A Handbook of Information and Regulations for Graduate Students

Department of Agricultural Sciences
School of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences
Tennessee State University
Nashville, Tennessee  37209-1561
2010-2011
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INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared to provide information for new and continuing students in Agricultural Sciences graduate programs at Tennessee State University. The handbook outlines the graduate programs and their requirements, regulations, and guidelines. Information included is supplementary to the university policy as explained in detail in the latest issue of the Graduate Catalogue, and is subject to changes in policy made by the Graduate Council and the Department of Agricultural Sciences. The handbook may also be used for placement of graduate students.

This handbook is intended as a departmental supplement to the published information in the Graduate Catalog. It is required that graduate students in the Department be familiar with the policies of both the Graduate School and the Department. It is also required that students take the initiative in meeting all the requirements set forth in this manual and by the Graduate School in concert with their advisors and the graduate coordinator in the Department.

THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS SETTINGS

Tennessee State University (TSU), an 1890 land-grant institution, is a major state-supported, urban comprehensive university governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. This unique combination of characteristics - land-grant, urban and comprehensive – differentiates the university from all others in the state and distinctively shapes its instructional, research, and public service programs. In carrying out its diverse mission, the university serves the city of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, the state of Tennessee, the nation, and the international community.
As an 1890 land-grant institution, Tennessee State University provides instructional programs, statewide cooperative extension programs, and research in the food and agricultural sciences, which is applicable from local to international levels. The academic programs in the Department of Agricultural Sciences provide the instructional arm of the 1890 land-grant mission of the University. Thus, the programs are consistent with and further the mission of the University. They also satisfy the academic program criteria established by the commission on the colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The programs meet a clearly defined niche in that Tennessee State University has the only agricultural program in the state that produces a large number of African-American graduates. There is a School Strategic Plan that was developed in conjunction with the University’s Academic Master Plan and five-year Strategic Plan. The university offers advanced study in many fields including Agricultural and Consumer Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering, Physical and Biological Sciences, Health Sciences, Nursing, Social Sciences and Humanities. As a result, there are strong course offerings and well-qualified faculty in a variety of other disciplines that are complementary to Agricultural Sciences.

The Department of Agricultural Sciences is part of the School of Agricultural and Consumer Sciences at Tennessee State University. The Department of Agricultural Sciences was established in 1987 as one of the two departments in the School of Agricultural and Consumer Sciences. It resulted from the restructuring of the agricultural program that included three departments in agriculture: animal sciences, plant sciences, and rural development. These departments were combined into the present, “Department of Agricultural Sciences”. The department offers academic programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Scholarly research and extension is also an important component of the department. There are ten research laboratories on the main campus housed in Lawson Hall Annex and Farrell-Westbrook Agricultural buildings. Also available for research are three field research stations; the main campus farm, the Cheatham County farm and the Nursery Crops Research Station at McMinnville.
GRADUATE EDUCATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

Graduate education in the Department of Agricultural Sciences stresses development of leadership and superior professional competence suited to the demands of the public research, education, and business environments. Prerequisites to a successful graduate experience in agricultural sciences at TSU are:

1. The desire to understand and solve the complex and changing biological, environmental, social, and economic problems faced by agriculture, agribusiness and rural society.
2. The desire and ability to learn methods of rigorous logical analysis and creativity.

The graduate program is administered through to degree programs; Master of Sciences (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). The M.S. program in Agricultural Sciences is designed to:

1. Prepare research scholars in the increasingly complex scientific field of agriculture and related areas;
2. Prepare scholars for rewarding careers in government, education, the agricultural industry, and international organizations involved in agriculture and rural development;
3. Prepare scholars for leadership roles in professional agriculture;
4. Prepare scholars for further training in doctoral programs; and
5. Provide advanced training in agricultural education for graduates working in industry, secondary schools, and all classifications of agri-science education.

The graduate program of the Department of Agricultural Sciences is designed to prepare students for careers in the private, academic and government sectors. Experience and training are provided by means of (1) courses within traditional subject matter areas as well as on the frontiers of knowledge in the field, (2) seminars and discussions designed to sharpen the student’s ability to think about and express ideas on subjects in his/her area of interest and related areas, and (3) research experiences designed to develop competency in applications of theory and in the use of appropriate quantitative, qualitative, or mixed research methods.
MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAM

Master’s degree program in the Department of Agricultural Sciences qualify students for a degree of “Master of Science in Agricultural Sciences” with a concentration(s) in Agribusiness, Animal Science, Agricultural and Extension Education, and Plant Science. The program provides development of knowledge and professional skills for related careers in agribusiness, agricultural education, government service, and extension and prepares students for PhD. degree programs. The master’s degree program in Agricultural sciences provides a flexible program, which can be tailored to meet each student’s unique situation.

