

Plant and Environmental Sciences

Graduate Studies Handbook

Welcome to New Mexico State University's Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences. This handbook provides valuable information about graduate school and departmental policies. You should also obtain copies of the following documents, available through the Graduate School Office or website: "Graduate School Catalog," "Graduate Student Handbook," and "Theses & Dissertations."

The Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences offers a Master of Science in both **Plant and Environmental Science** as well as **Horticulture**, and a Doctor of Philosophy in **Plant and Environmental Science**. The faculty are experts in a variety of disciplines, including crop physiology, ornamental horticulture, social horticulture, soil science, environmental science, rangeland and desert ecology, plant breeding and genetics, nursery and greenhouse production, molecular biology, turfgrass, and forestry.

Although much of your time will be spent in class and with members of your committee, we encourage you to interact with other faculty members and fellow graduate students. They are valuable sources of information, and may add to your personal and professional growth in many ways. We hope your graduate experience will prepare you to become a leader in your field, and a life-long supporter of New Mexico State University.

Any item in this handbook is subject to modification
at any time by proper administrative procedure
(updated 8/30/2022)

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Degree Requirements

Admission:

Admission begins with an application to Graduate School (<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/>) that requires a \$40.00 nonrefundable application fee for U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Students who plan to engage in advanced study in the Department of Plant & Environmental Sciences (PES) at New Mexico State University (NMSU) must be admitted to the Graduate School, be accepted by the Department, and be accepted by a graduate faculty member. Undergraduate and graduate academic transcripts, a GRE score, three letters of recommendation, and a letter of purpose or intent for applying to graduate school are required for admission. The letters of recommendation should be from individuals who can address the student's potential to succeed in graduate studies. International students MUST apply through International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS; <https://iss.nmsu.edu/#admissions>) and pay the nonrefundable application fee of \$50.00.

Requirements for a Master of Science (M.S.) Degree:

The general NMSU requirements for the M.S. degree are described in the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/>). Students should familiarize themselves with these requirements. The PES Department has established specific procedures and requirements for the M.S. degree, including a minimum GPA of 3.0 for entering M.S. students.

Provisional status: In very rare instances, the Department may accept an individual as a provisional student in the M.S. degree program subject to the criteria specified in the Graduate School Catalog and the PES Graduate Studies Handbook. Such students will only be admitted if the graduate faculty member who is willing to serve as their major advisor provides an official letter that justifies why provisional status should be granted. Such requests will be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Committee for timely review and recommendation to the Department Head that the request either be approved or denied.

Student's Committee: The student's committee should be formed during the first semester of study. International students may delay forming a committee until the second semester of study; however, this is discouraged. The committee must have a minimum of three members of the University Graduate Faculty. The major advisor assumes the role of the committee chair. At least one member must have their primary tenure-track appointment in the PES Department. The Graduate Dean's representative must have an appointment outside the PES Department. The student's committee approves the "Program of Studies for Master's Students" form (usually by the second semester), guides the student in research, and administers the final exam. The Department Head will sign the program of study after the student's committee has approved the program. All forms needed by the graduate school must be filed by the student and can be found at (<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html#Masters1>).

- 1. Course Requirements:** General course requirements are described in the Graduate School Catalog. Courses numbered 450-499 are designed for senior undergraduates and graduate students; 500-599 are primarily for graduate students working on a master's or doctoral degree; 600-700 are principally for students working on a doctoral degree. A minimum of 30 semester credits in courses numbered 450 or above is required, including at

least 15 credits at the 500-level or above. Specific course requirements are left to the discretion of the student's committee with the following exception:

During their tenure at NMSU, all students will present at least one department seminar (AGRO/HORT/SOIL 590) covering the student's research.

