prior to the completion of the second semester (excluding summer semesters).

2. Plan II – Students in this plan will complete a report of a current ecological or management issue. Thirty- two (32) credit hours are required - comprised of 29 credit hours of coursework, and 1 credit hour of NREM 5020-Research and Presentation Seminar, and 2 credit hours of satisfactory research hours.

A formal proposal is not required for the report, but the advisory committee must approve an outline of the report prior to the completion of the second semester (excluding summer semesters).

## Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

A PhD degree in NREM can be achieved through two approaches.

1. The typical approach to this degree requires a minimum of 60 and a maximum of 66 credit hours beyond the Master's degree. This includes a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 45 credit hours for NREM 6000, 1 credit hour of which must be NREM 5020 – Research and Presentation Seminar.
2. Ninety (90) credit hours past your Bachelor's degree with a minimum of 24 credit hours and a maximum of 48 credit hours of NREM 6000, and 1 credit hour of coursework of NREM 5020 - Research and Presentation Seminar.

A research proposal must be accepted by the Advisory Committee and approval forms must be submitted prior to the completion of the third semester (excluding summer semesters).

## Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

Admission to doctoral candidacy indicates agreement by the Dean of the Graduate College that the student has demonstrated the ability to do acceptable doctoral-level graduate work and satisfactory progress has been made toward that degree. Consideration for candidacy requires (1) a completed and approved Plan of Study on file with the Graduate College, (2) a dissertation proposal approved by the student's Graduate Advisory Committee, and (3) successful completion of both written and oral comprehensive (qualifying) examinations. A chart indicating the possible outcomes related to evaluation of the candidate's written and oral exams is shown below.

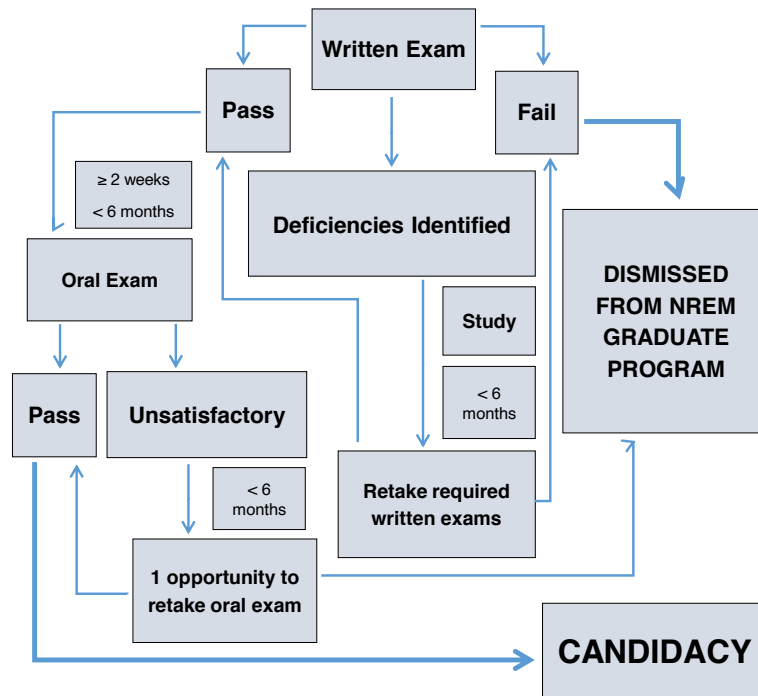
Ideally, students should complete the qualification exams and admission to candidacy process by the end of the second or third year of their doctoral program, depending on the expected time to degree.

A doctoral student must be admitted to candidacy no less than six months prior to graduation and must maintain continuous enrollment in every fall and spring semester until graduation.

Two graduate credit hours qualify as full-time enrollment for doctoral candidates.

Admission to doctoral candidacy is conferred with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College acting upon the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and departmental graduate program. To be considered for admission to doctoral candidacy, the student's Advisor (and co-Advisor, if applicable) must vote in the affirmative and no more than one member of the Advisory Committee may cast a dissenting vote on the Admission to Doctoral Candidacy Form.