Master of Science Degree Options

The M.S. degree in Agricultural Sciences is currently offered with two options: (1) Thesis option and (2) Non-thesis option. The thesis option requires that the student conducts research and writes a thesis, designed primarily for students interested in research who plan to pursue advanced degree such as a Ph.D. degree or occupy research positions following the completion of their training. The option develops students’ theoretical and research foundation for further graduate studies in addition to further knowledge and skills in agricultural sciences. This program requires 30 approved semester credit hours of coursework including four (4) credit hours dedicated to the thesis. Students in this program are expected to complete a thesis plus a minimum of 26 hours of course work, 12 hours of which must be core courses. The thesis is a report of scholarly research conducted by the student. The thesis research will be conducted under supervision of the student’s major professor and advisory committee (see information below about the creation of committee). Upon completion of the thesis, the student’s final oral examination is scheduled. Details of oral examination are given in section below. In addition to the oral examination, students are encouraged to present seminars based on their work. They are also required to write and submit at least one paper at professional meetings and at least one paper for submission to the professional journal in their field of expertise. Under the non-thesis option, the program requires 35 approved semester credit hours of course work. Upon completion of the course work, each student choosing the non-thesis option must take a comprehensive written and oral examination administered by the student’s advisory committee and other faculty members representing appropriate subject matter areas.
The core courses mentioned above in the program are as follows:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>THESIS OPTION</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NON-THESIS OPTION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major core-</td>
<td>12 hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGSC 5060 Stat. for Res. Work.</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGSC 5110 Research Methods</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGSC 5610-5620 Seminar</td>
<td>2 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGSC 5120 Thesis Writing</td>
<td>4 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrations (minimum)</td>
<td>12 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives (maximum)</td>
<td>6 hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total (with Thesis) =</td>
<td>30 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGSC 5060 Stat. for Res Workers</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGSC 5110 Research Method</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGSC 5610-5620 Seminar</td>
<td>2 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGSC 5350 Cont. Issues &amp; Prob.</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentrations (minimum)</td>
<td>15 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives maximum</td>
<td>9 hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total (without Thesis) =</td>
<td>35 hrs</td>
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Students choosing the non-thesis option are required to take a course titled “Independent Study of the Contemporary Issues and Problems” (AGSC 5350). This course includes a study of current literature applicable to the practice of contemporary issues, problem(s) and their solution(s) in a student’s area of concentration (Agribusiness, Animal Science, or Plant Science, Agriculture and Extension Education). Students should select a topic of their interest and complete work on the selected topic under the guidance of his or her advisor. If the completed work is approved by the advisor, then the student will make a request for written and oral (comprehensive) examination.

Curriculum/Program of Study

Program of Study for Agribusiness Concentration:

Core Courses: Thesis option 12 hours or non-thesis option 11 hours

AGSC 5060 Statistics for Research Workers 3 credit hours
AGSC 5110 Research Methods 3 credit hours
AGSC 5120 Thesis Writing 4 credit hours
Or AGSC 5350 Independent Study (For non-thesis option) 3 credit hours
AGSC 5610-5620 Seminar 2 credit hours

Required Courses: 12 hrs minimum with thesis or 15hrs minimum for non-thesis option
AGSC 5080  Agribusiness Management & Market Analysis  3 credit hours
AGSC 5090  Food and Fiber Industry Economics & Policy  3 credit hours
AGSC 5100  Environmental Resource Econ & Management  3 credit hours
AGSC 5300  Decision-making in Agribusiness-Quantitative App  3 credit hours
AGSC 5310  Intl. Agril. Trade and Marketing  3 credit hours
AGSC 5330  Agribusiness Strategy  3 credit hours

**Electives:**  6 hours maximum thesis or 9 hours maximum non-thesis
BISE 5020  Managerial Communication  3 credit hours
BISI 6370  Seminar in Information Systems  3 credit hours
ECON 6200  Economic Development  3 credit hours
MGMT 6120  Seminar in Managerial Problems  3 credit hours
MGMT 6090  International Management  3 credit hours
ECON 6110  Managerial Economics  3 credit hours
AGSC 5030  Organizational Leadership in AEE  3 credit hours
MGMT 6010  Organizational Theory  3 credit hours
AGSC 5040  Program Planning and Evaluation in AEE  3 credit hours
AGSC 5050  Special Problems in AEE  3 credit hours
AGSC 5150  Livestock Management  3 credit hours
AGSC 5180  Soil Classification  3 credit hours

**Program of Study for Agricultural Education Concentration:**

**Core Courses:** Thesis option 12 hours or non thesis option 11 hours
AGSC 5060  Statistics for Research Workers  3 credit hours
AGSC 5110  Research Methods  3 credit hours
AGSC 5120  Thesis Writing  4 credit hours
Or AGSC 5350  Independent Study (For non-thesis option)  3 credit hours
AGSC 5610-5620  Seminar  2 credit hours

**Required Courses:** 12 hrs minimum with thesis or 15 hrs minimum for non-thesis option
AGSC 5010  Foundations of Agric Extension Education (AEE)  3 credit hours
AGSC 5020  Instructional Strategies in AEE  3 credit hours
AGSC 5030  Organization Leadership in AEE  3 credit hours
AGSC 5040  Program Planning, Management, & Evaluation in AEE  3 credit hours
AGSC 5050  Special Problems in AEE  3 credit hours

**Electives:**  6 hours maximum with thesis or 9 hours maximum non-thesis
AGSC 5080  Agribusiness Management & Market analysis  3 credit hours
AGSC 5090  Food and Fiber Industry Economics & Policy  3 credit hours
AGSC 5100  Environmental, Resource Econ. & Management  3 credit hours
AGSC 5140  Special Problems in Animal and Poultry Science  3 credit hours
AGSC 5150  Livestock Management  3 credit hours
AGSC 5220  Plant Growth Substances  3 credit hours
AGSC 5260  Soil and Plant Analysis  3 credit hours
EDRD 6050  Reading in Content Areas  3 credit hours
EDSE 5530*  Edu & Psychology of Exceptional Children  3 credit hours
EDCI 6190*  Microcomputers in Educational Services  3 credit hours
EDCI 5000*  Foundations of education  3 credit hours

*When seeking teacher licensure simultaneously with the concentration in Agriculture & Extension Education, an undergraduate major in an area of Agricultural Sciences and the following courses are required: EDSE 5530, EDCI 6190, EDCI 4910, AGSC 4720 (9 hours) and EDCI 4705 (3 hours),

**If a student without an undergraduate major in Agricultural Sciences seeks licensure for teaching Agricultural Education, an additional program of undergraduate coursework must be uniquely designed for the student and completed to ensure that no agricultural science deficiencies are present.

