

DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, and AQUACULTURE
COLLEGE OF FOREST RESOURCES
FOREST AND WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER
MISSISSIPPI AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate Program
and
Departmental Procedures

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Section I

INTRODUCTION

The following information has been prepared to assist graduate students, faculty, and staff in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture in becoming familiar with operating procedures specific to the Department. Additional information can be found in the University Procedures Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, and the Graduate School Bulletin.

Graduate degree programs in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture at Mississippi State University are offered at the M.S. level in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science with an emphasis in fisheries, wildlife, or aquaculture and at the Ph.D. level in Forest Resources with an emphasis in wildlife, fisheries, or aquaculture.

All graduate students are expected to be familiar with and comply with University, Departmental, and subject area requirements. Failure to comply satisfactorily with all requirements may seriously inconvenience the student and, in some cases, may lead to termination of assistantships or dismissal from the graduate program in this Department.

I. DEPARTMENTAL ADMISSION, RETENTION, AND PROBATION

A. General requirements and policy

All applicants for a Master's degree must hold a Bachelor's degree and must be sponsored by a funded research project. All applicants for the Ph.D. degree must hold a M.S. degree and must be sponsored by a funded research project. An applicant cannot be admitted to the department until he/she meets all application requirements and a faculty

member agrees to serve as an advisor.

B. Admission policies and procedures for incoming M.S. students

1. When the Mississippi State University (MSU) Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture (WF&A) Graduate Coordinator (GC) is notified by the WF&A Secretary responsible for student admissions that a decision is required in WORKFLOW (Graduate School software that contains the student's application and academic records) about a potential graduate student, the WF&A GC will immediately review the following criteria: 1) the applicant's grade point average (GPA) calculated on last 60 hours of undergraduate (UG) coursework, 2) the applicant's final overall GPA as reported by the applicant's UG degree-granting institution, 3) record of the applicant's completion of the general GRE, and 4) confirmation that funding is available to support the applicant's program and that a WF&A faculty member has agreed to serve as advisor.
2. The WF&A GC then determines whether the applicant is: 1) eligible for "unqualified acceptance" into the WF&A, 2) eligible for "provisional probationary acceptance" into the WF&A, or 3) is "not acceptable" as a graduate student in the WF&A using the following guidelines:
 - a. Unqualified Acceptance: *Unconditional acceptance into the WF&A as a student in good standing. Applicant can be awarded a WF&A graduate assistantship and their first semester coursework is solely the choice of the applicant and the applicant's major professor.*
 - (1) Any applicant with a 3.0 or greater overall UG GPA and has taken the general GRE, and has a 2.75 or greater GPA in the last 60 hours.
 - (2) Any applicant with a 2.75-2.99 overall UG GPA and has taken the general GRE, and has a 3.0 or greater GPA in the last 60 hours.
 - b. Provisional Probationary Acceptance: *Conditional acceptance into the WF&A as a provisional probationary student. Applicant cannot be awarded a WF&A graduate assistantship. This applicant may be paid on wages that are equivalent to a base stipend (no more). The applicant must pay for his/her own tuition and fees (which may be non-resident). The applicant's first semester of coursework is determined by the WF&A Probation Committee (PC) in consultation with applicant's major professor, unless overridden by the WF&A Department Head (See Section 2 on Provisional Probationary Policy and Procedures for additional information on Provisional Probation).*
 - (1) Any applicant with a 3.0 overall GPA and who has taken the

general GRE, but has less than a 2.75 GPA in their last 60 hours. This is because the MSU Office of the Graduate School (OGS) would consider them as a provisional probationary student.

(2) Any applicant with a 2.75-2.99 overall UG GPA and who has taken the general GRE, and has between a 2.75 and 2.99 GPA in last 60 hours.

(3) Any applicant with an overall UG GPA below 2.75 and who has taken the general GRE, but has a 3.0 or greater GPA in last 60 hours.

- c. Not Acceptable. *Applicant is not acceptable as a graduate student in WF&A under any circumstances. The application is automatically returned to the MSU OGS by the WF&A GC and the major professor is notified that the student is an candidate in WF&A.*

*potential
unacceptable*

(1) Any applicant with an overall UG GPA below 2.75 and who has taken the GRE, but has less than a 3.0 GPA in last 60 hours.

(2) Any applicant with a 2.75-2.99 overall UG GPA and who has taken the general GRE, but has below a 2.75 GPA in last 60 hours.

C. Provisional probation policy and procedures for incoming M.S. students

1. Once it is determined by the WF&A GC that a student falls under provisional probation, the WF&A GC confirms with the applicant's major professor that they are aware that the applicant will be admitted provisionally. *If a situation arises that does not include a first time graduate student or contains an unusual circumstance, the WF&A GC should contact the WF&A PC Chair immediately and not contact the major professor until the WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, and WF&A PC Chair meet to discuss the situation.*
2. The WFC GC then immediately informs the WF&A PC Chair that there is an applicant that will be a provisional student and provides the WF&A PC Chair with the application, transcripts, and any other official material related to the applicant.
3. The WFG GC then informs the WF&A Accountant and WF&A Secretary in charge of graduate student records that the applicant is a provisional student and any paperwork associated with that applicant is to cease immediately until they are notified by him/her. *If by some chance a potential provisional probationary student who has already submitted an*

application for graduate school is slated to start work in the summer, steps (4) through (10) below must be completed and the applicant's fall semester-course schedule must be approved prior to them being processed for summer employment.

4. The applicant's major professor writes an official memorandum* to the WF&A PC Chair with a copy to the WF&A Department Head and WF&A GC indicating that they will be accepting a provisional student. The letter will include a suggested first semester course schedule for the applicant with the following stipulations to assure that the schedule is a "rigorous test" of the student's ability to succeed in graduate school:
 - a. The proposed schedule must contain at least 10 hours of coursework.
 - b. The proposed schedule must contain STAT 8114 (4 hours)
 - c. Each remaining course must be a 2 to 4 hour course at the 6000 or 8000 level.
 - d. The proposed schedule may not include any course taught by the applicant's major professor
 - e. The proposed schedule may not include any Directed Individual Study (DIS) course with any MSU faculty member.
 - f. The proposed schedule may not include any Special Topics course with any MSU faculty member.
 - g. The proposed schedule may not include any on-line or distance courses at MSU or any other university.
5. The WF&A PC Chair shares memorandum from major professor and application materials provided by the WF&A GC with the rest of the WF&A PC for discussion.
6. After WF&A PC deliberations, the WF&A PC Chair will relay the PC's decision on the applicant's first semester course schedule in a memorandum to the WF&A Department Head with copy to the applicant's major professor and WF&A GC. The course schedule may or may not be consistent with recommendations by the applicant's major professor. If the schedule is not consistent with the suggested schedule of the applicant's major professor, the memorandum from the WF&A PC Chair will clearly state the reasons why the committee did not agree. At the bottom of the memorandum will be a check box for the WF&A Department Head to "Approve" or "Disapprove" of the WF&A PC's recommendation and a signature line.
7. If the memorandum to the WF&A Department Head from the WF&A PC Chair is consistent with the major professor's recommended course schedule, the WF&A Department Head will automatically approve the

PC's recommendation and return the memorandum immediately to the PC Chair who will proceed to (10) below.

8. If the WF&A PC recommended course schedule for the applicant is not consistent with the major professor's suggestion, the WF&A Department Head will withhold his/her decision and will immediately contact the applicant's major professor to determine if they wish to file a protest. If the major professor decides to file a protest, he/she will do so in a written memorandum to the WF&A Department Head with a copy to the WF&A GC and WF&A PC Chair stating their grievance and any extenuating circumstances related to the applicant that warrants re-consideration.
9. After receiving memorandum from the major professor, the WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, WF&A PC Chair, and major professor will meet to discuss differences. After meeting, the WF&A Department Head will make his/her decision on approval/disapproval of PC's recommended course schedule. If the WF&A Department Head decision is Disapprove", a copy for semester Head's he/she will write an additional memorandum to the PC Chair with to the WF&A GC and applicant's major professor stating reasons disapproving, and provide his/her final provisional probationary course schedule for the applicant. The WF&A Department decision is binding and non-reversible.
10. After receiving the WF&A Department Head's final decision, the WF&A PC Chair will write a memorandum to the applicant indicating their course schedule for their provisional probationary semester, that they must obtain a "B" or better in each of the prescribed courses, and that failure to achieve to the Head, professor. that will result in dismissal with loss of eligibility for readmission WF&A. This memo will be copied to the WF&A Department WF&A GC, WF&A PC members, and the student's major
11. The WF&A GC immediately informs the WF&A Accountant and Secretary that employment paperwork may commence on the student. *(All written correspondence to this point will be converted to a single Adobe PDF by the WF&A PC Chair and distributed to WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, WF&A PC members, major professor, and WF&A Secretary).*
12. It is the responsibility of the student's major professor to monitor progress of their student during their provisional probationary semester and to plan circumstance else provide a code (RAC) for semester prior to field work around the student's class schedule. Under no should the major professor, WF&A Secretary, or anyone provisional probationary student with a registration access the semester following their provisional probationary successfully completing the requirements set forth

by the WF&A PC,
fate from the WF&A
This notification

and receiving written notification about their future
PC Chair or MSU OGS Dean as per 13 or 16 below.
cannot occur until final grades are posted.

