

NRES  
GRADUATE  
STUDENT  
HANDBOOK

FALL 2009

## WELCOME

Welcome to the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences. Graduate education is fundamentally important to your Department, for this is a means of building leaders whose impact will help define the future. You will study under faculty recognized nationally or internationally for their expertise, at a University that offers an abundance of resources to support your research and academic pursuits, including some of the finest library resources available within the U.S., a wide array of laboratory and field facilities, and opportunities for cross-disciplinary training and collaboration. We hope you will make use of these resources as you progress through your graduate program.

As graduate students, you are in the Graduate College and are governed by its policies and procedures. All tenure track faculty and some adjunct faculty/researchers are members of the Graduate Faculty of the Graduate College. You, the department, its faculty, and its undergraduate students are also members of the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES). All Colleges, Schools, and Units are under the directives put forth by the 'campus,' namely the Provost's Office, the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information concerning departmental policies, timelines, and guidelines for the progression through your program of study. The handbook is also designed to facilitate mutual understanding between students and faculty. This manual is intended to supplement the following items:

- A Handbook for Graduate Students and Advisers (The Graduate College), <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/gradhandbook/index.asp>
- Academic Staff Handbook, <http://www.ahr.uiuc.edu/ahrhandbook/default.htm>
- The current GEO contract, <http://www.ahr.uiuc.edu/Grads/index.htm>
- University of Illinois Programs of Study, 2009-2010 and the University of Illinois Courses Catalog, <http://courses.illinois.edu/>
- Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students, <http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/>

We hope your graduate experience is rewarding, and encourage you during and after your graduate program of study, to direct any questions to the NRES Student Services Center, N-509 Turner Hall, (217) 333-5824, or to the Graduate College, 204 Coble Hall, (217) 333-0035. Below are the key contacts for the NRES Graduate Program:

- Jeff Brawn, NRES Department Head, (217) 333-2770, [jbrawn@illinois.edu](mailto:jbrawn@illinois.edu)
- Michelle Wander, NRES Graduate Coordinator, (217) 333-9471, [mwander@illinois.edu](mailto:mwander@illinois.edu)
- NRES Student Services Center (Karen Claus or Piper Hodson), (217) 333-5824, [nres-ssc@illinos.edu](mailto:nres-ssc@illinos.edu)

\*\*Students first enrolled in fall 2009 or later will be held to the requirements of this handbook for graduation.

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## **THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES) is a broad and diverse department offering a wide range of options for graduate study, leading to both M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. The mission of the department is to establish and implement research and educational programs that enhance environmental stewardship in the management and use of natural, agricultural, and urban systems in a socially responsible manner. Composed of approximately 30 faculty, 60 adjunct professors and affiliates, and 150 graduate students with a large supporting staff. The department includes the following specialization areas of research and teaching: agronomy/agroecology; ecology; ecosystem science; fish and wildlife; forest resources and management; global environmental change; human dimensions of natural resources and ecology; landscape ecology, microbial ecosystems; plant ecology, physiology, and genetics; quantitative and spatial methods; restoration ecology; soil science and conservation; sustainability; and water/biogeochemistry.

In addition to departmental faculty, NRES offers students the opportunity to work with a wide range of affiliates who are housed in the Illinois Natural History Survey, the Illinois State Geological Survey, the Morton Arboretum, or one of several other related agencies. Many areas of our research are interdisciplinary across departments or include one or more areas of specialization. Graduate study in NRES involves developing an expertise through course work and research experience in one or more of these disciplines and using this knowledge to address and to solve problems.

Well-equipped laboratory and greenhouse facilities are available for each field of specialization within the department, complemented by nearby experimental farms and natural areas. NRES faculty located primarily in Turner Hall. The Main Office, Department Head's Office, Business Office, Human Resources Office, and Student Services Center are all located on the fifth floor of Turner Hall. Many of the faculty are in Turner Hall on the fifth and second floors. Faculty also have laboratories and offices in the Edward Robert Madigan Laboratory, the National Soybean Research Center and other buildings.

### **Departmental Organization**

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has duties and responsibilities for teaching, research, and extension. **Teaching** undergraduate and graduate students and preparing them to effectively assume leadership roles within the various professions of NRES is a primary responsibility. **Research** programs within the department are primarily designed to generate information needed by the public or private sector for solving environmental problems, but are often equally critical in providing students the research experience that ultimately determines the direction of their thesis or dissertation. Many of these research efforts are applied in nature, while may be designed to discover more fundamental information needed to further advance applied technology. Within the department, there are outreach programs to assist the public in applying new technologies generated through research. Each of the faculty, whether department, adjunct, or affiliate, has responsibilities in instruction, research and/or outreach, and most of them have responsibilities in more than one area.

## **GRADUATE EDUCATION - What Is It?**

Graduate education provides the opportunity to gain a deeper knowledge of your subject area than was possible as an undergraduate. It also further socializes you to the academic, research, and professional culture of your field of study. Your graduate education is that relatively short period of transition, as you become a teacher, researcher, extension specialist, consultant, or other related professional. As a graduate student, you have opportunities for activities and experimentation that are unlikely to recur.

You alone can decide on the extent and quality of the educational and research experience gained from your graduate program. Your initiative, more than anything else, will dictate how much you will learn and how far and in what direction this training will take you. Unlike undergraduate studies, the graduate program is not based entirely on the ability of the student to earn good grades in organized course work. You are expected to develop some appreciation for the broad field of NRES, and this will be accomplished through attending seminars, talking with faculty and graduate students who work in other specialties and working closely with the faculty, staff, and other graduate students who work on research related to your interests. You will find many exciting things going on within the department; keep your eyes open and become involved. What you get out of this experience in terms of preparation for a stimulating professional career will largely be determined by what you put into it. Always keep in mind that you can never really know what experiences will be valuable in the future. Consequently, the more complete and varied these experiences are, the better trained and qualified you will be.

The schedule of course work you will complete is developed by you and your Guidance Committee, rather than being specifically prescribed. Talk with your advisor and committee about your interests and career goals as you prepare your plan of study so that they can provide you the best advice possible on the courses you should take. Remember that a vital part of your graduate education is developing and conducting your research program. Bear in mind that as you proceed through your program of study and related activities, all of your interactions with others, particularly with your advisor and committee, are influencing your future letters of recommendation. The strength of these recommendations will depend upon you.

Each graduate student will typically specialize in a single area of academic research, but most faculty members have discipline training and backgrounds that enable them to provide guidance in more than one specific area. Students are encouraged to get to know and seek technical help from as many of the faculty as possible, whatever their specific area of interest.

## GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

### The Basic Programs

NRES offers Master of Science (two options) and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

- The M.S. Thesis Option (Plan A) program helps students develop into researchers. Coursework is no longer the primary focus, and students learn how to create, plan, and carry out independent research.
- The M.S. Non-Thesis Option (Plan B) program guides students in the acquisition of professional expertise beyond the undergraduate degree. While the program requires a research “special project,” students in this option are not as likely to develop the independent research skills acquired through the experience of completing a thesis. Consequently, the Non-Thesis Masters is not adequate preparation for continuation into a Ph.D. program.
- The extramural M.S. program provides working adults in the Chicago area the opportunity to complete a *non-thesis* M.S. degree (Plan B) by taking courses online or at off-campus locations such as the Morton Arboretum. These courses are offered by faculty and affiliates of NRES. For further information, contact Dr. Don Briskin at 217/244-1115 or [dbriskin@illinois.edu](mailto:dbriskin@illinois.edu).
- The Ph.D. program prepares students to be an expert in their fields. Earning a Ph.D. involves mastering a field of study and increasing the knowledge and understanding in that field through the completion of a dissertation that makes a contribution to existing research.

### Joint Degree Programs

The University of Illinois offers a joint degree program in law and natural resources and environmental sciences. Students must be accepted into each department separately during the same term, and will also complete the requirements of both programs at the same time. Graduates of the joint program will receive an M.S. in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and a Juris Doctor of Law degree from the College of Law. This program allows students to supplement a law program with training in a related scientific field. You may contact either Dr. Eric Freyfogle in the College of Law at 217/333-8713 or [erictf@illinois.edu](mailto:erictf@illinois.edu), or Dr. Michelle Wander in NRES at 217/333-9471 or [jmwander@illinois.edu](mailto:jmwander@illinois.edu) for more information.

A number of NRES faculty are also members of the Physiological & Molecular Plant Biology (PMPB) program. This program takes advantage of the breadth of knowledge and expertise in plant biology at UIUC. The program provides a flexible academic curriculum for students and draws participating faculty from a variety of academic units and programs. PMPB offers a doctoral program, but students interested in the masters should pursue the joint degree option. In this program students receive a M.S. in NRES, but with a specialization in plant development & molecular biology, plant biochemistry & biophysics, or organismal & community plant physiology. The program itself does not independently admit students at the masters' level or confer M.S. degrees. Students must be accepted to a specific departmental graduate program (in this case NRES) prior to admission to the program and must fulfill the requirements of the degree in NRES in addition to the program's requirements. A student participating in the program is a bona fide member of NRES, like any other NRES graduate

student who is not participating in the Physiological & Molecular Plant Biology program. Please view the program's web page at <http://www.life.uiuc.edu/plantbio/pmpb> for more information.

Human Dimensions of Environmental Systems (HDES) is a rapidly expanding area of study. With increasing public concern about the environment, there are great expansions of employment and research opportunities at a scale unmatched since the 1960's and 70's. The collective goal of this program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is to enhance environmental decision-making through the application of social, psychological, and cultural research to interactions between humans and natural systems. Through the scholarship and creative activity of the program faculty and graduate students, we strive to expand the body of knowledge of human-environment interactions and to disseminate research results for incorporation into environmental policy and management. The program includes participating faculty from numerous disciplines and departments and HDES Scholars. The Scholars are graduate students selected through a competitive application process. The program itself does not independently admit students or confer graduate degrees. Students must be accepted to a specific departmental graduate program (like NRES) prior to admission to the program and must fulfill the requirements of the degree in NRES in addition to the program's requirements. These students are enrolled in participating units but undertake programs of study drawing on the resources of the Human Dimensions program, coursework, and faculty. The Human Dimensions of Environmental Systems program provides an interdisciplinary perspective on social, psychological, and cultural aspects of natural resources and environmental systems including human impacts of environmental change, conservation behavior, hazard and risk assessment, environmental attitudes and beliefs, perceived environmental quality, environmental planning, and assessment, and cultural aspects of environmental issues. You can find more information on this program at <http://www.hdes.org/>.

NRES is also one of the graduate departments participating in the Medical Scholars Program at the University of Illinois. The Medical Scholars Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is an MD/PhD program committed to preparing a diverse cadre of academic Physician-Scholars to confront the multi-dimensional problems and issues that face medicine. The MSP has over 160 MD/JD and MD/PhD students pursuing graduate study in over 35 academic disciplines, including the behavioral sciences, humanities, physical sciences, as well as the biomedical sciences. With such diverse student perspectives, the MSP provides a unique and exciting environment for bright and creative scholars to pursue their passion for combining cutting edge research with individualized high quality clinical training. All of the graduate and medical training is done at the Urbana-Champaign campus. The Medical Scholars Program is jointly sponsored by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Graduate College and the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine. Only US citizens and permanent residents are eligible for admission. Please visit <http://www.med.uiuc.edu/msp/> or contact the Medical Scholars Program at 217-333-8146 for details.

The program in Environmental and Resource Economics (pERE) offers courses, seminars, and an opportunity to conduct research under the guidance of some of the nation's leading scholars in environmental and resource economics. Its faculty serve on major government advisory bodies, editorial boards, and have been visiting scholars at universities around the globe. Their expertise ranges from environmental law and regulatory policy to advanced methods for the analysis of ecological-economic problems. pERE is one of several environmental programs supported by the Environmental Council at the University of Illinois.



The program itself does not independently admit students or confer graduate degrees. Students must be accepted to a specific departmental graduate program prior to admission to the program and must fulfill the requirements of the degree in NRES in addition to the program's requirements. Courses offered through the program in environmental and resource economics cover modern economic theory and its application to problems in environmental regulation, environmental quality, and natural resource management. Information is available at <http://www.ace.uiuc.edu/pere/pereinfo.htm>.

The Applied M.S. in Statistics is intended for students pursuing advanced degrees in other fields who wish to enhance their statistical knowledge and credentials by obtaining a degree in Statistics in addition to their primary field of study. Admission to this program requires that students be admitted for graduate studies in another field at UIUC. Students apply to the Applied M.S. program after they have begun their studies in NRES. For more information on the requirements and applications process, see <http://www.stat.uiuc.edu/degrees/applmasters.shtml>.

## ADMISSIONS

The department receives more applications for admission than can be accepted. Funding for graduate student support is always limited and can be provided only to superior students. When preparing to apply to NRES (or graduate school in general), you should be aware that an important key to your success is identifying a member of the faculty who is interested in advising you. We **strongly** recommend that students planning to apply to our graduate programs use the online faculty directory "Areas of Expertise" to identify faculty working in the research areas in which they are interested. Once you have a few faculty in mind, you should contact them directly to introduce yourself (including your background, educational and career goals, and what about their work interests you), ask whether they are currently accepting students, and inquire whether or not they are likely to have funding available. You should identify a potential advisor in your application statement of purpose.

Prospective graduate students are urged to apply for admission to the degree program as early as possible, preferably six to ten months before the beginning of the semester in which they expect to enroll. For fall admission, a deadline of February 1 is used for review of students for financial assistance. Although applications can be submitted later, the opportunities for financial support may be reduced. Strong letters of reference, evident motivation to undertake graduate study, and good preparation in basic science courses enhance an applicant's credentials.

### Admission Criteria

Applicants must have a grade average of 3.0 (4.0 = A) or better calculated on the last 2 years of undergraduate course work. In addition, Ph.D. applicants must have earned a grade average of 3.5 (4.0 = A) or better for their M.S. degree work.

