

PENNSSTATE



**Department of Agricultural Economics,  
Sociology, and Education**

**2014-2015  
Graduate Student Handbook**

**Agricultural and Extension Education (AEE)  
Agricultural, Environmental and  
Regional Economics (AEREC), and  
Rural Sociology (R Soc)**



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## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements of the Graduate School as given in the *Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin* - the White Book <http://bulletins.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/> apply to all graduate degrees and procedures of the Department. For example, the Department discourages the use of deferred grades in accordance with the policy outlined in the *Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin*. Students should familiarize themselves with this publication, with the Penn State academic calendar (see [http://registrar.psu.edu/academic\\_calendar/calendar\\_index.cfm](http://registrar.psu.edu/academic_calendar/calendar_index.cfm)) and with deadlines periodically announced by the Graduate School (see <http://gradsch.psu.edu/calendar/>).

There are two 16-week semesters in an academic year, Fall and Spring, and a 12-week Summer semester. The Summer semester is divided into two 6-week sessions. For purposes of this handbook the term “semester” includes the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.

### Major Advisor and Graduate Committee

#### **Temporary Advisor**

An incoming graduate student is assigned to a temporary academic advisor who consults with the new student to identify deficiencies, design a proposed program of study, and provide assistance in initial scheduling of courses. This process is to be completed before registering for the first semester. The temporary advisor also assists the student in the selection of a permanent academic advisor.

#### **Academic Advisor and Graduate Committee**

The academic advisor serves as chairperson of the student’s Master’s or Doctoral committee. It is the responsibility of the committee to assist the student in planning a course of study consistent with his/her interests and with departmental and Graduate School policy, supervise research required for the degree, and administer certain examinations. It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to ensure that all the requirements for his/her degree have been met.

Graduate students in Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics (AEREC) are required to obtain an academic advisor by the end of their first year in the graduate program. Any student who fails to obtain an academic advisor by the end of his/her first year could be considered to be making insufficient progress toward completion of degree. Students are permitted to switch academic advisors at any time during their graduate program.

#### **Master’s Committee**

The committee of each master’s candidate consists of at least three faculty members, the chairperson of which must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. For AEE students in the MS and MEd degree programs, two faculty members within AEE and one committee member must be Graduate Faculty outside the department. For AEREC students, at least half of the committee members must be faculty members in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. For Rural Sociology, more than half of the committee members must be faculty members in Rural Sociology. In cases where the candidate is also pursuing a dual-title field of study, the dual-title representative to the committee may serve as the Outside Field Member.

## **Doctoral Committee**

A doctoral committee consists of four or more faculty members, all of whom must be active members of the Graduate Faculty. At least two committee members, including the chairperson or at least one co-chair, must be from the student's major field. For AEE students, more than half must be from the AEE Graduate Faculty. Doctoral committees are formally listed with the Graduate School at the time of the candidacy examination. For an AEREC student, at least half of the committee members must be AEREC faculty. For a Rural Sociology student, more than half of the committee must be members of the Rural Sociology Faculty.

At least one regular member of the doctoral committee must represent a field outside the candidate's major field academic department in order to provide a broader range of disciplinary perspectives and expertise. This committee member is referred to as the "Outside Field Member." In cases where the candidate is also pursuing a dual-title field of study, the dual-title representative to the committee may serve as the Outside Field Member..

## **Plan of Study**

In AEREC, the student's plan of study is developed early in the program in consultation with his/her academic advisor. In Rural Sociology, the student's plan of study is developed early in the program in consultation with his/her advisory committee.

# Agricultural and Extension Education (AEE)

## **Introduction**

We offer Master's and Doctorate graduate degree programs in the following core areas of study: Educational Processes, Leadership Development and Communications, Program Development, and Research. Our faculty, staff, and graduates are to be noted for developing contemporary curricula and programs, conducting high quality research, and disseminating new knowledge in these areas.

## **Master of Science**

This program is intended to meet the needs of persons currently employed or desiring employment in formal and non-formal education, including employment in secondary school agriculture programs, two-year postsecondary programs, vocational education administration/supervision positions, extension, private industry, public and private human service organizations, and international education.

A minimum of 30 graduate credits is required, of which at least 20 must be earned at the established graduate campus/center of the University where the program is offered. At least 18 credits at the 500-level or above and 6 credits for thesis research is required (600).

## **Requirements**

### ***M.S. Course Work Requirements***

Requirements for the 30-credit master's degree include:

- AEE 501 Foundations of AEE, 3 credits.
- AEE 590 Colloquium, 1 credit. Graduate students are expected to attend all departmental colloquia. (Meets PSU SARI requirement).
- At least one, three-credit course from each core area: educational processes; communications/leadership development; program development and evaluation; research; totaling 15 credits. These courses may be at either the 400- or 500-level or higher.
- Three additional research credits beyond course taken to meet core research requirements; courses to select from among the following AG 400, AEE 520, AEE 521, AEE 509, EDPSY 400, EDPSY 406, R SOC 522.
- 6 credits AEE 600
- Eighteen of the 30 credits must be at the 500-level or above.

### ***M.S. Comprehensive Examination***

The candidates will complete a written examination (approximately four hours) and a one-hour oral examination. This exam is administered by the student's graduate committee near the completion of coursework.

### ***Writing/Defending the Thesis***

The Master's of Science degree program requires that a thesis be written and defended before the graduate committee. The defense is open to the public and is to be announced by the candidate's advisor. The thesis (see Appendix B) must be approved by the student's graduate committee and forwarded to the Graduate School. When a thesis or dissertation is submitted to the Thesis Office, it must meet the formatting and deadline requirements set forth in the latest edition of the Thesis Guide. All doctoral dissertations and master's theses must be submitted electronically. For more information on electronic theses and dissertations (eTDs), visit the [eTD Web site](#); a copy must be filed in the Department. The most recent [Thesis Guide](#) can be accessed at the Graduate School.

### ***Publication Requirement***

It is required that all graduate students, master and doctoral, write an article or a paper for publication or presentation based upon (1) their thesis or professional paper or (2) their assistantship responsibilities as determined by the academic advisor and assistantship supervisor prior to the granting of a degree. The article or paper will be reviewed and approved by the student's graduate advisor. Academic credit may be granted for an acceptable article or paper. The article or paper will be submitted to a refereed or professional journal, a professional or research conference, and/or a popular magazine. If co-authored with a faculty member, the student's name will appear as the lead author. The manuscript and proof of submission should be turned into the Graduate Staff Assistant to be placed in the student's file.

### **Master of Education**

This program is intended to meet the needs of persons currently employed or desiring employment in agricultural education, including employment in secondary school agriculture programs, two-year post-secondary programs, Extension, career and technical administration/supervision positions, private industry, and international education. You can earn your degree in residence during the academic year or through annual three-week summer sessions.

A minimum of 30 graduate credits earned with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher completed within eight years of admission to the degree program is required; 20 of these credits must be earned in residence; at least 24 must be in course work. At least 18 credits at the 500-level or above must be included in the program and a significant culminating or "capstone" experience or other mechanism to demonstrate evidence of analytical ability and synthesis of material is required.

### **Requirements**

#### ***Composition of Coursework***

Requirements for the 30-credit master's degree include:

- AEE 501 Foundations of AEE, 3 credits.
- AEE 590 Colloquium, 1 credit. Resident students are expected to attend all departmental colloquia. (Meets PSU SARI requirement).
- At least one, three-credit course from each core area: educational processes; communications/leadership development; program development and evaluation; research, totaling 15 credits and these courses maybe at the 400- or 500-level or higher.
- Three credit professional paper (AEE 596) or 6-credit thesis (AEE 600) must have the approval of the student's graduate committee and be related to the candidate's area of professional interest.
- 18 of the 30 credits must be at the 500-level or higher.

#### ***Comprehensive Examination***

The candidates will complete a written examination (approximately four hours) and a one-hour oral examination. This exam is administered by the student's graduate committee near the completion of coursework.

#### ***Writing the Professional Paper or Thesis***

This master of education program requires that a professional paper or thesis be written. The topic should be based on the candidate's area of professional interest and approved by the candidate's graduate committee. A copy of the bound paper is placed on file in the Department. When a thesis is submitted to the Thesis Office, it must meet the formatting and deadline requirements set forth in the latest edition of the Thesis Guide. All doctoral dissertations and master's theses must be submitted electronically. For more information on electronic theses and dissertations (eTDs), visit the [eTD Web site](#); a copy must be filed in the Department. The most recent [Thesis Guide](#) can be accessed at the Graduate School. The defense for this paper/thesis is open to the public and is to be announced by the candidate's advisor.