### Candidacy Process



### Dissertation Requirement

A research proposal must be accepted by the Advisory Committee and approval forms must be submitted prior to the completion of the third semester (excluding summer semesters). A final dissertation requires the completion of an original research project that is worthy of publications in refereed journals.

## Graduate Certificate in Grassland Management

The Grassland Management Certificate program is a 12-credit hour graduate certificate offered completely online. This is a collaborative program with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Kansas State University, South Dakota State University, and Oklahoma State University. Details can be found at <https://go.okstate.edu/graduate-academics/programs/certificates/grassland-management.html>.

To enroll in the program, students will need to complete an application to the Graduate College, which requires an application fee and a copy of official transcripts. You must file a Plan of Study prior to graduation, and it should be done as early in the program as possible. To complete the Graduate Certificate, you need to also complete the graduate certificate form after you finish your coursework.

## Plan of Study

### M.S. Students

The original Plan of Study for the Master's degree must be submitted to the Graduate College prior to the end of your **second semester** (not including summer semester). You should develop the plan of study with your advisor using the online plan of study application:

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/student-resources.html>. The online submission requires approval by the advisory committee, NREM department, and the Graduate College for final approval.

For NREM Departmental approval, our department requires you to also submit a research proposal approved by your committee prior to the end of your **second semester** (not including summer semester). Submit the Proposal Acceptance form (provided by your advisor) to Angela Bartlett in NREM. Submit your Responsible Conduct of Research module from Institutional Review Board (IRB) and include 1 credit hour of NREM 5020 (Departmental Seminar: Research and Presentation) on your Plan of Study. Failure to file an accepted Plan of Study by the due date will result in the inability to enroll in further classes. Credit for all courses on a graduate Plan of Study must have been awarded within 7 years of completion of all degree requirements.

For MS students, EXACTLY 6 credit hours of NREM 5000 are to be included on your Plan of Study.

### Ph.D. Students

You should develop the plan of study with your advisor and submit your plan using the online plan of study application <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/student-resources.html>. The online submission requires approval by the advisory committee, NREM department, and then the Graduate College for final approval.

For NREM Departmental approval, our departmental requirements state that you must also submit a research proposal approved by your advisory committee. This form must be signed by your graduate committee and returned to Ms. Bartlett in NREM prior to the end of the third semester (excluding

summer sessions). The proposal acceptance form (provided by your advisor) is required to be completed before the department can accept your plan of study. You must also have completed the Responsible Conduct of Research module from Institutional Review Board (IRB) and include 1 credit hour of NREM 5020 (Departmental Seminar: Research and Presentation) on your Plan of Study.

The original Plan of Study must be submitted to the Graduate College prior to the end of the third semester (excluding summer sessions) of enrollment in the doctoral program. Failure to file an accepted Plan of Study by the due date will result in the inability to enroll in further classes. The plan must include all the acceptable graduate work that has been completed and all that will be taken for the degree. Courses used to earn a master's degree are not listed on the doctoral Plan of Study. Credit for all courses on a graduate Plan of Study must have been awarded within 10 years of completion of all degree requirements.

### **Excessive Hours**

Regulation Concerning Excessive Hours: All petitions for permission to enroll in credit hours that exceed those allowed under regulations of the University (See University Academic Regulations in the most recent OSU Catalog) shall be approved in writing by the student's Academic Advisor and the Dean of the College in which the student is matriculating, and then filed in the Office of the Registrar. Excessive hours are those that exceed 30-36 credit hours for MS and 60-66 credit hours for PhD students.

### **All Students**

All graduate students should meet with their Advisory Committee at least once a year until completion of the degree. If you have a conflict with one of your committee members, you should first contact your advisor. If the conflict happens to be with your advisor, you should speak to your committee members. If you feel that the conflict is continuing, arrange to speak with the Graduate Coordinator and/or the Department Head. They can assist you with conflicts or grievances.

