



**ANIMAL SCIENCE**

*Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources*

# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK



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## ***INTRODUCTION***

The purpose of this manual is to provide a summary of procedures and policies of the departmental graduate program. Beginning graduate students are urged to read the manual carefully and then retain it for reference throughout their program. **This manual does not supersede the Office of Graduate Studies catalog** (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/home>). The email address for the Office of Graduate Studies is [graduate@unl.edu](mailto:graduate@unl.edu) and the telephone number is 402-472-2875.

## ***DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE COMMITTEE***

The Department's Graduate Committee is comprised of ten members appointed by the Department Chair. The chair of the Graduate Committee is appointed by the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the Department Head. The other Graduate Committee members are appointed by the Department Head and represent Animal Breeding and Genetics, Meat Science and Muscle Biology, Non-Ruminant Nutrition, Physiology, Ruminant Nutrition, Distance-delivered Graduate Programming (e.g., Master of Applied Science), Outstate Research and Extension Centers, and the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center. A graduate student from the Animal Science Department also is identified to serve as a non-voting student liaison to the Graduate Committee.

The Committee responds to inquiries from prospective students, handles review of applications and admissions, develops program policies and departmental program coordination, addresses student academic problems, approves doctoral supervisory committees, develops departmental recruiting grants, and addresses student concerns. The goal of the Committee is to develop and maintain excellence in the departmental graduate program. Students should feel free to approach the Department Head, any member of the Graduate Committee or a Graduate Faculty member with concerns or comments related to their graduate programs.

## ***DEPARTMENTAL DISCIPLINARY SPECIALIZATIONS***

The Animal Science Department offers disciplinary specializations (in six areas as part of both the Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy degree programs). These specializations are in Breeding and Genetics, Extension and Education, Meat Science and Muscle Biology, Non-Ruminant Nutrition, Physiology, and Ruminant Nutrition. As part of admission to the graduate program, students will choose a disciplinary specialization.

## ***GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION***

The Animal Science Graduate Student Association (ASGSA) was formed to foster close relationships among Animal Science graduate students and faculty, to encourage leadership, to promote greater interest in the profession, and to promote participation in professional activities. Students are encouraged to join ASGSA. It is open to all persons of the Animal Science Department or related disciplines (Agronomy and Horticulture, Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, Food Science, Nutritional and Health Sciences, Statistics, and Biochemistry) who the membership believes will help to promote the purpose of the ASGSA, and who are currently pursuing an advanced degree.

ASGSA activities include interdisciplinary seminars, fund-raising projects, and social functions, all designed to fulfill the purposes stated above. In addition, eligible ASGSA members may receive travel funds to defray the cost of attending one professional meeting each year and may also receive funds to cover the cost of thesis/dissertation binding. Eligibility for membership in ASGSA is determined by participating in monthly meetings, fund-raising events, and by paying yearly dues. For more information, refer to the URL <https://animalscience.unl.edu/asgsa>.

## ***MAJOR PROFESSOR (ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH ADVISOR)***

Each graduate student must have a major professor prior to being admitted and initiating graduate study. This individual is selected prior to their admission in agreement with the graduate student. The major professor works with the graduate student to guide and direct his/her activities and development



throughout their program. Selection of a major professor is largely a matter between the individual student and an individual faculty member. Factors having a bearing on the selection include finding areas of mutual interest, funding, professor's previous commitments, and student's abilities and goals. The major professor may be changed early in the student's program if it seems desirable and is approved by the Graduate Committee.

### ***POLICIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS***

International students whose first language is not English must take an English proficiency placement test administered by the Department of English before registrations are approved by the Office of Graduate Studies. Depending on the results of the examination, the international student may be required to complete additional English courses to gain certification status. Apart from the English proficiency requirement, international students function in graduate programs on the same basis as their U.S. counterparts. An assignment to a teaching assistantship will depend on the results of the English proficiency exam and/or the results of participation in the International Teaching Assistants workshop. All international students are encouraged to maintain a close liaison with International Student and Scholar Office (<https://globalnebraska.unl.edu/isso>), 1100 Seaton Hall, Suite 201, City Campus, at telephone number (402) 472-0324

**English Proficiency Requirements.** International students whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate abilities to undertake advanced academic work in an English-speaking institution. **Exemptions** for the English proficiency requirement are granted for non-native speakers who have received a bachelor's or more advanced degree either from an accredited U.S. institution or from a university outside the U.S. at which English is the official language of instruction. Further specifics regarding English Proficiency requirements, beyond requirements for admission, are provided by the Office of Graduate Studies (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/prospective/international/english>), including details regarding the English Proficiency testing.