13. After final grades for the student are posted for their provisional probation semester, if the student has successfully passed their provisional probationary semester, the WF&A PC Chair will write a memorandum to the student indicating he/she has successfully passed his/her provisional probationary semester. This is the final *WF&A PC Chair will add this letter to 11 above and deliver to major professor, WF&A GC, WF&A PC, and WF&A Secretary student file).* the student indicating he/she has successfully probationary semester and will be retained which includes only one future step for such students. *(The existing PDF file produced in WF&A Department Head, for placement in*
14. If the student fails to meet the requirements set forth by the WF&A PC, a memorandum will be written to the WF&A GC by the WF&A PC Chair with a copy to the WF&A Department Head recommending that the student be dismissed from the WF&A graduate program.
15. The WF&A GC will immediately write a memorandum to the MSU OGS Dean which recommends dismissal of the student from the WF&A graduate program. Prior to sending this memorandum to OGS, it will be routed to the CFR Dean, and WF&A Department Head for signatures, and copied to the WF PC Chair and student's major professor.
16. The Dean of the MSU OGS will write a formal letter to the student dismissing him/her from the university and direct him/her to the MSU Graduate Student Bulletin for steps to appeal his/her status if desired. The summary of this appeal process is below:
 - a. The student must initiate the appeal process by formally requesting reinstatement in writing to the WF&A Department Head and WF&A GC with a copy to the WF&A PC Chair and major professor. This letter should contain the student's explanation for why he/she should be considered for reinstatement.
 - b. The WF&A Department Head and WF&A GC will review this appeal with the WF&A PC and major professor and render a recommendation. If the appeal is successful, the WF&A Department Head will communicate that decision to the student in writing with a copy to the CFR Dean, MSU OGS Dean, WF&A GC, WF&A PC Chair, and major professor. The letter will include stipulations for an additional probationary semester. The WF&A

PC Chair will monitor the additional probationary semester and return to Step 13 or 14 above depending on student performance.

- c. If the appeal at the WF&A departmental level is unsuccessful, the WF&A Department Head will communicate that decision to the student in writing, and the letter will indicate that the student may then appeal to the CFR Dean. This letter will be copied to the CFR Dean, MSU OGS Dean, WF&A GC, WF&A PC Chair, and student's major professor.
- d. The student must then formally request reinstatement in writing to the CFR Dean. This letter should contain the student's explanation for why he/she or the student should be considered for reinstatement and be copied to the MSU OGS Dean, WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, WF&A PC Chair, and major professor. Prior to rendering a decision, the CFR Dean will consider the recommendation of an appointed subcommittee of the Graduate Council. The CFR Dean's decision should be communicated in writing to the student with a copy to the MSU OGS Dean, WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, and WF&A PC Chair. *(If b. above is unsuccessful, it was because there was consensus from those involved that the student should be dismissed from the WF&A Department and/or that the major professor is unwilling to continue funding the student and serving as the student's major professor. Thus, reinstatement from the CFR Dean may have to include indication of alternative funding and a faculty member who is willing to accept that student. This opportunity may only be available in another MSU academic department).*
- e. If the appeal to the CFR Dean is unsuccessful, the student may then appeal to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

** All written official documentation for Steps 1-16 must be done on official MSU, CFR, or WF&A letterhead. At the conclusion of the respective case, the WF&A PC Chair will summarize the case in writing and will add remaining documentation to the file produced in 11 above which contains the complete case file for future reference by WF&A PC Chair and Committee. Additionally, the complete case file will be given to the WF&A Departmental Secretary for placement in the student's official file in case of further appeal and/or legal action.*

D. Non-provisional probation policy and procedures for M.S. students

1. Once it is determined that an existing WF&A graduate student's GPA falls under a 3.0, the major professor will immediately inform the WF&A

GC and WF&A PC Chair through email or in-person. WF&A Faculty should not rely on student self-reports of grades and should check each graduate student's final grades as soon as they are available.

2. The WF&A GC then informs the WF&A Accountant and WF&A Secretary in charge of graduate student records that the applicant is a probationary student and that the student must be converted from a GRA to an hourly worker. This student must be paid wages that are equivalent to a base stipend (no more). The applicant must pay for his/her own tuition and fees (which may be non-resident).
3. The student's major professor writes an official memorandum* to the WF&A PC Chair indicating that the student will need to be assigned a course schedule for their probationary semester. The letter will be copied to the WF&A Department Head and WF&A GC and will include a suggested semester course schedule for the student with the following stipulations to assure that the schedule is a "rigorous test" of the student's ability to overcome his/her deficiencies:
 - a. The proposed schedule must contain at least 9 hours of coursework.
 - b. Two courses must be at the 8000 level.
 - c. If the student received a C, D, or F for a course that caused his/her probation, re-taking that course should be strongly considered if available.
 - d. The proposed schedule may not include any course taught by the applicant's major professor
 - e. The proposed schedule may not include any Directed Individual Studies (DIS) course with any MSU faculty member.
 - f. The proposed schedule may not include any Special Topics course with any MSU faculty member.
 - g. The proposed schedule may not include any on-line or distance courses at MSU or any other university.
4. The WF&A PC Chair requests official file for student from WF&A GC and shares that information and memorandum from major professor with the rest of the WF&A PC for discussion.
5. After WF&A PC deliberations, the WF&A PC Chair will relay the PC's decision on the probationary semester course schedule in a memorandum to the WF&A Department Head with copy to the applicant's major professor and WF&A GC. The course schedule may or may not be consistent with recommendations by the student's major professor. If the student's schedule is not consistent with the suggested schedule of the Chair will clearly major professor, the memorandum from the WF&A PC state the reasons why the committee did not agree.

If the
student's
Chair will clearly

At the bottom of the Department Head to recommendation and a

memorandum will be a check box for the WF&A "Approve" or "Disapprove" of the WF&A PC's signature line.

6. If the memorandum to the WF&A Department Head from the WF&A PC Chair is consistent with the major professor's recommended course schedule, the WF&A Department Head will automatically approve the PC's recommendation and return the memorandum immediately to the PC Chair who will proceed to (9) below.
7. If the WF&A PC recommended course schedule for the applicant is not consistent with the major professor's suggestion, the WF&A Department Head will withhold his/her decision and will immediately contact the student's major professor to determine if he/she wishes to file a protest. If the major professor decides to file a protest, he/she will do so in a memorandum to the WF&A Department Head with a copy to the WF&A PC Chair and WF&A GC stating his/her grievance and any extenuating circumstances related to the student that warrants re-consideration.
8. After receiving memorandum from the major professor, the WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, WF&A PC Chair, and major professor will meet to discuss differences. After meeting, the WF&A Department Head will make his/her decision on approval/disapproval of PC's recommended course schedule. If the WF&A Department Head decision is "Disapprove", he/she will write an additional memorandum to the PC Chair with a copy for disapproving, and schedule for the decision is binding and non-reversible. If the WF&A Department Head decision is approval, he/she will provide his/her final probationary semester course student. The WF&A Department Head's decision is reversible.
9. After receiving the WF&A Department Head's final decision, the WF&A PC Chair will write a memorandum to the student indicating his/her schedule for the probationary semester, *that he/she must obtain a "B" or better in each of the prescribed courses AND raise his/her overall GPA to 3.00 or above, and that failure to achieve that will result in dismissal with loss of eligibility for readmission to the WF&A.* This memo will be copied to the WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, WF&A PC members, and the student's major professor. *(All written correspondence to this point will be converted to a Adobe PDF by the WF&A PC Chair and distributed accordingly to WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, Probation Committee, major professor, and WF&A Secretary).*
10. It is the responsibility of the student's major professor to monitor progress of his/her student during the probationary semester and to plan field work around the student's class schedule. Under no circumstance should the

major advisor, WF&A Secretary, or anyone else provide a probationary student with a registration access code (RAC) for the semester following the probationary semester prior to successfully completing the requirements set forth by the WF&A PC, and receiving written notification about the student's future fate from the WF&A PC Chair or MSU OGS Dean as per 11 or 14 below. This notification cannot occur until final grades are posted.