### ***Publication Requirement***

Prior to the granting of a degree, all graduate students are required to write and submit an article for publication in a refereed professional journal or a refereed paper. For students completing a culminating experience, a refereed poster for presentation at a professional conference is also appropriate. If co-authored with a faculty member, the student's name will appear as the lead author. The topic should be based on:

- the student's professional paper, thesis, or culminating experience or
- a topic related to the student's assistantship responsibilities that has been pre-approved by his/her academic advisor.

The publication and proof of submission should be turned into the Graduate Staff Assistant to be placed in the student's file.

### **Doctoral Program**

Courses completed in the doctoral program in agricultural and extension education should give students competence in at least one core area of expertise: educational processes; leadership development and communications; program development, and research.

Approximately 75 credits of graduate work beyond the baccalaureate degree are required. Approximately two-thirds of the total program must be in the major field. Courses in education or statistics may be counted in the major with prior approval of the doctoral committee. A minimum of 30 credits must be earned in residence.

A minor is not required by the program; however, students may elect a minor (minimum of 15 credits) in a Graduate School approved program with the consent of the doctoral committee. A graduate faculty member from the minor program, if a minor is elected, must serve on the committee.

### **The Candidacy Examination**

Within the first three semesters after admission to the PhD program, each student must take and pass a candidacy examination. This examination is administered in two-part—written and oral—by the assigned advisor and two other AEE faculty members. This examination assesses the student's general knowledge of agricultural and extension education, writing skills, and oral communication skills and may take from six to 12 hours for the written portion and two to three hours for the oral portion. Successful completion of this examination is reported to the Graduate School through the Graduate Program Staff Assistant and the PhD student becomes a PhD candidate.

### **Ph.D. Composition of Coursework**

Up to 30 credits from an approved Master of Science degree may contribute to the 75 credits required for the PhD. In addition to completing the departmental publication requirement, specific Ph.D. degree requirements include the following:

- AEE 501 Foundations of AEE, 3 credits.
- AEE 590 Colloquium, 2 credits over two semesters in the doctoral program. Graduate students are expected to attend all departmental colloquia.
- At least one, three-credit 500-level course from each core area is taken during the doctoral program: educational processes; leadership development and communications; program development, and research. See AEE Core Areas for listing of departmental courses by core area. Courses, totaling 15 credits, must be at the 500-level.
- Three additional research credits beyond the course taken to meet core research requirement, selected from among AEE 520, AEE 521, or AEE 522. These six credits must be earned during the academic year, not during summer session.
- ENG 418 Advanced Technical Writing and Editing, 3 credits.
- AEE 600/610, up to a maximum of 12 credits; AEE 601/611.
- No credits may be taken after the comprehensive examination is successfully completed except with the approval of the Graduate School.



Doctoral students develop an appropriate program of study to meet these requirements in consultation with their adviser and graduate committee. See PhD. Summary of Requirements.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

A doctoral candidate must take a comprehensive examination when (1) she/he has completed the course requirements, including the core requirements, approved for the graduate program; (2) she/he has met the communication requirement; and (3) she/he in the judgment of the advisor and the doctoral committee is ready for the exam. The comprehensive exam consists of two parts--written and oral--and usually spans from two and one-half to three days (a total of approximately 12 hours). In both parts of the exam, the candidate's knowledge of the field of agricultural and extension education, and the minor field, if appropriate, is determined by the responses, both written and oral, to questions provided by the doctoral committee. The comprehensive examination must be scheduled through the Graduate Program Staff Assistant.

### **Dissertation Proposal**

The candidate's dissertation proposal must be approved by the doctoral committee before beginning the research. The candidate shall arrange for a meeting of the doctoral committee to present the proposal and to seek the committee's advice and approval.

### **Final Oral Examination**

Regulations for the final oral examination for the doctoral degree in agricultural and extension education are the same as the regulations for this examination included in the Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin for the University. The final oral examination and subsequent discussions of the dissertation are open to the public.

### **Professional Development**

Graduate students are expected to take advantage of the many opportunities for professional experience in addition to coursework; please see Ph.D. Summary of Requirements

<http://aese.psu.edu/graduateprograms/aee/phd-aee/phd-requirements> and Doctoral Flow Chart

<http://aese.psu.edu/graduateprograms/aee/phd-aee/DoctoralFlowchart.pdf> on the department website for clarification.

### **Publication Requirement**

All doctoral students in agricultural and extension education are required to write an article or a paper for publication or presentation based upon (1) their dissertation or (2) their assistantship responsibilities as determined by the academic adviser and assistantship supervisor prior to the granting of a degree. The article or paper will be reviewed and approved by the student's graduate adviser. Academic credit for an acceptable article or paper may be granted. The article or paper will be submitted to a refereed or professional journal, a professional or research conference, and/or a popular magazine. If co-authored with a faculty member, the student's name will appear as the lead author.

### **Dual-Title AEE/International Agriculture and Development**

The AEE/INTAD dual title degree program enables students to develop expertise and skills, as well as acquire practical experience in international agriculture and development, all while maintaining professional identification with their primary discipline.

At the core of the program is the course INTAD 820: International Agricultural Development Seminar. Each seminar session is led by professors from different departments with multiple international experiences and expertise in subject matter and process skills. The focus of this course will change annually to reflect issues in the global arena and faculty interests and expertise. In particular, this course will emphasize analytical thinking and application knowledge. Students will be challenged to integrate knowledge gained in other classes and to develop an ability to translate and transfer this information into an international context.

# Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics (AEREC)

## **Introduction**

The AEREC faculty has approved changes to the AEREC curriculum. These proposed changes await final approval from Penn State's Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate. The following curricular requirements reflect the proposed changes.

## **Master of Science**

The M.S. degree is a research-oriented degree. Thus, a strong component of the M.S. candidate's program includes training in scientific methods as well as in techniques of analysis applicable to the field.

The entering student in the AEREC M.S. program must have 9 credits of course work in economic theory and/or applied economics. If this requirement is not met, the student can be admitted with the formal understanding that any deficiencies in undergraduate preparation will be removed early in the graduate program. In addition, the student may be required to complete courses in specific areas (e.g., intermediate micro- and/or macroeconomics, applied statistics, calculus) before taking specific courses required in the program.

AEREC M.S. students are required to write a thesis and to pass a final oral examination as part of the requirements for the degree. The thesis must meet the formatting and deadline requirements established by the Graduate School (see <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/thesis.html>).

A minimum of 31 graduate course credits is required for the AEREC M.S. degree. Of these, a minimum of 25 course credits and 6 research credits are required. At least 18 credits must be at the 500 or 600 level. Credits earned for thesis work will not be assigned a letter grade other than R (research). Courses taken to remove deficiencies in preparation may extend the minimum number of credits required. A minor is not required.

**M.S. Course Work Requirements.** The course work requirements in the AEREC M.S. program are:

- (1) Microeconomic Theory. AEREC 597E (3 credits)
- (2) Quantitative Methods. AEREC 527 (3 credits)
- (3) Colloquium. AEREC 590. (1 credit)
- (4) Econometrics I AEREC 510 (3 credits)
- (5) Applied Welfare Economics(3 credits)
- (6) 6 credits of field electives from any AEREC courses taught at the 500 level or from BA 597D, chosen in consultation with the student's academic advisor. Cannot include readings or independent study courses (e.g., AEREC 496 or 596). Many students choose AEREC 511 and BA 597D as their field electives.
- (7) 6 credits of any electives at the 400 or 500 level. Cannot include readings or independent study courses.
- (8) Thesis research. AEREC 600 (6 credits)

The course work requirements listed above apply to all students. Individual faculty may have additional course work expectations for their students. Each student is strongly encouraged to discuss course work expectations with his/her academic advisor, and to develop a plan of study early in the program in consultation with his/her academic advisor.

In some instances, a student may wish to substitute a different course for a required course when the two cover essentially equivalent material. In such cases, exceptions to the stated requirements may be granted by the AEREC Graduate Committee. Requests for course substitutions should be made in advance, i.e., before the substitute course is taken, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at the University is required for graduation and to maintain good academic standing.

Master's candidates do not have to be registered the semester they graduate. The Department notifies the Graduate School when all degree requirements are met.

## **Doctoral Program**

The Ph.D. degree is primarily a research degree. Thus, the main goal of the program is to provide the student with the tools, skills, and experience necessary to conduct research in the area of Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics.

A doctoral program consists of courses suggested by the candidate's committee in addition to the required courses listed below. A minor is not required. In addition to the course requirements of the Ph.D. program, the student must write a doctoral thesis and pass doctoral candidacy, comprehensive, and final oral examinations. The doctoral thesis must meet the formatting and deadline requirements established by the Graduate School (see <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/thesis.html>).

