DEPARTMENT OF PLANT SCIENCES AND PLANT PATHOLOGY

Montana State University
Bozeman, MT

Graduate Student Policies & Procedures

The Graduate School website may be found at
http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/

Note: The MSU Bulletin, Graduate catalog and The Graduate School take

precedence over this publication relative to official procedures and deadlines.

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Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology
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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to familiarize new graduate students with policies and procedures of both the Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology and of the Division of Graduate Education at Montana State University. In many respects these guidelines serve to set the stage for what we believe will facilitate a productive time for every student. They are not set in stone, but any changes or deviations from them will be up to the faculty, the student's committee, and/or the department head.

The website for the Division of Graduate Education is http://www.montana.edu/wwwdg/. Graduate School forms are also available at this site. The advice of the Dean of the Division of Graduate Education should be sought when apparent conflicts in regulations cannot be resolved at the departmental level.

The Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology is a very diverse group. For simplicity, references in this manual to "Plants Sciences" encompass study of plant pathology, plant genetics, or horticulture.

Although students are expected to put forth the necessary commitment and effort to progress at a satisfactory pace, a graduate degree from the department is not guaranteed solely on the basis of time spent. Rather, our goal is to assist each graduate student to attain competence in a chosen field. Mastery of Plant Sciences is a difficult task, but the rewards are substantial. We believe the effort is worthwhile.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Graduate Committee

Upon a student's arrival in the department, a faculty advisor will be assigned by the Department Head to advise the student on immediate concerns and needs, particularly as they relate to the courses to be taken the first semester in residence. If a student has elected to work with a particular faculty member, then that faculty member will become the student's

major professor. If a student has not chosen a faculty member as major professor the first semester in residence, a temporary major advisor will be selected by the Department Head. During the second semester of residence, however, the student, in consultation with faculty members and the Department Head, must select a major advisor and permanent graduate committee, and file a record of that committee with the Division of Graduate Education. A summary of the procedures for graduate degrees is outlined in the Graduate Bulletin. Selection of the permanent graduate committee is done by mutual consent of the student, his/her major professor, and the prospective faculty committee members. The best way for a student to approach this is to develop a tentative committee list in consultation with the major professor. Once agreed upon, it is the student's responsibility to contact the prospective faculty committee members to determine their willingness to serve. The proposed committee is submitted to the department head who then sends in the formal recommendation to the Graduate Dean. The Graduate Dean actually formalizes the committee assignments including the selection of graduate representatives for the Ph.D. committees. Graduate committee request forms are available in the departmental office or online at http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html.

Shortly after the student receives formal designation of a committee from the Graduate Dean the student should request a meeting of the committee (including the Graduate Representative in the case of Ph.D. committees) to discuss the potential thesis problem, courses to be taken at MSU, and any other items of concern. Students should realize the program of courses is not set in concrete, but can later be changed with the approval of the committee.

Program of Courses

Students are expected to be familiar with the basic aspects of plant science prior to enrollment in the department. If they are deficient in one or more areas, e.g. plant anatomy, they will be expected to become proficient in such areas, usually by taking course work to make up any deficiency. This may require taking classes at a level below which graduate credit can be given. Many students wonder about the areas of study in which they need to be proficient.

The following is a list of minimal requirements:

Working knowledge of plants including:
- plant anatomy
- plant taxonomy
- plant physiology

In addition, a basic understanding of:
- chemistry (organic and biochemistry)
- physics
- statistics

- microbiology

We would expect by the end of their career here a working knowledge of plant genetics, horticulture, and/or plant pathology, depending on student interests. All students are strongly encouraged to take PSPP 524 (Advanced Plant Pathology) and PSPP 542 (Genetic Plant Improvement). These courses provide basic knowledge in the primary focal points of graduate study in the department. Knowledge of more specialized areas would depend on the student's interest.

By the middle of his/her second semester in residence (including summer semester), each student should have met with his/her graduate committee to draw up his/her "Graduate Program" and have it filed with the Graduate Dean. As with all deadlines, it is the responsibility of the student to see that it is done. Graduate Program forms are available in the departmental office or online at http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html.