11. After final grades for the student are posted for his/her probationary semester, if the student has successfully passed the probationary semester, the WF&A PC Chair will write a memorandum to the student indicating he/she has successfully passed his/her probationary semester and will be retained under normal retention policies which includes not being allowed another probationary semester. This is the final step for such students. *(The WF&A PC Chair will add this letter to existing Adobe PDF file produced in 9 above and deliver to major professor, WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, WF&A PC, and WF&A Secretary for placement in student file).*
12. If the student fails to meet the probationary requirements set forth by the WF&A PC, a memorandum will be written to the WF&A GC by the WF&A PC Chair recommending that the student be dismissed from the WF&A graduate program.
13. The WF&A GC will immediately write a memorandum to the MSU OGS Dean which recommends dismissal of the student from the WF&A graduate program. . Prior to sending this memorandum to OGS, it will be routed to the CFR Dean, and WF&A Department Head for signatures, and copied to the WF PC Chair and student's major professor.
14. The Dean of the MSU OGS will write a formal letter to the student dismissing them from the university and direct them to the MSU Graduate Student Bulletin for steps to appeal his/her status if desired. The of this appeal process is below:
 - a. The student must initiate the appeal process by formally requesting reinstatement in writing to the WF&A Department Head and WF&A GC with a copy to the WF&A PC Chair and major professor. This letter should contain the student's explanation for why he/she should be considered for reinstatement.
 - b. The WF&A Department Head and WF&A GC will review this appeal with the WF&A PC and major professor and render a recommendation. If the appeal is successful, the WF&A Department Head will communicate that decision to the student in

summary

writing with a copy to the CFR Dean, MSU OGS Dean, WF&A GC, WF&A PC Chair, and major professor. The letter will include stipulations for an additional probationary semester. The WF&A PC Chair will monitor the additional probationary semester and return to Step 13 or 14 above depending on student performance.

- c. If the appeal at the WF&A departmental level is unsuccessful, the WF&A Department Head will communicate that decision to the student in writing, and the letter will indicate that the student may then appeal to the CFR Dean. This letter will be copied to the CFR Dean, MSU OGS Dean, WF&A GC, and WF&A PC Chair, and student's major professor.
- d. The student must then formally request reinstatement in writing to the CFR Dean. This letter should contain the student's explanation for why they should be considered for reinstatement and be copied to the MSU OGS Dean, WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, WF&A PC Chair, and major professor. Prior to rendering a decision, the CFR Dean will consider the recommendation of an appointed subcommittee of the Graduate Council. The CFR Dean's decision should be communicated in writing to the student with a copy to the MSU OGS Dean, WF&A Department Head, WF&A GC, and WF&A PC Chair. *(If B above is unsuccessful, it was likely because there was consensus from those involved that the student should be dismissed from the WF&A Department and/or that the major professor is unwilling to continue funding the student and serving as the student's major professor. Thus, reinstatement from the CFR Dean may have to include indication of alternative funding and a faculty member who is willing to accept that student. This opportunity may only be available in another MSU academic department).*
- e. If the appeal to the CFR Dean is unsuccessful, the student may then appeal to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

** All written official documentation for Steps 1-14 above must be done on official MSU, CFR, or WF&A letterhead. At the conclusion of the respective case, the WF&A PC Chair will summarize the case in writing and will add remaining documentation to the file produced in 9 above which contains the complete case file for future reference by WF&A PC Chair and Committee. Additionally, the complete case file will be given to the WF&A Departmental Secretary for placement in the student's official file in case of further appeal and/or legal action.*

E. Retention policies for doctoral students

1. Any Ph.D. Student who falls below a 3.00 overall grade point and/or

receives a "D" or "F" in any course will automatically be dismissed from the program. The WF&A GC will write memorandum to OGS Dean for formal dismissal from the WF&A graduate program. Section D., Step 14 will then commence.

F. Admission policies and procedures for incoming Ph.D. students

1. Acceptance - Ph.D. Program

a. The applicant must have received a M.S. degree, a GPA of 3.2 out of 4.0 on all prior graduate studies (excluding research or thesis credits), and must have completed the general GRE.

b. Applications should be first initiated online through myBanner (MSU Online Software). All required information and documentation should be directed to the OGS. Once approved, it will then be forwarded to the WF&A. The following items must be provided to the OGS:

- (1) Official transcript of undergraduate and graduate work,
- (2) Official GRE scores
- (3) Official TOEFL score (if required, see below)
- (4) Three letters of recommendation (including telephone numbers of references).
- (5) Letter outlining specific research interest, career goals, reason for applying at Mississippi State University, and prospective Major Professor (if known).

Those items which cannot be submitted electronically should be mailed to:

U.S. Postal Mailing Address:
Office of the Graduate School
P.O. Box G
Mississippi State, MS 39762

- c. The following two items should be sent directly to the Department:
- 1) Copy of Master's thesis (to be returned after committee review)
 - 2) Resume of work experience, presentations, and publications.

Note: A personal visit is optional, but strongly recommended. The Department does not routinely defray costs of such a visit.

G. Acceptance of international students

1. If the student has a degree from a U.S. university, he/she must meet all of the above requirements and does not need to submit a TOEFL.
2. Students who do not have a degree from a U.S. university must meet all of above requirements of items where the GPA is determined by the Graduate School based on the student's transcript. In addition, if the first language of the student's home country is not English, he/she must submit a TOEFL score. A score of 550 or greater is required for unqualified admission. A score of 475-549 will be considered for qualified admission, but successful completion of the remedial English courses outlined in the Graduate Bulletin is required (see: www.grad.msstate.edu/pdf/bulletin.pdf)

II. ACCEPTANCE AND ORIENTATION

The availability of all assistantships, regardless of source of funds, should be announced nationally in appropriate subject-matter outlets for at least 30 days to ensure that a well-qualified pool of applicants is available to select a student and thus fill an assistantship. Major Professors may encourage a student candidate to apply to the GS. After screening by the Graduate School; successful applications are then forwarded to the WF&A GC for review. If the GC determines that the applicant meets all requirements for admission to the graduate program, including the availability of funding for a graduate assistantship, the following steps are taken:

- 1) The Major Professor completes the Graduate Research Assistant Form which will include minimally, the starting date, and expected ending date (*if before June 30 of current year*), account number, stipend amount, and any special stipulations. This form will then be forwarded to the Accountant and the Office Associate responsible for applications.
- 2) The Departmental Accountant reviews the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Graduate Research Assistant Form to ensure that funds are available in the account provided, and that all other material is consistent with contract expectations.
- 3) The Departmental Accountant then prepares an acceptance letter for the Department Head's and student's signatures.

Upon arrival, the student should first report to his/her major advisor and make an appointment with the Departmental Office Associate and the Departmental Accountant for briefing on departmental procedures. A copy of these procedures will be given to the student and a quick review will be provided. A student work station and keys will be made available through the Departmental Office Associate. The Department Head, Graduate Coordinator, faculty, and staff will be available to help students needing assistance throughout their tenure at Mississippi State University. Appointments are encouraged for non-emergency situations.

III. REGISTRATION

A graduate student must be enrolled in the spring, summer, and fall semesters to retain a graduate research assistantship. **Graduate students must be enrolled in at least 13 hours for**

each spring and fall semester and at least six hours (three hours for each 5-week term or six hours for 10-week term) for the summer to retain an assistantship.

Once a student is no longer on an assistantship, they must still register for at least 1 hour in the fall and 1 hour for either spring **OR** summer of each academic year. They must also register for at least 1 hour in any of the following circumstances:

- Takes a comprehensive examination
- Proposes a thesis/dissertation
- Defends a thesis/dissertation
- Submits initial and final thesis/dissertation document to the library

In order to enroll, students must obtain their Registration Access Codes (RAC #) from their Major Professor.

IV. COMMITTEE REQUEST FORM AND GRADUATE PROGRAM OF STUDY

All Graduate Forms can be found at: <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/>

Prior to submitting the formal Program of Study to the Graduate Coordinator, the student's graduate committee will be selected and officially appointed in consultation with the student. A Committee Request Form must be completed by the student with committee members' signatures and submitted to Departmental Office Associate with in the first 6 months from the start of their program. Master of Science Graduate Committees must include at least three committee members (includes committee chair), and Doctoral Graduate Committee a minimum of four members (includes committee chair). All committee members must hold Level 1, Level 2, Associate, or Committee Participant status. No more than one individual holding a Committee Participant appointment can serve on a Masters' Committee and two on a Ph.D. committee.

All committee members **MUST** hold Ph.D. Special permission may be obtained for those who do not have a faculty appointment with the MSU Office of Graduate Studies to serve as a Committee Participant on a student's committee until the student graduates. To receive special permission, the student and major advisor must submit a written request to the Department Head with the individual's C.V., and the Graduate Committee Participant Form to the Department Office Associate. After being reviewed by the WFA Graduate Advisory Committee, the Department Head may forward the request to the CFR Dean and the Graduate Dean for approval.