**Ph.D. Course Work Requirements.** The following 40 credits of required course work apply to all AEREC students:

- ( 1) Microeconomic Theory. ECON 502 (3 credits).
- ( 2) Quantitative Methods. AEREC 527 (3 credits)
- ( 3) Colloquium. AEREC 590. (1 credit)
- ( 4) Econometrics I and Econometrics II. AEREC 510 and AEREC 511 (3 credits each for a total of 6 credits).
- ( 5) Microeconomics Theory II. ECON 521 or BA 597D (3 credits).
- ( 6) Applied Welfare Economics (3 credits)
- ( 7) Applied Microeconometrics (3 credits)
- ( 8) Computational Economics (3 credits)
- ( 9) Two "Advanced" AEREC courses (6 credits). Two of the following three courses: Advanced Agribusiness and Consumer Economics, Advanced Environmental and Natural Resource Economics, and Advanced Regional and International Development Economics. This course may have a temporary name and number.
- (10) Three credits of AEREC workshops (3 credits). Students can take any combination of AEREC workshops totaling 3 credits.
- (11) 6 credits of electives at the 500 level, chosen in consultation with the student's academic advisor. Cannot include readings or independent study courses (e.g., AEREC 496 or 596).

**No course may be used to satisfy more than one requirement.**

The course work requirements listed above apply to all students. Individual faculty may have additional course work expectations for their students. Each student is strongly encouraged to discuss course work

expectations with his/her academic advisor, and to develop a plan of study early in the program in consultation with his/her academic advisor.

In some instances, a student may wish to substitute a different course for a required course when the two cover essentially equivalent material. In such cases, exceptions to the stated requirements may be granted by the AEREC Graduate Committee. Requests for course substitutions should be made in advance, i.e., before the substitute course is taken, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at the University is required for doctoral candidacy, for admission to the comprehensive examination, the final oral examination, and for graduation.

After a Ph.D. candidate has passed the comprehensive examination and met the University's two-semester full-time residence requirement, the student must continue to register continuously for each Fall and Spring semester (beginning with the first semester after both of the above requirements have been met) until the Ph.D. thesis is accepted and approved by the doctoral committee. However, if a student has passed their final oral exam before the graduation semester starts, but after the submission deadline for the current semester, the student does not have to register for the graduation semester. For example, if a student passes their final oral exam in mid-August, which is too late for Summer graduation but before the Fall semester begins, the student would not have to register for Fall, even though that is when the student will officially graduate. The student does not need to register for summer semesters, unless the student will officially graduate at the end of the summer semester (August).

### **English Language Competency**

Competency in the English language in all forms of expression is essential for progress in graduate study and is required by the Graduate School. The required standards of competency are as follows:

- *Reading.* The student must be capable of reading and comprehending key intermediate-level economic concepts and analytic arguments presented in English.
- *Writing.* The student must be capable of presenting a unified, comprehensible written test which demonstrates ability to utilize key intermediate-level economic concepts in English. The presentation must reflect correct use of contemporary English grammar, spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing.
- *Speaking.* The student must be capable of orally presenting a unified, comprehensible economic argument which demonstrates ability to utilize key intermediate-level economic concepts in English. The presentation must reflect accurate word choice, appropriate use of key economic vocabulary and concepts, and ability to present a logical argument in contemporary English language.

The AEREC Graduate Committee assesses each entering student's English language competency as part of the admissions process. The Graduate Committee may require an entering Ph.D. student to take an exam to better determine his/her English language competency. The exam is administered by the AEREC Exam Committee. If a student fails the exam, the Exam Committee will present a remediation plan to the student and the AEREC Graduate Committee. This remediation plan may require the student to take appropriate courses or instruction. Upon completion of the recommended remediation plan, the student will be required to retake the English competency exam. If the student fails the retake exam, she or he will be dropped from the Ph.D. program.

### **Qualifier (Candidacy) Exam.**

The qualifier exam is the AEREC program's doctoral candidacy exam, and is administered by the AEREC Exam Committee. The qualifier exam is offered each year during the second half of May or the first half of June. The qualifier exam is typically taken at the end of the student's first year in the Ph.D. program. It must be taken no later than 18 months after entering the Ph.D. program. Any student who does not wish to take the qualifier exam at the end of their first year must receive written approval from the AEREC Exam

Committee. In no case will a student be permitted to wait beyond the end of the third semester, excluding summer.

Successful completion of the qualifier exam admits the student to candidacy. Students whose native language is not English must also meet the English language competency requirements described above to be admitted to candidacy. The qualifier exam is designed to determine if students understand the theoretical and quantitative tools needed to enter the applied portion of their course work and to successfully complete their Ph.D. dissertation.

The qualifier exam consists of two sections, one covering microeconomics and the other covering econometrics and other basic quantitative methods. Each section is given one of the following grades: (a) Pass with Distinction; (b) Pass; (c) Marginal Pass; (d) Marginal Fail; or (e) Fail. Results of the exam are reported to the Graduate Staff Assistant. She will then file the paperwork to send to the Graduate School.

The qualifier exam requires students to demonstrate: (1) a Ph.D. level understanding of major concepts and theories in microeconomics and in econometrics and quantitative methods; (2) the ability to solve structured problems in microeconomics and in econometrics and quantitative methods; and (3) the ability to explain the meaning and implications of their solutions in clearly written English prose. Competency in mathematics, as used in Ph.D. level courses in microeconomics, econometrics and quantitative methods is necessary in order to pass the exam. However, the exam is not a mathematics test, and students will be graded on the criteria listed above.

Students who receive a grade of marginal pass or higher from at least two-thirds of the committee on a given section of the exam have passed that section and are not required to retake that section regardless of the grade on the other section.

If a student fails any section, he or she has the following re-examination option:

A written exam may be taken within three months on the failed section. If the second written is failed, exam committee may choose to offer the student an oral exam, which would be administered within two weeks. If the committee chooses to not offer an oral exam, the results of the section written exam are final.

The AEREC Exam Committee schedules the exams and makes the final decision concerning whether or not a student passes. If a student fails to pass the exam by the end of the process, he or she will be dropped from the AEREC Ph.D. program.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

The AEREC Ph.D. student must take a comprehensive examination administered and graded by the student's doctoral committee. The timing of this examination is at the convenience of the student and the committee that administers it. However, since the exam is comprehensive, it is recommended that it be given after the student has completed most of his or her course work. The content of the exam is determined by the student's doctoral committee, but usually focuses on the student's dissertation proposal and related course work.

**NOTE:** Student notifies Department Graduate Staff Assistant of Comprehensive Exam date and time. She will then fill out the paperwork and submit to the Graduate School. This must be done at least - two weeks prior to the exam date. The examination is scheduled and announced officially by the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services upon recommendation of the department or program head. Two weeks' notice is required by the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services for scheduling this examination. Your candidacy exam, and your doctoral committee appointment form must have already been filed with the Graduate

School prior to scheduling of your comprehensive exam. This policy is the same for both the AEREC and Rural Sociology program.

### **Final Oral Examination**

Paperwork is filed for the Final Oral Exam in the same manner as for the Comprehensive Exam - two weeks' prior to the exam date. Upon completion of the student's doctoral thesis, a final oral examination is scheduled. The exam is administered by the student's doctoral committee. This exam is open to the public and is typically related to the student's dissertation research.

### **Dual-Title AEREC/Demography Degrees**

Dual-title degrees in AEREC/Demography are available to students with a strong interest in demographic theories and techniques as applied to Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics. Dual-title M.S. and Ph.D. degree options are available.

A dual-title degree in AEREC/Demography can help a student develop skills in demographic techniques and methodologies, including geographic information systems (GIS) and statistical methods. The Demography program is affiliated with Penn State's Population Research Institute (PRI).

A student pursuing a dual-title degree in AEREC/Demography must meet all AEREC degree requirements as well as all Demography degree requirements. Some courses may count toward both sets of requirements. A student must submit an application for admission to the Director of the Graduate Program in Demography. Admission to the Ph.D. dual-title degree program should be completed before the student takes his or her qualifier exam. Additional information on Demography admission and degree requirements is available online at <http://www.pop.psu.edu/demography/front-page/>.

### **Dual-Title AEREC/Operations Research Degrees**

Dual-title degrees in AEREC/Operations Research are available to students with a strong interest in operations research techniques as applied to Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics. Dual-title M.S. and Ph.D. degree options are available.

A dual-title degree in AEREC/Operations Research can provide a student with an interdisciplinary perspective on the formulation, analysis, and solution of decision-making problems. Operations Research draws on techniques from many fields, including economics, mathematics, and engineering.