### ***POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS AT DISTRICT RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTERS***

#### ***FACULTY ADVISORS***

If a graduate student's major advisor is located at research and extension centers, they will also have an "on-campus" advisor. The "on-campus" advisor will be identified for the student **before** entry into the graduate program. (This procedure will enable graduate students to use their time on the Lincoln campus effectively in course work and research.) During the term of the graduate student's program, the Supervisory or Examining Committee may elect to meet at least once at the research and extension center where the research is being conducted.

#### ***TIME ON THE LINCOLN CAMPUS***

Students beginning an M.S. program will likely need to spend at least two semesters in residency on the Lincoln campus, whereas Ph.D. students may need to be in residency on the Lincoln campus three or more semesters to complete course work. The sequence and/or availability of courses approved by the Supervisory Committee will dictate the number of semesters a student will spend on the Lincoln campus.

### ***MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) DEGREE PROGRAM***

#### ***MAJOR ADVISOR***

M.S. students work closely with their major professors in developing their total program.

#### ***EXAMINING COMMITTEE***

Formation of a M.S. Committee early in a student's academic program is strongly encouraged. With the assistance of their advisor, students need to identify an Examining Committee composed of at least two

additional Graduate Faculty for approval by the Department Graduate Committee Chair. The Examining Committee must be identified and the internal Examining Committee Form (<https://animalscience.unl.edu/GraduatePrograms/cmteform.pdf>) submitted at the time of submission of the Memorandum of Course. The M.S. thesis is approved or disapproved by the Examining Committee.

### ***MEMORANDUM OF COURSES***

The Memorandum of Courses consist of a description of courses, research topic, and other requirements deemed desirable for completion of the M.S. program. Departmental minimum program requirements are the same as those established by the Office of Graduate Studies.

For the M.S. program, there are three options (I, II, and III). Option I is utilized by nearly all students in the Department of Animal Science. Students who are in option I must earn a minimum of 30 credits consisting of 20 to 24 credit hours of regular course work and 6 to 10 thesis credit (899) hours. Eight credit hours (in addition to 899) must be earned in courses open exclusively to graduate students (900 level or 800 level without 400 or lower counterparts).

At the M.S. level, however, it is possible for the student to pursue non-thesis options (see Graduate Catalog), which may be the best option for those not pursuing a doctorate (Option II) or a program to be continued for a higher degree (Option III), rather than the thesis option program (Option I). Options II and III are available to students only by special permission of the Animal Science Graduate Committee. Such permission must be obtained at the time of admission into the program. Requirements for Option II and III are provided by the Office of Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/degrees/masters>). The Option chosen will be determined based on discussion with, and agreement by, the major professor.

The Memorandum of Courses for the M.S. degree is developed cooperatively by the student and major professor before grades have been received in more than one-half of the program credit hours. This is typically done during the student's second semester of classes. Other faculty members may be involved if desired. The Memorandum of Courses must be approved by the Animal Science Graduate Committee Chair and then the Dean for Graduate Education.

Changes in Memorandum of Courses are permissible and proposals for such changes must be approved in the same manner as described for the original program proposal.

### ***GUIDELINES FOR M.S. EXAMINATIONS***

**General.** Requirements for the M.S. degree are provided in Office of Graduate Studies Catalog (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/degrees/masters/>). A written comprehensive examination is required for the M.S. degree. Because of differences in subject areas and advisors, as well as variation among student programs, the format of comprehensive examinations will be unique and is to be expected. The guidelines presented below are not intended to usurp the authority of the major professor and the Examining Committee, but are an attempt to encourage some uniformity within the Department of Animal Science.

**A. Written Comprehensive Examination.** When a student has substantially completed courses in the program, he/she must pass a written comprehensive examination. It is recommended that this examination be successfully completed within 10 months of the planned graduation date but must be passed at least four weeks prior to the Final Examination.

1. The Major Advisor obtains questions from Examining Committee and from other faculty, where appropriate, to construct an examination specific for each student.
2. The written examination should be completed within a period of one week, but the amount of time for each question or set of questions, and the format of the exam, will be left to the Major Advisor.

3. Answers to the questions are to be graded either as Pass or Fail or on a numerical scale (0 to 100%) by the faculty members who submitted the questions, each grading their own question(s). The Office of Graduate Studies does not have standards for determining a passing grade on the written examination. It is recommended that a passing grade be 70% of the questions, if graded Pass or Fail, or 70%, averaged over the questions, if assigned numerical scores.

**B. Oral Comprehensive Examination.** This is not required by the Office of Graduate Studies or the Department but may be required by the major advisor. If there is an examination, it is recommended that:

1. The oral examination should be given as soon as possible after the written examination is completed and graded.
2. Answers to the written comprehensive examination questions should be available for review by the Examining Committee.

**C. Thesis.** The following must be adhered to:

1. The thesis must be presented to Examining Committee in time to permit review; or **as a minimum two weeks prior to the Final Examination.**
2. Details, including deadlines, for the preparation and submission of the Thesis is provided by Office of Graduate Studies (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/degrees/masters>). A single final copy of the thesis must be provided to the Secretary of the Graduate Committee in the Department of Animal Science.

