



Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences

GRADUATE PROGRAMS POLICY MANUAL

Updated Fall 2023

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences	CAAS
Department of Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences	ADVS
Departmental Assistantship	DA
Doctorate of Philosophy	PhD
Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine	DVM
Graduate Programs Committee	GPC
Graduate Record Examination	GRE
Master's Degree	MS
Research Assistantship	RA
School of Graduate Studies	SGS
Teaching Assistantship	TA

I. INTRODUCTION

The policies outlined in this document conform to policies of the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (CAAS), School of Graduate Studies (SGS), and Utah State University (USU) as published in official catalogs, bulletins, or codes. SGS establishes minimum standards, and the Department of Animal, Dairy, and Veterinary Sciences (ADVS) may establish higher standards. Refer to the USU General Catalog under Graduate General Information and ADVS Graduate Programs (<http://catalog.usu.edu>), or go online to <https://gradschool.usu.edu/> for further information. Graduate students in interdepartmental curricula, research centers, or other organizations or departments are governed by this document if their Major Professor is a faculty member in the ADVS Department.

The Department is authorized to provide the following graduate degrees: MS and PhD degrees in Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences. Areas of specialization are:

Master of Science (MS)

Animal Management (Plan A and B)

Plan A (thesis required)

Plan B (paper required). MS Plan B is offered only in the Animal Management Specialization.

Animal Health and Disease

Animal Molecular Genetics

Animal Nutrition

Reproduction and Development

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Animal Health and Disease

Animal Molecular Genetics

Animal Nutrition

Reproduction and Development

The Department is also authorized to provide MS - Plan A and PhD degrees in Toxicology.

II. ADMINISTRATION

- A. **Department Head** - Responsible for the graduate programs of the Department. Certain aspects of the programs may be delegated to individuals (Associate Head for Academic Programs and the Graduate Programs Coordinator) and other groups (Graduate Programs Committee - GPC) that are accountable to the Department Head for recommendations and/or actions.
- B. **Graduate Program Director** - Responsible for routine duties as needed, or as delegated by the Departmental Head. These duties include, but are not restricted to the following:
 1. Liaison between the Department Head, Associate Head for Academic Programs, faculty of the Department of Animal Dairy and Veterinary Sciences (ADVS) and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS).
 2. Respond to general inquiries from prospective graduate students regarding graduate programs offered by the Department and to requests for information or surveys addressed to the Department by other institutions or agencies.

3. Upon recommendation by the Graduate Program Committee and upon approval by the Department Head, prepare and submit a letter of offer for acceptance of applicants into a graduate program of study.
4. Assign and coordinate activities of teaching assistant assignments required of Departmental Assistantships (DAs) and Fellowship awardees to courses and instructors.
5. Collaborate with the ADVS Budget Officer in keeping Assistantship and Fellowship awards active and current.
6. Verify and authorize tuition waivers/remissions awarded by the Graduate School Dean. This process is coordinated through the College (CAAS).
7. Recommend ways for improving graduate programs within the Department to the GPC and/or the Department Head.
8. Serve as an ombudsman for the Departmental graduate student community.
9. Administer exit survey, provide relevant information to Department Head and arrange exit student interviews with Department Head.
10. Serve as a facilitator for the GPC, Supervisory Committees, Major Professors, and graduate students, as needed.

C. Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC)

1. Provide a roster of graduate students and files to monitor the progress of students toward completion of their degrees. Notify students and their major professor when deficiencies exist.
2. Coordinate the SGS Subsidized Health Insurance program with students that qualify.
3. Certify the completeness of thesis and dissertations for final examination. Verify format specifications for Departmental approval of thesis and dissertations prior to the submission to SGS. Oversee and certify final corrections to thesis and dissertations before final submission to SGS.

D. Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) - Responsible for informing the Graduate Programs Coordinator and making recommendations to the Department Head on matters such as, but not restricted to the following:

1. Suggestions for establishing and changing graduate programs policies within the Department.
2. Assists the Graduate Programs Director in evaluating new student applications on a as needed basis.
3. Awarding of DAs and the ADVS Doctoral Research Fellowship to graduate students.
4. Serve as an advisory group for the formation of graduate student Supervisory Committees.
5. Reviewing the Graduate Programs curricula and providing recommendations to the Curriculum Committee on changes or modifications.

The GPC is appointed by the Department Head and consists of 5 faculty members at the level of Assistant Professor or Higher and whose role statement contains a research component.

E. Major Professor - Responsible for the following:

1. Serve as an advisor and supervisor for graduate students for whom he/she has accepted responsibility.

2. Recommend members of a Supervisory Committee to the GPC, following consultation with his/her graduate student. Must be approved by the 1st semester of study for MS students and the 2nd semester for PhD students.
3. Serve as Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee for each of his/her graduate students.
4. Counsel his/her graduate students on courses to be taken.
5. Encourage his/her graduate students to adhere to the normal graduate progress scheduled as specified herein.
6. Usually serve as the Thesis or Dissertation Director for his/her graduate students.
7. If a student receives a tuition award, the major professor reviews the Tuition Award Agreement with the student and make sure it is properly executed.

F. Thesis or Dissertation Director - Responsible for the following:

1. Advise and assist the graduate student in developing a research project title and pre-proposal.
2. Supervise the conduct of the graduate student's research project, assuring that the thesis or dissertation is prepared as a scholarly document and satisfies all SGS requirements for approval.
3. Serve as a member of the graduate student 's Supervisory Committee.

G. Supervisory Committee - Responsible for certifying writing competency if English is not the first language, approves course work and research, and conducts the qualifying examinations (PhD degree only) and the Plan B paper/Plan A thesis or dissertation (MS and PhD degrees) defense of the graduate student.