A student pursuing a dual-title degree in AEREC/Operations Research must meet all AEREC degree requirements as well as all Operations Research degree requirements. Some courses may count toward both sets of requirements. A student must submit an application for admission to the Chair of the Operations Research Committee. Admission to the Ph.D. dual-title degree program should be completed before the student takes his or her qualifier exam.

The doctoral committee for a Ph.D. dual-title degree student is recommended by the graduate major program granting the degree. The chair and at least two members of a doctoral committee must be approved by the Operations Research Committee as qualified to supervise a doctoral thesis in operations research. The Operations Research Committee is responsible for administering an examination in operations research which constitutes a portion of the comprehensive examination administered to the doctoral students in this dual-title degree option.

More information about the Operations Research dual-title degree program can be obtained at <http://www2.ie.psu.edu/or/index.html>.

## **Dual-Title AEREC/International Agriculture and Development**

Dual-title degrees in AEREC/International Agriculture and Development (IntAD) are available to students with a strong interest in international agriculture or development issues related to Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics. There are also opportunities for international experiential learning. Dual-title M.S. and Ph.D. degree options are available.

A student pursuing a dual-title degree in AEREC/Operations Research must meet all AEREC degree requirements as well as all Operations Research degree requirements. Some courses may count toward both sets of requirements. A student must submit an application for admission to the Chair of the Operations Research Committee. Admission to the Ph.D. dual-title degree program should be completed before the student takes his or her qualifier exam.

The doctoral committee for a Ph.D. dual title degree student must include one member who is an INTAD Program faculty member.

More information about the INTAD dual-title degree program can be obtained at <http://agsci.psu.edu/international/graduatestudents/intad>.

# Rural Sociology

## Master of Science

M.S. candidates in Rural Sociology are expected to develop foundational understandings of rural sociology, research methods and statistics, and a general awareness of basic substantive, theoretical and methodological issues of areas relevant to rural sociology (such as demography, food and agricultural systems, environment and natural resources, community and community development, or international development).

Requirements for M.S. students include the following:

- R SOC 502 “Use of Theory in Rural Sociology”
- R SOC 513 “Research Methods in Rural Social Sciences”
- Two graduate-level (400 and above) statistics courses (selected in consultation with graduate program coordinator and your adviser)
- R SOC 516 “Change in Rural Society” OR R SOC 517 “International Social Change”
- AEREC 590 “Colloquium” [this is a 1-credit course to be taken within the first year of study]
- two additional graduate-level courses in Rural Sociology
- R SOC 600 “Research Thesis Credits” [6 credits required; typically taken in the 2nd year of study]

Consultation with your adviser and the Graduate Program Coordinator is necessary to determine the acceptability of a substitution for any of these required courses. A minimum of 36 total graduate level credits (400 level or above) are required for the M.S. degree.

M.S. students devise a plan of study in close consultation with their adviser, both to ensure they meet the above requirements and to craft a tailored curriculum that addresses the student’s academic background and interests and advances their career goals. Every M.S. student has an advisory committee consisting of three members, generally all drawn from the Rural Sociology graduate faculty. Students participating in dual title programs must also ensure that the composition of their committee conforms to requirements of their dual title program. It is expected that M.S. students on a ½ time assistantship will complete the degree in 4 semesters, not including summers. Four dual title options are possible (see below for further information). A minor is possible, but not required. M.S. students will have a final oral examination of their thesis project that is administered by their M.S. advisory committee. Under the guidance of the adviser, a written draft of the complete thesis will be submitted to the committee two weeks in advance of the exam.

## Doctoral Program

The principal aim of the doctoral program in Rural Sociology is to develop the advanced sociological research and analytical capacities necessary for understanding and addressing the problems, structures and processes affecting the well-being of rural people and places and the sustainability of communities and landscapes in domestic and international contexts. To this end, the student selects relevant Rural Sociology courses as well as courses in complementary academic fields, with guidance from the adviser and other members of his or her Ph.D. advisory committee. In total, the Ph.D. advisory committee consists of at least four faculty members, more than half of whom must be from the Rural Sociology Graduate Faculty, and at least one of whom must be from outside the AESE Department. In consultation with the adviser, the student selects these committee members to represent the student’s chosen two areas of concentration, beyond the rural sociology core and the methods and statistics core.

Once the requirements, detailed below, have been met, there is no specified number of course credits of instruction and research required for the Ph.D. Rather, award of the degree can be made at such time as the student has demonstrated to his or her committee and to the Department that he or she is a well-trained,



competent, and professional sociologist. While the precise amount of time needed to complete the Ph.D. cannot be specified due to variation in the scope and approach of Rural Sociology dissertation research projects, it is generally expected that a Ph.D. student on a 1/2-time assistantship will finish the doctoral program in 7 additional semesters (not including summers) beyond the master's degree. Four dual title options are possible (see below for further information). A minor is possible, but not required.

All Ph.D. students are expected to be strongly prepared in four areas: Rural Sociology, Methods and Statistics, and two additional areas of concentration of their choice. All students must meet rural sociology requirements and the methods and statistics requirements, as noted below.

### **Rural Sociology Area Requirements**

Required rural sociology courses provide a broad overview of rural sociology's theoretical roots, intellectual connections and current uses, as well as the substantive issues facing rural people and places both domestically and internationally. Two courses are needed to meet the rural sociology area requirements.

- R SOC 502 "Use of Theory in Rural Sociology"
- R SOC 516 "Change in Rural Society" OR R SOC 517 "International Rural Social Change"

### **Methods and Statistics Area Requirements**

Ph.D. students in Rural Sociology need to become equipped with a minimum level of research skills within the first year of training. This is accomplished either through prior instruction, whether in Masters training at Penn State or at another institution, or by enrollment in research methods and statistics courses in the first year of the Ph.D. program. The Methods and Statistics area requirements are designed to provide a basic understanding of social research methods and statistics. Ph.D. students must meet the following four-course minimum requirements, recognizing that thorough competency often requires additional coursework:

- R SOC 513 "Research Methods in the Rural Social Sciences"
- R SOC 514 "Qualitative Methods"
- Two graduate-level (400 and above) statistics courses (selected in consultation with graduate program coordinator and your adviser)

### **Concentration Areas**

For the other two areas of concentration, Ph.D. students may choose to develop expertise in the sociology of food and agriculture, natural resources / environmental sociology, community, international development, or rural social demography. A student may also design their own concentration, in consultation with their adviser. We offer four formal dual-degree options – Rural Sociology and Demography; Rural Sociology and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment (HDNRE); Rural Sociology and International Agriculture and Development (INTAD); and Rural Sociology and Women's Studies (see below). For these four degrees, one of the areas of concentration must be demography, HDNRE, INTAD or women's studies, respectively.

### **Additional Requirements for the PhD**

PhD students must take at least three additional Rural Sociology courses. These courses may also contribute to the two self-chosen concentrations. Selection can be made from the following list:

- R SOC 508 "Sociology of Agriculture"
- R SOC 516 "Change in Rural Society" (*if not taken to fulfill Rural Sociology requirement*)
- R SOC 517 "International Rural Social Change" (*if not taken to fulfill Rural Sociology requirement*)
- R SOC 525 "Population and Development"
- R SOC 530 "Demography & Sociology of Poverty in Rural America"
- R SOC 552 "Rural Community Theory"
- R SOC 555 "Human Dimensions of Natural Resources"

- R SOC 597 [597 courses are new or experimental course offerings that have not yet been assigned a permanent course number and are usually followed by a letter, e.g., 597A]

Consultation with your adviser and the Graduate Program Coordinator is necessary to determine the acceptability of counting prior graduate coursework as substitution for any of the required courses or of substituting other currently offered Penn State courses for any program requirements.

If an entering Ph.D. student has not completed their M.S. degree in Rural Sociology at Penn State, he or she is also expected to complete one semester of R SOC 590, the one credit colloquium, within the first year of their program.

Ph.D. students who have completed the comprehensive exam must also be enrolled in R SOC 601 (dissertation research credits).

### **English Language Competency**

There is no language or communications requirement for the Ph.D. in Rural Sociology beyond the Graduate School's requirement of competency in English. The ability to effectively and competently read, write, and speak the English language is critical for success in Rural Sociology at The Pennsylvania State University. Course work in our program involves extensive reading on topics that span the range from the philosophic to the technical, and the ever present need to use English to express information and ideas in both verbal discussions and written assignments. To ensure that all Ph.D. candidates attain a high level of English ability, the following strategy for the assessment and remediation of English deficiencies is followed.

**Reading:** Students must be capable of reading and comprehending sociological material written for advanced undergraduate audiences.

**Writing:** On their own, students must be able to compose clear and understandable English, with a minimum of blatant grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors.