**D. Time and Place of Final Examination.** Final examinations are required for M.S. candidates. Furthermore, all examinations must be conducted at the time and place they are scheduled. **The Final Examination Report Form is to be completed by the student and forwarded to the Department Office four weeks before the time of the examination.** The time and place of the final exam will be included in the Animal Science Newsletter or announced by memo to the Animal Science faculty. The Final Examination Report Form must be received in the Office of Graduate Studies at least four weeks before the final examination. A preliminary (non-final) copy of the thesis, including title page and abstract, must be presented to the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks before the final examination for review of formatting, font type, etc.

**E. Conduct of Final Examination.** The student may present the results of the thesis in the form of a seminar, but this is not required. Thesis defense presentations are open to the public. Graduate students, plus those faculty not participating in the final examination, are then typically excused and the examination over the thesis and any other areas deemed pertinent by the Examining Committee (e.g., written examination results) proceeds to conclusion.

### ***STATUTE OF LIMITATION***

The work required for the M.S. degree must be completed within ten consecutive years. No courses can be revalidated after the 10-year period.

### ***DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) DEGREE PROGRAM***

#### ***MAJOR ADVISOR***

Ph.D. students are advised in course work by the major professor prior to program approval by a Supervisory Committee and the Graduate College. During this initial period, major professors will work with Ph.D. students to develop a tentative graduate program and a tentative list of Graduate Faculty to serve on the Supervisory Committee. Once approved by the Graduate Committee and the Office of Graduate Studies, it is the responsibility of the student to follow the program developed by the Supervisory Committee.

## ***SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE***

The Ph.D. Supervisory Committee's purpose is to assist the student in constructing and following a program that will enable professional development compatible with the goals of the student. The Supervisory Committee consists of at least four Graduate Faculty, including the major professor and at least one Graduate Faculty external to the Department of Animal Science but within the University system. Faculty from other departments with courtesy appointments in the Department of Animal Science cannot serve as the external faculty member. Some degree of diversity in the makeup of the Supervisory Committee is deemed desirable because this committee functions to develop and challenge the thinking of the student as part of the preparation for a diverse, challenging profession. One objective measure of diversity is to include faculty from multiple disciplines of Animal Science.

The major professor assists the student in developing a proposed Supervisory Committee. The student will then send an electronic request to the Graduate Committee Chair. The request must contain the names of the proposed Supervisory Committee members, and a proposed title and a brief description of the dissertation topic. This Supervisory Committee proposal is routed electronically to the Graduate Committee for approval. If one Graduate Committee member wishes, the student and his/her major advisor will meet with the Graduate Committee at their next monthly meeting to discuss and resolve questions related to the makeup of the Supervisory Committee. The major professor serves as Chair. Ideally, the Ph.D. student and her/his advisor should complete this process before the end of the second semester of classes in the student's program.

Once approved by the Graduate Committee, the proposed Supervisory Committee will meet before the student has **completed 45 hours including planned transfer-credits but exclusive of language and/or language tools on their Program of Studies** (described latterly). At this first meeting, the Committee will review and act on the student's proposed course program, research topic, language and/or research tool requirement (research technique or collateral field study), select a Reading Committee for the dissertation, and set the procedure for assessing progress of the student's program.

A Reading Committee, consisting of two members of the Supervisory Committee (exclusive of the Chair), will be appointed by the Supervisory Committee. The Reading Committee will approve or disapprove the dissertation based on its content and completeness once it has the approval of the major professor.

An outcome of this first meeting, the student will submit their Appointment of Supervisory Committee and Program of Studies to the Graduate Committee Chair, which will be signed and forwarded to Office of Graduate Studies. Final approval of Supervisory Committee members is made by the Dean for Graduate Education.

The Committee functions to ensure the student has reached a satisfactory level of academic and research achievement prior to the conferring candidacy for the Ph.D. Candidacy can be conferred (i) once a student has completed a "substantial" number of the credits on their Program of Study, and (ii) satisfactory completion of a written and oral comprehensive examination. These examinations must occur at least 7 months prior to the dissertation defense. In addition, the Supervisory Committee determines satisfactory completion of the dissertation and its oral defense.

Beyond its formal duties, the role of the Supervisory Committee is to help develop a pertinent and rigorous program, and provide counsel if problems arise during a student's program. To strengthen communication between the student and the Supervisory Committee, it is desirable for the Committee to meet at least once annually to review the student's progress in research and in completion of the courses described in the program of study.

**Submission of dissertation.** The dissertation must be given to the Reading Committee **at least four weeks** prior to the expected final oral examination. After approval by the Reading Committee, the dissertation must be submitted to the Supervisory Committee **at least two weeks** prior to the oral

defense.

