



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Horticultural Sciences

Graduate Policy Manual

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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
College of Agriculture
& Life Sciences

This policy manual primarily pertains to graduate students of the Department of Horticultural Sciences. If you are not a Horticulture major, please visit your program's academic advisor for questions about coursework, degree plans, etc.

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GRADUATE POLICY MANUAL

DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

(Revised August 2023)

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Department of Horticultural Sciences Graduate Policy Manual is to summarize those policies that frequently are encountered or misunderstood by graduate students in the Department. In addition, specific policies established by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (COALS) and the Department of Horticultural Sciences are presented. These policies appear in the text in italics. The Policy Manual is a supplement to the Graduate Catalog and does not replace it.

GRADUATE CATALOG

The official policies of Texas A&M University are published annually in the Graduate Catalog and updated on the Graduate and Professional School website (<http://grad.tamu.edu>). Each graduate student's responsibility is to study and abide by the policies set forth in the most recently published Graduate Catalog and on the Graduate School Website.

The Department cannot stress enough that it is the graduate student's responsibility and duty to become intimately familiar with all policies that affect their graduate program and to follow all policies correctly and in a timely manner.

THE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

The Graduate School at the University is responsible for administering the graduate programs of Texas A&M University. The Graduate School is located on the main campus in Nagle Hall, located on Academic Plaza just south of the Academic Building. The Graduate School reception area is on the second floor, room 204. All petitions, requests, and proposals are submitted to The Graduate School for final approval as described on their website (<https://grad.tamu.edu>). Technical questions that cannot be answered at the Department level should be addressed to The Graduate School. The Graduate School publishes a Graduate Student Calendar every semester, which gives the precise dates for all deadlines, and it should be consulted regularly. The calendar can be obtained from their website (<https://grad.tamu.edu>). The Graduate School also produces a Graduate Catalog that contains a lot of helpful information, also available on their website. In addition, all university-level forms relative to your graduate program must be obtained from their website. All Department-level forms can be obtained from your academic advisor (114 Kleberg) or the Department's Home Page – <https://hortsciences.tamu.edu>.

DEPARTMENT'S HOME PAGE

The Department of Horticultural Sciences' website <http://hortsciences.tamu.edu> contains a wealth of information about the Department, including the Graduate Policy Manual, biographical sketches of all graduate faculty members in the Department, and links to other useful information, such as The Graduate School website. Aggie Horticulture (<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>) is also a good source for keeping up with the department's activities.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

To maximize the efficient use of funds and facilities, graduate students should move toward fulfilling their degree requirements as rapidly as possible. Students should work with their Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee to establish the courses to satisfy their degree requirements (see section on Degree Program). The registration procedure is as follows:

1. Select the courses in consultation with your Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee.
2. You may register online during your designated registration period in Howdy (<https://howdy.tamu.edu>). It is advisable to pre-register. There are monetary penalties for late registration.

MINIMUM REGISTRATION AND CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

The Graduate Catalog and The Graduate School websites contain the latest official information. Policies specific to Horticulture graduate students or frequently asked questions are as follows:

Minimum and Maximum Registration

Table 1 lists the minimum and maximum registration requirements for graduate students. It is a tabular interpretation of the guidelines specified in the Graduate Catalog as modified by policies set forth by the Department, COALS, and the Graduate School. In the event of a conflict in requirements, the University's and College's requirements always prevail over the department's requirements.

Departmental Policy on Minimum and Continuous Registration

All graduate students in the Department (regardless of major) must maintain continuous enrollment of a minimum of 1 credit hour per semester (fall, spring, and summer) from the first enrollment semester until the graduation semester. The student can request a waiver based on full-time employment by the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS), medical reasons, leaves of absence, etc. If a waiver is granted, the student cannot be on-campus or at a Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center or other TAMU System facility actively completing requirements for their degree, except for a waiver granted to full-time TAMUS employees. The Minimum Registration Waiver form (see Form 1) can be obtained from the Department. This continuous registration requirement is in addition to the University requirement for continuous registration for students who have completed all course requirements (other than HORT 684, 691, and 693) on their Degree Plan. A waiver from the University requirement can only be obtained by filing a Leave of Absence petition with The Graduate School. Any student violating the continuous registration requirement will have their registration blocked. The block can be removed only after the student consults with the Associate Head for Graduate Programs, who will consult with the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee before removing the block. A letter of reinstatement must be sent from the Associate Head for Graduate Programs to the Graduate School for students blocked by The Graduate School. If a student is allowed to register after missing continuous registration for 1 or more semesters, then they must register for 1 credit hour for each semester in violation plus the current semester.

Distance Courses

Several departments offer courses at a distance. These courses have a 700 section number associated with them and come with an additional distance education fee that the student must pay. Although these courses may be taken while in residence at the College Station campus, they are still considered distance courses if they have a 700 section number associated with them. **For non-distance Ph.D. degree programs, including the Ph.D. in Horticulture, no more than four courses may be taken by distance or via web-based instruction without the approval of The Graduate School. This rule does not apply to M.S. or M.Ag. programs, although no more than 50% of the non-research hours can be obtained via distance courses or web-based courses.**

Waiver of Minimum Registration

If you feel your situation justifies registration below what is stated in Table 1, fill out a Minimum Registration Form (Form 1) and turn it in to the Associate Head for Graduate Programs for approval before the first day of classes for that semester. **Waivers cannot be granted to students on assistantships.**

In Absentia Registration

A student may register *In Absentia* if enrolled in a course that is offered on an individual basis and conducted away from the College Station campus and System campuses or facilities such as Agricultural Research and Extension Centers, Research Stations, or other properties under the jurisdiction of The Texas A&M University System. Such courses may include, but are not limited to internships, directed studies, practicums, etc. To qualify for *In Absentia* registration, the student **must not** have access to or use of facilities of The Texas A&M University System at any time during the semester or summer term for which he or she is enrolled. The definition of “facilities” includes human resources and services such as those provided by graduate advisory committee members responding to drafts of theses, dissertations, or records of study material, etc. Therefore, those students who conduct a portion of their research at the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Centers are not eligible to register *In Absentia* if they will be accessing these facilities during the term for which he or she is enrolled. **Furthermore, any student holding a fellowship or assistantship may not register *In Absentia*.**

Time Limit on Coursework

Master’s degree candidates must complete their coursework within seven years of the first-semester registration, and Ph.D. degree candidates must complete their coursework within ten years. Coursework taken before these periods of time cannot be used towards the degree.

99-Hour Cap Rule

Ph.D. students exceeding seven years will be penalized on hours enrolled above 99 hours in the following semesters. Tuition equivalent to out-of-state tuition will be charged on excess hours. This is a TAMU policy that the Department cannot waive.

MINIMUM COURSE PREREQUISITES

Suggested Course Prerequisites

Suggested course prerequisites vary among the M.Ag., M.S., or Ph.D. degrees depending upon the desired internship experience, research project, subdiscipline within the field chosen, and the prospective student's post-graduation goals. A B.S. in Horticulture, Agronomy, Biology, or related sciences will satisfy most prerequisites for

programs within the Department. Some remedial coursework may be required for applicants with bachelor's degrees from widely divergent fields of academia.

