

***GRADUATE POLICIES & PROCEDURES  
HANDBOOK***

**DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY**



**College of Forest Resources**

**Mississippi State University**

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# GRADUATE POLICIES & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

Department of Forestry

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The Department

The Department of Forestry is one of three departments in the College of Forest Resources (CFR) at Mississippi State University (MSU). The Department's academic programs are funded through the CFR, research programs are funded through the Forest and Wildlife Research Center (FWRC), and extension programs are funded through the MSU Extension Service. The Department is housed in Thompson Hall on the MSU campus.

## 1.2 The Graduate Program

The purposes of the graduate program in the Department of Forestry are to provide: (a) advanced academic study in forestry and the natural resources beyond the baccalaureate degree and (b) opportunities in which students can engage in independent research activities and/or projects. The Department strives to provide both students and faculty with an environment conducive to learning and scholarly activities.

The Dean of the CFR has final authority for approving successful completion of graduate programs and awarding of degrees. The Department Head/Graduate Coordinator of the Department of Forestry has responsibilities for administering the graduate programs within the Department. This document provides department-specific information on these programs. Additional information is contained in the "*Bulletin of the Graduate School*" which can be found online at the website of the MSU Office of Graduate School (<http://www.grad.msstate.edu/>).

Graduate study in the Department is offered leading to the degrees of Master of Science in Forestry (thesis and non-thesis options) and Doctor of Philosophy in Forest Resources. Beginning in 2010, the M.S. degree offered by the Department of Forestry also became available as a distance education degree program. Specialized areas of study include forest business, forest management and economics, forest genetics and biotechnology, forest hydrology and soils, silviculture, forest biometrics, spatial technologies in natural resource management, forest harvesting and operations, urban forestry, forest recreation, and wildlife and other natural resource economics.

### 1.3 The Graduate Faculty

Faculty in the Department of Forestry are members of the Graduate Faculty of Mississippi State University. Graduate Faculty members are appointed by their department head and college dean and are considered to have superior expertise and professional accomplishment, so that they are appropriate for instruction of students enrolled in graduate degree programs (MSU "*Faculty Handbook*": The Graduate Faculty; <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/faculty/>). Responsibilities of Graduate Faculty members may include:

- (a) teaching graduate-level courses and seminars,
- (b) advising graduate students,
- (c) supervising/guiding graduate student research and study to its completion,
- (d) serving on graduate committees/examining committees for graduate students,
- (e) remaining current and actively productive in scholarly/research/creative endeavors,
- (f) participating in the formulation of graduate curricula and policy,
- (g) being eligible to serve on the MSU Graduate Council, and
- (h) serving as a Graduate School representative on doctoral preliminary and final oral examinations.

Membership on the Graduate Faculty is at either the Level 1 or the Level 2 category. Both categories are authorized to teach graduate-level courses, serve as members of graduate committees, and serve as chairs of master's committees and directors of master's thesis research. Level 1 members of the Graduate Faculty may chair doctoral committees and serve as directors of doctoral dissertations. Level 2 members may serve as co-directors (with a Level 1 member) of doctoral dissertations. Members of the Department of Forestry faculty who have earned a terminal degree in forestry or a forestry-related discipline and hold an academic rank of assistant professor or higher at MSU are considered "regular" members of the Graduate Faculty.

MSU administrators or visiting professors may be appointed as Associate Graduate Faculty so long as they have an earned terminal degree in their area of graduate responsibility and hold a rank of assistant professor or higher. Associate Graduate Faculty may serve on graduate student committees and teach graduate courses.

Participant appointments may be granted to individuals to enable them to participate in graduate activities. Individuals who receive participant appointments do not fall under the criteria of Level 1, Level 2, or Associate categories and therefore are not members of the Graduate Faculty. Individuals appointed Graduate Teaching Participant status may teach graduate-level courses in their area of expertise. Individuals appointed Graduate Committee Participant status may serve on graduate committees, but may not chair or co-chair those committees, and may not direct or co-direct thesis or dissertation research projects. No more than two individuals who have been granted participant appointments can serve on a dissertation or doctoral committee. No more than one individual who has been granted a participant appointment can serve on a master's thesis or master's non-thesis committee.

## **1.4 Graduate Student Responsibilities**

All graduate students are expected to be familiar with and comply with university, college, and departmental requirements. Failure to do so may seriously delay graduation and, in some cases, may lead to termination of an assistantship or dismissal from the graduate program.

## **2. ADMISSION**

### **2.1 Application for Admission**

Students interested in applying for admission to the Department's graduate program can apply online through the Office of the Graduate School (<http://www.grad.msstate.edu/>). Prior to consideration for admission, the applicant must: (a) meet requirements for admission, and (b) complete the online application. Once admission requirements are met, the Office of the Graduate School will electronically forward the application materials to the Department, and departmental faculty will be notified that materials are available to be viewed online. A faculty member may make a request to the Graduate Coordinator that an offer of a teaching or research assistantship be made to an applicant. Otherwise, if all requirements are met, a student may be admitted without any commitment of financial assistance.

### **2.2 Admission Requirements**

Departmental applicants for a Master of Science degree or a Doctor of Philosophy degree should hold a bachelor's degree from a fully recognized four-year institution of higher learning having unconditional accreditation by the appropriate bodies. In addition, applicants for the Doctor of Philosophy degree should hold a Master of Science degree (or equivalent) in a field of study that is relevant to the proposed area of doctoral study. In situations where the Master's degree is not in a field directly relevant to the proposed area of doctoral study, acceptance of the student must be approved by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator. In unusual cases the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator may grant permission for a student to go directly from a bachelor's degree to a doctoral program.

Prior academic performance, as measured by Grade Point Average (GPA), is a primary factor used in determining admission categories (See Section 2.3). Certified transcripts of prior studies must be supplied as part of the application so the student's GPA can be verified.

Scores on the General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) are not required with initial applications for graduate programs in the Department of Forestry. However, the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator or a faculty member interested in chairing the applicant's committee may request GRE scores before making a final decision on acceptance. Therefore, the Department recommends that applicants inquire about the GRE requirements prior to submission of their application packet. The applicant's scores on the GRE may be used by faculty in making acceptance decisions for provisional admission (See Section 2.3.2), appointment decisions for awarding assistantships (See Section 2.7), and course decisions in

planning the student's program of study (See Sections 3.2, 4.2, 4.4.1, 5.2, and 5.4.1).

International students who come from countries where English is not the first language, and who have not earned prior degrees in the United States, will be required to take either the "Test of English as a Foreign Language" (TOEFL) or the "International English Language Testing System" (IELTS) exam (see Section 2.4.1 below). TOEFL or IELTS scores will be used as an indicator of English proficiency and applicants who do not meet minimum scores will be required to schedule English as a Second Language (ESL) courses at MSU.

## **2.3 Admission Categories**

### ***2.3.1 Regular Admission – Master of Science Program***

In addition to holding an undergraduate degree, regular (unconditional) admission to a graduate program leading to a Master of Science degree in Forestry requires that an applicant satisfy at least one of the following minimum graduate admissions requirements based on the level of work completed at the time of the application:

- a) 3.0 GPA on the last two years (approximately 60-70 semester hours or 90-100 quarter hours) of undergraduate academic coursework
- b) 3.0 GPA on 30 or more semester hours of undergraduate credit **after** earning the first bachelor's degree
- c) 3.0 GPA on the last two years (approximately 60-70 semester hours or 90-100 quarter hours) of undergraduate academic coursework **and** a 3.00 GPA on **fewer than** 24 hours graduate coursework
- d) 3.00 GPA on **24 or more** graduate hours
- e) An earned master's degree or higher-level degree.

GRE scores may be requested and evaluated before acceptance decisions are made.

Some international students must demonstrate an acceptable proficiency in English by scoring above a Department of Forestry established minimum score on either the TOEFL or IELTS exam (See Section 2.4.1).

### ***2.3.2 Provisional Admission – Master of Science Program***

Students who have a GPA greater than or equal to 2.50 and less than 3.00 for the last two years (60-70 semester hours or 90-100 quarter hours) of undergraduate academic coursework may be admitted with provisional status. Scores from the General Test of the GRE may be requested to evaluate the student's potential to successfully complete the graduate program. Although no minimum scores are specified by the Department, desirable expectations are at least 1,000 for the combined verbal and quantitative scores and a minimum score of 3.0 on the analytical section.

Students admitted on provisional status must achieve a GPA of 3.0 or better on three graduate courses (minimum of 9 hours) during the first semester of enrollment to be removed from

provisional status. Students entering the Master of Science Distance Program on provisional status must receive a minimum 3.0 GPA on their first 9 hours of coursework, regardless of the number of semesters. If a GPA of 3.0 is not achieved, the provisional student will be dropped from the program following the first semester (or following the first 9 hours of coursework for Distance Program students). Students admitted on a provisional basis are not eligible for graduate teaching or research assistantships while on provisional status.

International students will not be admitted under provisional status, but they can be admitted on a “conditional” basis if they meet the GPA conditions for regular admission and their TOEFL or IELTS score falls between the MSU established minimum and the Departmental minimum (See Section 2.4.1).

### ***2.3.3 Regular Admission – Doctor of Philosophy Program***

Regular admission to the Department of Forestry’s graduate program leading to a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Forest Resources requires a GPA of 3.10 or higher out of 4.00 on all prior graduate studies, which must include at least 20 credit hours of courses, excluding research credits. GRE scores may be requested and evaluated before a decision is made by the student’s major advisor concerning acceptance.

In rare situations where a student wishes to go directly from a baccalaureate degree to a doctoral program, regular admission will require: (a) a GPA of 3.25 for the last two years (60-70 semester hours or 90-100 quarter hours) of studies (undergraduate or graduate), and (b) approval by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator.

Some international students must demonstrate an acceptable proficiency in English by scoring above a Department of Forestry established minimum score on either the TOEFL or IELTS exam before being admitted into the doctoral program (See Section 2.4.1).

### ***2.3.4 Provisional Admission – Doctor of Philosophy Program***

Doctoral applicants are not accepted on a provisional basis. International students may be admitted on a “conditional” basis if they meet the GPA conditions for regular admission and their TOEFL or IELTS score falls between the MSU established minimum and the Departmental minimum (See Section 2.4.1).