**Speaking:** Students must be able to speak English clearly and correctly, both extemporaneously and in formal presentations.

**Written and Oral Evaluation:** Beginning in the Fall 1992 semester, the Graduate Program Committee in Rural Sociology will be responsible for assessing the English ability of all entering Ph.D. students, whose first language is not English, during the first month of their enrollment. This preliminary assessment will consist primarily of a one-day examination that will have three phases. First, students will be given an hour to read a sociological research article. The article will be chosen by the Graduate Program Committee and will (1) be easily readable in an hour, (2) be written at about the advanced undergraduate level, (3) have a mixture of theoretical discussion and empirical analysis, and (4) focus on a topic of general appeal. Second, students will be given four hours to write an essay about the article, guided by questions suggested by the Graduate Program Committee. This essay will be limited to four pages in length. Third, after reading these essays the Committee will meet with each student to appraise their verbal abilities in English. The student will be asked to present a brief synopsis of their essay and be expected to answer questions about it. We stress that the intent is not to evaluate the student's command of Rural Sociology, but merely to assess their ability to read, write and speak English.

This evaluation will be complemented by other evidence of English ability. The latter might include TOEFL scores, assessments by recommendation letter writers and other outside sources, or by examples of written work by the student. Together, this information will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Committee who will then decide whether remediation is warranted, and if so, suggest an appropriate course of action.

**Waiver of Written and Oral Evaluation:** If there is compelling evidence that matriculants already meet or

exceed acceptable standards of English ability, the Graduate Program Committee will have the option of waiving the written and oral evaluation.

### **Candidacy Examination**

A candidacy examination must be taken by all students intending to earn the Ph.D. The examination is administered by the candidate's doctoral committee within three semesters of entry into the doctoral program (summer sessions do not count) but not before the student has completed 18 credits of graduate courses beyond the baccalaureate. A plan of study is developed by the student with the help of his/her committee in advance of the candidacy meeting, and is generally approved, perhaps with revision, during that meeting. In the event that the committee responsible for the student's M.S. oral examination at Penn State has made a recommendation regarding the student's acceptability as a Ph.D. candidate, the doctoral committee may use the master's committee recommendation as the candidacy exam or enlarge on it as is necessary for a rational decision about candidacy. Students whose native language is not English must also meet the TOEFL and English language competency requirements to be admitted to candidacy.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

Each Ph.D. candidate must pass a comprehensive (combined written and oral) examination in rural sociology, research methods and statistics, and two chosen areas of specialization. The comprehensive exam is normally taken after the candidate's course work has been substantially completed and is administered in response to the student's petition.

**NOTE:** The student is required to notify Department Graduate Staff Assistant of the Comprehensive Exam date and time no later than two weeks prior to the exam. The paperwork will then be filed and submitted to the Graduate School two weeks prior to the exam date. Two weeks notice is required by the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services for scheduling this examination. Your candidacy exam, and your doctoral committee appointment form must have already been filed with the Graduate School prior to scheduling of your comprehensive exam. This policy is the same for both the AEREC and Rural Sociology program.

### **Final Oral Examination**

Paperwork is filed for the Final Oral Exam (dissertation defense) in the same manner as for the Comprehensive Exam – at least two weeks prior to the exam date. In practice, Ph.D. students should anticipate scheduling their dissertation defense well in advance of the intended date to ensure the availability of all members of the committee. Students are advised to check carefully regarding University deadlines for completion of the defense and submission of the final draft in making their plans, especially if they wish to receive their degrees by a particular date. The exam is administered by the student's doctoral committee. The student's presentation on the dissertation research may be open to the public, with the formal exam conducted privately by the committee with the Ph.D. student.

### **Dual Degree in R SOC and Demography**

The Rural Sociology graduate program participates in the multidisciplinary dual-title graduate programs in demography. Interested students are able to earn a dual-title master's and/or doctoral degree in Rural Sociology and Demography. Dual-title students take additional required courses in demographic theory and methods that fall into four categories: Disciplinary survey courses, demographic methods, seminars in demographic processes; elective courses in population studies. The full description of the dual-title program, including all course offerings in the seven affiliated departments is available on-line at <http://www.pop.psu.edu/demography/>. Faculty in Rural Sociology currently offer two demography courses intended to provide students with an understanding of theories and substantive demographic issues in

the following areas - poverty and inequality and population and development. These courses are appropriate for all rural sociology students with substantive interest in these areas, not just dual-degree demography students. These courses are also intended to prepare students for comprehensive exams in the demography concentration area.

### **Dual Degree in R SOC and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment**

The Rural Sociology graduate program participates in the transdisciplinary intercollege dual-degree graduate programs in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment (HDNRE). Interested students are able to earn a dual-title master's and/or doctoral degree in Rural Sociology and HDNRE. Dual-title students take additional required courses including in Integrated Perspectives in HDNRE, Ethical Issues in HDNRE, HDNRE Colloquium, and select among other required courses which provide a foundation for engaging in HDNRE-related applied and basic research, teaching, and outreach. The full description of the HDNRE program is available at <http://agsci.psu.edu/graduatestudents/hdnre>. Faculty in Rural Sociology offer one required course in the core curriculum of HDNRE (Human Dimensions of Natural Resources) and several related courses (Social Impact Analysis, Theories and Methods of Community and Natural Resources, Natural Resource Sustainability) which provide students with an understanding of theories and substantive natural resource and environmental issues. A thesis/dissertation on a natural resource and environment topic which includes social aspects of resource use is required of students in the dual-title degree program.

### **Dual Degree in R SOC and International Agriculture and Development (INTAD)**

The Rural Sociology graduate program participates in both the M.S. and Ph.D. dual degree programs in International Agriculture and Development (INTAD). INTAD enables students from various College of Agricultural Sciences graduate programs to develop expertise and skills, as well as acquire practical experience in international agriculture and development, in a context that also supports and draws on professional identification with the primary discipline.

At the core of the program is the course INTAD 820: International Agricultural Development Seminar. Each seminar session is led by professors from different departments with multiple international experiences and expertise in subject matter and process skills. The focus of this course changes annually to reflect issues in the global arena and faculty interests and expertise. A dissertation of an international agriculture and development topic is required of all students in the dual degree program. Further information about the program's requirements and opportunities can be found here: <http://agsci.psu.edu/international/graduatestudents/intad>.

### **Dual Degree in R SOC and Women's Studies**

The dual-title degree grounded both in Rural Sociology and Women's Studies fosters scholarly work across disciplines and increase the intellectual rigor and breadth of graduate work through immersion of candidates in Women's Studies and Rural Sociology. The dual-title degree also provides a context in which students can learn to synthesize knowledge within and across disciplinary boundaries. In addition, a dual-title degree program provides students with an opportunity for increased work within a pedagogical framework that encourages an interdisciplinary approach to teaching. For more information on this dual-degree, see: [http://womenstudies.psu.edu/graduate/degree\\_programs.shtml#PhD](http://womenstudies.psu.edu/graduate/degree_programs.shtml#PhD).

Doctoral-level dual-degree students are required to take nine credits of course work in Women's Studies: WMNST 501: Feminist Perspectives in Research and Teaching (3 credits), WMNST 502: Global Feminism (3 credits), and WMNST 507: Feminist Theory (3 credits). Students also must complete nine additional

credits of Women's Studies course work (at least 6 of which should be at the 500 level) chosen in consultation with the Women's Studies graduate advisor. A dissertation on a women's studies topic is required of students in the dual-title degree program.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

All graduate students are required to have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 for graduation. Additionally, Ph.D. students are required to complete the program within eight years from the date of acceptance into candidacy. All requirements for the master's degree must be met within eight years from date of entry.

### Registration Requirements

*Master's Candidates* do not have to be registered the semester they graduate. The Department will send a letter to the Graduate School when all requirements are met.

*Ph.D. Candidates* must have continuous registration from passing comprehensives through graduation. However, if they have defended before the graduation semester starts, but after submission deadline for the current semester, they do not have to register for the graduation semester; e.g., complete defense by mid-August, which is too late for Summer graduation but before Fall semester begins, the student would not have to register for Fall even though that is when they would officially graduate. Students do not need to register for summer semesters, unless the student will officially graduate at the end of the summer semester (August).

### Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

M.S. and Ph.D. theses must conform to the regulations of the Graduate School as given in the [Thesis Guide](http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/thesis.html) <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/thesis.html>

It is suggested that not later than the middle of the fourth semester beyond the master's degree (or before the end of the eighth semester in the case of an Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics student who does not take the master's degree), each Ph.D. candidate should prepare, under the guidance of the major professor, and present to the doctoral committee a thesis proposal that states the research problem, its significance, proposed procedure, tentative time schedule, and other relevant matters. It is further suggested that the student seek the advice and counsel of all members of the committee in preparing the thesis.