- A. Members are approved for appointment by the Dean of SGS on the recommendation of the Graduate Programs Coordinator and Department Head.
- B. The Major Professor will serve as Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The Major Professor and graduate student will recommend faculty members appropriate for the Supervisory Committee. The student will submit a Supervisory Committee Form through ServiceNow which will be routed to the Graduate Program Coordinator, Department Head and Graduate School for approval.
 - a. Supervisory committee members should consist of faculty that have expertise and experience to contribute substantially to the thesis or dissertation research and to the training of the graduate student. They must also be a member of the Utah State University Graduate Faculty. SGS maintains a list of faculty eligible to serve on Supervisory Committees, who are designated as Graduate Faculty. The roster of Graduate Faculty for ADVS shall include all department faculty members with MS, PhD and/or DVM degrees, and these individuals will be eligible to serve on graduate advisory committees as follows:
 1. Faculty with PhD terminal degree shall be eligible to serve as a chair or regular member of a Supervisory Committee for students pursuing either PhD or MS (plan A or B) degrees.
 2. Faculty with an MS terminal degree shall be eligible to serve as a chair or regular member of a Supervisory Committee for student pursuing an MS (plan A or B) degree.

3. Faculty with a DVM terminal degree, but no other graduate degree may serve as a regular member of any Supervisory Committee but may not serve as a chair of a Supervisory Committee.
4. Faculty with a DVM terminal degree and a graduate degree may serve according to the above policy for the respective degree (e.g., DVM faculty with MS degree may serve as chair/member of Supervisory Committee for a Master's student; DVM faculty with PhD degree may serve as chair/member of any Supervisory Committee)
5. Service on a Supervisory Committee by a non-faculty (including Adjunct and non-university scientists) will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Department Head, and the CV of the proposed member should accompany the request.

III. ADMISSION TO DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE PROGRAMS

A. Graduate Programs Director - Responsible for the following:

1. Review and evaluate applications for admission to graduate programs in the Department.
2. Make recommendations to the Department Head, who is responsible for the final decision on each application.

B. Criteria for Admission

1. Documents required include the following:
 - a. Completed Application for Admission Form including a statement of interest (<https://gradschool.usu.edu/apply/>).
 - b. Official transcripts of all college and university course work of the applicant.
 - c. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, including the Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytical Writing sections.
 - d. At least 3 letters of recommendation.
 - e. International applicants must also submit:
 - (1) International applicants from non-English speaking countries must provide evidence of a minimum score of 213 on the computer-based TOEFL examination or 79 on the internet-based test, a score of 6 or higher on the IELTS or 53 on the PTE. Applicants who fail to achieve a passible score are required to take the English Language Placement Test as given by the Intensive English Language Institute at USU. The results of the test place applicants into 1 of 3 categories; (1) full-time study of English (Intensive English Program), (2) a combination of English language study and academic study, or (3) full-time academic studies. Full-time category requires a score of 6.0. See SGS requirements at: (<https://gradschool.usu.edu/apply/>)
 - (2) Financial certification and a financial guarantee statement.
2. Desired standards of performance and background for acceptance as a matriculated graduate student:

- a. A grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher (on a 4.0 scale), with primary consideration on the last 60 semester credits of the most recent degree program and the quality of the program.
- b. Scores from the GRE, including Verbal and Quantitative sections, should be at the 40th percentile or higher for each section.
- c. Three letters of recommendation.
- d. The applicant for a graduate program in ADVS should have completed a BS undergraduate program similar to the Science Core of the ADVS Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Science BS degree. This program includes the following science courses and their prerequisites: BIOL 1610 (Biology I) and 1620 (Biology II) or their equivalents; CHEM 1210 (Principles of Chemistry), 1220 (Chemical Principles Laboratory I), Principles of Chemistry II) and 1225 (Chemical Principles Laboratory II) or their equivalents; MATH 1050 and STAT 2000 (Statistical Methods) or their equivalents.
- e. Applicants with deficiencies in these areas may be admitted to a graduate program of study subject to the completion of remedial coursework specified by the GPD and the Department Head. Other preparatory courses may be specified by the student's Supervisory Committee. The student must receive a grade B or higher in each of these courses. Remedial courses cannot be listed as credit courses required for the student's Program of Study. Additionally, a nontraditional ADVS graduate student (has received a Bachelor's or Master's Degree in a field other than Animal, Dairy or Veterinary Science) with adequate GRE scores, GPA and recommendations, may be asked to take additional courses. It will be the responsibility of the Supervisory Committee to develop a program of study that will adequately compensate for areas of deficiency. The student must receive a grade of B or higher in each of these courses.
- f. Applicants can be admitted into a Departmental PhD program without a masters' degree. Students with an undergraduate GPA of approximately 3.5 or higher and a GRE of 50% or higher in the Verbal and Quantitative sections may be considered for a post-baccalaureate PhD program. A request by an applicant for a post-baccalaureate PhD program will be decided by the Department Head, upon recommendation of the GPD. A request by a Departmental MS student to transfer into a PhD program without first completing the MS degree will be decided by the Department Head, upon recommendations of the student's Supervisory Committee (first) and the Graduate Programs Director (second).
- g. An applicant with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) applying for a PhD program, will be considered equivalent to a student that has completed an MS degree program.
- h. International applicants from non-English speaking countries must meet the English requirement as set by SGS. (<https://gradschool.usu.edu/apply/>).
- i. Before an applicant can be admitted as a matriculated student, a qualified faculty member must agree to serve as his/her Major Professor. The Major Professor must be a faculty member within ADVS, working within the applicant's academic area of interest, and a member of the Graduate Faculty.

