



**CROP
SCIENCES
GRADUATE
STUDENT
HANDBOOK**

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

THE DEPARTMENT OF CROP SCIENCES

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ERML = Edward R. Madigan Lab • PSL = Plant Sciences Laboratory • TH = Turner Hall • National Soybean Research Center = NSRC

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The Department of Crop Sciences adheres to all University policies regarding graduate education. Students are encouraged to review these policies: <https://grad.illinois.edu/handbooks-policies>

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS WITHIN CROP SCIENCES

The graduate degree programs available in the Department include the M.S. degree program (10KS0030MS on-campus), M.S. Bioinformatics degree program (10KS5100MS), M.S. Plant Biotechnology degree program (10KS5461MS), Online M.S. degree program (10KS0030MSU), and the Ph.D. degree program (10KS0030PhD).

M.S. in Crop Sciences (with thesis)

Requirements

1. Complete a minimum of 32 credit hours. The 32 hours must include:
 - A minimum of 20 graded hours of graduate level coursework approved by the student's Guidance Committee.
 - CPSC 594: Graduate Professional Orientation.
 - CPSC 598: Crop Sciences Seminar during each fall and spring semester.
 - At least 4 hours of graded coursework at the 500-level in addition to CPSC 594 and CPSC 598.
 - 12 hours of Crop Sciences 599: Thesis Research
2. Annual completion of student self-evaluation during spring term.
3. Completion of Graduate Student Plan with Guidance Committee by the end of the second semester of enrollment and turned into Graduate Studies Office. MS students require three individuals on their committee—two of these must be members of the Graduate College faculty.
4. Final Oral Examination.

The Final Oral Examination comprises a public presentation and defense of the student's thesis research to their Guidance Committee. The student will coordinate with their committee to schedule and discuss specific expectations for the exam. The student will also notify the Grad Studies Coordinator of the time and location of the public presentation of their research at least one week before. The Committee will determine the scope and format of the exam. The possible outcomes of the M.S. final exam are pass, fail (and elimination from the program), or incomplete. If the student receives an incomplete, the M.S. examination must be repeated within three months.
5. Submission of approved thesis to Graduate Studies Office for Departmental Format Approval.
6. Deposit M.S. thesis with the Graduate College: <https://grad.illinois.edu/thesis/submit>
7. Completion of Exit Interview Survey with Graduate Studies Office.

Timeline

Most students will complete their program within two and a half years. Students who have not completed their degree within five years will be put on academic probation.

M.S. in Crop Sciences (without thesis)

Requirements

1. Complete a minimum of 32 credit hours. The 32 hours include:

- 12 graded credit hours at the 500-level. Credit in thesis research does not count toward a non-thesis degree.
- Only 4 credit hours of CPSC 593 (Independent study) may be counted toward the total.
- CPSC 594: Graduate Professional Orientation.
- CPSC 598: Crop Sciences Seminar during each fall and spring semester.

2. Annual completion of student self-evaluation during spring term.

3. Completion of Graduate Student Plan with Guidance Committee by the end of the second semester of enrollment and turned into Graduate Studies Office. MS students require three individuals on their committee—two of these must be members of the Graduate College faculty.

4. Final Oral Examination.

The Final Oral Examination committee (generally the Guidance committee members) will determine the scope and format of the Oral Examination in advance. To clarify committee expectations, the student is urged to visit with each committee member prior to the examination. Decisions of the Committee on the examination must be unanimous. If the student fails the oral examination, the student has the opportunity to retake the exam once.

5. Completion of Exit Interview Survey with Graduate Studies Office.

Timeline

Most students will complete their program within two and a half years. Students who have not completed their degree within five years will be put on academic probation.

M.S. in Bioinformatics with Crop Sciences Concentration (thesis)

Requirements

1. Complete a minimum of 32 credit hours including:

- 12 credit hours at the 500 level.
- 28 credit hours of graded coursework.
- 4 credit hours of CPSC 599 (Crop Sciences Research).
- 8 credit hours of graduate level coursework within the Department of Crop Sciences.
- 12 credit hours within a general core distributed among Fundamental Bioinformatics, Crop Sciences, and Computer Science courses (contact Graduate Studies Office for list of appropriate coursework).
- 7 credit hours of courses in Computational, Quantitative, and Statistical Biology which must include CPSC 440 (Applied Statistical Methods I) or CPSC 540 (Applied Statistical Methods II).
- CPSC 598 (Crop Sciences Seminar) during each fall and spring semester. A presentation of thesis research in CPSC 598 is also required (typically during the final semester).