Departmental Policy on Course Prerequisites

It is highly recommended that all graduate students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences have taken or will take 6 credit hours of 200, 300, 400, or 600-level HORT courses prior to admission. If the student is deficient in HORT instruction, the Chair of the student's Advisory Committee can require the student to take an additional 6 credit hours of HORT (300, 400, or 600 level course) at TAMU as part of their degree. The Chair must approve these courses. Any 300, 400, or 600-level courses may be applied towards the student's Degree Plan with the Chair and Committee's approval. These 6 hours of HORT courses will be in addition to the 9-hour Master's and 12-hour Doctoral requirement at the 600 level for all HORT graduate students. If the student is deficient in non-HORT supporting field courses (for example, chemistry, soils, plant physiology, etc.), the Chair will determine course prerequisites that need to be taken.

Graduate students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences majoring in molecular and environmental plant science (MEPS), genetics (GENE), food science and technology (FSTC), or plant breeding (PLBR) must meet the course prerequisite requirements set forth by the Interdisciplinary Faculty of that major.

Courses Specified by the Graduate Admissions Process

In addition to the Departmental course prerequisites described above, the graduate admissions process may specify certain courses as a condition of acceptance into the Department's graduate program. Individual Chair or Advisory Committees may also require certain courses to be taken as a prerequisite to a degree. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis based on the student's background, degree pursued, and/or type of research or internship to be undertaken.

DEGREE PLAN AND GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Degree Plan

The Degree Plan establishes all coursework required for the graduate degree and the Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee.

The Degree Plan lists the courses that students must complete for their degree. In addition, the committee may list prerequisite courses necessary to fill in gaps in the student's previous training or education. See Degree Plan Deadlines for pertinent deadlines.

The degree plan is submitted online. For specific instructions, please see the Graduate School website (<https://grad.tamu.edu>) under the Current Student tab.

Departmental Policy on Minimum Course Requirements

Requirements are subject to change. **Students are required to follow the newest set of minimum course requirements when the Degree Plan is submitted. If a student does not have an approved degree plan on file and the Departmental Graduate faculty votes to change a departmental policy on minimum course requirements or other specific policies related to the degree plan, then the student must follow the new guidelines when they submit their degree plan for approval.**

All graduate students in the Department must:

1) Regardless of major, take or have taken one graduate-level graded statistics course per degree (i.e. one for the Masters and another for the Ph.D.; if none were taken for the Masters, then two are required for the Ph.D.). This may be satisfied by a graduate-level statistics course or a graduate-level experimental design/data analysis course in a subject matter department; the course chosen must be a graded course (i.e. no S/U courses can be used to fulfill this requirement).

2) Regardless of major, take at least one 681 seminar course per degree (i.e. one for Masters and another for Ph.D.). The seminar may be in Horticulture (i.e. HORT 681) or in the student's major (i.e. MEPS 681, GENE 681 or FSTC 681). Up to three repeated hours of HORT 681 may be applied to satisfy the minimum number of graduate hours required in Horticulture courses. If a student transfers from another major and has already taken a 681 equivalent in that major, then the 681 requirement will be waived for that degree. **It is also expected that all Horticulture graduate students will attend the biweekly seminar series organized by the Department of Horticultural Sciences throughout their studies in the Department.** This series is designed to expose students and faculty to the wide diversity of activities in horticulture.

3) All HORT majors must take at least one hour of HORT 690, which is taught by a Departmentally designated faculty member as a professional development course. If the course has been previously taken during a Master's degree at TAMU, then the requirement will be waived for the Ph.D. Additional hours of HORT 690 may be taken under other faculty as various theory of research courses; however, these will not substitute for the HORT 690 required as a professional development course.

4) All HORT Master of Agriculture or Master of Science students must take 9 hours, and HORT Ph.D. students must take 12 hours of graduate-level instructional HORT courses (excluding HORT 684, 685, 690, 691, or 693) in addition to the HORT 690 requirement as a professional development course. Ph.D. students who have taken 9 hours during their M.S. program in the Department can use these 9 hours as part of the 12-hour requirement for their degree. Up to three hours of HORT 681 Seminar can be applied toward these 9 and 12-hour requirements, respectively.

5) All other curricular matters are at the discretion of the student and his/her Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee, assuming the Department and Graduate Catalog requirements are met.

Schedule of Horticulture Graduate Course Offerings

Table 2 lists all graduate courses offered in the Department and the tentative semesters they are projected to be offered. This table is intended for planning purposes, but due to various reasons impacting faculty schedules and Departmental resources, it is subject to change without notice.

Use of Transfer Courses

Consult the latest edition of the Graduate Catalog for the section on Limitation on the Use of Transfer, Extension, and Certain Other Courses. These guidelines under the degree type section (M.Ag., M.S., Ph.D) must be followed when preparing a Degree Plan.

Degree Plan Deadlines

Degree Plans must be completed and filed with the Graduate School: 1) during the 2nd regular semester and prior to registration (or preregistration) for a third semester for

Master's candidates and during the 4th regular semester and prior to registration (or preregistration) for the fifth semester for Doctoral candidates and 2) no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination or thesis defense for Master's candidates or preliminary exam for Doctoral candidates. The student will be blocked from registering by the Graduate School if the degree plan has not been filed by the specified semester.

Graduate Advisor or Chair of the Graduate Advisory Committee

The graduate advisor serves as the Chair of the Graduate Advisory Committee. The graduate advisor should be selected based on the student's interests and goals, the faculty's workload and interests, funding availability, and facilities and equipment. Students seeking to apply for an M.Ag., M.S., or Ph.D. degree in Horticulture should have identified a graduate faculty member to serve as their advisor. Students applying for Horticulture degree programs are only admitted if a faculty member indicates agreement to serve as their advisor.

The graduate advisor plays the primary role in developing a graduate student's program and assists the student in preparing a Degree Plan.

The student should work closely with the graduate advisor to determine whether the graduate program is meeting the student's goals and seek advice on problems that may develop during graduate study.

Members of the Graduate Advisory Committee

In addition to the graduate advisor, who functions as the Chair, Master's candidates must select two faculty members to serve on their Advisory Committee, and Doctoral candidates must select three faculty members to serve on their Advisory Committee. At least one of the committee members must be from outside the student's Department or major, and at least two of the committee members must be from the Department of Horticultural Sciences.

Any member of the Graduate Faculty can serve as a committee member. Graduate Faculty in the Department of Horticultural Sciences include those faculty who hold Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor rank or a Distinguished Lecturer designation and have been approved at the Department, COALS, and University levels for inclusion as Graduate Faculty. A list of graduate faculty members in the department appears in Table 3. A Biographical Sketch of all Graduate Faculty and Adjunct Graduate Faculty in the Department is available on the Department's website, <https://hortsciences.tamu.edu>. The Graduate Catalog contains a list of all members of the Graduate Faculty in the University. The Advisory Committee may include Texas A&M University faculty or staff that are non-members of the Graduate Faculty (such as Research Scientists, Lecturers, Research Assistant Professors, Research Associate Professors, or Research Professors) or even qualified individuals from outside the University, with special permission from the Graduate School. Special appointments to a graduate committee are non-voting members, and they must be in addition to the normal contingent of graduate faculty members on the committee. Committee members become official upon the submission of the degree plan.

Preliminary Graduate Advisory Committee Meeting

The student should schedule an advisory committee meeting prior to the second semester's registration. The purpose of this meeting is to determine a student's level of competence and to guide the student in developing a plan of study that meets his or her career goals. The meeting is informal and consists of an interchange between the student and the committee members. The student, with the help of the graduate advisor,

should prepare a preliminary Degree Plan and a preliminary research/internship plan for discussion at the meeting. The meeting will end with suggestions for the student on preparing the Degree Plan and the internship/thesis/dissertation proposal. The committee may suggest an additional meeting at a later date to finalize the program of study and proposal as needed.