## **2.4 International Students**

### ***2.4.1 Language Proficiency***

International applicants from countries where English is not the first language must demonstrate proficiency in English to be accepted for regular admission in the Department’s graduate programs. This proficiency is determined by the student’s score on either the TOEFL or IELTS exams.

If an international student has a degree from a U.S. university or comes from a country where English is the first language, they do not need to submit a TOEFL or IELTS score. In all other cases, the applicant must submit their results from either the TOEFL or IELTS examination. For the TOEFL Paper-Based Test (PBT), applicants must score 550 or higher to be accepted for regular admission. For the TOEFL Computer-Based Test (CBT), applicants must score 213 or higher to be accepted for regular admission. For the TOEFL Internet-Based Test (iBT), applicants must score 79 or higher to be accepted for regular admission. For the IELTS, applicants must score 6.5 or higher to be accepted for regular admission. Applicants scoring between 477 and 549 on the PBT, 153 and 213 on the CBT, 53 and 79 on the iBT, or 4.5 and 6.5 on the IELTS may be admitted conditionally, pending successful completion of the remedial English courses outlined in the MSU "*Bulletin of the Graduate School*." International applicants who complete the Professional Mastery Program at the MSU ESL Center may submit a certificate of completion with their application in place of English language test scores.

#### ***2.4.2 Additional Acceptance Requirements***

International students who do not have a degree from a U.S. university will have their official transcripts evaluated by the Office of the Graduate School to determine whether the work is equivalent to a U.S. degree and meets minimum standards for regular admission to a graduate program.

All international applicants must complete a Document of Support in their Application for Graduate School, and must provide either a bank letter or other Document of Financial Support if they do not have full funding from either the Department or another source.

### **2.5 Summary of Departmental Admission Requirements**

Before an applicant can be considered for graduate admission, they must have:

- (a) completed appropriate bachelor's and/or master's degrees (Section 2.2),
- (b) met minimum GPA standards (Section 2.3),
- (c) completed all application forms for the MSU Office of the Graduate School,
- (d) provided certified transcripts or official academic records of all college studies,
- (e) had three letters of recommendation provided to the Office of the Graduate School,
- (f) provided a statement of purpose for wanting to enter the graduate program,
- (g) met language proficiency requirements (for international students – see Section 2.4.1),
- (h) provided documented evidence of financial support (for international students – see Section 2.4.2), and
- (i) submitted scores for the General Test of the GRE (if requested by the Department)

<b>Summary of Requirements</b>
<b>Master's Degree Program</b>
Bachelor's degree from an accredited university
Regular admission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPA <math>\geq 3.00</math> for last two years (60-70 semester hours or 90-100 quarter hours) of undergraduate study</li> </ul>
Provisional admission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPA <math>\geq 2.50</math> and <math>&lt; 3.00</math> for last two years (60-70 semester hours or 90-100 quarter hours) of undergraduate study</li> <li>• Provide evidence of acceptable verbal, quantitative, and analytical skills on the GRE [if requested by the tentative major professor]</li> </ul>
International students (additional English proficiency requirements): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular admission – TOEFL or IELTS score above Department minimum (Section 2.4.1)</li> <li>• Conditional admission – TOEFL or IELTS score between MSU and Department minimum (See Section 2.4.1)</li> </ul>
<b>Doctoral Degree Program</b>
Bachelor's degree from accredited university, and Master of Science degree in related field (approval required for exceptions to master's requirement)
Regular admission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GPA <math>\geq 3.10</math> on all prior graduate courses (if <math>\geq 20</math> graduate hours) <b>OR</b> a GPA <math>\geq 3.25</math> for last two years (60-70 hours or 90-100 quarter hours) of undergraduate/graduate coursework (if <math>&lt; 20</math> graduate hours)</li> </ul>
International students (additional English proficiency requirements): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular admission – TOEFL or IELTS score above Department minimum (See Section 2.4.1)</li> <li>• Conditional admission – TOEFL or IELTS score between MSU and Department minimum (See Section 2.4)</li> </ul>

## **2.6 Acceptance and Orientation**

Admission into the Department of Forestry's graduate program is not automatically guaranteed by completion of application procedures. Students who meet admission requirements may be accepted with funding (i.e., an assistantship offer) or without funding (i.e., provisional admission, or student not offered departmental assistance). A student choosing to enter without funding can do so with the agreement of a faculty member in the Department to serve as their major or co-major professor. Applicants who require financial assistance must find a faculty

member in the Department who agrees to serve as the major (or co-major) advisor of the applicant's program and a source of funding for the applicant's program must be identified.

The Department Head/Graduate Coordinator has the authority to grant or deny admission into the Department's graduate program. Notification of a decision on the application will usually be made to the applicant within 30 days after a complete application packet is received by the Department from the MSU Office of the Graduate School. The applicant will receive an e-mail message and/or a letter from the Office of the Graduate School regarding acceptance or rejection of the application.

If financial support will be provided by an assistantship, a letter from the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator will be sent to the student offering the assistantship (**APPENDIX DF-1**). The applicant is requested to indicate acceptance or rejection of the offer, sign the letter, and return it to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator *as soon as possible*.

Upon arrival on campus, new students should first report to their major professor, and then make an appointment with the Department Head's administrative assistant (Thompson Hall Room #105, telephone: 662-325-2949) for a briefing on departmental procedures and to complete employment paperwork if the student has been awarded an assistantship. Students accepted into the Department's M.S. Distance Program should immediately contact their major professor for information regarding program requirements and development of a program of study. Primary advising responsibilities for all graduate students resides with the student's major professor, although the Department Head, faculty, and departmental staff will be available to help students throughout their tenure at Mississippi State University.

## **2.7 Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate research assistantships (GRA) and graduate teaching assistantships (GTA) are often available in the Department, and are associated with specific research grants, research disciplines, or forestry courses. Individual faculty members with research funding, or those who are allocated departmentally funded graduate assistantships, will recruit graduate students for those positions. Faculty members generally offer assistantships based on an evaluation of the student's GPA, letters of reference, and prior training/experience. GRE scores may also be used to aid in selection of students for assistantships.

To be eligible to receive an assistantship, a student must have "regular" or "conditional" admission status in the Department's graduate program. Students on "provisional" or "probationary" status are not eligible to receive assistantships. Students on assistantship must be full-time students (registered in at least 9 graduate credit hours) and may not enroll in more than 13 graduate credit hours. The required full-time status must be maintained throughout the entire semester. **Therefore, no course may be dropped if the resulting course load would be fewer than the required 9 graduate credit hours, nor may any course in the 9-hour load consist of or be converted to audit status.** The 9-credit hour course load may not be composed of undergraduate courses unless the course is a program prerequisite. In such cases, the minimum graduate load required will be 6 credit hours and only one undergraduate course will be

permitted as part of the 9-credit hour load. During the summer, students on assistantship must be enrolled in at least 6 graduate credit hours with a maximum of 13 credit hours allowed.

An assistantship will continue throughout the student's tenure, so long as the source of funding continues and the student maintains satisfactory academic performance (i.e., greater than a 3.0 GPA) and satisfactory progress on their professional paper/project, thesis, or dissertation. Students awarded a graduate assistantship will receive a tuition waiver from MSU; however, they will be financially responsible for activity and/or special fees, and possibly a portion of their tuition if the assistantship is funded through the Department. All prospective teaching assistants are required to participate in a Teaching Assistant Workshop offered by the MSU Office of the Graduate School prior to beginning their first assignment as a teaching assistant.

Assistantships represent half-time positions based upon a 40-hour week. Information on procedures, policies, and responsibilities can be found online from the MSU Office of the Graduate School at <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/financial/assist/>. The student's major professor has the discretion of deciding how the work hours will be assigned. The assigned work (i.e., research, teaching, service) may or may not be directly related to the student's specific research or professional project. Students receiving assistantships do not earn leave time; however, they do participate in the university holiday schedule.

## **2.8 Registration**

Prior to the first semester of their graduate program, students should contact their major professor to determine what courses to take and to get their registration access code (RAC) to enroll in classes. During subsequent semesters students will obtain their "Enrollment Information" sheet containing their RAC number from their major professor in October for the spring semester registration and in March for the summer and fall semester registration. If the major professor does not have the student's Enrollment Information sheet, the student should contact the Department Head's administrative assistant in Thompson Hall Room #105. Students in the M.S. Distance Program can obtain their RAC number via email from their major professor prior to the end of each fall and spring semester.

## **2.9 Graduate Student Health Benefits**

Graduate students in the Department are eligible to participate in the University's Student Injury and Sickness Insurance Plan. Details of this plan can be found on the Student Health Center's website at: [http://www.health.msstate.edu/healthcenter/insurance\\_student.php](http://www.health.msstate.edu/healthcenter/insurance_student.php). Full-time graduate students that are receiving a graduate assistantship are eligible to be reimbursed for their health benefit premiums. International graduate students are required to carry health insurance while at Mississippi State University. All international students will be automatically enrolled in the student health insurance program at the time of registration, unless proof of comparable coverage is furnished to the Administrator at the MSU Student Health Center.

### 3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

#### 3.1 The Graduate Committee

##### 3.1.1 *Committee Request Forms and Composition of Committee*

The first step in a graduate student's program is to select or be selected by a major professor. Typically this is done informally through conversations before or at the time of acceptance, particularly for those students on assistantship. Self-supported students, including students in the MS Distance Program, may be assigned a temporary faculty advisor to aid in their first registration, with the understanding that the student's permanent faculty advisor may change.

The second step for the student is to form a graduate committee. Committee composition will be determined through consultation between the student and their major professor. Membership on the committee is open to all MSU Graduate Faculty as well as persons with "Graduate Committee Participant" status (See Section 1.3). Committee members are selected on the basis of their interest in, and ability to assist in, the development and completion of the student's graduate program. At least one person on a master's student's committee or two persons on a doctoral student's committee shall be regular members of the Graduate Faculty in the Department of Forestry. One of these persons will serve as major or co-major professor. All committee members will have full voting privileges. Specific requirements for the composition of master's and doctoral committees are given in Sections 4.1 and 5.1.