2. Annual completion of student self-evaluation during spring term.

2. Completion of Graduate Student Plan with Guidance Committee by the end of the second semester of enrollment and turned into Graduate Studies Office. MS students require three members on their committee—two of these must be members of the Graduate College faculty.

3. Final Oral Examination.

The Final Oral Examination comprises a public presentation and defense of the student's thesis research to their Guidance Committee. The student will coordinate with their committee to schedule and discuss specific expectations for the exam. The student will notify the Grad Studies Coordinator of the time and location of the public presentation of their research at least one week prior. The Committee will determine the scope and format of the exam. The possible outcomes of the M.S. final exam are pass, fail, or incomplete. If the student receives an incomplete, the M.S. examination must be repeated within three months.

4. Deposit M.S. thesis with the Graduate College: <https://grad.illinois.edu/thesis/submit>

5. Completion of Exit Interview Survey with Graduate Studies Office.

Timeline

Most students will complete their program within two and a half years. Students who have not completed their degree within five years will be put on academic probation.

M.S. in Bioinformatics with Crop Sciences Concentration (without thesis)

Requirements

1. Complete a minimum of 36 credit hours of graded course work including:
 - 12 credit hours at the 500 level.
 - 8 credit hours of graduate level coursework within the Department of Crop Sciences.
 - 12 credit hours within a general core distributed among Fundamental Bioinformatics, Crop Sciences, and Computer Science courses (contact Graduate Studies Office for list of appropriate coursework).
 - 7 credit hours of courses in Computational, Quantitative, and Statistical Biology which must include CPSC 440 (Applied Statistical Methods I) or CPSC 540 (Applied Statistical Methods II).
2. Annual completion of student self-evaluation during spring term.
3. Completion of Graduate Student Plan with Guidance Committee by the end of the second semester of enrollment and turned into Graduate Studies Office. MS students require three members on their committee—two of these must be members of the Graduate College faculty.
4. Final Oral Examination.

The Final Oral Examination committee (generally the Guidance committee members) will determine the scope and format of the Oral Examination in advance. To clarify committee expectations, the student is urged to visit with each committee member prior to the examination. Decisions of the Committee on the examination must be unanimous. If the student fails the oral examination, the student has the opportunity to retake the exam once.
5. Completion of Exit Interview Survey with Graduate Studies Office.

Timeline

Most students will complete their program within two and a half years. Students who have not completed their degree within five years will be put on academic probation.

Ph.D. in Crop Sciences

Students may enter the Ph.D. following completion of their M.S. or directly following their B.S. degree.

Requirements

1. Complete a minimum of 64 credit hours including:
 - A minimum of 12 graded hours of graduate level coursework approved by the student's Guidance Committee.
 - CPSC 594: Graduate Professional Orientation.
 - CPSC 598: Crop Sciences Seminar during each fall and spring semester.
2. Annual completion of student self-evaluation during the spring term.
3. Complete at least one poster or oral presentation at a scientific meeting.
4. Complete a Ph.D. Graduate Student Plan in consultation with Guidance Committee by the end of the second semester of enrollment and turned into Graduate Studies Office. PhD students require four members on their committee—three of these must be members of the Graduate College faculty and two must be tenured faculty.
5. For direct B.S. to Ph.D. students only; pass the Qualifying Exam following the completion of 32 hours of graded course work or prior to their fifth semester.

The student will choose five courses upon which they wish to be examined. Instructors for those courses will provide three questions suitable to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the subject for a PhD student. The Director of Graduate Studies will administer the exam to the student(s). The exam will be closed book and the student will answer any two of the three questions submitted by the instructor of each course. A grade of 80% for each course is required to pass the written examination. Students that score below 80% on any of the individual course questions will be given the opportunity to retake the examination once. The retake will be an oral exam administered by 2-3 appointed faculty (excluding the student's major advisor). Students that fail will be transferred to the M.S. thesis program. Upon completion of the M.S. degree they will be eligible to apply to the Crop Sciences Ph.D. program.
6. Pass the Research Proposal Defense by the end of their third semester (fifth semester for B.S. to Ph.D.).
 - In consultation with their advisor and Guidance Committee, students will develop a research proposal. The format can be based on a standard USDA-AFRI research proposal or other common grant proposal; however, the student is encouraged to discuss specific expectations with their committee.
 - The student will consult with their Guidance Committee to schedule a proposal defense date and submit their proposal to committee members at least two weeks prior to that date. At the discretion of the faculty advisor, the student can also defend their research proposal on the date of their oral preliminary examination.
 - The Guidance Committee will evaluate the proposal for its description of relevant background information, clear objectives, strong rationale, feasibility of approaches and methods, and potential for completion by expected graduation date. During the defense, students will be expected to discuss the literature, methodology, and objectives of their proposed research. Following successful completion of the proposal defense, the committee members will sign the "Graduate Research Proposal" departmental form, indicating that they have reviewed and approved the student's PhD proposal. This form with the

committee members' signatures will be submitted to the Crop Sciences Graduate Studies office as well as an electronic copy of their proposal.

