

**Graduate Program Requirements
&
Graduate Advising
Department of Agriculture
Revised, August 2007**

The following systematic advising protocol will be provided to graduate students entering the Master of Science in Agriculture at SFA:

1. Admission:

All graduate student applications for in the Department of Agriculture will be reviewed by the Graduate Advisor and the Department Chair. Appropriate graduate entry-level recommendations will be assessed and returned to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Admission Classification:

- Clear Admission 2.8 overall GPA
- Probationary Admission 2.5 to 2.8 overall GPA
- Other considerations: If overall GPA is <2.5 consider GRE or work experience
- GRE not required, considered only as alternative admission criteria

2. Major Professor & Graduate Committee:

Following acceptance from the graduate school, a Major Professor will be assigned by the Department Chair or Graduate Advisor. This assignment will be based on the student's needs and interest. Faculty who have grant funds are encouraged to recruit or select a graduate student to work with them. The assigned Major Professor and student should work together to select a graduate committee. The graduate committee should consist of at least 3 graduate faculty members including the major professor. A fourth graduate faculty member will be added from the department in which the student is declaring a minor or taking significant course work.

3. Degree Plan & Graduate Committee Meeting:

Within one semester of the beginning graduate course work (9-12 hours), the student and Major Professor will complete the Degree Plan form (the admission to Candidacy and Degree Plan are combined into one form). Prior to the completion of the Degree Plan, a graduate student may be released for poor performance or unsatisfactory progress. The graduate committee should meet to consider the Degree Plan. Deficiencies should be identified (an oral or written exam may be a part of that diagnostic process) and steps taken to address deficiencies. Before a Degree plan can be approved, the student must have:

- Completed a graduate degree plan (see Degree Plan Requirements)
- Attained a B average on all work at SFA in the major and overall
- If applicable, obtained approval of the thesis proposal
- Removed all prerequisites to admission imposed by the Departmental graduate advisor

- Obtained a positive recommendation from the Graduate Committee

4. Degree Plan Requirements:

- a. A minimum of 18 hrs with an Ag prefix on 30 hour option (includes thesis)
- b. A minimum of 21 hrs with an Ag Prefix on 36 hour option (non-thesis)
- c. In special circumstances where student additional flexibility to meet professional goals the minimum Ag hours specified above may be reduced by 3 hours.
- d. Graduate Assistants are expected to take thesis option unless other arrangements are agreed to at the beginning of the graduate program or at the time of appointment to assistantship.
- e. Course Work Requirements:
 - 1) A minimum of 3 hours dealing with statistics selected from:
 - FOR 517 Biometrics, required of all thesis option students, (fall only)
 - MTH 520 Statistical Analysis I
 - AGR 530 Interdisciplinary Research (spring or summer even years)
 - Other courses related to statistics may be substituted with the approval of the Department Chair or the Departmental Graduate Advisor
 - 2) Ag Core. A minimum of 15 hrs on 36 hour option or 12 hours on 30 hour option selected from:
 - AEC 542 Agricultural Policy, Thompson, Fall Odd Years
 - HRT 514 Advanced Horticulture Crop Production, Adkins, Fall Odd Years
 - ANS 502 Physiology of Growth and Stress in Livestock, Brown, Sp Odd Years
 - HRT 518 Public Garden Management, Creech, Spring Odd Years
 - AGN 508 Soil Plant Relationships, Young, Spring, Even Years
 - ANS 501 Advanced Nutrition, Brown, Spring Even Years
 - AGR 531 Advanced Agricultural Waste Management, Young, Fall Even Years
 - AGR 530 Interdisciplinary Research, Adkins, usually once per year.
 - AGR 500 Technical Seminar (1 cr. hr.,) Brown Spring every year
 - Note, the semester in which a course is taught may change, but the Department will attempt to stay with the schedule shown. (Updated February 27, 2009)
 - 3) At least 1 hr from AGR 500 (spring only)
 - 4) A maximum of two 575's (AGR 575, Advanced Graduate Studies sometimes called Special Problems). Each must be with a different professor and should not deal with thesis related topics except when a student changes from thesis to non-thesis option.
 - 5) Additional hours of 500 level course work may be selected from dual level courses that are offered for both undergraduate and graduate credit or from 400G courses. **Graduate students who have taken these courses as undergraduates cannot receive graduate credit by re-taking them for their graduate program.** The University system does not currently have a system to check for this duplication. As it stands now, it is up to students and the professors teaching the course to be sure that this duplication does not occur. **Graduate Students enrolled in these**

courses (dual credit 500 level or 400G) are expected to do extra work and or study that is of a graduate level quality.

5. Thesis proposals:

Proposals will not be signed by the Department Chair or Graduate Advisor without the review and approval of the thesis committee. *Post hoc* (writing the proposal after the research has been completed) approvals are not acceptable. The Thesis Proposal must be approved before registering for AGR 590, Thesis Writing. Thesis proposals should follow the guidelines of the graduate office.

Graduate students must see their Major Professor each semester for academic advising and to have an advising hold removed.

6. Final Exam: Non-Thesis students will take a **written and oral final exam.**

Students on Thesis Option will not take a written final and will follow the procedures outlined by the Graduate Dean for thesis approval and scheduling of final oral exam and thesis defense.

7. Final Written Exam For Non-Thesis Candidates:

- a. Approximately one month prior to the final oral comprehensive exam, each Graduate Committee member will make arrangements with the graduate student for a final written exam.
- b. Each Graduate Committee member will determine the conditions under which the student will take the written exam (proctored or not, resource material available or not, other considerations) **and** will be responsible for seeing their portion of the exam is carried out as per their instructions. At the completion of the written exam, the student will make an appointment with each Committee member to review their portion of the written exam.
- c. A copy of questions should also be provided to other Committee members.
- d. The Committee member will review the written exam with the student pointing out areas which need further work.
- e. These deficient areas may form the initial questions on the Final Oral exam

8. Final Oral Exam: A date, time, and location for the Final Oral Exam will be set in conjunction with the beginning of the Written Exam. Initial questions for the Oral may be follow-up questions from the written exam as each Committee member has discussed with the student at the conclusion of the written phase. The Committee member may expand the specific topics for the Final Oral at the meeting with the student. The Final Oral will also include questions from all Committee members regarding **ALL** of the students graduate course work including courses taken from faculty not on the Committee.

9. Exit questionnaire:

An Exit questionnaire will be completed by the graduate student concerning perceived strengths and weaknesses of the student's course of graduate study. The Department Chair will provide this questionnaire and keep the completed version.

10. Duties of Major Professors:

Timely advising to all graduate agriculture majors regarding:

- a. Major requirements
- b. Thesis option and Non-thesis option
- c. Graduate Assistantship responsibilities (where applicable)
- d. Sequencing of courses
- e. Appropriate credit hour loads
- f. Assistance in registration
- g. Degree plans
- h. Graduation requirements
- i. Final Written and Oral exam
- j. Thesis research and writing
- k. Thesis exam
- l. Job search and resume development

* updated October 2008