Research Conducted at an Off-Campus AgriLife Research Center

Numerous graduate faculty within the Department reside at off-campus Research and Extension Centers across the state. Off-campus faculty who are members of the Department of Horticultural Sciences Graduate Faculty are allowed to serve as chairs of graduate student committees. The off-campus chair is expected to identify an on-campus faculty member who will mentor the student while attending classes on campus. In addition, the off-campus chair is expected to meet regularly with the graduate student on campus to oversee and gauge the student's progress concerning coursework, the required thesis proposal, and research projects and activities. Most M.S. and Ph.D. students who intend to conduct their research at an off-campus location will spend a minimum of 2 long semesters taking classes on the College Station campus before moving to their off-campus location. If an international student intends to move to an off-campus location to conduct their thesis or dissertation research, they must comply with all visa requirements. Before moving to the off-campus location, the international student must notify International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) and obtain approval. ISSS will provide the student with the necessary documents to obtain approval.

THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

An M.S. candidate must develop a thesis proposal, and a Ph.D. candidate must develop a dissertation proposal. The proposal describes the area of research, lists the objectives of the research, and presents the methodology and approach that will be used. A cover page for the proposal (Form 2) and the guidelines for preparing the proposal can be obtained from The Graduate School website. Once your proposal has been verbally approved by your committee, it must be routed through for approval. Students can contact the Academic Advisors to obtain the necessary forms and instructions for routing their proposals. *All M.S. students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences must file a thesis proposal with the Graduate School prior to registration (or preregistration) for a third regular semester. All Ph.D. students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences must file a dissertation proposal with the Graduate School prior to registration (or preregistration) for a regular fifth semester. If the thesis or dissertation proposal is not filed by this time, students will be blocked from registration by the Department.*

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

A preliminary examination is required for all Ph.D. students; waivers are not permitted. Refer to the latest issue of the Graduate Catalog and The Graduate and Professional School website for details.

M.S. THESIS AND Ph.D. DISSERTATION

In the Department of Horticultural Sciences, an M.S. degree requires a thesis and a Ph.D. degree requires a dissertation. Research problems should be carefully selected by the student, their Graduate Advisor, and Advisory Committee to investigate areas of mutual interest with significant research potential.

The M.S. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation must be prepared according to the guidelines set forth in the “Thesis & Dissertation Manual,” which can be accessed at <https://grad.tamu.edu>. An example of the thesis title page can be found on page 26 (Form 2).

Master of Agriculture students within the Department are required to provide an electronic copy of the signed professional paper in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format to the Associate Head for Graduate Programs by the last Friday of regularly scheduled classes during the semester in which the student intends to graduate. The signed professional paper should also be sent to the department program coordinator prior to the student’s exit seminar. If these are not provided, a block will be placed on graduation. Copies of the thesis and dissertation for M.S. and Ph.D. students, respectively, are maintained by the Texas A&M University library, and clearance from the thesis office by their published deadlines is required prior to graduation.

EXIT SEMINAR

An exit seminar summarizes the major findings, experiences, and accomplishments of a Master of Agriculture internship, Master of Science thesis, or Doctor of Philosophy dissertation. The exit seminar is presented at the end of a student’s graduate program. See The Graduate School Calendar for deadlines.

Departmental Policy on Exit Seminar

All graduate students in the Department, regardless of major, must present a final exit seminar (not for course credit) on the final results of their internship and professional paper for M.Ag. students, or their thesis or dissertation research for M.S. and Ph.D. students. These seminars must be announced by the graduate student between 1 to 2 weeks in advance of the seminar by placing fliers in mailboxes and posting them on bulletin boards on all floors of the Horticulture/Forest Science Building (HFSB) and sending a copy of the announcement to the Department's Associate Head for Graduate Programs or their designated representative for electronic distribution. The exit seminar must have open attendance. The student and graduate advisor determine the scheduled time for the exit seminar, which is often held just prior to the final examination. Alternatively, the exit seminar may be presented as a part of the Department's seminar series during the last semester of the student's graduate program.

TAMU-KINGSVILLE COOPERATIVE PHD PROGRAM

The Cooperative Horticulture Ph.D. Program with TAMU-Kingsville is in place to facilitate the cooperative training of Ph.D. students by the TAMU Department of Horticultural Sciences faculty in conjunction with faculty in Horticulture and related Plant Science fields at the TAMU-Kingsville campus and the Citrus Center. Students are initially accepted independently by both academic institutions and must have a co-advisor at each institution. Students must meet the same degree requirements as those in the Horticulture Ph.D. Program at College Station, with the exception that at least 50% of their degree plan hours must be from courses offered through College Station. Of the 12 hours of required graduate-level HORT courses, 6 of these must come from TAMU-College Station while the other 6 can come from TAMU-Kingsville as long as they are related to Horticulture. **Proposal and Dissertation Research hours, Advanced Studies in Horticulture and Advanced Problems in Horticulture**

offered at TAMU-Kingsville do not count toward the required 12 hours of graduate level HORT courses. It is recommended that the student provide the current Graduate Advisor or Associate Head for Graduate Programs with the TAMU-Kingsville course name and content to ensure that it satisfies the Department's requirements. All graduate students have a 1-year residency requirement as required by the TAMU Graduate and Professional School and a number of HORT courses, including the required *HORT 690, Professional Development*. These can be taken while in residence at TAMU in College Station. Additionally, some graduate level HORT courses are taught via the web or TTVN from time to time. Many of the faculty members in the Citrus Center and horticultural-related areas of Plant Science at TAMU-Kingsville are already adjunct members of the TAMU Department of Horticultural Sciences' graduate faculty and would be eligible to participate in the program.

MINIMUM GRADE POINT RATIO (GPR)

Graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point ratio (GPR) of 3.00 on both the courses on the Degree Plan and on all graded graduate (600) and advanced undergraduate (300, 400) courses eligible to be applied toward a graduate degree. The cumulative GPR is calculated from all graded (excludes S/U) courses taken at Texas A&M University that are eligible to be used on the Degree Plan (i.e. all 300, 400, and 600-level courses). The University policy and method of calculation of the GPR are described in detail in the Graduate Catalog. For students in the TAMU-Kingsville Cooperative Ph.D. program, only courses taken at TAMU College Station are used in the calculation of the student's GPR as per TAMU policy.

Departmental Policy on Minimum GPR

If a graduate student's GPR falls below a cumulative 3.00, the following Departmental policy details the procedures to be followed.

All graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point ratio (GPR) of 3.00 or greater. Any student whose cumulative GPR falls below 3.00 will be allowed the next semester, in which they are enrolled, to raise their cumulative GPR to or above 3.00. For students on an assistantship or fellowship, funding for that semester will be allowed only if justified to the satisfaction of the Associate Head for Graduate Programs, Department Head, Executive Associate Dean of COALS, and the Graduate School. A letter of justification for continued funding is forwarded from the Chair of the Advisory Committee, through the Associate Head for Graduate Programs, and to the Department Head. The Department will then make a recommendation to the Executive Associate Dean of COALS and the Graduate School for a final decision.

