

HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT
GRADUATE PROGRAM
PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION.

The Horticultural Sciences Graduate Program (HOS) is administered jointly by the Horticultural Sciences (HS) and Environmental Horticulture (HSE) departments. This document describes the procedures and regulations of the Graduate Program directly administered by the Horticultural Sciences Department and concerns graduate students who applied and were admitted under the *Horticultural Sciences Concentration*.

The Horticultural Sciences Department comprises a team of dedicated faculty, staff, and students whose major goal is to improve fruit and vegetable production for the benefit of farmers and consumers. As an academic unit of the University of Florida, a Land Grant Institution, the Department's faculty members conduct cutting-edge Research, Education, and Extension Programs that address the vegetable and fruit production needs of the State of Florida. Faculty members have a wide range of expertise that includes fruit & vegetable production, postharvest physiology, plant physiology, biochemistry, plant breeding/genetics & genomics, and molecular & cellular biology. The Department has faculty located on the main campus in Gainesville and at the Research and Education Centers throughout the State. It also has the largest Graduate Program in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

The Horticultural Sciences Graduate Program offers research-based M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees. The main objective of the Program is to provide high-quality education, training, and professional development for our graduate students to become successful leaders in their chosen field. Key goals for our students include: learning critical thinking to formulate hypotheses, devising methods to test hypotheses, conducting independent research, and communicating ideas in a clear and effective manner. Oral and poster presentations are important means of communication; however, writing is considered the most important form of professional communication.

The Graduate Program is managed by the Department's Graduate Advisory Committee and by Graduate Student Supervisory Committees for each student. Supervisory Committees are chaired by the student's Advisor. It is not uncommon for a student to have a Co-Advisor when the student needs direct training from faculty members with different expertise. The student's Supervisory Committee will provide research advice, professional mentorship, and determine when degree requirements have been met.

The Horticultural Sciences Department considers that the ultimate responsibility for success in Graduate School rests on the graduate student. This document is intended to provide a structure to ensure the success of each graduate student from initiating a program of study to writing and defending a M.Sc. thesis or a Ph.D. dissertation. None of the procedures and regulations described in this document are meant to contradict the University of Florida Graduate Catalog, <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/academics/graduate-catalog>, which is the primary resource of current official information on deadlines, registration and degree requirements. In addition, students are advised to periodically review the University of Florida Graduate School Handbook at: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/student-life-and-support/student-handbook>.

II. GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Graduate Advisory Committee is comprised of five graduate faculty members and chaired by the Graduate Coordinator. Committee members provide advice and support to the Graduate Coordinator on matters related to policies and procedures by which the Graduate Program operates. Committee members also support the Graduate Coordinator by recommending admission of new students, funding for assistantships, fellowships, & graduate awards, and drafting changes to procedures and regulations to be discussed and voted on by the entire graduate faculty.

Committee Membership (July 2020)

- C. Eduardo Vallejos, Graduate Coordinator (Gainesville, Main UF Campus)
- Mark Settles (Gainesville, Main UF Campus)
- Samuel Hutton (UF Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, Wimauma, FL)
- Marcio Resende (Gainesville, Main UF Campus)
- Denise Tieman (Gainesville, Main UF Campus)

III. GRADUATE STUDENT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

Upon arrival to the University, students should meet with their Advisor to determine an initial program of study, research project, and identify Supervisory Committee members. The major roles of the Supervisory Committee are to provide guidance, mentoring and approval of the student's program of study and research plan. The Committee will also provide the student with annual evaluations and conduct the qualifying and final examinations. The committee has the responsibility of ensuring the dissertation is a piece of original research contributing to new knowledge in the field.

Students should also contact the Academic Support Coordinator to request a desk if that is not available in the Advisor's lab.

III.A. Master of Science

The Supervisory Committee of students seeking a Master's degree shall consist of **at least two** Graduate Faculty members. If a minor is sought, then the committee must include a Graduate Faculty member from the minor department. Selection of the committee should be initiated by the student in consultation with his/her Advisor. Committee members are nominated by the Department Chair, approved by the CALS Dean, and appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School is an *ex-officio* member of all Supervisory Committees. Students may request changes in the Committee, but not past the mid-point of their program, or after the defense.