### **Transfer Credits**

Master's students can take up to 9 credit hours of transfer credit from another accredited university but must have at least 21 credit hours from OSU. PhD students can also transfer nine credit hours and must have at least 51 credit hours at OSU on the 60-credit hour plan, or 81 credit hours on the 90-credit hour plan.

### **Coursework Selection**

The course work for each student is determined by the student conferring with their Graduate Committee. All graduate students are required to enroll in one credit hour of NREM 5020 Graduate Seminar: Research and Presentation during their graduate program and are encouraged to attend the seminar presentations regularly. There are no other departmental specific coursework requirements. Courses should be selected to best match the interests and goals of the student and provide the necessary depth to complete their research or Extension programs.

## Examinations

In addition to regular examinations in your courses, there are several specific exams in the degree programs in Natural Resource Ecology & Management. The most obvious exam is the thesis or dissertation defense. This exam is conducted at the conclusion of your program by the advisory committee. The defense is required to be preceded by a public seminar during either the NREM Graduate Seminar course or immediately preceding the defense.

Doctoral students must also complete comprehensive, or qualifying, exams consisting of both written and oral exams conducted by the advisory committee. Comprehensive exams are necessary to enter candidacy in the PhD program and must be completed at least 6 months prior to the final dissertation defense.

Since admission to candidacy may occur at various times related to the academic calendar, the student will need to be admitted to candidacy prior to the first day of Fall semester to be eligible to schedule their final defense and graduate in the Spring; prior to the first day of Spring for Summer; and, prior to the first day of Summer for Fall graduation.

## Doctoral Candidacy Enrollment Requirements

Doctoral students who have completed the requirements for admission to doctoral candidacy and had their “Admission to Doctoral Candidacy” form accepted by the Graduate College may enroll for a minimum of two credit hours and be considered full-time. This post-candidacy reduced enrollment option includes GTAs, GRAs, and international students. A student is normally expected to enroll primarily in research hours or in program-approved courses after being admitted to doctoral candidacy.

Continuous enrollment post-candidacy is required of all students. Enrollment of a minimum of at least two credit hours per semester is required for every semester of a student's candidacy (summer session excluded) until graduation. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that they meet this enrollment requirement.

Reduced continuous enrollment post-candidacy doctoral students are defined as “full-time” for purposes such as visa status, financial aid, and assistantship eligibility. Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment post-candidacy will be required to seek reinstatement to their doctoral program, which is not guaranteed. If reinstated, conditions and fees may apply. PhD students may be required to re-gain candidacy following reinstatement (successfully complete comprehensive or qualifying exams again). Grades of “withdraw” do not meet the continuous enrollment requirement.



## **NREM Graduate & Professional Student Government Organization (NREM GSO)**

The purpose of NREM-GSO is to advance the education of Natural Resource Ecology and Management graduate students at Oklahoma State University via unity, cooperation, and service.

- ❖ Bringing prominent scientists in for seminars
- ❖ Recreational activities (cookouts, camping trips)
- ❖ Presenting graduate student viewpoints to NREM faculty
- ❖ Hosting fundraisers
- ❖ Developing materials to enhance graduate student education

## **Standards, Problems, Dismissals and Appeals**

### **Graduate Student Annual Academic Progress Review**

In accordance with Graduate College general policy and the policy requiring that a graduate student be making satisfactory academic progress to hold an assistantship, the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management conducts an annual review of graduate students enrolled in a degree-seeking program. Additionally, an annual review helps the student progress through the graduate program by allowing timely identification of deficiencies, clarification of expectations for academic performance, and/or identification of opportunities for continued success. The Department and Graduate College use annual reviews to monitor student progress toward the degree and to determine funding of assistantships and awards for the upcoming academic year.