Refer to the Office of Graduate Studies description of degree requirements for further explanation of these procedures (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/degrees>).

### ***PROGRAM OF STUDIES***

The Program of Studies consist of a description of courses, research topic, and other requirements deemed desirable for completion of the Ph.D. program. Departmental minimum program requirements are the same as those established by the Office of Graduate Studies.

For the Ph.D. program, the minimum amount of graduate credit is 90 credit hours including a minimum of 12 hours, and maximum of 55 hours, of dissertation. Not fewer than 45 credit hours must be completed at the University of Nebraska for the doctoral degree. The courses required for the student pursuing the Ph.D. are established by the Supervisory Committee. There is no absolute course work requirement to receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The Department intends programs to be flexible, to build on previous activities, and to meet specific educational objectives of the student. Where specific research interests apply, graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of expertise of faculty members located at research and extension centers, expertise in teaching and extension programming, laboratories within Animal Science, and faculty in other departments.

The Program of Studies for the Ph.D. degree is developed cooperatively by the student and the Supervisory Committee, usually from a proposal prepared by the major professor and student. The Program of Studies must be filed prior to completion of half the coursework, including any approved transfer credits, for the doctoral program. The program is submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies for final approval.

Changes in the Program of Studies are permissible and proposals for such changes must be approved in the same manner as described for the original program proposal.

### ***GUIDELINES FOR PH.D. EXAMINATIONS***

**General.** Requirements for the Ph.D. degree are described in the Office of Graduate Studies Catalog. These should be consulted and adhered to by all Supervisory Committees. The Graduate Catalog states that each Ph.D. student must take a written comprehensive examination but the format of this examination is left to the Supervisory Committee. Also, at the discretion of the Supervisory Committee, a student may be required to pass an oral comprehensive examination. The Supervisory Committee is responsible for the administration of the entire Ph.D. program within the regulation of the Office of Graduate Studies. Therefore, variation among students in programs and formats of comprehensive examinations will be normal and is to be expected. The guidelines presented below are not intended to usurp the authority of the Supervisory Committee, but are an attempt to encourage some uniformity within the Department of Animal Science. The Supervisory Committee should agree on the examination procedure when they approve the program of study.

**A. Written Comprehensive Examination.** When a student has substantially completed courses in the program, he/she must pass a written comprehensive examination, which may consist of several parts, in major and minor or related fields:

1. The Chair of the Supervisory Committee obtains questions from every member of the Supervisory Committee and from other faculty, where appropriate, to construct an examination specific for each student.
2. The written examination should be completed within a period of one week, but the amount of time for each question or set of questions, and the format of exam, will be left to the Chair and the Supervisory Committee.
3. Answers to the questions are to be graded either as Pass or Fail or on a numerical scale (0 to

100%) by the faculty members who submitted the question(s). The Office of Graduate Studies does not have standards for determining a passing grade on the written examination. It is recommended that a passing grade be 80% of the questions, if graded Pass or Fail, or 80%, averaged over the questions, if assigned numerical scores.

**B. Oral Comprehensive Examination.** This is not required by the Office of Graduate Studies but may be required by the Supervisory Committee. It is recommended that:

1. Oral examinations are held for all Ph.D. students in Animal Science.
2. The oral examination should be given as soon as possible after the written examination is completed and graded.
3. Answers to the written comprehensive examination questions should be available for review by the Committee.
4. In addition to questions related to the field of study, it is recommended that the oral examination include a review of the specific area of research for the dissertation and progress to date.

Doctoral students may, with permission of their committee, retake their comprehensive exam once if initially unsuccessful. It may not be retaken in the same semester as the first attempt. Further details in such circumstances are provided in the Graduate Studies Catalog (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/degrees/doctoral/>).

**C. Candidacy.** When the student has passed the written and oral examination, if required by the Supervisory Committee, and satisfied any language and research tool requirements, the Supervisory Committee recommends to the Office of Graduate Studies his/her admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. **This report must be filed at least *seven months* prior to the final oral examination.**

**D. Dissertation.** The following must be adhered to:

1. The dissertation must be presented to Reading Committee in time to permit review of content and completeness, and approval, or at least four weeks prior to the date of the Final Examination. The Dissertation must be approved for content and completeness by the Reading Committee.
2. Once reviewed, and content approved, by the Reading Committee, the potential revised Dissertation is presented to the Supervisory Committee in time to permit review, with the **minimum** time two weeks prior to the Final Examination.
3. Details, including deadlines, for the preparation and submission of the Dissertation is provided by Office of Graduate Studies (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/degrees/doctoral/>). A single final copy of the dissertation must be provided to the Secretary of the Graduate Committee in the Department of Animal Science.