It is the student's responsibility to get the signatures of each of the committee members. There is a filing fee ($50) for all students filing the Program of Study. The funds from this fee will be used for costs associated with filing and administering the Program of Study for each student's degree as well as services including the graduate writing tutor and formatting assistant in the Division of Graduate Education. This is a one-time fee that will be applied directly to your student account after your Program of Study has been received by the Division of Graduate Education.

Research Topic

Many students will not have any idea of the type of research they would like to carry out for a thesis. It is not unusual and is nothing to be too concerned about. In fact, no formal thesis problem may be determined for the first one or two semesters, however, it is best to try to determine at least preliminarily a potential problem as soon as possible. The selection of a research topic should be done in consultation with your major professor, and other members of the department if needed.

Once a research topic is chosen, a written thesis outline or proposal must be submitted to and approved by the student's graduate committee prior to starting thesis research as a matter of department policy. It is recommended that the student's Graduate Committee meet at least two times per year to discuss the student's research program progress. It is the responsibility of the student to call the committee together.

After a problem has been decided upon and the student has worked on it for some time, a change in problems may be desirable for a variety of reasons. Such changes could be due to personality conflicts with the major professor, a change in the student's interest, or to the fact that the problem just hasn't worked out well and seems to be going nowhere. If this is the

case, the student should discuss it with his/her major professor (or the department head if needed) so that an agreeable solution can be found.

GRADES IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

Each graduate student must maintain a 'B' average (GPA 3.0) in all courses in the major and minor fields which are taken for graduate credit and which are listed on the student's program of study. Any course listed in the major or minor in which a grade of 'C' or lower has been received is considered as a failing grade. Two or more such grades will be grounds for dismissal from our program. The GPA is calculated only on the basis of courses specified in the major and minor areas on the program.

DEPARTMENTAL EXAMINATIONS

The examination procedure is different for M.S. candidates and Ph.D. candidates.

Master's Comprehensive Exam and Defense of Thesis

During the last semester of residence, the student will be examined over both his/her research and general knowledge of coursework. The oral exam and thesis defense usually lasts 2-3 hours. Prior to the exam, the student will be expected to present a seminar covering the research for his/her thesis. The seminar is best scheduled the same day as the exam if at all possible. Topics covered in the exam are the prerogative of the committee members, but they usually are related to general knowledge of Plant Sciences, i.e. subjects that are considered to be common knowledge, as well as more specific items covered in graduate classes in Plant Sciences. Questions will also concern the research covered in the thesis.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam

While the time for taking the comprehensive exam for the Ph.D. degree will vary for each student, the most common time to take it is at the conclusion of course work. Since course work generally requires about two years to finish, the comprehensive exam usually occurs at the end of the second year of residence.

The comprehensive exam consists of two parts. The first is written and consists of a set of questions presented to the major professor by each graduate committee member. The normal situation is for the student to answer one member's question in approximately four hours. Some students will answer one member's questions each day so that they can complete the written exam in one week. Others prefer to answer two member's questions per day, but this often results in "writer's cramp". Within a short period of time after the completion of the written comprehensive exam, usually a week to 10 days, the oral comprehensive exam will be scheduled. The student may or may not be allowed to see the results of his/her written exam prior to the oral exam. This is left up to each individual committee member. The oral exam

usually lasts three hours and will consist of questions from each committee member. In some cases, the questions will surround areas on the written exam with which the student may have had difficulty, or they may cover any other area the committee member chooses. Sometimes questions are also asked by the Graduate Representative.

To pass the comprehensive exam the student must perform satisfactorily on both the written and oral portions of the exam.

Students should take the comprehensive examination very seriously as it provides an excellent opportunity to review areas that perhaps have been allowed to slip by, e.g. plant taxonomy, general botany, basic statistics, etc. It also provides a good opportunity to synthesize subjects from different areas the student previously had kept compartmentalized. If the student fails the exam, the committee may or may not provide for a second opportunity to take the exam. The university stipulates that in case of failure, the student must wait at least six months before the exam is repeated.