A "Committee Request Form" shall be completed by the student, signed by the student and the committee members, and submitted to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for signature during the first semester of enrollment. The form will be forwarded by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator to the MSU Office of the Graduate School, copies will be provided to the student and committee members, and a copy of the form will be placed in the student's file. The MSU "Committee Request Form" can be obtained from the website of the MSU Office of the Graduate School (<http://www.grad.msstate.edu/>).

If the direction of a student's M.S. program or research project changes, or if a committee member leaves the University or retires during the course of the student's tenure, it may be necessary to change the membership of the graduate committee. Such changes are requested on a "Committee Request Change Form" and sent to the Department's Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for signature after being signed by the student and those persons to be added to and/or deleted from the committee. The addition of a new committee member who holds Participant Status requires that the appointment be recommended by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator and approved by the Dean. Graduate Faculty, who leave MSU or retire, can apply for Participant Status and remain on the student's committee.

### **3.1.2 *Committee Responsibilities and Meetings***

The role of a graduate student's committee is to: (a) provide guidance on the student's program of study, project development and implementation, technical writing, and (b) evaluate the student's performance to determine if and when the requirements for the graduate degree have been successfully met. The Department recommends that the student meet with their graduate committee at least once each semester during the student's tenure. Meetings with individual committee members may suffice if done with the major professor's approval. Students in the M.S. Distance Program will interact primarily with their major professor via regular email or telephone communications, but they should also maintain communication with other members of their graduate committee.

Both the student and major professor are responsible for maintaining frequent communication with each other and with other members of the committee. "Frequent" communication may involve contacts several times each week, but will vary throughout the year depending on the stage of the student's graduate program. Quality of graduate education is enhanced by regular interaction between the student and major professor; therefore, faculty members in the Department will not serve as major or co-major professor for more than six graduate students at one time except under extraordinary circumstances which must be approved by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator and the Dean. This limit does not include Distance students for whom the faculty member serves as faculty advisor.

## **3.2 The Graduate Program of Study**

### **3.2.1 *Program of Study***

The major professor serves as the student's advisor for their graduate education and will assist the student in preparing a program of study. A graduate student's program of study is a list of all courses to be taken during the student's tenure. The program of study for a student serves two needs – fulfilling the student's intellectual interests, and providing the appropriate background required by their research or professional paper/project.

The graduate student and their major professor will meet prior to the start of the student's first semester to prepare a tentative program of graduate study and enroll the student in classes. Once the student's graduate committee has been selected, the committee will meet with the student, assess the student's academic background, and approve or modify the program of study. This assessment may involve an oral examination, as well as an examination of the student's scores on the verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing parts of the GRE. In addition, the program of study will be evaluated relative to the student's intended area of study. The graduate program of study will then be finalized on a "Graduate Program of Study" form, signed by all committee members and submitted to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator. Copies will be provided to the student, committee members, and the MSU Office of Graduate School.

The program of study should be finalized and forwarded to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator by the end of the second semester of enrollment for on-campus students working full-time on classes and research. This time frame may be extended for those pursuing a second master's degree in another department, enrolled only part-time, or pursuing a degree in the Department's M.S. Distance Program.

The specific set of courses ultimately taken by a student often changes from those listed on the original program of study due to scheduling conflicts, cancellation of courses, or development of new courses. Changes to the student's original program of study are to be documented on a "Change to Graduate Program of Study" form, signed by the student and committee, and submitted to the Department's Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for approval and signature. The original program of study, along with all changes must be filed with the MSU Office of the Graduate School in the student's final semester.

### ***3.2.2 Semester Course Load***

Students receiving assistantships hold Graduate Assistant appointments. Graduate Assistants must be enrolled "full-time" throughout the entire appointment period (i.e., spring, summer, and fall semesters of each year of the graduate program). Full-time enrollment in the graduate program of the Department of Forestry for students on assistantship is considered to be 13 credit hours per semester during the fall and spring semesters and six credit hours during the summer (including Thesis or Dissertation Research hours). At least 9 hours of the full-time course load (fall and spring semester) must be composed of graduate courses, except where an undergraduate course is a prerequisite to a course in the student's program of study. Full-time status must be maintained throughout the semester, so no course may be dropped if it results in reducing the course load below a minimum of 9 credit hours. Students not on assistantship are not required to maintain full-time status.

### ***3.2.3 Developing a Program of Study***

The "Graduate Program of Study" form is available on the MSU Office of the Graduate School website. The following guidelines should be followed when filling out the form.

- (a) Indicate whether the Master of Science or Doctor of Philosophy degree is to be received,
- (b) Indicate the major (Forestry for the Master of Science degree or Forest Resources for the Doctor of Philosophy degree),
- (c) List the courses alphabetically by symbol and then in numerical order,
- (d) Provide course titles exactly as they appear in the MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School for the current semester (if some courses are already completed, list by symbol, number, and title as they appeared in the Bulletin at the time the courses were taken),
- (e) If the program has a minor field of study, designate at least 9 hours of minor courses with asterisks,
- (f) Show the number of hours for Special Problems, Research/Thesis, or Research/Dissertation as a number in parentheses after the generic four-digit number for the course

[i.e., FO 7000 (3) Special Problems (for three Special Problems credit hours), FO 8000 (6) Research/Thesis (for six Thesis credit hours), FO 9000 (20) Research/Dissertation (for 20 Dissertation credit hours)],

- (g) Do not list the title of the Special Problem nor break the Research/Thesis or the Research/Dissertation into more than one entry, and
- (h) Indicate credit for time spent in preparing a professional paper for the Master of Science with Non-Thesis Option by listing the "Master of Forestry Professional Paper" (FO 8293) in one semester of the program (normally the last semester).

Information about supplemental courses should be entered on a separate sheet of paper and attached to the Graduate Program of Study. Supplemental courses include: (a) undergraduate courses to be taken as prerequisites, (b) graduate courses to be audited, or (c) graduate courses to be taken which are related to the field of study but not applied to the graduate program.

Supplemental courses will not be counted in calculating: (a) the number of hours on the graduate program and (b) the ratio of upper-level to lower-level graduate courses. The student's graduate committee will determine the need for supplemental courses and specific courses that should be taken.

### ***3.2.4 Transfer of Graduate Credit***

Transfer credit hours from other U.S. universities, international universities, or military educational programs may be used to fulfill requirements for graduate degrees in the Department of Forestry provided: (a) they were earned in programs enjoying full accreditation by appropriate regional and national accrediting bodies, and (b) they contribute to a systematic program of graduate study. Grades lower than "B" will not be accepted for transfer credit. A maximum of 9 hours of transferred course credit for the master's degree or one-half of the course credit hours in the doctoral program will be accepted toward fulfilling requirements for each degree.

Transferred courses are to be listed on a "Transfer Approval Form" with a copy of the transcript attached to the form. The form is to be signed by the student and their graduate committee members and sent to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for approval. Following approval, the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator's office forwards the form to the Office of the Graduate School and a copy of the form is retained in the student's file in Room #105. For additional information concerning the applicability of transfer credit students should consult the MSU Bulletin of the Graduate School (<http://www.grad.msstate.edu/pdf/bulletin.pdf>).

### ***3.2.5 Continuous Enrollment***

If employment, illness, or other extenuating circumstances necessitate that a student take a leave of absence, they are still obligated to meet all requirements for completing the degree. A graduate student who has completed all coursework, but lacks completion of the thesis/professional paper/dissertation, must be continuously registered for at least one credit hour during the fall semester and either the spring or summer semester of each academic year. This includes: (a) doctoral students who have completed their coursework, passed their preliminary/comprehensive examinations, and are working on their dissertations; (b) master's students who have completed their coursework, passed their final comprehensive examination,

and are still revising their thesis or paper; and (c) master's students who have completed their coursework, but have not taken or passed their final examinations. Students who fail to maintain continuous enrollment will be required to pay tuition and registration fees for missed terms at current rates.

### **3.3 Study Plans for Research or Professional Paper**

#### ***3.3.1 Importance***

A study plan is required from each student working on a graduate degree in the Department of Forestry. This plan, to be developed in consultation with the student's committee, details the: (a) proposed thesis research, (b) professional paper or project development (when applicable), or (c) proposed dissertation research. Development of the study plan will: (a) fully acquaint the student and their committee with the tasks to be accomplished, and (b) ensure that the student has formulated sound techniques for obtaining and processing materials required for the completion of their research study or professional paper or project. The plan should be prepared, approved and signed by the student's graduate committee, and submitted to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for signature by the end of the student's second semester of enrollment. The student and committee members will be provided copies of the study plan once it has been signed by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator. The original plan will be kept in the student's graduate file in Room #105. Changes to the study plan can be made (and are expected) as the student's knowledge of the subject increases, but a time schedule for the main activities and research/development tasks must be developed and followed as outline in the plan for the student to satisfy degree requirements in a timely manner.

#### ***3.3.2 Study Plan Content***

The information contained in a study plan will vary depending on the nature of a student's project, and whether the plan is for a formal research project or for a non-thesis option professional paper or project. Information commonly included in a study plan includes an Introduction, a Review of the Literature, a Methods section, and a planned timetable for completion of the project. The Introduction should include a brief description of the problem to be addressed in the thesis/dissertation/professional paper or project, and include a list of objectives. The Literature Review should demonstrate the student's familiarity with the existing pertinent literature in their field of study, and contain properly cited references and a corresponding "List of References" to be placed at the end of the plan. The Methods section will vary considerably depending on the nature of the study and type of plan – thesis, professional paper or project, or dissertation. In a traditional research study plan, the methods section should describe all of the steps required for completion of the research project in enough detail for the student's committee to be able to evaluate whether the proposed study design and analytical approach are valid and likely to produce the desired outcomes. In the study plan for a professional paper or project, the methods section should detail the steps to be taken in completing the paper or project, including a description of the sources of information to be used in preparing the professional paper. The planned timetable should include a summary table of tasks and a schedule for the planned completion of each task.

The completed study plan should contain a title page formatted as shown in **APPENDIX DF-2** which includes signature lines for committee members and the Department's Department Head/Graduate Coordinator.