- If the Guidance Committee does not find the proposal or its defense satisfactory, the student must revise the proposal prior to completing the oral component of the Preliminary Exam.

7. Pass the Preliminary Exam prior to or during enrollment of their fifth semester (seventh for B.S. to Ph.D.).

- Students must complete a "Request for Appointment of Doctoral Examination Committee" Students should submit their request through the [Graduate College Student Portal](#). Students should submit their committee appointment request at least three weeks before the date of the intended exam. This is essential so that the committee can be reviewed and approved by all relevant units before the exam. If the committee is not appointed before the day of the exam, it could mean that the exam will need to be rescheduled. Doctoral examinations can take place in-person, virtually or in a hybrid format.
- Written component: Students will solicit written questions from each committee member to evaluate their knowledge of the field and specific research competence in advance of the oral component of the examination. Each faculty committee member can set the specific format of their portion of the student's examination. The faculty members providing these questions will grade these questions prior to the oral exam. Students will be required to score 80% or greater on these written questions from each of their committee members in order to pass the written exam. If they do not score 80% or better on the written portion of the exam from any of the faculty committee members, they will be tested and re-evaluated for their knowledge in these areas when given the oral portion of the examination.
- Oral component: The oral portion of the exam will be held within a month after completion of the written exams. The student will consult with their committee to schedule an exam date. In the oral exam the committee members will test the student for general knowledge and their response to the questions on the written examinations. Committee members are encouraged to challenge the student with questions outside of their specific research agenda to gauge their competence and skill at communicating their work and general knowledge in a broader and interdisciplinary context. At the conclusion of the oral component, the committee will unanimously decide to pass, fail, or defer. If a deferral decision is made then the same committee must reexamine the student within 180 days of the date of the first exam and the outcome of the second exam must be pass or fail.

8. Successfully defend and deposit their dissertation.

- The student will contact the Graduate Studies Office at the beginning of the semester when they plan to defend and graduate to review the final degree requirements, depositing process and to schedule their final defense presentation.
- The student will use the Graduate College Self-service portal to add their name to the degree list.
- The student will request the appointment of their Doctoral Final Examination committee. Students should submit their request through the [Graduate College Student Portal](#). Students should submit their committee appointment request at least three weeks before the date of the intended exam. This is essential so that the committee can be reviewed and approved by all relevant units before the exam. If the committee is not appointed before the day of the exam, it could mean that the exam will need to be rescheduled. Doctoral examinations can take place in-person, virtually or in a hybrid format.
- The student will prepare their dissertation in consultation with their advisor and in compliance with Graduate College guidelines. The student will send the dissertation to the Final Exam Committee at least two weeks before the defense.

- The defense comprises a public presentation of the student's research and a closed examination by the student's committee. The student will schedule their final exam in consultation with their committee. The advisor and at least one voting member must be physically present at the exam. Following the completion of the exam, the committee will either pass, pass pending revisions, or fail the student. Once any required revisions are completed, the signed Thesis Dissertation Approval form and one hard-copy of the dissertation should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office for the Departmental Thesis Review.
- Deposit the dissertation with the Graduate College.

9. Complete exit interview with Graduate Studies Office.

Time Limit

Ph.D. students who do not complete their degree within six years (seven for direct B.S. to Ph.D.) will be placed on academic probation.

Transferring from MS to Ph.D. in Crop Sciences

Crop Sciences MS students may apply to transfer to the PhD program through two routes.

(1) Prior to completion of the MS degree. Upon acceptance, the student is then considered a direct admit PhD student and must complete all of the corresponding requirements, including the qualifying exam.

(2) Following completion of the MS degree. Upon acceptance, the student is considered a PhD student and is exempt from the qualifying exam.

Application procedure: Students wishing to transfer to the PhD program must contact the CPSC graduate program at least two months prior to the desired transfer. Applicants must submit two letters of recommendation from faculty, including one from the student's MS advisor. Applicants are also encouraged to update their original application personal statement. Applications will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee on a rolling basis.