- 2. Thesis Option:** Most students are expected to complete a thesis which requires completion of research suitable for scientific journal publication. For students pursuing this option, a thesis will be written and formatted according to Graduate School guidelines (<https://eltnmsu.sharepoint.com/sites/GraduateSchool/SitePages/Master's-Thesis-Students.aspx>). The student must know deadlines for thesis submission to the committee and the Graduate School. A minimum of 4 credits of AGRO/HORT/ENVS 599 (Master's Thesis) must be completed. Additional Master's Thesis credits may be completed by a student, however, a maximum of 6 credits may be counted towards the 30 credit degree requirement. Having once registered for thesis credit, a student must continue to register for a minimum of 1 credit thesis or graduate-level course work each fall and spring semester until the thesis is approved by the Graduate School and accepted by the Branson Library. If the thesis will be completed during summer, the student must register for one credit hour during the summer session in which the thesis will be completed.
- 3. Non-Thesis Option:** A non-thesis option, which the Department deems a terminal degree, is available for students with the approval of the student's advisory committee. The non-thesis option is not recommended for students wishing to pursue a Ph.D. For students pursuing the non-thesis option, a research project must be completed and a research report will be written on an area of investigation conducted by the student. The student's committee will determine the report's format and final acceptance.
- 4. Final Exam:** The final exam is administered by the student's committee. It is an oral defense of the thesis or research report, and also a general examination on the student's field of study. If an M.S. candidate (thesis option only) is interested in subsequently pursuing a Ph.D. at NMSU, the Ph.D. qualifying exam may be administered in conjunction with the M.S. final exam (subject to prior committee approval). In such cases, the original M.S. committee members would likely be retained for the Ph.D. committee, and additional members subsequently added (if needed). For additional information see "Requirements for a Ph.D. Degree" below.

Master's Accelerated Program (MAP): The MAP provides an opportunity for academically qualified undergraduate students (minimum average GPA of 3.0) to begin working on a master's degree during their junior and senior years while completing a bachelor's degree. Undergraduate students may apply for acceptance to a MAP after completing 60 semester hours of undergraduate coursework, of which a minimum of 25 credit hours must be completed at NMSU and apply towards their undergraduate major. Undergraduate students accepted into a MAP can substitute a maximum of 12 graduate course credits (450 level or higher) for required or elective courses in their undergraduate degree program. Courses must be selected that can logically be applied towards the completion of a master's program of study. A grade of B or higher in this coursework will be required in order for it to be eligible for graduate credit.

MAP Participation Requirements:

1. Must complete 60 semester hours of undergraduate coursework of which a minimum of 25 semester credit hours must be completed at NMSU and apply towards the undergraduate major.
2. The grade point average (GPA) must be at a minimum of 3.0 to participate in PES MAP.
3. The student must be classified as a Junior or Senior.
4. A student completing a second bachelor's degree can be eligible for MAP.
5. Graduate level courses included in MAP are those courses numbered 450 and above or those chosen by the graduate academic departments. 600 and 700 level courses are NOT part of MAP.
6. Meet the department requirements for participating in MAP. Some departments may have requirements that exceed these minimum standards.
7. Additional information and required forms can be found at <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/map-process-04-05-2022.pdf> and <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html>

Requirements for a Ph.D. Degree:

The general university requirements for a Ph.D. degree are described in the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/>). A student is urged to know these requirements. Additionally, PES has established specific procedures and requirements for the Ph.D. degree (see items 1 to 8 below), including a minimum GPA of 3.3 for entering doctoral students. The "Program of Study and Committee for Doctoral Students" form needs to be filed by the student once they have completed 12 graduate credits beyond the M.S. degree, and passed their qualifying examination. Additional required forms are available at (<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html#Doctoral1>).

Provisional status: Given that the Ph.D. degree represents the highest academic degree offered by NMSU, no students will be admitted on a provisional basis into the PES Ph.D. degree program. Students who do not meet the minimum Ph.D. requirements may be admitted as an M.S. degree candidate, provided they meet the minimum M.S. degree requirements. In this role, the student will have the opportunity to demonstrate their competence. If successful, they may subsequently pursue the Ph.D. subject to endorsement by their major advisor and the student's advisory committee (see item #6 below).

1. **Doctoral Committee:** The student's committee should be formed the first semester of study. International students may delay forming a committee until the second semester of study; however, this is discouraged. The major advisor assumes the role of the committee chair. This committee will be composed of at least four members of the University Graduate Faculty: two of whom must have their primary appointment in the PES Department, and one from a related area who may be the Graduate Dean's representative. See the Graduate Catalog for rules governing the Doctoral Graduate Committee. All members will attend the comprehensive exam and the final defense. The Doctoral Committee guides the candidate in the research, evaluates the merits of the dissertation, and verifies satisfactory completion of requirements noted below.

- 2. Qualifying Exam:** During the first semester of study, the student must pass the qualifying exam administered by the student's qualifying committee. The qualifying exam may be taken in the second semester of study by international students. The composition of the qualifying committee is determined after consultation with the graduate student, and upon recommendation from the student's advisor. The committee normally includes at least four members of the University Graduate Faculty, and two members must have their primary appointment in PES. The qualifying committee may recommend:
- a. Admitting the student to further work toward the doctorate,
 - b. Limiting the student to the master's program,
 - c. Re-evaluating the student's progress after the lapse of one semester, or
 - d. Discontinuing graduate work.