C. Notification Procedures

1. All applicants will be notified of the acceptance decision by a letter (Letter of Offer) from the department. The student should read the Letter of Offer carefully following the

directions as specified. An offer of admission into the Department is valid for 1 year from its date of issuance. After that time, a reapplication is necessary for consideration.

2. Any offer of financial support that is made by the Department is not valid unless accepted within the time indicated in the letter of offer. After accepting the offer, the graduate student must report in person to the Department as specified in the letter or the offer is automatically void. This will be enforced for students awarded an assistantship or fellowship.
3. All potential graduate students applying for DAs or other Departmental-sponsored funds must have completed and submitted the required forms to the Graduate Programs Committee by March
15. Application forms can be obtained by going to <https://adv.s.usu.edu/htm/graduate/financial-assistance/>
4. The initial disposition of all financial assistance applications, including notification of applicants, will normally be completed by April 1.

D. Appeal Process

The Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) recommends to the department head the acceptance status of a new graduate student applicant. The decision of the GPC is based upon a combination of factors, i.e., GPA, GRE, letters of recommendation, reasons for wanting to pursue a graduate degree, program of study, financial support, availability of a major professor, etc. The Department Head makes the final decision on whether an applicant is accepted (matriculated) or not accepted into a departmental graduate program. If the prospective student feels that his/her application did not receive a fair evaluation, or that the GPC at the time of evaluation was unaware of mitigating circumstances that might weigh heavily on recommendation for matriculation, then he/she has the right to appeal by submitting a letter to the Department Head outlining the reasons why the application should be reconsidered. If the Department Head considers that the reasons have merit, then the Department Head will request the GPC to reconsider the application. The GPC will resubmit a recommendation to the Department Head for a final decision.

IV. STUDENT STATUS

A. Matriculated Status

1. A matriculated student who has been accepted by the Department into an approved degree program, with the concurrence of the Dean of SGS, will continue in matriculated status as long as he/she maintains satisfactory performance.
2. A student with a GPA that falls below a 3.0 any semester will be notified by the School of Graduate Studies and will be placed on probationary status. The status of a student whose GPA falls below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters may have his/her graduate program terminated. In the latter case, reapplication is required to regain matriculation. Should a student holding an appointment such as an ADVS Assistantship or Fellowship or a Presidential Doctoral Research Fellowship be changed to probationary status, the assistantship or fellowship will be terminated. Until a Program of Study is submitted to the School of Graduate Studies office, computation of the GPA will be based solely upon the post-baccalaureate courses on the student's USU transcript. Once a Program of Study is approved by the student's Supervisory Committee and the Department Head and is on file with RGS, the course grades on it will be used to compute the student's GPA.

B. Matriculated-provisional Status

1. A student may be matriculated on a conditional basis when information, such as GRE scores, has yet to be received by SGS, or whenever a missing prerequisite or academic deficiency must be remedied. Continuation in the degree program is contingent upon the completion of specified conditions as specified in the student Letter of Offer by the Department. If a student does not adhere to the conditions specified in the letter, such as time of completion for the deficiency, the student will be terminated from the program. This policy applies to all students and will be strictly enforced by SGS.
2. Any conditional admission and the time limit for meeting the condition will be specified at the time of acceptance in the Letter of Offer from the Department Head, in writing to the student (also as a PDF via email if services are available) and to the Dean of SGS. Whenever an applicant agrees to the condition for admissions by electronic verification as specified in the Letter of Offer, it is with the understanding that he/she accepts each condition and the time limit for meeting it. Once the requirements are met, the student will be removed from conditional status by SGS. By not meeting a provisional status condition on time will be grounds for dismissal from the degree program. This policy will be enforced by SGS.
3. A student on provisional status may be awarded a Departmental Assistant, if his/her GPA is 3.0 or above and he/she is a full-time student.
4. A conditional student can obtain approval for the establishment of his/her Supervisory Committee. The Program of Study should be submitted within the appropriate time frame but will not be approved by the Dean of SGS until all conditions of conditional status have been met. Students need to realize that conditional status places them in a precarious situation if conditions are not met as specified in the Letter of Offer. Therefore, ADVS generally will not offer conditional status, and in particular to an international student.

C. Matriculated-probationary Status

1. For continued participation in a graduate program, a student must complete requirements in a timely manner with scholarship and independence. Upon reviewing a student's progress, several factors will be considered including demonstrated ability to develop a thesis proposal, independence in the conduct of research, performance on comprehensive examinations, GPA, and special program requirements. A matriculated - probationary student is where the student has been put on a warned status because of inadequate progress on his/her program. The student will be removed from matriculated-probationary status by the Dean of SGS once conditions recommended by the Supervisory Committee and Department head and approved by SGS are met.
2. A student will lose his/her Departmental Assistantship or Fellowship if placed on matriculated-probationary status.
3. Matriculated-probationary status may be grounds for dismissal from the degree program.

D. Non-matriculated-post-baccalaureate Status

1. A non-matriculated-post-baccalaureate student holds a Bachelor's degree but has not been accepted to a graduate degree program. A student in this category should apply to the Undergraduate Admissions Office if taking additional classes. To gain admission as a matriculated graduate student, he/she must apply to the School of Graduate Studies and be accepted by the Department.

2. A maximum of **12** semester credits earned as a non-matriculated post-baccalaureate student may be used in a graduate degree program, but only if approved by the student's Supervisory Committee after admission as a matriculated graduate student.