GRADUATE COLLEGE INFORMATION

Credit Loads

Full-time credit loads are described below. Enrollment for less than full-time during any semester may decrease the fees assessed by the University, but also decreases the services available to you as a student (i.e. McKinley Health Center, IMPE, etc.), and in some cases may cause student loan deferments to be cancelled. Please also note that for purposes of loan deferral only, zero credit registration in GC 599 will count as full time registration. For more information about GC 599, please see the Graduate College web site <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/>. Graduate students not registered for at least a half-time load in a particular term will be subject to Social Security and Medicare deductions for that term.

Graduate students with assistantship appointments of at least 25% (Fellowships impose different requirements, see below)

Fall and spring terms: 8 or more hours
Summer 2 term: 4 or more hours

Graduate students with fellowships (including those holding a concurrent assistantship) and graduate students with "stand-alone" tuition waivers

Fall and spring terms: 8 or more hours
Summer 2 term: 4 or more hours

NOTE: Fellows are required to maintain a full course load each term of registration unless the Graduate College Fellowship Office has approved a reduced course load. Fellows who are international students must also have a reduced course load approved by the International Student and Scholar Services.

Graduate students with 1%-24% assistantships and graduate students without assistantships

Fall and spring terms: 8 or more hours
Summer 2 term: 4 or more hours

NOTES for International Students:

For purposes of course load, each required or recommended ESL course taken as a result of the English as a Second Language Placement Test (EPT) will count as the equivalent of 4 hours, even if the course credit is recorded as zero hours.

Fellows and international students whose first term of study is the summer term must carry a full course of study. In addition, students who hold an RA or TA for the summer term, but were not enrolled full-time for the previous spring or will not be enrolled full-time for the following fall, must also register for the summer term. Registration for all other students for the summer term is at the discretion of the research advisor. Students not enrolling for the summer may have their student health insurance coverage extended through the summer months by visiting the Student Insurance Office in Room 480 in the Illini Union Bookstore Building before the extension deadline in June.

The Graduate Student Petition – (Graduate Student Request)

The Graduate Student Petition is used to request an exception to a Graduate College policy or deadline. These petition instructions, including all supporting documentation required for various requests, are available online at the Graduate College web site <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gsas/gradpetition>. The student completes a request, prints it out, signs it, and asks their advisor to endorse the petition (which includes an explanation of their support and signature). The form is then returned to the Graduate Studies office AE-106 Turner Hall where it will be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval. If approved at the department level, the petition will be forwarded to the Graduate College for review. The student will be notified of the Graduate College decision directly by email. Common examples of uses of the graduate petition are acceptance of non-degree coursework towards a degree, extension of time to complete a degree, to extend time for an I (Incomplete) or DFR grade, etc. Decisions made at the departmental level may require approval of the Crop Science Graduate Studies Committee.

When filing a Graduate Student Petition, it is important for graduate students to consult with the Graduate Studies Office regarding their request for this exception to policy. Depending on the nature of the request, Graduate Student petitions require different information or supporting documentation. Two basic themes should be included on any statement provided in a Graduate Student petition:

1. **Clearly Identify the Issue**
2. **Provide Justification as to why you (the student) should be allowed an exception to this policy or deadline. This justification may include a timeline of events, medical documentation, supporting statements, or other as applicable**

Once you have completed the student section of the Graduate Student Petition, please return the petition to the Graduate Studies office where the petition may be routed for review. Upon completion of the necessary signatures and comments, the petition will then be submitted to the Graduate College for final review and official decision. An email will be sent to both the student and the Graduate Studies Office.

Graduate College Policy

Probation. The Graduate College requires a minimum overall graduate GPA of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale; however, graduate degree programs can have a higher minimum if approved by the Graduate College. The minimum GPA for **Crop Sciences is 3.0**. Students who have a lower overall graduate GPA at the end of any semester of enrollment will be placed on probation. Once placed on probation, a student will have one semester to improve their standing to Full Standing, or will be dismissed from the Graduate College.

Appeal of Dismissal. Dismissal from the Graduate College can be appealed by petition. The Graduate College will consider petitions containing strong program support and strong justification based on other factors pertinent to the program's determination of satisfactory academic progress.

Limited Status Admission. A student admitted to the Graduate College on limited status due to low undergraduate GPA must meet the degree program's minimum overall graduate GPA at the end of the first semester of registration or be dismissed from the Graduate College.