Applicants should have adequate preparation in the fundamental sciences and courses appropriate to the proposed field of study in natural resources and environmental sciences. Because NRES is interdisciplinary, what constitutes an adequate background varies by field of study, so you should ask potential advisors what coursework and experience they like their graduate advisees to have. Applicants without the necessary prerequisites may be accepted

conditionally in a non-degree program. In these cases, remedial undergraduate courses must be completed to establish a basic foundation before they will be accepted into the degree program.

The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is required of all students, except for students in the extramural M.S. program and students in the joint law program (who may substitute LSAT scores for GRE scores). We only require the quantitative, verbal, and analytical portions of the GRE exam. We rarely accept students who earn less than a combined score of 1100 on the quantitative and verbal sections with at least a 4.5 for the analytical section; however, there is no minimum score for admission. If your score is lower than you feel you could have earned, you are encouraged to retake the exam to improve the total score. The GRE score must have been earned within five years of the date of admission to the department. The official GRE results will be mailed to the University of Illinois if you use the code 1836. The GRE results will be examined along with GPA, letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, and other information in the application package.

Students whose native language is not English are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The TOEFL or IELTS score must have been earned within two years of the proposed term of entry to the University.

The following chart provides minimum score requirements for admission (from <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/admissions/instructions/04c.cfm>):

| English Proficiency Test | Minimum score                 | Limited status admission and English as a Second Language Placement Test required** | Full Status Admission |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| TOEFL iBT                | 79                            | 79-102  | greater than 102      |
| TOEFL CBT                | 213                           | 213-253   | greater than 253      |
| TOEFL PBT                | 550                           | 550-610   | greater than 610      |
| IELTS (academic exam)    | 6.5 and 6 in all sub-sections | 6.5 and/or any sub-section less than 6  | greater than 6.5      |

### **Admission Process**

When elements of an application file begin to be received at NRES, they are filed alphabetically by applicant's last name in an "incomplete" file. An applicant's file is considered complete when NRES has received an application with the fee paid, three letters of reference, an official GRE score report, all the applicant's transcripts, personal statement, and an official TOEFL or IELTS score report if the applicant is international. The applicant will not be considered for admission until all these elements are present. When the file is complete, it is then sent to the NRES Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee. If the Committee determines that the applicant is not qualified for our program, the applicant is sent a letter indicating that result. If the Committee decides that the applicant's qualifications meet the departments' requirements, a summary of the file will be circulated to select faculty (those the applicant listed as potential advisors, those who have communicated an interest in that particular applicant, and any other faculty members having research interests in areas similar to the applicant as recommended by the Committee). This list of faculty is then included in the applicant's file.

For the qualified applicants, the next step is usually the longest in the process. The faculty to whom the file is circulated will respond with information about whether they believe they applicant should be admitted, whether they are interested in advising him/her, and whether

or not they have funds to support the applicant's program of study. Once the file has been available for two weeks (or longer if potential advisors are interested but awaiting results of grant proposals, etc.), the results are compiled. If no faculty members are interested in serving as the advisor, the applicant is denied admission. If one or more faculty are willing to serve as the advisor, the applicant is sent a letter of acceptance to the program detailing any funding provided (generally guaranteed for the length of the program) and the file is sent to the Graduate College for verification. The department only recommends admission, which issues the official acceptance into the program and the University. The Graduate College also determines qualifications of international applicants, verifies the availability of funding to support international students, and issues DS-2019 or I-20 paperwork to international students. The departmental acceptance letter indicates a date by which the applicant needs to formally accept or decline the offer of admission and funding. This decision must be sent via mail, email, or fax to the NRES Student Services Center.

### **Admission on Limited Status**

Any applicant admitted with an undergraduate GPA for the last 2 years below 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or with a score below the University minimum on the TOEFL or IELTS, will be admitted on limited status. Once the student has satisfactorily completed twelve hours of graded coursework or completed all the English as a Second Language courses required by the University, he or she will automatically be upgraded to full status by the Graduate College. No student may graduate while on limited status.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

### **Sources and Awarding of Financial Support**

Several sources of financial support are available within the department for recruiting high quality students: research assistantships supported by federal, state, or private grant funds made available to NRES faculty; competitive research assistantships supported by NRES; teaching assistantships; University Fellowships; the Jonathan Baldwin Turner Graduate Fellowship Program the Odell Graduate Fellowship in Soil Science, the Spaeth & Boggess Graduate Fellowship in Forestry, Federal Work Study programs, and waivers of tuition and fees. The Graduate College Fellowship Office also administers competitive fellowships and grants to currently enrolled and prospective graduate students. Check the requirements for these awards at the Graduate College Fellowship Office web site, <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/fellowship/>. Assistantship appointments are made on a percentage basis. All 25% to 67% appointments as research or teaching assistants, as well as all fellowships, provide a stipend and tuition and fee waiver.

Several graduate scholarships are also annually awarded to continuing students in the department. The call for applications goes out in the spring to continuing students. More information about each of the \$1000 graduate scholarships we award is available in appendix E.

Departmental financial support is granted on a competitive basis at the time of admission. Using the application for admission, applicants are judged for academic potential based on past performance, experience, motivation, dedication to the designated area of interest, and, where

applicable, the potential to satisfy the objectives of a donor. Information about the current availability of financial aid can be obtained from the Graduate Coordinator or, in the case of research and teaching assistantships, directly from faculty members working in the area of interest. Continuing students can apply for some sources of funding, such as teaching assistantships. In these cases, a call for application is emailed to all NRES graduate students.

In addition, the department supports the NRES Educational Opportunity Travel Grants to continuing NRES students. This program of support is for student travel that enhances their graduate training and career opportunities. Applications for financial support can include attendance at professional conferences, workshops, events, or for training to learn research techniques at other laboratories. Two competitions are held, one each in the spring and fall semesters, following email announcement.

In the awarding of financial support for graduate study, there are always many more applicants than support funds. Consequently, a careful evaluation of each applicant is made, and offers are extended to those candidates who show the greatest potential for graduate study and for the use of the knowledge gained. The department does not assume the responsibility for supporting students who agree to enter the program at their own expense. Acceptance for graduate study in the department is not considered to be a commitment for present or future financial support, unless specifically stated in the acceptance letter.

Students who qualify for federal work-study must notify the NRES Human Resources Manager in order to take advantage of the program. In order to qualify, you must complete the FAFSA form in the winter, and be notified by the Office of Student Financial Aid that you qualify for this funding source.

**Expense and Benefit Table**

The following table represents anticipated expenses of graduate study for the 2009-2010 academic year for a new, full time student. (All rates are variable and subject to change.) Tuition rates can be found at [http://registrar.illinois.edu/financial/grad\\_base.html](http://registrar.illinois.edu/financial/grad_base.html), and fees are provided at [http://registrar.illinois.edu/financial/grad\\_fees.html](http://registrar.illinois.edu/financial/grad_fees.html).

M.S.

|                                      | IL Resident |              | Out of State* |              |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
|                                      | Costs       | Compensation | Costs         | Compensation |
| Tuition & service fee                | \$9,318     |              | \$22,584      |              |
| Other fees                           | \$3,338     |              | \$3,338       |              |
| Living expenses (approx.)            | \$16,086    |              | \$16,086      |              |
| Total cost*                          | \$28,742    |              | \$42,008      |              |
| Annual stipend- 50% RA for 11 months |             | \$16,896     |               | \$16,896     |
| Tuition & service fee waiver         |             | \$9,586      |               | \$22,852     |
| Total award                          |             | 26,482       |               | \$39,748     |

New Ph.D.

|  | IL Resident | Out of State* |
|--|-------------|---------------|
|--|-------------|---------------|

|                                      | Costs    | Compensation | Costs    | Compensation |
|--------------------------------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| Tuition & service fee                | \$9,318  |              | \$22,584 |              |
| Other fees                           | \$3,338  |              | \$3,338  |              |
| Living expenses (approx.)            | \$16,086 |              | \$16,086 |              |
| Total cost*                          | \$28,742 |              | \$42,008 |              |
| Annual stipend- 50% RA for 11 months |          | \$17,930     |          | \$17,930     |
| Tuition & service fee waiver         |          | \$9,598      |          | \$22,864     |
| Total award                          |          | \$27,525     |          | \$40,794     |

\* Applicants who are not U.S. citizens must submit evidence that they have sufficient financial resources to support their entire program of study before the University will accept them for admission. This includes costs of tuition, fees, living expenses for the student and all their dependents, etc. for all years necessary to complete the student's program of study.

Graduate student assistants with an assistantship appointment of at least 25% receive a waiver of tuition. For details about the waiver and specific fees, students should refer to <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/policies/tuitionwaiver.htm>.

### **Departmental Stipends**

The Department of NRES maintains minimum stipend rates for assistants. Teaching and research assistants are paid at the same rates. An assistant may be appointed for 13%, 25%, 50%, 67%, or 100% time. However, 50% time appointments are considered standard. The monthly rate table for 2009-2010 NRES RA and TA stipends is shown below. These rates are subject to change annually as the University pay rates increase. Note that as PhD students pass their preliminary exam, their pay rate increases. The "level 2" rate will be applied the first August 16 after the student has passed the preliminary exam, as the department cannot give students mid-year raises. Graduate assistants are normally appointed by the semester for a 9- or 11-month appointment. The monthly stipend rate below is then paid for each month in which the assistant is appointed. Students with a 9-month appointment are not paid in June, July, or August. Students on an 11-month appointment are not paid in August.

### **2009-2010 NRES RA and TA Stipends\***

|          | <b>MS</b>      | <b>PhD Level 1 (before the Prelim)</b> | <b>PhD Level 2 (after passing the Prelim)</b> |
|----------|----------------|--|---|
| <b>%</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Monthly</b>                         | <b>Monthly</b>                                |
| 100      | \$3,072        | \$3,260                                | \$3,480                                       |
| 67       | \$2,059        | \$2,184                                | \$2,332                                       |
| 50       | \$1,536        | \$1,630                                | \$1,740                                       |
| 25       | \$ 768         | \$ 815                                 | \$ 870  |

\* These rates were approved by the NRES faculty, but the University governs the ability of the department to implement them. Increases in assistantship stipends are occasionally delayed by the University.

### **Work Required**

Research and teaching assistants are expected to work part-time for their assistantship. This service can be exclusive of their thesis research. However, it is virtually impossible to

determine absolutely the number of hours of work per week expected of most assistants. For instance, one cannot be specific about the time one devotes to a research assistantship that is tied to thesis research. The specific nature of this service is determined by the student's major advisor. Support for students not fulfilling assumed responsibilities may be terminated.

Teaching assistants are selected by the faculty member teaching the course assigned an assistant. Inquiries about position availability should be made to them directly. When seeking assistantships outside of NRES, students should refer to the Assistantship Clearinghouse that lists hourly positions and assistantships available on campus (<http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/clearinghouse/>). All teaching assistants in NRES are required to successfully complete the University's two-day Graduate Academy for College Teaching, as well as one 90-minute Microteaching session. In addition, international students are required to earn a score of 50 or better on the SPEAK test in advance of agreeing to TA. The SPEAK test is only offered in October and March. The NRES Student Services Center sends an email announcing the SPEAK Test and the Graduate Academy for College Teaching training as soon as it becomes available.

### **Appointment Processing**

Because the first day of the pay period is August 16, students should plan to begin working on that date. If that day is a weekend, students should discuss the actual start date with their faculty advisor. Additionally, students may not work before their paperwork is completed. For these reasons, new students or students on new appointments who will be working as research or teaching assistants should report to the NRES Human Resources Manager as soon as they arrive on campus in order to fill out the necessary forms and to avoid a delay in receiving their first paycheck. Students who are advised by adjunct or affiliate faculty will need to see the Human Resources Manager in their employing department. Students on fellowships need to contact the unit that awarded the fellowship. For JBT and Graduate College fellowships, that unit will be the Graduate College Fellowship Office (333-0036). Both assistantship appointments and fellowships must be accepted by signing and returning an offer letter.

International students are required to have applied for a social security number before beginning employment. The International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office has streamlined this process so that it can be done on campus and usually within a week. Students must make this a priority once they arrive on campus.

Continuing students should check with their advisor to verify that their appointment will be extended into the next semester, summer, or the following academic year, depending on individual circumstances. A reminder from the student may be useful, since advisors are required to renew graduate appointments every semester. Summer percentages are not always the same as fall and spring semesters, and some students work hourly during the summer, so your situation may vary. If you have questions about your appointment, see the NRES Human Resources Manager. Additionally, RA and TA funding is provided by your advisor, unless you have been awarded a fellowship or merit-based assistantship. If you change advisors, your new advisor will become responsible for supporting your program of study.

Pay periods begin on August 16 for the fall term and on January 1 for the spring term. All assistants should be on campus and have their appointment processing done by these dates.



Arriving late or not finishing processing by these dates will result in late paychecks and/or paychecks for less than a complete month for the first pay period. All graduate assistants are paid on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of each month via direct deposit. If the 16<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, pay is deposited on the preceding Friday. Fall appointments are from 8/16 to 12/31. Spring appointments are from 1/1 to 5/15, and summer appointments are from 5/16 to 7/15. Once again, regular graduate assistants are 11-month appointments and are not paid in the month of August. As all assistants are paid by direct deposit, the only way to view your earnings statement is by using the NESSIE system, <https://nessie.uhr.uillinois.edu/cf/index.cfm>.

### **Income Taxes**

All students holding a fellowship should review fellowship policies (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/chapterVIII/section02.asp>), which includes issues of taxation. The University does not withhold taxes from fellowship payments, but the income may be subject to income taxes.

After processing paperwork with the NRES Human Resources Manager, foreign students will have to report to B6 Coble Hall to fill out their W-4 forms for federal tax withholding.

