

University of Arkansas

Department of Animal Science

Graduate Student Handbook

This document has been prepared as a helpful guide for Department of Animal Science graduate students. This guide contains information on procedures and policies that are specific for the Department of Animal Science Graduate Program. Procedures and policies not covered herein are covered in the University of Arkansas Graduate Catalog and the Graduate School Graduate Handbook. Students should consult these documents in addition to this handbook. Policies from the Graduate School supersede any departmental policy.

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Table of Contents

Welcome.....	2
Getting started.....	2
Meeting with your advisor	3
Enrolling in classes.....	4
Office Assignments and Keys	4
Payroll and Paychecks.....	4
University Vehicles.....	5
Telephones.....	5
Computer Access and Software.....	5
Holidays, Vacation, etc.....	6
Building Hours	6
Animal Science Graduate Student Orientation Session.....	6
Animal Science Graduate Student Organization.....	6
How to Succeed	6
Conduct of Research	7
Data collection and ownership	7
Laboratory Safety	8
Animal and Human Subjects.....	9
Academic Integrity.....	9
Non-disclosure Expectations.....	9
Responsible Conduct of Research.....	9
Graduate Degree Program Requirements:	10
M.S. Degree Requirements	10
Ph.D. Degree Requirements	122
Graduate Assistantships	144
Timeline	17
Final Thoughts	18

Welcome

We are pleased that you have chosen to pursue an advanced degree from the University of Arkansas, Department of Animal Science. The Department offers both the Master of Science (M.S.) (with both a thesis and a non-thesis option) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees in Animal Science. The thesis M.S. and the Ph.D. degrees in the Department require the completion of one or more advanced research projects and the submission of a completed thesis or dissertation. The Department offers an outstanding, nationally-recognized research program to support the research required to complete your degree. The non-thesis M.S. advanced degree program consists of a prescribed list of courses and does not require the completion of research project(s).

The materials presented in this handbook are intended to provide helpful and specific information regarding the Graduate Degree Program of the Department of Animal Science. Additional regulations and other important information on University of Arkansas Graduate School programs are presented in the University of Arkansas Graduate Catalog and the Graduate Student Handbook, found on the Graduate School website <https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/graduate/index.php>. In the case of inconsistencies or confusion between the departmental handbook and the Graduate School, the Graduate School supersedes the departmental document. Students in the Department of Animal Science are ultimately responsible for understanding and following policy.

Getting started:

This section gives you general information about getting started in your graduate degree program. In addition to this general information, there are several very important things you need to note as you begin your graduate career:

1. It is the responsibility of the student and the major advisor to know the rules and procedures for the completion of your degree. **Each graduate student should assume primary responsibility for knowing and meeting deadlines and requirements and in achieving adequate progress in the degree program.** For each semester, calendars with deadlines are available on the Graduate School website.
2. Graduate studies are very different from most of your undergraduate programs. Acquiring an advanced degree or becoming a professional research scientist requires the same kind of commitment that is needed to achieve success in any type of professional career. You must be self-

motivated, and make a commitment of intellect, time, effort, dedication to purpose, and perseverance to succeed in a graduate program.

3. University of Arkansas policy requires that your academic and research progress be reviewed annually by your major advisor/graduate committee. Departmental policy is that performance will be evaluated at 6-month intervals. If your performance evaluation is deemed unsatisfactory, you may be placed on a probationary period. The purpose of this probationary period is to provide an opportunity for you to correct the deficiencies identified in your work performance and for you to become an effective graduate student in the Department. If deficiencies in performance are not corrected at the end of that period, disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including termination from the graduate program.
4. Your major advisor may also be referred to as your graduate advisor. A principal investigator (PI) for a research project is the scientist ultimately responsible for directing the research. For your thesis/dissertation project, the PI may or may not be your major advisor. If the PI is not your major advisor, they would generally be a member of your graduate advisory committee. You should find multiple mentors as you work toward your degree. A mentor is anyone who is experienced in the field and that you trust to give you good advice.
5. One of the easiest things to do to help you transition from an undergraduate to a graduate degree program is to become acquainted with experienced graduate students who can give insight into the program. Ask questions, seek advice on transitioning from an undergraduate to graduate student, ask for assistance in classes, literature reviews, manuscripts, and research projects, or anything else that may come to mind. Your graduate student peers will become your greatest allies.