Ph.D. Final Examination and Dissertation (Thesis) Defense

When a student has completed his/her research for the thesis, a final examination will be scheduled to cover this material. In addition, the student is expected to present a seminar over the thesis. It is best if the seminar can be scheduled the same day as the final exam. While the majority of the Ph.D. final exams will probably cover the thesis, the student should also be prepared to answer questions over any material pertaining to his/her career as a graduate student. If the final exam is failed, it may not be repeated for at least two months.

M.S. THESIS AND Ph.D DISSERTATION WRITING

The thesis or dissertation must be written in the format and style prescribed by the Division of Graduate Education. Consult the latest Manual for Thesis Preparation which is available online at http://www.montana.edu/wwwetd/, and discuss any concerns with the staff in the office of the Division of Graduate Education by calling them at 406-994-4145 or emailing them at gradformatting@montana.edu.

The Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology requires that students include a literature review for their dissertation. It is a very important part of the learning experience and invaluable to the student and to put the dissertation in context to the broader literature.

Students should read one of the following books about scientific writing prior to attempting to write the thesis:

DAY, R.A. 1983. How to write and publish a scientific paper. 2nd Edition. ISI Press, Philadelphia. ISBN 0-89495-002-3.

O'CONNOR, M., & WOODFORD, F.P. 1975. Writing scientific papers in English. Elsevier-North Holland. New York. ISBN 0444-15165-6.

GRADUATING

Before a graduate degree and approval for graduation can completed, each student's Program of Study must be evaluated to insure that all requirements have been met in accordance with each degree program. This is an important step for a student and the university as it insures that proper credit has been given for all student effort. Once approved and complete, the student has full assurance that they have met all the degree requirements and can file for graduation. The Degree Audit Fee ($20) will be a recurring fee each time a student files an Application for Advanced Degree. This fee will be applied directly to your student account.

The graduation fee ($30) is a one-time fee incurred at the time a student applies to graduate. This fee will be applied directly to your student account.

SEMINAR PREPARATION AND PROCEDURES

Each student is required to present at least one seminar per academic year. In the semester the student presents their seminar, they must also register for PSPP 594-01. All students are also required to regularly attend the department seminar series. The purpose of seminar is two fold. It serves as another vehicle for obtaining information about the subject of Plant Sciences and related areas. It also serves to provide the student with the experience of presenting information before a group of interested individuals and colleagues. In addition, the experience will be useful in aiding the student to overcome "stage fright" and make him/her a better public speaker or lecturer.

Several items relating to seminar presentations are as follows:

Topic

The seminar topic must be approved by the student's advisor and/or the faculty member coordinating PSPP 594-01. Students are encouraged to use PSPP 594-01 for presenting thesis proposals and the thesis/dissertation defense when appropriate. At other times, topics from the current scientific literature on any aspect of plant science may be presented.

Preparation

In general, seminars should be structured like a journal article. The introduction should consist of enough background and literature review to acquaint the audience with the topic. This should be followed with explanation of the scientific approach and any unusual methodology.

Results and discussion should be explained in enough detail to be understood by a scientifically literate audience. The seminar should conclude with a general discussion of the implications and applications of the work.

Audiovisuals

They can make or break a seminar! There is absolutely no excuse for bad visuals. The department has the facilities and equipment to present excellent PowerPoint presentations. Be sure to prepare your presentation far enough in advance that if the slides don't turn out well (e.g. too dark, too much information, etc.) you can redo them prior to your presentation. Perhaps the biggest error people make in preparing slides is to put too much information on one slide, or to make the lettering so small that people in the back of the room can't read the slide.

Practice

It is best if you practice the seminar several times prior to your formal presentation. Not only will it help you determine your timing, and whether the visuals are satisfactory, but will give you confidence that you know your material well. Many faculty, staff and students are willing to listen to a practice session so don't hesitate to involve them.

Professionalism

You should consider the seminar a professional presentation and act accordingly in regard to dress, attitude, style of presentation, etc.

Demonstration of Preparation

Students are required to have their seminar content approved in advance by their major advisor and one other faculty or staff member.

TEACHING

The department believes that all students should gain teaching experience during their tenure as graduate students. This will be accomplished by assisting in teaching for at least one class offered in our department or others as determined by the student and major professor. Students must receive an invitation from the faculty/teacher of the course.