**E. Time and Place of Final Examination.** Final examinations are required for Ph.D. candidates. Furthermore, all examinations must be conducted at the scheduled time and place. **A form attached to the Application for Final Oral Exam is to be completed by the student and forwarded to the Department Office four weeks before the time of the examination.** The time and place of the final exam will be included in the Animal Science Newsletter or announced by a memo to the Animal Science faculty. **The Application for Final Oral Exam and a copy of the dissertation and abstract are due in the Office of Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the final examination.**

**G. Conduct of Final Examination.** The student may present the results of the dissertation in the form of a seminar but this is not required. Dissertation defense presentations are open to the public.



Thereafter, those present, exclusive of the Supervisory Committee and student, will typically be excused until the conclusion of the defense.

### ***STATUTE OF LIMITATION***

The time limit on the doctoral program is eight years from the time the student's Program of Study is filed in the Office of Graduate Studies Office. There are no waivers and there are no revalidation procedures.

### ***GRADUATE RESEARCH***

An important aspect of both M.S. and Ph.D. programs is the opportunity to conduct research. The research project selected as a part of a graduate program will be one that is compatible with the student's interest and research goals of the major professor. In conducting the research project, the student will plan, execute, and report research.

### ***SEMINARS***

Seminars are an important part of graduate education. Seminars provide the opportunity to develop skills in organizing and presenting technical information to a group of peers and to stay abreast of current research in the student's area. This experience is excellent preparation for presenting papers at scientific meetings, extension and classroom presentations, or anytime students are required to speak before a group. **All new graduate students, in either their first or second semester, must enroll in Animal Science Seminar 806, which is offered during the fall semester of each year.** This course is designed to develop the basic skills needed to present a seminar and to help new graduate students become familiar with the faculty and research programs in the Department. **All graduate students are expected to attend and participate in seminars within their discipline, the interdisciplinary seminar in our Department, and seminars sponsored by centers or areas** (e.g., Center for Biotechnology; Interdepartmental Nutrition Program), which will enhance their graduate education.

### ***EXPECTED STUDENT PERFORMANCE***

Graduate students are expected to make satisfactory progress in course work and research activities at all times. The extent to which progress is judged satisfactory is determined largely by the major professor (with help from the Examining Committee for M.S. students or Supervisory Committee for Ph.D. students), formalized through an annual review (due by August 1 each year).

The Office of Graduate Studies has the following scholarship requirements that must be satisfied to receive graduate credit:

1. A minimum grade of B is required for graduate credit in 800-level courses with 400 or lower counterparts within the student's major department or area.
2. A minimum grade of C or P (Pass) is required for graduate credit in 800-level courses in minor, collateral, or supporting areas of work.
3. A minimum grade of C or P (Pass) is required for graduate credit in 900-level courses, or 800-level courses without 400 or lower counterparts.

Graduate students in Animal Science have further requirements for academic performance:

1. The grade-point average in courses other than thesis or dissertation credits must be at least 3.0 for graduation. This average is calculated from courses on the Memorandum of Courses for M.S. students or the Program of Studies for Ph.D. students.
2. Non-thesis/non-dissertation credits listed on the Memorandum of Courses for the M.S. or the Program of Studies for the Ph.D. may not be taken on a Pass/No Pass basis, unless only offered on a Pass/No Pass basis.

In the case of unacceptable grades or progress on research activities, as documented in the annual review, a course of action to redress deficiencies in performance is developed by the major professor (M.S. or Ph.D.), Examining Committee (M.S.) or Supervisory Committee (Ph.D.). That course of action is submitted to the Graduate Chair for review and approval, before continuing the graduate program.

All graduate students are encouraged to assist with research projects other than their own to broaden their knowledge and skills. The research conducted as part of the Ph.D. and M.S. (thesis option) programs is expected to contribute to the chosen field, being of sufficient importance to merit publication. All thesis-option M.S. candidates are required to prepare a thesis and Ph.D. candidates are required to prepare a dissertation communicating the results of their research.

### ***PROBATION OR TERMINATION OF A STUDENT'S PROGRAM***

Violation of the Student Code of Conduct or failure of a student to meet satisfactory scholastic requirements, pass comprehensive examinations, or master methodology may result in probation or termination of the student's program. A description of the probation or termination process, including termination appeals, is provided by the Office of Graduate Studies (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/degrees/termination/>).

A student who has been found to have infringed upon the "Student Code of Conduct" policy is ineligible for any Animal Science award.

### ***GRADUATE STUDIES FORMS AND DEADLINES***

Required forms for both the M.S. and Ph.D. programs, and their associated deadlines, are available on the Office of Graduate Studies website (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/degrees>).