Meeting with your advisor

First meeting. When you were accepted into the Department of Animal Science graduate program, you were assigned a major advisor, based on your goals and areas of common interest. As soon as you arrive on campus, you should take the initiative in setting up a meeting with your major advisor. The first meeting should precede the first week of classes. The purpose of the first meeting is to have a friendly determination of your strengths and weaknesses to start the development of your plan of study and to select the classes for your first semester. At the meeting, you should be prepared to talk about your academic and non-academic background and your career goals. Develop a strategy to communicate with your major advisor; it will be necessary to speak often throughout the semester. Will you communicate through e-mail, weekly meetings, or another plan?

Subsequent meetings. Before the end of the first semester, you should meet with your major advisor at least one additional time to select **and form your graduate advisory committee**. You and your advisor should discuss and select who will serve on your committee based on your required coursework and area of research. You need to be proactive, research the background of prospective candidates for your advisory committee, and talk this over with your major advisor. Your advisor may, at their discretion, add additional members to your committee beyond those required by the degree program. Once a committee has been selected, you should visit with each person and confirm that each is willing to serve on your committee. During your first meeting, you should obtain the signature of each committee member on the Master or Ph.D. advisory committee report form (<https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/graduate/current-students/forms.php>) and submit it to the department's administrative manager for submission to the Graduate School and inclusion in your personal file. At the University of Arkansas, you officially have 2 committees (a separate advisory [for course requirement guidance] and a thesis/dissertation committee); however, in the Department of Animal Science the makeup of these 2 committees is usually identical and this document will refer to your single graduate advisory committee. Your advisor and advisory committee may require additional meetings as needed to assist you in completing your degree program successfully and to discuss your academic and research progress. A full plan of study (what courses you intend to take) should be completed before the end of your 1st semester in consultation with your graduate advisory committee.

Enrolling in Classes

Once your advisor and committee (beginning after your 1st semester) have developed your plan of study, you can enroll in classes using the UAConnect student information system. If you need help with the system, check with your advisor or an experienced graduate student. All graduate students must see the Departmental Administrative Manager for help with enrolling in thesis/dissertation credits.

Office Assignments and Keys

See the department's administrative manager in AFLS B-111 for office assignments and to obtain a key card that will be taken to Facilities Management to obtain keys. Keys will not be issued until you have obtained your University of Arkansas student ID. Offices are assigned as available to graduate research or teaching assistants first, and then to other graduate students.

Payroll and Paychecks

If you are a graduate or teaching assistant (on assistantship), or will be paid on hourly payroll, you will need to contact the department's administrative manager as soon as possible (even before arrival in

Fayetteville). You will receive information on payment times and methods and begin filling out the appropriate forms and begin the process in the WorkDay system. The University of Arkansas now requires background checks on all employees, including Graduate Assistants. Please be watching your email for a request for information email from HireRight. Any offer of employment is contingent on your background check reporting back as “Meets University Standards.”

If you ever have concerns about the amount or timing of your paycheck, talk to the department’s administrative manager.

University Vehicles

Your major advisor should be contacted and should approve the use of a vehicle before use. Departmental vehicles are to be used for official University of Arkansas business (research, teaching, or extension) purposes only. You must be a state employee (on assistantship or paid hourly) and possess a valid driver’s license to drive departmental vehicles. You may not transport individuals not associated with the University of Arkansas (e.g., family members) in the state vehicles. There are some exceptions to this rule such as for recruiting visits; however, if there are any doubts ask before doing it. There are vehicles available for short trips in the area, such as between AFLS and the farms, and other vehicles that are not to go to the farms but are used for state and nationwide travel. For longer trips, a budget must pay for mileage so talk to your major advisor before doing this. Information on acquiring and using a fuel card to refuel the vehicles will be covered in your orientation.

A bus operates between the main campus and the University farm, located approximately 2 miles north of the campus, and should be used whenever possible. Hours of operation can be found at (<https://parking.uark.edu/transit-services/transit-operations/maps-and-schedules.php>).