If the student passes the qualifying exam, the student's advisor and Doctoral Committee will prepare the student's preliminary program of study for the doctorate with the Graduate School.

Note: For M.S. students at NMSU, with prior approval, the qualifying exam may be administered at the M.S. final exam.

- 3. Minimum Course Requirements:** Candidates for a Ph.D. degree in PES are expected to demonstrate (via course work and independent study) a thorough understanding and proficiency in their chosen major, and if applicable, a minor area. Courses numbered 450-499 are designed for senior undergraduates and graduate students; 500-599 are for graduate students working on a master's or doctoral degree; 600-700 are principally for students working on a doctoral degree. A minimum of 30 graduate credits (beyond the Master's Degree) or 60 credits (for exceptional students possessing only a B.S. degree; see item 7 below) are required. Actual course requirements are left to the discretion of the Doctoral Committee, with the exceptions given below:
- a. All Ph.D. students will present two PES departmental seminars (AGRO/SOIL 694) during their study at NMSU. It is recommended that the first seminar be presented within the student's first year. The second seminar will cover the dissertation research. If a Ph.D. student completed a M.S. degree in PES and presented a departmental seminar over their M.S. thesis research, only one additional departmental seminar (covering the dissertation research) is required.
 - b. All Ph.D. students must complete a minimum of 9 hours of course work numbered above 600 exclusive of research and dissertation credit.
 - c. At least 18 credits of dissertation (AGRO/ENVS 700) must be completed after passing the comprehensive exam. A student may initially enroll in AGRO/ENVS 700 credits during the same semester that they take their comprehensive exam. However, this option is not recommended because if the student does not pass the exam, the 700-level credits will not count. Consequently, enrollment status, assistantship eligibility, and resident tuition rate eligibility could be jeopardized.

- 4. Comprehensive Exam:** This exam covers all phases of the major and minor fields of study, and is given after completion of the agreed-upon course work, and when sufficient progress has been made toward fulfilling “additional” requirements (see #8 below). The examination must contain both oral and written portions. Generally, there should be a time lapse of at least one year between the comprehensive and final oral examination (i.e., the dissertation defense).
- 5. Dissertation and Final Exam:** A dissertation subject chosen by the candidate in their major field must receive final approval of the Doctoral Committee. The committee will require the candidate to defend the dissertation in a final oral examination. Research described in the dissertation must be suitable for peer-reviewed journal publication, and the dissertation document must be formatted according to Graduate School guidelines (<https://eltnmsu.sharepoint.com/sites/GraduateSchool/SitePages/Doctoral-Dissertation-Students.aspx>).
- 6. Transfer from M.S. to Ph.D. Programs:** A graduate student without a M.S. degree or equivalency is normally admitted to a M.S. degree program first. Eligible students can transfer from M.S. to Ph.D. programs without completion of the M.S. degree. The request for such a transfer will be made jointly by the student and his or her major advisor(s) with endorsement of the student’s graduate committee. The transfer will normally be made after at least one year of M.S. study - when the student’s scholastic performance and research potential have been clearly established. The major advisor(s) will notify the Department Head of this transfer.
- 7. Applicants possessing only a Bachelor’s degree:** In very rare situations, an exceptional student who meets all minimum requirements but possesses only a B.S. degree, may be admitted to the Ph.D. program. Such applicants will only be admitted if the graduate faculty member who is willing to serve as their major advisor provides an official letter that justifies why admission should be granted. Such requests will be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Committee for timely review and recommendation to the Department Head that the request either be approved or denied.
- 8. Additional Requirements:** One of the following six additional requirements must be satisfied and approved by the Doctoral Committee:
 - a. Thorough knowledge of a foreign language other than English.
 - b. Reading ability in two foreign languages.
 - c. Reading ability in one foreign language and proficiency with a research tool.
 - d. Reading ability in one foreign language and one semester of supervised teaching.
 - e. Proficiency with a research tool and one semester of supervised teaching.
 - f. Two semesters of supervised teaching.

A research tool is defined as a particular subject area different from the major area and is intended to broaden the student's academic background. Proficiency is defined as satisfactory performance with a minimum of six hours of course work in the particular subject area, or by a demonstrated ability in an area satisfactory to the Doctoral Committee. The Doctoral Committee may allow a minor to satisfy the requirements.