### **3.4 Theses and Dissertations**

#### ***3.4.1 Description***

A Master's thesis represents the student's contribution to knowledge within their discipline, based on research conducted by that student. The thesis topic is selected by the student in consultation with their major professor and graduate committee and is subject to the approval of the committee.

A Ph.D. dissertation should demonstrate the student's mastery of research techniques and represent an original contribution of knowledge to the field of study. The student's graduate committee must approve the dissertation topic and the final written dissertation.

#### ***3.4.2 Preparation and Submission***

The graduate student is responsible for the preparation and expense of all drafts and final copies of their thesis or dissertation, although the major professor may assist with some of these expenses. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to obtain a copy of "*Standards for Preparing Theses and Dissertations*" available online from the Office of the Graduate School. The MSU Mitchell Memorial Library also holds workshops designed to assist students in properly formatting their thesis or dissertation.

Students should recognize that the thesis or dissertation may require several revisions, both before and after submission to the major professor and graduate committee and following the defense of the student's final written document. The major professor will determine if the thesis or dissertation is properly organized, correctly stated and interpreted, and written in an acceptable style. When the major professor is satisfied that the draft is ready for review, a copy of the final product will be furnished to each committee member. Students are encouraged to provide portions of the draft thesis or dissertation to committee members, with their approval, for comments prior to completion of the overall document. Committee members must be provided with a copy of the thesis or dissertation at least two weeks prior to the oral examination and defense. Earlier submission to committee members may allow time to receive comments and make revisions prior to the defense.

The student's graduate committee will often require revisions/changes to the thesis or dissertation following the oral examination and defense before approving the final document. Once these changes are made to the satisfaction of the major professor and committee members, the "final" copy of thesis or dissertation is submitted to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for review and approval prior to the deadline set by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator. This deadline commonly occurs during the first third of a semester and comes at

least two weeks prior to the deadline for submission to the CFR Dean. The Department's deadline will allow time for review by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator and corrections (if needed) by the student. The Department Head/Graduate Coordinator will not sign the approval page if there are corrections to be made; therefore, it is the responsibility of the student's major professor and committee to ensure that the thesis or dissertation is correctly completed. Three copies of the approval page (on the required paper for dissertations or theses) should be signed by committee members, the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator, and the Dean.

Once a thesis or dissertation is approved by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator and the Dean, the document will be submitted electronically to the Office of Thesis and Dissertation Format Review in the Mitchell Memorial Library to be checked for format and content. The committee signature page, complete with required signatures, must be submitted in print to the Mitchell Memorial Library before the thesis or dissertation will be reviewed. A list of required corrections will be sent to the student. This process will continue until an acceptable copy of the thesis or dissertation is submitted to the Library, at which time a final submission of the thesis or dissertation will be requested. Instructions for submission of a thesis or dissertation to the Library can be found on the Library's website (<http://library.msstate.edu/thesis>.)

The student, upon final approval of the thesis or dissertation by the Library, will be responsible for making copies for personal distribution. An electronic copy and a hard-bound copy of the thesis or dissertation should be prepared for the student's major professor. A hard-bound copy should also be submitted to the Department Head to be placed in the Thompson Hall "Reading Room." Additional copies (i.e., hard or soft-bound) should be made for the student's Committee members. Copies may also be required by sponsors of the student's research.

### **3.5 Non-thesis Option Professional Paper or Project**

#### ***3.5.1 Description***

Students in the non-thesis M.S. option are required to produce a professional paper or written documentation for a professional project. A professional paper usually contains a detailed literature review and discussion of a topic relevant to the student's program of study. This paper should be of high quality and utility. The documentation for a professional project must contain a detailed description of the objectives, procedures, and outcomes of the project. The topic of the final paper or project is determined in consultation between the student and their major professor and must be approved by the student's graduate committee.

#### ***3.5.2 Preparation and Submission***

The graduate student is responsible for the preparation and expense of all drafts of their professional paper or project documentation, although the major professor may assist with some of these expenses. Students should recognize that the professional paper or project write-up may require several revisions, both before and after submission to the major professor and graduate committee and following the defense of the document. The major professor will determine if the

material is properly organized and written in an acceptable style. When the major professor is satisfied that the draft is ready for review, the paper will be furnished to each committee member. Committee members must be provided a copy of the professional paper or project write-up at least two weeks prior to the oral examination and defense. Earlier submission to committee members may allow time to receive comments and make revisions prior to the defense.

The student's graduate committee will often require revisions to the professional paper or project write-up following the oral examination and defense before approving the final document. Once these changes are made to the satisfaction of the student's major professor and committee members, the "final" copy of the professional paper or project write-up is submitted to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for review and approval. The professional paper/project write-up does not require approval from the CFR Dean, Library, or Graduate School. Once the final paper or project write-up has been approved by the student's graduate committee and by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator, the student has fulfilled the professional paper or project requirement for graduation.

Upon final approval of the professional paper or project write-up, the student will be responsible for making copies for personal distribution. An electronic copy, an unbound copy, and a bound copy of the paper or project write-up should be prepared for the student's major professor. A hard- or soft-bound copy should also be submitted to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator to be placed in Thompson Hall's "Reading Room." Additional bound copies should be made for the student's committee members.

### **3.6 Publication of Research**

No research project is complete until the results are disseminated and publicly available. Students are expected to prepare technical and scientific manuscripts promptly based on their research or professional paper (or project write-up if appropriate). Publication should proceed in cooperation with the major professor and possibly with committee members. Details of authorship should be discussed between the student and the major professor, but is normally at the discretion of the major professor. The major professor should be incorporated as a co-author for papers where they have made a substantial contribution. Failure to proceed with publication in a timely manner may result in the major professor publishing the study results as the senior author.

### **3.7 Ownership of Data**

The thesis or dissertation is the property of the student through copyright procedures. However, **data collected by graduate students or associated personnel are the property of Mississippi State University.** The student and major professor have joint responsibility to ensure that all original data sheets and computer files are documented and deposited with the principal investigator before the student leaves MSU. The major professor or principal investigator is responsible for maintaining these data in a secure, documented location for the university and research sponsors. Students are strongly advised to frequently provide copies of up-to-date data

files to their major professor during the course of the research project.

### **3.8 Seminars**

Students are encouraged to attend seminars of interest throughout campus, especially those organized by the Department of Forestry and the CFR. Students are also encouraged to initiate seminars on topics of interest.

All graduate students in the Department of Forestry are expected to enroll in two semesters of seminar courses during their degree program. Students will enroll in FO 8111 – Graduate Seminar generally during the first fall semester of their tenure. FO 8111 is designed to introduce students to graduate study and begin preparing students for their graduate program. Students will enroll in FO 8211 – Graduate Seminar generally during the last spring semester of their tenure. This course focuses on communication skills and requires students to prepare and deliver a presentation describing the results of their thesis/dissertation research or professional paper/project. Doctoral students who have previously received a master’s degree may not be required to enroll in FO 8111, but will be expected to enroll in FO 8211.

### **3.9 Academic Performance, Repeat Policy, and Probationary Policies**

Students must maintain satisfactory academic performance during their graduate program of study or they will be placed on academic probation. Probationary students include those on “provisional admission” for a deficiency in GPA at the time of application; and those placed on “probationary status” for failure to maintain a GPA above 3.00, receiving a grade of D or F, or failing to maintain satisfactory progress on assigned tasks.

If a student’s cumulative GPA falls below a 3.00 after the start of their graduate program, they will be placed on academic probation. However, a master's student admitted under “provisional admission” must maintain a 3.00 GPA continuously and will not be allowed another academic probation semester after the start of their program. A student admitted under “provisional admission” who’s cumulative GPA falls below 3.00 will be dismissed from the graduate program.

A student placed on academic probation because their cumulative GPA falls below 3.00 must regain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 within the next two subsequent semesters or within 9 credit hours of graduate coursework, whichever comes first (providing that the student attains a minimum GPA of 3.00 in all semesters during which they are on probation). Failure to regain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 after two semesters (or 9 credit hours of coursework) will result in the student being dismissed from the graduate program and losing eligibility for readmission. Students in the M.S. distance program will be allowed 9 credit hours of coursework to bring their cumulative GPA back up to 3.00, regardless of the number of semesters. A student whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.00 for a second time will be dismissed from the graduate program.

Any grade of D or F received in any course taken after admission to the graduate program will result in the student being placed on academic probation, and may result in the student being

dismissed from the graduate program and losing eligibility for readmission. The student receiving a D or F will be required to maintain satisfactory academic performance in all subsequent semesters of their graduate program or they will be dismissed from the graduate program and lose eligibility for readmission. A student receiving a grade of U will have one semester to bring their performance back up to satisfactory or they will be dismissed from the graduate program and lose eligibility for readmission.

With the approval of the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator and the CFR Dean, a student may repeat one course per degree program. Both grades for the repeated course will be retained on the permanent transcript and used to compute the final GPA.

### **3.10 Administration of Program**

#### **3.10.1 *Deadlines***

The student bears the responsibility for correct and timely submission of forms and reports, and for accomplishment of program requirements. Failure to meet deadlines, unless caused by unforeseen and non-controllable events, may result in placement of the student on probationary status for one semester. If the required tasks have not been completed by the end of the probationary semester, the student may be dismissed from the Department's graduate program. *While students will generally receive assistance from their major professor and graduate committee, they should not rely on them for deadline reminders.*

#### **3.10.2 *Required Forms***

Many required forms for graduate students are available online at the MSU Office of the Graduate School website (<http://www.grad.msstate.edu/>). If a student cannot find a required form, they should check with the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator's administrative assistant.

#### **3.10.3 *Administrative Organization and Records***

The CFR Dean is the academic dean for all graduate programs in the College of Forest Resources. The Department Head/Graduate Coordinator is responsible for administration of the graduate programs within the Department of Forestry. The Department Head/Graduate Coordinator will maintain departmental files for all graduate students. This file will contain the student's application documents, salary papers (for assistantships), committee request form, program of study, program changes, transcripts, grades, study plan, and any official correspondence pertaining to the student. A student may have access to their file upon request, with the exception of letters of recommendation that they have previously waived the right to see. Also, the major professor and the student's graduate committee may review the file at any time.