Telephones

Telephones in the Department of Animal Science and those on the University farms are business phones and should only be used for business calls. Personal calls should be limited.

Computer Access and Software

Your major advisor may or may not provide a computer and software in your designated office. If you need additional access or software, the computer equipment, software, and printers located on the center tables in AFLS A-112 are available for faculty and student use. Computer equipment located in AFLS B-108 is also available at times when classes are not scheduled, and there are computer labs around campus for student use. Projectors and a laptop computer are available for business related use and can be checked out. Please check with the department’s administrative manager for details.

Holidays, Vacation, etc.

University Holidays are published on the University website. Graduate students on assistantship or hourly payroll do not accumulate annual leave or sick leave and are not eligible for compensatory time off. Graduate students may still have responsibilities toward their thesis or dissertation research project that may require work on holidays or off hours. In any of these cases, graduate students should visit with their major advisor regarding their research and other responsibilities prior to any planned absences.

Building Hours

Normal business hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (or 4:30 p.m. if only a 30-minute lunch break was taken). The outside doors to the AFLS building are locked by Facilities Management personnel at approximately 6:30 p.m. each working day. All offices and labs should be locked by their occupants upon leaving for the day. The building is usually opened on workdays at approximately 7 a.m.; however, individual offices are not opened. Labs should be locked at all times when not in use. Exterior doors to the building should **NEVER** be propped open to allow uncontrolled access after doors have been locked.

Animal Science Graduate Student Orientation Session

Each fall, within a month of the semester starting, all graduate students will be invited by the department head to a meeting that will serve as an introduction for new students, and reminder for current students, of departmental policy and expectations. **All graduate students should make every effort to attend this meeting.**

Animal Science Graduate Student Organization

The Animal Science Graduate Student Association (ASGSA) is an organization composed of graduate students in the M.S. and Ph.D. programs in the Department of Animal Science at the University of Arkansas. The objective of this organization is to promote communication and professional relationships for those interested in careers in Animal Science, as well as career development, academic success, and social interaction between graduate students and faculty. The ASGSA is a professional development organization that provides an opportunity to bring students together across and within disciplines. Interaction of the students within the various disciplines of Animal Science goes beyond the academic setting and aids in building valuable relationships for the future.

How to Succeed

Success in your graduate program starts with the realization that the greatest part of what you gain

and what you achieve in a graduate program is in your own hands. Graduate school is very different from your undergraduate program. You must be committed and dedicated to fulfilling the requirements of your degree program and successfully addressing your research problem. Self-motivation is an essential requirement.

Your initial courses, studies, and assignments will likely focus on broadening and deepening your knowledge base through classroom and laboratory experiences. At the same time, if you are a Ph.D. or thesis M.S. student, you may begin the preliminary parts of your research project(s) while acquiring numerous scientific and technical skills. If the available courses and laboratory experiences do not provide the skills you need, you must have the initiative to find and develop those skills on your own (with the help of your major advisor) through reviews of the relevant scientific literature, or through associations with colleagues here or at other institutions. Later stages of your degree program will consist of planning and conducting your research and will require team building skills, statistical analysis, and the use of speaking and writing skills to finalize, present, and publish your research results.

How to make it happen:

- Let your advisor know your career plans early on so that a useful and appropriate degree program can be developed by your graduate advisory committee.
- Identify what you need to accomplish and plan on how to make it happen.
- Identify your strengths both in academics and research and capitalize on them.
- Identify your weaknesses and determine how you can eliminate them.
- Seek help from your major advisor in both academic and research areas BEFORE it is too late for him/her to help you.
- Get to know your graduate advisory committee and take advantage of the expertise that they can provide.
- Make a schedule of what you need to accomplish and stay on track.

Conduct of Research

Data collection and ownership

Gathering data and retaining accurate records are of the utmost importance in successful and meaningful research. In addition, funding agencies may require that accurate, well-documented records of data collected for sponsored grants be archived and readily available.

Custody and ownership of all original data collected during your studies and research is retained by

the Department of Animal Science. When graduate students leave the program, they may (with the permission of their major advisor) take copies of their data and files to finish up a thesis or publications, but all original data books and sheets, summaries, spreadsheets, etc., should be retained by and are the sole property of the Department of Animal Science, and of the University of Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station, Division of Agriculture. The records must be archived in the Department with clear documentation. Make sure that you discuss the details of how and where data are stored with your major advisor.

