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Department of Agricultural Economics and
Rural Sociology

2011-2012 Graduate Student Handbook



Agricultural Environmental and
Regional Economics
and

Rural Sociology

Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

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The Pennsylvania State University

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DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Requirements of the Graduate School as given in the *Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin* - the White Book (<http://www.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) and with deadlines periodically announced by the Graduate School (see <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/calendar/gradcal.htm>).

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 procedure 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 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.

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. 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.

Each doctoral student's committee must include at least one outside member. The primary responsibilities of this outside member are (1) to maintain the academic standards of the Graduate School and (2) to assure that all procedures are carried out fairly. The outside member represents the Graduate School; and, as such, the outside member must be a member of the Graduate Faculty but need not have direct expertise in the research area of the candidate. The outside member cannot hold an appointment having a budgetary connection to the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology. The outside member cannot have any conflicts of interest with other members of the committee, such as serving as co-principal investigator with any other members of the committee.

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, Environmental and Regional Economics (AEREC)

Introduction

In the 2009-2010 academic year, the AEREC faculty approved changes to the AEREC curriculum. 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) 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 are required in the 500 and/or 600 series. 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). Note: This course currently has a temporary number. Once the AEREC revision proposal is finalized, this course will have a permanent number.
- (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). (Note: An M.S. student may petition for suitable substitutes for these courses.)
- (5) Applied Welfare Analysis. (3 credits.) This course will have a temporary name and number for Spring 2011.
- (6) 9 credits of electives at the 400 or 500 level, chosen in consultation with the student's academic advisor. Cannot include readings or independent study courses (e.g., AEREC 496 or 596).
- (7) 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 Analysis (3 credits). This course will have a temporary name and number for Spring 2011.
- (7) Applied Microeconometrics (3 credits). This course will have a temporary name and number for Spring 2011.
- (8) Applied Computational Economics (3 credits). This course will have a temporary name and number for Spring 2011.
- (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 1-credit AEREC workshops (3 credits). Students can take any combination of 1-credit AEREC workshops.

- (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.

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, the student may have an oral within two weeks.

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 - 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.Agr., 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. Additional information on Demography admission and degree requirements is available online at <http://www.pop.psu.edu/demography/graduate-program-in-demography/graduate-program-in-demography/?searchterm=dual%20degree>.

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.

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.

Rural Sociology

Master of Science

M.S. candidates in Rural Sociology are expected to develop an understanding of rural sociology, research methods and statistics, and a general awareness of substantive, theoretical and methodological issues of fields within sociology (such as community development, demography, international development, or environment and natural resources).

At a minimum, students should take:

- AEREC 525 or its equivalent for research methods
- a two-semester statistics sequence (AG 400 and R SOC 573, or their equivalents)
- two or more of the following courses for rural sociology (R SOC 452, 501, 502, 508, 516 and 517).

A plan of study is devised in consultation with the student's graduate committee, both to meet these recommendations, and to craft a curriculum that is tailored to the student's academic background and career goals.

Doctoral Program

The principal aim of the doctoral program is to impart the research and analytic abilities necessary to understand and explore the problems, structure and functioning of rural society. To this end, the student is guided in course selection by the major professor and other members of the advisory committee. In total, the advisory committee consists of at least four members, more than half of whom must be from the Rural Sociology Faculty, and at least one of whom must be from outside the program. Members of the committee are chosen by the student to represent areas of specialization.

There is no specified number of course credits of instruction and research beyond the master's level required for the Ph.D. Rather, award of the degree is made at such time as minimal course requirements are met and the student demonstrates to his or her committee and to the Department that he or she is a well-trained, competent, and professional sociologist. Thus, it is impossible to specify the exact amount of time necessary to complete the degree. However, it is expected that a student on a 1/2-time assistantship will finish the doctoral program in 10 semesters (3 1/4 years) beyond a master's degree. A minor is not required.

Ph.D. students are expected to be prepared in four areas: Rural Sociology, Methods and Statistics, and two areas of concentration of their choice. The following course requirements apply to Ph.D. students matriculating in the Fall, 2006 semester or later. All students will meet the core rural sociology requirements and the methodology and statistics requirements.