Safety and Security

Safety is everyone's business. Be careful in all you do. There is a special hazard if you are working alone. In an extreme emergency, help may be summoned by the fire alarm station. Staff and students injured during the course of work duties are requested to report promptly to either the Carle Occupational Medicine Department or the Christie Occupational Medicine Department, or to the respective emergency rooms when the occupational medicine units are closed. Although workers may see their personal physicians, the University will only pay "usual and customary" charges in these situations. Those who go first to the occupational medicine department at Christie or Carle will have all charges paid (including referrals) for compensable on-the-job injuries. Anyone who receives a work deferral for more than three days that is not issued by either of the occupational medicine departments must schedule a follow-up appointment with one of the two departments as soon as practical. It is the sole responsibility of injured workers to keep their departments and the Claims Management Office located at 100 Trade Center, Suite 103, 333-1080, informed of any work deferrals. Hours of operation for the two occupational medicine departments are:

Carle Occupational Medicine [http://www.carle-clinic.com/Occupational Environmental/](http://www.carle-clinic.com/Occupational_Environmental/), Carle Foundation Hospital, 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., weekdays, Telephone: 383-3077

Christie Occupational Health Service <http://www.christieclinic.com/department/occupational-health/>, 101 W. University Ave., Champaign, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., weekdays, Telephone: 366-1200. *Adapted from Guide to Graduate Life.*

If a fire or any emergency, call 911. Fire alarm stations are located in main corridors. Learn their location now. If you call the fire department, wait at the main entrance to direct them to the fire. Everyone should evacuate the building when the fire alarm sounds.

Do not leave valuables and easily stolen (portable) items (e.g., cameras, laptop computers, purses) where they are accessible and untended. Report "suspicious" strangers lingering in hallways or labs to the Department main office.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a specific type of insidious and intolerable behavior. This behavior has a specific legal definition, and includes any unwanted sexual gesture, physical contact, or statement which is offensive, humiliating, or an interference with required tasks or career opportunities at this University. Sexual harassment can be overt or covert, physical or nonphysical, spoken or unspoken, and directed at persons of either gender. Whatever the form and wherever the setting, sexual harassment is illegal and will not be condoned by this University. The University has specific regulations and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment. Concerns about sexual harassment should be brought, in confidence, to the department head.

OTHER RESOURCES

Professional Development: <https://grad.illinois.edu/careerdevelopment>

Teaching Certificate: <https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/teaching-certificates>

Graduate College Travel Award: <https://grad.illinois.edu/general/travelaward>

Information On Types Of Assistanships: <https://grad.illinois.edu/assistantships>

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON GRIEVANCES

A policy on grievance procedures for graduate students has been adopted and is listed below. We hope that no situations arise in which a student has a grievance. However, if a need should arise, the procedure stated in the policy statement will apply.

Introduction

All members of the University community are expected to observe high standards of professional conduct and ethical behavior in graduate education and in the supervision of graduate research and teaching (Guiding Standards for Faculty Supervision of Graduate Students, March 31, 1997). In a large and heterogeneous scholarly community however, problems may arise. Thus the University articulates its policies and provides effective informal and formal procedures for resolving these problems involving graduate students.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the interests of graduate students in the Department of Crop Sciences by providing informal and formal means of seeking resolution in case of an inappropriate action of a member of the faculty or administrative staff or an inappropriate application of a department policy. Any graduate student in the Department of Crop Sciences may informally pursue or formally file a grievance when s/he believes that a decision or behavior adversely affects his/her status as a graduate student.

This Policy and Procedures on Grievances by Graduate Students in the Department of Crop Sciences specifies the policy and describes the procedures to be employed to resolve grievances by graduate students in this department. It was approved by the Graduate College on May 30, 2000. This policy does not apply in cases of academic misconduct. Breaches of academic integrity in research and publication are handled under the campus's Policy and Procedures on Academic Integrity in Research and Publication. Similarly, this policy does not apply to cases that arise under the Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students ("Code"), such as capricious grading in a course (Section 26) or academic integrity (Section 33). The policies and procedures described in this document do not override or supersede any other policies as established in the University *Statutes* and campus policies.

Scope and Coverage

A. Definition of a Grievance

A grievance may arise when a graduate student believes that their status as a graduate student, or University appointment based on student status, has been adversely affected by an incorrect or inappropriate decision or behavior. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:

1. inappropriate application of a department or University policy;
2. being unfairly assessed on a preliminary examination;
3. being required to engage in excessive effort on assistantships;
4. being improperly terminated from student-based University appointment (teaching or research assistantships, etc.);
5. being improperly terminated from a program;
6. being required to perform personal services unrelated to academic or assistantship duties;

7. being required to meet unreasonable requirements for a graduate degree that extend the normal requirements established by the campus or by the department and are inconsistent with the scholarly standards in the discipline;
8. being the subject of retaliation for exercising their rights under this policy; or
9. being the subject of professional misconduct by a student's graduate supervisor or other faculty or staff member.