Research data should be kept in an orderly fashion so that the data are accessible and easily reviewed by the researchers involved. The records should name the experiment, researchers, date, basic protocols, etc. Statistical analyses should be documented with notation of the experimental design, results of tests of statistical assumptions, inclusion or exclusion of data, and conclusions drawn from the statistical results. There should be sufficient notation to allow someone else to examine the data and conduct the analysis. Laboratory books or binders are recommended. If electronic media is the principle method of storage, a hard copy may also be produced.

No data should be shared without the permission of the principal investigator. In addition, any submissions of abstracts or manuscripts must be reviewed by all co-authors prior to submission. There are best practices recognized in the scientific field on who should be listed as a co-author on publications. Discuss this with your major advisor before inviting people to review manuscripts.

Laboratory Safety

All graduate students, regardless of classification, must conform to all University of Arkansas safety regulations and must attend any required safety training classes or seminars. If conducting research, the principal investigator will add you to BioRaft (the campus's information management system) as a lab user and BioRaft will notify you through e-mail of your required training modules. You **MUST** complete the required BioRaft training **BEFORE** beginning work in the laboratories.

Please work with the lab manager in each area that you intend to use to ensure that you have been identified in BioRaft as a lab user. Be sure you are communicating with faculty and staff responsible for each lab. The Department of Animal Science has a lot of shared lab and storage space. This plan relies on everyone who uses the area to be a good citizen. Please do your share of cleaning, equipment maintenance, and notify staff and faculty if supplies are low or equipment is broken. Follow posted rules for spaces (i.e., in the walk-in freezer – do not store boxes on the floor). Everyone doing their part improves the experience for all.

Students working with hazardous chemicals, hazardous materials, or radiation sources may be required to obtain special training and submit protocols to the appropriate committee. Biological Safety, Hazardous Material, and Radiation Safety Committees exist on campus for this purpose. In most cases, your major advisor will inform you on how these issues are to be handled or may submit the protocol for approval.

Animal and Human Subjects

All studies involving the use of vertebrate animals or human subjects must be approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (Ag-IACUC for livestock or campus IACUC for laboratory animals) or the Institutional Review Board (IRB for human subjects) before being initiated. Your advisor may have already obtained the approval or may require you to take part in the process. The graduate school requires confirmation of approved protocols before acceptance of the final version of your thesis or dissertation. Be sure that you have been officially added to IACUC projects and that you have done the required training for the use of animals **BEFORE** initiating animal work.

Academic Integrity

Students are advised to review the University's Academic Integrity policy; information can be found on this website: <https://honesty.uark.edu/> Academic integrity and professional responsibility are vital parts of the department and University's culture. The department will enforce the University's policy and instances of dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, etc., will be dealt with as presented in that policy with sanctions up to and including dismissal from the program.

Non-Disclosure Expectations

Students should understand that some research they may be involved in will be subject to non-disclosure agreements, Export Controls, and other federal or state regulations. Take these situations seriously and understand the situation that you are in. Talk with your advisor and review information on the University's research compliance website: <https://research.uark.edu/units/rscp/>.

Responsible Conduct of Research

Students are expected to learn and understand the appropriate conduct of research within their field. New students should review the website for the University Research Compliance office and educate themselves on the pillars of the responsible conduct of research: <https://research.uark.edu/units/rscp/responsible-conduct-of-research.php> . There are serious consequences for research misconduct. You are here to learn; if you have questions **ASK**, and do not ever fabricate, falsify, or plagiarize information.

Graduate Degree Program Requirements

M.S. Degree Requirements:

Coursework (M.S. NON-Thesis). The minimum number of credits required for the M.S. degree is 30 credits of coursework. There are specific course requirements for this M.S. degree:

Basic Program Core (4 credits)

ANSC 5901 Animal Science Graduate Seminar

And 3 credit hours of statistics from the following list –

AGST 5023 Principles of Experimentation or

ESRM 5393 Statistics in Education and Health Prof. or

ESRM 6403 Educational Statistics and Data Processing or

STAT 5003/5001L Statistical Methods and Lab or

Any graduate level statistics course approved by graduate advisory committee.