Core Course Requirements

Core courses provide a broad overview of rural sociology, rural sociological theory, and the issues facing rural people both domestically and internationally. Four courses are needed to meet the core course requirement.

Take the following course or an equivalent theory course:

- R SOC 502 Use of Theory in Rural Sociology

Take one of the following two courses:

- R SOC 516 Change in Rural Society
- R SOC 517 International Rural Social Change

Take any two of the following courses (the list includes R SOC 516 and 517 if not taken above):

These courses encompass different areas in rural sociology and will provide students with an understanding of different specialty areas in the discipline. It is suggested that students choose courses from this list that do not fall within their declared areas of concentration, to provide breadth of training in the discipline.

- R SOC 501 Development of Rural Sociology
- R SOC 508 Sociology of Agriculture
- 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 Children and Youth in Developing Countries
- R SOC 597 Demography of Health and Mortality
- R SOC 597 Risk Assessment
- R SOC 597 Social Impact Assessment
- R SOC 597 Theory and Methods of Community and Natural Resources

Methods and Statistics Course Requirements

To provide a basic understanding of research methods and statistics, Ph.D. students must meet the following four-course minimum requirements, recognizing that thorough competency often requires additional coursework: Students are required to take AEREC 525 or its equivalent for research design and methods, R SOC 597 (Qualitative Methods) or its equivalent, and a two-semester statistics sequence (AG 400 and R SOC 573, or their equivalents). The typical Ph.D. candidate is equipped with a minimum level of research skills within the first year of training. This is accomplished either through prior instruction or by enrollment in research methods and statistics courses in the first year.

Concentration Areas

For the other two areas of concentration students might develop expertise in the sociology of food and agriculture, natural resources / environmental sociology, community, international development, or family sociology. We also offer three dual-title graduate degrees – Rural Sociology and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment, Rural Sociology and Demography, and Rural Sociology and Women’s Studies (see below). For these three degrees, one of the areas of concentration will be HDNRE, demography or women’s studies, respectively. Students may also design their own concentrations, in consultation with their advisors. Additional information about areas of special concentration and corresponding courses offered in those areas will be found in Rural Sociology Graduate Program website (<http://www.aers.psu.edu/programs/RuralSociology.htm>).

Dual Title Degrees in Rural Sociology 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/graduate-program-in-demography/graduate-program-in-demography/?searchterm=dual%20degree>. Faculty in Rural Sociology offer four demography courses intended to provide students with an understanding of theories and substantive demographic issues in the following areas: health and mortality, poverty and inequality, population and development, children in developing countries. These courses are appropriate for all rural sociology students with substantive interest in these areas, not just dual-title demography students. These courses are also intended to prepare students for comprehensive exams in the demography concentration area.

Dual Title Degrees in Rural Sociology and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment

The Rural Sociology graduate program participates in the transdisciplinary intercollege dual-title 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 Title Degree in Rural Sociology 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 the dual-title degree see: <http://www.womenstudies.psu.edu/academics/programs/phd.htm>. Prospective students seeking admission to the dual-title degree program should apply directly to Rural Sociology. Each applicant should state that she/he wishes to apply to the dual-title degree in Women's Studies, and should include in the application a statement of purpose that addresses the ways in which her/his research and professional goals reflect an interest in interdisciplinary and feminist research. Both the Women's Studies program and the cooperating department will evaluate applications and decide on admission. Doctoral-level dual-title 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.

Language Requirement

There is no language or communications requirement for the Ph.D. in Rural Sociology beyond the Graduate School's requirement of competency in English.

English Language Competency

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: 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 – 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.

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.