E. Undergraduate Status

1. Course credits applied to an undergraduate degree cannot be applied to graduate degree program. An exception to this policy directly follows below in 2.
2. A transitional student is a Utah State University undergraduate who has received permission to file a split form in order to register for graduate courses. A transitional student must be within 30 credits of completing his/her BS degree requirements, have a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and have applied for admission to RGS. The split form must be filed prior to posting the grades for the particular semester requested to be split. The form must be signed by the Department Head and/or Undergraduate Advisor. A split form cannot be processed after the Bachelor's degree has been closed out and the option is only available to USU undergraduates. A maximum of **9** semester credits earned in this way may be used in a graduate degree program, but only if approved by the student's Supervisory Committee after admission as a matriculated graduate student. Approval of the split form does not guarantee acceptance by SGS and into a graduate program within the Department.
3. Students who have completed a BS degree and want to take additional classes but do not seek MS or Doctoral degrees should apply to the Undergraduate Admissions Office (USU Registrar's Office).

F. Withdrawal from Program

1. If you are completely withdrawing from your graduate program, please email gradforms@usu.edu with your name and A-number. The School of Graduate Studies will process your request and contact you when your file has been closed.

V. GRADUATE STUDENT SUPERVISION

A. Major Professor

1. A Major Professor must be assigned to all students at the time of matriculation. New students can be directed to his/her major professor by contacting the Graduate Programs Coordinator. Students should meet with their Major Professor prior to the first semester of registration. Students desiring to change their Major Professor may petition the Department Head. It is the Department's responsibility to ensure that a Major Professor is available for a student once admitted unless there is justifiable cause for not doing so. Justifiable cause includes unwillingness or inability of the student to pursue research that falls within the interest of a faculty member, unsatisfactory progress in the graduate program, including either course work or thesis/dissertation research, and personal relationships that make the advisor-student relationship untenable. In cases where a Major Professor is no longer available through no fault of the student - such as in the case of retirement, resignation from the university, or death - the Department will make a good faith effort to assign a Major Professor.

B. Supervisory Committee

1. Matriculated graduate students must have a Supervisory Committee, which is responsible for approving and supervising the program of courses and research and overseeing the conduct of and approving the research for the MS Plan A thesis, MS Plan B paper or the PhD dissertation.

2. The graduate student, after consultation with the Major Professor, should provide a completed Supervisory Committee Assignment form through ServiceNow by the end of the first semester of enrollment (MS degree) or by the end of the second semester of enrollment (PhD degree). That form will be routed through Graduate Program Coordinator, Department Head and Graduate School for approval. <https://gradschool.usu.edu/forms/>.
3. The Program of Study form must be prepared and submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator for approval by the end of the second semester of study (MS degree) or by the end of the third semester of study (PhD degree). The form is accessed by using either USU ACCESS (via Portal) or by USU ACCESS (bypass portal). The student will click Student and then go to DegreeWorks. The Program of Study will be completed by following the promptings on the screen. The research risk section on the Program of Study form (for an MS degree) or the Doctoral Application for Candidacy (for a PhD student) must be checked. The GPC will submit the form through ServiceNow and it will be routed to all committee members, Department Head and Graduate School for approval.
4. Committees supervising graduate program leading to the MS degree shall consist of not fewer than three members of the USU faculty. All three faculty may be members of ADVS. At least one member must represent the graduate student's area of specialization, and at least one must be from outside the specialization area.
5. Committees supervising programs leading to the PhD degree shall consist of not fewer than five members of the USU faculty. Three members must be from within and at least one must be from outside the Department.
6. Faculty may serve on Faculty holding any rank below the Assistant Professor level may serve on the Supervisory Committee as an additional non-voting member, with the approval of the Dean of SGS.
7. The Thesis or Dissertation Director, even if not a member of ADVS, must be a member of the Supervisory Committee.
8. The graduate student's satisfactory progress through his/her program and rational evaluation of his/her success depends on the members of the Supervisory Committee being responsible and regularly available to the student for consultation.
9. Additions to the Supervisory Committee will be allowed to (1) fill vacancies created by the actual or de facto resignation of a member when that resignation renders the Committee invalid by the criteria of V.B.4. or V.B.5. above, or (2) provide expertise for a need that was not foreseen at the time the original Committee was appointed. De facto resignation shall be deemed to exist when, in the opinion of the Departmental Head, a member is unable or not willing to function effectively in that capacity.

All changes in the membership of the Supervisory Committee will be accomplished by the procedures of V.B.2. above. No alterations in the membership of the Supervisory Committee will be made without approval of the Departmental Head. It is the policy of RGS not to approve changes in Supervisory Committee membership within 6 weeks of the final examination other than in exceptional circumstances.

C. Restrictions of Graduate Credit

1. The minimum requirement for an MS degree is 30 semester credits, including at least 24 credits in residency and, for Plan A graduate students, 6 to 15 semester credits of "Research and Thesis" (ADVS 6970). Courses outside the student's major field numbered 3000-4990 may be used for the MS degree only with the approval of the Supervisory Committee and the Dean of SGS. These courses are subject to a limit of 3 credits.
2. The minimum requirement for a PhD degree is 42 approved graduate semester credits in addition to an MS or DVM degree or 70 approved graduate semester credits with a BS degree. The PhD dissertation must be supported with a minimum of 12 semester credits (42-credit program) or 18 semester credits (70-credit program) of "Dissertation Research" (ADVS 7970). At least 3 semesters, including a minimum of 2 consecutive semesters of full-time registration, must be in residency.
3. "Research and Thesis" or "Dissertation Research" credits will be graded, upon consultation with the Major Professor, as P for each semester enrolled.
4. Graduate level "Special Problems" credits in courses within the Department shall not exceed 3 credits for the MS degree and 6 for the PhD degree.

D. Seminars

1. ADVS graduate students are required to register for 1 - 3 seminars depending upon their program of study (BS to MS 1 seminar, BS to PhD 3 seminars and MS to PhD 2 seminars). At least one seminar must be ADVS 6800 (Graduate Seminar), which is offered spring semester. The format of the spring semester seminar is designed to instruct students on best practices for making scholarly presentations. ADVS also jointly hosts a fall seminar with the Center for Integrated BioSystems (CIB). The fall semester seminar consists of research reports from faculty within and outside the Department. Graduate students are expected to attend all ADVS or ADVS/CIB seminars. Attendance should occur during the entire time of the student's program of graduate study.

E. Duration of a Degree Program

Graduate study in ADVS must be completed in a reasonable period of time. Graduate students may use the following to guide their progress:

1. Under typical circumstances, a student entering the graduate program with a BS degree should complete an MS degree within 2 years of full-time graduate study and a PhD within 3 additional years of study. An MS degree student or DVM should complete a PhD in 3 - 4 years. A DVM that is in the PhD/Pathology Residency Program should complete the PhD within 5 years. A BS to PhD graduate program should take 4 - 5 years. However, lengths of individual programs can vary depending on the program of study. Students with a strong background may complete these degrees in less time.
2. Acceptance of credit taken more than 8 years prior to completing a degree can be obtained only by following the policy of SGS.
3. Graduate students on DAs or Fellowships will not normally be supported for a total of more than 2 years (MS degree), 3 years (PhD degree) with MS or DVM, or 4-5 years for the BS to PhD degree. DVM students in a PhD/Residency Program will be supported for 5 years.

F. Standard of Achievement in Courses

1. Graduate students must report to the Major Professor required courses in which grades below "C" were obtained.
2. The Supervisory Committee and the Department Head have the option of accepting required credit with grades of "C", "C+", or "B-". A C- is a failing grade. Students whose GPA falls below a 3.0 for 2 consecutive semesters may be dismissed from a graduate program.

G. Appeals Procedure

1. Any graduate student or faculty member wishing to challenge decisions of the Graduate Programs Committee or Supervisory Committee shall petition the Department Head for a hearing. The Department Head may agree to hear arguments pertaining to the matter or to appoint a Hearing Committee which shall subsequently advise the Department Head as to a recommended course of action.
2. All Departmental decisions shall remain the ultimate responsibility of the Department Head. Individuals who wish to pursue additional avenues of appeal beyond the Department level shall consult the USU Student Code for approved procedures at <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/>.

VI. RESEARCH, REPORTS, AND EXAMINATIONS

A. Research Pre-proposal

The research pre-proposal prepared by the graduate student is a summary of the planned research, and contains a brief introduction, justification, objectives, experimental design, and procedures to be followed. It is presented to the Supervisory Committee in a formal setting to examine the student's understanding of the problem and the plan of research. Following this process, it becomes a thesis/dissertation proposal and is then submitted to the Graduate Programs Director or Department Head for review along with the Program of Study form. The pre-proposal presentation should take place during the end of the first year of study for the MS program and the 2nd or 3rd year of a PhD program depending on whether a student enters the program with a BS, MS or DVM degree. The student's Research program for the MS degree must be a contribution to the field of knowledge based upon the graduate student's own investigations or a treatment and presentation of known subject matter from a new point of view. Research for the PhD degree must represent an original contribution to the field of knowledge.

B. Plan B MS Degree Program

A Plan B MS degree program is offered only in the Animal Management Specialization. The Plan B MS is considered a terminal degree in ADVS. The term "paper" is substituted for "thesis" in reference to the Plan B option.

C. Entrance Requirements for Plan A and Plan B MS Degree Programs

1. Appointment of the Major Professor and the Supervisory Committee are accomplished through the same procedure as for Plan A.
2. A list of proposed courses and the topic for the Plan B paper must be approved by the Supervisory Committee. This information is then submitted to the Department Head or Graduate Programs Director along with the completed Program of Study form. The completed Plan B paper is to be presented in a regularly scheduled departmental public defense.
3. The Supervisory Committee is responsible for evaluating the progress of the graduate student and for conducting the final oral examination. The oral examination covers the

student's paper, course work taken during the graduate program, and other areas (as determined by the Supervisory Committee relevant to the student's area of specialty).

- a. The paper prepared under the Plan B option follows the same format as a thesis and is expected to reflect equivalent scholarship standards.
 - b. Two semester credits of "Research and Thesis" (ADVS 6970) are required under the Plan B option. However, no more than 3 such credits can be counted toward the degree.
4. The Plan B program is the same as the Plan A program regarding the following points:
- a. A minimum of 30 credits are required to complete the program.
 - b. Scheduling procedures and time schedule relating to examinations.
 - c. Minimum grade point average of 3.0 is required.
5. Plan B papers are neither bound for the library nor reviewed by thesis coordinator of the School of Graduate Studies. The responsibility for approving the Plan B paper resides with the Department.
- a. To implement the Departmental evaluation, a copy of the paper, in its completed form, must be submitted to the Graduate Programs Director not less than 2 weeks prior to scheduling the final examination. Following the review, the Graduate Programs Director will forward the paper with an evaluation and recommendation to the Department Head.
 - b. Approval of the paper by the Department Head, as evidenced by signature, is all that is required by RGS
 - c. Plan B papers will be kept on file in the ADVS Main Office.
6. Graduate students who select the Plan B option should be aware that the Department considers this to be a terminal degree. It is not equivalent to the research MS Plan A degree for purpose of admission to the Departmental PhD degree program. This policy only applies to the Department.