Animal Science Core (8 - 9 credits; 1 class in each of the following disciplines)

Genetics - any 5000 or higher genetics course in ANSC

Nutrition - any 5000 or higher nutrition course in ANSC

Physiology - any 5000 or higher physiology course in ANSC

Animal Science Electives (9 credits)

Any ANSC graduate courses

General Graduate Course Electives (8 - 9 credits)

At least 15 of the required 30 credits must be 5000 or 6000 ANSC courses with no more than 3 credits of ANSC 500V Special Problems and no more than 6 credits of 4000-level graduate courses. The major advisor and the graduate committee will consider the background and career goals of each student, and select courses that will adequately prepare each student, and enable the student to successfully fulfill all degree requirements.

Coursework (M. S. Thesis). The minimum number of credits required for the M.S. degree is 24 credits of coursework and 6 hours of credit for thesis. The only specific course requirement for the thesis M.S. degree is a semester of seminar; there are no other specific course requirements for the thesis M.S. degree. However, at least 14 credits of the 24 credits of coursework must be from 5000 level or higher

courses. The major advisor and the graduate committee will consider the background and career goals of each student, and select courses that will adequately prepare each student, and enable the student to successfully fulfill all degree requirements. Most students will take courses in statistics and biochemistry, plus courses that focus on the field of study. The exact number of credits required and the specific courses required for each student are decided by the major advisor and the graduate committee.

Transition Between M.S. Programs. A student can transition from the non-thesis to a thesis program with the approval of the major advisor and the department head. A student desiring to transition from the thesis to the non-thesis program must have the approval of the major advisor, the M.S. thesis committee, the department head, and the graduate dean. In addition, **no credit will be granted for thesis credits, and a maximum of 6 credits of course work completed at the time of transition can be counted in the non-thesis degree program.** Students in the non-thesis option are not eligible for departmental assistantships.

Seminar (for both M.S. programs). All graduate students are expected to attend seminars whether enrolled for credit or not. M.S. students are specifically required to complete a minimum of 1 credit hour of seminar as a part of the plan of study.

The Graduate Advisory Committee (for both M.S. programs). The M.S. graduate advisory committee must include a minimum of 3 members selected from the University of Arkansas Graduate Faculty, including the major advisor. Your major advisor may, at their, discretion require more than the minimum number of members. Graduate advisory committee members should be selected by the major advisor and the student and are to be submitted to the Head of the Department of Animal Science for approval before the end of the first semester.

GPA Requirement (for both M.S. programs). Students who are in the graduate program must maintain a 2.85 GPA on all coursework. A student whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.85 is placed on academic probation for 1 semester. A student whose cumulative GPA remains below 2.85 at the end of the probation is dismissed from the graduate program. A letter grade of D is not acceptable in a graduate program and will not be accepted toward degree credit.

Annual Review. All graduate students must be given an Annual Graduate Student Academic Review each year by the major advisor, or the major advisor and graduate advisory committee. Completed review forms (https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/_resources/forms/academic-review/gradstudentreview-masters.pdf) are due to the Graduate School by June 30th of each year.

Residency Requirements (for both M.S. programs). The residency requirements for the M.S. degree are

outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook available on the Graduate School website at <http://grad.uark.edu/>. Residency requirements for a degree program are not specifically related to your place of residence.

Thesis and the Oral Defense of Thesis (for Thesis M.S.). Students must submit a final thesis that is acceptable to the University of Arkansas Graduate School and must also pass an oral defense of the thesis conducted by all members of the graduate advisory committee (present or remotely). The oral defense should be announced to the departmental faculty at least 2 weeks before the event. For thesis students, the oral defense also serves as the required final comprehensive exam. If a split decision occurs among committee members, the majority rules.

Final Comprehensive Exam (for Non-Thesis M.S.). Non-thesis students must pass a final oral comprehensive exam conducted by all members of the graduate advisory committee (present or remotely). If a split decision occurs among committee members, the majority rules.

Other Requirements. M.S. students in the thesis option in the Department of Animal Science are also expected to develop a minimum of 1 research paper in suitable form and format for submission to a peer reviewed journal prior to graduation.