Program of Study for Animal Science Concentration:

Core Courses: Thesis option 12 hours or non-thesis option 11 hours
AGSC 5060  Statistics for Research Workers  3 credit hours
AGSC 5110  Research Methods  3 credit hours
AGSC 5120  Thesis Writing  4 credit hours
Or AGSC 5350  Independent Study (for non-thesis option)  3 credit hours
AGSC 5610-5620  Seminar  2 credit hours

Required Courses: 12 hrs minimum with thesis or 15 hrs minimum for non-thesis option
AGSC 5130  Animal Nutrition  3 credit hours
AGSC 5140  Special Problems in Animal and Poultry Science  3 credit hours
AGSC 5150  Livestock Management  3 credit hours
AGSC 5160  Animal Genetics and Breeding  3 credit hours
AGSC 5170  Advanced Poultry Production and Management  3 credit hours

Electives: 6 hours maximum with thesis or 9 hours maximum for non-thesis
AGSC 5090  Food and Fiber Industry Economics & Policy  3 credit hours
AGSC 5100    Environmental Resource Economics & Management       3 credit hours
AGSC 5180    Soil Classification                                3 credit hours
AGSC 5220    Plant Growth Substances                           3 credit hours
AGSC 5260    Soil and Plant Analysis                           3 credit hours

Program of Study for Plant Science Concentration:

Core Courses: Thesis option 12 hours or non-thesis option 11 hours
AGSC 5060    Statistics for Research Workers                  3 credit hours
AGSC 5110    Research Methods                                 3 credit hours
AGSC 5120    Thesis Writing                                   4 credit hours
Or AGSC 5350  Independent Study (For non-thesis option)      3 credit hours
AGSC 5610-5620 Seminar                                       2 credit hours

Required Courses: 12 hrs minimum with thesis or 15 hrs minimum for non-thesis option
AGSC 5180    Soil Classification                              3 credit hours
AGSC 5190    Plant Breeding                                   3 credit hours
AGSC 5220    Plant Growth Substances                          3 credit hours
AGSC 5230    Advanced Propagation of Horticultural Plants     3 credit hours
AGSC 5240    Advanced Pomology                                3 credit hours
AGSC 5260    Soil and Plant Analysis                          3 credit hours

Electives: 6 hours maximum with thesis or 9 hours maximum for non-thesis
AGSC 5090    Food and Fiber Industry Economics & Policy        3 credit hours
AGSC 5100    Environmental, Resource Econ. & Management       3 credit hours
AGSC 5130    Animal Nutrition                                 3 credit hours
AGSC 5150    Livestock Management                             3 credit hours
AGSC 5160    Animal Genetics and Breeding                     3 credit hours
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE PROGRAM

The Ph.D. in Biological Sciences is an interdepartmental degree program offered by the Department of Biological Sciences in the School of Agricultural and Consumer Sciences. Admission procedure for the Ph.D. program is outlined under the Department of Biological Sciences in the Tennessee State University catalogue. The major advisor will be appointed by the department offering the student’s primary emphasis. Course descriptions are listed under the respective departments.

CERTIFICATE: APPLIED GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Admission Process
Application for the certificate must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher education and meet the Graduate School requirements for non-degree admission and retention as published in the University catalog. Requests for application forms and materials should be directed to the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

Certificate Requirements
To earn the Certificate in Applied Geospatial Information Systems, students must satisfactorily complete the following courses:
AGSC 6510 Advanced Geospatial Information Systems
AGSC 6520 Advanced Spatial Analysis
AGSC 6530 Advanced Geospatial Metadata
AGSC 6540 Advanced Spatial Database Design and Management
AGSC 6550 Advanced Geospatial Information Systems Application and Design
AGSC 6560 Advanced Global Positioning Systems

The certificate is awarded upon the successful completion of the six courses (18 semester credit hours). For more information, please call the Department of Agricultural Sciences (615-963-5431) or Dr. Robert Harrison (615-963-5183).
ADMISSION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURE

Admission Requirements and Completing an Application File-M.S. Degree in Agricultural Sciences

Candidates must have the equivalent of the bachelors degree with a major in one of the agricultural sciences or a related area and a minimum quality grade point average of 2.50 on a 4.00 point scale and a minimum score of 870 on the GRE (verbal & quantitative, or verbal, quantitative & subject), or 370 on the MAT for unconditional admission. An applicant with the bachelor’s degree in areas other than agricultural sciences may be recommended to graduate school for conditional admission and be required to take up to eighteen (18) credit hours of undergraduate prerequisite courses in agricultural disciplines, as recommended by the department of Agricultural Sciences Graduate Admissions Committee. The departmental Graduate Admissions Committee may also consider and recommend (after evaluating the applicant’s application including the recommendation letters) for conditional admission, if the applicant has a 2.25-2.49 GPA and a minimum pre-admission test score of 935 on the GRE or 383 on the MAT or 2.10-2.24 GPA and a minimum pre-admission test score of 1,000 on the GRE or 349 on the MAT. Students seeking teacher licensure in Ag Ed must have a 2.70 cumulative grade point average to be admitted.