Supervised teaching is intended to prepare students for the teaching profession. The experience may involve one semester of supervised teaching (AGRO/HORT/SOIL 697), development of instructional materials, or other suitable experience that allows the student first-hand knowledge of the educational process. Competence is to be judged by the instructor. A written evaluation by the instructor will be submitted to the Doctoral Committee for approval.

Graduate Student Information

All graduate students should carefully review information provided in the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/>) including NMSU Academic Regulations (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/>). For additional information on services and resources available to graduate students, please visit <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/>.

Financial Assistance

Financial support may be available for graduate students in the form of assistantships, fellowships, scholarships, and loans. Departmental assistantships and university fellowships are generally limited and are awarded on a competitive basis. As a research assistant (RA) or teaching assistant (TA), graduate students pay resident (in-state) tuition, and are committed to work 20 hours per week.

The financial aid office (<https://fa.nmsu.edu/>) helps new graduate students apply for many types of financial support. Perkins loans (national direct student loans), Stanford loans, and college work-study are all available to graduate students. The amount of aid awarded will be based on the financial need of the student.

Graduate students wishing to apply for any of the above types of financial aid must maintain a GPA of 3.0 and must be enrolled for at least 9 graduate credits in a regular semester (Fall and Spring).

- **Teaching Assistantships (TA):** Each year the department is issued a limited number of Teaching Assistantships through the Graduate School. If a student wants to be considered for a teaching assistantship, they should make the request through their advisor. A full-time TA is required to work 20 hours per week and may be responsible for two or more lab sections. Half-time TA's (10 hours/week) are also available and may only teach one lab section or provide grading and course/lab preparation support. The Ph.D. students

are eligible for TA support up to six semesters and M.S. students for four semesters. All TA's must complete an online mandatory orientation offered by the Graduate School. In addition, new and returning TA's are required to attend the PES Department Teaching Assistant Orientation at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters. New international students must pass the NMSU International Teaching Assistant (ITA) Screening administered by the Center for English Language Programs. If they do not pass the ITA Screening, a student must attend courses offered through the Department of Communications, to ensure that they have a good command of English and will be able to teach. Teaching Assistants may be asked to provide two hours per week of service to the PES Department.

Teaching assistantships start with the beginning of the semester in August (on or around August 15) and run through the end of the spring semester in May (on or about May 15). Each year assistantships are reassigned. Continuation of TA support will be based, in part, on course evaluation forms associated with the course(s) taught by the student, and on the needs of the Department; therefore, a student receiving a teaching assistantship one year is not guaranteed an assistantship the next year. Available assistantships are assigned in July and December. Teaching assistants are paid twice per month (approximately the 15th and last working day). Internal Revenue Service tax withholding guidelines require NMSU undergraduate and graduate students to maintain three (3) credit hours of course work for summer sessions to be eligible for the student FICA tax exception. Student employees who do not meet this requirement during any given pay period will be subject to Social Security taxes and Medicare taxes.

- **Research Assistant (RA):** A research assistant is responsible for working on research programs under the direction of a faculty member. Duties vary among research programs, but can include field work, data recording and analysis, lab analysis, report writing, and other assignments as necessary to perform the research. Some of these duties may be unrelated to the student's thesis/dissertation project, but will contribute to the program's overall research objectives.

A research assistantship is granted by an individual professor after approval by the Department Head. Contracts are renewed yearly. A full-time research assistant is required to work 20 hours per week. Half-time research assistantships (10 hours/week) are also available. Research assistants are paid twice per month (approximately the 15th and last working day).

- **Payroll Deduction:** All graduate assistants will pay tuition. Graduate students on a half-time (10 hours/week) assistantship or more per week will be eligible for the resident tuition rate during the first 12 months of tenure. If New Mexico resident status (application is available from the Registrar's Office) has not been established by the time of reappointment, the graduate student may be subject to the non-resident tuition rate. Contact the Registrar's Office for further details. Tuition payments can be deducted from the student's paycheck by the business office. When enrolling, if a student has signed a contract for an assistantship, the graduate school will supply a payroll deduction card.

International Students

The NMSU International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) is the focal point for the University's international activities (<https://iss.nmsu.edu/>). The ISSS provides services and advisement to international students that come from many countries. New international students must contact an international student advisor who will coordinate admissions, provide immigration advice, enroll the student in orientation programs, provide general counseling, and develop special programs for the student. The ISSS also cooperates with international student associations and community organizations to organize socio-cultural activities for international students and their families.