Practices or actions by a student's supervisor, other faculty member, or other member of the University community that seriously deviate from ethical or responsible professional standards in the supervision of graduate student work may constitute professional misconduct in violation of University policy.

Informal Procedures

University policy strongly encourages all students who believe they have a grievance to use all appropriate avenues for informal resolution before initiating a formal grievance. Students in Crop Sciences are encouraged to discuss the issue with the faculty or staff member with whom the problem has arisen. If a satisfactory solution is not forthcoming, the student should discuss the issue with their advisor, the director of graduate studies, or the Head of the department, who shall attempt to find a resolution acceptable to both parties. The student may also consult with the Graduate College, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Ombudsman Office, the Office of International Student Affairs, or other sources.

Formal Procedures

A. Identification of the Grievance Committee

The Graduate Student Policy and Grievance committee shall serve as the department Grievance Committee. This committee consists of two graduate students and nine faculty members. The committee and its chair are appointed by the Head. The chairperson of this Committee is listed in the department's *Handbook of Policies and Procedures*, available in AW-101 Turner Hall or from the student's advisor. When serving as a grievance committee, the chair is responsible for assuring that a record of the committee's investigations, deliberations, and recommendations is forwarded to the Head.

B. Procedures

1. A student in the department of Crop Sciences may file a formal grievance with either the department head or directly with the Graduate College, as the student elects. A formal grievance should be filed promptly and must be filed in writing within 180 calendar days of the decision or behavior resulting in the grievance, regardless of whether the department procedure or Graduate College procedure is used. The written grievance should indicate the parties involved, the action or decision being contested, any applicable university, campus or unit policy, an explanation of why the action or decision is inappropriate, and the remedy sought.

2. The Head shall define the subject matter and scope of the issues related to the grievance in a written charge to the grievance committee. The primary involved parties shall receive a copy of the charge.

3. Any participant to the grievance may challenge any member of the grievance committee if there is a perceived conflict of interest. The challenge should be made in writing to the Head of the department. If the objection is prompt and reasonable, the Head shall replace the person with one who meets the stated criteria. The decision of the Head as to whether the challenge is prompt and reasonable as to the acceptability of the replacement selected may be a basis for appeal of the grievance committee's recommendation.

4. The grievance committee's investigation shall include a review of written materials presented and seeking information from the primary parties in writing or in person.

5. Within 30 calendar days of the filing of the grievance, the chair of the grievance committee shall report its recommendations in writing to the department Head. The Head may grant an extension of the time limit for good cause. The committee's report shall contain:

- a. a summary of the grievant's contentions and relief sought
- b. the response of the individual against whom or department against which the grievance was filed
- c. a general description of the investigative process
- d. a citation of relevant policies
- e. an explicit finding of fact based on the preponderance of the evidence with respect to each grievance included in the investigation panel's charge
- f. a listing of the evidence relevant to each finding
- g. an indication of whether there was a reasonable basis in fact and honest belief for the allegations in the investigated grievance
- h. a recommendation of appropriate redress for the grievant(s) and
- i. any recommended changes in policies and procedures to minimize the probability of recurrence.

6. Within 7 calendar days of receipt of the committee's report, the Head shall determine the disposition of the case and communicate the decision to the primary involved individuals. If the Head determines that the grievance has not been proved or has no merit, the Head will notify all involved parties and all persons who have been interviewed or otherwise informed that the grievance has been dismissed.

If the Head concurs with the committee's conclusion that the grievance has been sustained and has merit, the Head will proceed in accordance with the University statutes and relevant University rules and regulations. The Head may, after consultation with appropriate campus officers, prescribe redress for the grievant. In addition, the Head may initiate modifications of department policies or procedures. The Head shall notify the relevant primary involved individuals (grievant, respondent, grievance committee members) of actions taken.

7. Within 10 calendar days of receipt of written notification of the Head's determination, appeals may be made to the Graduate College as specified in the Graduate College grievance policy. This appeal can be based only upon demonstrated specific deficiencies in the application of this department grievance procedure to the student's grievance.

8. After completion of a grievance review and all ensuing related actions, the Head shall return all original documents and materials to the persons who furnished them. The department shall destroy the grievance file on a date 5 years beyond the grievant's time limit for completion of the degree. A report of the nature of the grievance and the primary involved parties shall be forwarded to the Graduate College.