- Each enrolled degree-seeking graduate student must complete the Annual Review Form. The form is available on the NREM website: <http://nrem.okstate.edu/academics/graduate/graduate-department-forms> The annual review is an opportunity for the graduate student to receive feedback from their major advisor on their progress towards completion of their degree, overall performance as a student, and setting goals for completion of their degree.
- Students must meet with their advisor by December 5 and submit the signed annual review form by the end of December to Angela Bartlett in NREM.
- The Graduate Program Coordinator or Graduate Administrative Support Specialist places the signed original of the review in the student's file.
- In the case of unsatisfactory progress, the student must receive written documentation of the issues and expected remediation. Notification will be sent to the student before March 15. The Graduate Dean is copied on this correspondence.

### **Required Grade Point Average for Continuation in Program**

Students must maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and are subject to probation after receiving a letter grade of "C" in any course or receiving a "UR" in research. Research grades are reported as satisfactory

progress “SR” or unsatisfactory progress “UR” in thesis and dissertation hours. A grade of “UR” signifies that progress during that semester was not sufficient to allow the student to graduate in a timely manner. “UR” grades are considered failing and students can be on probation after one “UR” grade and dismissed after two “UR” grades. Programs are notified of students receiving a “C” grade or lower, and at the discretion of the dean of the Graduate College, one of four actions based on the student’s current semester performance and past academic history will be taken:

1. Program Departmental Notice. The program is notified and is encouraged to review the student's performance to determine if any program intervention is needed.
2. Academic Probation. If a student's overall GPA drops below a 3.0 or if a UR grade is earned, the dean of the Graduate College judges the student's overall academic performance so warrants then s/he is subject to being placed on academic probation. Probation will be removed at the end of the semester only after the student brings his or her cumulative GPA for courses eligible for graduate credit taken at OSU to 3.0 or greater, earns a SR grade, or completes all degree requirements, whichever comes first.
3. No further enrollment without Departmental Consent (NFEWDC).
  - a. If the student was admitted on academic probation and did not meet the requirements of this admission, or
  - b. If they have received two consecutive UR grades, or
  - c. If the student was on academic probation the previous semester, or
  - d. If the dean of the Graduate College believes the student's overall academic performance warrants program intervention, then the student is not permitted to enroll further without the consent of the program. To continue in the program, the student must submit a written petition to the dean of the Graduate College requesting reinstatement and outlining a plan to remedy the academic situation. This petition must be accompanied by a letter of support from the department head or graduate program coordinator. Failure to submit such a reinstatement petition could result in the canceling of any pre-enrollment for the upcoming semester.
4. No Further Enrollment (NFE). The student has consistently performed below the acceptable standards for graduate students. The student is not permitted to continue graduate study at OSU.

Following receipt of NFEWDC, in order for the student to continue in the program, they must submit a written petition to the dean of the Graduate College requesting reinstatement and outlining a plan to remedy the academic situation. This petition must be accompanied by a letter of support from the department/unit head or graduate program coordinator. Failure to submit such a reinstatement petition will result in the canceling of any pre-enrollment for the upcoming semester.

## Filing a Leave of Absence

All students are expected to exhibit satisfactory progress in their programs. However, students may experience health or other personal issues that may necessitate the student applying for a leave of absence to temporarily halt their graduate program. You can request up to a 1-year leave of absence where you will not be receiving any stipend or performing any graduate work. At the end of the leave of absence, you will return to the Graduate Program. During the time away, the student still maintains contact with their major advisor and develops a plan when the student returns to the graduate program. If the student leaves the university without requesting a leave of absence, they will need to re-apply to Graduate College and admission will be contingent upon funding and availability of your major professor. If reinstated, conditions and fees may apply. PhD students may be required to re-gain candidacy following reinstatement (successfully complete comprehensive or qualifying exams again).

If a student is dismissed due to unsatisfactory progress in their programs, they are entitled to an appeal. Please see: [https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/sites/default/files/appeals\\_policy.pdf](https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/sites/default/files/appeals_policy.pdf) for details.

## Hazardous Materials, IRB and Quarterly Safety Training

There are several requirements for training that are mandated either by the University or by the State of Oklahoma. These training sessions must be completed by all graduate students.