Students are admitted in the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Application forms and instructions are available from the School of Graduate Studies and Research. Application requests and correspondence on admissions may also be sent via e-mail (gradschool@tnstate.edu). All applications for admission are made directly to the Graduate School. The applicant must complete and submit all the items requested in the Graduate application package. Applicants are expected to include Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Miller Analogy Test (MAT) scores as a part of the application. Therefore, applicants must have their GRE or MAT score reports sent directly to the School of Graduate Studies and Research. Students may be admitted without GRE or MAT score only under special circumstances and will be required to take the examination and furnish scores during their first semester in residence (as part-time or full-time students).
University/ College Transcripts- All applicants, whether degree-seeking or not, must submit official transcripts of all post secondary work including TSU, with the application. These transcripts must be obtained from the registrar of your college or university in sealed envelopes and attached to your application or mailed directly to the School of Graduate Studies. All applicants should have two letters of recommendations sent to the Head, Department of Agricultural Sciences. In summary, a prospective candidate for the Master of Science program in Agricultural Sciences must first be admitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research by following these steps:

- Read and follow the instructions on the application form.
- You may apply online: www.tnstate.edu
- E-mail inquiries to: gradschool@tnstate.edu
- File an application for admission on the approved application form. A non-refundable fee of $25.00 must be submitted with application for admission. This fee is payable by check or money order only, payable to Tennessee State University. Applicants for readmission are not required to pay the fee unless seeking a higher degree.

Applications may be submitted online or mail the completed application with other necessary documents to:

Tennessee State University,
School of Graduate Studies and Research,
3500 John A Merritt Blvd.
Nashville, TN: 37209-1561

Application Deadlines and Application Decision

Admission decisions are made throughout the year. Applicants may be admitted to begin study in fall, spring or summer semesters. The complete application package should be received as early as possible. Refer to the application or the Graduate School website for appropriate deadlines. To ensure consideration for admission to the graduate school, the application and other required documents must be postmarked by the following priority deadlines:

- July 1 – Fall semester
- November 1 – Spring semester
- April 1 – Summer semester

The Department of Agricultural Sciences receives a student’s application only after the School of Graduate Studies and Research has reviewed the application and found it to have met general admission requirements (see the Graduate School catalog or website- www.tnstate.edu)
for these requirements). The applications received from the Graduate School are reviewed by the
department’s Graduate Program Admissions Committee. The committee reviews the application
package along with the recommendation letters and recommends to the Head, Department of
Agricultural Sciences that a candidate be granted “conditional” or “unconditional” standing in
the department or be denied for admission. The Head of Department reports the recommendation
to the Graduate School Dean. The final decision is notified to the applicant by the Dean of the
Graduate School.

**International Students:**

In addition to the above-mentioned requirements, international students whose first
language is not English must submit evidence of English proficiency. They must take the Test of
English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and request The Educational Testing Service (ETS) to
send the results of the TOEFL to the School of Graduate Studies and Research. A minimum
TOEFL score of 500 (paper test) or 173 (computer-based test) or 61 (Internet-based test) is
required.

In addition, official transcripts or authorized school records with a listing of courses
and grades received must be evaluated by a foreign educational credential agency (such as World
Education Service), at the student’s expense, must be submitted before they can be accepted.
Evaluation reports of transcripts must be sent directly to the School of Graduate Studies and
Research by the agency. International students must also provide evidence of financial resources
sufficient to provide tuition and fees for the academic year and the $25.00 non-refundable
application fee.

All international students applying for admission who have a student visa shall submit
a certificate from a licensed physician or the qualified medical authority verifying freedom from
tuberculosis within thirty (30) days from the first day of classes. Failure to submit such
certificate shall result in denial of further enrollment or admission. In the event that the student
has tuberculosis or has potential tuberculosis requiring medical treatment, continued enrollment
will be contingent upon the determination by a licensed physician that further enrollment does
not present a risk to others and upon the student’s compliance with any prescribed medical
treatment program.
Note:

- It is mandatory that all F-1 students have health insurance upon enrollment for the duration of their studies. The policy must include a clause of Medical Evacuation and Repatriation of $10,000 each.
- After admission, copies of Visa or Alien Registration card must be submitted before student may enroll.
- Internationals transferring from another university/college must submit to their current school’s the “Immigration Information” forms for a release date, before processing of an I-20.

Unconditional Admission:

Applicant granted full admission status is eligible to begin taking graduate level courses. To be eligible for unconditional admission to the master’s degree program in Agricultural Sciences, a candidate must have been accepted into the School of Graduate Studies, meet the basic departmental requirements as described above and have preparation in formal undergraduate courses or equivalent experience. These students are considered for assistantship.

Conditional Admission:

A Conditional admission to the master’s degree program in Agricultural Sciences will be given to prospective students satisfying all requirements for full admission but have not had undergraduate courses in agriculture or have undergraduate degree other than in agriculture. The prerequisites may be satisfied by any of the following methods: by taking the undergraduate courses or their equivalent. All conditions must be met as specified, and courses taken in this status must be earned with a grade of “B” or higher, and must be completed within two academic semesters from time of enrollment in graduate school, unless otherwise specified by the department head in writing. The prerequisite courses can be taken simultaneously with regular M.S. degree courses on the approval of the Head of Department. Satisfactory completion of the identified prerequisites will change the student’s admission status from conditional to unconditional. An applicant may also be recommended for conditional admission by the graduate admissions committee (after evaluating the application package) if he or she has a 2.25-2.49 GPA and a minimum pre-admission test score of 935 on the GRE or 383 on the MAT or 2.10-2.24 GPA and a minimum pre-admission test score of 1,000 on the GRE or 349 on the MAT.
**Transfer Credit Policy:**
At the Master’s level, a student may be allowed a maximum of twelve (12) semester credit hours from another accredited college or university. The transfer of credit form may be obtained online at www.tnstate.edu/grad or from the School of Graduate Studies & Research. The course work being considered for transfer must be evaluated by the Graduate coordinator/department Chair, School Dean and the Dean of Graduate School. Only courses in which the student earned grades of “B” or better, and which are taken within the degree program time limit, will be considered for transfer. Credits earned in partial fulfillment of a previously completed degree program at Tennessee State University or any other institution may not be transferred or used for credit in another degree program (2009-2011 Graduate Catalog).

**Class Loads Policy:**
Full-time status is attained when the graduate student enrolls in at least nine (9) credit hours in one semester. When a student enrolls in any course for credit, the maximum class load for either the fall or spring semester shall be twelve (12) hours. Students may take up to fifteen (15) hours with an overload approval. The maximum load for either summer session I or summer session II shall be six credit hours. Students desiring to carry an overload must have the endorsement of the Major Advisor, Dean of the School, and the Dean of the Graduate School (2009-2011 Graduate Catalogs).

**Second Master’s Degree:**
Students may not be simultaneously enrolled in two Master’s degree programs. Credits earned to fulfill requirements for the first Master’s degree may not be used to satisfy any of the requirements for the second Master’s degree, or reduce the number of hours for the second Master’s degree (2009-2011 Graduate Catalog).
PROGRAM OF STUDY AND ADVANCEMENT OF CANDIDACY

Each new graduate student is required to submit a formal program of study and advancement to candidacy for approval. This program must be made with the advice and concurrence of his/her academic advisor and graduate committee and must be submitted after completing nine (9) credit hours of graduate course work. Program of study must be submitted for approval using the Program of Study and Advancement to Candidacy form. This form can be found online at “Forms & Publications” website hosted by the School of Graduate Studies & Research. Only courses appearing on the approved program will be counted toward fulfilling degree requirements. Changes in the program may be made, using the Change in Program or Personnel form with the approval of Student’s Graduate Committee and the Graduate School.

The new graduate student is advised to arrive a few days before the start of classes to become acquainted with the faculty and to meet with the graduate coordinator to prepare a course schedule for the student’s first semester. If the student has not already selected a thesis advisor, he/she is encouraged to select a permanent thesis advisor within four to six weeks, secure this faculty members approval. The student is encouraged to complete his/her program in minimum time. It is recognized that this minimum will vary depending up on the courses taken, the thesis problem, and the student’s ability. Normally, the student should take the maximum course work load (Graduate School Regulations) in the early stages of his/her program and reduced loads in the latter stages. The graduate programs of all students in the department will be evaluated periodically by the Graduate Coordinator and the Department Head, with deficiencies and strengths brought to the attention of those concerned.

Thesis/ Special Problems:

A thesis is required of those in the M.S. program with thesis option. A problem involving research is also required of those on assistantship in the Master of Science degree program. Four semester hours or credits are assigned for the research and writing leading to the M.S. thesis.
Thesis Project Proposal

During the first semester, the student selects his/her major research professor (thesis advisor) and discusses possible topics with the major research professor. Students are also required to establish a Thesis Committee (Guidance Committee) consisting of a Chairperson and at least two committee members and request one committee member from outside the Agricultural sciences department. These committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty. A completed Thesis/Dissertation Committee Appointment Form, after obtaining required signatures, is submitted to Department Head and the School Dean for recommendation and final approval by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Students after deciding a tentative thesis topic must begin work on developing the research project proposal in consultation with major professor. Although the research is the student’s responsibility, he/she should expect guidance from his or her advisor in selecting a topic. Minimum items that must be included on this are: Tentative Thesis/Project Title; Purpose and Objective(s); Significance of the Problem (supported by relevant published research); Theory –base; Method(s) of Investigation; Expected Results, and Anticipated Date for completing the investigation. A suggested format for proposed thesis research proposal/special problem is provided in Appendix. During the second semester (or summer if the student began in spring), the student is expected to finalize the project proposal and present it in a seminar to the faculty and other graduate students. After the seminar, needed revisions are made and signatures obtained from the committee members and the Department head on the form- Report on Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Presentation. Committee chair submits the form indicating proposal has been approved by the thesis committee.

Formulation of objectives and procedures and the writing of a formal project proposal are a required part of the training of graduate students. Master’s degree students with thesis option must register the course AGSC 5120 (Thesis Writing). This course orients the student toward the research process, including the drafting of his/her thesis/special project research proposal. Thus, each student makes a contribution to the department by planning the research project. Once the project is approved, the student is expected to devote an increasing amount of time to the research. In the later phase of the program (after course work is completed), 100 percent of the student’s time is devoted to research.
All students must indicate in their research proposal whether or not their research will involve human subjects, animal care, radiation safety, hazardous materials. If any of these are involved, obtain research compliance approval from the Institutional Review Board- (IRB) or Animal Care Committee by submitting a prescribed form and survey, according to procedures on Office of Sponsored Research (TSU) website, before initiating data collection. Students who have not developed a suitable thesis research proposal (as determined by the thesis committee and Head of Department) and/or have not done well in presenting the proposal will not be allowed to continue in their program until this deficiency has been corrected. Assistantship may be terminated for those students not meeting the above deadlines.