### **Sick Leave and Vacations**

Graduate assistants are eligible for 13 non-cumulative and non-compensable sick leave days per appointment year, but do not earn vacation time. Probably more than any other factor, success in science requires hard work and dedication. First-rate scientists routinely work long hours, sometimes seven days a week. In contrast to class work, experiments are expected to continue on weekends and between semesters year round. In fact, the time between classes is often the most productive time to do experiments. Before scheduling a vacation, you should approve the time off with your advisor.

## **ELEMENTS OF A GRADUATE PROGRAM**

Several specific elements comprise a graduate program of study. Within the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, the most important elements are the major advisor, the Guidance Committee, the Plan of Study and the Research Proposal, the annual review process, and the Graduate Student Orientation (NRES 594).

### **Major Advisor**

The key individual in the development of the graduate program is the major advisor or major professor. The major advisor is responsible for helping the student plan a program of study that will provide the opportunity to reach a prescribed level of excellence. It is important to recognize that the advisor is to advise and counsel and not to "carry" the student. It is the responsibility of the student to achieve the prescribed level of excellence with the advisor directing the way.

The selection of the major advisor is based on the interests and goals of the student, the source of funds if the student is provided financial assistance, the current workload, and interests of the faculty of the department, and the availability of facilities. In the selection of a faculty advisor, every effort will be made to insure that the student has the best possible opportunity to achieve the graduate program goals, and that the professor chosen has expressed an interest in that specific student.

A student may change major advisors during their program of study only after a complete review of the situation by the Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee. To initiate the process, the student must fill out an NRES Request for Action form. The committee will make recommendations to the Graduate Coordinator who will consult with the Department Head in order to make a final decision. However, it is considered desirable for a change in advisors to occur between the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees if the student continues in NRES.

### **Guidance Committee**

During the first semester of enrollment, a Guidance Committee will be selected. The composition of this committee will be determined by the major advisor in consultation with the student. One member of the Guidance Committee must be a tenure track faculty member in NRES. The M.S. committee shall consist of at least three faculty members, one of whom is the major advisor. For Ph.D. candidates, this committee is composed of at least four members, including the major advisor. At least three of these must be members of the Graduate Faculty, and at least two must have tenure. Usually, the Guidance Committee also serves as the Preliminary and Final Examination Committees. (See the Ph.D. PROGRAM section Preliminary Examination for Examination Committee requirements.) At least one member of the Guidance Committee must be a faculty member from a department other than NRES.

It is the function of the Guidance Committee to assist the major advisor and the student in developing an appropriate course of study and to review the detailed Research Proposal, once the preliminary plan has been outlined by the major advisor and the student. The role of the committee members is to offer helpful suggestions toward the most effective execution of the research effort. The Guidance Committee is required to sign approval of both the Research Proposal and the Plan of Study.

### **NRES 594**

In the fall semester of their initial year, new graduate students are required to enroll in and satisfactorily complete NRES 594, Professional Orientation in NRES. Students that have completed a M.S. degree in NRES and continue on for a Ph.D. degree are not required to enroll in NRES 594 a second time.

### **Plan of Study**

During the first semester of any graduate program, the student and the major advisor will prepare a draft Plan of Study. This plan will include a schedule of courses to be completed and a timetable of the proposed total program. Only courses at the 400- and 500-level will apply toward completion of a graduate program. During the first or second semester, after the student meets with his/her their Guidance Committee, changes in the plan and recommendations by the



committee will be included in a revision. This revised plan must then be signed by all committee members and submitted to the NRES Student Services Center by reading day of the second semester of enrollment. All members of the student's Guidance Committee should be provided a copy of the plan. If there is to be any deviation from the plan, modifications must be approved by the student's Guidance Committee. In order to complete the degree requirements in a timely manner, it is the responsibility of the student to take into consideration which semester(s) necessary courses will be available. Some courses are only offered in alternate years, or may be canceled for other reasons, such as low enrollment or faculty sabbatical leaves. The Plan of Study outline form can be found in appendix A of this document. If the completed plan with committee signatures affixed is not received on time, students will be placed on departmental advising hold until the plan is received. Advising holds prohibit access to student registration. Reading day is listed on the Academic Deadlines website <http://registrar.illinois.edu/registration/deadlines.html>.

### **Literature Review and Research Proposal**

A literature review that builds a foundation for the research to be conducted will be prepared as a requirement for satisfactory completion of NRES 594. This will contribute to the development of the research or special problem proposal that is required of all M.S. and Ph.D. candidates. This proposal should be drafted prior to the initiation of active research toward the degree and is to be developed by the student in consultation with their major advisor. Students should solicit input from additional faculty members including committee members during the proposal development phase. During the second semester of their program, students should present a draft proposal to the Guidance Committee for review and discussion at one or more meetings held for this purpose. After discussion is complete, the student satisfies the committee by incorporating recommendations and corrections into the proposal, committee signatures are obtained by the student on appendix Y. The approved research proposal with the signatures of the Guidance Committee affixed is due to the Student Services Center by reading day in the third semester following enrollment. If the proposal is not received, students will be placed on a departmental advising hold until the proposal is received. Advising holds prohibit access to student registration. Reading day is listed on the Academic Deadlines website <http://registrar.illinois.edu/registration/deadlines.html>.

### **Research Proposal**

The following guidelines provide an example of one format that can be used to prepare a research proposal. Other formats are acceptable. The Research Proposal should include the following content:

#### **Guidelines for Preparation of a Research Proposal**

Complete the cover sheet (see Appendix B).

**Title** - A clear, concise statement of the subject of the research. The title, used by itself, should give a good indication of what the project is about.

Previous Work - A brief review of the current state of knowledge on the problem, how it falls short of meeting current and future needs, and how the proposed work will extend present knowledge (literature citations should be listed at the end of the project outline). The conclusion of this section should lead the reader directly into the next two subsections of justification for further work and the statement of objectives for the proposed work.

Justification - A concise statement of the importance of the problem to the agriculture and rural life of the state, region, or nation, reasons for doing the work at this location at this particular time, and potential benefits to agriculture, the scientific community, and the public at large.

Objectives - A clear, complete, and logically arranged statement of the specific objectives of the project, each identified by number.

Procedures - A statement of the essential working plans and methods to be used in attaining each of the stated objectives. The procedures should correspond to the objectives and follow the same order. Phases of the work to be undertaken immediately and concurrently should be designated. The location of the work and the facilities and equipment available and needed should be indicated. The statement on procedure should indicate that the research has been carefully planned and provide for changes when they are necessary to improve the work.

Duration - An estimate of the time required to complete the research planned and publish the results. Whenever any material change in the objectives of a project is advisable, a new or revised project outline should be prepared. A major change in procedure may also necessitate a revision of a project outline. Projects normally run for one to three years, but a maximum of five years may be requested.

Personnel - A list of the leader or leaders and other technical workers assigned.

Financial Support - An estimate on a separate page of the annual allocations of funds to salaries, wages, equipment, supplies, travel, publication, and any other operating expenses.

### **Annual Graduate Student Review**

At the start of the fall semester of each academic year graduate students in NRES are required to complete an annual progress review. The annual review is designed to assist students in maintaining progress toward completing their degree requirements. This information will also be used to report on departmental activities and as a resource to identify students for scholarships, awards, and other recognitions. A key component of the review process involves the communication between faculty advisors and their graduate students to address previous progress and future expectations in their graduate career.

It is extremely important that students take this process seriously and report their accomplishments accurately and with adequate detail. The Graduate Coordinator, Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee, and NRES Student Services use these reviews for identifying students to be nominated for awards and to report on a number of important measures of graduate education.

The process is as follows: The NRES Student Services Center emails instructions for the annual review to all graduate students at the beginning of the fall semester. Students complete the student section of the form. After faculty members receive the student's self-evaluation, they provide an evaluation of their students' progress using the last page of the form for each NRES graduate student in their program. It is recommended that advisors review this document with their students before submitting them. Advisors then forward the complete review form back to the NRES Student Services Center. The Graduate Coordinator will review these documents and return copies including the advisor's evaluation to each student. Copies of these forms will be included in each student's graduate file in the NRES Student Services Center. If students have any questions or concerns regarding the advisor's comments, they are encouraged to discuss these with their advisor.

### **Seminar**

All NRES graduate students are required to present their research results before they meet with their guidance committee to defend their thesis or dissertation. The seminar will be for 50 minutes, and be open to the public. The announcement of the seminar must be given to the NRES main office, W-503 Turner Hall, for distribution at least two weeks prior to the scheduled event. The information provided for the announcement should include an abstract of the work along with title, location, time, and date of the presentation. The NRES main office will help with scheduling, reserving rooms, and advertising the seminar. The Final Seminar Check-List form is available at the NRES Student Services Center. The M.S. Exam form is obtained from Student Services. The PhD Certificate of Result form must be signed out by your advisor or a member of your committee from the Student Services office. Students are not allowed to handle their doctoral pass/fail form.

Ph.D. students are required and M.S. students are strongly encouraged to give at least one additional presentation (oral or poster) at an appropriate professional or scientific meeting. Students should seek advice and approval from their advisor about the venue selected to meet this requirement. Students must provide documentation of completion of this requirement by filling out appendix B and acquiring their advisor's signature for verification.

## GRADUATE COLLEGE INFORMATION

### Credit Loads

Full-time credit loads are described below. Enrollment for less than full-time during any semester may decrease the fees assessed by the University, but also decreases the services available to you as a student (i.e. McKinley Health Center, IMPE, etc.), and in some cases may cause student loan deferments to be cancelled. Please also note that for purposes of loan deferral only, zero credit registration in GC 599 will count as full time registration. For more information about GC 599, please see the Graduate College web site <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/>. Graduate students not registered for at least a half-time load in a particular term will be subject to Social Security and Medicare deductions for that term.

Graduate students with assistantship appointments of at least 25% (Fellowships impose different requirements, see below)

Fall and spring terms: 8 or more hours

Summer 1 term: 3 or more hours

Summer 2 term: 6 or more hours

Graduate students with fellowships (including those holding a concurrent assistantship) and graduate students with "stand-alone" tuition waivers

Fall and spring terms: 12 or more hours

Summer 1 term: 3 or more hours

Summer 2 term: 4 or more hours

NOTE: Fellows are required to maintain a full course load each term of registration unless the Graduate College Fellowship Office has approved a reduced course load. Fellows who are international students must also have a reduced course load approved by the International Student and Scholar Services.

Graduate students with 1%-24% assistantships and graduate students without assistantships

Fall and spring terms: 12 or more hours

Summer 1 term: 3 or more hours

Summer 2 term: 6 or more hours

### NOTES for International Students:

For purposes of load, each required or recommended ESL course taken as a result of the English as a Second Language Placement Test (EPT) will count as the equivalent of 4 hours, even if the course credit is recorded as zero hours.

Fellows and international students whose first term of study is the summer term must carry a full course of study. In addition, students who hold an RA or TA for the summer term, but were not enrolled full-time for the previous spring or will not be enrolled full-time for the following fall, must also register for the summer term. Registration for all other students for the

summer term is at the discretion of the research advisor. Students not enrolling for the summer may have their student health insurance coverage extended through the summer months by visiting the Student Insurance Office in Room 480 in the Illini Union Bookstore Building before the extension deadline in June.

In some cases, the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement consider a student full time at a reduced enrollment. International students should check with the Office of International Student and Scholars Services for details. Continuing international students are not required by the campus to enroll for the summer terms. Those who do enroll are not required to carry a full course load.

International graduate students who have completed all credit requirements (course work and thesis research) for their degree programs may register for zero hours of 599 until completion of study. This registration will be considered full-time for purposes of SEVIS reporting. International students seeking any exception to the full-time credit requirements should contact the Office of International Student and Scholars Services before registering for the reduced credit load.

### **Grading System**

The University of Illinois employs a 4.0 grading scale. Grades range from A+ to F, and each + and – level of each letter grade (with the exception of A+) represents a different value that will be averaged to calculate a student's GPA. The University also uses the following symbols:

- W— Authorized withdrawal from a course. No grade is given.
- I— Incomplete (formerly Ex). An Incomplete grade is assigned when a final grade is temporarily excused. An extension of time to complete course work is a privilege that may be granted by the instructor, if permitted by departmental policy, to a student who has not completed the final examination or other requirements for the course. An Incomplete grade given in the fall term must be replaced by a letter grade no later than the reading day of the spring term, while this deadline becomes the reading day of the fall term when an Incomplete grade is given in the spring or summer term. Failure to complete the work within this period automatically results in a grade of F. If the student does not maintain continuous enrollment, the Incomplete grade becomes an F after one calendar year.
- DFR— Grade temporarily deferred. Used only in research courses and in other approved courses that usually extend beyond one semester. For many courses approved for DFR grading, the time limit for the DFR grade to revert to F is the same as for the Incomplete grade. The grade for thesis research course (599) remains DFR until thesis research has been passed or failed.
- S or U— Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Used as final grades only in the thesis research course (599) and in certain other approved courses; not included in the GPA computation. A grade may not be given for thesis research until the thesis work is completed and the thesis deposited.

- CR or NC— Credit or No Credit. Used only if a student has registered for a course under the Credit/No Credit Option, before the published deadline, with the approval of their major department. A form requesting this option may be obtained from the student's department.
- ABS— Absent from the final examination without an acceptable excuse; counts as a failure (F) in the GPA.
- NR— Grade has not been recorded by the Instructor. A grade must be submitted before a student can graduate.

The I grade can be given when a student has not fulfilled all the expectations of a graded course. Upon completion of the required work, the faculty member changes that the I to the grade the student earned. If no grade change is submitted by Reading Day of the semester following the assignment of the I grade, the grade automatically changes to 'F by rule' and is calculated in the GPA as an F grade.