- The ISSS is located in the Educational Services Center, Suite 850, telephone (575) 646-2834.
- The ISSS cannot loan money to a student unless the student's government sponsor has made arrangements with the ISSS in advance.
- International students must have a current Social Security number in order to be employed at NMSU.

Termination, Academic Misconduct, Disciplinary Action

Termination

The PES faculty may need to terminate an appointment of a graduate student. Ordinarily, termination of an appointment for unsatisfactory performance will not occur without a probationary period, during which time the student will be given the opportunity to improve performance. The Graduate Studies Committee reserves the right, however, to terminate an appointment without such a probationary period if such an action is needed to protect the integrity of PES. The Graduate School will not allow re-appointment of TAs or RAs who are no longer in good academic standing.

Criteria for passing AGRO/HORT/ENVS/SOIL 599, 600 or 700 (PR or U): To obtain a grade of “PR,” students should make reasonable progress in their research and writing of their thesis/dissertation. Explicit in this statement is the agreed upon expectations between the advisor and the student. Failing to meet this standard will merit a grade of “U.” Two “U” grades will result in immediate termination from the PES graduate program. It is suggested that the student meet regularly with their advisor and that expectations for progress be put in writing at the beginning of each semester.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism or any academic misconduct is not tolerated. The plagiarism and academic misconduct policy created by New Mexico State University is found at (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/#academicmisconductandgrievancetext>). Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

1. Cheating or knowingly assisting another student in committing an act of cheating or other form of academic dishonesty.
2. Plagiarism, which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, submitting examinations, themes, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, undocumented quotations, computer-processed materials, or other material as one’s own work when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person.
3. Unauthorized possession of examinations, reserve library materials, or laboratory materials.
4. Unauthorized changing of grades on an examination, in an instructor’s grade book, or on a grade report; or unauthorized access to academic computer records.
5. Nondisclosure or misrepresentation in completing applications or other University records pertaining to academic departments or colleges.

Disciplinary Action

The Student Handbook states that the following are possible sanctions that may be imposed on individual students for infraction of regulations:

1. Disciplinary Probation
2. Disciplinary Suspension
3. Dismissal
4. Expulsion

As an alternative, an instructor may deem it appropriate to give a “0” grade for the plagiarized work, or for the entire course.

Office Support Staff

Administrative:

Araceli Ramirez – Administrative Assistant, Associate

- General assistance, arranging field-trip transportation, and keys.
- Phone: 575-646-3405 email: araceli@nmsu.edu

Taylor L’Heureux – Administrative Assistant, Intermediate

- Graduate assistantships, appointments with Department Head, and general help.
- Phone: 575-646-3406 email: taylorlh@nmsu.edu

Accounting:

Patsy Wallace – Fiscal Assistant, Senior

- Paychecks, purchasing regulations and financial activities, excluding graduate assistantships.
- Phone: 575-646-4620 email: pwallace@nmsu.edu

Maddie Ontiveros – Fiscal Assistant, Associate

- Travel reimbursements and credit card transactions.
- Phone: 575-646-1141 email: mgontive@nmsu.edu

Department Head

- Dr. Rolston St. Hilaire
- Phone: 575-646-3406 email: rsthilai@nmsu.edu

Assistant Department Head

- Dr. Niall Hanan
- Phone: 575-646-3406 email: nhanan@nmsu.edu

Departmental website: <http://aces.nmsu.edu/academics/pes/>

Graduate Student Cubicle Assignment Rules

The Department of PES has access to 30 cubicles in Skeen Hall. The PES and the Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Sciences Departments mutually agreed that cubicle space will be proportionally allocated based on graduate student enrollment by department.

The assignment of graduate student cubicles is the responsibility of the PES Graduate Studies Committee. The Administrative Assistant assists the Graduate Committee with this task.

Cubicle Assignment General Rules are:

1. Teaching Assistants will receive the highest priority. This is to facilitate undergraduate student access to Teaching Assistants.
 2. Full-time funded students (research assistantship and funded research) will be given second priority. Also, international students full-time funded by non-NMSU agencies or institutions will be given second priority. The priority will be based on the starting date in Graduate School.
 3. Students not fulfilling #1 or #2 will be given space based on availability. Again, the priority will be based on the starting date in Graduate School.
 4. Ph.D. students who have not finished after four years, and M.S. students who have not finished in three years may be required to relinquish an assigned cubicle.
 5. Faculty members must send an email request to the Administrative Assistant for assignment of cubicles for their graduate students. The request should include the student's name and starting date as well as an index number to be charged in the event of the student losing the key card (see #6).
 6. Students must turn in their key card to the Administrative Assistant when no longer using the cubicle. If the key card is lost or damaged the cost of change will be charged to the faculty advisor's account.
 7. If no cubicles are available, a request will be filled as soon as an opening occurs during the semester.
 8. Checks will be made of the cubicles in the middle of the semester to make sure that they are being used. If a cubicle appears not to be used, then an email will be sent to the student and faculty advisor asking if the cubicle is needed by the student. If not, the cubicle will be reassigned.
 9. When all the graduate student cubicles are assigned, additional students will be assigned to rooms with technicians and postdocs. This assignment will be temporary until a desk becomes available in the graduate student area. At that time the student will be requested to move to the open space in the graduate student area.
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Graduate Assistant Salary Scale