Time Limits (for both M.S. programs). It is a requirement of the Graduate School that master's students complete their degrees within 6 consecutive calendar years from the first semester of enrollment in the program.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements:

Coursework. The minimum number of hours required for the Ph.D. is 72 graduate semester credits post-baccalaureate or 42 graduate credits post-M.S. Students are allowed to pursue a Ph.D. in ANSC without receiving a M.S. first, but they must have a cumulative grade-point average of 3.2 or higher on all undergraduate coursework. Apart from seminar, there are no specific course requirements. However, the major advisor and the graduate committee will consider the background and career goals of each student, and select courses that will adequately prepare each student, and enable the student to successfully fulfill all degree requirements. For a student with a M.S. degree there would be 24 credits of coursework (this includes 2 credits of ANSC seminar) and 18 credits of dissertation research required. Most students will take courses in statistics, biochemistry, advanced sciences, and courses that focus on the field of study. For a student pursuing a Ph.D., without receiving a M.S. degree, the expectation is 48 credits of coursework and 24 of dissertation. The exact number of credits required, and the specific courses

required for each student are decided by the major advisor and the graduate committee.

Seminar. All graduate students are expected to attend seminars whether enrolled for credit or not. Ph.D. students are specifically required to complete a minimum of 2 credit hours of seminar as part of the plan of study. Students pursuing a Ph.D. directly from a B.S. program would complete a minimum of 3 credit hours of seminar.

The Graduate Advisory Committee. The graduate advisory committee must include a minimum of 4 members selected from the University of Arkansas Graduate Faculty, including the major advisor. At least one of the members of the committee must be from outside the Department of Animal Science. Additional committee members may be required at the discretion of the major advisor. Graduate advisory committee members should be selected by the major advisor and the student and be submitted to the Head of the Department of Animal Science for approval before the end of the first semester.

GPA requirement. A student whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.85 is placed on academic probation for 1 semester. A student whose cumulative GPA remains below 2.85 at the end of the probation is dismissed from the graduate program. The required cumulative GPA for graduation with a Ph.D. is 3.0 on all coursework.

Annual Review. All graduate students must be given an Annual Graduate Student Program Review each year by the major advisor, or the major advisor and graduate advisory committee. Review forms (https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/_resources/forms/academic-review/gradstudentreview-doctoral.pdf) are due to the Graduate School by June 30th of each year.

Residency Requirements. The residency requirements for the Ph.D. degree are outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook and in the University of Arkansas Graduate Catalog available on the Graduate School website at <http://grad.uark.edu/>. Residency requirements for a degree program are not specifically related to your place of residence.

Qualifying exams. All Ph.D. students will be given an Admission to Candidacy Exam which consists of a comprehensive written exam from each committee member. An optional oral exam may also be required by the graduate committee or major advisor. Generally, the qualifying exams are completed when a student has 1 year remaining in the program. A student who fails the admission to candidacy exam will not be permitted to reschedule the exam for a 6-month period. **After a doctoral student has passed the candidacy examinations, the student must register for at least 1 hour of graded graduate course credit or dissertation credit each semester and 1 credit during the summer until the degree is completed, whether the student is in residence or away from the campus.**

Dissertation and the Oral Defense of the Dissertation. All students must submit a final dissertation that is acceptable to the University of Arkansas Graduate School and must also pass an oral defense of the dissertation conducted by all members (remote participation is acceptable) of the graduate advisory committee. At least 2 weeks in advance, a form (<https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/graduate/current-students/dissertation-defense.php>) should be sent to the Graduate School notifying campus of the date, time, and place of the defense. If there is a split decision among committee members, about the student's performance on the oral defense or about the quality and acceptability of the dissertation, the situation must be resolved to the satisfaction of each committee member. A committee member may insist on necessary steps to reach a resolution or elect to step down from the committee. Rarely the Dean of the Graduate School may remove a faculty member from an advisory committee or assign a representative from the Graduate faculty to serve on the committee. Detailed information can be found on the Graduate School's website.

Other Requirements. Ph.D. students in the Department of Animal Science are also expected to develop a minimum of 2 research papers in suitable form and format for submission to a peer reviewed journal, prior to graduation.