### **Credit/No Credit Option**

Graduate students must present letter grades for the minimum number of hours required for the degree being sought. Graduate students may, with the advisor's approval, take additional hours above the required minimum on a credit/no credit option. No credit is given for courses in which grades of D or F are received. Over the entire course of a degree program, a student must earn at least 8 hours of graded (A-D) course work (excluding thesis and non-credit seminars) for each 4 hours of credit-no credit course work. In any one semester, a student may take no more than 4 hours on a credit-no credit basis. (Hours transferred from another university cannot be used as part of the "graded course work.") If a student is admitted on limited status, or if a student falls below a minimum GPA of 3.0 and is placed on limited status, they will not be allowed to register for credit-no credit course work until the GPA has been raised to the minimum and the limited status designation has been removed.

### **The Graduate Petition**

The graduate petition is used to request any action from the Graduate College. These petition instructions, including all supporting documentation required for various requests, are available online at the Graduate College web site ([http://grad.illinois.edu/gsas/petition\\_instruct.cfm](http://grad.illinois.edu/gsas/petition_instruct.cfm)). The student completes a request, submits it online, prints it out, signs it, and asks his/her advisor to endorse the petition (which includes an explanation of his/her support and signature). The form is then returned to the NRES Student Services Center where it will be submitted to the Department Head for approval. If approved at the department level, the petition will be forwarded to the Graduate College. The student will be notified of the Graduate College decision directly by email. Common examples of uses of the graduate petition are acceptance of non-degree coursework towards a degree, extension of time to complete a degree, transfer from the M.S. program to the Ph.D. program, and to extend time for an I or DFR grade.

Decisions made at the departmental level require approval of the NRES Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee, and requests should be made in writing, using the NRES Request for Action form.

### **Graduate College Probation Policy**

Graduate students must make satisfactory progress in all aspects of their program in order to continue pursuing a graduate degree. Factors that a program may use to determine satisfactory academic progress include, but are not limited to performance on qualifying, preliminary, and other examinations; performance in course work; satisfactory and timely completion of all milestones as determined by the program; satisfactory progress in research; and overall graduate and/or program grade-point average (GPA). Students enrolled in approved joint degree programs must meet the minimum GPA requirements of each degree program in order to maintain satisfactory academic progress and to graduate. Overall GPA is the only factor monitored by the Graduate College, while attention is given to the others by the Guidance Committee and department. Any type of programmatic failure can result in a recommendation of probation or dismissal from the Graduate College.

#### *GPA Requirements*

The Graduate College requires a minimum overall graduate GPA of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale; however, graduate degree programs can have a higher minimum if approved by the Graduate College. The minimum GPA for NRES is 3.0. Students who have a lower overall graduate GPA at the end of any semester of enrollment will be placed on probation. Once placed on probation, a student will have one semester in which to raise his/her overall graduate GPA to the minimum of 3.0. Failure to do so will result in dismissal from the Graduate College.

#### *Limited Status Admission*

A student admitted to the Graduate College on limited status due to low undergraduate GPA must meet the degree program's minimum overall graduate GPA at the end of the first semester of registration, or be dismissed from the Graduate College.

#### *Appeal of Dismissal*

Dismissal from the Graduate College because of a low overall graduate GPA can be appealed by petition. The Graduate College will consider petitions containing strong program support and strong justification based on other factors pertinent to the program's determination of satisfactory academic progress.

## **M.S. PROGRAM**

All incoming on-campus students wishing to pursue a Master of Science degree in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences will be admitted to the Plan A thesis option of the program. No exceptions will be made.

### **Plan A- Thesis Option**

Plan A requires that the student satisfactorily complete a minimum of 32 semester hours of graduate course work, of which a minimum of 12 hours are 500-level numbered courses. This coursework shall include 1 to 12 hours of Thesis Research (599), which culminates in the completion and oral defense of a thesis.

- The student must satisfactorily complete NRES 594.

- M.S. students may not receive credit for more than 8 hours of NRES 501, Special Problems.
- The student must satisfactorily defend the thesis at a final examination.
- HDES Proseminar credit applied to an NRES MS graduate degree will not exceed 4 hours. Students may take the course every term, but may only use 4 hours to count toward their degree.

### **Plan B- Non-thesis Option**

The Plan B option is standard for extramural M.S. students, but is only rarely allowed for on-campus M.S. students. Any request for this option must be submitted on an NRES Request for Action form with all the required attachments during the first year of the program (Appendix C). The Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee considered these requests on their individual merit and their decisions are final. This option is a terminal degree program, and students completing this option should not plan to pursue a career in research. A Plan B student must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 32 hours of graduate course work, of which a minimum of 12 hours are 500-level numbered courses.

- The student must satisfactorily complete NRES 594.
- The student may enroll in NRES 501, Special Problems to prepare and revise the special project. No more than 8 hours of NRES 501 can be counted toward an M.S. degree.
- The student must prepare and submit a critical review of a special subject in the chosen area of interest and orally defend it. In addition, the student must perform satisfactorily on a comprehensive final examination.

### **Required Courses**

Coursework is tailored to meet the needs of the individual student and is determined in consultation with the student's advisor and Guidance Committee. In addition to meeting the other course requirements of Plan A or B, all students are required to enroll in NRES 594 (Orientation) during their first fall semester and present an open seminar covering their project before completing the degree (generally as part of their final examination/thesis defense).

The 32 hours of graduate courses required for the M.S. degree in NRES can include credit hours transferred from another department or institution. For more details, consult the Graduate Coordinator or the NRES Student Services Coordinator. Transfers are limited to 12 hours of graduate coursework, and require petitioning the Graduate College.

### **Final Examination**

For the Plan A, M.S. degree, the student's final examination is held after submission and approval of the thesis by the major advisor, and must involve an open seminar. For a Plan B program, the M.S. student in NRES is required to take a comprehensive final examination, which may be written, oral, or a combination of both, designed by the student's Examination Committee. The M.S. Examining Committee consists of the student's Guidance Committee with the major professor as chairperson. The Examination Committee will determine the scope and format of the final examination in advance. To clarify committee expectations, the student is urged to visit with each committee member prior to the examination. The M.S. Exam Committee



Appointment form must be submitted to Student Services 4 weeks prior to your exam for approval from the Graduate Coordinator.

At the conclusion of the examination, the committee will complete the Final Examination for the Master's Degree form. This form reports the results of the examination and is available at the NRES Student Services Center (SSC). The form, signed by all the Examination Committee members, will then be submitted to the SSC for inclusion in the student's file. The possible outcomes of the M.S. examination are pass, fail (and elimination from the program), or incomplete. If the student receives an incomplete, the M.S. examination must be repeated within three months. The final examination shall be taken during the final semester the student is enrolled as an M.S. candidate.

### **Depositing the Thesis or Special Problem**

During the final semester, students are responsible for being sure that their names have been added to the degree list by using UI Integrate or the Application for Degree form, which is available online at the Graduate College, <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis/forms.htm>.

All of the following documents will be required when depositing a thesis and can be picked up at the NRES Student Services Center:

- If unable to add name to degree list during first 10 days of the semester, student must complete the Application for Degree (Grad College)
- NRES Graduate Student Exit Survey (NRES Student Services)
- M.S. Exam Committee Appointment Form (NRES Student Services)
- At least three Certificates of Committee Approval (<http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/forms/certificate/CertCommitteeApproval.pdf> )
- Departmental Format Approval form (NRES Student Services)
- Final Examination for the Master's Degree Form (NRES Student Services)
- The Graduate College *Thesis Handbook* (<http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/thesis/thesishandbook/pdf/thesishandbook.pdf>) is a useful resource.

When the Masters thesis is completed, the student will be required to write up the research in a format acceptable to the Graduate College. If the research findings have been published, please note that the Department of NRES requires thesis formatting as follows:

- An overall introduction section must be included.
- A literature review section must summarize how the research fits into the broader knowledge of the topic area.
- Any data not reported within the body of the thesis must be included in appendices.
- Theses with multiple chapters must provide a summary that integrates the scope of their experiments into a broader research theme.
- If all of the above are included, the remainder of the thesis can be presented in publication format.

All of the following documents will be required when depositing a special problem project and can be picked up at the NRES Student Services Center:

- Application for Degree
- NRES Graduate Student Exit Survey

- M.S. Exam Committee Appointment form
- Masters Special Project Approval form
- Final Examination for the Master's Degree form

Well in advance of the final exam, a draft of the thesis (Plan A) or special project (Plan B) is to be submitted to the student's advisor. The major advisor will review the document and make appropriate suggestions. Copies of the revised draft are then provided to the members of the Examining Committee a minimum of two weeks in advance of the date of the exam. The student will then defend the research at the final examination. The Final Examination for the Master's Degree form must be completed and submitted to the Student Services Center immediately following the exam by the Committee Chair. The Chair is typically the student's advisor. Providing the student passes the examination and all thesis revisions are complete, the student should have the members of the Examining Committee affix their signatures on a minimum of three original Certificates of Committee Approval for thesis or two copies of the Departmental M.S. Project Approval form for non-thesis projects.

Suggestions or recommendations for change from the student's Examination Committee will then be incorporated into the document and resubmitted to the advisor and/or committee members as agreed upon at the completion of the thesis defense. Plan A students must then submit one copy of the thesis, the Departmental Format Approval form, and the Certificates of Committee Approval to the Graduate Coordinator for departmental format approval (required by the Graduate College), and then to the NRES Student Services Center. For Plan B students, one copy of the project and the Departmental M.S. Project Approval form and the Final Examination for the Masters Degree form must be deposited at the Student Services Center. The student will be asked to complete and return the NRES Graduate Student Exit Survey.

The form and documents will be circulated to the Department Head, who is required to approve all theses and special problems. Please allow at least one week for approvals by the Graduate Coordinator and Department Head, after which the student will be notified. Two copies must be deposited at the Graduate College; this can only be done between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. when thesis checkers are available. Plan B students do not deposit their projects at the Graduate College. The University will officially confer degrees after approval by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. M.S. degrees are conferred in December, May, August, and October of each year. Diplomas will be mailed to graduates at the permanent address on record or the address provided by the student on the Application for Degree form, approximately one month later.

If you are leaving campus, and will not be in town during the deposit process, the best option is to sign up with the Thesis Office to deposit by mail. The Thesis Office is very cooperative and helpful when working with students remotely, but you must sign up in advance, and the deadline is one week earlier than for regular deposits.

M.S. students, in counsel with their major advisor, are strongly encouraged to prepare one or more manuscripts for scientific publication, describing their research and results. The major advisor will provide guidance regarding the type of publication and the appropriate publication outlet.

### **Time Limit**

The Graduate College requires M.S. candidates to complete all requirements for the degree within five calendar years after their first registration; however, within NRES there is an expectation that the M.S degree will be completed within 2.5 calendar years. Upon entry in the Graduate College, you are assigned an Expected Graduation Date (EGD). Enrollment beyond the EGD is allowed only after petitioning for a time extension. Please note that M.S. students are not required to be enrolled the semester they take the final examination, deposit the thesis, or graduate.

### **M.S. Sequence of Program**

- Acceptance and selection of major advisor.
- Registration as a graduate student (including NRES 594).
- Selection of Guidance Committee during the first semester of study.
- Preparation of Study and Literature Review with submission to Advisor for approval to fulfill class requirement in NRES 594 .
- Approved Plan of Study submitted to Student Services Center by reading day of the second semester enrolled.
- Approved Research Proposal submitted to Student Services Center by reading day of the third semester enrolled.
- Completion of program course requirements.
- Addition of name to pending degree list.
- Submission of thesis/project to Examination Committee.
- Schedule final examination and (Plan A only) advertise thesis seminar.
- Title page check at the thesis office (Plan A only).
- Thesis seminar (Plan A only), followed by comprehensive exam and defense of thesis/project.
- Departmental format review by the Graduate Coordinator.
- Submission of thesis/project to NRES Student Services Center for department head approval.
- Submission of thesis to the Graduate College.
- Completion of NRES Exit Survey.
- Return of all office and lab keys to the area secretary.
- Graduation.

### **Graduation**

Graduation for M.S. students can take place in May, August, October, or December. Consult the Graduate College Calendar (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/calendar.htm>) for dates and deadlines for the specific term during which you plan to graduate. The only graduation ceremony at the University of Illinois is held in May. Students graduating in August, October, or December will be invited to participate in graduation the following May, when two ceremonies are held. The campus-wide ceremony is held at the Assembly Hall. A second ceremony is held by the College of ACES, usually in the Smith Music Hall. Graduation tickets are sent by the College of ACES Placement office, directly to all those on the graduation list.

### **Prospective NRES Ph.D. Candidates**

Students nearing completion of an M.S. degree at the University of Illinois, who wish to continue for a Ph.D. in NRES at the University of Illinois, should make this request in writing to the Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee using an NRES Request for Action form. Supporting letters of reference that document the student's potential as a Ph.D. candidate must be submitted to this committee by the current M.S. advisor, the prospective Ph.D. advisor, and one additional M.S. committee member. The Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee will make a recommendation concerning admission to Ph.D. candidacy after reviewing the student's progress as a M.S. candidate and the supporting letters. If accepted, the student will then complete a Graduate Petition to request the change of program, which requires the signature of the Department Head. The Graduate College must approve this petition before a student's status will be changed. After approval, the student must develop a new Plan of Study for the Ph.D. program and revise the Research Proposal in consultation with the Guidance Committee. These documents must then be signed by the Ph.D. committee and submitted to the Student Services Center by the end of the first year in the Ph.D. program.

It is preferred that students earn a M.S. degree before pursuing a Ph.D. degree. However, if an advisor desires the student to enter the Ph.D. program in NRES prior to obtaining the M.S., the student must petition the NRES Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee for the transfer. (See the section of this handbook entitled Direct B.S. to Ph.D. Degree Program.)

The advisor is responsible for notifying the Human Resources Manager of any change in graduate status before the stipend rate will be adjusted to the "Ph.D. Level 1" rate. Additionally, the student must fulfill the M.S. degree requirements before the new rate will become effective. International students continuing in a Ph.D. program must notify the International Student and Scholar Services to update their visa and if necessary extend its expiration date.