III.B. Doctor of Philosophy

The Supervisory Committee of Ph.D. students shall consist of **at least four** graduate faculty members. At least two members, including the chair, must be from the Horticultural Sciences Department. There should be one external member who should be from a different educational discipline with no ties to the Department. If a minor is sought, then the Committee must include a graduate faculty member from the minor department. If more than one minor is selected, then each minor area must be represented in the Supervisory Committee. A student with two minors should have five members. A faculty member representing a minor field cannot act as the

external member.

Retired graduate faculty members may continue their service on Supervisory Committees for 1 year after retirement. They may continue to serve on existing or new committees beyond this period with approval of the academic unit. Individuals without graduate faculty status may be included in a student's Supervisory Committee through the special appointment process. These individuals include UF tenure-track faculty not yet approved as graduate faculty, non-tenure track UF faculty or staff who do not qualify for graduate faculty status, and individuals outside the UF system with specific expertise who may contribute to the student's program. The special appointment request should be submitted by the Advisor to the Graduate School. Special appointment members may not serve as committee chair, co-chair, external member, or minor representative.

The student and Chair or Co-chair must be physically present for the oral defense. Other committee members may attend remotely using modern communication technology. A committee member who is unable to be present at the qualifying or final exam may find a substitute who has graduate faculty status in the same academic area. The substitute should sign the appropriate forms indicating that he/she is signing on behalf of the official member and the chair should explain/justify the absence of the official member. The substitute should not sign the Electronic Thesis or Dissertation form.

IV. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

IV.A. Master of Science

The program of study should be designed to provide students with the necessary skills, knowledge and background to prepare them for a professional career. This includes conducting successful research projects and reporting research results with oral presentations and in writing. Students are required to prepare and submit a program of study form that lists the courses that will be completed for their graduate program. This program of study must be approved by the student's Supervisory Committee.

IV.A.1. University of Florida M.Sc. Requirements

- The University of Florida requires a minimum of 30 credit hours for the Master's degree.
- No more than 9 graduate credit hours (earned with a grade of A, A-, B+, or B) may be transferred from another institution. The Supervisory Committee should evaluate the academic integrity of the course work before the Department submits petitions for transfer of credits. The petition should be submitted during the student's first term of enrollment. Approval for this transfer is made by the Dean of the Graduate School.
- Pending approval by the Supervisory Committee, a student may take a maximum of 6 credit hours of courses numbered 3000 or above outside the major.
- A maximum of 6 credit hours of HOS 6971-Research for Master's Thesis will be credited towards the 30 credit minimum.
- An optional minor may be chosen in an academic unit other than the major. The requirements for this option include at least 6 credits of course work in the minor field, and a 3.00 GPA is required for minor coursework. Two 6-credit minors may be taken

with the major academic unit's permission.

- Students must pass a final comprehensive examination that will cover the candidates' field of study and their research project. It must occur no earlier than the term before the degree is awarded.
- Students who will not register for a period of more than 1 term need prior written approval from the Supervisory Committee Chair for a leave of absence for a designated period of time. This approval will remain in the student's departmental file. The Graduate School does not require notification. The student must reapply for admission on return.

IV.A.2. Horticultural Sciences Department M.Sc. Requirements

- The Department requires that a minimum of 12 credit hours be of formal HOS courses listed in the Graduate Catalog under *Horticultural Sciences Departmental Courses*.
- Core Curriculum Minimum Requirements. Each Student's Supervisory Committee will determine whether the student has already taken, or can take, courses that are demonstrable equivalent to those listed below.
 - HOS 6934 - Professional Seminar Preparation
 - HOS 6932 – Proposal Preparation
 - HOS 4304/6932 Horticultural Physiology
 - ALS 6093 Introduction to Applied Statistics
- Students will need to write and submit to the Supervisory Committee a research proposal by the end of their first year. This proposal should be no longer than 8 pages (Excluding figures, tables and references). It should include the objective and supportive aims, provide relevant background information, a justification, and describe the experimental procedures and expected outcomes.
NOTE: Failure to turn this proposal to the Program will result in a hold on the student's registration.
- Students will need to write and defend a Master's thesis as the final requirement for graduation. Material included in a thesis is required to be the student's original work.
- Students are encouraged to prepare a manuscript describing their work for submission to a referred journal publication.