## **4. MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

A summary list of recommendations and requirements for the Master of Science degree in the

Department of Forestry is shown in **APPENDIX DF-3**. Templates for development of a tentative schedule of completion dates of program activities are provided in **APPENDIX DF-4**.

#### **4.1 Master's Graduate Committee**

A Master of Science student's graduate committee must consist of at least three members of the Graduate Faculty, including those holding Graduate Committee Participant status. If the student has a minor field outside of the Department of Forestry, at least one member of the graduate committee must be from the minor area to serve as the student's minor professor. The major professor and at least one-half of the graduate committee must hold academic appointments and be MSU employees; exceptions to this rule can be approved by the appropriate dean. At least one person on the committee (usually the major or co-major professor) should be a regular member from the Department of Forestry. Only one member of a Master's student's graduate committee may hold Graduate Committee Participant status.

#### **4.2 Master's Program of Study**

The student and the student's graduate committee will meet during the student's first semester of work to prepare a "Graduate Program of Study." The committee, at its discretion, may request the student's GRE scores to help identify academic needs. Furthermore, the committee may require the student to take an Oral Qualifying Examination (See Section 4.4.1) to identify academic needs. These needs will be considered in developing the student's program of study.

A minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate study are required for a Master of Science degree. For the "Thesis Option," a minimum of 24 hours of coursework and six hours of FO 8000 – Research/Thesis is required. For the "Non-Thesis Option," all 30 hours must be represented by academic coursework, including FO 8293 – Master of Forestry Professional Paper.

One-half or more of all master's coursework (exclusive of FO 8000 – Research/Thesis) must be composed of upper-level graduate courses (i.e., 8000- or 9000-level courses or 7000-level Directed Individual Studies). No more than six hours of 7000-level Directed Individual Studies courses are allowed, unless approved by the Office of the Graduate School and the Dean/Department Head. Up to one-half of the master's student's coursework may be composed of lower-level graduate courses (6000-level). At least 9 credit hours of approved courses (6000-level or higher) must be taken as courses offered by the Department of Forestry for a master's degree in Forestry. If a minor is chosen, at least nine hours in the minor area must be taken. Transfer credit may not constitute more than nine semester hours of coursework unless approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Students in the Master of Science program must complete all coursework and an approved thesis or professional paper/project within eight years of enrollment in the program. Under exceptional circumstances, a student may be granted a one-year extension of this deadline. Failure to complete all required benchmarks within the allotted timeframe may result in the student being terminated from the degree program.

### **4.3 Master's Study Plans for Research and Professional Paper**

Master's students enrolled in on-campus programs are expected to submit a study plan for their thesis research, professional paper, or project development to their graduate committee and the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator by the end of the second semester of tenure (excluding summer sessions). Students in the M.S. Distance Program may take longer to develop the study plan, but should have a study plan completed by the end of their fourth semester. The study plan should include a summary table showing a planned timetable for the completion of major milestones involved in research/project execution, thesis/paper preparation, and required administrative tasks. A template for such a table is shown in **APPENDIX DF-4**.

### **4.4 Master's Examinations**

#### ***4.4.1 Qualifying Oral Examination***

The Qualifying Oral Examination may be used, at the discretion of the student's graduate committee, during the first semester of the student's program to determine if the student is suitable for graduate work (in a situation of provisional admission) or to determine what courses to include on the graduate program of study. A student's GRE scores may also be requested and used in combination with Qualifying Oral Examination results to identify academic weaknesses that require additional courses for the program of study. The examination date will be set by the committee after consultation with the student.

The qualifying exam will consist of general knowledge questions asked by committee members relative to their own specialty areas and to the area of specialty chosen by the student for their program. At the end of the examination, the committee will convey recommendations to the student verbally. A written summary of the recommendations will be prepared by the major professor and placed in the student's file in Room #105, with a copy to the student.

#### ***4.4.2 Final Comprehensive Presentation and Defense of Thesis, Professional Paper, or Project Write-up***

A final comprehensive examination is required of all degree candidates in the M.S. program. An examination date will be set by the student's major professor after consultation with the student and graduate committee members. The student must provide their committee members with a copy of the thesis, professional paper, or project write-up at least two weeks prior to the exam. This document should already have been reviewed by the major professor and revised (as needed) by the student.

To be eligible for the final examination and defense, a graduate student must: (1) have an overall 3.0 GPA or higher on all graduate courses attempted after admission to a degree program including courses that comprise the program of study as well as other non-program courses, and (2) be enrolled at MSU during the semester when the examination/defense occurs.

There are two parts to the examination/defense. The first consists of an oral presentation by the

student that is open to faculty, staff, students, and other interested persons. The graduate student will be responsible for ensuring that their oral presentation is adequately announced to the scientific and public community by posting announcements at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date. The second component of the examination/defense will consist of a closed oral examination of the student by their graduate committee. The Department's Department Head/Graduate Coordinator will also be invited to attend. The examination will consist of questions concerning coursework and the thesis/professional paper/project. The student's major professor will record the results of the examination on a "Report of Examination Results" form which must be signed by all members of the student's graduate committee before being forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will submit the form to the Office of the Graduate School and keep a record in the student's graduate folder in Room #105..

One negative vote will not constitute failure for a student on a thesis/professional paper/project defense, while two or more negative votes will constitute failure of the defense. A student who fails the final examination cannot apply to take another examination until at least four months have elapsed from the date of the original examination. The student will be instructed by their committee concerning the reasons for failure and asked to review course notes or re-analyze/rewrite sections of the thesis/paper/project write-up before re-taking the examination. Only the closed oral portion of the examination will be conducted for a re-take. Two failures on the final examination (i.e., the original and one re-take) will result in the student being dropped from further consideration for the master's degree.

#### **4.5 Master's Application for Graduation**

To be eligible for graduation at the next graduation date (May, August, or December), a student must formally apply for graduation before the deadline published in the University's Graduate Academic Calendar. The formal application can be made online to the MSU Registrar's Office during enrollment for the semester of graduation. There is a graduation fee. If the student fails to complete the degree in the designated semester, another application must be made and another fee paid. A student must be enrolled in at least one credit hour in the semester they are graduating, unless their thesis/paper/project write-up was completed, defended, and approved by the library (for a thesis) before the end of the previous semester.

The Office of the Graduate School provides a "GRADUATION CHECK LIST – MASTER'S" (**APPENDIX DF-5**) to the Department's Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for the student after that office has received the student's application for graduation. The student's major professor completes this checklist, and provides the original to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator for signature. The Department Head/Graduate Coordinator then returns the form to the Office of the Graduate School. The Office of the Graduate School will use the checklist to audit the student and notify the Dean and Registrar that the student is eligible for graduation.

### **5. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

A summary list of recommendations and requirements in the Department of Forestry for students

pursuing the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Forest Resources (awarded by the CFR) is shown in **APPENDIX DF-6**. A template for development of a tentative schedule of completion dates of activities for the degree is given in **APPENDIX DF-7**.

### **5.1 Doctoral Graduate Committee**

A doctoral student's graduate committee should have at least four members of the Graduate Faculty (five if there is a minor). The graduate committee will be composed of the major professor as chairman who must be a Level 1 member of the graduate faculty and from the student's major field of study, the minor professor (if applicable), and at least three other members, two of whom must be from the student's major field of interest. All committee members must be members of the graduate faculty including those holding Graduate Committee Participant Status. The major professor and at least one-half of the graduate committee must hold an academic appointment and must be MSU employees. Exceptions to this rule can be approved by the CFR Dean. At least two persons on the committee (one being the major or co-major professor) should be regular members from the Department of Forestry. Only two members of a doctoral student's graduate committee may hold Graduate Committee Participant status.

### **5.2 Doctoral Program of Study**

For the Doctor of Philosophy degree the student and graduate committee should meet to prepare the "Graduate Program of Study" no later than the student's second semester. The committee may request and review the student's GRE scores and may require the student to take an Oral Qualifying Examination to identify academic needs before the program of study is developed.

#### ***5.2.1 Residency Requirements***

Mississippi State University has no specific on-campus residency requirement for Ph.D. students; however, the Department of Forestry requires at least three years of study while registered as a doctoral student. The three-year period must contain at least one semester (fall or spring) enrolled full-time (13 hours per semester) or two semesters enrolled half-time (at least six hours per semester).

A student in the Ph.D. program must complete their graduate program within a period of five years after passing the Preliminary/Comprehensive Examination (per Graduate Council, March 2010). A one-time, one-year extension may be requested. The "Request for Extension of Time" form must be signed by the major professor and the CFR Dean and submitted to the Office of the Graduate School. Student's not meeting the deadline will be dropped from the degree program.

#### ***5.2.2 Course Requirements***

The doctoral program has no specified minimum number of required course hours, although at least three academic years beyond the bachelor's degree are necessary to meet departmental requirements. The only requirements of the MSU Office of the Graduate School are that:

- (a) at least one-half of the coursework required by the student's graduate committee, and all dissertation credits, must be obtained from MSU;
- (b) a minimum of 20 credit hours of research/dissertation must be taken; and
- (c) at least 12 hours of graduate coursework in a minor must be included (up to one-third may be transferred in) when the program is set up with both major and minor fields of study.

A doctoral student's graduate committee will determine the courses to include in the program of study based on:

- (a) the student's academic background,
- (b) the courses available in the Department of Forestry and elsewhere at MSU,
- (c) the minimum of 20 credit hours of research/dissertation required by MSU, and
- (d) any requirements of full-time enrollment (such as for an assistantship).

The composition of upper- and lower-level graduate courses on a doctoral program are not specified by the MSU Office of the Graduate School. Doctoral committees in the Department of Forestry will use the following guidelines in developing programs of study:

- (a) at least one-half of the required coursework must be obtained from MSU (university requirement),
- (b) at least one-half of all required coursework (MSU and elsewhere) (exclusive of research/dissertation credits) should be upper-level graduate courses (7000 level or higher), and
- (c) at least 12 hours of graduate coursework (6000 level or higher) should be in the major area (i.e., Forestry Department courses).

These specifications are guidelines rather than requirements, and they can be modified by recommendation of the student's graduate committee and approval of the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator.