Suggestions for Graduate Students

The graduate program of study is designed to provide students the opportunity to achieve a high degree of competence in preparation for a professional career. Throughout the program, the student is being evaluated, both formally and informally. Grades attained in formal courses are important but so is course selection. Typically, the most in-depth evaluation of the student's professional competence is provided by the preliminary and final exams and the thesis presentation. That competence will be reflected not only by a positive outcome to both exams, but also in the letters of reference written by the major advisor and committee members. The following are but a few general suggestions that will, hopefully, prove useful.

Academic Freedoms and Rights of the Parties

1. It shall be a prime concern of all persons who implement this policy and these procedures to protect the academic freedoms fundamental to the academic enterprise. Among other things, this includes the professional judgments of student performance that are an essential part of the graduate education process. Academic freedom, however, affords no license for the mistreatment of graduate students.

2. The rights of the primary involved individuals shall be specified in the form of a written notice or letter from the Head. The primary involved individuals have the following rights:

- a) To receive notice of the identity of the members of the grievance committee.
- b) To receive a written statement of the charge including the subject matter being considered by the grievance committee. If additional information emerges during the committee's evaluation that substantially changes the subject matter, the parties shall be informed promptly in writing.
- c) To submit statements in writing and to meet with the committee to present information.
- d) To consult private legal counsel, or another person who may provide advice at the meeting with the committee. Prior notice of the presence of an advisor must be given and any other primary involved party may request a delay of up to 5 calendar days to arrange for the presence of an advisor.
- e) To review and respond to the grievance committee's final report.

3. Any of the parties responsible for the implementation of this policy may consult University Legal Counsel at any time during the informal or formal processing of a grievance.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a significant professional or personal involvement with the facts or the parties to a dispute. Any participant who has a conflict of interest in a dispute under this procedure, or a concern about a conflict on the part of another, shall report it to the Head who shall take appropriate action. If the Head has such a conflict, the Head will inform the Associate Dean of the Graduate College who will, in consultation with the dean of the academic college, decide how to address the situation.

Timeliness and Procedural Changes

All procedures prescribed in this document should be conducted expeditiously. The Head for good cause may extend any of the time periods and may make other reasonable alterations of these procedures, provided that the alteration does not impair the ability of a grievant to pursue a grievance or the respondent(s) named in the grievance to defend themselves. Any alterations of these procedures must be communicated to all pertinent parties.

Withdrawal of a Grievance

The grievant may submit a written request to withdraw the grievance at any time. The Head shall decide whether to approve the request. A request to withdraw shall be approved only if both parties to the action agree to terminate the proceedings. If the withdrawal request is approved, the Head shall notify the primary involved parties and the files shall be destroyed. If the withdrawal request is denied, the grievance shall continue to be processed to a conclusion according to the above procedures.

Termination of University Employment

The termination of University employment of any of the primary involved individuals in a grievance, by resignation or otherwise, after initiation of procedures under this policy, shall not necessarily terminate these proceedings.

Malicious Charges

Bringing unfounded charges in bad faith is a violation of this and the Graduate College grievance policy. If the grievance committee determines that the allegation(s) in the grievance or the testimony of any person was unfounded and motivated by bad faith, that finding shall be communicated by the Head to the Dean of the Graduate College and the dean of the academic college. After consultation with the Provost, the deans may inform the Head of such a finding. Such finding may be the basis for disciplinary action or other personnel decision in accordance with University rules and regulations.

FORM A - M.S. GRADUATE STUDENT PLAN FOR COURSEWORK - THESIS OPTION

Name of Student _____ UIN _____

Major Advisor _____ Expected Graduation Date _____

Area of Research _____

Committee Members: (Minimum of 3* graduate faculty members required)

1) _____ (*Advisor*) 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

THESIS OPTION:

32 hours total (20 hours of graded coursework + 12 hours thesis research)

20 hours of graded coursework include: four (4) hours at 500 level

| Course Number – 400 Level | Hours | Course Number – 500 Level | Hours |
|---------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | CPSC 594 Prof. Orientation | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | CPSC 598 Seminar Series | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Crop Sciences 599 thesis research hours (no more than 12 can be used) _____

Total Hours Completed _____

Student's Signature _____
Date

Major Advisor's Signature _____
Date

FORM B - M.S. GRADUATE STUDENT - NON-THESIS OPTION

PLAN FOR COURSEWORK

Name of Student _____ UIN _____

Major Advisor _____ Expected Graduation Date _____

Area of Specialization _____

Committee Members: (Minimum of 3* graduate faculty members required)

1) _____ (Advisor) 3) _____

2) _____ 4) _____

NON-THESIS OPTION – DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:

32 hours of graded coursework comprised of: twelve (12) hours at 500 level and one (1) hour for professional orientation course.

| Course Number – 500 Level | Hours | Course Number – 500 Level CPSC 594 – Prof. Orientation | Hours |
|---------------------------|-------|---|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

| Course Number - 400/500 Level | Hours | Course Number – 400/500 Level | Hours |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Total Hours Completed _____

Student's Signature
Date

Major Advisor
Date

FORM C. BIOINFORMATICS M.S. DEGREE

PLAN FOR COURSEWORK*

* This plan to be submitted by the advisor during the first year of graduate study and modified as required.