Thesis

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 – AERSThesis@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 distribution of assistantship services. In AEREC, the Department Head is responsible for the distribution 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, and five academic years for students earning both M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the program. The maximum number of semesters that a Rural Sociology student is eligible for an assistantship is based on these guidelines. 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 semester, 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. Beginning in Fall 2009, all incoming graduate student cohorts will be 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).
- 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. For students in the CEDEV program, the 5 hours of discussion-based RCR education is embedded into required CEDEV courses. CEDEV students with questions in this regard should contact CEDEV program staff.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON DEPARTMENT OPERATION

Use of Graduate Desk Space Third Floor Armsby

Each student will be assigned a desk subject to availability. **Students on assistantship have first priority.** AERS invested significant funds during the 2008/2009 academic year to upgrade the graduate student office space. 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 Department office.

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 staff in 103 Armsby.

A copy machine is available outside Room 13 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 – AERSThesis@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

The Information Technology Support Group

The Information Technology Support Group (ITSG) of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology offers computer support services to graduate students to assist them in learning the computer skills they need in pursuing their degrees. Priority is given to assistance needed with work performed to fulfill obligations of assistantships or other financial support arrangements, and with work done on theses and on other computer projects contributing to the Department’s efforts. The ITSG office is in Room 1 on the ground floor of Armsby. Requests for computer support services should be initiated by sending an email to itsghelp@psu.edu.

The ITSG conducts a computer orientation on “Computing in the AERS Department” at the start of the fall semester. This orientation is required for all new students. It provides important information about the AERS network, use of the computer lab, the software programs available, computer accounts, the basics of email, training resources, general tips and guidelines, and a few essential rules.

ITSG provides on-demand and scheduled assistance with a variety of questions and problems involving computer accounts, lab hardware, electronic mail, survey coding and data entry, data access (from various media), word processing, spreadsheet and database programs, presentation graphics, scanning, web searching/writing, and statistical analysis programs. Help with programming extends to data set creation and manipulation, statistical procedures, and reporting of results. When the ITSG cannot handle your questions they suggest other sources of support.

Computer Support Facilities

The Information Technology Support Group maintains the department’s computer Lab in Room 13 Armsby. It 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. Printing guidelines for the Lab are

available online at <http://inside.aers.psu.edu/itsgsupport/orientation/NewStudents.htm#Prin>. The guidelines must be followed to enable the Department to continue providing these printing services to students free of charge.

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

AERS Account. The AERS Computer Lab is reserved for use by AERS graduate students. A logon ID and password are required to use the computers and can be obtained from ITSG in Room 1. Private storage space on the AERS network is provided to students for files related to research and coursework. In addition, a Penn State Access account is required in order to have a psu.edu email account.

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, 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 currently creates and maintains "official pages" of AERS graduate students on the AERS web server, and 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 AERS page to your "personal" web pages and documents.

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 Department office (Room 103 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 103 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 \$750 during their period of study;
 - M.S. students: up to \$500 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 \$750 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 on inside.AERS and is maintained by ITSG. Included are: home addresses, spouses' names, office location, and home and office telephone numbers. Please inform the office staff in Room 107 Armsby Building of any changes in the above items.

Social Activities

Traditionally, the Department has sponsored a variety of social events each year. At least one Department social is held during the Fall Semester. Its purpose is to provide a means for students and faculty to get acquainted or reacquainted. Other less formal departmental activities 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 Student Association (GSA), 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 <mailto:AERSThesis@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 114 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 are expected to contribute to a research project. Some assistance, such as data collection and analysis, may also be available to nonassistantship 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://www.aers.psu.edu/>. The University's Schedule of Courses is available at the website <http://schedule.psu.edu/>.

Graduate Student Resource Guide

University Office of Global Programs provides answers to questions and needs that are unique to international students. The office is located at 410 Boucke Building. http://www.international.psu.edu/international_students/

Graduate Student Association (GSA) is the representative body for all graduate students. The GSA addresses issues of concern to graduate students and elects members to sit on shared-governance bodies of the University. The GSA also organizes social events for graduate students. <http://www.clubs.psu.edu/up/gsa/>

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

The Office for Disability Services provides information and assistance to students with disabilities. <http://www.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://www.psu.edu/dept/cew/GWC.shtml>

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 5-WALK (865-9255). <http://www.psu.edu/dept/police/escortservic.html>

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

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://www.sa.psu.edu/caps/>

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 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 <http://inside.aers.psu.edu/>

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