Adjunct appointments should be sought in the rare case where continuous student committee involvement is expected due to the nature of the relationship of the candidate and/or his/her agency with our department. To receive Adjunct Faculty status, the major advisor should submit a request to the Department Head with a justification and the individual's C.V. The Department Head will conduct a faculty vote before Adjunct Faculty status is awarded. Adjunct faculty status is for 3 years, and may be renewed upon request of the major advisor. The Department Head will forward his/her request for Adjunct Faculty status to the CFR Dean and request approval for Graduate Faculty status from the Graduate Dean. If the student has a minor field outside the Department, at least one member of the Graduate Committee must be from the minor area of study, and that member will be the student's minor professor. A Ph.D. student's

committee will include the Major Professor as chairperson, who must be a full member (Level 1) of the Graduate Faculty and from the major field, the minor professor(s) (if a minor is being pursued by the student), and at least three other members, two of whom are to be drawn from the student's major field of interest. If, during the course of a student's tenure, his/her research direction changes, it may be necessary to change the members of the Graduate Committee or the student's advisor. Such changes should be submitted on a Committee Request Change Form.

The Graduate Committee and the Masters student will meet prior to the end of his/her first six months from the start of their program to review the draft proposal and prepare the Graduate Program of Study. The Graduate Committee and the Ph.D. student will meet prior to the end of his/her first 12 months from the start of their program to review the research proposal and prepare the Graduate Program of Study. The student must complete this form with the help of his/her Major Professor and concurrence of his/her Graduate Committee. The Program of Study will be kept in the Departmental Office Associate's office and will be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies during the student's last semester of course work.

There are 6 fundamental responsibilities expected of members of graduate committees in WF&A: 1) review and approve the student's Program of Study; 2) review and approve the student's Research Proposal; 3) attend the student's Proposal Seminar; 4) participate (face to face*) in all meetings that involve Oral Examination (e.g., oral portion of the preliminary exam for Ph.D. candidacy, and the final thesis or dissertation defenses, 5) attend the thesis/dissertation defense (this includes the Departmental Seminar and the closed door meeting of the committee, and 6) read and approve the thesis/dissertation by signing the signature page.

*Electronic or telephone/computer conferencing to accommodate input from outside committee members who cannot be present during earlier planning meetings (e.g., proposal review and program of study development), but such remote conferencing means may not be used during meetings that examine the student's progress. All committee members (M.S. or Ph.D.) must be physically present during the student's oral exam, and thesis and dissertation defense. Rare exceptions may be made, but should be approved well in advance by the Graduate Coordinator and the Department Head.

The committee may include extra committee members (>3 for MS, and >4 for Ph.D.) who are willing to participate. In order for these members to sign thesis/dissertations they must be included on all graduate paperwork and serve in the same capacity as the required members (see Section IV, pages 18-19).

Master's students require 24 hours of course work; along with 6 hours of research/thesis research. Ph.D. students are required to have 20 hours of research/dissertation research. Please follow these instructions in completing the Program of Study for all degree programs:

1. List whether Master's or Ph.D. degree to be received.
2. List the major with the specialized field in parentheses.

3. List the courses alphabetically by symbol and then in numerical order.
4. List courses by symbol, number, and title exactly as they appear in the Bulletin of the current semester (if some courses are already completed, list by symbol, number, and title as these appeared in the Bulletin at the time the courses were taken). To declare a minor, nine hours must be taken in minor course work. These hours should be indicated by an asterisk (*) on the Program of Study.
5. The number of hours for Directed Individual Studies and Thesis Research/Thesis should be listed as the last number in the four digits.

Examples:

WFA 7003 Directed Individual Studies (for three Directed Individual Studies credit hours)

WFA 8006 Thesis Research/Thesis (for six Thesis credit hours)

The number of hours for Dissertation Research/Dissertation should be listed in parentheses.

Example: WFA 9000 (20) Dissertation Research/Dissertation

DO NOT list the title of the Directed Individual Studies nor break the Thesis Research/Thesis or the Dissertation Research/Dissertation into more than one entry.

6. Transfer credits may be accepted toward fulfilling the requirements for the Master's degree, provided they were earned in programs receiving full accreditation by the appropriate regional and national accrediting bodies and contribute to the presentation of a systematic program of graduate study. Courses with an earned grade lower than a "B" may not be transferred for graduate credit. For most Master's degree programs, transfer credit may not constitute more than nine semester hours of course work. For Ph.D. students, two years of graduate work completed elsewhere may be accepted toward fulfilling requirements for this degree (with the approval of the student's Graduate Committee). The last year must be completed at MSU. The preliminary examination must be taken at this University and will include subject areas of courses for which credits are transferred. (A Course Transfer Form may be obtained from the Office of Graduate School. Once a course to be transferred has been completed, the Course Transfer Form will need to be completed and returned to the Office of Graduate School along with transcripts from the hosting institution. A transcript of work to be transferred must be on file in the Graduate Office before the courses can be approved.) Transferred courses listed on the program should show the course symbol, number, session, semester hours, and grade. The name of the school and year the course was taken should be listed in parentheses after the title of the courses.

7. The following information should be entered on a regular sheet of paper and attached to the graduate program form(s):
 - a. Undergraduate courses to be taken as prerequisites, if any.
 - b. Courses to be audited.
 - c. Courses to be taken and related to the field of study but not to be applied to the Graduate Program.
8. One-half or more (≥ 12 hours) of all Masters of Science or Doctoral degree programs (exclusive of Thesis Research/Thesis) must be composed of graduate level courses (i.e., 8000-9000 or 7000 Directed Individual Studies only). The other half may be composed of split-level courses (e.g., WF 4000/6000). Hours taken for minor courses can be counted toward hours needed for major program.
9. The student should list the names of his/her committee members. **The graduate student will be responsible for obtaining original signatures and returning the form to the Departmental Office Associate before the end of the student's 1st semester.**
10. If a student finds it necessary to make a program change during his/her tenure as a graduate student, the student must use the Change in Graduate Program Form. The student must complete this form with the help of his/her Major Professor and have written approval by all members of his/her committee. **A written explanation for the change must be clearly provided on the form or attachment.**

V. RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A Research Proposal draft **must** be submitted by the student (M.S. and Ph.D.) to the Advisor for his/her signature prior to completing the first 6 months of their program. Both Master's and Ph.D. students prior to completing 12 months from starting their program are required to present a proposal to the department as a formal seminar. If the proposal and/or seminar has not been submitted or presented on time, and until the proposal and/or seminar has been received or presented and approved by the committee, the student will receive an unsatisfactory "U" grade for any further thesis/dissertation hours attempted.

The student should discuss with his/her major professor specifically about content and format of the Research Proposal. Minimally the document should constitute an Introduction (1 to 2 pages), supported by a Literature Review, and a Methods section that is relevant to the final draft of the thesis/dissertation. Under the proposed title, one to five objectives should be clearly stated (Appendix 2 provides an example of the title page for the Research Proposal). The Introduction should contain background information relevant to the proposed research and justification for why the research is need. Following the Introduction, the methods section should explain: (1) where the research will be done; (2) who will assist; (3) how the research will be done, clearly specifying the numbers of treatments, observations, animals, and replication planned as relevant; (4) the planned timetable for the research; and (5) the source of funds. If at all possible, the plan for statistical analysis of the data should be included.

The student in conjunction with the major advisor should submit an approval request to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) if animals are used; human dimensions students should submit appropriate protocols for human subject use.

All graduate students must publically present their research proposal during a seminar held within the department. The Proposal Seminar must be scheduled and advertised with at least **2 weeks advance** notice to assure that all faculty and graduate students in the Department and College are appropriately notified and invited. An announcement should be sent to the Office Associate, as well as a digital copy of an abstract from M.S. students, to e-mail to the Department. The seminar serves as a forum for the student to solicit and receive public comment and outside input. Immediately after the seminar, it is prudent for the student and research committee to meet to further discuss the Research Proposal. Additional guests may be invited to this meeting, but only with the consent of all involved (the major advisor, research committee and the student).

The development of the Research Proposal will fully acquaint the student and Committee with what will be accomplished and will ensure that the student has developed sound technique for obtaining and processing research materials. In that regard, students should seek help from within or outside the Department wherever it can be obtained in developing the Research Proposal. A student will be assigned an unsatisfactory grade “U” for WF 8000 or WF 9000 research hours if the research proposal is not approved by the Major Professor within the time specified. The student must submit a copy of the front page of the research proposal or an abstract with his/her Major Professor’s signature on it to the Departmental Office Associate prior to the seminar in order to have this requirement met. ***Meeting all required scheduling and deadlines that involve the Research Proposal is fully the responsibility of the student.**

VI. DEADLINES

The responsibility for correct and timely submission of forms and reports lies with the student. Failure to meet deadlines for the Committee Request Form, Program of Study, and Research Proposal may be cause for termination of assistantship and dismissal from the Department’s graduate program. Do not rely on your faculty advisor or the Departmental Office Associate to inform you of deadlines. **Minimally, failure to submit materials by specified deadlines will automatically result in the student receiving an “U” for any thesis/dissertation hours taken during the semester that the deadline(s) was/were not met.**

VII. OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE WITH OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The graduate student’s file is maintained in 271 Thompson Hall. This file contains the Committee Request Form, Program of Study, program changes, transcripts, Research Proposal, and any official correspondence pertaining to the student. Salary personnel papers, Personal Demographic Forms and Tuition Remission Forms are maintained in the Department Accountant’s office in A209 Thompson Hall. Correspondence with the Office of Graduate

Studies should be initiated by the Major Professor and forwarded to the Department Head's office for approval and further processing.