If the student's cumulative GPR is not raised to 3.00 or above after the additional semester of enrollment, or if the student's cumulative GPR falls below 3.00 in any subsequent semester (i.e. if a student ever has two semesters with a cumulative GPR below a 3.00, whether the semesters are consecutive or not), the Chair and Advisory Committee will be asked to recommend if the student should be allowed to continue their graduate program. A written recommendation as to the future of the student's graduate program will be sent from the Chair, through the Associate Head for Graduate Programs, and to the Department Head. If the student is allowed to continue, all graduate assistantship and fellowship funding will be terminated immediately, unless extraordinary justification is presented. The Department will then make a

recommendation to the Executive Associate Dean of COALS and the Graduate School for a final decision.

If, after the second violation, the student's cumulative GPR is not raised to 3.00 or above after an additional semester of enrollment, or if the student's cumulative GPR falls below 3.00 in any subsequent semester (i.e. if a student ever has three semesters with a cumulative GPR below 3.00, whether the semesters are consecutive or not), the graduate student will be terminated from the graduate program immediately, unless extraordinary justification is provided by the Chair, through the Associate Head for Graduate Programs, and to the Department Head. The Department will then make a recommendation to the Executive Associate Dean of COALS and the Graduate School for a final decision.

ELEMENTS OF A MASTER OF AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Internship

All M.Ag. students must devote a minimum of three consecutive months full-time, or its equivalent, to an internship experience. The internship is selected in cooperation with their Graduate Advisor and Advisory Committee and approved by the Associate Head for Graduate Programs. In the interest of broadening a student's experiences, advisory committees are discouraged from approving internships at the student's family business or at a firm at which the student is currently or formerly employed. Along with this reasoning, advisory committees are discouraged from approving internships that allow students to remain on campus unless the internship is outside of the Department of Horticultural Sciences. M.Ag. students should request a copy of the Internship manual from the Program Coordinator or Academic Advisor, which contains useful information on the guidelines and policies to follow prior to embarking on an internship. At the completion of the internship, an evaluation between the student and agency supervisor takes place using the internship evaluation form that can be obtained from the Program Coordinator or Academic Advisor. The agency supervisor should turn in the form as soon as feasible following the evaluation. An incomplete grade for HORT 684, Professional Internship, will be given until the internship evaluation form has been provided to the Associate Head for Graduate Programs by the internship supervisor.

Professional Paper

The professional paper is based on the internship experience and has three main parts: preliminary pages, the text, and supplementary pages.

1. Preliminary Pages (in the following order)
 - a. Title page
 - b. Approval page (Form 3 in Appendix)
 - c. Abstract (the first numbered page, iii)
 - d. Dedication page (optional)
 - e. Acknowledgment (optional)
 - f. Table of Contents
 - g. List of Tables (if more than one table is used)
 - h. List of Figures (if more than one figure is used)
2. Text (normally requires the following)
 - a. Introduction (problem studied at internship site)
 - b. Review of Literature
 - c. Objectives (for the problem-solving experience)
 - d. Results
 - e. Conclusions and/or Recommendations
 - f. Additional Internship Experiences

3. Supplementary Pages (in the following order)
 - a. Bibliography, references, or literature cited
 - b. Appendices (if needed)
 - c. Vita

APPROVAL AND FILING OF PROFESSIONAL PAPER

- a) During their final semester, Master of Agriculture students are required to enroll, in addition to any other course requirements, in one hour of HORT 693 under the direction of the Associate Head for Graduate Programs.
- b) The Department Head will only sign the signature page after the paper has been cleared by the Associate Head for Graduate Programs. The Department Head may designate the Associate Head for Graduate Programs as an alternate signatory.
- c) One electronic copy of the professional paper in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format containing the completed signature page will be provided to the Associate Head for Graduate Programs by the last Friday of regularly scheduled classes during the semester in which the student intends to graduate. If these are not provided, a block will be placed on graduation.

ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Types of Assistantships and Fellowships

The following graduate assistantships are available: Graduate Assistant Research (GAR), Graduate Assistant Teaching (GAT), Graduate Assistant Non-Teaching (GANT), Graduate Assistant Extension (GAE) and Graduate Fellowship (GF). Assistantships and fellowships are awarded by the Department, College, University, endowments, or sponsoring agencies. Assistantships require a work commitment, such as teaching undergraduate laboratory sections or working in a research laboratory. Students who hold full-time graduate assistantship positions are required to work 20 hours per week (50% effort). Assistantship positions are not allowed to work beyond 50% effort without the approval of the Graduate School. These guidelines vary between domestic and international students. Please consult the Graduate School website for more information. Fellowships do not require a work commitment and are more comparable to a scholarship.

Competitively Awarded

All graduate assistantships and fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis. Those awarded for a given semester will be for the specified academic semester only. Those awarded for multiple semesters or for the duration of the student's graduate program (subject to Departmental guidelines) are contingent on continued satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant as well as their overall graduate performance and availability of funds.

Graduate Application Deadlines

Two soft deadlines for evaluation of graduate program applications occur each year, September 15 each fall and January 15 each spring. Applications received by that date will be given full consideration by the Department for open assistantships.

- i) The Associate Head for Graduate Programs will forward applications for students looking to work in specific research programs to those faculty in that area. Additionally, faculty with funding can request graduate applications from the Academic Advisor or Associate Head.
- ii) Assignment of teaching assistantships will be based on the strength of the qualifications of the student and their suitability to teach the courses associated with the available slot. Although students will be assigned to assist with a given course or courses, the need to change course assignments to accommodate budget changes, undergraduate curriculum changes, and other considerations may exist. Students assigned to a given course will be independent of whether or not their advisor instructs the course(s). There will be an attempt to minimize shifts in teaching assignments, in order not to overburden students with preparation of new lesson/lab plans nor faculty with retraining student teaching assistants each semester.
- iii) Recruitment of the highest quality students for graduate research and quality instruction in the classroom/laboratory will be the priority. This is combined with a fair and equitable rotation of assistantships to various programs in the department including due consideration of faculty participation in undergraduate and graduate classroom instruction, student organization advising, and departmental service.

Individual faculty seeking to recruit individual students for grant-funded assistantships may request evaluation of students' applications outside of the general departmental application deadlines.

Minimum GPR

The Department requires all students on assistantships and fellowships to have a minimum entrance GPR of 3.00 and to maintain a minimum graduate GPR of 3.00 throughout their program. Successful applicants to the M.Ag. or M.S. programs typically have an undergraduate GPR of 3.00 or better, strong letters of support for admission to the graduate program from faculty mentors, a well-written letter of application, and in the case of international students strongly demonstrated competency in English via TOEFL scores or other testing instruments. Applicants for the Ph.D. program who have successfully completed a prior M.S. degree usually have similar or greater qualifications than those outlined for admission to the Master's programs. Applicants for a Ph.D. program directly from an undergraduate program without a prior M.S. degree are typically successful in being admitted only if able to demonstrate abilities beyond those usually demonstrated by applicants to the Master's programs. Examples might include a combination of more highly competitive GPR, very strong letters of reference, and evidence of prior research experience. Evidence of prior research experience might include authorship or co-authorship on peer-reviewed research articles, experience in an undergraduate research program or course, or a letter from a faculty member detailing direct involvement in research efforts in their laboratory. Students successfully admitted to the Ph.D. program with only a B.S. are strongly discouraged from transferring to a Master's program later in their term of study.

Transfer from M.S. to Ph.D. programs

Transfer from an M.S. program to a Ph.D. program of study is permitted with unanimous approval from the student's graduate advisory committee. A consenting committee member will likely need to be added to the advisory committee to reach the required minimum number as outlined by the Graduate School. Upon changing majors, a new degree plan will need to be submitted to the Graduate School.

