

New Mexico State University

**Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology
and Weed Science**

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

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**College of Agricultural, Consumer
and Environmental Sciences**

Entomology, Plant Pathology & Weed Science

**New Mexico State University
Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Science**

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Table of Contents:**

Introduction.....	1
Admission into the EPPWS Graduate Program.....	1
Thesis Option.....	2
Non-Thesis Options	2
Graduate Assistantships	3
General.....	3
Degree Requirement.....	3
Duties of Assistants	3
Desk/Office Space	4
Other Guidelines.....	4
Seminars.....	4
Departmental Office Interactions	5
Departmental Supplies and Photocopy Machine.....	5
University Vehicles	5
Safety Training.....	5
EPPWS Master of Science Degree Requirements.....	7
General Coursework Requirements.....	7
Outline of Required Events: Thesis Option.....	8
Outline of Required Events: Non-Thesis Option	9

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Introduction

Welcome to Graduate School at New Mexico State University (NMSU) and to the Agriculture Biology Graduate Program in the Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Science (EPPWS)! The faculty and staff in the EPPWS Department are committed to fostering a learning environment for valuable graduate education leading to advanced degrees in various disciplines and to the advancement of science. Your personal commitment is essential to obtaining an advanced degree through individual effort in the form of coursework, independent reading, seminar preparation, and research activities. These guidelines are intended to acquaint you with the policies related to graduate students/assistants in the EPPWS Department.

The NMSU Graduate School offers numerous online resources related to your graduate education including: the Graduate Catalog; Graduate student forms required from students by the Graduate School; list of Tuition & Fees; Thesis Guidelines; Deadline Dates; Graduate Assistantship information; and much more at <http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/>. All policies and rules in the Graduate Catalog from the year in which you started graduate school have precedent over later catalogs. All students will be expected to adhere to the guidelines in the online catalog with the additional clarifications related to our department that are listed in this document. Finally, Graduate students at NMSU are represented by a Union and there is a Collective Bargaining Agreement: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/ga-and-union/collective-bargaining-agreement.html>.

Admission into the EPPWS Graduate Program

To be considered for admittance into the Master of Science graduate program in the Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology, and Weed Science students need to satisfy the following:

1. Be accepted to the graduate program at NMSU (see <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/admission-process-criteria/> for details).
2. Provide a letter of intent describing the student's qualifications and reason for wanting to pursue graduate study in EPPWS.
3. Provide letters of recommendation from at least three individuals familiar with the student's qualifications for pursuing a graduate degree.
4. TOEFL scores are required for all foreign applicants.
5. GRE scores are not required at this time, but if available they may be considered with a student's application.

Thesis Option

Most students in our department will be expected to complete a thesis and will be hired a Research Assistants. Note that the ability for a student to be accepted into the thesis option may depend on finding a faculty member (i.e., “major professor”) with similar research interests and with funding to support a Research Assistant. Students typically concentrate their Agriculture Biology graduate program in entomology, plant pathology, or weed science; however, they may work across disciplines on a project focused on integrated pest management. For Research assistants in the thesis option, work on research will likely be necessary outside of the 20 hours of paid work assigned by the major professor.

As part of completion of a thesis-based degree, graduate students are expected to prepare a publication-quality manuscript. Further, students are encouraged to work with their major professor to submit the manuscript to a peer reviewed journal either before or after their graduation from NMSU. Students who need help with writing are encouraged to take a writing class which will benefit future publications.

In addition to the thesis, a public presentation followed by a defense / exam with the student’s graduate committee is required for completing the program. Students are encouraged to work closely with their major professor and with their committee as necessary to ensure that their research and presentation meet a high level of scientific rigor.

All data pertaining to research conducted by Graduate Students enrolled with the department are the property of the New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station and must remain within the department. The original version, as well as digital copies, of all data generated must be passed to the major professor prior to the student’s departure / graduation from NMSU.