IV.B. Doctor of Philosophy

The Ph.D. is a research degree granted to individuals who demonstrate general proficiency and a deep level of understanding of their chosen field of study, a skillful ability to conduct original research independently, and a demonstrated ability for effective oral and written communication. Doctoral training in the Department is accomplished through thoughtfully designed academic and research programs crafted through a coordinated effort of the Advisor and the Supervisory Committee in consultation with the student.

IV.B.1. University of Florida Ph.D. Requirements

- The University of Florida requires a minimum of 90 credit hours beyond the bachelor's

degree.

- A maximum of 30 credit hours may be transferred from a Master's degree program from UF or other institution. Credits can only be transferred for graduate-level, letter-graded credits earned within the previous seven years and deemed by Supervisory Committee to meet the standards of academic integrity. If the prior Master's degree is in a discipline different from the doctoral program, the Department will have to request the approval of the Graduate School.
- Courses beyond the Master's degree taken at another university may be transferred to the doctoral program as long as the courses are letter-graded with a grade of B or better, relate directly to the degree being sought, and are from an institution offering the doctoral degree. The Supervisory Committee must request approval for the transfer from the Graduate School no later than the third term.
- The total number of credits (including 30 for a prior Master's degree) that may be transferred cannot exceed 45. However, these credits must have been earned within the previous seven years.
- Students choosing to have a minor in any academic unit outside the major must have a minimum of 12 to 24 credit hours (depending on the minor) with a minimum grade of B (3.0) in courses numbered 5000 or higher.
- If two minors are chosen, then each must include at least 8 credits approved by the committee member representing the respective minor. If the minor is designed to include courses in more than one academic unit (other than the major's unit), then the nature of the minor must be clearly stated and the combination of courses must be approved by the Graduate School.
- The Supervisory Committee must approve the course load and the committee member representing a minor must approve the courses that will apply to the minor.
- Students who do not plan to register for more than 1 term need prior written approval from the Supervisory Committee chair for a leave of absence for a stated period of time. This approved leave is kept on file in the student's departmental record. It does not need Graduate School approval. The student must reapply for admission on returning. See Readmission Process in Graduate Catalog.
- Students must take a qualifying examination (written and oral) administered by their Supervisory Committee before they can be advanced to doctoral candidacy. Students are expected to advance to doctoral candidacy by the end of their fifth term.

NOTE: Failure to meet this milestone will result in a hold on the student's registration.

IV.B.2. Horticultural Sciences Department Ph.D. Requirements

- Core Curriculum Minimum Requirements. Each Student's Supervisory Committee will determine whether the student has already taken, or can take, courses that are demonstrable equivalent to those listed below.
 - HOS 6934 - Professional Seminar Preparation
 - HOS 6932 – Proposal Preparation

- HOS 4304/6932 Horticultural Physiology
- ALS 6093 Introduction to Applied Statistics
- Students will need to write a “Prospectus” by the end of the first year after admission to the program. This document is basically a 2-page proposal which is expected help the student focus on her/his particular project. The prospectus should be submitted to the advisory committee for review and approval. After revision, if needed, this document should serve as the basis for writing a full proposal.
NOTE: Failure to meet this milestone will result in a hold being placed on the student’s registration.
- Students should submit a full research proposal to the Supervisory Committee for their approval by the end of their second year since admission to the program. The proposal should be no longer than 15 pages (excluding figures, tables and references). It should include the objective and supportive aims, provide relevant background information, a justification, and describe the experimental procedures and expected outcomes.
NOTE: Failure to meet this milestone will result in a hold on the student’s registration.
- Students are required to prepare and submit at least one manuscript for publication as a senior author in a peer-reviewed journal before the final defense.
- As a final requirement for graduation, Ph.D. candidates will need to write a dissertation describing their doctoral research. Material included in a dissertation is required to be the student's original work. If the student has one or more submitted or published manuscripts as first author, these could be included in the dissertation following the Graduate Catalog guidelines.
- Students who plan to do their work at one of the Research and Education Centers of the University of Florida are encouraged to consider one or two terms of residency in Gainesville. While it is true that on-line courses are becoming available at an increased rate, the campus experience can provide students with unique opportunities to meet a diverse array of faculty members and students from diverse academic units and programs. Students can also use this experience to familiarize themselves with campus resources that they may wish to access at later stages of their program.