### ***THESIS AND DISSERTATION***

Most M.S. candidates complete a thesis (Option I) and all Ph.D. candidates complete a dissertation. Specifics concerning the organization, preparation, and due dates of thesis or dissertation are published in the Graduate Catalog and the guidebook for "Preparing a Thesis or Dissertation" (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/degrees/guidelines>) available from the Office of Graduate Studies. If there are additional questions regarding the form or style to use, it is suggested students follow the form and style used by the refereed journal in their area (e.g., Journals of Dairy, Poultry, Food, and Animal Science).

### ***PROGRAM MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS***

The Office of Graduate Studies requires that a student be enrolled during the term of an assistantship in an academic year. No enrollment is required in the summer. However, doing so may be desired (i) to not affect pay since to be exempt from FICA and Medicare withholding, graduate assistants must be enrolled for at least 4 or more credit hours in each academic semester, including summer, or (ii) to access services including building access, library services, and campus recreational facilities. Details are at <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/funding/assistantships>.

Most fellowships require maintenance of full-time status (nine hours each semester and six hours during summer with at least one of the six in each of two sessions, preferably the eight-week and second five-week session). With approval of the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies, Master's thesis students in their final year and doctoral students in candidacy may hold full-time status and be registered for fewer credit hours during that time provided they are not employed more than 20 hours per week (half-time). Details are at <https://registrar.unl.edu/academic-standards/student-status/>. Students in the final semester of an M.S. degree or candidates for the Ph.D. degree may hold full-time status and be registered for fewer credit hours during the fall and spring semesters. An electronic form "Certification of Full Time Graduate Status," must be submitted each semester of eligibility in which the student is not enrolled full time to request the Graduate Dean's approval. Master's thesis students may use the Certification for a total of three consecutive terms; Doctoral students in candidacy may use it for two years from first use.

Details are at <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/connections/questions-frequently-asked-graduate-students>.

Enrollment in the summer means graduate students will have to pay for registration fees. Some students may need to register for more credit hours during the summer to meet specific requirements (e.g., those set by health insurance or educational loan companies). Besides keeping full-time status, registering for the summer hours avoids being assessed FICA and Medicare withholdings from payroll checks during the summer. It is usually cheaper to register for the hours than to pay FICA and Medicare taxes. Once candidacy is achieved, the student must register for at least one credit hour each fall and spring until they graduate, even after meeting the total dissertation hours on their Program of Studies.

Graduate students are urged to read the **Graduate Student Registration** section of the Graduate Catalog regarding employment guidelines and full-time student status.

### ***RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS, TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS, AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS***

**Responsibilities.** Research assistants, teaching assistants, fellowship recipients, and other funded and non-funded graduate students are **directly** responsible to their major professor and are all expected to reach or surpass the same level of competence acceptable in their field to receive their advanced degree. Graduate students are given the opportunity, and are expected, to assist with research projects other than their own. Teaching assistants are responsible to the faculty member in charge of classes and are expected to help with lectures, laboratory sessions, grading papers, and preparing teaching aids. Attempts will be made to provide opportunities for all Ph.D. students and some M.S. students to gain teaching experience. **Graduate students receiving an assistantship cannot be employed in any other position.**

**Length of assistantship.** The usual term of an assistantship is two years for the M.S. degree and three years for the Ph.D. Extensions may be granted, given satisfactory progress in the student's program.

**Hours.** The amount of time spent per week on a student's research, working on other departmental research, attending classes and on other activities will vary considerably. Students employed in permanent departmental positions will have percentage equivalent of full-time appointments stated on their Personnel Action Form. A student receiving a regular assistantship has a 19.6-hour weekly time commitment (beyond class attendance) to the Department. All graduate students are encouraged to spend as much time as possible in the Animal Sciences building and in departmental activities.

**Vacation and Leave.** All vacations and leaves must be planned in advance and approval obtained from major professors. There are many times when a student's presence is absolutely necessary for the proper conduct of research. Conflicts can be avoided by careful and advanced planning. School breaks such as Christmas, Thanksgiving and Spring Break are work periods, except for days declared as official University holidays. When going on vacation or leave, a telephone number and/or address should **always** be left with the advisor's administrative assistant.

Information about Academic Leave of Absence is provided in the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/registration/leave/>)

**Health Programs.** Graduate students who are certified by the Office of Graduate Studies as full-time students and who pay the health fee are eligible for student health services. Eligibility continues only as long as students are registered. However, if students are not enrolled during the summer but can show intent to be enrolled in the fall term, they may obtain health services by making application to the Health Center and paying a prorated share of the annual fee.

Employee health benefit insurance programs are not available through the University as a result of receiving an assistantship. However, graduate students are eligible for a group student health insurance program through a private company. Information on such programs will be available at the time of

registration and/or through the University Health Center. If a student enrolls in the University health insurance program and is receiving assistantship support, 79% of the insurance premium will be covered (<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/funding/assistantships>).