## **Ph.D. PROGRAM**

### **Requirements**

For the Ph.D. program, a minimum of 64 hours are required beyond a M.S. degree. Coursework must include the orientation course, NRES 594, which is taken during the first fall semester of the graduate program (if it was not taken during the M.S. program). Students will give two research-based presentations with the first being either a poster or a seminar given at an appropriate scientific meeting, ideally within the first two years of their program.. At the end of the graduate program, a defense seminar will be presented summarizing the results of the thesis research. This seminar will occur immediately before the final exam, will be advertised two weeks in advance, and will be open to the public. The expected time to completion for the Ph.D. degree after the M.S degree is 3.5 to 4 calendar years.

HDES Proseminar credit applied to an NRES Ph.D. graduate degree will not exceed 4 hours. Students may take the course every term, but no more than 4 hours will count toward their degree. The 64 hours of graduate courses required for the Ph.D. degree in NRES can include credit transferred from another department or institution. For more details, students should consult the Graduate Coordinator or the NRES Student Services Coordinator. Transfers are limited to 12 hours of graduate coursework, and require petitioning the Graduate College.

### **Preliminary Exam**

The preliminary exam is required by the Graduate College and is meant to be a test of the student's knowledge of the basic content areas that are foundational to the research subject matter. Students should take their preliminary exam after they have completed the bulk of their course work and are readying themselves to devote most of their time to independent research. Students are expected to prepare for the exam after meeting with their examining committee, which will outline the scope of the exam within three basic content areas for mastery. The intent of this effort is that, through the process of review, the student will develop a new, more unified understanding of how core knowledge areas inform his/her area of inquiry. Ideally, the exam should be taken during the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> semester of the Ph.D. program. Students must take the exam within 6 semesters in residence (not including summers) or request a waiver from the NRES Student Services including a justification signed by their advisor.

### **Scheduling the exam**

The exam will include written and oral portions. The student in consultation with his /her advisor and advisory committee will determine the scope and specific topics to be covered by the written exam and the specifics for format and timing. The two basic formats for the written exams that are strongly encouraged include: 1) a formal research proposal in the format suitable for submission to the NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant competition (current deadline at NSF is the third Friday in November), or 2) questions prepared by members of the examining committee that are given to the advisor to administer. The student will work with his/her advisor to develop an exam plan that will outline the three content areas for coverage, timing, and steps for exam administration. This preliminary exam plan should include deadlines for written exam completion and the date for the oral exam. The plan must be submitted to the NRES Student Services with the advisor's signature one month before the written exam begins.

### **Committee composition**

The committee must include at least four voting members, three of whom must be members of the Graduate Faculty and two tenured members of the faculty. Non-voting members, such as an external reader, a member of the faculty who is off campus, or others who can make a significant contribution to the research, may be appointed. For any non-member of the Graduate Faculty, a letter of justification is required, along with a CV. The committee should include faculty members from more than one area of specialization.

### **Exam plan must list:**

1. date for the oral exam
2. director of dissertation research
3. members of the student's committee and their departments along with a brief description of the expertise they bring to the committee
4. other committee members
5. three core content areas to be covered in the exam

6. A description of the exam format including an indication whether the written will take the form of a proposal or be comprised of prepared questions. This must include information about the written exam.
  - If the written takes the form of a research proposal, then it is due two weeks before the oral exam.
  - If the written exam will consist of prepared questions developed by the examining committee and advisor, then the plan must list:
    - The types of questions to be asked (Open book essay, short answer, or review questions; Closed book essay or short answer questions; Technical, analytical questions that require numerical solution)
    - The time and place where student will take written exams; this may include multiple sessions and a mixed format

It is recommended, but not required, that written and oral exams be spaced in time so that the student has at least one week to prepare for the oral exam after receiving feedback on written materials.

### **Chairing of the oral portion of the exam**

Upon receipt of the exam plan, the Department Head will work with the Graduate Student Coordinator to select a representative of the graduate policy committee (GPC) or the student's committee to serve as the oral exam chair who will act as a neutral intermediary between the student, the advisor, and other members of the committee. Chair selection will be based on relevant expertise, and be done in consultation with the advisor. The role of the chair will be to convene the committee, administer the exam, and submit results certifying the outcome to the NRES Student Services. The chair will receive copies of the written exam questions and student responses at least one week before the oral exam. The chair's participation is intended to: help standardize the oral exam process, prevent any party from unduly or unfairly dominating the exchange, allow the advisor to participate in the exam more fully, and raise difficult questions that advisors and committee members who are close to the student may overlook or find difficult to broach. The three-hour oral exam will consist of two parts; the first part will be general and cover the student's three core areas of emphasis. The second part of the exam will be a defense of the research proposal.

At the completion of the oral exam, the student will leave the room as the committee decides whether the student has passed the examination. The decision for satisfactory performance must be unanimous. If a student does not pass a preliminary exam, the committee may:

1. Adjourn with its decision deferred for a period of time not exceeding six months
2. Record a failure but grant the student another opportunity to take the examination after completing additional course work, independent study, or research. In this case, the Graduate College will be informed of the failure, and the committee chair will indicate that the student should be given a second examination.
3. Determine that the failure is final and the student will not be allowed to retake the exam.

Only the voting members of the dissertation committee sign the Certificate of Result. The result of the examination must be promptly submitted to the NRES Student Services, and will be

immediately reported to the Graduate College. If the Graduate College is not informed of the result of the examination within six months after the scheduled examination date, the committee is considered to be dissolved, and a new committee must be appointed before the examination occurs. The newly appointed committee may, but does not have to, consist of the same members as the dissolved committee.

### **Exit Seminar**

A seminar presented at the end of the student's program is a report on the dissertation research. This 50-minute seminar is presented immediately prior to the thesis defense, and is open to the public. The student is responsible for contacting the NRES Main Office (333-2770) at least two weeks prior to the defense to arrange for a room reservation and advertising of the seminar. See ELEMENTS OF A GRADUATE PROGRAM under Seminar for more details.

### **Preparation of Dissertation**

When the dissertation is completed, the student will be required to write up the research in a format acceptable to the Graduate College. If the research findings have been published, please note that the Department of NRES requires thesis formatting as follows:

- An abstract summarizing the entire body of work must be included.
- Appropriate literature review must be included. This should summarize how the research fits into the broader knowledge of the topic area. Part of this information may, but is not required, to be presented in a separate introductory chapter.
- Any data not reported within the body of the thesis must be included in appendices.
- Theses with multiple chapters must provide a summary that integrates the scope of their experiments into a broader research theme.
- If all of the above are included, the remainder of the thesis can be presented in publication format.

All of the following documents will be required when depositing a dissertation and many can be obtained at the NRES Student Services Center:

- Application for Degree (Grad College)
- At least three Certificates of Committee Approval (<http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/forms/certificate/CertCommitteeApproval.pdf>)
- Departmental Format Approval form (<http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/forms/DeptFormAppr.pdf>)
- NRES Graduate Student Exit Survey (NRES Student Services)
- Final Seminar Check-List (NRES Student Services)
- A completed Survey of Earned Doctorates
- ProQuest Microfilm Agreement form, signed (Grad College)
- One abstract, formatted according to ProQuest guidelines
- The Graduate College *Thesis Handbook* (<http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/thesis/thesishandbook/pdf/thesishandbook.pdf>) is a useful resource.

During the last semester, students are responsible for being sure that their names have been added to the degree list by using UI Integrate or the Application for Degree form, which is available on the Grad College website <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis/forms.htm>.

Well in advance of the final oral exam, a draft of the dissertation is to be submitted to the student's advisor. This draft should comply with the format guidelines provided by the Graduate College (see *Thesis Handbook*). NRES format requirements are identical to the Graduate College requirements. The major advisor will then review the dissertation and make appropriate suggestions. Once these suggestions have been incorporated into the draft, it is to be circulated to the student's Examination Committee for review. All members of the final Examination Committee should receive the dissertation two weeks in advance of the date of the examination. The Examining Committee's recommendations for change will be presented to the student at the final exam.

### **Final Exam**

After the preliminary examination, and when the student's program is nearing completion, the student should submit a green Request for Appointment of a Doctoral Examination Committee form to the Graduate College for appointing the Final Examination Committee. Please note that one member of the committee must be designated as the contingent chair. Students will also fill out the Final Seminar Check-List form, which will finalize the date and location of the final seminar and exam. These forms are available at the NRES Student Services Center.

Ph.D. students must be enrolled in NRES 599, Thesis Research, for the semester in which the final exam is taken, regardless of when the thesis will be deposited. Refer to the Graduate College academic calendar (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/calendar.htm>) for details. Usually the final Examination Committee consists of the same members as the student's Guidance Committee. See the Preliminary Exam section for specifics related to the composition of Examination Committees. The final exam and exit seminar take place on the same day. The seminar is 50 minutes, open to the public and held at 9 a.m. or 1 p.m. After the seminar, the committee and student will move to a smaller room for the examination. The time and date of the final seminar and exam shall be communicated to the NRES Main Office secretary in order to be announced to the faculty of the department, at least two weeks prior to the exam. Before the exam, a member of the committee must sign for and pick up the Certificate of Result from the NRES Student Services Center. For the Ph.D. degree, the final oral examination is an open exam and has the essential character of the preliminary examination, except for the level of performance expected of the student and the finality of its interpretation by the faculty. Traditionally, this examination is described as the "the defense of the dissertation," and generally the research on which the dissertation is based provides the starting point of questions posed. However, it will also challenge the student's general knowledge and ability to integrate their research into the wider framework of their discipline.

It is the general practice for questioning in the exam to pursue lines of thought and argument from data and concepts that have contributed to the research and to its critical evaluation by the student. This broadening of the base is acceptable for the purpose both of "defending the dissertation" and of determining the intellectual qualifications of the candidate for the degree. Inasmuch as the Ph.D. degree is conferred on the basis of originality, independence



of thought, and capacity to synthesize and interpret, the oral examination generally deals more with principles and historic perspective than with factual data. The student is pursuing an academic degree of high order, and the final oral examination should be conducted on a corresponding plane of intellectual inquiry. The examination itself is not a routine exercise to be taken lightly by the student or the Examination Committee, but one on which depends the issue of qualification for a degree having the broad connotation of Doctor of Philosophy. In judging the qualification for a degree of this type, the Committee is responsible for evaluating not only the quality of the research presented, but also the manner of its defense and the evidence provided of associated intellectual capacity. The student is recommended to be prepared well in advance of the final examination. To clarify for the student the expectations of the committee members, the student is urged to visit with each committee member prior to the examination.

The possible outcomes of this examination are passing, fail, and deferred. If the outcome is fail, the committee decides:

1. That the failure to pass should be recorded, but that the candidate should be given another opportunity after completing additional coursework or research. In this case, the certificate, noting failure, should be signed and returned with a brief note from the Chairperson indicating that the Committee believes the student should have a second examination.
2. That the failure is final. In this case, the certificate should be signed and returned.

Immediately after the exam is completed, the decision is marked on the Certificate of Result, which is then signed by all members of the Examination Committee and returned to the NRES Student Services Center. The Student Services Center will copy the certificate for the student's file and forward the original to the Graduate College.

### **Submission of Dissertation**

If the draft submitted to the Examination Committee is acceptable, the members can sign the Certificate of Committee Approval forms immediately following the final examination. If revisions are required, signatures can be collected at a later date after the examination. Once revisions are included, one copy of the dissertation, all of the Certificates of Committee Approval, and the Departmental Format Approval form should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator for format approval, as required by the Graduate College. In addition, the Department of NRES requires some additional format requirements. Dissertations will not be approved when presented solely in publication format. A formatted thesis is required. See guidelines under Preparation of Dissertation.

Once the format is approved, the dissertation should be submitted to the NRES Student Services Center with all the copies of the Certificates of Committee Approval and the Departmental Format Approval sheets. The Department Head, for approval and signature, will then review the dissertation. The student will be notified when the dissertation is ready to be picked up. Allow at least one week for the Graduate Coordinator and Department Head approvals. At this time, the student will be asked to complete and return the NRES Graduate Student Exit Survey.

The student may then deposit two copies of the dissertation with the Graduate College. The Graduate College thesis checker will only accept dissertations that are in the proper Graduate College format, and is only in the office between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Acceptance of the dissertation by the Graduate College marks the official end of the graduate program, regardless of when the degree is conferred. The University will officially confer the degree after approval by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Ph.D. degrees are conferred only in December, May, and October of each year. Diplomas will be mailed to graduates approximately one month later to the permanent address on record or the address provided by the student on the Application for Degree form.

### **Time Limit**

A candidate for the Ph.D. degree must complete all requirements for this degree within seven years after first registration in the Graduate College, except as noted in the following paragraph.

A candidate for the doctorate, who has received a Master's degree elsewhere, must complete all requirements for the degree within six years after first registration in the Graduate College. A student whose program of study is significantly interrupted after he/she receives a Master's degree from the University of Illinois and who later returns to work for the Doctorate will have six years from the date of return to complete the degree requirements.

Within the Department of NRES, there is an expectation that the Ph.D. degree will be completed in 3.5 to 4 calendar years. Upon entry in the Graduate College, you are assigned an Expected Graduation Date (EGD). Enrollment beyond the EGD is allowed only after petitioning for a time extension. Reasonable extensions are granted by the Graduate College if recommended by the department. A candidate for the doctorate is required to take a second preliminary examination if more than five years elapse between the preliminary examination and the final examination. If coursework is beyond seven years old, the student must petition the Graduate College that it still be counted toward the degree. In this case, the student is required to prove that the material is still current and relevant.