Non-Thesis Option

A non-thesis option is available, depending on prior education and experience. Students planning on continuing their studies in a doctoral program or wishing to establish expertise in skills and techniques related to a specific career objective are strongly encouraged to select the thesis option. The non-thesis option is suggested for students desiring immediate employment or seeking to enhance their current employment situations in careers that do not involve research

Graduate Assistantships

General

A limited number of assistantships for students pursuing a thesis-based Master's Degree are available to qualified individuals on a competitive basis. These assistantships provide the student with valuable teaching and research experience. The department also benefits greatly from the contributions of these assistants. To be eligible for consideration for an assistantship, a student must satisfy the following:

1. Teaching Assistantships
 - a. Acceptance by and subsequent registration in the Graduate School
 - b. Classification as a "regular" graduate student by the Graduate School
 - c. Be enrolled in nine graded credit hours
 - d. Maintain a minimum of 3.0 grade-point average
 - e. Demonstrate proficiency in communication skills

2. Research Assistantships
 - a. Acceptance by and subsequent registration in the Graduate School
 - b. Classification as either a "regular" or "provisional" graduate student
 - c. Be enrolled in nine graded credit hours
 - d. Maintain a minimum of 3.0 grade-point average
 - e. Acceptance by a faculty member to work on a funded project within the department

Graduate assistants employed at least ten hours per week will be considered eligible for in-state tuition during the first 12 months of tenure if the assistantship is approved by the Graduate School prior to census date (stated by the Office of the Registrar as the third Friday of the semester each spring and fall semester). If New Mexico resident status has not been established by the time of any reappointment, the graduate assistant may be subject to nonresident tuition rates. Applications for state residency may be obtained in the Office of the Registrar, located in the Educational Services Building.

Degree Requirement

Coursework requirements for advanced degrees vary with the individual student as well as area of specialization. Outlines for M.S. degree plans are generated by the student in consultation with the major professor and with input from the student's assigned graduate committee. All M.S. candidates (thesis and non-thesis) must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate coursework, of which 15 hours must be in courses numbered 500 or above and 15 hours must be from courses offered within the department. If following the thesis option, not more than six nor fewer than four thesis credits may be counted toward the requirements for a Master's of Science degree.

Duties of Assistants

A student who is awarded a full-time assistantship is obligated to contribute 20 hours each week toward departmental activities. These duties may be divided between

teaching, research, and responsibilities as directed by a student's major professor. All students are encouraged to assist with teaching at least one semester (regardless of appointment) while completing their degree. Teaching assistants will be assigned to assist with at least one course each semester. The student is responsible to the faculty member in charge of that course for the teaching portion of his/her duties. Students on research assistantships will have duties assigned under the direction of the student's major professor and will generally involve helping the faculty member with his/her research projects. Research activities directed toward the student's thesis are performed in addition to those required by the assistantship.

Desk/Office Space

Graduate teaching assistants from EPPWS will have top priority for assignment of office space and, within practical limits, will be located together. Full time graduate research assistants will be next in line for office space, with seniority used to establish highest priority. Assignment will be one student per graduate carrel on an annual basis. Reassignments will occur as necessary, generally following the close of a semester. All graduate students are expected to respect the rights of others within their office, including maintaining an orderly and a studious environment, and keeping all doors locked when the area is not occupied. Keys will not be loaned or passed to another student and must be returned to the Department Chair prior to graduation.

Other Guidelines

Seminars

Students enrolled in the thesis option: Graduate seminars are offered during both fall and spring semesters. All graduate students in the thesis option are required to enroll in at least one (1) credit of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Science seminars. A student should take one seminar credit during the first semester of graduate school and present their thesis proposal plan. Students are encouraged to take a second seminar credit in their last semester and present a public exit seminar just prior to the defense of their thesis work.

Students in-residence and enrolled in the non-thesis option: Graduate Students are required to enroll in one (1) credits of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Science seminars. Typically, a student will take one seminar credit during the first semester of graduate school and present a review of a research paper in their area of subject matter concentration. Each student is encouraged to take the second seminar credit in their last semester and present a public seminar on a topic within their subject area of concentration. The student is expected to demonstrate mastery of their subject and communication skills through their presentation.