When the M.S. thesis or the Ph.D. dissertation is completed to the satisfaction of the appropriate committee and the final oral examination has been passed, the members of the candidate's committee are to sign the appropriate signatory page. After the foregoing are completed, the thesis/dissertation is to be submitted to the Department Head or Graduate Coordinator for signature. The Department Head or Graduate Coordinator will review the thesis/dissertation before affixing his/her signature. Each candidate is responsible for determining the time the Department Head wishes for review far enough in advance of the submission deadline of the Graduate School that the review can be accomplished without undue time pressure. Do not make assumptions about the Department Head's schedule immediately before the Graduate School deadline. Inquire early!

A copy of each thesis written within the Department is maintained in the Department. Each student is expected to give the Department a "pdf" copy of their thesis for our library. A listserv has been created through which they can be sent – [L-AESE-Thesis@lists.psu.edu](mailto:L-AESE-Thesis@lists.psu.edu).

## Termination of Graduate Study

A graduate student will not be permitted to continue in the Department in a degree program for any of the following reasons:

- (a) It is reported to the Department Head by the student's committee that there is lack of progress on the degree.
- (b) A student in the Ph.D. program in Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics does not pass all sections of the qualifier exam within the time specified for the exam.
- (c) An overall failure is registered in the comprehensive or final examination by the student's committee.
- (d) A student fails to meet the English competency requirements.

When it is determined that a student is to be terminated for unsatisfactory scholarship, the student will be given written notice. The student will be advised in general terms the reason(s) for termination.

## Student Grievance Procedures

When a student presents a grievance relating to his or her academic program, the Department Head will appoint a Grievance Committee to hear the case. The Grievance Committee will consist of three (3) faculty members and one (1) student. The Department Head should not be a member of the Grievance Committee. Normally one of the department's graduate officers will be a member of the committee.

The student will prepare a written statement of the nature of the grievance which is to be addressed to the Department Grievance Committee. This letter will be deposited with the Department Head's staff assistant.

The Grievance Committee will prepare a written report addressed to the Department Head which will be kept in the student's permanent file and transmitted to the Dean of the Graduate School for further action.

If at any time the student presenting the grievance engages legal counsel, the department grievance procedure will cease, the Grievance Committee will be disbanded, and the case will immediately be referred to the Dean of the Graduate School.

## ASSISTANTSHIP OBLIGATIONS

Many graduate students hold research assistantships, and occasionally graduate students receive other forms of financial support from the Department. Graduate students receiving financial aid from outside the Department are included under the stated rules unless specified in the terms of their appointments.

Normally, the student with a half-time assistantship is expected to schedule 9-12 credits per semester. A student with a quarter-time assistantship may schedule 9-14 credits, and with a three-quarter-time assistantship, 6-8 credits may be scheduled. Four to six credits is considered a normal course load during the Summer Session for those with a half-time assistantship. Only with prior approval from the student's advisor, the Department Head, and the Graduate School may the course load be increased or decreased beyond these ranges for a specific semester. Over a series of semesters the student's total credit load should conform to the general guidelines outlined above. (See Student Aid section of the Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin.) **NOTE: Audited courses do not count toward assistantship credit levels.**

Graduate assistantship stipends comprise an important portion of funds for research and provide the opportunity for students to work with faculty members and be exposed to various aspects of an academic program. Graduate students receiving departmental support are expected to actively engage in departmental

research or perform services related to resident education or extension programs, depending on the nature of funding. Time expended on a thesis or dissertation related to a research project is recognized as at least partial fulfillment of assistantship requirements. A student on an assistantship may elect to do a thesis or dissertation in an area unrelated to a departmental research project. The student, however, will be expected to perform research and/or education duties in return for the assistantship stipend. Students must determine themselves from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) whether or not stipends are subject to federal income taxation.

Departmental policy for all graduate assistantships relative to satisfying services required for payment of a stipend is as follows:

- (a) All half-time assistants will be expected to be available for performing services related to research and/or resident education or extension for an average of 20 hours per week; 30 hours per week for students on a 3/4-time assistantship and 10 hours per week for students on a 1/4-time assistantship. This is an 18-week commitment for a student on assistantship in the fall semester; an 18-week commitment for a student on assistantship in the spring semester; and a 12-week commitment for a student being paid in the summer semester. A graduate assistant may accept concurrent employment outside the University only with permission from the Department Head and the appropriate Graduate Committee chairperson. (See Assistantships under Student Aid in the Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin.)
- (b) The faculty member for whom a graduate assistant works is the assistantship supervisor and may or may not be the same person as the academic advisor. In Rural Sociology, the chairperson of the Admissions and Assistantships Committee coordinates the availability of services for needs and is responsible to the Department Head for the assignment of assistantship services. In AEREC and AEE the chairperson for the programs are responsible to the Department Head for the assignment of assistantship services.

In both AEREC and Rural Sociology, general guidelines are that a degree program is two academic years (an academic year being Fall and Spring semesters) for a Master's student, three academic years plus one semester for a Ph.D. student entering with a Master's degree. For students who complete both M.S. and Ph.D. in the same program, or who enter the M.S. program but transfer to the Ph.D. program without completing the M.S. program, assistantship eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis at the time the student enters the Ph.D. program. Students enrolled in dual-title degree Ph.D. programs are eligible for an additional semester of assistantship funding. A student may petition for a one-semester extension of assistantship support through his or her advisor. The petition will be granted only under unusual or extenuating circumstances.

Students in AEREC or Rural Sociology who secure external funding to support off-campus fieldwork for their thesis or dissertation will not have this funding counted against the semester limits indicated above. "External funding" is defined here as funding that is provided to a student by an organization other than Penn State.

**NOTE:** Due to financial exigencies, departmental funds are no longer available for summer assistantship support for students entering Fall 2004 or later. Faculty with grant funds may support summer assistantships or wage payroll positions.

A student may lose an assistantship at any time due to substandard academic performance, lack of progress in the degree program, unsatisfactory performance of research responsibilities and assigned duties, or financial exigencies of the Department. The standards for academic performance are as follows:

- (a) The student will come under review for continuation of assistantship appointment or other



departmental assistance if the student's cumulative grade point average falls below 3.20, or if the student receives a grade of D or F.

- (b) The student will automatically lose his or her assistantship or other financial aid if the student's cumulative grade point average falls below 3.00 for two consecutive semesters. (Appeal to the Department Head is always available.)

For AEREC students with coursework deficiencies, the GPA required for assistantship retention will be calculated as follows. Initially, grades in deficiency course work (300 level and below) and/or graduate course work (400 level and above) will be used to calculate a student's cumulative grade point average for assistantship retention. For students with coursework deficiencies, the GPA will be calculated on the basis of grades received in deficiency and graduate courses until 6 credits of graduate-level coursework have been completed. At that point, deficiency course grades will no longer be included in calculating the GPA for assistantship retention. The GPA will be calculated on the basis of grades received in the 6 credits of completed graduate coursework and all future graduate coursework. For Rural Sociology, the student's overall GPA is used to evaluate adequacy of performance.

Reviews necessitated by a low GPA or a poor grade (D or F) will be conducted during the first two weeks of the succeeding semester. In Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics, this review is carried out by the AEREC Graduate Committee in cooperation with the student's advisor. Following the review, the Chairperson of the AEREC Graduate Committee will transmit a recommendation to the Department Head regarding the desirability of continuing the student's financial support. In Rural Sociology the review is conducted by the student's advisory committee, and a recommendation is forwarded to the Department Head.

Applications for reinstatement of an assistantship appointment will be reviewed by the AEREC Graduate Committee (in Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics) or the student's advisory committee (in Rural Sociology) in cooperation with the student's advisor, and a recommendation will be forwarded to the Department Head. Reinstatement is based on progress toward meeting the standards outlined above and the availability of funds.

Any student on assistantship who plans to shift from a Master's to a Ph.D. program (with or without completing the Master's program) must submit a new application and compete with other applicants for such assistantships.

A student admitted in AEREC to the M.S./Ph.D. program who subsequently wishes to not pursue the M.S. but instead go directly for the Ph.D. should only make the switch upon the recommendation of his/her academic advisor and the approval of the AEREC Graduate Committee. If such a student has an assistantship, the question of when the rate of pay is to be changed from M.S.-grade to Ph.D.-grade will be decided on a case-by-case basis. However, a guiding principle is whether or not the student has passed the qualifier exam.

Grade standards for students not on assistantship appointment or other departmental aid are those specified by the Graduate School.