Project Time-Line

Students are expected to complete a time-line with their major advisor that will be used to determine satisfactory progress. Minimum items that should be included on this time-line are the date of the project proposal presentation, submission of a first draft of the thesis to the advisor, and submission of the completed draft of thesis to all committee members (at least two full weeks before the final oral examination). In addition, students should discuss with the advisor how much time major advisor may need to correct the first draft of thesis and adhere to the time table agreed upon by the major advisor. The time-line should be submitted to the major advisor and graduate coordinator for approval before it is turned in with the project proposal.

Submission of Thesis / Special Problems

The major professor has the authority to require the student to have the manuscript (research proposals/ thesis /non-thesis option special problem manuscript) in acceptable form and language before the manuscript is distributed to the student’s committee. Format of the thesis manuscript should conform to the recommendations set forth in the guidelines for preparing Dissertations, Thesis, Projects, and Course Papers available at no cost in the Graduate School and the Graduate School website. Students are required to obtain copy of same from the Graduate School.
In the event of a conflict between the student and major professor on the acceptance of manuscript, the Graduate Coordinator and the Department Head will assist in resolving the question.

1. When the candidate and the major advisor feel that the thesis/special problem manuscript is in a form suitable for the final draft, copies shall be circulated to: (1) All members of the candidate’s advisory committee; (2) the Graduate Coordinator. A cover letter from the advisor will designate this copy as the official reader’s copy. The committee members must receive the manuscript sufficiently early (at least two weeks prior to defense) so that revisions can be made and returned to the faculty at least five working days before the final defense of the research.

2. Although it is expected that major suggestions of committee members will be incorporated into the manuscript, it is the responsibility of the student and his major advisor to see that the reader’s copy incorporates committee suggestions and is essentially in the form from which duplications will be made for submission to the Graduate School. Proper grammar and consistency of style are essential to the manuscript.

3. The candidate’s advisory committee will decide on the acceptance of the completed thesis/special problem manuscript with regard to content and style.

4. After the defense of the research, members of the student’s committee, the Graduate Coordinator and the Department Head should be given at least one week to examine the final manuscript before approving it. Additionally, the approval of the Dean of the School of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences and the Graduate Dean is required.

GRADUATE EXAMINATIONS

The Final Oral Examination (Thesis Defense)

Oral examinations are the concluding event of each master’s program. These examinations are conducted by the student’s special committee. Oral examinations for the thesis option program normally concentrate on the student’s thesis. The student is expected to “defend” the thesis. This entails being able to answer questions about how and why certain things were done in the thesis and to be able to interpret the results. Student may also be asked questions to determine if the students have been able to integrate the materials learned in courses so to apply them to issues and problems at hand. The major advisor is responsible for scheduling examination in consultation with other thesis committee members, Graduate Coordinator and Department head. The request to hold the examination should be made at least one week (5 working days) prior to the examination. As part of the examining process, the student shall begin the examination by formally presenting his/her research to the
committee (20-30 minutes). Where possible, visual aids should be employed. Other faculty members and graduate students should be invited for the presentation part of the oral examination only. The major advisor is responsible for posting examination results to the Dean of Graduate Studies after obtaining signatures from committee members, department head, and the School Dean on the form -Report of Final Oral Examination (defense) of the Thesis or Dissertation.

**Comprehensive Examination:**

The Master degree students with non-thesis option must register and pass the course AGSC 5350(Independent Study-Contemporary Issues and Problems) near the end of their course work. In this course students, under the guidance of a professor, will study, research a problem or issue resulting in a substantial piece of writing. Upon completion of the course work, each student choosing the **non-thesis option** must take a comprehensive written and oral examination administered by the student’s advisory committee and other faculty members representing appropriate subject matter areas. The student’s major advisor will serve as chairman of the committee conducting examination. Student is responsible for obtaining approval from the Graduate School for the examination dates.

Written portion of the comprehensive examination will be based upon the core requirements for candidate’s area of emphasis. At the oral examination, student will begin by giving a short (20-25 minutes) presentation on their study topic. Oral examination will be conducted in such a way as to determine if the student has been able to apply (synthesize) knowledge gained in various courses in presenting issues and problems and integrate the materials learned in courses so as to apply them to analyze issues in his/her area of interest. In addition, the student will present and discuss the study he/she conducted for the course AGSC5350. Members of the examining committee will then have time to ask the students questions pertaining to his/her presentation, as well as the program of study. Upon completion of the examination, the student’s major advisor must submit the results to the Head of the Department and the Graduate School. If a student fails the comprehensive examination, one retake will be allowed. Should the student again fail a third and final comprehensive examination may be taken upon completion of additional course work (minimum of 6 hrs) to be selected by the student’s advisory committee.
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Graduate Assistantship

Graduate Assistantships are available in the department to qualified graduate students (see minimum qualifications for the award below). The School of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences funds these assistantships from the funds received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other potential sources. Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis to qualified applicants based on individual qualification and merits. Students not initially provided assistantships may become eligible later during their course work, depending on their performance and the availability of the funds. In addition, assistantships are awarded only to the students who are unconditionally admitted into the department’s graduate program. There is no guarantee that stipend payment will continue for the full period; acceptable performance of the assistantship duties is always required. Each assistantship will be reviewed at the end of each semester by the student’s research supervisor, graduate coordinator, and the Department head. Renewal will be based upon acceptable performance of work responsibilities and academic progress.