### ***5.2.3 Foreign Language or Research Skills***

There are no specified foreign language or research skill requirements in the Department of Forestry. This issue must be considered individually for each student by each graduate committee. The student and his/her committee may decide to include a research skill (such as use of an electron microscope) or a reading knowledge of a foreign language on the student's program of study. Courses for these foreign language or skill requirements must be listed on the "Graduate Program of Study" form under RESEARCH SKILL REQUIREMENTS.

### ***5.2.4 Transfer Credits***

Transfer credit hours from other U.S. universities, international universities, or military educational programs may be used to fulfill requirements for the doctor of philosophy degree at MSU provided they meet the criteria established in the general requirements of the Graduate School. Credits to be transferred are subject to approval by the student's graduate committee and the Department's Graduate Coordinator. Transferred credits cannot exceed one-half of the

designated coursework on the program of study. Up to one-third of the required hours for a minor (12 hours at the doctoral level) may be transferred to MSU. All research/dissertation credits must be earned at MSU. Transferred courses are to be listed on the "Transfer Approval Form" and approved by the Department's Graduate Coordinator. Questions on the student's preliminary/ comprehensive examinations (See Section 5.4.2) will include subject areas of courses for which credits were transferred.

### **5.3 Doctoral Research Study Plan**

Doctoral students must have an approved research study plan before they can take their preliminary/comprehensive examinations. The research study plan should be produced by the student, approved by the student's graduate committee, and signed by the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator by the end of the second semester of the student's tenure. The research study plan should include a summary table of major milestones for research operations, dissertation preparation, and required administrative tasks. The table should include a planned timetable for the completion of each item. A template for such a table is shown in **APPENDIX DF-7**.

### **5.4 Doctoral Examinations**

#### ***5.4.1 Qualifying Examination***

A written and/or oral qualifying examination may be administered (at the discretion of the student's graduate committee) one time during the first semester of a doctoral student's enrollment. The examination date will be set by the student's graduate committee after consultation with the student. The examination is to be completed in one day. The student's GRE scores may also be requested by the committee and used (in combination with the examination results) to identify areas of the student's academic training that need to be strengthened. There is no pass or fail on the examination, since students should not have been accepted into the doctoral program if they were not qualified for advanced graduate work. However, as a result of the examination, students may be required to complete additional coursework in identified areas of weakness or underexposure.

The qualifying examination will be comprised of questions developed by the student's graduate committee. General knowledge questions will be submitted by committee members relative to their own specialty areas and to the area of specialty chosen by the student for their research program. The student's graduate committee will be responsible for grading the examination. The committee will convey recommendations resulting from the exam to the student verbally. A written summary of the recommendations will be prepared by the major professor and placed in the student's file in Room #105, with a copy provided to the student.

#### ***5.4.2 Preliminary/Comprehensive Examinations***

Preliminary/comprehensive examinations for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree may be taken when the student is within six hours of completing their coursework and has a

research study plan approved. A student must be enrolled during the semester in which the examinations are administered, and must have a GPA of 3.00 or higher on all courses attempted for graduate credit after being admitted to the degree program. The student's Program of Study and Committee Request forms must be submitted to the Office of the Graduate School when the preliminary/comprehensive examination is scheduled. Examination dates are determined by the student and their major professor after consultation with the student's graduate committee. Examinations must be taken prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> if a student intends to graduate in December, prior to November 1<sup>st</sup> to graduate in May, and prior to February 1<sup>st</sup> to graduate in August.

A written preliminary examination comprised of questions from each member of the student's graduate committee will be administered during the two-week period preceding the oral preliminary examination. The student must pass the written portion of the preliminary exam (no more than one dissenting vote from the graduate committee) before they can take the oral exam portion. The oral examination will be passed if not more than one dissenting vote is received. The student or a committee member may request that the Graduate School appoint an outside observer to attend the preliminary/comprehensive examination.

Exam results must be submitted by the student's major professor within one week after the oral examination on a "Report of Examination Results" form. The form must be signed by all members of the student's graduate committee (or their replacements). This form is forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator for signature and submission to the Office of the Graduate School. A copy of the form is kept in the student's graduate folder in Room #105

A student who fails the preliminary/comprehensive examinations cannot apply to retake the exam until four months have elapsed from the date of the original oral examination. Two failures on the examinations will result in the student being removed from further consideration for the doctoral degree.

Upon successfully passing the preliminary/comprehensive examinations, an "Admission to Candidacy for Doctor of Philosophy/Doctor of Education Degree" form is to be completed, signed by the student, the student's graduate committee members, and the Department's Department Head/Graduate Coordinator. The form is then submitted to the Office of the Graduate School along with the "Report of Examination Results" form. A copy of the form is kept in the student's graduate folder in Room #105.

### ***5.4.3 Final Comprehensive Examination and Defense of Dissertation***

Producing and defending a dissertation is required of all doctoral candidates. A date for the final examination and dissertation defense will be set by the student and their major professor after consultation with the student's graduate committee members. The student must provide committee members with a copy of the dissertation at least two weeks prior to the exam. The document should already have been reviewed by the major professor and revised (as needed) by the student.

The examination and defense will consist of two parts. The first will be an oral presentation by

the student that is open to faculty, staff, students, and other interested persons. The graduate student will be responsible for ensuring that the presentation is adequately announced to the scientific and public community at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date. The second component of the examination will consist of a closed oral examination of the student by his/her graduate committee. The Department Head/Graduate Coordinator will be invited to attend. This part of the examination will consist of questions concerning coursework, the dissertation, and other relevant topics as appropriate. Results indicating that the student has passed or failed the final examination will be entered onto a "Report of Examination Results" form by the student's major professor, signed by all members of the student's graduate committee and the Department's Graduate Coordinator, and submitted by the Coordinator to the Office of the Graduate School. A copy of the form is kept in the student's graduate folder in Room #105.

A student who fails the final examination cannot apply to retake the examination until four months have elapsed from the date of the original examination. The student will be instructed by his/her committee on the reasons for failure and asked to review course notes or re-analyze and/or rewrite sections of the dissertation before retaking the examination. Only the closed oral part of the examination will be retaken. Two failures on the final examination (i.e., the original and the retake) will result in the student being dropped from further consideration as a doctoral candidate.

### **5.5 Admission to Candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree**

A student will be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree under the following conditions:

- (a) the dissertation topic has been selected and the research study plan approved by the student's graduate committee,
- (b) the student's graduate coursework has been satisfactorily completed with a GPA of 3.00 or above (all graduate coursework except remaining Research/Dissertation hours),
- (c) all research skills (if required) have been completed prior to taking the preliminary written and oral examinations;
- (d) the preliminary written and oral examinations have been passed, and
- (e) the final graduate Program of Study has been officially approved and accepted by the Office of the Graduate School.

The major professor is responsible for preparing the "Admission to Candidacy Form" and forwarding it to the Department Head/Graduate Coordinator. This is to be done only after: (a) the doctoral candidate has passed the preliminary exam, and (b) the Graduate Program of Study form and any necessary changes (i.e., deletions or additions) or transfer forms have been sent to the Office of the Graduate School. The Graduate Coordinator will send the "Admission to Candidacy Form" to the Office of the Graduate School following his approval. A copy of the form is kept in the student's graduate folder in Room #105.

### **5.6 Doctoral Application for Graduation**

To be eligible for graduation at the next graduation date (May, August, or December), the

doctoral student must formally apply for graduation before the deadline published in the University's Graduate Academic Calendar. The deadline occurs at the end of January (May graduation), near mid-June (August graduation), and near mid-September (December graduation). This formal application can be made online to the MSU Registrar's Office during enrollment for the semester of graduation. There is a fee. If the student fails to complete the degree in the designated semester, another application must be made and another fee paid. A student must be enrolled in at least one credit hour in the semester they are graduating, unless their dissertation was completed, defended, and approved by the Library before the end of the previous semester.

The Office of the Graduate School will provide a "GRADUATION CHECK LIST – DOCTORATE" (**APPENDIX DF-8**) to the Department's graduate coordinator for the student after that office has received the student's application for graduation. The student's major professor completes this check list form and submits it to the Graduate Coordinator for signature. The Graduate Coordinator will return it to the Office of the Graduate School. That office will use the check list to audit the student and notify the Dean and Registrar that the student is eligible for graduation.

## **6. OTHER DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **6.1 Employment and Professional Responsibilities of Graduate Students**

Graduate students may be asked to broaden their experience by assisting with undergraduate courses or research programs as approved by their major professors. A professor may ask a student to assist with teaching classes or laboratories, or a student may be called upon to assist other graduate students on their research projects. Students should be aware of, and are encouraged to participate in, research endeavors of other graduate students and faculty within the Department. Graduate students are also encouraged to participate in professional/scientific societies and organizations related to their field of study. Additionally, professional development is not limited to coursework, research activities, and participation in professional/scientific organizations. Reading of recent, important publications in forestry and related fields is strongly encouraged. A list of suggested readings has been prepared by the Department and may be modified by the major professor in consultation with the graduate committee and provided to the student for study at the beginning of the student's tenure in the graduate program.

Graduate students on assistantship are expected to maintain regular hours. Holidays and semester breaks for graduate students are the same as 9-month University holidays for faculty. A student's major professor must approve other absences at least two weeks prior to date of departure. In the case of family emergencies that require a full day or more of absence, the student should notify the major professor immediately to make arrangements for coverage of work responsibilities.

### **6.2 Equipment Use by Graduate Students**

Cars and trucks, ATVs, boats, motors, cameras, computers, field equipment, and other research

and teaching tools are the property of MSU/FWRC (State of Mississippi) or research cooperators and are not to be borrowed for recreational or other personal use. Students requesting such equipment for teaching and research purposes are fully responsible for proper use and care of the equipment. A "Hand Receipt" must be completed if equipment other than a departmental vehicle is taken off campus. If the equipment is lost or damaged, the student may be responsible for its repair or replacement.

### **6.3 Parking and Vehicle Use by Graduate Students**

A graduate student's personal vehicle may only be parked in areas on campus designated for student parking. Students will be responsible for paying fines for tickets received for illegal parking on campus. A hold on grades and graduation will result from failure to pay these fines.