Non-resident students enrolled in the non-thesis option: Graduate Students are required to enroll in one credit of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Science seminar and one credit of EPWS Special Problems (EPWS). Typically, a student will take one credit of special problems during which they are expected to write a paper demonstrating mastery of a

topic within their subject area of concentration (through a literature review and/or limited research project). Each student will take the seminar credit in their last semester and present a public seminar on this topic within their subject area of concentration. The student is expected to demonstrate mastery of their subject and communication skills through their written report and presentation.

All graduate students are expected to attend and participate in seminar (regardless of whether the student is enrolled in the class). Research and class schedules should, therefore, be arranged accordingly.

Departmental Office Interactions

Graduate students often require office staff assistance for various types of projects. Because departmental office staff members have heavy workloads pertaining to regular departmental business, all reasonable requests for office staff assistance should be channeled through a faculty member. Unreasonable requests **will not** be accommodated.

Departmental Supplies and Photocopy Machine

Supplies related to teaching activities are provided by the department. Students needing materials for such activities should issue a request through the faculty member in charge of the course/ or their major professor. Supplies are not provided for the student's coursework activities. A photocopy machine is available for departmental business. All transactions require an account number which may be obtained from the student's major professor.

University Vehicles

Vehicles are available for official use only. Graduate students may be allowed to drive university owned vehicles at the discretion of their major professor. Individuals using university vehicles must have a valid driver's license and a State of New Mexico permit which is issued after completion of the NMSU defensive driving course. Graduate students are encouraged to enroll in the defensive driving course as soon as possible after their arrival.

Safety Training

Safety training is required for each individual in a research laboratory and is offered by the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EH&S). The following is a checklist of the required training for various research lab activities. This checklist and additional information on the safety class schedule are provided in the training section of the EH&S web page <https://safety.nmsu.edu/training/>

Activity	Required Training
Do you work with, have or store chemicals work area(s), vehicle or building?	Hazard communication in your (Right to Know) class

Does your area qualify as a lab under the OSHA lab standard?	Lab standard
Do you use infectious agents, human blood, body fluids or tissues in your laboratory?	Bloodborne pathogens
Do you use radioactive materials, x-ray equipment or similar radiation devices?	Radiation safety
Do you produce waste containing chemicals, biological tissues, body fluids, infectious agents or radioactive materials or residues?	Hazardous waste training
Does your research involve animals?	Contact Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Does your research involve the use of lasers?	Laser safety
Does your research involve the use of respirators or dust masks?	Respiratory safety and fit testing
Does your laboratory use or service equipment on which an unexpected restarting could cause injury?	Lockout-Tagout
Does your area have any confined spaces you must enter?	Confined space entry
Do you work with or near electrical hazards?	CPR Training
Does your research require the application of pesticides?	Pesticide safety plus respiratory safety (if applicable)
Are there fire extinguishers in your work area or nearby for your use?	Fire extinguisher training
Do you drive a university vehicle?	Defensive driving
Do you do research on WSMR?	UXO training

Additional training will be conducted by laboratory principal investigators or their staff to address special procedures unique to each laboratory.

Master of Science Degree in Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Science

I. General Coursework Requirements

- A. All Graduate students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average.
- B. A minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate work is required of which:
 1. At least 15 credits must be in courses numbered 500 or above.
 2. At least 15 credits must be in EPWS courses.
 3. At least half of the credits (exclusive of thesis) must be taken with other than a single professor.
- C. Designated hours to be completed:
 1. For students enrolled in the Thesis Option at least four but not more than six credits in EPWS 599 (Master's Thesis). Students enrolled in EPWS 599 may be asked to present progress updates. Students enrolled in the Non-Thesis option cannot take EPWS 599.
 2. One (1) credit in EPWS 590 (Graduate Seminar): one credit to present the thesis proposal plan. Taking seminar a second time for one (1) credit in the semester of the student's defense is also recommended, but not required.
 3. At least three credit hours in graduate-level Experimental Statistics.
- D. Graduate Assistants
 1. Assistantships are not available to students enrolled in the Non-Thesis option.
 2. During fall and spring semesters, assistants must enroll for at least nine graded graduate credits but not more than 15 credits.
 3. Enrollment during summer sessions is not required.
 4. Internal Revenue Service tax withholding guidelines require graduate students employed through NMSU to maintain at least six credit hours of course work during the fall and spring semesters and three credit hours of course work for summer sessions to be eligible for the student FICA tax exemption. Student employees who do not meet this requirement during any given pay period will be subject to Social Security taxes at the rate of 6.2% and Medicare taxes at the rate of 1.45%.
- E. Additional Requirements
 1. A maximum of six credits in S/U courses may be taken during a MS program.
 2. A maximum of six credits (four in a single semester) in EPWS 551 (Special Topics) may be taken during a Master's program.
 3. If a minor is declared, the minimum number of credits in the minor discipline must be completed and approved by the minor-granting department.
 4. In certain instances, courses to meet undergraduate deficiencies may be required. These count toward the total allowable credits each semester but not toward graduation. With the permission of the student's advisor and the department chair, such deficiency courses may be taken under an S/U option

