

DEPARTMENT OF AGRIBUSINESS, AGRONOMY, HORTICULTURE, AND RANGE MANAGEMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

The Department of Animal Sciences and the Department of Agribusiness, Agronomy, Horticulture, and Range Management offer a Master of Science in Agriculture with two tracks: (1) the thesis track, which is research based, and (2) the non-thesis track. The purposes of these tracks differ somewhat according to the objectives, plans, and employment interests of individual students. The following provides general information concerning the two tracks. For more specific information contact either department.

All students are required to demonstrate to departmental graduate faculty acceptable proficiency in both oral and written English prior to preparation of a degree plan. Successful completion of remedial English courses may be required in instances of insufficient proficiency.

The MS (non-thesis track) may be attractive to certain full-time students and to part-time or commuting students who desire advanced course work to further qualify for certain types of public or agency employment or to enhance advancement opportunities in their present employment. It is a more general degree with course work flexibility to allow students to design a program emphasizing specialized interests in certain subject matter areas or one emphasizing broader-based advanced studies. General requirements include 36 semester hours of advanced course work in agriculture and supporting fields above the bachelor's degree.

The MS (thesis track) involves an original research project under the direction of a graduate faculty member and the preparation of a thesis in addition to prescribed course work. Generally, successful pursuit of this degree necessitates full-time and uninterrupted graduate enrollment. The degree may be considered terminal in individual cases, but a major advantage is the preparation and background provided to pursue further graduate study to the PhD level. Also, for certain types of employment with agencies and corporations, the experience gained in research methodology and technical writing is invaluable in enhancing and broadening one's employment and advancement opportunities.

The Department of Agribusiness, Agronomy, Horticulture, and Range Management collaborates with the College of Business Administration, offering a concentration in Agribusiness Management for students pursuing the Master of Business Administration degree. For additional information, contact the MBA Director in the College of Business Administration.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission to the MS in Agriculture (non-thesis track) program is contingent upon application to and acceptance by the College of Graduate Studies. Upon meeting general requirements including acceptable scores on the Aptitude Test of the GRE, a student holding a bachelor's degree in agriculture normally can begin the 36-hour program. Prospective students with a bachelor's degree in non-agricultural fields are usually required to complete, as a minimum, 24 hours of undergraduate leveling courses (12 upper level hours in agriculture). In addition, 4 hours of biology and 4 hours of chemistry (prerequisites for upper-level agriculture courses) are required. During the completion of prerequisites and leveling courses, the student is designated as "special student-undergraduate leveling courses only."

General requirements and procedures for admission to an MS in agriculture (thesis) are similar to the MS (non-thesis). Because of the research emphasis in the MS (thesis), however, additional background courses or additional undergraduate leveling work may be required upon acceptance and admission. In addition to the general agricultural background as required for the MS (non-thesis), certain prerequisites (e.g., in chemistry, biology,

statistics, biochemistry, economics, business) may be necessary on an individual basis to complement the student's thesis program.

ADVISEMENT AND COMMITTEE'S ROLE

MS Non-thesis Track

Upon approval for admission by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, the major department notifies the MS (non-thesis) student of assignment to an "interim advisor" who counsels the student in early course work and tentative program direction. As soon as possible thereafter, and normally prior to completion of more than 12 hours, the student selects, with assistance of the interim advisor, an advisory committee, which then assumes the advisory role. When full admission is achieved, the student is responsible for preparing and securing committee approval of a formal degree plan and submitting the degree plan with an application for candidacy for the master's degree to the Graduate Dean.

MS Thesis Track

Prior to or immediately upon acceptance for graduate study by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and the student's declaration of intent to pursue an MS (thesis) program, the student must consult with his or her major department's graduate faculty concerning potential research projects and thesis topics. Because of the close interaction and cooperation required between the student and the graduate faculty advisor, pursuit of the MS (thesis) degree must be arranged in advance. Upon agreement between the student and his/her major advisor, a research topic is selected and determinations are made as to a program of study, background courses, and the composition and appointment of the advisory committee. During the first semester of enrollment or before the completion of 12 semester hours' credit, a formal degree plan and thesis proposal are submitted to the advisory committee for approval and submission through appropriate channels.

CURRICULUM

MS Non-Thesis Track

Of the 36-hour MS (non-thesis) requirement, a minimum of 18 hours of courses offered by the above departments is required for a major in Agriculture. A 12-hour minor may be chosen in another field but is not required. Two-thirds (24 hours) of the total 36 hours must be 500-level courses. At least one-half of all hours in a 12-hour minor must be 500-level. A rigid, standard curriculum required of all students is not imposed; instead, the graduate curriculum is individually planned within certain guidelines by each student and approved by the advisory committee and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.

All candidates are required to take a graduate-level research course selected from a discipline area most appropriate to their interest and approved by the committee.

A curriculum summary and guideline for the MS in Agriculture (non-thesis) includes the following:

Agriculture sciences (major)	18-30 hours
Supporting fields (may include a 12-hour minor)	0-12 hours
Required research course	3 hours
(May be a part of a major or support field depending upon discipline emphasized in MS program)	
AGRI 580 (professional writing requirement)	3 hours
Total:	36 hour minimum

MS THESIS TRACK

Minimum requirements for this track are 36 hours above the BS, excluding any required leveling or background courses. The thesis and associated research may be counted as six hours toward the total. Of the remaining 30 hours, a minimum of 18 hours

must be in the major. No more than one-third of the major hours may be approved upper-level undergraduate courses. A 12-hour minor in another field may be chosen but is not required. If a minor is declared, no more than one-half of the hours may be approved upper-level undergraduate courses. Of the total 36-hour minimum requirement, no more than one-third may be undergraduate level.

Because of the diversity of agricultural specialties, the student and advisory committee are given discretionary latitude in developing the specific course of study to allow desired specialization in major and minor courses. A typical program of study is as follows:

Agriculture sciences	14-26 hours
Agriculture 585	1-3 hours
Agriculture 588 (Thesis)	6 hours
Supporting fields (may include a 12-hour minor)	0-12 hours
Approved research course	3 hours
(Selected from discipline most appropriate to research)	
Total:	36 hour minimum

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

The comprehensive examination for the MS (non-thesis) consists of a written examination. An oral examination may be required of any candidate with a marginal performance on the written examination. Instructors of degree plan courses and committee members are invited to submit questions for these examinations. Upon admission to candidacy, the student and committee schedule the examinations in order that they will be completed at least 20 class days prior to final exams during the long semesters or at least 10 days prior to final exams in summer sessions. Students must be enrolled during the semester in which the examinations are taken.

Both written and oral examinations may be attempted once per regular semester or summer. If either the written or oral component is not successfully completed on first attempt, the specific area(s) of weakness will be identified to the candidate so that corrective action (additional review or required course work) may be taken before the next attempt. If a second attempt is unsuccessful, the candidate will be required to complete a minimum of 12 hours of specified course work with a B average before scheduling a third attempt. A maximum of three attempts is allowed.

For the MS (thesis) candidate, upon completion and acceptance of the thesis, a final oral examination is scheduled with the advisory committee. Major emphasis will be directed toward defense of the thesis, although the examination will also include course work materials.

The oral examination may be attempted once per regular semester or summer. If the oral examination performance is not acceptable on first attempt, the specific area(s) of weakness will be identified to the candidate so that corrective action (additional review or required course work) may be taken before the next attempt. If a second attempt is unsuccessful, the candidate is required to complete a minimum of 12 hours of specified course work with a B average before scheduling a third attempt. A maximum of three attempts is allowed.