The Master's student's Committee Request Form and Program of Study will be held in the Departmental Office Associate's office until the student has passed his/her defense and will be submitted along with the Report of Examination Results Form. All forms for the Ph.D. student will be submitted to the Graduate School at the required deadlines. Exam results forms will also be forwarded to the Graduate School when results are submitted to the Office Associate.

A student may have access to his/her file upon request with the exception of letters of recommendation. Also, the Major Professor and the Committee may review the file at any time.

VIII. REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER'S STUDENTS

Students entering under the Master's Degree Program will be expected to meet the following requirements within the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture:

A. Required Reading List for Master's Comprehensive Exam

To help the Master's student prepare for the comprehensive portion of the final examination/defense, the faculty strongly recommends and expects the following readings be completed prior to the final exam:

Wildlife Reading List:

1. A general biology text (e.g., Keeton)
2. A general ecology text (e.g., Ricklefs)
3. Techniques for Wildlife Investigations and Management. 2005. (Braun)
4. Conservation of Wildlife Populations: Demography, Genetics and Management (2007). L. Scott Mills.
5. Landscape Ecology in Theory and Practice (2001). Turner, Gardner, O'Neill.
6. Game Management (Leopold)
7. Our Wildlife Legacy (Allen)
8. Statistics for Research (Dowdy and Wearden) or other basic statistics text
9. One of the following Principles & Practices in Wildlife Biology:
 - a.. Wildlife Management (Giles)
 - b. Wildlife Ecology and Management (Robinson & Bolen)
 - c. A Review of Wildlife Management (Peek)
 - d. Principles of Wildlife Management (Bailey)
 - e. Managing our Wildlife Resources (Anderson)
 - f. Wildlife Ecology, Conservation and Management, 2nd edition (2006). Sinclair, Fryxell, and Caughley

Fisheries Reading List:

1. A general biology text (e.g., Keeton)
2. A general ecology text (e.g., Ricklefs)
3. Fisheries Techniques (Murphy & Willis; Neilson & Johnson, eds.)
4. Reading in Aquatic Ecology (Ford & Hazen)
5. Inland Fisheries Management in North America (Hubert & Quist, eds.)
6. Principles of Fisheries Science (Everhart, Eipper and Youngs)
7. Statistics for Research (e.g. Canavos) or other basic statistics text
8. Methods in Stream Ecology (Hauer & Lamberti eds.)
9. Limnology (Cole) or Limnoecology: the ecology for lakes and streams (Lampert & Sommer)
10. Multidimensional Approaches to Reservoir Fisheries Management (Miranda & DeVries eds.)

Aquaculture Reading List:

1. A general biology text (e.g., Keeton)
2. A general ecology text (e.g., Ricklefs)
3. Limnology (Cole)
4. Pond Aquaculture Water Quality Management (Boyd & Tucker) or Water Quality: An Introduction (Boyd)
5. A basic statistics text
6. Fish physiology/biology (e.g., Moyle and Cech)
7. Introductory aquaculture text (Stickney or Pillay & Kutty)
8. Recalculating Aquaculture (Timmons and Ebeling)
9. Flowing Waters Fish Culture (Soderburg)
10. Fish Hatchery Management (Wedemeyer)
11. Environmental BMP for Aquaculture (Tucker & Hargreaves)

B. Statistics Requirement for Master's Students

A minimum level of competency in statistics is required. This requirement may be satisfied by obtaining a B or better in ST 8114 or ST 8214 or equivalent graduate level statistic courses as approved by the student's committee.

C. Ecology Proficiency of Master's Students

Although no formal policy or exam exists to test the knowledge of our students in ecology, it is expected that all graduate students in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture understands basic knowledge gleaned from the recommended readings (VIII, A, 1) and have a solid proficiency in ecology. This expectation will be evaluated during the comprehensive portion of the student's oral final examination.

D. Proposal Seminar

M.S. students are required to present their thesis proposal to faculty and students within the **first 6 months** after starting their graduate program in the department. Immediately after the seminar the student and the graduate committee will meet to discuss and approve the student's Program of Study, and discuss the research plan and timetable. The M.S. Student must have the final draft of their Thesis Proposal approved by their graduate committee **no later than 12 months** after starting their graduate program.

E. Proficiency in Communication Skills of Master's Students

The Department recommends that all Master's students take WF 8212 Communication in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, or equivalent graduate level course approved by the student's committee, or present papers at professional meetings during their program tenure.

IX. REQUIREMENTS FOR PH.D. STUDENTS

Students entering under the Ph.D. program will be expected to meet the following requirements within the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture:

A. M.S. graduate degree

To be admitted into the doctoral program of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, the student must have earned M.S. degree with a thesis requirement.

B. Statistics Requirements

A minimum level of competency in statistics is required. This requirement may be satisfied by obtaining a B or better in ST 8114 or ST 8214 or equivalent graduate level courses as approved by the student's committee. The student's committee may approve course(s) already taken as satisfying the statistics requirement.

The statistics requirement may vary according to individual goals and needs. It is recommended that the requirement be satisfied during the first year; ordinarily, students should take a statistics course (if needed) during their first semester.

C. Proposal Seminar

Ph.D. students are required to present their research proposal to faculty and students within the **first 6 months** after starting their graduate program in the department. Immediately after the seminar the student and the graduate

committee will meet to discuss and approve the student's Program of Study, and discuss the research plan and timetable. The Ph.D. student must have the final draft of their Dissertation Research Proposal approved by their graduate committee **no later than 12 months** after starting their graduate program.

D. Proficiency in Communication Skills of Doctoral Students

The Department recommends that all Ph.D. students take WF 8212 Communication in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, or equivalent graduate level course approved by the student's committee, or present paper(s) at professional meetings during their program tenure.

E. Preliminary Examinations

The preliminary examination for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree may be taken when the student is within six hours of completing course work and has the dissertation topic approved. The preliminary exam is composed of two portions: a written and oral. The student first completes the written portion and then follows with the oral examination. Upon completion of the preliminaries (written and oral), a vote is taken by the doctoral committee on the student's performance regarding 1) academic performance (coursework), 2) written preliminaries, and 3) oral preliminaries. A "Pass" is determined by a majority vote with no more than one dissenting. A student must be enrolled during the semester in which each preliminary examination (oral and written) is administered. The request to take the preliminary examination must be filed by the student with the Department Head's office and the Declaration of Examination/Defense Form must be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the anticipated date of the examination. The examination must be taken by June 1 if a student intends to graduate in December, of that year, by November 1 to graduate in May of the succeeding year, and by February 1 to graduate in August of the same year. A student who fails the preliminary examination (written or oral) cannot apply to take another exam until four months have elapsed from the date of the original examination. Two failures on this examination will result in the student being removed from further consideration as a doctoral candidate. Exam results must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by the Department Office Associate.

F. Admission to Ph.D. Candidacy

A student will be admitted to candidacy under the following conditions: (1) the dissertation topic must have been selected and approved; (2) the student has satisfactorily completed graduate course work as deemed appropriate by the student's Graduate Committee; (3) the final graduate program has been officially approved and accepted in the Office of Graduate Studies; and (4) the written and oral preliminary examinations have been passed. The student is responsible for

preparing the Admission to Candidacy Form and forwarding it to the Office Associate's office for processing. This is to be done only after the Ph.D. candidate passes the Preliminary exam, and has completed a minimum of 20 hrs. of dissertation credit. Forms may be obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies: <http://grad.msstate.edu/forms/>

G. Foreign Language Requirements

There is no foreign language requirement in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

X. GRADUATE MINOR IN WILDLIFE, FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE

The Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture allows graduate students outside of the graduate program in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture to have a minor. The minor may be in one of three subject areas: aquaculture, fisheries, or wildlife.

A. Procedure to establish a minor

If a minor is chosen, the student's graduate committee must include a representative from the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture to serve as the minor professor, approve all coursework that is applied towards the minor, and administer the Minor Examination. Once minor course work is approved by the graduate committee it must receive a review and signature approval by the Graduate Coordinator of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

B. Requirements for a Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture minor in a M.S. or a Doctoral program

A minor in a M.S. degree program in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture requires:

- 1) a minimum of nine hours of graduate course work;
- 2) the approval of the course work by the Major Professor and committee;
- 3) a member from Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture to serve as the minor professor on the student's graduate committee;
- 4) the approval by the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Graduate Coordinator;
- 5) the student must achieve at least a grade of **B** in each of the courses included on the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture minor program.

