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Recent Changes to AVS Graduate Program Policy

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Clemson University Graduate School Policy Handbook, Policies and Procedures Link:

The policies and procedures of the Graduate School have been established to ensure that a consistent set of standards are followed from the admissions process all the way through to the awarding of degrees for every Graduate School program. Generally, you are subject to the policies in effect when you first matriculate into your graduate program. Minor changes in policy that will not affect your progress toward a degree may be implemented immediately when that is determined to be in the best interest of students and/or the University, or if the changes are required by a legislative or regulatory body. These changes, along with all other substantive changes, will be noted in the “Changes to Graduate School Policy, Annotated” page(s) of this handbook.

The most recent version of Clemson University Graduate Handbook is available at:


Overview of the Program:

The purpose of the Animal and Veterinary Sciences (AVS) graduate program is to provide a high quality education for graduate students with diverse goals, and to develop, through research, the knowledge and technology necessary to continually improve productivity, efficiency, and sustainability of animal agriculture. Students interested in a professional career in the animal sciences will be exposed to educational and research experiences involving the many facets of animal nutrition, physiology, microbiology, genetics and meat science through a rigorous curriculum of graduate-level courses and challenging experimentation approaches. The most current ideas and concepts in animal sciences will be provided to the students through their daily interactions with the faculty in both the classroom and laboratory environments. All students will be required to use the most relevant experimental methods and techniques in answering questions to improve the understanding of animal biology in an effort to provide society with quality food products that enhance people’s lives.

Requirements for Admission:

The AVS Department requires GRE scores, resume, personal statement and three letters of reference for application to our graduate program. For M.S. thesis and Ph.D. degrees, the department also requires that you identify an AVS graduate faculty member that is willing to serve as your major advisor for the degree program prior to admission to the program.
Animal and Veterinary Sciences Graduate Degree Programs

Animal and Veterinary Sciences, MS

Applicants to the Animal and Veterinary Sciences programs should have a strong background in the animal, biological and physical sciences. Students with deficiencies in these sciences may be admitted provided they correct these deficiencies during the first year of the program of study. MS students are required to complete coursework in an area of interest approved by their graduate advisory committee. MS students may select a thesis or non-thesis option.

Masters of Science, Non-Thesis Option:
Students in the non-thesis option must complete a minimum of 30 hours of coursework, excluding thesis research, and a comprehensive oral examination. At least one-half of the total graduate credit hours required by the advisory committee must be selected from courses numbered 8000 or above.

Masters of Science, Thesis Option:
Students in the thesis option must complete a minimum of 30 hours of graduate coursework, including six credits of thesis research. At least one-half of the total graduate credit hours required by the advisory committee, exclusive of thesis research, must be selected from courses numbered 8000 or above. The following course areas and credit hours are required:

Statistics: 6 credits
Communication: 3 credits
Advanced Knowledge of Discipline: 15 credits
Research Proficiency: 6 credits, AVS 8910

Animal and Veterinary Sciences, PhD
Each student's program will include at least 30 credit hours beyond the master's degree or 60 hours beyond the bachelor's degree, including a minimum of 18 hours of dissertation research. At least one-half of the total graduate credit hours required by the advisory committee, exclusive of thesis research, must be selected from courses numbered 8000 or above. A dissertation is required. The following course areas and credit hours are required:

Statistics: 3 credits
Research Proficiency: 18 credits, AVS 9910 Research and Thesis
Advanced Knowledge of Discipline: 9 credits
Professional Development: 1 per year as approved by your committee

To be accepted into candidacy for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in AVS, each student must complete the requirement of comprehensive examination. The comprehensive exam is taken in two parts: written examinations and oral examinations. Examinations are scheduled with the major advisor and advisory committee. After completion of the
preliminary exams, graduate student will file the GS5D form. The time span from the beginning to the end of the examination must not exceed 12 months. If a student fails to pass the comprehensive examination, he/she may be given a second opportunity depending on the recommendation of the committee. A second failure will result in the student being declared ineligible to receive the PhD or EdD degree at Clemson University in any program; that is, the student will not be eligible to transfer nor apply to a different doctoral program at Clemson University.

Guidelines:

Advisor (major advisor, committee chair):
Every student enrolled in a graduate program must have a major advisor. The major advisor is the faculty member who provides general guidance throughout your program of study. The major advisor will recommend initial courses to be taken until the advisory committee is selected. Initial coursework should be of a fundamental or core nature so that the full advisory committee, once constituted, will have maximum flexibility to formulate the remainder of your program of study. Your major advisor, in consultation with the graduate program coordinator or department chair, will assist you in selecting the members of your advisory committee. The major advisor is responsible for chairing the advisory committee meetings and for providing realistic expectations for completing the requirements of the degree. An advisory committee may be co-chaired by more than one faculty member.

Graduate Advisory Committee:
A student’s advisory committee approves your degree curriculum, supervises your graduate program, administers the final oral examination, and initiates the recommendation for the awarding of the degree. In addition, the advisory committee may administer qualifying (or preliminary) or final comprehensive examinations. One member of the committee is designated as chair (or major advisor) and normally directs your dissertation or thesis.

Every student enrolled in the Graduate School must form an advisory committee not later than the middle of their second semester after matriculation into a master’s or specialist’s degree program, or not later than the beginning of the fourth semester of their doctoral program. Individual programs that require a standing exception to the timeline for curricular reasons may appeal for an alternative timeline to be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

Committee composition: A minimum of three faculty members must be selected by a student seeking a master’s or specialist’s degree, and a minimum of four faculty members must be selected by a student seeking a doctoral degree. All members of an advisory committee must be current members of the graduate faculty. The majority of the advisory faculty may serve as co-chairs or committee members as long as the chair is a permanent faculty member appointed to the graduate faculty and the Special faculty member(s) are members of the graduate faculty. The chair, co-chair, or at least half of the committee must have a primary appointment in the program offering the degree. If the student declares a minor, this area must be represented on the committee. Committee members of
interdepartmental programs are to be appointed according to bylaws (formulated by the program faculty and endorsed by the academic unit housing the program).

**Major advisor or committee chair:** Regular or Administrative faculty holding graduate faculty status are eligible to serve as the major advisor or chair of the committee.

**Plan of Study (form GS2; p. 14, CU Graduate School Policies and Procedures):**

If you are a degree-seeking student, you must file a GS2 Plan of Study or graduate degree curriculum (accessed via iROAR) near the beginning of your program of study. This planned program represents your individual curriculum as recommended by your advisory committee. It must adhere to departmental as well as University policies. The total number of graduate credits required for the degree is determined by your advisory committee, consistent with the specific program guidelines and Graduate School policy. These credits constitute the core of your graduate degree curriculum. All transfer courses listed on the GS2 must conform to the policies on transfer courses (see Transfer credit). These documents may evolve, with advisory committee approval, throughout the course of your degree program, and changes should be reviewed and approved by your committee, and a new GS2 form submitted whenever a change occurs.

**Deadlines:**
Students pursuing a master’s degree must submit the plan of study by the middle of their second semester following matriculation, and doctoral students must submit the curriculum no later than the beginning of their fourth semester of study following matriculation. If you don’t meet these deadlines, you may be blocked from registering for courses until you submit a plan of study.

**Final GS2 and graduation:**
In order to be approved for graduation, your final GS2 must be filed by the deadline listed on the graduation deadlines web page. Failure to meet these deadlines may result in late fees and/or inability to graduate when desired.

**Continuous enrollment (p. 14, CU Graduate School Policies and Procedures):**
As a graduate student enrolled in a degree program, you are required to maintain continuous enrollment after initial matriculation (i.e., you must register each fall and spring semester until you either have graduated, have permanently withdrawn, or have been dismissed). If you are enrolled in the spring and fall semesters, you are not required to register during the summer unless you meet the exceptions (see Graduate School Policies and Procedures, p.15). Registration in a zero-credit internship or similar course satisfies this requirement. Registering to audit a course does not meet this requirement. Note that a student on a 12-month graduate assistantship must maintain continuous enrollment during the summer in addition to fall and spring semesters.

**Assistantships and Fellowships**
All assistantships are administered by individual units (departments, colleges, centers, etc.). Any student interested in an appointment as a graduate assistant should make direct
contact with the department, college, or unit of interest. Each unit may have deadlines for applying for positions and/or specific requirements for the assistantship.

Types of assistantships:

Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) conduct supervised research or assist with research funded from any source administered by the University.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) teach undergraduate classes or laboratories under the supervision of a faculty member. GTAs are not responsible for assigning grades.

Graduate Teachers of Record (GTR) assume primary responsibility for teaching undergraduate classes or laboratories and are responsible for assigning grades. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) requires that all Graduate Teachers of Record (GTR) have “earned at least 18 graduate semester hours in their teaching discipline, be under the direct supervision of a faculty member experienced in the teaching discipline, receive regular in-service training and be evaluated regularly. The department chair has the responsibility for determining that the 18-hr requirement is met either through coursework or with a memo containing documentation that the graduate assistant meets the requirement as an exception. The Enrolled Student Serves Office will certify that the 18-hour requirement has been met.

Annual Evaluation:

As per Graduate School policy, all graduate assistants must be evaluated prior to the end of the term that will complete their annual assignment. Beginning with the Fall 2018 semester, the Graduate School will approve returning assistantship assignments only if an up-to-date evaluation is on file.

Evaluation template forms are at [https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/faculty-staff/forms.html](https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/faculty-staff/forms.html). There are two options available or programs can use their own evaluation form if they already have a template in use.

Proposal Requirement for M.S.-Thesis and Ph.D. degrees:

Graduate students in the M.S.-Thesis and Ph.D. degrees will submit a written proposal and oral research proposal to their advisory committee. If approved, the GS-Approval of Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal form, located at: [https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/files/pdfs/GS-ResearchApproval.pdf](https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/files/pdfs/GS-ResearchApproval.pdf), will be completed and submitted to the graduate school prior to graduation.