Related links:

- Graduate Student Salaries (<https://hr.nmsu.edu/employment/student/>); then look for the Graduate Assistants Salary Table link (updated annually).
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Departmental Scholarships

The Department administers the following graduate student scholarships:

- Arden and Elsie Baltensperger Scholarship awarded to graduate students studying turfgrass science, plant breeding, or genetics.
- John Harrington Memorial Scholarship awarded to a Sophomore, Junior, Senior or Graduate student with a declared major in the PES Department, and a major interest in forestry, urban forestry, or natural resource management. Student must demonstrate leadership in department or college activities.
- E.A. Herrera Graduate Scholarship awarded to a graduate student with preference given to students interested in pecan or fruit tree research.
- Lowenstein Graduate Fellowship awarded to one graduate student who shall be designated the 'Lowenstein Fellow' studying some aspect of ornamental horticulture.
- Marvin Wilson Memorial Scholarship awarded to a graduate student majoring in agronomy, horticulture, or soils.

Students are encouraged to apply online in January of each year for the scholarships in the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences: <https://scholarships.nmsu.edu/>

Departmental Graduate Awards

Baldwin and Reichert Scholar Award

This award will support one or two graduate students in the department for either travel to a conference, or travel to a research project site.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Student must be regular student
2. Student must submit an application form (see front office staff) that includes a copy of an accepted abstract before the award deadline (~July of each year).
3. For travel to research site, the travel award will be based on the research merit and geographic location

Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award

The Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award recognizes a graduate student who has demonstrated the ability to publish a high quality, peer-reviewed research paper in a timely manner. Two awards are offered each spring semester; one to an M.S. candidate and one to a Ph.D. candidate. Each recipient will receive a \$500 award to defray the costs of presenting their research at a professional society meeting. Students should be nominated by a faculty member in the Department; usually their graduate advisor. Nominations should include the following information:

1. Is the student a M.S. or Ph.D. candidate?
2. Briefly describe the student's contributions towards developing/writing the manuscript (i.e., did student write most of the document on their own; or was moderate or significant input required by others).
3. Include an electronic copy of the paper.

Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Assistant Award

The Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Assistant (TA) Award recognizes a student who has excelled in supporting the teaching mission of the Department during the current academic year. One award is offered each spring semester. The recipient will receive a \$500 award to defray costs associated with attending a professional conference or a professional development activity. Exemplary students should be nominated, in writing, by a faculty/staff member; usually the instructor of record for the course(s)/lab(s) supported by the student nominee. Nominations should include the following information:

1. Number of semesters that the student served as a TA during the current academic year.
2. Number of lab/class sections taught by the TA during the current academic year.
3. Level of TA support (e.g., 10 or 20 hours/week).
4. TA responsibilities: number of students in lab or class section(s), lab or lecture preparation, grading, supplementary instruction (i.e., conducting "help-sessions"), etc.
5. A concise summary of the TA's teaching evaluation(s) for the current academic year – if available.

Professional Societies

Belonging to a professional organization as a graduate student is beneficial. The student has the opportunity to attend professional meetings, meet others in their field, and present research at these meetings to gain useful experience and contacts. Below are some common professional organizations and a brief explanation of each.