V. TIMELINE FOR MILESTONES

For the purpose of this section three terms should be recognized: Fall Term (Aug-Dec), Spring Term (Jan-May), and Summer C Term (May-Aug).

V.A. Master of Science

End of First Term: Identify thesis topic.

End of Second Term: Select a Supervisory Committee, and have the first committee meeting.

End of Third Term: Complete research proposal.

NOTE 1: Registration for the fourth term will be placed on hold for those students who do not meet all of these milestones.

NOTE 2: Students are encouraged to complete enough research to write

abstract and make presentation at a professional conference.

End of Fourth Term: Continue research project and start writing thesis.

Start of Fifth Term: Complete first draft of thesis for advisor to review.

End of Sixth Term: Defend thesis and submit to Graduate School. Complete first draft of manuscript to be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

V.B. Doctor of Philosophy

End of First Term: Identify topic of dissertation.

End of Third Term: Select Supervisory Committee, complete 2-page research prospectus, and meet with Supervisory Committee.

NOTE: Registration for the fourth term will be placed on hold for those students who do not meet all of these milestones.

End of Fifth Term: Complete written and oral qualifying exam.

NOTE: Registration for the sixth term will be placed on hold for students who have not taken their exam. The hold will be lifted as soon as dates for the exam are set.

End of Sixth Term: Complete 15-page research proposal. Collect enough data to prepare abstract for oral or poster presentation at a professional meeting.

NOTE: Registration for the seventh term will be placed on hold for those students who do not complete a research proposal.

7th – 10th Terms: Continue to work on dissertation.

End of 11th Term: Submit manuscript to peer-reviewed journal.

End of 12th Term: Defend dissertation.

V.C. Proposal Preparation Course.

This course will be offered in the fall term a year for all first-year students in the program. MSc students starting in the summer will have until the end of the following spring to finish their proposals, while those starting in the spring will have until the end of the following spring to finish their proposal. PhD students who start in the spring or summer terms will not be impacted, because they have 6 terms to finish their proposal.

VI. SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The student's Supervisory Committee provides research advice and professional mentorship, and determines when degree milestones and requirements have been met. Supervisory Committee meetings are an assessment of a student's progress in the graduate program. To fulfill these roles, **the Supervisory Committee must hold at least one annual meeting with the student.** It is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her Advisor to schedule the annual meeting of the Supervisory Committee. It will be the Department Chair's responsibility to ensure these meetings take place. Students are also strongly encouraged to avail themselves of Committee members' expertise through one-on-one interactions or additional Committee

meetings.

In anticipation of the Annual Supervisory Committee Meeting, the student and his/her Advisor should identify issues that need to be addressed at the meeting, such as identifying the best study program (course work), designing a research project, reporting progress, or establishing a timeline for the Qualifying or Final Examinations. The student must prepare an agenda for the meeting, which should be approved by the Advisor. Progress reports from previous terms should be shared with the members of the Committee at least one day ahead of the meeting. Longer documents such as the proposal, manuscripts, theses or dissertations should be made available at least 4 weeks prior to the meeting.

At the meeting, students should present a summary of research progress and a plan of work for the following year. The committee will provide the student with feedback and evaluate student's progress using the **Graduate Student Evaluation Criteria** document. The committee will also prepare and sign the **Supervisory Committee Annual Report** which should be submitted to the Program Assistant. In addition to the assessment of student's progress, the committee can also provide recommendations for altering the study and/or research programs.

VII. PROGRESS REPORTS

Students must complete a **Self-Evaluation Report** documenting academic progress at the end of each term (fall, spring, and summer C). The report should contain in bulleted form a list of academic coursework, research, and related accomplishments as well as a list of goals for the following Term. An estimated timeline for the qualifying exam and/or final defense should also be included in the report. The Advisor must review the report, determine whether progress is Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory, and sign the report before it can be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant. In the event of an **Unsatisfactory** evaluation, the Advisor should call for a Special Supervisory Committee meeting to address major concerns with the student. This meeting should elaborate a plan of action to get the student on-track for timely completion of the degree.

Academic progress should be evaluated by the extent to which the student is following the Plan of Study and his/her performance in course work. According to the Graduate School, graduate students need an overall GPA of 3.00 truncated and a 3.00 truncated GPA in their major (and in the minor, if a minor is declared) at graduation. Students with less than a 3.00 GPA may not hold an assistantship or fellowship. Academic probation will be triggered by a cumulative GPA that falls below 3.00 (truncated).

Academic progress is also evaluated in relation to the timing of research activities stated in the student's proposal. Principal criteria for research progress should also take into account the ability of the student to conduct independent research, and the extent to which the student has been able to report results through oral and poster presentations, submitted manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals, and the extent of completion of thesis or dissertation.

Note: Academic progress evaluations are separate from annual evaluations of any assistantship appointments. Annual evaluations are based on admission date. Committees must be involved in approval of reports.

VIII. QUALIFYING EXAMINATION AND THESIS AND DISSERTATION DEFENSE

VIII.A. Master of Science Degree

VIII.A.1. Master's Thesis

Students enrolled in the Master's program must prepare and present a thesis that displays their ability to conduct independent research. It must be acceptable, in form and content, to the Supervisory Committee and to the Graduate School. The work must be of publishable quality and must be in a form suitable for publication, guided by the Graduate School's format requirements. The academic unit is responsible for quality and scholarship. The Graduate Council requires the Graduate School Editorial Office, as agents of the Dean of the Graduate School, to review theses for acceptable format, and to make recommendations as required.

VIII.A.2. Helpful Links for Thesis Preparation

Graduate School Editorial Office: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial/>

Application Support Center: <https://asc.helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

Format requirements: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial/format-requirements/>

Checklist: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduate-school/pdf-files/2019-04-Doctoral-Checklist.pdf>

VIII.A.3. Master's Final Defense

Upon completion of course work and the master's thesis, students will go through a final examination by the Supervisory Committee. The student will be tested on subjects related to their major, and minor(s) if applicable, and the research project described in the thesis. The first part of the examination will consist of an oral presentation describing the research accomplishments of the student. This presentation will be open to the campus community. The second part of the exam will be attended only by the Supervisory Committee. The student and the Supervisory Committee chair or co-chair must be physically present together at the same location. Other members may attend the defense remotely, using modern communication technology. If a Supervisory Committee member cannot be present at the student's final defense, a Graduate Faculty member in the same academic unit may substitute for the absent committee member. No substitutions are allowed for the Chair. Other graduate faculty may be able to attend if their attendance is approved by the Supervisory Committee, but they will not be allowed to ask any questions or make any comments at all.

Following the exam, the committee should discuss the performance of the student and determine whether the student has passed. Members of the committee will sign the Final Examination form and the ETD signature page. If a substitute is present, then s/he should sign the Final Examination form in the space provided for committee members, noting the name of the absent member. The chair of the student's major academic unit also must indicate the reason for the absence and state that the absent member agreed to this substitution at the final examination. The substitute should not sign the ETD signature page. The original committee member should sign that form. If changes in the thesis are requested, then the Supervisory

Committee Chair or the committee's designee will hold the ETD Signature Page until all stipulations of the committee members are satisfied. The defense of the Master's thesis must be completed successfully prior to its submission to the Graduate School. Only the approved version of the thesis should be submitted to the Editorial Office.

VIII.B. Doctoral Degree

VIII.B.1. Qualifying Examination for Ph.D. Students

Students enrolled in the doctoral program must pass a qualifying exam before they can be advanced to doctoral candidacy. The qualifying exam will be administered by the Supervisory Committee and will comprise of a written and an oral exam. The student is responsible for scheduling the exam prior to the end of his/her fifth term (see Timeline for Milestones section). All members of the Supervisory Committee must be present during the oral exam, and the chair or co-chair must be in the same room with the student. Other committee members can participate remotely using modern electronic means of communication.

The main objective of the qualifying examination is for the Supervisory Committee to assess:

- The student's level of preparation by determining the depth and breadth of knowledge in his/her chosen field of study.
- The student's ability for critical thinking in the formulation of hypotheses and the design of experiments to test them.
- The student's capacity for clear and effective communication.
- The student's ability to think critically on his/her feet.

The UF-mandated written section of qualifying exam will be coordinated by the Advisor. Each member of the committee will give the student either an open or closed book exam. These exams should be given approximately one month before the oral exam. Committee members should provide students with feedback based on the respective exam results before the oral exam. The Supervisory Committee may postpone the oral exam for a retake of the written exam in case of a poor performance.

The oral section of the qualifying exam should be taken approximately one month after the written exam. The oral examination should have two parts. The first part will comprise a seminar open to the campus community. The student will give a presentation covering background information related to the dissertation, objectives of the project, a description of experimental activities and potential outcomes. Any preliminary evidence should also be included. The second part of the oral exam will be attended only by the Supervisory Committee. Other Graduate Faculty may be able to attend if their attendance is approved by the Supervisory Committee, but they will not be allowed to ask any questions or make any comments at all. Following the exam, the committee should discuss the performance of the student and determine whether the student could be advanced to candidacy. According to the Graduate Catalog, if a student fails the qualifying examination, the Graduate School should be notified. A re-examination may be requested, but it must be recommended by the Supervisory Committee. At least one term of additional preparation is needed before re-examination.

Doctoral students who have a satisfactory academic record, an approved dissertation topic,

and have successfully completed the qualifying examination will be advanced to doctoral candidacy by recommendation of Supervisory Committee. This advancement will have to be approved by the academic unit chair, the college dean, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Doctoral candidates will be classified as 9 and will be able to enroll for credits in HOS 7980 - Research for Doctoral Dissertation.

Graduation is not allowed before two terms after the qualifying examination. However, the term in which the student passed the qualifying can be counted as one of these terms, provided that the exam took place before the midpoint of the term.

VIII.B.2. Doctoral Dissertation

Doctoral candidates must prepare and present a dissertation that shows independent investigation and that is acceptable in form and content to the Supervisory Committee and to the Graduate School. The work must be of publishable quality and must be in a form suitable for publication, using the Graduate School's format requirements. *The student is responsible for achieving the level of quality and scholarship required, and the Supervisory Committee is responsible for ensuring that the quality and scholarship of the dissertation meets both the Graduate Program and Graduate School expectations.* The Graduate Council requires the Graduate School Editorial Office, as agents of the Dean of the Graduate School, to review dissertations for acceptable format (check hyperlinks below), and to make recommendations as needed.

VIII.B.3. Helpful Links for Preparing Dissertations

Graduate School Editorial Office: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial/>

Application Support Center: <https://asc.helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

Format requirements: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial/format-requirements/>

Checklist: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduate-school/pdf-files/2019-04-Doctoral-Checklist.pdf>

VIII.B.4. Final Examination

Upon completion of the dissertation, doctoral candidates will be given a final examination by the Supervisory Committee. The dissertation must be presented to the Supervisory Committee at least 14 days prior to the defense. The candidate and the Supervisory Committee chair or co-chair must be physically present together at the same location. Other members of the committee may attend the defense remotely, using modern communication technology. The defense should be no more than 6 months before the degree is awarded. All forms should be signed at the defense: the candidate and the Supervisory Committee chair sign the UF Publishing Agreement Form, while the entire Supervisory Committee signs the ETD Signature Page and the Final Examination Report. If dissertation changes are requested, the Supervisory Committee chair or his or her designee may hold the ETD Signature Page until all are satisfied with the dissertation. However, this form must be submitted electronically, via GIMS, by the Final Submission Deadline for the Graduate School Editorial Office, during the term of intended degree award. All work for the doctorate must be completed within 5 calendar years after the qualifying examination, or the qualifying examination must be repeated.

IX. PROBATION AND DISMISSALS

Following a recommendation for admission from the Graduate Advisory Committee, applicants to the HOS Graduate Program receive a Letter of Admission inviting them to join the graduate program, which they are required to sign indicating commitment to the program. Graduate students in the program, as all UF students, are expected to commit to holding themselves and their peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity as required by the [UF Student Honor Code](#). Students in the program are also expected to perform at the highest level in their academic and research endeavors. Annual evaluations and GPAs will be monitored by the program to ensure students strive for excellence and perform at the top of their capabilities. Students with an unsatisfactory scholarship, defined as a failure to receive a GPA of 3.00 (truncated) or above for one term will be placed on probation. Two consecutive terms with a cumulative GPA below 3.00 will be cause for dismissal from the program. In addition, as indicated in the Graduate Catalog, graduate students who receive a GPA below 3.00 (truncated) may not hold an assistantship or fellowship. The Department could petition the Graduate School for an exemption, but a plan of corrective action must be provided.

Graduate students may also receive a Letter of Appointment for a Graduate Research Assistantship indicating the annual rate of pay, frequency of payment, beginning and ending dates and further details on duties, responsibilities and commitments. This is basically an employment contract that is regulated by the [Graduate Assistants Union Collective Bargaining Agreement](#). Graduate Assistants are entitled to five days of paid leave for every term (fall, spring, or summer C) in their contract. These days are not cumulative and are only effective for the term. In addition, the contract lists a number of situations that entitle graduate assistants to unpaid leave. However, regardless of the occasion, students are expected to notify and obtain approval for all leave with their Advisor. Unexcused absence for more than three consecutive days is cause for dismissal from an assistantship. Misconduct or underperformance are considered justifiable causes for disciplinary actions, which could range from reprimand and suspension to termination. Students are entitled to a grievance process described in detail in the Agreement.

IX. GRIEVANCES

The Department is committed to treating all students fairly, equitably, and with the highest ethical standards. Faculty members are encouraged to provide a welcoming environment that is both intellectually nourishing and academically challenging. However, students occasionally may encounter problems pertaining to their graduate program. To address any of these problems, graduate students are entitled to pursue a formal grievance procedure by which they will have the opportunity to bring complaints and problems of an academic nature, exclusive of grades, to the attention of the Department administration. The formal grievance procedure provides assurance that all parties will be given fair treatment. The University of Florida defines a grievance as dissatisfaction occurring when a student thinks that any condition affecting him or her is unjust or inequitable or creates unnecessary hardship. Areas in which student grievances may arise include scientific misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination, employment-related concerns, and academic matters. The University has various mechanisms available for handling these problems when they arise, and it can sometimes be confusing for the student in knowing where to turn. A detailed description of the grievance procedures can be found in the Graduate Student

Manual at <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduate-school/pdf-files/Student-Handbook-19-20.pdf>

Clear and upfront communication is the key element in problem or conflict resolution. In general, students are advised to attempt to settle grievances in an informal fashion before initiating a formal grievance. Formal grievances must first attempt to resolve the issue through their academic unit before elevating the issue to college level administrators. The student should address the issue with his/her advisor, a Supervisory Committee member, or the graduate coordinator. If none of these faculty members are available/appropriate, then the department chair and/or center director should be contacted. Students may also seek help from the Counseling and Wellness Center <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

If students do not find a satisfactory resolution, they may contact the University Ombudsman for an appointment. The Ombudsman for graduate and professional students is located in 31 Tigert Hall, telephone (352)392-1308, <https://www.ombuds.ufl.edu/>. Documentation must be provided of all formal actions taken to resolve the issue.

X. FLORIDA RESIDENCE

Florida residency status has a significant impact of the cost of tuition at the University of Florida. For this reason, students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents but are not Florida residents are encouraged to apply for Florida residency upon arrival to the State. Except for certain provisions stated on the residency affidavit included with the admissions application, Florida residency for tuition purposes cannot be obtained until the student has resided in the state for at least 12 months preceding the term for which residency is sought. According to Florida laws, students who are initially classified as nonresidents will not be automatically reclassified as residents merely by being enrolled for one year.

It is suggested that on arrival to Gainesville, student should file the Declaration of Domicile form at the Alachua County Administrative Building (corner of University Avenue and Main Street), Official Records Office, Room 101(keep the receipt). Also, students should obtain a Florida driver's license or I.D., Florida voter registration, Florida vehicle registration, or other applicable documents as soon as possible. It will be essential to relinquish documentation showing legal ties to another state. It is also advisable to keep copies of utility deposits, rental agreements, and other documents.

A *Request for Change in Residency Status* form can be obtained in the Admissions Office, S222 Criser Hall. Review the information and items that will be requested when the student files for residency after being in the state 12 months. The application must be accompanied by supporting documentation, also dated at least 12 months prior. A driver's license, vehicle registration, and voter registration are the customary documents presented. The residency review staff members in the Admissions Office are not authorized to provide guidance on methods of obtaining residency. Their role is to review applications for Florida resident status, together with supporting documentation, and to render a decision based on the documentation and the requirements of Florida law. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to provide all appropriate documentation.