1. Within 30 days of employment, you must complete Hazardous Communication/Right to Know Training, which is required for all OSU employees. This is an on-line module available through Environmental Health and Safety (<http://cs.okstate.edu/safety/Training.htm>). When completed, either print a copy or send a screenshot via email to Ms. Melissa Dunn ([melissa.dunn@okstate.edu](mailto:melissa.dunn@okstate.edu)).
2. Within your first semester, you must complete the Responsible Conduct of Research module from Institutional Review Board (IRB). This is also an on-line module.
3. Quarterly safety training sessions are required by the State and are typically conducted on-line. The departmental safety officer will send a reminder e-mail to all employees each quarter with training session and the completed materials must be submitted to Ms. Angela Bartlett.

Failure to complete any of these training sessions can be grounds for dismissal. When quarterly safety training is not completed, travel (and travel reimbursement) will be restricted.

## Terms of Probation

The terms of probation and dismissal are listed in the OSU catalog for the Graduate College. The appeals process is also clearly delineated in the catalog.

## Academic Misconduct/Dishonesty

Although it is not typically a problem in graduate studies, Oklahoma State University has a strict policy regarding Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty. The official University policy and procedures can be read at ([http://www.okstate.edu/osu\\_policies/2-0822.html](http://www.okstate.edu/osu_policies/2-0822.html)).

## Appeals Process

The Graduate College has established an appeals process in case any graduate student feels they have been unfairly targeted in their program. Hopefully, this will not happen, but your first action should be to contact the Graduate Program Coordinator or the Department Head. If you contact the Graduate Program Coordinator, they will contact the Department Head. We will make every effort to rectify the situation at the departmental level. If that does satisfactorily address the issue, the University appeals procedure can be found at <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/content/appeals-policy>.

## NOTES

## Summary of Procedure for Master's Degree

| Procedure   | Time  |
|---|---|
| Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Requirements and report completion to graduate program office and NREM office (Angela Bartlett).   | Required for departmental acceptance of Plan of Study.  |
| Form advisory committee.  | As early in the research phase as possible.   |
| Develop thesis research /report plan with assistance of advisory committee.   | As early in the research phase as possible; prior to departmental acceptance of Plan of Study.  |
| Write research proposal/report plan and receive acceptance from advisory committee. Submit Research Proposal acceptance form to NREM office (Angela Bartlett).  | Prior to the end of the second semester (excluding summer sessions) of enrollment. Required for departmental acceptance of Plan of Study. |
| Submit an online Plan of Study* and Proposal Acceptance Form with the assistance of advisory committee.   | Prior to the end of the second semester (excluding summer sessions) of enrollment.  |
| Complete major portion of course work.  |   |
| Verify accuracy of Plan of Study on file and revise if necessary. Secure Adviser, committee, and graduate program approval for any necessary changes.   | Within the first two weeks of the semester or summer session in which degree is to be conferred.  |
| Complete Graduation Clearance Form* (Graduate College) and Diploma Application (Registrar). Follow guidelines given on the Graduation Clearance Form carefully.   | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.  |
| Attend a workshop or watch online tutorial by the Graduate College.   | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.  |
| Schedule the thesis/report defense.   | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.  |
| Submit a copy of the thesis/report to each committee member to review. The format must follow recommendations in the Graduate College Thesis Manual; however, the style is to be determined by the advisory committee.  | At least two weeks prior to the defense of the thesis.  |
| Defend your thesis/report.<br>The Graduate College should be notified of the results by submitting the Result of Final Examination* form immediately following conclusion of the examination.   | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.  |
| Make any changes in thesis required by advisory committee. Advisory committee members will sign two copies of the approval page. Submit approval page and one copy of the abstract to the Graduate College. The Graduate College makes the final decision on acceptance of the thesis. Submit the electronic thesis online. | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.  |
| Rent or buy cap, gown, and hood at Student Union Bookstore and attend Graduate Commencement.  | See Graduate College Calendar for date of Graduate Commencement.  |