Degree Time Limits. Doctoral students must complete the degree within 7 consecutive calendar years from the semester in which the student was first admitted to the program.

Graduate Assistantships

Availability. A limited number of state-supported and grant-supported graduate ½-time or ¼-time assistantships are available to students on a competitive basis. The award of assistantships is made by each individual professor who has funding available with the approval of the Animal Science Department Head. Incoming M.S. students must have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA (4.0 scale) on the last 60 credits of undergraduate work to be eligible for a graduate assistantship. Incoming Ph.D. candidates must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on all graduate work. Incoming Ph.D. candidates without an M.S. degree must have a cumulative GPA of 3.2 or better on all undergraduate work. Graduate students who enter the program with less than a 3.0 GPA may be considered for appointment to an assistantship if they maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for one or more semesters after the start of their graduate program. **Assistantships are not available for M.S. students in the non-thesis option.**

Departmental policy is that performance of graduate students receiving assistantships will be evaluated at 6-month intervals. If your performance evaluation is deemed unsatisfactory, you may be

placed on a probationary period. The purpose of this probationary period is to provide an opportunity for you to correct the deficiencies identified in your work performance and for you to become an effective graduate student in the Department. If deficiencies in performance are not corrected at the end of that period, disciplinary action may be taken, up to and including termination from the graduate program.

Stipends: M.S. graduate assistant stipends are \$15,000 for the first 15 hours and increase to \$15,500 thereafter (for ½ time assistantships). Ph.D. stipends are \$18,000 per year and increase to \$18,500 following successful completion of preliminary examinations (for ½ time assistantships). Stipends for ¼ time assistantships are half these amounts.

Out of state tuition is waived for all students on an assistantship, and in-state tuition is paid by the Department of Animal Science for students who are on ½-time research or teaching assistantships. Students on ¼ time assistantships are responsible for in-state tuition. **All associated University and student fees must be paid by all students.**

You are expected to maintain a 2.85 GPA to remain on assistantship as well as satisfy the Graduate School's minimum enrollment requirement of 6 credits (for ½-time assistantship) or 9 credits (for ¼-time assistantship) to a maximum of 15 credits per semester of graduate hours. For students on ½-time assistantships, tuition will be paid up to 30 credits including 6 thesis credits for M.S. thesis option students and 42 credits including 18 dissertation credits for Ph.D. students. For post-B.S. Ph.D. students this would be 72 credits.

Duties. Graduate students holding a ½-time appointment are expected to work 20 hours per week for their major advisor outside of their thesis/dissertation research; the requirement is 10 hours per week for the ¼-time appointment. Assistants are expected to be available for work each working day, although this will be negotiated with your major advisor. Normal business hours of the University of Arkansas are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and students should attempt to be available and fulfill your responsibilities during those times. It is possible, however, that research projects or responsibilities of your own thesis or dissertation research may fall outside of those hours. The duties required in assisting your major advisor's research may include helping design and conduct trials including, but not limited to, preparations, sample collections and analysis, data entry and analysis, library searches, and paper preparations. Other duties may be designated in writing. With limited exceptions outlined below, the time required to fulfill the commitments of a ½-time graduate assistantship will not exceed 20 hours per week (10 hours per week for a ¼-time assistantship). This limit cannot be an average for a semester or a year, but is a limit for each week. Graduate School policy requires that all graduate assistants must be

notified in writing of their duties. This required information was included in your letter of offer. In addition, your graduate advisor may provide you with an additional, more detailed and specific, outline of expectations. Hours that are **not** included in the 20- (or 10-) hour weekly work limit include the following:

- Hours worked on research that is a part of your thesis project.
- Travel to and from conferences to present a paper that is part of the duties of the assistantship.
- Hours going to and attending class.
- Hours completing class assignments and studying for exams.
- Voluntary commitments that you have made to assist in other events, activities, research, or work (unless authorized by your major advisor) that is going on in or outside of the department.

Teaching Responsibilities. Graduate assistants in the Department of Animal Science are required to assist with the research of their major advisor and, in addition, are required to assist with one undergraduate class each academic year (usually every other semester).