At the end of each year, there is an evaluation process for graduate assistants in the Department to assess their performance of research responsibilities and assigned duties. As part of this process, every graduate assistant in the Department must complete a self-assessment form describing their assistantship duties and outputs during the semester. A graduate assistant assigned to more than one faculty supervisor must complete one form for each supervisor. Each faculty member in the Department supervising graduate assistants completes a graduate assistant evaluation form, one form for each graduate assistant that the faculty member is supervising, utilizing the information on the self-assessment forms. Each departmental graduate committee then reviews the completed self-assessment and evaluation forms for the graduate assistants in its program. Cases of poor performance are forwarded to the Department Head for further

review and possible action. Cases of outstanding performance are forwarded to the Department Head for possible commendation.

Graduate assistants are encouraged to discuss work expectations with their faculty supervisors at the beginning of each semester. Graduate assistants are also encouraged to seek feedback on their performance from their supervisors throughout the semester.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

According to University Faculty Senate Policy 49-20 (<http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/47-00.html#49-20>), “Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University’s Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students’ dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.”

Policy 49-20 continues, “Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.”

Students should bear in mind the importance of academic integrity in their course work, assistantship and wage payroll work, and work on theses and dissertations. If a student has questions about whether a particular action would be a violation of academic integrity, the student’s academic advisor and the appropriate departmental Graduate Committee can provide guidance. The College of Agricultural Sciences’ guidelines for implementing Policy 49-20 are available online at <http://agsci.psu.edu/students/resources/academic-integrity>.

## **SARI**

Penn State’s Graduate School and its individual graduate programs take issues of research ethics very seriously. All incoming graduate student cohorts are expected by the Graduate School to successfully complete the Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) program as a requirement for graduation.

The SARI program is an opportunity to engage graduate students broadly in a dialog surrounding issues pertinent to research ethics. The SARI program has two parts:

- 1) During the first year of enrollment, graduate students are required to complete an online Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training program provided by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). The Office for Research Protections (ORP) will provide the link to this training via the SARI Resource Portal on the ORP website ([www.research.psu.edu/orp](http://www.research.psu.edu/orp)).
- 2) Graduate students are also required to engage in an additional 5 hours of discussion-based RCR education prior to degree completion. Students in the Department’s two in-residence graduate programs (R SOC and AEREC) will do this jointly. Specifically, the programs will offer three one-hour classes via AEREC 590, the departmental colloquium for first-year students. The three one-hour AEREC 590 classes will focus on publication practices and responsible authorship (including collaborative practices); peer review of manuscripts and proposals; acquisition, management, sharing, and ownership of data; or related topics. In addition, a two-hour seminar on research integrity will be offered as part of the Department’s seminar series.

Attendance is mandatory at both the AEREC 590 classes dedicated to SARI topics and the SARI-oriented seminar, and absentees will need to make arrangements for alternative discussion-oriented SARI training. Students will be expected to complete the requirements in their first year. Very rarely we have students who start in the Spring; they will be expected to complete the on-line RCR training in the Spring and to have completed all requirements by the end of the subsequent Fall semester. Students are reminded that successful completion of the SARI program is mandatory for graduation.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ON DEPARTMENT OPERATION**

### **Use of Graduate Desk Space—Armsby and Ferguson Buildings Third Floor Armsby Rooms 12 and 9 in Ferguson**

Each student will be assigned a desk subject to availability. **Students on assistantship have first priority.** Each desk has a work surface with a task light, overhead bin, drawer. In order to keep this space in good condition and provide an appropriate academic environment, students should observe the following:

Do not change desks without coordinating with the contact person in the Graduate Studies Office (Amanda Ault).

Do not use tape or other adhesive materials on the metal surfaces. Magnets will hold materials in place without damaging the surface.

Use push pins to hold materials on the cloth surfaces of the workspace.

Do not store materials on top of the bins or on the floor.

Some bookshelves are provided in the office areas. Identify the owner of materials on each shelf by labeling the shelf with the magnetic labels provided.

Do not bring personal furniture into the offices.

Do not bring cots into the offices.

Be considerate of other students in the immediate area.

Turn off task lights and room lights when no one is in the office.

Application for office keys is made through Amanda Ault, 111A Armsby.

A copy machine is available outside Room 13 Armsby for your use. Anyone with cash or a Penn State ID card with money on the card in the form of Lion Cash can use this machine. This is the same system that is used on copiers in the library and all over campus.

Long distance telephone calls may only be made in relation to work assigned by the faculty supervisor or by billing the call to a personal phone credit card.

Supplies, such as pencils, paper, and note pads, are provided by the Department to students for work related to assistantship duties and to those on fellowships that provide such support. Supplies are available from the staff assistant of the faculty member serving as the assistantship supervisor. Supplies are not provided by the Department for course and degree work.

## **Sexual Harassment Training**

Each student is required to attend training conducted by the College of Agricultural Sciences on Sexual Harassment. This is mandated by the Dean and the college's Human Resources Department will offer the training.

## **Copies of Theses**

A copy of each thesis written within the Department is maintained in the Department. Each student is expected to give the Department a "pdf" copy of their thesis for our library. A listserv has been created through which they can be sent – [L-AESE-Thesis@lists.psu.edu](mailto:L-AESE-Thesis@lists.psu.edu).

Copies of these, as well as theses from other disciplines at Penn State, are also available in Pattee Library. Information on the availability of microfilm copies and/or descriptions of dissertations at other universities may be obtained through the Reference Department of Pattee Library, 105 East Pattee. Students also submit electronic copies of their theses to the University's electronic theses and dissertations (eTD) program (see <http://www.etsd.psu.edu/>).

## **Computer Support Services**

### **Information Technologies**

The Pennsylvania State University  
401 Ag Administration Building  
University Park, PA 16802

Support Phone: 814-865-1229

Admin Phone: 814-863-3449

Fax: 814-863-2662

Email: [AgHelpdesk@psu.edu](mailto:AgHelpdesk@psu.edu)

Information Technologies supports over 1500 users at University Park and the 67 county extension offices through network and systems design and management, computer purchasing, IT consultation, user support, and training. Please use the Help Request Form for questions or assistance. <http://agsci.psu.edu/it/help-request>

### **Computer Support Facilities**

The department's computer Lab in Room 13 Armsby is equipped with about 20 Windows computers and printing facilities for student use. The computers are on the department's local area network and are connected to the campus data backbone.

Available software permits a wide variety of tasks ranging from electronic mail communication to statistical analysis. The operating system is Windows. Software programs include Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, Outlook, and FrontPage). Programs for analysis include SAS, SPSS, LIMDEP, GAMS, Matlab, Stata, and GAUSS.

Printing is done on laser printers in the Lab. Printing on these Lab printers must be limited to assistantship-related work and essential documents related to courses and theses. A small collection of manuals and other

reference materials on micro and mainframe computer programs is available in Room 1 Armsby. Manuals may be signed out for short periods of time.

## **Computer Accounts**

**Penn State Access Account.** All registered students are given an Access account by Information Technology Services (ITS) at Penn State. To activate the account, students must take a photo ID card to an automatic signature station (204 Wagner Building or W113 Pattee Library are two of several). This Access account is also required to use any of the public computer labs on campus and to access the Penn State backbone and full range of Internet services from a home computer.

**Personal Web Account.** The University's Information Technology Services (ITS) office offers webspace on their Web server, [www.personal.psu.edu](http://www.personal.psu.edu), to any Penn State faculty, staff, student that requests it. Once you have your Access account you can apply for your personal web space at <http://www.psu.edu/webspace/>. ITSG requests that you use the ITS-s free space for any web pages which you create containing additional information about your personal and professional life and for documents you wish to have on the web. At your request, links can be made from your official AESE page to your personal web pages and documents by emailing Amanda Ault ([alr226@psu.edu](mailto:alr226@psu.edu)) as she maintains the AESE graduate student pages.

## **Automobiles, Expense Accounts, and Field Work**

Expense accounts and field work should be discussed with the advisor. Departmental and University travel forms and policies, covering details such as travel allowances, meals, lodging, and mileage tables may be found online <http://www.travel.psu.edu/>. If you need an automobile for official travel, ask in the Finance office (Room 5 Armsby). NOTE: Students must be employees of the University (i.e., on assistantship or wage payroll), 21 years of age or older, and have a valid operator's license in order to use University vehicles. **Check with staff in 5 Armsby prior to making any travel arrangements.**

## **Student Travel to Professional Meetings**

Graduate students are encouraged to attend their professional society meetings. The Department will support such attendance within the following guidelines, subject to funds availability:

- (a) For professional travel, resident graduate students will be allocated the following:
  - Ph.D. students: up to \$1000 during their period of study;
  - M.S. students: up to \$750 during their period of study.This amount may be used on one single trip, or spread out over more than one trip. Students who complete a M.S. degree in the Department and then enter a Ph.D. program will be eligible to also request the \$1000 for the Ph.D. program.
- (b) Graduate students may ride to professional meetings without charge if faculty and/or staff members are driving University vehicles in which passenger space is available.
- (c) Reimbursement for expenses must have prior approval of the Department Head and is dependent upon availability of funds.
- (d) If the Department or any other University office will be providing funds for travel, check with staff in 103 Armsby prior to making any travel arrangements or paying registration.