1. **American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)** The world's largest general science organization. Encompasses all fields of science and technology. Publishes the weekly journal *Science*. <https://www.aaas.org/>
2. **American Society of Agronomy (ASA)** Dedicated to the development of agriculture enabled by science, in harmony with environmental and human values. <https://www.agronomy.org/>
3. **American Society for Horticulture Science (ASHS)** The world's premiere horticulture society. National meetings are held annually. ASHS awards student travel grants to attend the meetings if presenting. <https://www.ashs.org/>
4. **American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB)** Cultivating a better future through plant biology. <https://aspb.org/>
5. **American Phytopathological Society (APS)** The premier society dedicated to high-quality, innovative plant pathology research. <http://www.apsnet.org>
6. **Association for Women in Science (AWIS)** Dedicated to achieving equity and full participation for women in science, mathematics, engineering and technology. <https://www.awis.org/>
7. **Crop Science Society of America (CSSA)** An educational and scientific organization dedicated to the advancement of crop science. <https://www.crops.org/>
8. **Society of American Foresters (SAF)** Promotes the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems to benefit society. <https://www.eforester.org/>
9. **Soil Science Society of America (SSSA)** Professional home for those who aim to advance the discipline and practice of soil science. <https://www.soils.org/>

Many journals/magazines of these professional organizations are available online for free to NMSU students. Memberships for students are typically very affordable but will require your advisor's signature

Honorary Organizations

Gamma Sigma Delta: Honorary Society for Agricultural Sciences.

- Must be nominated by a current member in good standing.
- Many Department faculty are members.

Pi Alpha Xi: Honorary Society for Horticulture.

- Must be nominated by a current member.

Sigma Xi: Scientific Research Society

- Must be nominated by a current member in good standing.
- Generally post-doctoral.
- Annual research and grant awards for undergraduate and graduate students.

APPENDIX

GRADUATE STUDENT & ADVISOR CHECKLIST

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS PROGRAM

First Semester

- ___ Attend Departmental, Graduate School, and/or International Student Orientation Programs
- ___ Select Graduate Committee
- ___ Plan Program of Study (i.e., coursework to be taken) according to the M.S. degree requirements discussed above.
- ___ Begin writing research proposal (recommended)
- ___ Obtain latest Graduate School requirements for Master's Thesis students^{1,2}

Second Semester

- ___ Meet with Graduate Committee for proposal (recommended) and curriculum (required) approval
- ___ Complete "Program of Study for Masters Students" form². This plan should comprise at least 15 credits in courses numbered 500 or above (including 4-6 thesis credits), and a minimum of 15 credits of other class work (numbered 450 or above), totaling 30 credits
- ___ The "Program of Study for Masters Students" form requires Department Head signature after approval by the committee and must be filed with the Graduate School

Last Semester

- ___ Check with Graduate School for deadlines and final graduation requirements^{3,4}. Complete "Application for Degree"
- ___ Enroll in Hort/Agro/Soil 590, Graduate Seminar
- ___ Schedule final oral defense and complete "Masters Final Examination Form"²
- ___ Final thesis defense
- ___ Ensure all Graduate School requirements for Master's Thesis students¹ have been completed
- ___ Turn in thesis by specified deadline³

¹ Review all requirements at <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu> and look under the "Current Students" tab. Also, please view <https://eltnmsu.sharepoint.com/sites/GraduateSchool/SitePages/Master's-Thesis-Students.aspx> to find specific information about thesis requirements including: "Checklist & Procedures for Thesis", "Preparing your Manuscript for Submission", "Sample Formatted Thesis", "Required Forms", "Optional Embargo Restriction Form", and "ETD Submission Process". At the time of thesis submission to the Graduate School, all requirements must be completed.

² Additional forms required by the Graduate School are available at: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html#Masters1>. Note: "Masters Final Examination Form" must be submitted at least 10 working days before the exam.

³ Deadlines are available at: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20School%20Calendar.html>

⁴ See also the following information to ensure that all graduation requirements have been met: (<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduating%20.html>)

GRADUATE STUDENT & ADVISOR CHECKLIST MASTER OF SCIENCE NON-THESIS PROGRAM

First Semester

- ___ Attend Departmental, Graduate School, and/or International Student Orientation Programs
- ___ Select Graduate Committee
- ___ Plan Program of Study (i.e., coursework to be taken) according to the M.S. degree requirements discussed above.
- ___ Begin writing research proposal (recommended)
- ___ Conceptualize project report

Second Semester

- ___ Meet with Graduate Committee for project (recommended) and curriculum (required) approval
- ___ Complete “Program of Study for Masters Students” form¹. This plan should comprise at least 15 credits in courses numbered 500 or above, and a minimum of 15 credits of other class work (numbered 450 or above), totaling 30 credits
- ___ The “Program of Study for Masters Students” form requires Department Head signature after approval by the committee and must be filed with the Graduate School

Last Semester

- ___ Check with Graduate School for deadlines and final graduation requirements^{2,3}. Complete “Application for Degree”
- ___ Enroll in Hort/Agro/Soil 590, Graduate Seminar
- ___ Finish project report and complete all course work
- ___ Schedule final oral defense and complete “Masters Final Examination Form”¹
- ___ Final examination
- ___ Submit “Report of Written Exam Results for Masters Non-Thesis Students”¹ to the Graduate School by specified deadline if the final exam will not be an oral exam

¹ Required forms for thesis and non-thesis M.S. students are available at:

<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html#Masters1>, Note: “Masters Final Examination Form” must be submitted at least 10 working days before the exam.