**Tax Information and FICA.** Graduate assistantships are taxable income. Payment of FICA can be avoided by registration for at least four credit hours per semester (or one credit hour with an approved waiver, see Program Maintenance Requirements, page 10) and four credit hours spread over two summer sessions including at least one of these hours in each of two sessions (preferably the eight-week and second five-week sessions). The W-4 form is completed at the beginning of employment.

**Tuition and Tuition Waiver for Students Receiving an Assistantship.** A graduate student receiving a teaching or research assistantship will qualify for a waiver of up to 12 hours of resident tuition during each semester if the appointment is continuous and for four full months within the semester dates. Resident tuition rates would be charged to the student for credits in excess of 12 hours. **If a student resigns or terminates the assistantship during the semester before four full months are served, all tuition benefits are lost, and the student will be responsible for that semester's tuition payment.** Graduate assistants will also receive tuition waiver for the first 12 hours during summer sessions. **Students are responsible for paying all other fees including University Program and Facility Fees (UPFF) for academic semesters and summer sessions.**

### ***GRADUATE STUDENT TRAVEL POLICY***

Graduate students who are either presenting their research at or attending professional meetings will be eligible to receive reimbursement of at least the cost of transportation, registration fees, and lodging, meal and miscellaneous expenses allowed under state and university policy. All travel must be approved on the standard travel authorization form. Expense reimbursement will be the responsibility and at the discretion of the student's major professor from grants or other funds available to the major professor.

### ***DATA AND RECORDS***

All data and records pertaining to the research activities are the property of the Department of Animal Science. The same applies to other items such as photographs, transparencies, microscopic slides, specimens, models, and computer programs that might have been developed as a part of the graduate activities. Students desiring copies of any of these items may have them duplicated at their own expense if such duplication is mechanically feasible and provided there are no copyright agreements prohibiting such duplication.

### ***PUBLICATION AND PATENTS***

In addition to preparation of a thesis and/or dissertation, all students are strongly encouraged to prepare manuscript(s) of their research results for publication and/or presentation at scientific meetings. The student will gain valuable experience from the efforts that go into publishing results and presenting scientific papers. The student and major professor work closely on such efforts.

There may be cases where graduate student research efforts lead to patentable discoveries. The Board of Regents encourages seeking patents on discoveries as a method of bringing recognition and remuneration to the individuals involved and to the University. If you believe you have a commercially relevant discovery, you should discuss it with NUtech Ventures (<https://www.nutechventures.org/>)

Students are often inventors on patents and their work can have commercial impact. The Board of Regents policy, Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 outline the IP policy at the University (<https://nebraska.edu/-/media/unca/docs/offices-and-policies/policies/board-governing-documents/board-of-regents-policies.pdf>).

Graduate students may work on proprietary research. However, the size of commitment to proprietary research should be limited, allowing the student adequate time to complete the research and publish the



data in the thesis or dissertation, which stands alone in fulfilling this portion of the requirement of the M.S. or Ph.D. degree.

### ***DEPARTMENTAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND SUPPLIES***

Graduate students need to work, to various degrees, with administrative assistants, laboratory technicians, managers, and other support staff in pursuing a graduate program. At times, students need to use departmental supplies, equipment, and facilities to accomplish the goals of the graduate program. It is departmental policy that graduate students must gain the approval of major professors when departmental supplies or services are needed.

An administrative assistant is not obligated to do work for the students not authorized by advisors.

**Laser Printer.** Available to Animal Science faculty, staff, and graduate students for generation of text and graphics. Work-related jobs have priority during office hours.

**FAX Usage.** No personal Fax messages can be sent from the Department. Since the university has tax-exempt status, the State of Nebraska does not allow personal use of the fax machines. All work-related Fax messages must be sent by the suite secretaries.

**Office Supplies.** All office supplies should be requested through the suite administrative assistant.

### ***MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION***

**Building Pass and Key** New graduate students should see Deb DeWald, Human Resources Office (C201) as soon as possible to obtain building access (via their NCard) and keys. Graduate students are expected to have an NCard in their possession to present to security personnel upon request whenever they are in the building after regular hours. A \$10 deposit per key is required and will be refunded upon return of the key(s). Students must return keys when they finish their programs. Student should secure their personal belongings when they are in the building and remember to lock all doors during nonbusiness hours.