Minimum Registration - Full-Time Status

Graduate students on **any level** of assistantship or fellowship funding must register for a full-time course load. For the fall and spring semesters, full-time status is 9 credit hours. Full-time status for the summer semester is 6 hours. Full-time registration cannot be waived for students on assistantships or fellowships. Full-time status may also be required for certain scholarships, insurance coverage, loan eligibility, or international student status. Typically, all international students must be registered as full-time students for the fall and spring semesters, regardless of funding source. All international students must register for a full-time course load during their first semester at Texas A&M, first semester in a new academic program, or last semester in an academic program. For the summer semester, international students who are not supported on an assistantship or fellowship are required to register for a minimum of 1 hour. International students are allowed to petition for a Reduced Course Load due to medical reasons, academic difficulty, or final semester. These requirements should be investigated by the student when less than full-time enrollment is being considered.

Time Limit on Assistantships

As a general policy, appointment to a graduate teaching assistantship will be granted to Master's level students for a maximum of 5 long semesters (fall and spring). These 5 semesters of teaching do not have to be consecutive. Similarly doctoral students will be allowed to hold teaching assistantships for a maximum of 9 long semesters (fall and spring). Extensions can be granted with approval of the Associate Head for Graduate Programs on a case-by-case basis. Each student's teaching performance is reviewed each semester by the instructor of record for that course. Continuation as a graduate teaching assistant will be contingent on a satisfactory evaluation. All graduate research assistantships are provided by grant funds secured by the faculty member. Appointment to and continuation of a graduate research assistantship is at the discretion of the student's advisor and is typically contingent on satisfactory student performance and the availability of funds. The length of fellowships varies and is specified when the fellowship is awarded. Continuation of fellowships is typically contingent on student performance and availability of funds.

Medical Benefits

Graduate students on full-time assistantships (50% effort; 20 hours/week) receive medical benefits through the Graduate Student Insurance Plan after 60 days for new employees (students should consult the appropriate agency or university personnel office to obtain the latest rules relating to employment and benefits). The benefits can be extended to their spouse and dependents for an additional fee. Graduate students on fellowships do not receive medical benefits. Medical insurance policy information is available on the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies (grad.tamu.edu) website.

Outside Employment

According to the Payroll Office, if a graduate student is on a 20-hour-per-week teaching or research assistantship they cannot be employed in any other capacity on-campus without prior approval from the Graduate School. If approval is obtained from the Department and the Graduate School, a domestic student is not allowed to work more than 10 hours per week beyond the assistantship anytime during the semester. International students are not allowed to work beyond whatever percent of effort their assistantship is for the fall and spring semesters, in accordance with immigration rules. The Payroll Office conducts computer checks of all students for additional employment on-campus on a semester basis and actively enforces this policy. Off-campus employment is not restricted by the Department unless a conflict of interest is involved. Any potential conflicts of interest between on-campus and off-campus employment

should be reported immediately to the Department Head and the appropriate financial disclosure forms must be filed.

Training & Safety Documentation

Each graduate student is responsible for providing evidence of the introductory laboratory safety training course to the Main Administrative Offices of the TAMU Department of Horticultural Sciences and the Graduate Advisor. Those students working in research or teaching laboratories must provide lab safety certification prior to beginning employment with the Department. All greenhouse workers and students in labs using the greenhouses are required to receive WPS (Worker Protection Standards) training. Additionally, if a student uses any pesticides, additional training is required. Both WPS and Pesticide training modules are available in TrainTraq on the TAMU SSO site. If these courses are taken in TrainTraq, you must contact Dr. Gerald Burgner (gsburgner@tamu.edu) and send him a copy of your completed training. At that time, he will send you a written exam to complete to finalize the training. WPS training must be renewed every year for all students working in the greenhouse or field. Pesticide training also must be renewed each year for students handling pesticides and all pesticide application must be performed under an employee with a pesticide applicator's license. Contact the current greenhouse or HORTREC manager to determine which employees have a pesticide applicator's license. Graduate students are periodically required by TAMUS, COALS, the Department, or their graduate advisors to obtain additional safety and employment related training. Documentation of all such training should be provided to the appropriate personnel in the Main Administrative Offices of the Department and Graduate Advisor. Refer to page 17 for details on how to access the training.

Student Travel

Graduate students who travel beyond 25 miles for educational purposes (i.e. attending meetings/conferences, volunteer activities, field trips, performing research, internship, etc.) must file a travel documentation form with the University. Refer to page 19 for the University Travel Policy (University SAP 13.04.99.M1.01).

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

Recipients of awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are required to comply with specific requirements to ensure appropriate training in the responsible conduct of research. University SAP 15.99.99.M0.04 went into effect August 6, 2020. The requirements outlined in this procedure apply to all postdoctoral researchers and any undergraduate or graduate student participating in research funded internally or externally (e.g., sponsored research or research gift).

The RCR training requirements for graduate students depend on whether the graduate student is participating in research funded internally, by research gift(s), or by an external sponsor as sponsored research. Graduate students enrolled in a course that includes research as an integral element are also subject to the RCR requirements (e.g., master's thesis, or doctoral dissertation). For graduate students participating in research through a course funded internally or by research gift(s), CITI RCR training must be completed within 60 days from the commencement of the research activity. For graduate students participating in externally funded research, CITI RCR training must be completed within 60 days following receipt of such support. In addition, each

graduate student must complete an additional four hours of face-to-face Core training within the first six months of his or her involvement in externally funded research. Information on this training can be found at the Division of Research website <https://vpr.tamu.edu/manage-research/responsible-conduct-of-research/workshop-information>.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Wherein possible, all students should be encouraged to obtain a minimum of one semester's teaching experience as a teaching assistant in an undergraduate laboratory section during their tenure at Texas A&M University. All new teaching assistants must attend and complete the Teaching Assistant Institute (TAI) training prior to teaching in the classroom. Documentation of this training should be provided to the appropriate personnel in the Main Administrative Offices of the Department. Additionally, international students whose native language is not English must meet minimum English proficiency standards (<https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/academic-success-resources/elp>). A student on a Teaching Assistantship is eligible for a \$25 per month increase if they have successfully completed the Academy for Future Faculty program. This \$25 per month increase will begin the semester after successful completion of the Center For Teaching Excellence AFF program (<https://cte.tamu.edu/prepare-future-faculty/academy-for-future-faculty>) and only apply during those months they are employed on a teaching assistantship. This increase will be provided from the same source of funds used to fund their assistantship during a given semester. It is the **student's responsibility** to provide documentation to payroll in the Department of Horticultural Sciences of their new status.

NONRESIDENT TUITION EXEMPTIONS

The following conditions allow a non-resident of the State of Texas to obtain a non-resident tuition waiver because of House Bill (HB) 1147. Current information on this topic can be found in the appendix of the most current catalog in "Rules and Regulations for Determining Residence Status" which can be obtained through the Graduate School.

Competitive Scholarships

A scholarship is one, which is designated as competitive by the institution, whose sum either singularly or in combination with other competitive scholarships totals the amount of \$1000, that is publicized and open to all students including Texas residents; and which has been selected by the institution to be a basis for the waiver of non-resident tuition charges.

Faculty and Dependents

Teachers, professors, and research associates who are employed at least one-half time on a regular monthly basis by a Texas institution of higher education are entitled to register themselves, their spouse, and their children in a Texas institution of higher education by paying the tuition and fees required of Texas residents. This is subject to change by the Texas state legislature.