² Deadlines are available at:

<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20School%20Calendar.html>

³ See also the following information to ensure that all graduation requirements have been met:

(<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduating%20.html>) /

GRADUATE STUDENT & ADVISOR CHECKLIST

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

First Semester

- ___ Attend Departmental, Graduate School, and/or International Student Orientation Programs
- ___ Select Graduate Committee
- ___ Plan Program of Study (i.e., coursework to be taken), as described above in doctoral degree requirements. A minimum of 30 credits beyond the Master's Degree is required including at least 18 credits of dissertation work (700-level course) and 9 credits numbered above 600 exclusive of research and dissertation credit.
- ___ Write research proposal
- ___ Take qualifying exam and complete "Doctoral Qualifying Examination Form"¹
- ___ Meet with Graduate Committee for proposal and curriculum approval, and complete "Program of Study and Committee for Doctoral Students Form"¹. Obtain Department Head signature after approval by the committee and submit form to the Graduate School

At least one year before final oral exam

- ___ Obtain latest Graduate School requirements for Doctoral Dissertation students^{1,2}
- ___ Schedule and take comprehensive exam. Complete "Doctorate of Philosophy Examination Form"¹ and indicate "Ph.D. Comprehensive"
- ___ Enroll in 18 Dissertation credits after completion of comprehensive exam
- ___ Present two PES departmental seminars (AGRO/SOIL 694) while attending NMSU

Last Semester

- ___ Check Graduate School deadlines and final graduation requirements^{3,4}. Complete "Application for Degree"⁴ and "Doctoral Dissertation Title Form"¹
- ___ Schedule final oral defense. Complete "Doctor of Philosophy Examination Form"¹ and indicate "Ph.D. Final Dissertation Defense"
- ___ Final Dissertation defense
- ___ Ensure all Graduate School requirements for Doctoral Dissertation students² are completed
- ___ Turn in completed dissertation by specified deadline³

¹ Review all requirements at <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu> and look under the "Current Students" tab. Also, see <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html#Doctoral1> for required forms: "Doctoral Qualifying Exam", "Program of Study", "Dissertation Title Submission", & "Doctorate of Philosophy Examination form" which is used for both the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam & Final Dissertation Defense. "Doctorate of Philosophy Examination Form" must be submitted at least 10 working days before the exam.

² Dissertation requirements (<https://eltnmsu.sharepoint.com/sites/GraduateSchool/SitePages/Doctoral-Dissertation-Students.aspx>): "Checklist & Procedures for Dissertation", "Preparing your Manuscript for Submission", "Sample Formatted Dissertation", "Required Forms", "Optional Embargo Restriction Form", and "ETD Submission Process". At the time of Dissertation submission to the Graduate School, all forms and requirements must be completed.

³ Deadlines: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20School%20Calendar.html>

⁴ See also the following information to ensure that all graduation requirements have been met: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduating%20.html>

Graduate Student Progress Checklist Master of Science Program

Student Name:

Date Entering Program:

Advisor Name:

Committee Members (3 minimum, 1 primary appointment in PES, 1 Graduate Dean's representative):

The following must be completed before the end of the second semester.

Target date Completion date

First committee meeting:

Proposal review/approval by committee (recommended):

Program of study must be reviewed/approved by committee and submitted to graduate school:

The following must be completed before or during the last semester.

Target date Completion date

Exit seminar:

Final defense:

Graduate Student Progress Checklist Doctor of Philosophy Program

Student Name:

Date Entering Program:

Advisor Name:

Committee Members (4 minimum, 2 primary appointments in PES, 1 Graduate Dean's representative):

The following must be completed before the end of the second semester.

Target date Completion date

First committee meeting:

Qualifying exam:

Proposal approval by committee (required):

Program of study must be reviewed/approved by committee and submitted to graduate school:

First seminar (recommended):

The following must be completed one semester before the first oral exam.

Target date Completion date

Program report and meeting with committee:

Comprehensive exam:

The following must be completed during the last semester.

Target date Completion date

Exit seminar:

Final Defense: