GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Work from Other Institutions
With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 12 credits of graduate coursework taken during graduate study at other institutions. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements. Students may petition the department for an appeal of the ten year limit on a case-by-case basis.

UW–Madison Undergraduate
With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 7 credits of graduate coursework numbered 300 or above from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree. The coursework may also count toward the 50% graduate coursework requirement if the courses are numbered 700 or above. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements. Students may petition the department for an appeal of the ten year limit on a case-by-case basis.

UW–Madison University Special
With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 15 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special student. The coursework may also count toward the 50% graduate coursework requirement if the courses are numbered 700 or above. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements. Students may petition the department for an appeal of the ten year limit on a case-by-case basis.

PROBATION

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

The Doctoral Committee, chosen by the student and major professor, is a committee of four or more members representing more than one graduate program, three of whom must be UW-Madison graduate faculty or former UW-Madison graduate faculty up to one year after resignation or retirement. At least one of the four members must be from outside of the student’s major program or major field (often the minor field) and approved by the Certification Committee. A minimum of two must be from the Soil Science faculty. At least three committee members must be designated as readers. Representation of the Minor Department (see Graduate Minor Requirements in the handbook) is at the option of the Minor Department, but the Department of Soil Science recommends that the Minor Professor be on the Committee.

The required fourth member of the Doctoral Committee, as well as any additional members, all retain voting rights. They may be from any of the following categories, as approved by the executive committee: graduate faculty, faculty from a department without a graduate program, academic staff (including emeritus faculty), visiting faculty, faculty from other institutions, scientists, research associates, and other individuals deemed qualified by the Executive Committee (or its equivalent) provided the individual has a Ph.D. degree or its equivalent.

It is the responsibility of the student and the Major Professor to form a Doctoral Committee and schedule a meeting before the end of the second semester (not including summer sessions) of Ph.D. graduate work.

A student who does not meet deadline requirements in this document will not be allowed to register in the subsequent semester until a written plan for meeting the requirements has been approved by their major advisor and the department Certification Committee.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Prospectus: The written prospectus and the prospectus seminar must be completed by the end of the third semester (not including summer sessions).

Preliminary exam: Students who obtain their M.S. degree in the department and who continue in the department for their doctorate must take the preliminary examination by the end of the fourth semester (not including summer sessions) of Ph.D. graduate work. Candidates who are approved to retake a failed examination must have passed by the end of the fifth semester.

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree who obtained an M.S. or M.A. degree elsewhere, must take the Preliminary Examination by the end of the fourth semester (not including summer sessions) of Ph.D. graduate work. Candidates who are approved to retake a failed examination must have passed by the end of the fifth semester.

Candidates who do not adhere to this deadline must show justification for the delay to the department certification committee.

Final oral exam and deposit of dissertation: A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may by require to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

Doctoral degree students who have been absent for ten or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements. Students may petition the department for an appeal of the ten year limit on a case-by-case basis.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences: Grievance Policy

In the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS), any student who feels unfairly treated by a member of the CALS faculty or staff has the right to complain about the treatment and to receive a prompt hearing. Some complaints may arise from misunderstandings or communication breakdowns and be easily resolved; others may require formal action. Complaints may concern any matter of perceived unfairness.

To ensure a prompt and fair hearing of any complaint, and to protect the rights of both the person complaining and the person at whom the complaint is directed, the following procedures are used in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Any student, undergraduate or graduate, may use these procedures, except employees whose complaints are covered under other campus policies.

1. The student should first talk with the person at whom the complaint is directed. Most issues can be settled at this level. Others may be resolved by established departmental procedures.

2. If the student is unsatisfied, and the complaint involves any unit outside CALS, the student should seek the advice of the dean or director of that unit to determine how to proceed.
   a. If the complaint involves an academic department in CALS the student should proceed in accordance with item 3 below.
   b. If the grievance involves a unit in CALS that is not an academic department, the student should proceed in accordance with item 4 below.

3. The student should contact the department’s grievance advisor within 120 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment. The departmental administrator can provide this person’s name. The grievance advisor will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, in discussions with the student and the person at whom the complaint is directed.
   a. If informal mediation fails, the student can submit the grievance in writing to the grievance advisor within 10 working days of the date the student is informed of the failure of the mediation attempt by the grievance advisor. The grievance advisor will provide a copy to the person at whom the grievance is directed.

4. If the alleged unfair treatment occurs in a CALS unit that is not an academic department, the student should, within 120 calendar days of the alleged incident, take his/her grievance directly to the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs. The dean will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If this mediation attempt fails, the subcommittee will bring the case to the full committee. The committee will seek additional information from the parties or hold a hearing. The committee will present a written recommendation to the dean who will provide a final decision within 20 working days of receipt of the committee recommendation.

OTHER

Financial support is available to qualified M.S. and Ph.D. students in the form of research assistantships. Most assistantships are funded through research grants, and the final decision rests with the professor(s) supervising the research. A research assistantship for at least one-third of the time qualifies a student for remission of all tuition. The department offers a limited number of teaching assistantships. Graduate School fellowships are also available.