A minor in a doctoral program in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture requires:

- 1) a minimum of 12 hours of graduate course work;

- 2) the approval of the coursework by the Major Professor and graduate committee;
- 3) the approval of the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Graduate Coordinator;
- 4) a member from Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture to serve as the minor professor on the student's graduate committee;
- 5) the student must achieve at least a grade of B in each of the courses included on the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture minor program.

C. Minor Exam

The minor exam (written, oral, or both) will be administered by the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture minor committee member. The minor professor will conduct the exam in combination with and using the same procedure as the major exam. The minor committee member will work in conjunction with the student's instructors to determine appropriate subject areas for the exam. The oral examination for the minor exam should be conducted in conjunction with the oral portion of the major exam. The minor professor is responsible for ensuring that the student demonstrates knowledge and understanding commensurate with a M.S. or Ph.D. minor in addition to the usual duties of a committee member.

D. Duties of the minor professor

The Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture minor professor has 4 primary responsibilities over and above those of a simple committee member:

- 1) Approval/consultation of course selection.
- 2) Preparation, administration, and evaluation of the written minor examination.
- 3) Preparation, administration, and evaluation of the oral minor examination.
- 4) Ensuring that the student's knowledge of the minor subject material is consistent with the expectations of the faculty of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

XI. THESIS/DISSERTATION

The preparation of the thesis/dissertation is a time-consuming endeavor that can be efficiently expedited by careful attention to the following details.

During the initial stages of writing the thesis/dissertation, the Major Professor will be responsible to see that the material is properly organized, correctly stated and interpreted, and written in an acceptable style. Early drafts of the thesis/dissertation may be provided to the Graduate Committee for input prior to the final draft being submitted for defense, if they agree.

When the Major Professor is satisfied that the thesis/dissertation is ready to be defended, a copy of the typewritten manuscript with the thesis/dissertation advisor's/director's signature on the signature page will be furnished to each committee member and to the Graduate Coordinator. Committee members must be provided a copy of the thesis/dissertation 3 weeks prior to the oral examination/thesis defense or dissertation defense. This draft will be viewed by the committee as the final document to be defended, and any further revision to the manuscript will not be accepted prior to the defense.

Serving on a graduate committee in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture carries with it, many responsibilities. Agreeing to serve on a graduate committee means that the committee member is accepting the responsibility of providing the student with guidance and advice within his/her expertise. This responsibility extends to when the final draft of the thesis/dissertation is presented for defense. It is incumbent of committee members to read the thesis/dissertation well before the exam. Committee members may express concerns about the eligibility of the thesis/dissertation to be defended within the 3 week period prior to the exam, and should not wait until the actual time of the defense to inform the student that the thesis/dissertation is "not ready to defend". If after review of the thesis/dissertation, the committee member feels the document is not defensible, he/she should first consult with the student's advisor, and then the Graduate Coordinator.

For M.S. candidates, upon conclusion of the thesis defense, a vote is taken by the thesis committee on the overall student's performance regarding the 1) academic performance, 2) oral presentations of the thesis to the faculty, staff and students, 3) defense of the thesis to the committee, and 4) demonstration of sufficient knowledge of principles of management and conservation of natural resources. Acceptance of a successful Thesis is determined by a majority vote with no more than one dissenting.

For doctoral candidates, upon conclusion of the dissertation defense, a vote is taken by the doctoral committee on the overall student's performance regarding the 1) oral presentations of the dissertation to the faculty, staff and students, and 2) defense of the dissertation to the committee. Acceptance of a successful Dissertation is determined by a majority vote with no more than one dissenting.

A final copy of the thesis/dissertation must be provided to the Department Head office by the designated deadline for the Graduate Coordinator to sign. A final copy is that copy that has incorporated all comments from the committee raised during the defense, all comments by the Graduate Coordinator, and all comments by the Major Professor. The Graduate Coordinator **will not sign** the signature page if there are corrections to be made; therefore, it is the student's Major Professor and committee members' responsibility to assist the student and ensure that the thesis/dissertation is without error. If errors are found within the final draft submitted to the Graduate Coordinator, approval will be delayed. The CFR Dean will establish his/her deadline for thesis/dissertation submission at the beginning of each semester, and these will determine the deadline submission dates for the Department Head office (typically three weeks earlier).

It is the **student's responsibility** to ensure that the thesis/dissertation is grammatically correct and consistent in material presented. All students are encouraged strongly to review the document, "Grammar, style and content guidelines for theses and dissertations in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture, College of Forest Resources, Mississippi State University" before submitting the final copy to the Graduate Coordinator for signature.

A soft-bound copy of the thesis should be prepared for the student's Major Professor, one soft bound copy for the Graduate Coordinator, one soft bound copy for the CFR Reading Room and one bound copy for each member of the Committee, in addition to copies required by the University, and, in some cases, sponsors of research. Cost assignment of printing and binding is at the discretion of the Major Professor. The Mississippi Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit require two copies from students supported from Unit funds.

XII. PH. D. PRELIMINARY WRITTEN and ORAL EXAMS

The Ph.D. student is responsible for scheduling the written and oral preliminary examinations, and providing written announcement to the Graduate Committee including the Department Head and Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks before the exam. After consulting with their Major Professor the Ph.D. candidates must notify the Department Head's office and the Office Associate of the time, date, and location of their exam. They must also send the Office of the Graduate School the Declaration Announcement of Comprehensive Examination/Defense Form at least 2 weeks prior to exams. The Ph.D. written and oral examinations will be passed if not more than one dissenting vote is received. In the event of failure to pass the Ph.D. written and oral examinations, a re-examination may be given as soon as 4 months later. The decision of re-examination is at the discretion of the student's graduate committee.

XIII. MASTER'S ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION AND DOCTORAL DEFENSE

The final examination will be composed of two parts. The first part will be an oral presentation open to faculty, staff, and interested persons of the community. The graduate student will be responsible for announcing the oral presentation at least **three weeks prior** to the scheduled date. The student is responsible for ensuring that his/her oral presentation is adequately announced to the scientific and public community by posting announcements in designated locations and/or by email. An announcement should be sent to the Office Associate to distribute and a brief abstract to accompany it is encouraged. The second component of the examination will consist of a closed oral examination of the student by his/her graduate committee consisting of questions concerning 1) course work and general knowledge and the 2) thesis/dissertation.

A copy of the Thesis/Dissertation title page with the advisor's signature should be turned in to the Office Associate prior to announcing a defense. The student will also need to send The Office of the Graduate School the Declaration Announcement of Comprehensive Examination/Defense Form at least 2 weeks prior to defense.

XIV. DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WILDLIFE, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE GRADUATE COORDINATOR

The Graduate Coordinator of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture shall be a member of the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Graduate Faculty and is elected by the faculty every three years. The Department Head may not be nominated and elected as Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator has primary oversight of the graduate student's academic program in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture until the student passes his/her general oral exam and thesis defense or until the doctoral student passes his/her dissertation defense.

Primary responsibilities of the Graduate Coordinator include:

1. Reviewing the credentials of individuals accepted into the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Graduate Program to ensure that all requirements are met.
2. Reviewing and approving the student's Program of Study.
3. Reviewing and approving the student's Research Plan of Work.
4. Working with the Chair, Departmental Probation Committee to ensure all requisites are met.
5. Appointing an alternate coordinator when he/she serves as committee member and/or when circumstances prevent attendance at committee meetings that require his/her presence.

An important responsibility of the Graduate Coordinator, given that the Office of Graduate Studies does not send a Graduate Representative to graduate examinations, is to ensure that: 1) the examination is fair to the student; 2) the Department and University policy is followed; and 3) the examination is of sufficient rigor and commensurate with the expectations of the graduate faculty of the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture. The Graduate Coordinator has the authority to halt any final graduate examination if he/she feels that any of the above is not being met or honored by the examining committee.

XV. TIME LIMIT

After the student begins the M.S. program, he/she must complete all course work and a thesis within six years. Students in the doctoral program must complete all course work and a dissertation within eight years. Otherwise, the student is terminated from the degree program.

XVI. PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH

No research project is complete until the results are disseminated and available for public and other use groups. Students are expected to prepare technical and scientific manuscripts based on their research promptly on completion of field work or concurrently when writing the thesis/dissertation. Publication should proceed with the cooperation of the Major Professor. Authorship is normally at the discretion of the Major Professor. The Major Professor should

always be incorporated as co-author and in some instances senior author (depending on individual contribution) in recognition of the faculty direction of the research. Failure to proceed with publication in a timely manner (approximately 1 year post-graduation) will allow the Major Professor to take the initiative in this phase of the research.

XVII. SEMINARS

A variety of seminars are sponsored on campus. Students are encouraged to attend seminars of interest by other departments and expected to attend those organized by the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture. Students who are on campus and do not have an authorized conflict are expected to attend seminars regardless of whether they are taking the seminar for credit. Students should seek to initiate seminars on topics of interest.