**Photography and Videography in Areas with Animals.** Use of recording devices such as cameras, video recorders, tape recorders, cell phones or tablets, etc. in a UNL secured animal facility, satellite facility or field research site must receive prior approval from the Department Head, Institute Animal Care Program (IACP) Attending and/or Clinical Veterinarian, and the UNL Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Compliance Coordinator. Circumstances when photography/videography may be authorized are: 1) when performed by authorized Primary Investigator or designee when required for scientific or publicity reasons, when due consideration is given to ensuring that the University of Nebraska is accurately represented; 2) when performed by authorized personnel when required to assist in clinical diagnosis of disease; and, 3) when performed by authorized personnel when required to document compliance or animal handling issues at the direction of University officials, IACUCs, veterinarians, and representatives of federal agencies. **The IACUC Reserves the right to review any and all pictures and video recordings, tape recordings, or camera (film or digital) images before release, and may require that these images/recordings be destroyed.** All visitors must abide by individual facility Standard Operating Procedures pertaining to protective clothing, and entrance requirements.

**Parking and Vehicle Registration.** Students planning to park vehicles on campus are required to register the vehicle(s) and obtain a parking permit. Permits can be purchased from Parking and Transit Services, Stadium Drive Parking Garage, City Campus (<https://parking.unl.edu/>). A pamphlet describing the parking lots available and the University traffic rules and regulations will be given with the parking permit. Students are not eligible to park in faculty/staff lots.

**University Vehicles.** University vehicles are available when transportation is needed for research purposes or other official University business. Approval is required from the major professor for all university vehicle usage. A license check needs to be performed before driving a UNL vehicle (by Deb

DeWald, Human Resource Office). For insurance purposes, all graduate students, whether or not on University payroll, need to obtain a travel pre-authorization before driving a University vehicle. A valid driver's license and driver pre-approval is required for all graduate students driving a University vehicle. Drivers and passengers of University vehicles must use seat belts. In case a student is at fault in an accident, the insurance covers expenses to other person(s) involved. If proper pre-authorization was received expenses to repair or replace the University vehicle are paid, at least in part, by the Department. If there is an accident, non-University personnel riding in the University vehicle are not covered by insurance. Further specifics for University of Nebraska Authorized driver policy (<https://fleetmanagement.unl.edu/policies/authorized-drivers>) and University of Nebraska Authorized passenger policy (<https://fleetmanagement.unl.edu/policies/authorized-passengers>) are available at the noted websites.

**Desk and Locker.** Shortly after a student's arrival, the major professor and/or the Chair of the Department Graduate Committee will locate a desk for the student. As other people leave, students have the option of changing desks. Locker space is available. Students needing a locker should contact Brent Johnson (D111). Students should check with the relevant Administrative Assistant for their disciplinary group supporting to see where their mail will be placed.

**Loans.** Students wishing to borrow funds for college expenses can inquire at the office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, 16 Administration Building, City Campus. This office does not participate in the granting of fellowship or assistantships but does maintain current information on all other forms of available financial aid.

**Bicycles.** Bicycles are **not** to be stored in the Animal Sciences building. Bicycle racks are located at entrance points to the building. Be sure to lock your bicycle securely to prevent theft.

### ***UNIVERSITY RESOURCES***

- Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS); University Health Center, 550 N. 19th St. Suite 123; Phone number: 402-472-7450 (24 hours); On campus, dial 2-7450.
- University Health Center, 550 N. 19th St., Lincoln; Phone number: 402-472-5000; On campus, dial 2-5000.
- Husker Pantry: located in Room 123, University Health Center, 550 N. 19th St., Room 123; <https://pantry.unl.edu/>.
- University Police: 300 N. 17th, Lincoln; Phone: 402-472-2222; On campus, dial 2-2222.

### ***ADDITIONAL INFORMATION***

- Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska Bylaws, Policies and Rules (<https://nebraska.edu/regents/bylaws-policies-and-rules>)
- Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Employee Handbook (<http://snr.unl.edu/employeeinfo/information/employeehandbook.asp>)
- Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/>)
- Schedule of Classes ([https://myred.nebraska.edu/psc/myred/NBL/HRMS/c/COMMUNITY\\_ACCESS.CLASS\\_SEARCH.H.GBL?INSTITUTION=NEUNL](https://myred.nebraska.edu/psc/myred/NBL/HRMS/c/COMMUNITY_ACCESS.CLASS_SEARCH.H.GBL?INSTITUTION=NEUNL))
- Department of Animal Science directory (<https://animalscience.unl.edu/our-people>)
- Animal Science Graduate Student Association Officers (<https://animalscience.unl.edu/asgsa>)

***ANIMAL SCIENCE GRADUATE COMMITTEE (2020-2021)***

Committee Chair: Ron Lewis

Secretary for Graduate Committee – C203 Animal Science: Heather Wilson

Non ruminant Nutrition: Phil Miller

Breeding & Genetics: Daniel Ciobanu

Outstate Research and Extension Centers: Karla Wilke

Ruminant Nutrition: Paul Kononoff

U.S. Meat Animal Research Center Representative: Larry Kuehn

Meat Science and Muscle Biology: Gary Sullivan

Distance-delivery Graduate Programming: Andrea Watson

Physiology: Jennifer Wood

Graduate Student Representative: Caitlin Ross