DEPARTMENT OFFICE AND STAFF

The staff in the main offices (Leon Johnson Hall 324 and Plant BioScience 119) has an open

door policy as far as interaction with students is concerned. They are a resource for questions you may have about the campus, department policies and procedures, etc. However, no use of the office equipment (computers and printers) is allowed and no students are allowed access to the files in the office.

Ordering of all lab supplies is done through the lab manager. Office supplies are ordered through department staff in either Leon Johnson or PBB. Please contact your lab manager or the office staff regarding the ordering procedures. As a university department, the ordering of supplies is limited either by where supplies may be purchased or by the amount and quantity. If supplies are needed immediately, advise your major professor.

Assignment of student carrels is based on seniority. Changes are made when space becomes available and/or when mutually agreeable between students. Individual graduate student mailboxes are located in 119 PBB or next to the elevators in 324 Leon Johnson Hall, depending on where your lab is located.

DEADLINES AND DATES

The graduate student bears ultimate responsibility to meet all the dates and deadlines given in the University Catalog. Do not expect your major professor, your committee members, or members of the office staff to remind you. YOU MUST MEET THE DEADLINES AND DATES YOURSELF. If you are uncertain about dates and deadlines, consult the MSU Graduate Bulletin, and if it is unclear to you, we will try to clarify them, or tell you where to get clarification.

STIPEND, FELLOWSHIPS, & AWARDS

Students are often supported by Graduate Research Assistantships and Fellowships from a variety of sources, or perhaps their own personal funds. Usually this is determined prior to admission to study in the department. In addition to the above, there are several awards available on campus for which students may compete and which can serve to supplement their regular stipend.

E.L. Sharp Graduate Achievement Award - Upon the retirement of E.L. Sharp from the department in 1987, a fund was established in his honor, the interest from which is to be used to reward the graduate student in Plant Pathology who makes the most significant accomplishment in a given year. The accomplishment can be in the form of an outstanding thesis, poster, oral presentation at a meeting, or any other documentable accomplishment. Usually the award is presented each year. The faculty members or students may nominate a student for this award, or a student may apply for it. A committee of faculty will determine the winner based on the documentation provided.

Leonard Chvilicek Award – This award is given to a graduate student who is working on a problem related to wheat production and/or improvement. Preference is given to a Montana high school graduate, and recipient must hail from an agricultural background (farm or agribusiness family). Plant breeding faculty selects the recipient annually.

Robert F. Eslick Memorial Award – This award was established in memory of Robert F. Eslick. Professor Eslick had a long and distinguished career as a plant breeder and agronomist at Montana State University. The award is made to a full-time graduate student in crop science who shows academic and professional promise, with preference given to a graduate of a Montana high school. Plant breeding faculty selects the recipient annually.

Out-of-state students are expected to declare Montana residency by the second year of their assistantship. Guidelines for declaring residency can be found at the end of this manual. If you do not intent to become a Montana resident, you should discuss this with your advisor. Montana residency does not apply to international students, as they are not eligible.

WORK EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS SUPPORTED BY GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS (GRA's)

The work performed by a graduate student, although contributing to the productivity of the major advisor and the department, is nevertheless primarily for the benefit of the student. Research leading to publications is a major criterion by which the student will be judged for the rest of his/her career and is a crucial factor in obtaining a desirable job or postdoctoral appointment after leaving MSU. Therefore, whereas a GRA is technically a half-time appointment requiring 20 hours per week spent on research, most students find it necessary and desirable to spend significantly more time in order to maintain a suitable rate of progress towards a degree. Sufficient research effort and progress shall be a matter to be decided by the student, major advisor, and graduate committee. Reappointment will be contingent upon satisfactory performance in research and coursework as determined by the major professor.

A goal of a student's program should be to have their work nationally recognized and readily available to the scientific community. Students are expected to prepare appropriate portions of their thesis for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

VACATIONS and HOLIDAY POLICIES and EXPECTATIONS

Graduate students are considered as regular employees regarding vacations and holidays.