Assistantships and Fellowships

Teaching assistants, research assistants, and graduate assistants non-teaching who are employed at least one-half time at a Texas institution of higher education and whose job duties are related to teaching or research in an academic program associated with their field of study are entitled to register themselves, their spouse and their children in

the employing Texas institution of higher education by paying the tuition and fees required of Texas residents subject to change by the state legislature.

Provisions for Improper Registration for Tuition Purposes

HB 1147 requires that if a student falsely registers as a resident student when he or she is a non-resident, the student has 30 days from the date of notification by the University to pay the amount he or she should have paid as a non-resident. If the individual fails to make a timely payment as required by law, the individual is not entitled to receive a transcript or to receive credit for courses taken during the time the individual was falsely registered as a resident student.

Non-resident Tuition Exemptions

If you are not a resident of Texas you are required to pay out-of-state tuition and fees unless you are on a full-time (50%) effort assistantship, a university-awarded Fellowship or have received at least a \$1000.00 competitively awarded University scholarship for the given academic year. If one of the above conditions applies, you will be eligible for the in-state tuition and fee rate.

Establishing Texas Residency

The ideal solution is to be declared a Texas resident. This determination is made by the Registrar in the Office of Admissions and Records. You should contact the Registrar directly if you have questions.

HOLIDAYS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS ON ASSISTANTSHIPS

Graduate students on assistantships are considered part-time employees of TAMU, Texas AgriLife Research or Texas AgriLife Extension. As such they are entitled only to time off during official University holidays and do not accrue vacation time or sick leave. However, a student on a GAR, GAE, or GAT may make arrangements with their supervisor to take time off during non-University holidays; but this must have their supervisor's approval.

PERSONAL COMPUTER USE IN GRADUATE STUDENT OFFICES

Graduate students may use their personal computers in their assigned offices and laboratories, but TAMU, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and the Department assume no liability for theft or damage to the computers. Only Department/University owned computers are eligible to be connected to the Departmental computer network. This restriction is a result of potential liability, security, and labor issues related to the connection of the personal computers to the Departmental network. Appeals for exceptions to this policy should be made to the Associate Head for Graduate Programs. If an exception is granted, unrestricted access to the computer will be granted to a COALS System Analyst for the purposes of maintaining security and risk management of the Departmental network. Any computers connected to the network must be equipped with up-to-date virus protection software and other software as dictated by TAMU System, University, College, and Departmental policies. In addition, all users regardless of who owns the computer are subject to university guidelines for computer usage (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/>).

SIGNATURES

All petitions, degree plans, thesis/dissertation proposals, requests for final exams, change of major, drop/add forms, late registration, minimum registration forms, etc.

require Departmental approval. The current Department Head has designated that all requests and forms be signed by the Associate Head for Graduate Programs. If the Associate Head for Graduate Programs is not available, then the Head can sign in their place. **The final copy of the thesis/dissertation is signed by the Department Head, or at his designation the Associate Head for Graduate Programs.** Many items also require Dean's approval. Dean's signatures are obtained from the Dean's Office. Contact the graduate advisors for help with any forms that must be filed and how to route them.

BLOCKS

Blocks (such as registration blocks) placed on the student by the Department can only be removed by the Department Head or Associate Head for Graduate Programs. Blocks placed by other units within TAMUS (Deans Office, Graduate School, Parking and Transit, Fiscal Office, etc.) can only be removed by that unit.

ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT EVALUATION

At the end of each academic year, all graduate students in the Department of Horticultural Sciences are required to complete in cooperation with their advisor (co-advisors) the Annual Graduate Student Evaluation form. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine a student's progress toward fulfilling their degree requirements, enhancing goal setting for the coming year, documenting the student's accomplishments, and encouraging timely feedback between the student and advisor on the student's professional development and career goals. The annual graduate student evaluation is due June 15th each year. If a student fails to have the annual evaluation with their advisor and does not submit the completed form by June 15th, a block will be put on their upcoming fall semester registration and remain in effect until the evaluation form is turned in. If the student has already registered for fall classes by June 15th, their courses will be dropped by the graduate advisor and they will not be allowed to re-register until the evaluation form is completed and turned in.

GRADUATE RECORDS CONFIDENTIALITY

The Graduate Records in the Department offices are confidential and as such you are not allowed access to your complete graduate folder without permission of the Department Head or Associate Head for Graduate Programs, subject to TAMU System guidelines. If you would like to view any of the information in your folder, you may ask the Program Coordinator, who will make you a copy of the appropriate materials when time permits, if permission is granted by the Department Head or Associate Head for Graduate Programs. Confidential letters of reference, evaluations, etc. will not be copied if the prospective student has signed a waiver of the right to view those documents.

TITLE IX AND STATEMENT ON LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants,

student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, you will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Assessment Clinic](#) (CAC).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

EMPLOYEE/UNDERGRADUATE CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS

According to System Regulation 07.05.01: A system university employee is prohibited from pursuing or having a consensual relationship with an undergraduate student at that institution. A consensual relationship in violation of this section may result in disciplinary action against the member employee, up to and including dismissal. An employee may request an exemption from the prohibition set forth in this section from the president or designee of the member for whom the employee works. Exemptions may be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Documentation of an exemption will be signed by the president or designee and placed in the employee's personnel file.

FINAL COMMENT:

Every attempt is made to meet the needs of individual students. You are encouraged to discuss your goals and objectives fully with your Graduate Advisor, Advisory Committee, Department Head, or Associate Head for Graduate Programs. Solicit the help of the Associate Head for Graduate Programs if the Department, College or University policies are unclear or if you feel a policy is in conflict with your objectives. Suggestions for changes, additions or deletions to all policies are welcomed. Your views and suggestions are taken seriously by the Department and have a real impact on formulating Departmental policies. Therefore, please speak up when you feel it is appropriate. Communication is the key to a successful graduate program.

APPENDICES

Laboratory compliance:

Every student is required to enroll in the General Laboratory Safety course. You can find information for this class at: <https://ehs.tamu.edu/programs/laboratory-safety.html>. The safety training classes are available in TrainTraq (course #2114106) for both employees and non-employee students. General Laboratory Safety training also includes Hazard Communication training. This training will prepare laboratory beginners to work safely in the laboratories. If you will be working in a laboratory or greenhouse setting you should also receive lab (or greenhouse) specific training from your advisor or someone they designate to provide this training. This will train you for the specific hazards you might encounter in the specific program that you will be working on. This training should be documented by you and your advisor, and a copy of the documentation kept on file for the yearly EHS laboratory inspection.

Additionally, Teaching Assistants are required to take the Laboratory Safety for Teaching Assistants training (TrainTraq course ##2111402) in addition to the General Laboratory Safety course. Go to <https://ehs.tamu.edu/programs/laboratory-safety.html> to learn more about this training.

If you teach a lab, you and your direct supervisor will deliver the appropriate Lab Safety training to your students during the first days of the semester. This will include training of students in safe techniques, as well as documentation of this training. Your supervisor will provide you with these documents for students and inform you of the specifics of your lab's safety training program.

Miscellaneous Compliance:

All users of power tools and farm equipment or vehicles will receive training before using the said equipment. Many of the appropriate training courses are available in **TrainTraq** (found in SSO). Tractor, Utility (gator) vehicle, and Riding lawnmower are available. We have DVD's for power tool safety in our department. See the Farm Shop or Safety Officer.