D. Thesis or Dissertation

<http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/hm/degree/semesterdeadlines>

1. A graduate student should meet with his/her Supervisory Committee prior to the termination of the research program for review and approval of the research results. Only after this review should the final writing of the thesis or dissertation begin.
2. The graduate student must refer to the current Publication Guide for Graduate Students at Utah State University issued by the School of Graduate Studies for instructions on format and standards of writing for theses and dissertations. The thesis/dissertation may be prepared in either traditional or multiple-paper format.
3. The completed thesis/dissertation it should be distributed to the members of the Supervisory Committee at least 4 weeks prior to the final oral defense (20 USU business days). This gives time for the committee to review the thesis/dissertation prior to signing the Appointment for Examination Form, which is required to be submitted to SGS 2 weeks (10 business days) prior to the defense. The 10 USU business day policy is strictly enforced by SGS.
4. Committee members who believe that the thesis/dissertation is not in final form will notify the graduate student and Major Professor prior to the 2-week (10 business days) deadline for

signing the Appointment for Examination Form (which is 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defense). The defense may be postponed in order to make the appropriate revisions.

5. Only minor, usually editorial changes may be made following the defense. If major changes are needed, another defense must be scheduled.
6. Following final Supervisory Committee approval of the thesis/dissertation, the thesis/dissertation is submitted to the Graduate Programs Coordinator.
7. Upon approval of the thesis/dissertation by the School of Graduate Studies, it is submitted to the Supervisory Committee and Department Head for his/her signature on the title page.
8. Once reviewed by the School of Graduate Studies, the thesis/dissertation will be returned to the graduate student through the Graduate Programs Coordinator for final corrections/revisions.
9. Upon verification of all required corrections/revisions by the Graduate Programs Coordinator, the thesis/dissertation will be returned to the School of Graduate Studies for the Dean's signature on the title page, and then submitted to the library. The library will approve the thesis/dissertation for entry into DigitalCommons@USU. =
10. At the time of defense, a student must be registered for 3 credits. Following the semester of defense, the student is given a one-semester grace period to finish his/her thesis/dissertation. If the time of completion goes into the following semester, then there is a \$100 assessment fee paid to the Graduate School. If it goes an additional semester, there will be an additional \$100 fee (total = \$200). If the completion goes beyond three semesters, then the student will have to re-defend and register for 3 credits.
13. If the graduate student fails to complete all degree requirements (i.e., submission of the bound thesis/dissertation, scientific and layperson abstracts to library) within 1 year of the successful defense, the student will be required to re-defend.

E. Examinations

1. MS Degree Candidates

- a. A thesis defense will be scheduled at least 10 USU business days before the student's anticipated completion date. The defense consists of two separate parts, one immediately following the other.
 - (1) Part 1 consists of a public seminar presented to the Supervisory Committee and all interested faculty, graduate students, and other persons during normal working hours for the university. A general announcement via email as to time, place, and topic must be made preceding the seminar and/or in an individual flyer a minimum of 10 business days before the scheduled seminar. It is the joint responsibility of the Major Professor and student to ensure that the seminar is publicized. The seminar will precede the oral defense conducted by the Supervisory Committee (below).
 - (2) Part 2 consists of an oral defense conducted by the Supervisory Committee. The defense usually follows the seminar (above), is closed to the public, and will usually concern thesis related topics. The student should be notified in advance if he/she is to be tested on topics outside of the thesis. A unanimous vote of the supervisory committee is required to pass the defense. In the event of conflict, the Graduate

Programs Director will recommend a procedure for action to the Department Head and the matter will be taken to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

- b. Recommendations regarding the student's qualifications and permission to continue graduate work toward the PhD degree will be made by the Supervisory Committee to the Department Head for final approval.

2. PhD Degree Candidates

a. Qualifying Examinations

- (1) The qualifying examinations will consist of written and oral sections. Both examinations are required and will be conducted by the Supervisory Committee. Following successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the School of Graduate Studies requires the Application for Candidacy form to be filed at least three months before the final defense.
 - (a) The written examination will be assessed by the student's entire Supervisory Committee within 2 weeks of its completion. This examination will be used to probe the breadth and depth of the student's knowledge of his/her area of specialization and of designated areas of knowledge which the Supervisory Committee believes are requisite to the student's professional goals. The examination may be either a composite of questions by each Committee member or separate examinations given by individual Committee members. The examination will contain questions of general, broad, synthetic nature, as well as questions of a more specific nature. The written examination should be completed within 2 weeks of initiation.
 - (b) The oral examination will be conducted within 2 weeks following notification to the student of the results of the written examination. At the end of the oral examination, the Supervisory Committee will vote and a simple majority will determine the student's performance on the qualifying examinations.
 - (c) Successful completion of the qualifying examinations is reported to the School of Graduate Studies on the Application of Candidacy form, which changes the student's status to a PhD degree candidate. <https://gradschool.usu.edu/forms/>
- (2) At the discretion of the Supervisory Committee, a student failing to pass the qualifying examinations may exercise one of the following two options:
 - (a) Retake the qualifying examinations
 - (b) Terminate the PhD degree program

- b. Dissertation Examination. A dissertation defense will be scheduled at least 10 working days before the student's anticipated completion date. The defense will consist of two separate parts, one immediately following the other.

- (1) Part 1 consists of a public defense presented to the Supervisory Committee and all interested faculty, graduate students, and other persons during normal working hours for the university. A general announcement via email as to time, place, and topic must be made preceding the public defense and/or in an individual flyer a minimum of 10 business days before the scheduled seminar. It is the joint responsibility of the Major Professor and student to ensure that the seminar is publicized. The public defense will precede the oral defense conducted by the Supervisory Committee (below).