XVIII. INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES DUE TO EMPLOYMENT

If employment causes the student to leave campus, the student is still obligated to meet all requirements for completing his/her degree. A graduate student who has completed all course work and/or has been admitted into candidacy and/or lacks only the completion of the thesis or dissertation must be during at least 2 academic terms (summer is considered 1 term) per year. This includes:

1. Doctoral students who have completed their course work, passed their comprehensive/preliminary examinations, and are working on their dissertation.
2. Students in an educational specialist program who have completed all their course work but have not taken or passed their final examinations.
3. Master degree students who have completed all their course work, passed their examinations, and are working on their thesis.
4. Master degree students who have completed their course work but have not taken or passed their final examinations.

Students who fail to be continuously enrolled will pay tuition and registration fees for missed terms at current rates, and will pay a penalty fee equivalent to the current rate of one graduate credit hour. The academic year is as follows: fall, spring, summer (must enroll for both 5-week terms or a 10-week term to count for one semester).

An Exit Form should be filled out before leaving campus (Appendix Three).

Section II

I. GENERAL DUTIES

Graduate students may be asked to broaden their experience by assisting with undergraduate courses and research programs as approved by their Major Professors. A

professor may ask a student to assist with teaching a lab or a student may be called upon to assist other graduate students on their research projects if approval is given by the Major Professor. Students are expected to be aware of and participate in research endeavors of other graduate students and faculty within the Department. Graduate students are expected and encouraged to participate in Student and State Chapters of national professional organizations such as The Wildlife Society, the American Fisheries Society, Catfish Farmers of America, and The World Aquaculture Society. Additionally, professional development is not limited to course work, research activities, and participation in professional organizations--readings from established lists are strongly encouraged.

Graduate students on an assistantship (RA or TA) are expected to maintain regular hours at all times. Holidays for graduate students are the same as those for the faculty (Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Martin Luther King's birthday, Memorial Day, Easter, and Fourth of July). Graduate assistants are not eligible for sick or vacation leave; vacation must be preapproved by his/her Major Professor at least two weeks prior to taking leave. If pre-approval is not secured by the student from his/her Major Professor, the following actions will be taken:

1st Offense - written reprimand of student by Major Professor; copy is filed in student's permanent file

2nd Offense – written reprimand and paycheck reduced for unworked hours

3rd Offense - paycheck reduced for unworked hours w/option to terminate the assistantship

Please notify the Departmental Office Associate of your e-mail address to receive correspondence and job announcements.

Students will be expected to keep their work station clean, neat, and professional in appearance. Outdoor equipment, plant or animal specimens, muddy boots, etc., should not be in the office area. Frequent inspections will be made by the Department Head. Failure to maintain a clean, neat, professional workstation may result in loss of the workstation. Only one workstation is allowed per student and students must notify Office Associate if they relocate or no longer need their workstation.

Office equipment will not be loaned to students. You may use the typewriter in the Accounting Suite for **short** typing assignments. Any research equipment taken off campus **MUST** have a Hand Receipt filled out (this includes vehicles, computers, and cameras). The Computer Labs on the first and third floors of Thompson Hall are available for student use, free of charge. Boats, motors, trucks, four-wheelers, tree stands, cameras, and other research and teaching equipment are the property of MSU/FWRC or Coop Unit and are not to be borrowed for recreational or personal use. Students using such equipment for research are fully responsible for its proper care and use and, if lost or damaged, may be expected to pay for its repair or replacement.

II. VEHICLES AND PARKING POLICY

Use of the Department's vehicles is a privilege and must be treated as such. A driver of a vehicle should immediately report accidents, tickets or malfunctioning to the professor in charge of the vehicle; leave the vehicle with at least one-half tank of gas; keep the vehicle in presentable order for the next person who uses it; and maintain vehicle log, vehicle maintenance and cost center number (project number) for your trip as per instructions from your major advisor. Mileage and a cost center (project) number must be turned in to the Forest Operations upon completion of each use of the departmental van. Poor maintenance or tendency toward untidiness by a student may be cause to prohibit use of the Department vehicles. Vehicles are to stay on campus (compound behind the Seed Technology Building) when not in use. The Coop Unit has additional restrictions on use of Federal vehicles. Coop Unit students will receive additional instruction from the Unit Leader.

Any user of a WF&A state-owned vehicle is responsible for that vehicle during its usage and must follow all motor vehicle laws and regulations of the state of Mississippi. The MS Driver's Manual may be accessed and downloaded at:

[http://www.dps.state.ms.us/dps/dps.nsf/webpageedit/LicenseManuals_DriversLicenseManuals_DL-anualPDF/\\$FILE/Driver%20License%20Manual%20March%202011.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.dps.state.ms.us/dps/dps.nsf/webpageedit/LicenseManuals_DriversLicenseManuals_DL-anualPDF/$FILE/Driver%20License%20Manual%20March%202011.pdf?OpenElement)

Please be certain that you review and understand all laws pertaining to driving on MS' roadways before driving a state-owned vehicle! Driving a state-owned vehicle is a privilege and not a right. Receiving a moving violation while using a WF&A vehicle **WILL** result in you losing your driving privileges (for state vehicles) for 6 months. This is a serious issue because WF&A has the largest fleet of state-owned vehicles of any unit in MSU. Vehicles are under profound scrutiny by state legislators and thus any infraction puts a brighter spotlight on this department regarding vehicle ownership and usage. Thus, we must be very vigilant!! Lastly, but importantly, while driving a state-owned vehicle, let's be polite and courteous, regardless of how the other person may act towards you!!!

The College of Forest Resources/Forest and Wildlife Research Center (CFR/FWRC) has established a parking policy to provide direction for parking of State and federally owned vehicles used by employees, students, collaborators, guests, etc. **The main parking lot of Thompson Hall is reserved for faculty, staff and guests. Neither Department nor Coop Unit vehicles should be parked in the Thompson Hall parking lot, except for temporary loading and unloading. Therefore, all State and Federally owned vehicles shall be parked either in the gravel parking lot behind Thompson Hall or in the open parking lot directly across Stone Boulevard from Thompson Hall.** Additional parking is available at the Blackjack Road facilities of the FWRC. If a student receives a parking or speeding ticket, the student will be responsible for paying the fine, and this ticket will be recorded in the student's file.

III. OFFICE PROCEDURES

Secretarial Services

Secretarial services provided to graduate students will be only those specified by the Major Professor. Ordinarily these services will be restricted to activities directly required by sponsored research. Students are responsible for typing theses/dissertations. All class work is the responsibility of the student.

Copiers

Graduate students may NOT use the photocopiers in the Mailroom (1st floor - Room 110). All graduate students needing copies of material must have permission from his/her Major Professor to make copies. A special copier account number is also needed which must be provided by the student needing copies to the Departmental Staff Assistant. Copying will be completed on a first-come, first-served basis. Copying will be performed only for project needs approved by the student's Major Professor. Students must secure the services of a local photocopying center for personal or class related copies. Due to the demands and schedules of staff at the receptionist desk, please allow for up to two days for completion of task. If an emergency task is needed, please speak with the staff upon request.

Facsimile

A FAX machine is located in the Receptionist's Office (110). Our FAX number is 662-325-8726. FAX transmission sheets can be obtained in Room 110. Instructions for sending a FAX are on the facsimile machine. **DO NOT ASK THE RECEPTIONIST TO SEND A FAX.** If you have problems, see the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture staff. All long-distance faxes must be charged to your long distance telecommunications code.

When FAX messages are received, they will be placed into the appropriate mailbox as soon as possible. Please ask all persons sending a fax to you to indicate your name on the front of the fax.

Mail

The graduate student mail is delivered twice daily to Rooms 210 and 220. Please check your mail boxes daily; this is the faculty and staff's method of getting messages and information to you.

Reserving Projection Devices for Seminars/Instruction

Students needing an overhead projector, slide projector, or multi-media projector must see the Office Associate to check out this equipment for academic use. All equipment should be returned as soon as possible in the condition that it was obtained. Return the equipment to the Office Associate so that it may be checked in. Under no circumstances should a piece of equipment be left at the secretary's desk if he/she is unavailable. If this occurs and the equipment disappears, the last person checking it out will be responsible for replacing the equipment.

IV. OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION AND POLICIES

Offices

Graduate student offices are located in TH210 and 220 and in The Acorn and are assigned by Departmental Office Associate when students enter the program. A limited number of individual offices are available for Ph.D. students or M.S. students writing their thesis on a shared basis at The Acorn. These offices are assigned by the Office Associate. Offices at the Acorn are considered a privilege and not a right. These offices are awarded on seniority and availability and can be reclaimed by the Department Head at any time if necessary for faculty/staff use.