Name of Student _____ UIN _____

Major Advisor _____

Term of Admission _____ Expected Date of Degree _____

Area of Research _____

Committee Members: (Minimum of 3 members of graduate faculty)

_____ (advisor) _____

COURSE PLAN:

M.S.--must total 32 hours (28 graded hours for thesis and 4 hours of thesis research)

M.S.--must total 36 hours of graded coursework for non-thesis option

Must include registration in CPSC 598 each term

1. Graded Coursework at 500 Level (12 hrs.) See reverse side for listing of courses

| Course Number | Course Number | Hours |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------|
| Fundamental Bioinformatics | _____ | 4 |
| Crop Sciences | _____ | 4 |
| Computer Sciences | _____ | 4 |

B. Other Graded Coursework (7 hrs.)

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

C. Crop Sciences 598 and/or

D. Crop Sciences 599 (thesis hours) if applicable

Total Hours

Student's Signature

Date

APPROVED:

Major Advisor

Date

Department Representative

Date

FORM D - PH.D. GRADUATE STUDENT PLAN FOR COURSEWORK

Student's Name _____ UIN _____

Major Advisor _____

Area of Research _____

Guidance Committee Members: (Minimum of 4 members* of the graduate faculty are required)

1) _____ (*Advisor*) 2) _____

3) _____ 4) _____

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS:

Doctorate candidates are expected to take the Preliminary Exam by or during their fifth semester and their Final Exam by their seventh semester. (This does not include the summer semesters.)

_____ **Expected Date of Preliminary Exam**

_____ **Expected Date of Final Exam**

COURSE PLAN:

Ph.D.--must total 64 hours (a minimum of 12 graded coursework hours + 32 thesis research hours {CPSC 599} + 20 hours (other – seminar series/coursework/thesis research hours)

Mandatory Courses: CPSC 594 and CPSC 598

| Course Number | Hours | Course Number | Hours |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| CPSC 594 Professional Orientation | _____ | CPSC 598 Seminar | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Crop Sciences Thesis Research Hours _____

Total Hours _____

_____ Student's Signature

_____ Date

_____ Major Advisor

_____ Date

DEPARTMENT OF CROP SCIENCES

GRADUATE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Name: _____ Date: _____

Attached is the Ph.D. research or special project proposal entitled:

This proposal has been reviewed by the Guidance Committee of the student, and will serve to guide the research program of the student.

Approved by:

Advisor

Co-Advisor

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Received by _____ on: _____
Graduate Coordinator Date

Advanced Studies in Crop Sciences- CPSC 593 Contract

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Student's UIN: _____

Curriculum: _____ M.S. _____ Ph.D. _____

GPA: _____ Hours Earned: _____

Semester Enrolled in CPSC 593: _____ Credit Hours: _____

Research Supervisor's Name: _____

Research Supervisor's CRN: _____

Expected Credit: _____

List all special problems, research or thesis courses previously taken:

| Dept. and Course No. | Semester Taken | Title of Problem | Instructor | Hours | Grade |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

Please attach a one page description of the research project or special topic including:

- 1) Proposed project summary
- 2) Overview of research topic or special topic
- 3) Summary of research materials and methods or topics to be covered
- 4) Expected final product

Student's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Approved by (Instructor's Signature): _____ **Date:** _____

Approved by (Faculty Advisor's Signature): _____ **Date:** _____

Approved by (Authorized Dept. Signature): _____ **Date:** _____

Student Responsibility

Students must initiate the advanced study experience by discussing their interests and/or potential research opportunities or advanced study topics with individual faculty. They are responsible for making sure they meet the eligibility parameters for the course description they are interested in. Students are responsible for keeping communication lines open and making timely progress on the proposal application and the actual experience. The student should submit periodic progress reports to the faculty supervisor. The student should submit a final report summarizing the research project or special topic prior to a grade being assigned.

Faculty Member Responsibility

Guidance given to students should include help in defining a reasonable experience that is commensurate with credit expected. Both the expected experience and associated credit should be made clear to the student prior to enrolling in the class. The faculty member is the mentor for the research experience or special topic.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM TO nes@illinois.edu