(2) Part 2 consists of an oral defense conducted by the Supervisory Committee. This usually follows the public defense (above), is closed to the public, and will usually concern dissertation related topics. The student should be notified in advance if he/she is to be tested on topics outside of the dissertation. The Supervisory Committee will conduct the examination with the student, but other interested faculty members holding the PhD degree may attend. A unanimous vote of the Supervisory Committee is required to pass the defense. In the event of conflict, the Graduate Programs Committee will recommend a procedure for action to the Department Head and the matter will be taken to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

3. Schedule of Examinations

a. Students and advisors should carefully review the School of Graduate Studies requirements as set forth in the Graduate Catalog regarding examination schedules.

https://catalog.usu.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=12&ent_oid=998

b. Departmental Schedule

- (1) A copy of the completed thesis/dissertation is to be submitted to the Graduate Programs Director 5 weeks (25 business days) prior to the final defense. The Graduate Programs Director will certify to the Supervisory Committee that the thesis/dissertation is complete and suitable for use as an examination copy. Copies of the certified thesis/dissertation must be made available to members of the Supervisory Committee 4 weeks (20 business days) prior to the defense.
- (2) The oral defense of the thesis/dissertation must be scheduled through the School of Graduate Studies at least 10 working (business) days before the oral defense is to take place.
- (3) Following the oral defense and approval of the thesis/dissertation by the Supervisory Committee, the completed thesis/dissertation will be resubmitted to the Graduate Programs Director for Departmental review. The Graduate Programs Coordinator will then certify to the Department Head that the thesis/dissertation is appropriate in format and content for submission to the School of Graduate Studies. The Department Head will approve the thesis/dissertation and sign in a space provided on the title page.
- (4) Following review by the School of Graduate Studies, the thesis/dissertation will be returned to the student's Major Professor through the Graduate Program Coordinator for final corrections. The Graduate Program Coordinator will then certify that the corrections have been made so that the thesis/dissertation may be returned to the School of Graduate Studies for approval.

VII. EMPLOYMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT

A. Affirmative Action Policy

All employment procedures must conform with USU's Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunities Policy <https://www.usu.edu/equity/>.

B. Employment

1. Departmental Assistantships (DAs)

- a. Matriculated graduate students may be employed part-time as a Research Assistant on contract for 20 hours per week. The number of hours is based on the Full Time Equivalent (0.5 FTE = 20 hours/week; 0.25 FTE = 10 hours/week). RAs are collectively considered a Departmental Assistantship (DA) and have a 10 hour/week teaching component fall and spring semesters. If the Assistantship is the sole source of income on the USU campus, then no action needs to be taken. If a student chooses to take on additional work outside of the RA, those hours have to be entered into the USU time clock system. Such hours are in addition to the 'standard' hours of the RA. The Department does not encourage students on an RA to work beyond the 20 hours/week because the student needs the required time dedicated to learning and participating in a graduate program. DAs are required to take the Teaching Assistant Workshop USU 7920 prior to the semester they are given a teaching assignment. The course is 1-credit and is graded pass/fail. The School of Graduate Studies will pay the class fee. The 1-credit course hour cannot be counted as a credit hour on the Program of Study. Students failing to take the Workshop will lose their RA until the teaching assistant training requirement has been completed.
- b. DAs are generally offered on a competitive basis to outstanding students who are matriculated, or in the process of matriculation, in an approved Departmental degree program. DAs are awarded by the Department Head in accordance with Departmental guidelines and upon the recommendation of the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC). Students receiving a DA **must** meet the minimum requirements of RGS (GPA ≥ 3.0 and GRE percentiles in Verbal and Quantitative ≥ 40). To remain competitive for a DA, a graduate student usually has to have a GPA ≥ 3.5 and GRE percentiles greater than 40.
- c. Departmental Assistantships are usually awarded on a 52-week basis. The recipient of a DA is expected to contribute 20 hours per week (1040 hours per year) of his/her time to the Department. Of this time commitment, 300 hours are required as a Teaching Assistant, equivalent to 20 hours per week for one semester (20 hr/wk x 15 wk/semester = 300 hr) or less time per week if the assignment is over more than one semester within an academic year. Assignments are usually for fall and spring semesters. Teaching assignments will be directed by the GPD Director who will designate the courses to which the students are assigned with approval of the Department Head. The student's Major Professor will be notified of their student's assignments. DAs are for half-time duties and generally differ from scholarships and fellowships in that they are provided in return for 20 hours per week on an assignment other than the student's thesis or dissertation research. They are contracts for a monthly payment for the term of the contract. They will not normally be awarded to a student for a total of more than 2 years (MS degree), 3 years (MS or DVM to PhD degree), or 4 - 5 years (BS to PhD degree) with no Master's degree. Students awarded an MS assistantship who transfer to a PhD program without first completing the MS must reapply for a PhD assistantship at the time of the transfer request. Approval of this request will be based on availability of current and future assistantship funding. If the request is approved, the major advisor may be asked to provide the difference in the Departmental contribution between the MS and PhD stipend (approximately \$3,000) until funding becomes available. Students can receive an assistantship for a total period of 1 to 5 years; continuation of financial support beyond these periods will require an individual petition initiated by the student

and submitted by the student's Major Professor to the GPC on a semester-by-semester basis.