### **Ph.D. Sequence of Program**

- Acceptance and selection of major advisor.
- Registration as a graduate student (including enrollment in NRES 594).
- Selection of Guidance Committee during the first semester of study.
- Preparation of Study and Literature Review with submission to Advisor for approval to fulfill class requirement in NRES 594 .
- Approved Plan of Study submitted to Student Services Center by reading day of the second semester enrolled.
- Approved Research Proposal submitted to Student Services Center by reading day of the third semester enrolled. . .
- Delivery of a scientific presentation based on dissertation research Completion of coursework requirements.
- Submission of Request for Appointment of a Doctoral Examination Committee form to the Graduate College for appointment of the Preliminary Examination Committee.
- Preliminary examination, within the first 5 semesters of the Ph.D. program.

- Completion of dissertation research.
- Preparation of dissertation.
- Enrollment in NRES 599 for term during which the final exam will take place.
- Addition of name to the degree list.
- Submission of Request for Appointment of a Doctoral Examination Committee form to the Graduate College to appoint the Final Examination Committee.
- Submission of Final Seminar Check-List form to the NRES main office.
- Final seminar and comprehensive exam/defense of dissertation.
- Preparation of research for publication.
- Submission of dissertation to NRES Student Services Center for department head approval. Then submission of dissertation to the Graduate College.
- Completion of NRES Graduate Student Exit Survey
- Return of all office and lab keys to the area secretary.
- Graduation.

### **Graduation**

Graduation for Ph.D. students can be in May, October, or December. Consult the Graduate College Calendar for dates and deadlines for the specific term during which you plan to graduate. The only graduation ceremony at the University of Illinois is held in May. Students graduating in October or December will be invited to participate in graduation the following May. Two ceremonies are held. The campus-wide ceremony is held at the Assembly Hall. You may also participate in a second ceremony is held by the College of ACES, usually in the Smith Music Hall. Graduation tickets are distributed by the College of ACES Placement office. If you are on the graduation list, the mailings will be sent to you directly.

## **DIRECT B.S. to Ph.D. DEGREE PROGRAM**

### **Entrance Requirements**

The student must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 in the last 60 semester hours (90-quarter hours) of undergraduate course work and in any work done in a M.S. program. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are required. Students accepted into this track must be outstanding and have a singleness of purpose. Research experience as an undergraduate is desirable. This program is for exceptional students only, and acceptance into this program requires approval by the Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee and the Department Head at the time of application. Current M.S. students wishing to pursue this track must meet these same entrance requirements. In addition, however, they must complete an NRES Request for Action, requesting that they be able to continue into the Ph.D. program without depositing the M.S. thesis. This document must be submitted to the Student Services Center, accompanied by supporting letters from the M.S. advisor, one M.S. committee member, and if different, the potential Ph.D. advisor. The Graduate Policy Committee will consider the petition and render a decision, potentially requiring a qualifying examination to ensure that the student has the competency and potential to obtain a Ph.D. degree.

### **Program Requirements**

Students in the direct B.S. to Ph.D. program must complete the requirements associated with both the individual M.S. (32 hours) and Ph.D. (64 hours) degree programs (see separate sections on requirements for these programs). Prior to the completion of the second year of the program or at the time of the request by a current M.S. student, the student will take an oral qualifying exam administered by the Guidance Committee. The program sequence thereafter is identical to that of the standard Ph.D. program.

### **The Qualifying Examination**

The Qualifying Examination is a rigorous exam designed to confirm the student's ability to begin a Ph.D. program. This examination is a test of the student's advanced level of knowledge of the proposed subject area. After successful completion of this exam, the student submits a Graduate College petition, along with the results of the Qualifying Exam on the departmental form, requesting placement into the Ph.D. program in NRES. In the event of failure the student may elect to continue as a M.S. degree candidate (either Plan A or Plan B) if recommended by the Guidance Committee.

### **B.S. to Ph.D. Sequence of Program**

- Acceptance and selection of major advisor.
- Registration as a graduate student (including NRES 594).
- Selection of Guidance Committee during the first semester of study.
- Preparation of Study and Literature Review with submission to Advisor for approval to fulfill class requirement in NRES 594 .
- Approved Plan of Study submitted to Student Services Center by reading day of the second semester enrolled.
- Approved Research Proposal submitted to Student Services Center by reading day of the third semester enrolled.
- Take oral qualifying exam before the end of the second year of the program.
- Completion of coursework requirements.
- Submission of Request for Appointment of a Doctoral Examination Committee form to the Graduate College to appoint the preliminary Examination Committee.
- Preliminary Examination.
- Completion of dissertation research.
- Preparation of dissertation.
- Enrollment in NRES 599 for term during which the final exam will take place.
- Addition of name to the degree list.
- Submission of Request for Appointment of a Doctoral Examination Committee form to the Graduate College to appoint the final Examination Committee.
- Submission of Final Seminar Check-List form to the NRES main office.
- Presentation of final seminar, followed immediately by the comprehensive exam/defense of dissertation.
- Preparation of research for publication.
- Submission of dissertation to the NRES Student Services Center for department approval. Submission of dissertation to the Graduate College.

- Completion of NRES Graduate Student Exit Survey
- Return of all office and lab keys to the area secretary.
- Graduation.

## **GENERAL DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION**

Within the department, certain guidelines and policies have been established to best serve the interests of both the students involved and those persons who are providing the resources needed to make graduate study programs possible. A Web Page Resources list is provided in the appendix D of this document. Included are a variety of topics and sources of general information for students that are available on the web. The appendix also includes a contact list for NRES, which contains the names and addresses of faculty and staff and their areas of expertise.

### **Email, Web Pages and the NRES Graduate Student List-serve**

All new students are assigned an email account (login@illinois.edu) when they enter the Graduate College. This account will be used by the Department to send important information and correspondence, unless you request that these messages be sent to a different email address. Your University email account will be active every semester you are enrolled and throughout the summer terms, but will be closed: (1) within three months if you do not register for a spring or fall term; and (2) if your Expected Graduation Date (EGD) is passed. In either of these cases, it is your responsibility to advise the Student Services Center of a new email address if you wish to continue receiving departmental notices and information. Alternatively, you can request to have your University email account remain active for dial-up access during semesters when you are not enrolled, by contacting CCSO (217-333-1637) and paying a fee. Please note that University email boxes have finite storage space, and that your email trash must be emptied regularly to ensure that, you do not miss important messages.

The Department maintains a Graduate Student list-serve as the mechanism by which important email messages are sent. Each graduate student in the Department is automatically added to this list upon enrollment, and will remain on the list until graduation. If you do not want to be on this list, you will need to come to the NRES Student Services Center, and request in writing to be removed from the list-serve. Removal will be permanent unless you request, likewise in writing to the Student Services Center, to be reinstated on the list-serve.

The NRES list-serve is for official use only. Students may use the list-serve address to send official information only to other students. Abuse of the list-serve to send unofficial or offensive email to other students will result in removal from the list-serve and disciplinary action by the Department Head.

### **Labs, Offices, Mailboxes, Telephones, and Keys**

Always leave the laboratories and other areas you use clean and orderly. Wash all glassware after using, and do whatever cleanup is necessary. University regulations prohibit the use of laboratory refrigerators or freezers to store food for human consumption.

Pending availability, the Department attempts to furnish office equipment (desks, lamps, file cabinets, etc.) for graduate student use. Faculty advisors are responsible for providing office and lab space for their graduate students. In addition, the department also has limited graduate office space available. If you need a desk, please contact the Student Services Center. In the appropriate building near your office space, you will be assigned a mailbox where you will receive all official mail. Please check your mailbox regularly.

You may have a telephone near your office. The number of that telephone is the one to list as your office telephone, unless you have a cell phone that you prefer to use instead. The office telephone, like most of the staff telephones, is restricted to local calls only. For long-distance calls, use your cell phone, a pre-paid calling card, or a telephone designated by your advisor.

Keys for laboratories and graduate offices are available only when requested by the major professor, approved by the Department Head, and handled through the area secretary responsible for your building. All keys must be accounted for by the secretary, which ensures an accurate inventory. Upon leaving NRES, return all keys to the secretary who issued you the keys.

### **Safety Training**

The Urbana campus has initiated a safety training program for all laboratory personnel (including graduate students) working in research laboratories. Safety is a topic of considerable concern and discussion, and is addressed by an official campus policy. It states "Unit heads should ensure that general laboratory safety training is completed by all incoming faculty, staff and students who will work in laboratory space, belonging to the unit, where biological, chemical or radiological materials are used." This training can be completed online at <http://www.drs.uiuc.edu/training/> and the participant will receive a training certificate upon completion <http://www.fs.uiuc.edu/CAM/CAM/v/v-b-1.2.html>. Please keep a copy of this training certificate in your lab and send one to Student Services for inclusion in your permanent file.

All incoming NRES graduate students working in research laboratories that use biological, chemical, or radiological materials are expected to complete the on-line training **no later than 1 month after they begin their program**. The training provides general laboratory safety information and covers standard laboratory safety guidelines, laboratory signs and labels, personal protective equipment, waste disposal, emergency preparedness, and proper protocol for working with biological, chemical, and radioactive materials. The session can be completed in approximately 30 minutes. NRES students should print two copies of the training certificate and send one to the Student Services Center for inclusion in your student file, and keep one in your lab.

NRES faculty with labs containing biological, chemical, or radiological materials are responsible for ensuring that staff and students are properly trained by the deadline. Failure to comply may result in fall appointments not being processed in a timely way.

### **Security**

As a graduate student in the department, you have rights and privileges, but you also have responsibilities. Each student should assume responsibility for maintaining security of building, labs, and other facilities. If doors are to be locked, make certain they are locked. Be alert to strangers, for thefts have occurred in the past. This is your department; help preserve it.

### **Copiers and Supplies**

Departmental copiers can be used for research purposes if the major professor has approved the material. No class notes, thesis, or personal items can be copied, as there are other machines for this use in campus libraries or copy centers. Copy cards for library work may be provided by your advisor, and can be obtained from the campus vending office on the third floor of the Illini Union.

All supplies (graph paper, pens, paper, record books, notebooks, etc.) can be obtained only from your major professor, unless other arrangements are made. This allows for an accurate record of expenses.

### **Field and Greenhouse Space**

Arrangements for field space are also made through the major professor, as are any arrangements to use departmental teaching, research, or demonstration areas located off campus. Requests for greenhouse space can be addressed to Ruth Green in the Plant Sciences Lab. Greenhouse space is normally assigned at the beginning of the fall term, and field space in the spring. Students are responsible for their field and greenhouse thesis research, and should do their own harvesting and collection of data. Problems with planting, spraying, and the like can be discussed with the major advisor.

### **Departmental Clubs and Organizations**

The department has several clubs and organizations that are very active and provide additional opportunities for experience and interactions for graduate students. Among these are the Illini Foresters, the American Fisheries Society, the Soil and Water Conservation Society, and the student chapter of the Wildlife Society. Bulletin boards for club activities are located in the west hallway of the first floor of Turner Hall. Graduate students are also encouraged to participate as other opportunities become available through the Department or the Graduate College.

### **Departmental Events**

The Department annually sponsors several events throughout the year. Faculty, students, staff, alumni, emeritus faculty, and their families are invited to attend all departmental functions. First is the Fall Picnic, which is held soon after school begins in the fall semester. We have a holiday party, usually a potluck, in December. The Spring Picnic is held during the last week of school in the spring, normally on reading day. Watch for announcements about these events throughout the year. In addition, the departmental faculty seminar is held Thursday afternoons in W-109 Turner Hall.

### **Professional Meetings**

The Department encourages students to attend professional meetings in the area of their interest, but departmental funds are not available to support conference travel and expenses. Normally funding for this purpose is provided by the major advisor. The Graduate College Fellowship Office does offer competitive conference travel awards that reimburse up to \$300 of travel expenses by students whose paper has been accepted for poster or oral presentation at a professional meeting. The competition is held twice each year. For more information, see the Graduate College web page, <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/policies/travelgrant/index.htm>.

### **Job Placement**

Graduate students in NRES primarily gain employment after graduation through their major advisor or through networking with colleagues during their graduate program. However, the College of ACES also maintains the IConnect ACES system for job seeking assistance for students at a searchable job database online at <http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/Careers/>. All job announcements that come to the Department are posted here and on the bulletin board in the southwest hallway of the fifth floor of Turner Hall. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the resources and services provided by a number of career advising offices on campus, particularly the Graduate College Career Services Office (<http://grad.illinois.edu/careerservices/>), which provides extensive opportunities for clarifying your goals and improving your application materials. Other resources on campus include the Illinois Career Services Center, the Biotechnology Center Career Services office, and the ACES Student Development and Career Services Office. If you are looking for work on campus, the Student Office of Financial Aid and the Graduate Student Advisory Council post opportunities on their web pages. For more information on these and other job placement resources, see appendix D.

### **Problem Solving/Procedures for Grievances and Complaints**

Students and faculty in NRES are a diverse group whose personalities, experiences, activities, and personal goals vary widely. Most conflicts and problems that arise in this environment can be resolved without invoking formal grievance procedures; such informal resolution, where possible, is generally best for all concerned. At times, however, formal grievance procedures may be necessary. Prior to initiation of formal procedures, please contact the Graduate Coordinator for consultation. All conversations will be held in the strictest confidence. More information is available in N-509 Turner Hall regarding departmental grievance policy and procedures.

The Department of NRES follows all problem solving/grievance procedures established and approved by the Graduate College and University. Please see the following materials for specific information:

*A Handbook for Graduate Students and Advisers,*  
<http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/gradhandbook/index.asp>,

And



*Code on Campus Affairs and Handbook of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students*, <http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/>, **Rule 25**,

And

Policy and Procedures for Graduate Student Issues in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (Appendix H of this handbook).