Student Travel Rules

The opportunity to represent Texas A&M University throughout the state, nation, and world is one of the many benefits of being a recognized student organization. The university has established a travel registration process to promote the health and welfare of students. The Student Travel Rule and accompanying Standard Administrative Procedure apply to student travel sponsored by an academic department, university unit, or student organization. Specifically, these procedures are required when the intended travel is to an activity or event located 25 miles or more away from the university and any of the following circumstances apply:

- The event is funded by the University,
- The travel is undertaken using a vehicle owned or leased by the University,
- The activity or event is required by a recognized student organization, or

- The travel is undertaken under the scope, direction or election of a college, department, class, university office, learning community, study abroad program, recognized student organization, or their representatives.

Having access to current information is an essential factor in the University's ability to effectively respond to a critical incident involving Texas A&M students.

Texas A&M graduate students traveling for university business, including those on independent international experiences, or other educational purposes (i.e. attending meetings/conferences, volunteer activities, field trips, performing research, internship, etc.) must register with Education Abroad (<https://global.tamu.edu/ea/>) and submit an Emburse Travel Pre-Approval.

For all domestic trips for educational purposes (i.e. attending meetings/conferences, volunteer activities, field trips, performing research, internship, etc.), students are required to complete an Emburse Travel Pre-Approval before such travel takes place.

Foreign Travel:

Rules on foreign travel can be found at <https://global.tamu.edu/foreign-travel>.

A guide outlining rules, guidelines, procedures, and resources related to graduate and professional student traveling abroad can be found here:

<https://global.tamu.edu/ea/students/graduate-student>

Texas A&M Rules on Student Travel

<https://rules-saps.tamu.edu/PDFs/13.04.99.M1.pdf>

Table 1. Minimum¹ and maximum² registration requirements

	Each Fall and Spring Semester		For Entire Summer³	10-Week	SSI / SSII
Student Status	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Max
Assistantship (research/teaching/extension)					
1) State Funds	9	13	6	10	5/5
2) Grants/Contracts	9	13	6	10	5/5
Fellowship	9	16	6	14	7/7
International Students					
1) Self Supported	9	16	1	14	7/7
2) Government Support	9	16	1	14	7/7
Self-supported					
1) On-Campus entire or portion of semester	1	16	1	14	7/7
2) In Absentia Registration	1	16	1	14	7/7
3) Off campus registration	1	16	1	14	7/7
4) Full-time Employee ⁴	1	4	1	4	4/4
Thesis/Dissertation cleared by Thesis Clerk by 1st class day	0	0	0	0	0

¹All graduate students must maintain a minimum continuous enrollment of 1 credit hour each fall, spring and summer (all 10 weeks) semester(s) from the semester of first enrollment until the semester of graduation, unless 1) a Leave of Absence is granted, 2) a Minimum Registration Request is granted (for example, full-time employees), or 3) thesis or dissertation is cleared by Thesis Clerk before the start of the semester of graduation.

²Requests to exceed the maximum registration requires a petition approved by the Department and The Graduate School.

³Minimum summer enrollment requirements for students on assistantships and fellowships is 6 hours in any combination.

⁴Full-time employees must fill-out a Minimum Registration Form if 0 credit hours registration is chosen.

Table 2. Graduate course offerings by the Department of Horticultural Sciences.

COURSE # AND TITLE	2021-2022			2022-2023			2023-2024			2024-2025		
	F2021	Sp2022	Su2022	F2022	Sp2023	Su2023	F2023	Sp2024	Su2024	F2024	Sp2025	Su2025
HORT												
604 Applied Physiology of Hort. Plants (3)		DR										
607 Plant Biochemistry (3)		HK			HK			HK			HK	
608 Plants for Landscape Design (4)	MA			MA			MA			MA		
609 Plants for Landscape Design II (4)								MA			MA	
610 Plant Stress Response (3)				HK						HK		
618 Root Biology (3)		EP										
619 Plant Assoc. Microorganisms (3)					EP						EP	
630 Postharvest Biology (3)		LC			LC			LC			LC	
640 Phytochemicals in Fruits and Veggies (3)				BP			BP					
641 Science of Foods for Health (3)	BP									BP		
689 SPTP:Controlled Enviroments (3)								SZ			SZ	
689 SPTP:Advances in horticulture (3)								AD			AD	
689 SPTP:Wine Science (3)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	AB		Y			
689 SPTP:Viticulture/Small Fruit (3)		JS			JS							
681 Seminar (1)	PK			PK			PK			PK		
690 Theory of Research (1)	PK			PK			PK			PK		

ABBREVIATIONS: AB = Andreea Botezatu, AD = Amit Dhingra, BP = Bhimu Patil, CH = Charlie Hall, DR = David Reed, EP = Betsy Pierson, HK = Hisashi Kiowa, JS = Justin Scheiner, LC = Luis Cisneros, MA = Michael Arnold, PK = Patricia Klein, SZ = Shuyang Zhen

Table 3. Graduate faculty listed by area of specialization and (degrees that can be obtained under their direction).

<u>Controlled Environment Agriculture</u>	
<u>On-Campus</u> Shuyang Zhen	<u>Off-Campus</u> Genhua Niu (Dallas) Joe Masabni (Dallas) Krishna Bhattarai (Dallas) Daniel Leskovar (Uvalde) John Jifon (Weslaco)
<u>Floral Design and Event Planning (Horticulture)</u>	
<u>On-Campus</u> Bill McKinley	<u>Off-Campus</u>
<u>Food Science & Technology / Bioactive Compounds / Postharvest Physiology (Horticulture, Food Science and Nutrition)</u>	
<u>On-Campus</u> Luis Cisneros-Zevallos Bhimu Patil M. Isabel Vales Amit Dhingra Ahmed Darwish	<u>Off-Campus</u> Juan Anciso (Weslaco)
<u>Genomics (Horticulture, MEPS)</u>	
<u>On-Campus</u> Patricia Klein M. Isabel Vales Oscar Riera-Lizarazu Amit Dhingra	<u>Off-Campus</u> Krishna Bhattarai (Dallas)
<u>Greenhouse / Floriculture Production and Marketing (Horticulture)</u>	
<u>On-Campus</u> Charles Hall	<u>Off-Campus</u> Genhua Niu (Dallas) Joe Masabni (Dallas)
<u>International Horticulture (Horticulture)</u>	
<u>On-Campus</u> Tim Davis Bhimu Patil	<u>Off-Campus</u> Daniel Leskovar (Uvalde) Genhua Niu (Dallas) Joe Masabni (Dallas)
<u>Nursery / Floriculture Economics (Horticulture)</u>	
<u>On-Campus</u> Charles Hall	<u>Off-Campus</u>
<u>Ornamental Horticulture / Landscape Plant Establishment / Landscape Plant Development (Horticulture, MEPS, Plant Breeding)</u>	
<u>On-Campus</u> Michael Arnold	<u>Off-Campus</u> Genhua Niu (Dallas)

Oscar Riera-Lizarazu

Steve George (Dallas)

Plant –Associated Microorganisms / Plant Health (Horticulture, MEPS)

On-Campus

Off-Campus

Veronica Ancona (Kingsville)
Greta Schuster (Kingsville)
Genhua Niu (Dallas)
Madhurababu Kunta (Kingsville)
Mamoudou Setamou (Kingsville)

Plant Physiology (Horticulture, MEPS)

On-Campus

Patricia Klein
Hisashi Koiwa
Bhimu Patil
M. Isabel Vales
Amit Dhingra
Shuyang Zhen
Lorenzo Rossi