- d. Students with exceptionally high GPAs and GRE scores (≥ 3.5 GPA and $\geq 55\%$ on GRE section) may qualify for the ADVS Doctoral Research Fellowship (4 years maximum) or the RGS Presidential Doctoral Research Fellowship (4 years maximum). The major professor is expected to contribute \$3,500 per year to the ADVS Fellowship per year of effectiveness; whereas, the Presidential Fellowship requires that the major professor and Department contribute \$5,000 each per year while the fellowship is in force. The ADVS Fellowship is for \$18,000 per year and the Presidential Fellowship is for \$20,000 per year. Fellowships come with Subsidized Health Benefits. (<http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/htm/finances/insurance>). Students on a Fellowship may be given TA assignments as stated above. Other awards must be applied for online by going to the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences website <http://www.ag.usu.edu/htm/current-students/scholarships>. DAs and the ADVS Doctoral Fellowship forms can be accessed by going to <http://adv.s.usu.edu/htm/graduate/financial-assistance/>.
- e. Students on a DA or Fellowship must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 to retain their award. Students whose semester GPA falls below 3.0 will be notified that their award may be discontinued. This is a policy of RGS. If the GPA drops below 3.0 for 2 consecutive semesters, it will be grounds for dismissal from the degree program. Students that fall in this category will be required to reapply for the DA or Fellowship.
- f. Tuition awards for MS students on DAs
1. Nonresident and International MS Plan A students on a DA may be granted an award of the out-of-state portion of their tuition by the School of Graduate Studies. This will not apply for the second year unless the student has demonstrated in good faith that he/she has applied for Utah Residency or has obtained Utah Residency. International students do not have the option to apply for Utah Residency and therefore may be granted Non-resident tuition for up to 36 credit hours. Applications must be completed no later than the first day of classes for the semester for which the waiver is requested and must be used by the 15th day of classes. Applications are processed through the ADVS Head Office Senior Staff Assistant.

The waiver application renewal must be processed each year no later than May 1 for the following fall semester for those students whose DAs are renewed. Students are responsible for paying fees.

The MS out-of-state portion of tuition (US students only or students from US Territories) is limited to 36 credit hours as approved on the Program of Study (POS). The Program of Study is to be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies no later than the **second semester** of the student's program. Nonresident students that do not submit a POS by the 2nd semester may be responsible for full tuition.

The minimum number of credits a student on a DA (or Fellowship) must take for fall and spring semesters is 6 credits per semester and shall not exceed 12 credits per semester. Once all coursework is completed and only the research component of the degree is remaining, a student may register for 3 credits per semester. Non-0.5 FTE students must take 9 credits fall and spring semesters to maintain full time status. US students do not need to take any credit hours during the summer semester to maintain full time status with SGS. They must, however, work 20 hrs/wk during the

summer to maintain their DA. International students must register for USU 7777 during summer semester to fulfill their visa requirements. There is no charge for USU 7777.

MS students that are not supported on a DA or Fellowship are entitled to the same benefits as listed above providing the major professor hires the graduate student half time (0.5 FTE -20 hours per week). This would be on a contract basis for one or more semesters or for the academic year. RGS has stipulated any student in this category must receive a monthly stipend of \$675.00. The Supervisory Professor will be expected to pay the major portion of the Subsidized Health Insurance.

2. Resident and nonresident PhD students on a DA may be granted a tuition award (includes in-state and out-of-state portion of tuition) by the SGS, depending on appropriate qualifications and availability of funds. Applications must be completed no later than May 1st for Fall semester and the waiver must be used by the 15th day of classes. Applications are processed through the ADVS Head Office by the Senior Staff Assistant. Award application renewal must be processed each year no later than May 1st for Fall semester for those students whose DAs, fellowships and major professor sponsored stipends are renewed. Students receiving a Presidential or ADVS Doctoral Fellowship will be granted a tuition award providing funding is available from the Department and SGS. Doctoral students receiving a DA or Fellowship will also receive Subsidized Health Insurance, where approximately \$1,602 is paid by the Department and \$400 by the student (<http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/htm/finances/insurance>). This rate is subject to change on a yearly basis.

PhD students that are not supported on a DA or Fellowship are entitled to the same benefits as listed above providing the major professor hires the graduate student half time (0.5 FTE - 20 hours per week). This would be on a contractual basis for one or more semesters or for the academic year. RGS has stipulated any student in this category must receive a monthly stipend of \$675.00. The Supervisory Professor will also be expected to pay the major portion of the Subsidized Health Insurance. For specifics on Finances and Support go to <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/htm/finances>.

3. Graduate students are strongly encouraged not to work more than 20 hr/wk, and under no circumstances should a student work at USU more than 31 hr/wk over a 54-week period on USU work related assignments (does not include their research responsibilities). Work activities off campus or for other departments and researchers must be coordinated through the student's major professor. This policy is to ensure that the student has sufficient time to complete her/his academic and research requirements in a timely manner. The MS - Plan A and PhD are research degrees and time spent in the laboratory or in the field collecting data is very important in the educational experience. This may require time after normal University hours, in the evenings, or on the weekends depending upon the nature and scope of the research project.

C. Full Notice of Non-discrimination

In its programs and activities, including in admissions and employment, Utah State University does not discriminate or tolerate discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability,

status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by University policy, Title IX, or any other federal, state, or local law. The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations and/or USU's non-discrimination policies:

Executive Director of the Office of Equity

Matt Pinner

matthew.pinner@usu.edu

Old Main Rm. 161

435-797-1266

Title IX Coordinator

Cody Carmichael

cody.carmichael@usu.edu

Old Main Rm. 161

435-797-1266

For further information regarding non-discrimination, please visit <https://equity.usu.edu/>, or contact:

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

800-421-3481

OCR@ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education

Denver Regional Office

303-844-5695

OCR.Denver@ed.gov



**College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences (CAAS)
Graduate Student**

This page is to be signed by the student after receiving and reading this Utah State University **CAAS Graduate Student Handbook**. The original will be kept in the student file.

The **CAAS Graduate Student Handbook** includes information pertaining to USU student policies and program-specific requirements and expectations.

I realize it is my responsibility to read the **CAAS Graduate Student Handbook** and clarify any questions or concerns with the program faculty or the program director.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the requirements as stated in the policies and procedures published in the **CAAS Graduate Student Handbook**

Name of Student (Print)

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Major Advisor – Verifying advisor has read the Graduate Student Handbook