## **HOUSING OPTIONS**

Although most graduate students live in apartments or shared houses close to campus, several housing options are available to graduate students at the U of I. Campus options include four graduate student residences available through the Housing Division: Daniels Hall, Goodwin & Green Apartments, Sherman Hall, and the Orchard Downs Apartments that offer family housing. For information on these, visit the campus Housing Division web site at <http://www.housing.uiuc.edu/>. Hundreds of privately owned houses and apartments are available to rent near campus. You should visit these before signing a lease. In general, the closer the building is to campus, the higher the rent. Commuting quickly becomes expensive because of parking rates, but the public transit system (<http://www.cumtd.com>) offers free service with your student i-card. You may also benefit from talking with other graduate students about their experiences. There is no roommate service on campus, so if you need to share rent, you will have to do that on your own. The University Tenant Union offers helpful information for finding housing in the community at <http://www.tenantunion.uiuc.edu/>.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

The graduate program of study is designed to provide students the opportunity to achieve a high degree of competence in preparation for a professional career. Throughout the program, the student is being evaluated, both formally and informally. Grades attained in formal courses are important but so is course selection. Typically, the most in-depth evaluation of the student's professional competence is provided by the preliminary and final exams and the thesis presentation. That competence will be reflected not only by a positive outcome to both exams, but also in the letters of reference written by the major advisor and committee members. The following are but a few general suggestions that will, hopefully, prove useful.

### **Preparation for Oral Exams**

Well in advance of the examination; make plans to visit with each member of the Examination Committee. Ask for suggestions as to what you should prepare for. You may not have had a course from this person, and you may be examined on something different than you might expect. Prior to the examination, it is also prudent to discuss the procedure and guidelines thoroughly with your major advisor, so that you understand specifically how the examination will be conducted. Typically, advisors have helpful suggestions.

Remember, there are several ways to respond to a question.

1. Give the correct answer.
2. Ask for clarification of the question. It may not have been worded so that you would give the best answer. In addition, this will give you time to think.
3. "I don't know" is a far better option than inventing an answer that may then be refuted by the committee. The examiner may not let an "I don't know" answer stand, trying instead to lead you to the correct answer with other questions.
4. The question may call for a speculative answer. If so, speculate. You may need more information before you answer; if so, ask for it.
5. **Remember, "The Committee wants to help you."** Committee members are expected to maintain professional attitudes and conduct the examination without personal bias.

Do whatever possible to reduce your nervousness. Being nervous will interfere with your conduct and responses to questions. If, during the examination, you find yourself in need of a brief pause or refreshment, ask your major advisor if this is permissible.

For the final examination on the thesis or dissertation, you should be prepared to review:

1. Reasons for the study - scientific or practical implications.
2. Methods used for the important findings and their significance.
3. Unanswered problems suggested by your research or in other words, "What's next?"

### **Publication of Thesis and Dissertation Research**

Research is complete only after the results have been published and transmitted to those who may have interest in, or use for, the results. All graduate students are expected to prepare, in counsel with their major advisor, one or more manuscripts suitable for appropriate publication. The major advisor will provide guidance regarding the type of publication and the publication outlet.

## **APPENDICES:**

A: Graduate Plan of Study

B: Graduate Research Proposal

C: Request for Action

D: Preliminary Exam Plan

E: Web Resources

F: Departmental Contacts

G: NRES Fellowships

I: Policy and Procedures for Graduate Student Issues in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

**GRADUATE PLAN OF STUDY**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Degree: M.S. Plan A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ Ph.D. \_\_\_

Date First Enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Date of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution of B.S. (and M.S.): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date Plan of Study Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Undergraduate Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Area of Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Guidance Committee Members:

Signature of Approval

(Student) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Advisor) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Member) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Member) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Member) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Member) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Courses Considered Essential:

| <u>Course No.</u> | <u>Course Title</u>              | <u>Hours</u> |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| NRES 594          | Professional Orientation in NRES | 1            |
| NRES 500          | Seminar                          | 1            |

Recommended Courses:

| Course No. | Course Title | Hours |
|------------|--------------|-------|
|------------|--------------|-------|

|                      |       |       |
|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Essential Courses:   | _____ | Hours |
| Thesis (599):        | _____ | Hours |
| Recommended Courses: | _____ | Hours |
| Total:               | _____ | Hours |

Course Planning:

(Please remember that some courses are only taught in fall or spring, and others are taught only every other year. Also, classes may be cancelled because of low enrollment, sabbatical leave, etc.)

| 1 <sup>st</sup> Sem. | Fall/Spring/Summer | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sem. | Fall/Spring/Summer | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester | Fall/Spring/Summer |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |

| 4 <sup>th</sup> Sem. | Fall/Spring/Summer | 5 <sup>th</sup> Sem. | Fall/Spring/Summer | 6 <sup>th</sup> Semester | Fall/Spring/Summer |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |

| 7 <sup>th</sup> Sem. | Fall/Spring/Summer | 8 <sup>th</sup> Sem. | Fall/Spring/Summer | 9 <sup>th</sup> Semester | Fall/Spring/Summer |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |
|                      |                    |                      |                    |                          |                    |

Approved by: Graduate Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

**GRADUATE RESEARCH PROPOSAL (Appendix B)**

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

(See ELEMENTS OF A GRADUATE PROGRAM for instructions on formatting the proposal.)  
Attached is the M.S. \_\_\_/Ph.D. \_\_\_ research or special project proposal entitled:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This proposal has been reviewed by the Guidance Committee of the student, and will serve to guide the research program of the student.

**Approved by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Committee Member

Received by \_\_\_\_\_ on: \_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate Coordinator Date

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**

**GRADUATE REQUEST FOR ACTION (Appendix C)**

**NRES Graduate Student Request for Action**

Please complete this form, sign it, and return it to the NRES Student Services Center (N-509 Turner Hall) along with any required documentation. Attach a letter from your advisor supporting your request. No request will be considered without an advisor's letter of support, and some requests require multiple letters. Please read the instructions for your particular request. You will be notified of the decision by email, unless otherwise requested.

**Name**

**Campus Address**

**MC-**

**Campus Phone Number**

**UIN**

**Email**

**Graduate Advisor**

**REQUEST (please check one):**

**Transfer to PhD program after completion of MS**--Requires letters of support from your advisor and one other committee member. If you are changing advisors, the second letter must be from your new advisor.

**Transfer to PhD program without completion of MS**--Requires letters of support from your advisor and one other committee member. If you are changing advisors, the second letter must be from your new advisor.

**Enter Plan B (non-thesis) MS option**--Requires letter of support from your advisor.

**Extension of Preliminary Exam date**--Requires letter of support from your advisor.

**Count 400-level course toward requirement for 4 hours of 500-level lecture/discussion coursework**--Requires a description of the course, the additional work the student will do, and letters of support from the advisor and the instructor of the course.









## Appendix E. Web Resources

### General

U of I <http://www.uiuc.illinois.edu/>  
NRES <http://www.nres.illinois.edu>  
UIUC Student Resources <http://illinois.edu/resourcesfor/student.html>

### University Policy

Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students  
<http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/>  
UI Academic Calendar [http://senate.illinois.edu/a\\_calendar.asp](http://senate.illinois.edu/a_calendar.asp)  
Tuition and fees <http://www.oar.uiuc.edu/current/financial/index.html>

**The following web sites contain a great deal of information for University of Illinois students related to these topics.**

### Apartments

Tenant Union <http://www.tenantunion.uiuc.edu>

### Campus Safety

Division of Public Safety <http://www.dps.uiuc.edu/>

### Computer Services

Campus computer labs, email, passwords <http://www.cites.illinois.edu/index.html>

### Counseling Services

Counseling Center at the University of Illinois <http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/>

### Courses

Schedule, Course Catalog, Registration, Programs of Study  
<http://courses.uiuc.edu/cis/index.html>  
Transferable courses [http://registrar.illinois.edu/transcripts/transfer\\_credit.html](http://registrar.illinois.edu/transcripts/transfer_credit.html)

### Disabled Student Resources

Division of Rehabilitation-Education Services <http://www.disability.uiuc.edu/>

### Employment

UIUC Biotechnology Center, Career Services Office  
<http://www.biotech.uiuc.edu/cgi-bin/placement.pl/>  
ACES Student Development and Career Services <http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/Careers/>  
UIUC Career Center <http://www.careercenter.uiuc.edu/>  
On-Campus job placement <https://osfaweb1.ad.uiuc.edu/vjb/>  
GSAC Assistantship Clearinghouse: <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/clearinghouse/>  
Graduate College Career Services Office <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/CareerServices/index.htm>

### Financial Aid

Office of Student Financial Aid <http://www.osfa.uiuc.edu/>

### **Graduate College**

Graduate College <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/>  
Graduate fellowships and financial aid <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/fellowship/>  
UI Graduate Student Handbook <http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/gradhandbook/index.asp>

### **Health**

Student Insurance <http://www.si.uiuc.edu/>  
McKinley Health Center <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu/>

### **Housing on Campus**

Family and Graduate Housing Division <http://www.housing.illinois.edu/>

### **International Student Resources**

*International Student and Scholar Services* <http://www.ips.uiuc.edu/iss/>  
Division of English as a Second Language/ESL <http://www.deil.uiuc.edu/>

### **Parking**

Division of Public Safety <http://www.dps.uiuc.edu/>

### **Research/Thesis Resources**

Illinois Researcher Information Service <http://www.library.uiuc.edu/iris/>  
Office of Technology Management (intellectual property) <http://www.otm.uiuc.edu/>  
Writer's Workshop <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/>  
Statistical Consulting <http://www.stat.uiuc.edu/iso//>

### **Student Records**

Office of the Registrar <http://registrar.illinois.edu/>  
Order a transcript <http://registrar.illinois.edu/transcripts/request.html>

### **Transportation**

C-U Mass Transit District (bus service) <http://www.cumtd.com/>

## **APPENDIX F. NRES Departmental Contacts**

### **NRES Main Office**

Lezli Cline-Secretary to the Head  
W-503 Turner Hall  
244.6254  
[lcline@illinois.edu](mailto:lcline@illinois.edu)

Beth Leamon - Receptionist  
W-503 Turner Hall  
333-2770  
[eleamon@illinois.edu](mailto:eleamon@illinois.edu)

### **NRES Teaching Coordinator**

Tony Endress  
36 NSRC  
244-1679  
[aendress@illinois.edu](mailto:aendress@illinois.edu)

### **Graduate Coordinator**

Michelle Wander  
N-225 Turner Hall  
333-9471  
[mwander@illinois.edu](mailto:mwander@illinois.edu)

### **Appointments and Payroll**

Carol Preston – Human Resources Manager  
W-511 Turner Hall  
244-1484  
[preston1@illinois.edu](mailto:preston1@illinois.edu)

### **Travel, Supplies, Reimbursements and P-Cards**

NRES Business Office  
N-519 Turner Hall  
244-9430

### **General Problem Solving**

NRES Student Services Center (8-12 and 1-5 Monday through Friday)  
N-509 Turner Hall 333-5824  
[nres-ssc@illinois.edu](mailto:nres-ssc@illinois.edu)  
Karen Claus, Secretary [kclaus@illinois.edu](mailto:kclaus@illinois.edu)  
Piper Hodson, Student Services Coordinator [phodson@illinois.edu](mailto:phodson@illinois.edu)

The Student Services Center was created in order to improve our response to student concerns and serve as a resource to refer students to the resources to answer their questions. The Center also supports the academic programs responsibilities for the Department, including class scheduling, graduate student admissions, and student record keeping for both graduate and

undergraduate students. Additionally, the Center offers internship and job search assistance, keeps alumni records for the department, and administers departmental scholarships and fellowships.

## **Internships**

Piper Hodson  
N-509 Turner Hall  
333-5824  
[phodson@illinois.edu](mailto:phodson@illinois.edu)

## **G. NRES Graduate Scholarships**

Within the Department of NRES, five different Graduate Scholarships are available to continuing students: 1) Odell Graduate Scholarship in Soil Science, 2) J. Nelson Spaeth and William R. Boggess Graduate Scholarship in Forestry, 3) Downers Grove Garden Club Graduate Scholarship and, 4) Illinois Federation of Outdoor Resources Scholarship. Each scholarship is in addition to any other scholarships, research assistantships, and teaching assistantships.

Application information is emailed to all current NRES graduate students in February of each year. For the Downers Grove Garden Club Graduate Scholarships, the Garden Club itself will choose the winners over the summer and winners will be awarded in the fall. For the other scholarships, the Graduate Policy Committee will evaluate applications based on scholarship guidelines and superior academic achievement. Winners are generally notified in April.

Descriptions of the scholarships follow:

### **ODELL GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP IN SOIL SCIENCE**

The Odell Scholarship is awarded on an annual basis to an outstanding graduate student in soil science, with preference being given to students in Pedology, among students of similar ability. Recipients of the Odell Graduate Scholarship in Soil Science must have successfully completed at least one and preferably more semesters of graduate work at the University of Illinois. They must also have demonstrated superior academic ability and the potential for productive research in soil science. The same student may receive the Odell Scholarship for more than one year. One \$1000 award is available.

### **J. NELSON SPAETH AND WILLIAM R. BOGGESS GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP IN FORESTRY**

This scholarship is in honor of two distinguished former heads of the Department of Forestry, J. Nelson Spaeth and William R. Boggess. This Scholarship recognizes scholarly excellence and research potential in graduate students specializing in any area of forestry. The scholarship is awarded annually on a competitive basis. Applicants must have completed an undergraduate degree in forestry or a related discipline. One \$1000 award is available.

### **DOWNERS GROVE GARDEN CLUB SCHOLARSHIP**

The Downers Grove Illinois Garden Club sponsors this scholarship; it recognizes scholarly excellence and research potential of graduate students in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences. The scholarship is awarded annually to M.S. or Ph.D. students in NRES working in the following fields: Conservation, Landscape Architecture/Design, Natural Resources, or Horticulture. Winners will also be required to provide a letter of acceptance and a photo. Two \$1000 awards will be available.