\*denotes form available at <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/forms>

## Summary of Procedure for Doctoral Degree

| Procedure   | Time   |
|---|--|
| Complete Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Requirements and report completion to graduate program office and NREM office (Angela Bartlett).   | Required for departmental acceptance of Plan of Study.   |
| Form advisory committee.  | As early in the research phase as possible.  |
| Develop dissertation research plan with assistance of advisory committee.   | As early in the research phase as possible; prior to departmental acceptance of Plan of Study.   |
| Write research proposal and receive acceptance from advisory committee. Submit Research Proposal acceptance form to NREM office (Angela Bartlett).  | Prior to the end of the third semester (excluding summer sessions) of enrollment. Required for departmental acceptance of Plan of Study. |
| Submit an online Plan of Study* and Proposal Acceptance Form with the assistance of advisory committee.   | Prior to the end of the third semester (excluding summer sessions) of enrollment.  |
| Complete major portion of course work.  |  |
| Successfully complete written and oral qualifying (preliminary) exams and submit Admission to Doctoral Candidacy Form* to the Graduate College.   | At least six months prior to dissertation defense.   |
| Verify accuracy of Plan of Study on file and revise if necessary. Secure Adviser, committee, and graduate program approval for any necessary changes.   | Within the first two weeks of the semester or summer session in which degree is to be conferred.   |
| Complete Graduation Clearance Form* (Graduate College) and Diploma Application (Registrar). Follow guidelines given on the Graduation Clearance Form carefully.   | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.   |
| Attend a workshop or watch online tutorial by the Graduate College.   | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.   |
| Schedule the dissertation defense.  | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.   |
| Submit a copy of the dissertation to each committee member to review. The format must follow recommendations in the Graduate College Thesis Manual; however, the style is to be determined by the advisory committee.   | At least two weeks prior to the defense of the thesis.   |
| Defend your dissertation.<br>The Graduate College should be notified of the results by submitting the Result of Final Examination* form immediately following conclusion of the examination.  | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.   |
| Make any changes in thesis required by advisory committee. Advisory committee members will sign two copies of the approval page. Submit approval page and one copy of the abstract to the Graduate College. The Graduate College makes the final decision on acceptance of the thesis. Submit the electronic thesis online. | See Graduate College Calendar for deadlines.   |
| Rent or buy cap, gown, and hood at Student Union Bookstore and attend Graduate Commencement.  | See Graduate College Calendar for date of Graduate Commencement.   |

\*denotes form available at <http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/forms>

# Appendices

## Pertinent Graduate Student Web Pages

Council of Graduate Schools

<http://www.cgsnet.org/>

- Best Practices in Teaching

<http://itle.okstate.edu/>

- International Student Services

<http://iss.okstate.edu/>

- Counseling Center

<http://ucs.okstate.edu/>

- Graduate College

<http://gradcollege.okstate.edu/>

- Graduate Catalog

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/graduate-college-academic-calendar>

- Research Compliance/Research with Human Subjects

<https://research.okstate.edu/research-compliance/irb/>

<https://research.okstate.edu/faculty-resources/research-compliance-overview.html>

- Thesis/Dissertation Website

<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/student-resources.html>

- Library Website for Graduate Students

[https://okstate-stillwater.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01OKSTATESTILL\\_OKSTAT:OKSTAT&lang=en](https://okstate-stillwater.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01OKSTATESTILL_OKSTAT:OKSTAT&lang=en)

## Forms and Additional Resources

Available on Graduate College Website

- Graduate Student Deadline Dates
- Doctoral Committee Appointment Form
- Admission to Candidacy Application – Doctoral Degree
- Scheduling Defense of Dissertation Form

Timely announcements of various events and activities is posted on the Graduate College Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/OKStateGraduateCollege>

For all questions regarding Graduate College policies and procedures, check the OSU Catalog or contact the Graduate College.