Pro card policy for graduate students

Graduate students can use the Pro card to make purchases in town after they have reviewed the restrictions on Pro card use with an administrative staff member or attended fall orientation. The major professor for each graduate student must approve any Pro card purchase prior to the items being purchased. Specific rules are:

- No sales tax can be charged on the Pro card
- Any item exceeding \$250 must be approved by administrative staff before being purchased. The reason for the over \$250 rule is that some items over \$250 are considered equipment and require prior approval by sponsored programs accounting before they can be purchased.
- A Pro card may not be kept more than 2 hours without special permission from the Department Head Office (Dr. Dibble, Ms. Laura Andrews or Annice Hill.
- A Pro card may not be kept overnight without special permission from the Department Head

If someone needs something ordered on-line or a purchase called in to a company, they need to submit an e-mail to WFA-Purchasing@cfr.msstate.edu. The e-mail must contain the web address and phone number of the company, number needed for each item, a description of each item (so we know what is being ordered), an estimated cost for each item and the project acronym and fund number for the order. If the order needs to be rushed, please state that in the request for purchase.

Infractions of WF&A Pro card use will result in the following:

- 1st offense - The individual may not use the Pro card for one month.
- 2nd offense- The individual may not use the Pro card for 3 months.
- 3rd offense- The individual is no longer permitted to make purchases using the Pro card.

Computers

Several Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture laboratories have personal computers, printers, and other hardware that are available to graduate students of the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. These computers are made available for student use on a first-come first-serve basis. Please consult with your Major Professor or supervisor to determine which computers are available for your general use. Also, these personal computers are a privilege, not a right, and any abuse of these facilities may result in loss of usage privileges.

E-mail

Every graduate student should have an e-mail address. This address should be given to the Office Associate to ensure you will receive general correspondence and job listings. To obtain an e-mail address, please go to the MSU Web page and access the listing "Current Students." Under the Division of Student Affairs Other Student Services, you should access "To Obtain an E-mail Account or Dial-up Network Access." Please follow the instructions to complete the request for a MSU "RA" account.

Data Ownership

Data collected by graduate students or staff are the property of Mississippi State University. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all original data sheets and computer files are deposited with the principal investigator of his/her research project before leaving MSU. It is strongly advised that students, during the course of their research program, maintain multiple up-to-date files of all data collected with, or for, their Major Professor. The thesis or the dissertation is the property of the student through copyright procedures.

Research and Teaching Assistantships

The Graduate Research Assistantship is a half-time position based upon a 40-hr. week. The student's Major Professor has the discretion of deciding how the work hours will be assigned and allocated. Assigned work hours may or may not be directly related to the student's specific research project and may be more or less than 20 hours any particular week.

The Graduate Teaching Assistantship (TA) and CFR Scholarships (GRA) are half-time positions based upon a 40-hr. week. The Department Head will assign the student to the Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture courses and thus professors that he/she will assist during the designated semester. Students receiving a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (TA or CFR Scholarship) must take the Teaching Assistant Workshop or complete the Teaching Certification Program sponsored by the Office of Graduate Studies, which is typically offered in August. Application for the certification program may be obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies. Failing to attend this workshop or certification program will result in the student not being able to receive a TA. Teaching assistants in Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture should be aware of the following expectations/stipulations:

1. Individuals on a TA or CFR Scholarship are individually expected to provide teaching assistance up to 20 hours/week assisting the faculty to whom they are assigned.
2. A TA or CFR Scholarship recipient may be assigned to assist more than one faculty member, depending on projected work load.
3. The TA or CFR Scholarship recipient must schedule their own course work and research responsibilities around the expected/assigned work schedule of the teaching faculty to whom they are assisting. It is unacceptable to inform a faculty member to whom a TA or CFR Scholarship recipient is assigned to assist by saying: "I cannot help you with the labs on Thursday because I have a class I must to attend". The teaching assistant's obligation to assist the assigned faculty comes first; any conflicts with the student's own coursework or research preventing him/her from accomplishing this obligation will result in dropping or rescheduling of their coursework and/or removal of the TA or CFR Scholarship.

Conference Room Scheduling

All scheduling of rooms for committee meetings and presentations is arranged by the student and/or Major Professor through the Department Head's Administrative Assistant.

Geospatial Technologies (GIS) Laboratory

Room 260-Geospatial Technologies Laboratory is designed to support WFA spatial research of and use by WF&A faculty and graduate students. An undergraduate student or technician who does not have WF&A graduate student status may, on a limited basis, obtain special permission to access and use the lab by obtaining a GIS laboratory access form from the Office Associate (271 TH). The form includes a description and justification of the work to be conducted, a time schedule, and signature from the immediate professor or Principle Investigator.

GIS Rules and Regulations:

1. No food, drink, etc. are allowed in the lab
2. Books and manuals are property of the GIS lab, please do not remove them.
3. Do not leave personal material in the lab; take it with you when you leave. This includes cleaning up.
4. Do not Shutdown the computers but please Log-Off when you are finished.
5. Please do not leave your workstation unattended without logging out; someone might inadvertently destroy your files. If an unattended computer is logged in, you will be logged out so that other users may access it. If you are running a long-term process, lock your station and leave a note on the keyboard. Unattended machines without notes will be unlocked and logged out.
6. Workstations are available on a first-come first-served basis; however, GIS/GPS/Remote Sensing applications take priority over other uses. There is no "personal space" in the lab.
7. This lab is primarily for Graduate Students working on research. If you have a technician that needs to use the lab for you, please make them aware of these rules. Graduate students have priority for workstations and therefore if your technician is entering data they may have to give up their seat until another workstation is available.
8. Do not save data on the C:\ drive (local hard drive). It will be cleared periodically. Every graduate student has access to a folder on the W:\ drive and therefore it should be used.
9. You must have a CFR account to use this lab. Accounts can be created by CFR ITS downstairs.

Please **do not** attempt fixing computer and printing problems; all problems should be reported, even apparently small problems to the Department Head's Office (325-3830).

APPENDICES

Appendix One

DATE: _____

**TO: Department Head
Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture
Mississippi State University**

The committee listed below has assigned the following course work to _____
for his/her probation semester.

_____	Grade: _____
_____	Grade: _____
_____	Grade: _____

The student must obtain a “B” or better on each of the above courses and complete the course work by _____.

Committee:

Signature:

Dr. Kevin Hunt, Chair

Kris Godwon

Dr. Bronson Stickland

Dr. Guiming Wang

The above student has satisfactorily completed the probation requirements and is accepted into the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture graduate program.

Dr. Eric Dibble, Graduate Coordinator

Date

Dr. Bruce D. Leopold, Professor and Department Head

Date

Appendix Two

Research Proposal

For

John Doe

Candidate for the degree of

Masters of Science or Doctor of Philosophy

in

Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science or College of Forest Resources

Month, Year

PROPOSED TITLE: List title as it will be listed on the thesis/dissertation signature page.

- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Objective #1.
 2. Objective #2.
 3. Objective #3.

Student

Date

APPROVAL:

Major Advisor

Date

Committee Member

Date

Committee Member

Date

Committee Member

Date

Graduate Program Coordinator

Date

Department Head

Date

**College of Forest Resources and Forest and Wildlife Research Center
Employee Termination Clearance Sheet**

Employee Name: _____ MSU ID #: _____

Department/Unit WFA Phone Number: 325-3133

Job Placement _____

Forwarding Address _____

Forwarding Email Address _____ Forwarding Phone No. _____

The following list must also be completed and a signature must be obtained from the person indicated before you receive your final paycheck and/or your Graduation Checklist can be complete.

___ Remove all freezer samples, clear all Chemical Inventory and any disposal of Hazardous Waste **OR** reassign to another individual in the department.

_____ **Major Professor/Supervisor**

___ Finalize payroll, termination and leave accrual paperwork. Clear all calling cards, LDS #, voice-mail, e-mail and Banner access. Confirm mailing address for W-2.

_____ **Annice Hill (TH a209)**

___ Clear outstanding travel expenses.

_____ **Diane Weeks (TH 271)**

___ Cancel card access codes to building return office and work area keys.

_____ **Elaine Wright (Turn in to Kelly LaSalle - TH 271)**

___ Clear out office space. Remove copier codes, gas card access, e-mail (on list server) and return vehicle keys. Remove all inventory items under your responsibility and return all hand receipted items i.e. laptop, printer, phone, palm pilot, etc.

_____ **Kelly LaSalle (TH 271)**

Other university items to clear are: long distance, account services, health center, library, Sanderson Center, and tuition and fees. Please provide your forwarding address to the University Post Office and Statewide Federal Credit Union (if applicable).

-Schedule Exit interview with Department Head.

-I have reviewed this check-out sheet and the information is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Employee Signature Date

Supervisor Signature Date

Dean's or Director's Signature Date

Revised 3/15/2010

Revised 7/5/2011

Revised 8/31/2011

Revised 6/23/2014

Revised 8/29/2014