### **ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF OUTDOOR RESOURCES SCHOLARSHIP**

The Illinois Federation of Outdoor Resources proudly sponsors this award for NRES graduate students focusing their studies on conservation, wildlife management, ecology, or conservation law enforcement. Applicants must be a resident of the state of Illinois and maintain a 3.0/4 GPA to qualify for and hold the scholarship. The recipient is expected to attend the IFOR annual banquet, usually held in Alton, IL, and to provide a photo for their newsletter. One \$1000 award is available.

## **H. Policy and Procedures for Graduate Student Issues in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences**

Prepared May 30, 2000 and updated June

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The goal of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences policy and procedures is to rapidly and successfully resolve differences between advisors/mentors and graduate students before they become detrimental to either the student's or mentor's programs. If successful, this process will benefit both students, mentors, and alleviate the need for intervention by the Graduate College. In order to avoid potential problems, the Department insists that graduate students and advisors communicate their expectations clearly at the start of a graduate program, so that both parties are aware of the requirements of the working arrangement. We promise to facilitate preventative policies and procedures where most grievances can be handled without invoking formal processes. One of the preventative measures includes the development of an anonymous consultation web site, to which students may direct possible conflicts before they become problems. The graduate coordinator will address the questions and advise the students as to possible solutions.

All members of the University community are expected to observe high standards of professional conduct and ethical behavior in graduate education and in the supervision of graduate research, and teaching, (*Guiding Standards for Faculty Supervision of Graduate Students*, May 1997). In a large and heterogeneous scholarly community however, problems may arise. Thus, the University articulates its policies and provides effective informal and formal procedures for resolving problems involving graduate students.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this policy is to protect the interests of graduate students in the Department of NRES by providing informal and formal means of seeking resolution in case of an inappropriate action of a member of the faculty or administrative staff or an inappropriate application of a department policy. Any graduate student in the Department may informally pursue or formally file a grievance when s/he believes that a decision or behavior adversely affects his/her status as a graduate student.

*This Policy and Procedures on Grievances by Graduate Students in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences specifies the policy and describes the procedures to be employed to resolve grievances by graduate students in this Department. It was approved by the Graduate College on August 14, 2000. This policy does not apply in cases of academic misconduct. Breaches of academic integrity in research and publication are handled under the campus's Policy and Procedures on Academic Integrity in Research and Publication. Similarly, this policy does not apply to cases that arise under the Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students ("Code"), such as capricious grading in a course (Section 26) or academic integrity (Section 33).*

### **II. SCOPE AND COVERAGE**

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<sup>1</sup> The policies and procedures described in this document do not override or supersede any other policies as established in the University statutes and campus policies. For more information, see the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences graduate handbook and the *Handbook for Graduate Students and Advisers*.



A. Definition of a Grievance

A grievance may arise when a graduate student believes that his/her status as a graduate student, or University appointment based on student status, has been adversely affected by an incorrect or inappropriate decision or behavior. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1) inappropriate application of a departmental or University policy;
  - 2) being unfairly assessed on a preliminary examination;
  - 3) being required to engage in excessive effort on assistantships;
  - 4) being improperly terminated from student-based University appointment (teaching or research assistantships, etc.);
  - 5) being improperly terminated from a program;
  - 6) being required to perform personal services unrelated to academic or assistantship duties;
  - 7) being required to meet unreasonable requirements for a graduate degree that extend the normal requirements established by the campus or by the Department and are inconsistent with the scholarly standards in the discipline;
  - 8) being the subject of retaliation for exercising his/her rights under this policy; or
  - 9) being the subject of professional misconduct by a student's graduate supervisor or other faculty or staff member.
- 1) Use of the Grievance Policy

The University supports a variety of policies, which apply to many different situations. Questions about whether this grievance policy or another policy is the appropriate one to address a particular problem, may be directed to the Department Head, Associate Head, Graduate Coordinator, Graduate College, or other appropriate office.

Practices or actions by a student's supervisor, other faculty member, or other member of the University community that seriously deviate from ethical or responsible professional standards in the supervision of graduate student work may constitute professional misconduct in violation of University policy.

III. INFORMAL PROCEDURES

University policy strongly encourages all students who believe they have a grievance to use all appropriate avenues for informal resolution before initiating a formal grievance. Students in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences are encouraged to discuss the issue with the faculty or staff member with whom the problem has arisen. If a satisfactory solution is not forthcoming, the student should discuss the issue with his or her adviser, the Graduate Coordinator, or the Head of the Department, who shall attempt to find a resolution acceptable to both parties. The student may also consult with the Graduate College, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Ombuds Office, the International Student and Scholar Services, or other sources.

IV. FORMAL PROCEDURES

A. Identification of the Grievance Committee (revised June 2009)

- 1) The graduate student grievance committee shall be composed of four members, two faculty members elected annually by the voting faculty, and two graduate students, elected annually by the graduate students of the department. The function of the graduate student grievance committee is to handle graduate student grievances, including allegations of sexual

harassment, discrimination, or capricious grading. Procedures for the committee shall be approved by the faculty and will adhere to campus guidelines. If a member of the committee is unable to serve, the faculty member or graduate student receiving the next highest number of votes in the last election will fill the unexpired term.

- 2) The Department Head shall appoint one of the faculty members to serve as chair of the committee. The chair is responsible for assuring that a record of the committee's investigations, deliberations, and recommendations is forwarded to the Department Head.

B. Procedures

- 1) A student in the Department of NRES may file a formal grievance with either the Graduate Coordinator or Department Head, or directly with the Graduate College, as the student elects. A formal grievance should be filed promptly and must be filed in writing within 180 calendar days of the decision or behavior resulting in the grievance, regardless of whether the departmental procedure or Graduate College procedure is used. The written grievance should indicate the parties involved, the action or decision being contested, any applicable university, campus or unit policy, an explanation of why the action or decision is inappropriate, and the remedy sought.
- 2) The Department Head shall define the subject matter and scope of the issues related to the grievance in a written charge to the grievance committee. The primary involved parties shall receive a copy of the charge.
- 3) Any participant to the grievance may challenge any member of the grievance committee if there is a perceived conflict of interest. The challenge should be made in writing to the Department Head. If the objection is prompt and reasonable, the Head shall replace the person with one who meets the stated criteria. The decision of the Head as to whether the challenge is prompt and reasonable as to the acceptability of the replacement selected may be a basis for appeal of the grievance committee's recommendation.
- 4) The grievance committee's investigation shall include a review of written materials presented and seeking information from the primary parties in writing or in person. During a hearing, each of the primary involved parties may make a brief opening statement, and then respond to questions from the committee. The primary involved parties may not question each other directly, but may pose questions through the committee chair. At the end of the hearing, each primary involved party may make a closing statement.
- 5) Within 30 calendar days of the filing of the grievance, the chair of the grievance committee shall report its recommendations in writing to the Department Head. The Department Head may grant an extension of the time limit for good cause. The grievance committee's report shall contain:
  - a. a summary of the grievants contentions and relief sought
  - b. the response of the individual or department against whom/which the grievance was filed
  - c. a general description of the investigative process
  - d. a citation of relevant policies
  - e. an explicit finding of fact based on the preponderance of the evidence with respect to each grievance included in the grievance committee's charge

- f. a listing of the evidence relevant to each finding
  - g. an indication of whether there was a reasonable basis in fact and honest belief for the allegations in the investigated grievance
  - h. a recommendation of appropriate redress for the grievant(s) and
  - i. Any recommended changes in policies and procedures to minimize the probability of recurrence.
- 6) Within seven calendar days of receipt of the committee,'s report, the Head in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator, shall determine the disposition of the case and communicate the decision to the primary involved individuals and the grievance committee.
- 7) If the Head in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator determines that the grievance has not been proved nor has merit, the Department Head will notify all involved parties and all persons who have been interviewed or otherwise informed that the grievance has been dismissed.
- 8) If the Head in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator concurs with the committee's conclusion that the grievance has been sustained and has merit, the Department Head will proceed in accordance with the University statutes and relevant University rules and regulations. The Department Head may, after consultation with appropriate campus officers, prescribe redress for the grievant. In addition, the Department Head may initiate modifications of department policies or procedures. The Department Head shall notify the relevant primary involved individuals (grievant, respondent, grievance committee members) of actions taken.
- 9) Within 10 calendar days of receipt of written notification of the Department Head's determination, appeals may be made to the Graduate College as specified in the Graduate College grievance policy. This appeal can be based only upon demonstrated specific deficiencies in the application of this departmental grievance procedure to the student's grievance.
- 10) The grievance committee will appoint one member to conduct a follow-up review of the situation. Within 30 calendar days of the disposition of the case, the appointed committee member will meet with the involved parties individually to assess whether or not the recommendations were carried out and the grievance resolved. She/He will then report to the committee on the progress of the matter. The committee, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator, will discuss the handling of the matter, the solution, and the conclusion to make further recommendations about avoiding the problem in the future and to evaluate the grievance policy process.
- 11) After completion of a grievance review and all ensuing related actions, the Department Head shall return all original documents and materials to the persons who furnished them, if they are requested. The Department shall destroy the grievance file on a date 5 years beyond the grievants' time limit for completion of the degree. A report of the nature of the grievance and the primary involved parties shall be forwarded to the Graduate College.

## V. GENERAL PROVISIONS

### A. Coverage

This policy and these procedures apply to all graduate students and members of the academic and administrative staffs in the Department of NRES. This policy also applies to former graduate students, provided they meet the timeliness requirements specified in the procedures above.

### B. Oversight Authority and Responsibility

- 1.) The Department Head has responsibility, under the policies and procedures of the Graduate College, for the management of Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences graduate programs and related policies and procedures.
- 2.) The Department Head shall have the primary responsibility for administering campus procedures detailed herein. All information and items furnished will be made available to the grievance committee. During the course of an investigation, the Department Head will provide information about the status of the proceedings to the primary involved individuals. Subsequent to the grievance committees reporting, the Department Head will maintain a file of all documents and evidence, and is responsible for the confidentiality and the security of the file. The Department Head shall make the complete file available to the Associate Dean of the Graduate College on the appeal of a grievance outcome to the Graduate College.

### C. Confidentiality

All persons involved in administering these procedures will make diligent efforts to protect the reputations, privacy, and positions of all involved persons. These persons include those who file grievances, persons who are alleged in a grievance to have taken inappropriate actions or activities, and department administrators. All of the procedures and the identity of those involved should be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, confidentiality regarding information other than the identity of the grievant need not be maintained if the grievance is found to be false and in particular if dissemination is necessary to protect the reputation of individuals or units falsely accused. Making public the fact that a grievance has been deemed false or unproved is not considered retaliation against the grievant. Protection of confidentiality does not preclude disclosures necessary to redress actions leading to a grievance.

### D. Standards of Evidence

The grievance committee's decision shall be made on the "preponderance of evidence" standard. Any finding against an individual or department on the subject of the grievance must be supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

### E. Academic Freedoms and Rights of the Parties

- 1) It shall be a prime concern of all persons who implement this policy and these procedures to protect the academic freedoms fundamental to the academic enterprise. Among other things, this includes the professional judgments of student performance that are an essential part of the graduate education process. Academic freedom, however, affords no license for the mistreatment of graduate students.

- 2) The rights of the primary involved individuals shall be specified in the form of a written notice or letter from the Department Head. The primary involved individuals have the following rights:
  - a. To receive notice of the identity of the members of the grievance committee.
  - b. To receive a written statement of the charge including the subject matter being considered by the grievance committee. If additional information emerges during the committee's evaluation that substantially changes the subject matter, the parties shall be informed promptly in writing.
  - c. To submit statements in writing and to meet with the committee to present information.
  - d. To consult private legal counsel, or another person who may provide providing advice at the meeting with the committee. Prior notice of the presence of an advisor must be given and any other primary involved party may request a delay of up to five calendar days to arrange for the presence of an advisor.
  - e. To review and respond to the grievance committee's final report.
- 3) Any of the parties responsible for the implementation of this policy may consult University Legal Counsel at any time during the informal or formal processing of a grievance.

F. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a significant professional or personal involvement with the facts or the parties to a dispute. Any participant, who has a conflict of interest in a dispute under this procedure, or a concern about a conflict on the part of another, shall report it to the Department Head who shall take appropriate action. If the Department Head has such a conflict, one of the Associate Department Heads, in consultation with the Dean of ACES or a Dean or Associate Dean of the Graduate College, will replace the Department Head and carry out the duties of the Department Head for that grievance process.

G. Timeliness and Procedural Changes

All procedures prescribed in this document should be conducted expeditiously. The Department Head for good cause may extend any of the time periods and may make other reasonable alterations of these procedures, provided that the alteration does not impair the ability of a grievant to pursue a grievance or the respondent(s) named in the grievance to defend him/herself. Any alterations of these procedures must be communicated to all pertinent parties.

H. Withdrawal of a Grievance

The grievant may submit a written request to withdraw the grievance at any time. The Department Head shall decide whether to approve the request. A request to withdraw shall be approved only if both parties to the action agree to terminate the proceedings. If the withdrawal request is approved, the Department Head shall notify the primary involved parties and the files shall be destroyed. If the withdrawal request is denied, the grievance shall continue to be processed to a conclusion according to the above procedures.

I. Termination of University Employment

The termination of University employment of any of the primary involved individuals in a grievance, by resignation or otherwise, after initiation of procedures under this policy shall not necessarily terminate these proceedings.

J. Malicious Charges

Bringing unfounded charges in bad faith is a violation of this and the Graduate College grievance policy. If the grievance committee determines that, the allegation(s) in the grievance or the testimony of any person was unfounded and motivated by bad faith, that finding shall be communicated by the Department Head to the Dean of the Graduate College and the dean of the academic college. After consultation with the Provost, the deans may inform the Department Head of such a finding. Such finding may be the basis for disciplinary action or other personnel decision in accordance with University rules and regulations.

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