(with S being a grade satisfactory to the professor). These courses will not affect the maximum number of S/U graduate credits permitted.

II. Outline of Required Events to Complete a M.S. Degree: THESIS OPTION.

Obtain the current schedule from the graduate school at

https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/graduate_calendar/.

- A. Submit formal application for admission to Graduate School, accompanied by any required application fee by the following deadlines: Fall Semester, July 1; Spring Semester, November 1; Summer Sessions, April 1. Gain official acceptance by EPPWS and the Graduate School.
- B. First Semester – in consultation with major advisor and committee (the committee membership should be determined after consulting with one’s advisor):
 - ◆ Course work – complete a "tentative" program of study
 - ◆ Research Plan – In cooperation with the advisor, the student should prepare a research proposal to be presented as a seminar topic while taking EPWS 590 or AGRO 505, or as a public seminar at the end of the semester.
- C. Each July, the student must submit a summary of progress to their major professor who, in consultation with the committee, will evaluate the summary and determine whether the student can continue in the MS program
- D. Application to Candidacy
 - ◆ A formal program of study must be filed with the Graduate School immediately after completion of 12 credits of graduate work in residence.
 - ◆ After approval by the Graduate Dean, the student is formally admitted to candidacy for the M.S. Degree.
- E. Thesis
 - ◆ Student must personally deliver a copy of the thesis to each member of the examining committee **ten (10) working days** before the final examination.
 - ◆ The thesis should be submitted to the Graduate School Thesis Editor in accordance with deadlines published each semester.
- F. Final Examination
 - ◆ The form to schedule examination is to be submitted to the Graduate School **at least ten (10) working days** prior to the proposed date for the examination. [Note: While the form is required to be submitted 10 days prior to the examination date, it is essential to work with committee members

early in the semester of intended graduation to secure an exam date.]

- ◆ A public seminar on the thesis is to be presented prior to the defense.
- ◆ At the conclusion the examination, the student shall complete and submit a Graduate Clearance Card to the Graduate School.

III. Outline of Required Events to Complete a M.S. Degree: NON-THESIS OPTION.

Obtain the current schedule from the graduate school at

https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/graduate_calendar/.

- A. Submit formal application for admission to Graduate School, accompanied by any required application fee by the following deadlines: Fall Semester, July 1; Spring Semester, November 1; Summer Sessions, April 1.
- B. First Semester – in consultation with major advisor and committee (the committee membership should be determined after consulting with one’s advisor):
 - ◆ Course work - complete a "tentative" program of study
- C. Application to Candidacy
 - ◆ A formal program of study must be filed with the Graduate School immediately after completion of 12 credits of graduate work in residence.
 - ◆ After approval by the Graduate Dean, the student is formally admitted to candidacy for the M.S. Degree.
- D. Final Examination
 - ◆ The form to schedule the examination is to be submitted to the Graduate School **at least ten (10) working days** prior to the proposed date for the examination. [Note: While the form is required to be submitted 10 days prior to the examination date, it is essential to work with committee members early in the semester of intended graduation to secure an exam date.]
 - ◆ The final oral examination- defense should reflect the scope of the students’ plan of study (course work)
 - ◆ At the conclusion of the examination, the student shall complete and submit a Graduate Clearance Card to the Graduate School.