The assistantships are provided for assisting the progress of the school’s research/teaching projects and thus, financing students’ research associated with graduate study. The basic assistantship in the department is a one-half time appointment. A graduate research assistantship is generally a part-time formal appointment. A half-time assistantship carries with it the obligation to devote at least 20 hours/weak in research duties over the duration of the student’s program. Students receiving the assistantship accept the responsibility to perform the duties including carrying out supervised research related to his/her graduate program and to his/her other works as assigned by the major advisor and the Department head. Acceptable completion of assigned research tasks rather than simply working a specified number of hours per week constitutes a fulfillment of the assistantship obligations. Stipends are currently set at $16,538 annually for Master’s degree Students. Students are required to pay in-state fee from this amount. Assistantships are awarded annually on a fiscal year basis, July 1 to June 30 of the following year. Depending on availability of funds and student performance, assistantships are renewed on July 1 of each year for not more than a total two years (24 months) for Masters Students. Total in-state fees will be subtracted from each assistantship and credited to the
Continuation of each assistantship is based on a satisfactory performance and maintenance of a minimum overall GPA of 3.00 on a 4:00 scale.

In addition, graduate assistants must be full-time (registered for 9 semester hours or more during the fall and spring semesters and in summer for thesis-4 hours or more) students. All graduate assistants must choose the thesis option for their Master of Science degree in the Department of Agricultural Sciences. During the first semester, the student selects his/her major research professor and begin work on the research project proposal. During the second semester (or summer if the student began in spring), the student is expected to finalize the project statement and present it in a seminar to the faculty and other graduate students. Thus, each student contributes to the department by planning the research project. Once the project is approved, the student is expected to devote an increasing amount of time to the research. In the later phase of the program (after course work is completed), 100 percent of the student’s time is devoted to research.

Each graduate assistant has a responsibility to the department to carry out assigned research work under the direction of his or her major professor and to complete such research. Work responsibilities during initial semesters will contribute to the student’s understanding of the research that ultimately will be undertaken in the thesis and in all cases will contribute to the student’s research skills. A student is required to submit contributed papers to professional associations and to publish the results of research in a scholarly journal prior to and after completion of the thesis. The primary responsibility of each Graduate research assistant is the completion of research projects that have been assigned. However, the student may be expected to undertake other tasks as assigned by his or her major professor, or the department head.

**Minimum qualifications for the Award of Graduate Assistantship (Master’s degree) in the department of Agricultural Sciences:**

1. Must be admitted unconditionally to the Master of Science degree in Agricultural Sciences program at Tennessee State University.
2. Must submit a statement (750-1,000 words) why you should be awarded assistantship and how it is going to help you in your professional development.
3. A minimum GPA of 3.00 on a 4.00 point scale or better at the undergraduate level and a minimum score of 870 on the GRE, or 370 on the MAT.
4. Students with GPA between 2.50 to 3.00 at the undergraduate level may be considered if they have a high GRE score (of 935 or more or 383 or more on MAT) and very good recommendation letters.
5. Interview in person or by phone with department head and/or graduate coordinator and possible thesis advisor(s).
6. Two recommendation letters.
7. A student in the Agricultural Sciences program (in good standing) at TSU not receiving
the assistantship may be considered for assistant ship if he/she has 3.25 or better GPA on
a 4.00 point scale in the graduate courses. The student must also be recommended by two
faculty members in the department including a professor willing to serve as chair of
thesis guidance committee.

Application forms for Graduate Research Assistantships are available from the
Department of Agricultural Sciences, School of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences,
Tennessee State University, and Nashville, TN 37209-1561. Assistantship applications
should be submitted as early as possible, as but no later than July 1 for the fall semester,
November 1 for spring and April 1 for summer sessions. Graduate Assistantship applications
are made directly to the department, not to the Graduate School and recommendation letters
be submitted with the application in the sealed envelope or mailed directly to the Head,
Department of Agricultural Sciences. The Graduate Admission Committee, which is
appointed by the Head, Department of Agricultural Sciences will review applications for
Graduate Research Assistantships and makes recommendations to the department head on
granting of assistantship.

**Job Description for Graduate Research Assistant M.S and Ph.D. Degree**

**Graduate Research Assistant M.S Degree**
The appointment is associated with research and requires the following responsibilities:

1. Carry out a designed program of research under the supervision of a designated supervisor/major
   professor.
2. Work on and contribute to collaborative research teams.
3. Complete a thesis proposal with appropriate supervisory assistance.
4. Perform the following major duties that include but are not limited to:
   - Reading and comprehending reports and other scientific literature
   - Conducting data analysis and computations
   - Harvesting of field and/or laboratory samples
   - Writing research reports based upon data results and presenting data at conferences,
     scientific symposium and professional society meetings
   - Attend all announced School of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences seminars on a regular
     basis and participate in them actively.
   - Publish at least one paper in a reputed professional journal by the end of his/her program
   - Taking oral examination following completion of course work and in
     consultation with the Graduate School
   - Completing other duties as assigned by the major professor.
Graduate Research Assistant Ph.D. Degree

A graduate research assistantship is generally a part-time formal appointment. It requires completion of specific duties commensurate with the percentage appointment (e.g., 20 hours/week for a 50% [half-time] appointment). The appointment is associated with research and requires the following responsibilities:

1. Undertake research in at least one programmatic area within the department of admission.
2. Work on and contribute to collaborative research items.
3. Complete a dissertation proposal with appropriate supervisory assistance.
4. Perform the following major duties that include but are not limited to:
   - Reading and comprehending reports and other scientific literature
   - Conducting data analysis and computations
   - Harvesting of field and/or laboratory samples
   - Providing data files and hard copy reports and materials to the major professor in a timely manner
   - Participating in a meaningful teaching experience for at least one semester as determined by major professor
   - Presenting a seminar on the dissertation results
   - Writing research reports based upon data results and
   - Presenting data at conferences, scientific symposium and professional society meetings
   - Attend departmental seminars(required)
   - Taking oral examination following completion of course work and in consultation with the Graduate School
   - Attend all announced School of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences seminars on a regular basis and participate in them actively.
   - Publish at least two papers in reputed professional journals by the end of his/her program
   - Completing other duties as assigned by the major professor.