Use of departmental vehicles is a privilege and should be treated as such. The driver of a university vehicle should immediately report accidents, tickets, or malfunctions to the professor in charge of the vehicle. The user of any MSU vehicle should leave the vehicle in clean condition and filled with gas, so that it is ready for use by the next person. Abusive use, poor maintenance, or untidiness by a student may result in loss of privileges to use departmental vehicles. A student receiving parking tickets or moving violations in a University vehicle will be responsible for paying the fines.

Departmental vehicles are to remain parked on campus or at the Blackjack facility when not in use. The CFR/FWRC has an established parking policy to provide direction for parking of vehicles used by employees, students, collaborators, and guests. The main parking lot of Thompson Hall is reserved for faculty, staff, and guests. Departmental vehicles **SHOULD NOT** be parked in the main Thompson Hall parking lot, except for temporary loading and unloading activities. State and federally owned vehicles should be parked either in the gravel parking lot behind Thompson Hall, at the Acorn Building, or in the open parking lot directly across Stone Boulevard from Thompson Hall. Additional parking is available at the Blackjack shop/greenhouse area.

## **6.4 Office Procedures**

### **6.4.1 *Administrative Assistance***

Administrative services are not available for graduate students, except as arranged and specified by the major professor. Ordinarily, these arranged services will be restricted to activities directly related to sponsored research. Students are responsible for typing their own thesis/dissertation/professional paper/project materials. Class work is the student's responsibility, and not that of administrative or professional staff.

### **6.4.2 *Copiers***

Graduate students may not personally use the photocopiers in the mailroom (Thompson Hall Room #110A) or on the third floor of Thompson Hall (Room 311). A student needing copies must first secure permission from their major professor (or other supervising faculty member) and complete the "Student Copy Request" form located in the FORMS folder on the Department's computer network common drive (K:/Forms). The request form and materials to be copied are submitted to the Department Head's administrative assistant in Room #105, who will arrange for the copies to be made and placed in the student's mailbox in Room #224.

### **6.4.3 *Facsimile***

A FAX machine is located in the Receptionist's Office (Room #110). The FAX number is 662-325-8726. FAX transmission sheets can be obtained beside the machine. Instructions for sending a FAX are on the wall above the facsimile machine. Students should not ask workers at the reception desk to send a FAX. Students in need of assistance should contact a member of the administrative staff in the Department of Forestry for help. All long-distance faxes must be charged to the student's (or major professor's) long-distance telecommunications code. When FAX messages are received, they will be placed in the appropriate mailbox as soon as possible. A student should ask the sender to indicate the student's name on the front of the fax.

### **6.4.4 *Mail***

Graduate student mail is delivered daily to Thompson Hall Room #224. Each graduate student should check their mail box daily, as this is one method for the faculty and staff to get messages and information to students.

## **6.5 Other Information**

### **6.5.1 *Graduate Student Offices***

Graduate student offices are located in Thompson Hall Rooms #220 and #224, and in the Acorn Building located south of Thompson Hall. Work stations in these offices are assigned to students by the Department Head's administrative assistant when a student enters the program.

Work stations are to be kept clean, neat, and professional in appearance. Outdoor equipment, plant or animal specimens, muddy boots, etc. should not clutter the office area. Inspections may be made by the Department Head or their staff, and failure to maintain a clean and neat workstation may result in loss of the privilege to have a workstation. Only one workstation is allowed per student.

### **6.5.2 *Computers***

Two CFR computer laboratories and several research laboratories in the Department have personal computers, printers, and other hardware that are available for use by graduate students in the Forestry Department. The computers in the CFR laboratories are available for student use on a first-come, first-served basis when they are not in use by scheduled classes. Computers in the various research laboratories are under the control of research faculty who supervise those laboratories, and approval to use these computers must be obtained from the responsible faculty member. Use of CFR and research-lab computers is a privilege, and any abuse or unauthorized/inappropriate use of these computers may result in loss of user privileges.

### **6.5.3 *E-mail and Other Electronic Information for Graduate Students***

All MSU students are assigned a university e-mail address. Graduate students may also request a CFR e-mail address. E-mail is the official means of communicating with students at MSU, and departmental notices and other announcements will be sent to the student's e-mail address. Students are expected to check their e-mail frequently.

Students will be required to provide updated information on their local address, phone number, and other relevant information as requested when registering for classes. Personal information, class schedules for the current semester, and transcripts of previous courses taken at MSU are stored in the MSU computer system. Information is secure and only available to the student and MSU faculty and staff with appropriate privileges.

### **6.5.4 *Blackjack Facilities***

The Department of Forestry maintains a greenhouse for research, head houses for sample preparation, and storage buildings for equipment and supplies at the CFR's Blackjack facility on Blackjack Road adjacent to the campus. Use of these facilities by a graduate student should be arranged through the student's major professor.

### **6.5.5 *Scheduling of Conference Rooms***

Scheduling of rooms for committee meetings and presentations is arranged by the student and/or their major professor through the Department Head's administrative assistant in Thompson Hall Room #110, telephone number 662-325-2949.

## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX DF-1: Sample Letter of Offer of Assistantship in the Department of Forestry

DATE

STUDENT  
MAILING ADDRESS

Dear STUDENT: MSU ID #

I am pleased to offer you a graduate research assistantship position in the Department of Forestry at Mississippi State University. Please accept my personal welcome to our department. I am sure that you will find it an exciting and rewarding place to continue your education.

Your assistantship begins on (START DATE) and ends on (1 YR FROM START DATE) subject to satisfactory performance. You will receive a monthly stipend of (MONTHLY STIPEND), not to exceed a total of (ANNUAL STIPEND) annually. In addition to the above monthly stipend, the University will provide an exemption of approximately 71% of the assessed tuition and required fees. An exemption of 100% of the nonresident tuition/fee assessment will be provided if you are not classified as a resident of Mississippi. You will be responsible for the remaining balance of assessed tuition and required fees. Under the current tuition/fee schedule, this balance is currently \$755.39 during each fall and spring terms and \$83.96 per credit hour during the summer term. The tuition/fee schedule is subject to change. You will also be reimbursed for premiums for the health care insurance provided by the MSU Longest Student Health Center. Currently this amounts to \$985 annually to cover your personal health care. It does not cover the health care for any dependent family members.

This award is contingent upon the availability of funds, your being a United States citizen or having lawful authorization to work in the United States, and your agreement to the terms and conditions as described in the Graduate Assistant Handbook. A paper copy of the handbook is available in the Office of Graduate Studies or you can find it on the World Wide Web at <http://www.msstate.edu/dept/grad/publications.htm>. This offer may be withdrawn if you are not authorized to work at Mississippi State University by the beginning date indicated above. International students with a J-1 visa status must provide this office with a letter of eligibility from the MSU Office of International Services. This letter of offer is not a contract or an offer of a contract.

To hold an assistantship, you must be a fully admitted graduate student in good standing (not provisional) and maintain a full-time enrollment status. Renewal of the award is based upon the availability of funds, and on continued satisfactory performance in your assigned duties and your academic program. In addition, you are expected to comply with all federal and state laws, all policies of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, and all University policies. You must have an assigned Social Security number to be placed on the University's payroll. Please review the information at <http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html> for instructions and the required application form for obtaining the Social Security card.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) must attend and successfully complete the Teaching Assistant (TA) Workshop held once each year prior to fall semester. The schedule for the workshop can be viewed by accessing the calendar located at <http://www.msstate.edu/dept/grad/calendar.htm>.

As a graduate assistant, you will be required to perform duties equivalent to a maximum of 20 hours per week. (MAJOR PROF), (MP OFFICE), (MP PHONE), (MP E-MAIL ADDRESS) will provide specific instructions regarding your duties and the basis for evaluating your performance. To facilitate planning

and scheduling of your duties, please provide your class schedule and other available times for work. If you are unable to perform the required duties or do not complete these in a satisfactory manner, your assistantship and/or stipend may be adjusted or terminated immediately. Any tuition and required fee exemption awarded with the assistantship will be voided and rescinded if, at any time, all the eligibility requirements outlined in the Graduate Assistant Handbook are not met. This includes maintaining the minimum enrollment hours required by this appointment. Any change in eligibility, academic status, or employment status after the exemption is processed can result in a reduced or voided exemption regardless of the date that such changes occur during the term. Should this award be terminated prior to the specified ending date, your duties, stipend and the exemption will cease, and you will be required to pay a prorated portion of the previously applied tuition and required fees exemption.

You may indicate your acceptance or rejection of this offer by checking the appropriate response below and signing your name at the bottom of this letter. The letter should be returned to this office as soon as possible. We look forward to you joining our department. You have our best wishes for a rewarding graduate experience at Mississippi State University.

Sincerely,

Andrew W. Ezell  
Professor and Department Head  
Department of Forestry

ACCEPT OFFER:       REJECT OFFER:

Offer Accepted: I accept this award and understand the requirements as stated above. If funding for this position is through a grant or contract, I agree to allow the sponsoring agency access to my employment records as it is relevant to the review or audit of the project. I also understand that my employment is contingent upon the availability of funds.

I am  or am not  actively contributing to the Public Employees' Retirement System at this time (check one).

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Your Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Current Street Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Current Telephone Number)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City, State & Zip)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Current E-mail Address)

Cc: Human Resources Management  
Office of Graduate Studies

**APPENDIX DF-2: Format for Title Page of Study Plan**

**STUDY PLAN**

**FOR**

*(Proposed Title)*

By

*(Student's Name)*

A Proposed Plan  
Submitted to the Graduate Committee Indicated Below  
for Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the  
*(Master of Science with Thesis; Master of Science, Non-Thesis Option; or  
Doctor of Philosophy)* Degree  
in the Department of Forestry,  
College of Forest Resources,  
Mississippi State University

*(Month and Year)*

**APPROVAL:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signed above and typed name here), Major Professor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signed above and typed name here), Minor or Co-Major Professor*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signed above and typed name here), Committee Member*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signed above and typed name here), Committee Member*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signed above and typed name here), Committee Member*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Signed above and typed name here), Graduate Program Coordinator*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX DF-3: Department of Forestry Requirements for the Master of Science Degree**

<i>Graduate Committee</i>	$\geq 3$ faculty, should meet at least once/semester Graduate student should maintain frequent communication with all committee members.
<i>Course Requirements</i>	Specifics depend on student in consultation with the Graduate Committee A. Non-thesis option: $\geq 30$ hours total (includes 3 hours for professional paper) B. Thesis option: $\geq 24$ hours coursework ( $\geq \frac{1}{2}$ course credits at 8000 level) $\geq 6$ hours thesis/research
<i>Program of Study</i>	Completion and approval coursework
<i>Course load (must maintain full-time status when on assistantship)</i>	Fall or Spring = 13 hours (includes thesis/research hours) Summer = 6 hours
<i>Study Plan</i>	Proposal for thesis research or professional paper/project development, including list of tasks and time-table for accomplishment of tasks
<i>Thesis or Professional Paper</i>	Requires oral defense
<i>Academic Performance</i>	Maintain at least a “B” average ( $\geq 3.00$ GPA)
<i>Data Requirements</i>	All data are property of Mississippi State University
<i>Seminar Attendance</i>	Graduate students are expected to attend research seminars
<i>Publication of Research</i>	Graduate students are expected to actively contribute to manuscript preparation associated with publication of their research thesis, professional paper or project write-up.