Off-Campus

John Jifon (Weslaco)
Daniel Leskovar (Uvalde)
Genhua Niu (Dallas)
Vijay Joshi (Uvalde)
Joe Masabni (Dallas)

Plant Breeding and Genetics (Horticulture, MEPS, Plant Breeding)

On-Campus

M. Isabel Vales
Kevin Crosby
Patricia Klein
Oscar Riera-Lizarazu
Andrej Svyantek

Off-Campus

Vijay Joshi (Uvalde)
Xinwang Wang (USDA, College Station)
Eliezer Louzada (Kingsville)
Carlos Avila (Weslaco)
Subas Malla (Uvalde)
Krishna Bhattarai (Dallas)

Sociohorticulture / People:Plant Interactions (Horticulture)

On-Campus

Charles Hall

Off-Campus

Tina Waliczek Cade (Texas State)

Sustainable Horticulture Production / Nursery Production (Horticulture)

On-Campus

Michael Arnold
Tim Hartmann

Off-Campus

Larry Stein (Uvalde)
Genhua Niu (Dallas)
Joe Masabni (Dallas)

Vegetable/Fruit Production (Horticulture, Plant Breeding)

On-Campus

Kevin Crosby
M. Isabel Vales
Tim Hartmann
Monte Nesbitt

Off-Campus

John Jifon (Weslaco)
Subas Malla (Uvalde)
Daniel Leskovar (Uvalde)
Larry Stein (Uvalde)
Shad D. Nelson (Kingsville)
Joe Masabni (Dallas)
Genhua Niu (Dallas)
Carlos Avila (Weslaco)
Juan Anciso (Weslaco)

Table 3. continued**Viticulture / Enology (Horticulture)**On-Campus

Justin Scheiner

Andreea Botezatu

Off-Campus

Patrick O'Brien (Lubbock)

DEGREES OFFERED THROUGH THE DEPT. OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES¹

	<u>MAG</u>	<u>NTO-M.S.</u>	<u>M.S.</u>	<u>Ph.D.</u>
Horticulture	X		X	X
Plant Breeding*			X	X
Molecular & Environmental Plant Sciences (MEPS)**			X	X
Distance Plant Breeding*		X	X	X
Food Science***	X		X	X
Nutrition***			X	X

¹ MAG=Master of Agriculture -Non-Thesis, internship and internship professional paper required

NTO-M.S. = Master of Science – Non-thesis option, internship and professional paper required

M.S. = Master of Science - Thesis required

Ph.D. = Doctor of Philosophy - Dissertation required

*Plant Breeding and Distance Plant Breeding programs are administered through both the Department of Horticultural Sciences and the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences.

*MEPs is an interdisciplinary program administered through the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences.

** Food Science and Nutrition programs are administered through the Departments of Food Science and Nutrition, respectively.

Students obtaining degrees in MEPS, Food Science, and Nutrition will follow the policies outlined by those programs and are not subject to the policies outlined in the Department of Horticultural Sciences Graduate Policy Manual. Students in the Distance Plant Breeding program in the Department of Horticultural Sciences will follow the policies outlined in the Departments Distance Plant Breeding Handbook. Those students in the on-campus Plant Breeding program housed in the Department of Horticultural Sciences follow this graduate policy manual with the exception of the 12 HORT course hour requirement as these students are required to take courses in Plant Breeding and Genetics.

Form 1. Example of the form used to request registration below the minimum.

Minimum Registration Request	
Department of Horticultural Sciences	
<p>All graduate students are required to maintain continuous enrollment during their graduate program.</p> <p>Fill out this form if you wish to register for hours below the required minimum of 1 credit each semester. Students on assistantships and fellowships cannot register below the minimum required. You may also use this form to request a leave of absence. Submit the completed form to the Associate Head for Graduate Programs prior to the first day of classes for each requested semester.</p>	
Semester _____	Credit Hour Request _____
<u>STUDENT INFORMATION</u>	
NAME _____	MAJOR _____
CLASSIFICATION _____	DEGREE SOUGHT _____
LOCAL TELEPHONE _____	
<u>JUSTIFICATION</u>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"><div style="width: 45%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></div><div style="width: 45%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;"></div></div>	
Student's Signature _____	Graduate Advisor's Signature _____
Approved: _____	
Associate Head for Graduate Program's Signature _____	Date _____

Form 2. Example of title page for proposal, thesis, dissertation, or record of study.

Always consult the Graduate School website for the latest version.

See: <https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/academic-success-resources/thesis-dissertation-services/guidelines-for-theses,-dissertations,-and-records-of-study>

[INSERT FIRST LINE OF TITLE CENTERED AND IN ALL CAPS HERE]

[INSERT SECOND LINE OF TITLE HERE]

[A Thesis / A Dissertation / A Record of Study (Insert One Here)]

by

[INSERT YOUR OFFICIAL NAME AS LISTED IN TAMU RECORDS HERE]

Submitted to the Graduate and Professional School of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

[INSERT DEGREE IN ALL CAPS HERE]

Chair of Committee,	[Insert Full Name Here Upper and Lowercase, No titles]
Co-Chair of Committee,	[Insert Full Name Here Upper and Lowercase, No titles]
Committee Members,	[Insert Full Name Here Upper and Lowercase, No titles]
	[Insert Full Name Here Upper and Lowercase, No titles]
	[Insert Full Name Here Upper and Lowercase, No titles]
Head of Department,	[Insert Full Name Here Upper and Lowercase, No titles]

[May / August / December 20XX (Insert Month and Year of Graduation Here)]

Major Subject: [Insert Your Major Subject Here]

Copyright [Insert Year of Graduation] [Insert Copyright Owner Name]

Form 3. Example of professional paper approval page.

TITLE OF PROFESSIONAL PAPER IN BOLD CAPS

A PROFESSIONAL PAPER

By

(Insert name of student here)

Approved as to style and content by:

Dr. (Insert name), Department Head

Dr. (insert name), Committee Chair

Dr. (insert name), Committee Member or Co-chair

Dr. (insert name), Committee Member

Steps to Degree Completion

Familiarize yourself with milestones and deadlines for successfully completing your degree on the Graduate and Professional School website. For example, the Graduate and Professional School Knowledge Center (<https://grad.tamu.edu/knowledge-center>) provides details on how to fulfill graduate degree requirements. Also, tools and resources for degree completion can be found at <https://grad.tamu.edu/academics/degree-completion>.

Byline

This version of the Graduate Policy Manual for the Texas A&M University Department of Horticultural Sciences was originally revised and updated by Michael A. Arnold from the original versions written by David Wm. Reed and subsequently updated by Michael Arnold or David H. Byrne. Additional updates were made in August 2014, 2016, 2018, 2019, and 2021 by Patricia Klein. Revisions were made in August 2023, 2024, and 2025 by Oscar Riera-Lizarazu. *All materials in this departmental graduate policy manual are subordinate to policies set forth by the Texas A&M University System, Texas A&M University, the Texas A&M University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the TAMU Office of Graduate and Professional Studies as well as all local, state, and federal regulations.* Programmatic issues at the Department level represent decisions reached by the TAMU Department of Horticultural Sciences Graduate Faculty as a whole, while other policy issues are the results of guidelines from governing entities above the Department level or were determined by the Associate Head for Graduate Programs in consultation with the Department Head and College Administration. Please forward suggestions and corrections to this manual to the attention of the Associate Head for Graduate Programs, Texas A&M University, Department of Horticultural Sciences, College Station, TX 77843-2133.