Evaluation

Each graduate research assistant’s progress will be reviewed at the end of each semester. This process reviews progress on research (see section on the project proposal) as well as academic performance and is an integral part of maintaining an effective graduate program. The review is conducted for the purpose of allocating assistantship funds or continuation of assistantships. Failure by the graduate assistant to pass, in any one semester, nine hours of coursework on the graduate program with 3.0 or better grade point average will be sufficient grounds for reduction in the rate of stipend or suspension of the assistantship. Unsatisfactory performance includes failure to maintain a “B” average in all courses attempted for graduate credit. Any graduate assistant not meeting the requirements for admission for candidacy, excessive absences from work and unsatisfactory progress in
research work are other reasons he/she become ineligible to continue the assistantship. Thus, graduate assistants not meeting the academic standards of the department will be subject to dismissal. The Graduate Evaluation Committee, appointed by the Head, Department will evaluate student’s performance and recommend dismissal of any student after careful evaluation of overall performance. Appeals of dismissals may be made to a committee composed of the Department Head, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Graduate Evaluation committee. The decision of this committee will be final.

**Time Limitations on Assistantships**

Students on assistantships must complete their Master’s degree program within the time period of two years (24 months). If duties or other matters require his or her absence from the office during regular working hours, the graduate assistant is expected to notify the major advisor and the secretary assigned to the Graduate Coordinator of such absence, the nature of absence, and how he or she can be reached in case such should be necessary. Failure to receive prior approval for absences may result in termination of the assistantship. Although graduate research assistants do not earn leave with pay, they are considered junior staff members and are required to observe the research station work schedule.

**Assignment of Office Policy:**

The Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the Department Head, will be responsible for assignment of office space to graduate students. Doctoral candidates will receive priority in the assignment of offices. Those with seniority in the graduate program will receive priority in assigning space for Masters Candidates. Students interested in moving from their presently assigned space to a vacant space should contact the Department Head. Furniture is not assigned to the graduate student, but to the office in which it is located.

**Commitment to Excellence Through Diversity:**

The School of Agricultural and Consumer Sciences actively shares the University’s commitment to excellence through diversity. We are dedicated to increase the ethnic and cultural diversity of our student and faculty community and to activities and actions that will lead to a more just and humane society. We strongly encourage applications from students with nontraditional backgrounds who have high potential and aptitude. We will strive to find the
financial resources needed to attract and retain students who will enable us to better demonstrate our commitment to diversity.

### M.S. (Thesis) Degree Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Item</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>The week prior to start of classes</td>
<td>The Graduate Coordinator is temporary advisor to new graduate students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign major professor (Academic)</td>
<td>First week of classes in entering semester</td>
<td>The major professor becomes the permanent academic and thesis work advisor (if applies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign thesis Advisor (if applies)</td>
<td>Within four to six weeks of classes in entering semester</td>
<td>Graduate coordinator will assist the student in identifying and assigning the thesis advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete program of study and Advancement of Candidacy</td>
<td>After completing 9 credit hours but before completing 15 credit hours</td>
<td>It must be approved by the student’s advisory committee and the Department Head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appoint thesis committee</td>
<td>Before submitting thesis project research proposal</td>
<td>Approved by the Head of the Department and the Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete thesis research proposal and presentation of the proposal</td>
<td>By the end of second semester</td>
<td>A short presentation to the faculty/students. Proposal is approved by Graduate coordinator and Department Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit research proposal to the Graduate School</td>
<td>End of second semester</td>
<td>Approved by Head of Department and Dean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete thesis, schedule date for thesis defense</td>
<td>During or prior to last semester, Follow guidelines in Grad. Handbook.</td>
<td>Student in consultation with thesis advisor, must take all steps to complete thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Departmental seminar – thesis defense, oral examination</td>
<td>During the last semester of enrollment</td>
<td>Schedule, and inform department personnel, two weeks prior to presentation/oral defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take final oral examination</td>
<td>During students last semester of enrollment</td>
<td>After thesis is completed,</td>
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**M.S. (Non-Thesis) Degree Timetable**

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign Advisor (if applies)</td>
<td>Within four to six weeks of classes in entering semester</td>
<td>Graduate coordinator will assist the student in identifying and assigning the advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete program of study and Advancement of Candidacy</td>
<td>After completing 9 credit hours but before completing 15 credit hours</td>
<td>It must be approved by the student’s advisory committee and the Department Head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appoint committee</td>
<td></td>
<td>Approved by the Head of the Department and the Dean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Register for AGSC 5350</td>
<td>Near the end of course work (preferably)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule comprehensive Examination, written and oral</td>
<td>Preferably before the end of last semester</td>
<td>Must take AGSC 5350. Required course for non-thesis option before scheduling comprehensive examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Examination, written and oral.</td>
<td>Presentation of paper</td>
<td>Committee members, faculty, students, advisor submits result to Grad. School.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>