**APPENDIX DF-4: Student Schedule for Master of Science Degree in the Department of Forestry**

<b>Activity/Task</b>	<b>Tentative Completion Date</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Recommended Time Table*</b>
Initial Registration		Student and Major Professor	Prior to First Semester
Tentative Program of Study		Student and Major Professor	End of First Semester
Selection of Graduate Committee		Student and Major Professor	Early First Semester
Approval of Program of Study		Committee	Middle of First Semester
Approval of Study Plan		Committee	End of Second Semester
Committee Meetings for Progress Reports	a) b) c) d)	Student and Committee	At Least Once per Semester
Application for Degree		Student	By Deadline (Early in Final Semester)
First Draft of Thesis/ Professional Paper		Student	Early Final Semester
Defense of Thesis/ Professional Paper		Student and Committee	Middle of Final Semester
Submit Program of Study to Office of the Graduate School		Major Professor through Department Head/Graduate Coordinator	Final Semester
Submit Thesis/ Professional Paper to Graduate Coordinator		Student	Final Semester
Submit Thesis to Library (Thesis option only)		Student	Final Semester
Confirmation of Completion of All Requirements		Department Head/Graduate Coordinator	Final Semester

\*Does not include summer semesters

**APPENDIX DF-5: MSU Graduation Checklist in Final Semester for Master's Degree**

Please Type GRADUATION CHECK LIST \*\*\*\*\*  
MASTER'S \* Will Graduate \_\_\_\_\_\*  
(Year - Semester) Graduation \* Will Not Graduate \_\_\_\_\_\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DEGREE: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL HOURS ON PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF HOURS IN MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MINOR: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF HOURS IN MINOR: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS AFTER GRADUATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Box - Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

**PLEASE FILL IN BLANK AS INDICATED**

**GRADUATE PROGRAM** \*\*\*\*\* Prerequisites satisfied Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 \* Thesis \_\_\_\_\_ \*  
 \*Non-Thesis \_\_\_\_\_ \* Changes Needed Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
\*\*\*\*\*

**TITLE OF THESIS: (If Required)** \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Minimum of 6 hours of thesis/research required)

**CURRENTLY ENROLLED** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Hours \_\_\_\_\_

**Must** be currently enrolled if defending/submitting thesis,  
 taking comprehensive exams or lacking any other requirement.

**GRADE AVERAGE** 3.0 or greater Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 (must have a 3.0) 4.0 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**TRANSFER CREDIT** Transfer work Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 (9 hours only-courses may be no more than 6 years old at completion of degree)  
 (Attach Transfer Approval Form) Name of Institution If yes, number of hours \_\_\_\_\_

**OFF CAMPUS** (Half of no. of hrs must be taken at Main Campus, Meridian or Vicksburg.)  
 Number of hours at Main Campus \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of hours at Meridian \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of hours at Vicksburg \_\_\_\_\_

**UNCLASSIFIED HOURS** Unclassified hours Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, date screened \_\_\_\_\_  
 (only 9 hours prior to this date)

**NUMBER OF 8000 LEVEL COURSES** Thesis: Half of total coursework hrs on program exclusive of thesis  
Non-thesis: At least 15 hours must be at 8000 level  
 Number of hours \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTED INDIVIDUAL STUDY/WORKSHOP (SPECIAL PROBLEM)** No more than 6 hrs of Directed Individual Studies (Special Problem).  
 Number of hours \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title of DIS \_\_\_\_\_

**RESIDENCE MET** (See Graduate Bulletin)  
 (If required by college) Semester Completed \_\_\_\_\_

**8-YEAR TIME LIMIT** Courses taken before [Semester & Year, eight years earlier] will be out of date rendering student ineligible to graduate [Month day, Year].  
 Date first course taken \_\_\_\_\_

**ORAL/COMP. EXAM** Passed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Failed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**HAS MET ALL OF THE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Coordinator-s Signature

===== **FOR GRADUATE OFFICE USE ONLY** =====  
**THESIS BINDING FEE PAID** Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **THESIS IN** Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ **GRADES IN** Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**APPENDIX DF-6:** Department of Forestry Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree

<i>Graduate Committee</i>	$\geq 4$ faculty, should meet at least once/semester Graduate student should maintain frequent communication with all committee members.
<i>Course Requirements</i>	Variable, depends on Graduate Committee $\geq 20$ hours dissertation research
<i>Program of Study</i>	Completion and approval of coursework
<i>Course Load (must maintain full-time status when on assistantship)</i>	Fall or Spring= 13 hrs (includes dissertation/research hours) Summer = 6 hrs (includes dissertation/research hrs)
<i>Qualifying Exam</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> semester (optional) - decided by Graduate Committee
<i>Preliminary/Comprehensive Exam</i>	Written and oral exam conducted after completion of coursework or within 6 hours of completion
<i>Study Plan</i>	Proposal for dissertation research, including list of tasks and time-table for accomplishment of tasks
<i>Dissertation</i>	Requires oral defense
<i>Academic Performance</i>	Maintain at least a “B” average ( $\geq 3.00$ GPA)
<i>Data Requirements</i>	All data are property of Mississippi State University.
<i>Seminar Attendance</i>	Graduate students are expected to attend research seminars.
<i>Publication of Research</i>	Graduate students are expected to actively contribute to the preparation of manuscript associated with their dissertation research project.

**APPENDIX DF-7: Student Schedule for Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the Department of Forestry of the College of Forest Resources**

<b>Activity/Task</b>	<b>Tentative Completion Date</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Recommended Time Table*</b>
Initial Registration		Student and Major Professor	Prior to First Semester
Tentative Program of Study		Student and Major Professor	Early First Semester
Selection of Graduate Committee		Student and Major Professor	Early First Semester
Qualifying Oral Examination		(optional – decided by Committee)	First Semester
Approval of Program of Study		Committee	Second Semester
Approval of Dissertation Research Study Plan		Committee	Before Written/Oral Prelim/Comprehensive
Committee Meetings for Progress Reports	a) b) c) d)	Student and Committee	At Least Once per Semester
Written Preliminary/ Comprehensive Exam		Student	Less than 6 hrs. Remain on Program of Study
Oral Preliminary/ Comprehensive Exam		Student and Committee	During Week Following Written Prelim/Comp.
Application for Degree		Student	By Deadline (Early in Final Semester)
Submit Program of Study to Office of the Graduate School		Major Professor through Department's Department Head/Graduate Coordinator	Early in Final Semester
Submit Application for Admission to Candidacy		Major Professor and Student	After Passing Prelim Exam and Submitting Program of Study
Submit First Draft of Dissertation		Student	Early in Final Semester
Dissertation Defense		Student and Committee	Early in Final Semester
Submit Dissertation to Dept. Head and CFR Dean		Student	Final Semester
Submit Dissertation to Library		Student	Final Semester
Confirmation of Completion of All Requirements		Department Head/ Graduate Coordinator	Final Semester

\*Does not include summer semesters

**APPENDIX DF-8: MSU Graduation Checklist in Final Semester for Doctorate Degree**

Please Type

**GRADUATION CHECK LIST**  
**DOCTORATE**  
*(Year - Semester) Graduation*

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* Will Graduate \_\_\_\_\_\*  
 \* Will Not Graduate \_\_\_\_\_\*

\*\*\*\*\*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DEGREE: \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL HOURS ON PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF HOURS IN MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MINOR: \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF HOURS IN MINOR: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS AFTER GRADUATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Box - Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

TITLE OF DISSERTATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

DISSERTATION DIRECTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE FILL IN BLANK AS INDICATED**

**CURRENTLY ENROLLED** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Hours \_\_\_\_\_  
**MUST** be currently enrolled if defending/submitting dissertation or lacking any other requirements.

**GRADUATE PROGRAM** Prerequisites satisfied Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Changes Needed Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of dissertation hours (9000) required (minimum 20 hours): \_\_\_\_\_

**GRADE AVERAGE** 3.0 or greater Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 (must have a 3.0) 4.0 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**TRANSFER CREDIT** (courses may be no more than 8 years old at completion of degree)  
 (See Graduate Bulletin) Transfer work Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Attach Transfer Approval Form) If yes, number of hours \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Institution \_\_\_\_\_

**PRELIMINARY EXAM** Date Passed \_\_\_\_\_  
**COMPREHENSIVE EXAM** Date Passed \_\_\_\_\_

**RESIDENCE MET** (See Graduate Bulletin)  
**\*\*\*REQUIRED\*\*\*** Number of Hours \_\_\_\_\_  
 Semester Completed \_\_\_\_\_

**PH.D. CANDIDACY FORM** Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_

**8-YEAR TIME LIMIT** (Courses taken before [Semester & Year, eight years earlier] are out of date  
 rendering student ineligible to graduate [Month day, Year].)  
 Date first course taken \_\_\_\_\_

**ORAL EXAM/DISSERTATION DEFENSE** Passed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Failed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**HAS MET ALL OF THE ABOVE**  
**REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Coordinator's Signature

\*\*\*\*\* FOR GRADUATE OFFICE USE ONLY \*\*\*\*\*

**DISSERTATION IN** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ **COPYRIGHT FORM** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
**BINDING FEE PAID** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ **GRADES IN** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
**MICROFILM FEE PAID** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_