During semesters when the graduate assistant is assisting with teaching, the total number of hours devoted to assisting with teaching should not exceed 10 hours per week. Teaching duties may include attending the assigned class, providing occasional lectures, assisting with preparation and grading of exams, and proctoring exams. Graduate assistants will have no more than 4 contact hours (in the classroom) per week and no more than 6 hours dedicated to office hours and/or preparation and grading. In the event that the weekly hours for teaching exceeds the 10-hour limit, time devoted to research must be reduced so as not to exceed a total of 20 hours. Students whose teaching time requirement exceeds 20 hours per week should also consult with their major advisor.

Holidays and Vacation. Graduate assistants do not accumulate annual or sick leave and are not eligible for compensatory time off. All University of Arkansas employees are provided official University holidays. Note that some student holidays, such as Spring Break or Dead Day, are not official holidays. Graduate students still have responsibilities toward their thesis or dissertation research project that may require work on holidays or off hours. Due to the requirements of ongoing research projects or your own thesis or dissertation research requirements, graduate students should visit with their major advisor regarding research and other responsibilities prior to any planned absences.

Time Limits for Assistantships. The Graduate School has set the following limits on holding graduate assistantships (not fellowships): Master's students may hold a graduate assistantship for no more than 4 major semesters; a doctoral student may hold a graduate assistantship for no more than 6 major

semesters; a student who enters a doctoral program with only a baccalaureate degree may hold a graduate assistantship for no more than 10 major semesters.

Timeline for Events

An excellent resource is the Graduate School website entitled Graduation Resources (<https://graduate-and-international.uark.edu/graduate/current-students/commencement-graduation.php>) under links for each degree is a timeline with links to necessary forms and information – look at that often!

Before 1st semester

- Meet with major advisor and select courses
- Meet with Departmental Administrative Manager to find office, get keys, etc.

Before end of 1st semester

- Form graduate advisory committee
- Have first committee meeting (ideally before starting your research project), discuss proposed coursework for the entire program as well as research opportunities
- Complete and submit to department head's office appropriate form(s) for Graduate School

At least annually

- Have a committee meeting to discuss the progress in coursework and research

Every January/February

- The department hosts the Paul Noland Graduate Student Awards Competition. ANSC graduate students submit abstracts and give oral presentations. The top prize for each category (M.S. or Ph.D.) is money to be used for travel to a scientific meeting and winners will also be recognized at the annual departmental awards banquet. Details will be announced through email each year.

About 1 year before completion

- Ph.D. students should complete their qualifying exams

As you approach completion

- You should be sharing draft versions of your thesis/dissertation and working with your major advisor on this document well before you plan to finish.
- Remember to check the Graduate School website for the Academic Calendar with posted due dates for completion of the final exam and (if appropriate) thesis/dissertation submission.
- Committee members need time to review the thesis/dissertation document before the final exam,

preferably these should be given to the committee 2 weeks before the exam date.

- The Graduate School requires notification 2 weeks before the dissertation defense date. This is published on a Graduate School calendar and is open to the campus community.
- Presentation times for final defenses for thesis-M.S. and Ph.D. students should be announced to the Animal Science faculty, staff, and graduate students so that they may attend the presentations.

Final Thoughts

These are the general requirements and recommendations for the graduate program in the Department of Animal Science. However, it is important to maintain communication with your major advisor because each major advisor manages their graduate students differently. Go to your major advisor with questions instead of trying to tackle it all on your own. Advisors must follow Graduate School Policy; however, there may still be vast differences in each student's experience because of which program you are studying and which research group you are in. Remember that your advisor has your best interests at heart – they want you to succeed. It is in the advisor's best interest for you to succeed. You should be here to learn as much as you can in the short time you are a graduate student. Advisors will be pushing you to learn new things and develop professionally. In the moment that won't always be fun, but in the long run we have your best interests at heart. (If you ever doubt this, you should be aware that there are grievance procedures available through the Graduate School as outlined in the campus's Graduate Student Handbook.)

Welcome to the program!

You may be asked as a new Graduate Student to print (just this final page), sign, and return to your major advisor this acknowledgment:

I acknowledge that I have been provided access and have read this Department of Animal Science Graduate Student Handbook. I will refer to it as I work on my degree and will ask questions of my major advisor if information is not clear.

Printed name

Signature

Date