## **Department Directory**

A directory of all personnel in the Department is available at <http://aeese.psu.edu>. Amanda Ault is in charge of any changes or updates to the Graduate Student Directory. Please inform her of any changes that need to be made to your information on our directory.

### **Social Activities**

Traditionally, the Department has sponsored a variety of social events each year. Individual programs occasionally organize program-specific social activities. Other less formal departmental activities, such as monthly birthday celebrations, a chili cook-off and international meals are periodically organized by the Department's Social Affairs Committee.

### **Graduate Student Involvement in Department Activities**

Graduate students in the Department have representatives with voting privileges at Departmental faculty meetings. Students typically are asked to meet with individuals interviewing for a position on the faculty and to share their evaluations of the candidates. Finally, graduate students in the Department have representation on the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA), which is the official voice of graduate students at the University.

### **Checklist for Departing Graduate Students**

Send an electronic copy of the final thesis/dissertation in pdf format to [L-AESE-Thesis@lists.psu.edu](mailto:L-AESE-Thesis@lists.psu.edu)

Notify the Department Office of the departure date.

Check out with the Graduate Staff Assistant to confirm that all materials have been completed.

- Provide a forwarding address.
- Provide placement information.

Check out with ITSG:

- Provide date when leaving.
- Provide date when the account can be disabled.
- Discuss disposition of all electronic files.
- Take copies of files, if appropriate.

Within one week following graduation, departing graduate students are expected to do the following:

- Clean out assigned desk space.
- Leave desk keys in the lock.
- Remove any materials stored on bookcases or other common spaces.
- Notify the department office when everything is clear and the desk is ready for re-assignment.

Turn in Penn State ID.

Turn in Armsby keys to 116 Ag Admin and receive refund of deposit.

### **Other Publications**

The following are available from the Graduate School Office in Kern Building or the Graduate School website (<http://www.gradsch.psu.edu>): *Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin*, *Thesis Guide*, and the *Manual for Graduate Students*.

Available from the Graduate Student Association (<http://www.clubs.psu.edu/up/gsa/>): *Guide to Graduate Life*.

## DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH

The research program of the Department is administered under a variety of projects financed primarily with state and federal funds allocated to the Department by the Agricultural Experiment Station. Additional financial support for research is obtained through grants from, and cooperative agreements with, various state and federal departments and agencies, foundations and other nonprofit organizations, and industry. The grants and agreements may be for research that complements and supports one or more of the existing Department projects, the revision of an existing project, or a new project.

In addition to the above research funding sources, there are various institutes and centers at the University that provide opportunities for interdisciplinary research and project funding on problems under their responsibility. Of particular interest to graduate students in the Department are the Penn State Institutes of the Environment and the Population Research Institute.

Since most graduate assistantships are financed through research funds, thesis research is expected to contribute to a research project. Some assistance, such as data collection and analysis, may also be available to non-assistantship degree candidates if their theses contribute to a project. A student's interest in a researchable idea or problem not currently covered by existing research projects should be discussed with his/her advisor. If it is appropriate, it could result in a new project or a project revision to provide for such research.

## COURSES AND FACULTY

Available at website <http://aese.psu.edu/>. The University's Schedule of Courses is available at the website <http://schedule.psu.edu/>.

### **Graduate Student Resource Guide**

**The Office of Human Resources** provides resource booklets on child care facilities in State College Area and summer programs and caps for school-age children. <http://ohr.psu.edu/employee-and-family-resources/your-family/child-care-resources/>

**International Student Services** provides answers to questions and needs that are unique to international students. The office is located at 410 Boucke Building. <http://global.psu.edu/>

**Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)** is the representative body for all graduate and professional students. The GPSA addresses issues of concern to graduate students and elects members to sit on shared-governance bodies of the University. The GPSA also organizes social events for graduate students. <http://www.pennstategsa.com/>

**The Office of Student Aid** is a good place to begin the search for financial assistance. <http://studentaid.psu.edu/>

**The Office for Disability Services** provides information and assistance to students with disabilities. <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/>

**The Writing Center** is sponsored by the Graduate School and provides assistance to graduate students who wish to enhance their writing skills. Graduate students are invited to schedule appointments for one-on-one discussions of their writing projects. <http://pennstatelearning.psu.edu/tutoring/writing>



**Penn State Escort Service** is operated under the auspices of Police Services and will provide an escort for students walking on campus after dark. The escort service may be reached at 814-865-WALK (9255).

<http://www.police.psu.edu/up-police/services/safe-walk-service.cfm>

**Off-Campus Housing** opportunities are listed in 125 HUB-Robeson Center, 865-2346.

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/offcampus/>

**Office of Judicial Affairs** is responsible for dealing with violations of the Code of Conduct including sexual assault, harassing, stalking, and physical assault. The phone number is 863-0342.

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/>

**The Code of Conduct** is available at <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/codeofconduct/>

**The Affirmative Action Office** is committed to ensuring the University maintains an environment free of harassment and discrimination. <http://www.psu.edu/dept/aaoffice/>

**HUB-Robeson Center** is the site for multiple student services including restaurants, Copy Central, Id+ Office, a bank (Penn State Federal Credit Union), a convenience store, the Penn State Bookstore, the Center for Arts and Crafts, Art Galleries, and the main information desk for the University.

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** can help students resolve personal concerns that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, and satisfaction at Penn State. Some of the more common concerns include difficulty with friends, roommates, or family members; depression and anxiety; sexual identity; lack of motivation or difficulty relaxing, concentrating or studying; eating disorders; sexual assault and sexual abuse recovery; and uncertainties about personal values and beliefs. <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>

**Career Services**, located in the Bank of America Career Services Building, is fully equipped to assist graduate students in the preparation of resumes and curriculum vitae and in developing effective interviewing skills. Career Services hosts a career fair that is open to graduate as well as undergraduate students.

<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/career/>

**Research Protections** is the office that oversees all research on human participants, animals, radioisotopes and biohazardous materials. You must have permission from this office prior to conducting research involving any of these subjects. Permission can not be obtained after the work has begun.

<http://www.research.psu.edu/orp/>

**Pasquerilla Spiritual Center** is home to more than fifty spiritual organizations. The center is non-denominational and provides students with opportunities to explore ethical and spiritual issues.

<http://www.sa.psu.edu/insights/jan04/spiritual.shtml>

### **Problem Resolution**

Graduate students occasionally have difficulties with their advisors, their programs or an academic matter associated with their programs. The first step in problem resolution is always to talk with your advisor and then with the program chair or department head and then the associate dean of your college. If satisfactory resolution remains elusive, the associate dean of the Graduate School is available to provide guidance and maintain neutrality. Issues discussed during meetings with the assistant dean will remain confidential if requested by the student. Appointments may be made by calling 814-865-2516.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is often a confusing concept. At Penn State, plagiarism means taking someone's words and presenting them as your own. Cutting and pasting from a web site is considered plagiarism. Copying verbatim from any source without using quotation marks and the full reference is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity regardless of whether it is a homework exercise, an exam, a thesis, or a manuscript for publication.

**University Policies** may be viewed on line. Important policies include:

Sexual Harassment (AD41)

General Standards of Professional Ethics (AD47)

Student Parking Rules & Regulations (BS04)

Patents & Copyrights (Intellectual Property) (RA11)

<http://www.guru.psu.edu/policies/>



**Graduate Student Policies** are available on line

These include:

Grade mediation & Adjudication (G-10)

Resolution of problems (Appendix II)

Termination-Procedure for Termination of the Degree Program of a Graduate Student  
for Unsatisfactory Scholarship (Appendix III)

Termination of Assistantships Due to Inadequate Performance (Appendix IV)

Residency for Tuition Purposes at Penn State (Appendix V)

<http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/policies/student.html>

## **CURRENT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Available at website [aese.psu.edu/events](http://aese.psu.edu/events)

**Amanda Ault** ([alr226@psu.edu](mailto:alr226@psu.edu))  
Graduate Staff Assistant  
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(814) 865-0456

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. The Pennsylvania State University does not discriminate against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 201 Willard Building, University Park PA 16802-2801; tel. (814) 865-4700/V, (814) 863-1150/TTY.