Thus, on the days when the University has an officially scheduled holiday and offices are closed, students may also observe such holidays. If there are any questions as to what days are holidays, check in the departmental office. In some cases, classes are dismissed but the offices are open. Students should regard such days as regular work days. Students on GRA's are entitled to two weeks of vacation each year but they should consult with their major professor about when the time will be taken. Students shouldn't just disappear and tell no one where they are going or when they will return expecting fellow workers and other students to do the necessary work. In times between academic semesters and in the summer, students are expected to be at work since these periods are not official holidays. In fact, these time periods are valuable opportunities to spend quality time on research.

USE OF DEPARTMENTAL EQUIPMENT, VEHICLES, SPACE

The equipment and facilities owned and occupied by the department are here to be used for research. In many cases, however, specific pieces of equipment have been purchased by grants and/or are assigned to specific faculty members. To use such items, please contact the individual responsible for the item. Not only is it a common courtesy, but it will allow the best scheduling of and the proper use of the equipment. Students who abuse this will be denied use of the equipment. In the same vein, the various labs stock many chemical and other disposable items. If you need to "borrow" such, definitely obtain the permission of the lab director prior to so doing.

If the graduate student needs space in the Plant Growth Center (PGC), he/she should request such via the major professor. Space in the PGC is under the control of the PGC Advisory Committee, headed by David Baumbauer, Manager of the PGC. To obtain permission to use such space an application form must be filled out by the major professor and filed with Mr. Baumbauer.

There is space on the Post Research Farm, the Ft. Ellis Research Plots, and on the Horticulture Farm which are under the control of various committees. Again, see your major professor about the procedures for obtaining use of such space. Usually there is a meeting of the various Farm Committees in the spring prior to the planting to determine space needs for the coming growing season, including space for fall-seeded crops. If a student does utilize space on any of the Research Farms, they are expected to maintain it in a weed-free condition. The farm crew will not do this for you.

ATTENDANCE AT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL MEETINGS

Professional meetings are an excellent means for getting up-to-date information and to meet

colleagues working in areas similar to your own. The department will make every effort to assist students in attending such meetings. In general, if a meeting is a regional type and is within easy driving distance we will take a van or cars and as many students as we can accommodate. In this case, there will be no charge for transportation. We may be able to provide some living expenses depending on the budgetary circumstances in the department, but students should not count on this.

If the meetings are of such a distance that air travel is required, our first priority is to send Ph.D. candidates who are near the end of their student career and are looking for jobs or post-doc positions. We will do our best to provide financial assistance to such students, and if this is provided, the student is expected to present a paper or poster at the meeting. In general, we encourage any student attending relevant professional meetings to present a paper or poster since this provides an excellent opportunity to present your work before a group of your peers. Most often, the major professor, principal investigator, or project leader will provide the funds for students attending professional meetings. In addition, students may also request support from our departmental Graduate Student Travel Fund. To apply for such funding the student is required to submit a Travel Fund Request form to the Department Head for faculty approval.

PREPARATION OF PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION

While the student's first priority is to do the research for a thesis, and then to write the thesis, we feel the research really isn't complete until a paper has been prepared for publication in a refereed journal. Only then does the work receive the scrutiny all scientific work must have for it to be credible and to be recognized in the professional world. Students should be proud of their work and should focus on publication. To this end, the department will assist in the preparation of such papers with formatting, printing and duplicating.

JOB HUNTING

Students interested in finding a position are encouraged to check job announcements in publications such as Phytopathology News, Science, Agronomy News, ASHS Newsletters, etc. To prepare a resume to send along with a letter of application for a position, the Career Services sells a manual on resume preparation. When it comes time for an interview, it would be well to read the manual "How to Interview for a Position" published by Louisiana State University. Career Services can also help you with the preparation for interviews.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Most people who regard themselves as "professionals" belong to a professional society associated with their area of interest. The purpose is to benefit from the services provided by such societies. This can include publication in professional journals, job placement services, sponsoring and putting on professional meetings. Students are strongly encouraged to become members of relevant plant societies as most societies have student member rates that are significantly reduced from the regular rate.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

In-state admission and fee status is granted to those persons who have demonstrated over a period of time that their permanent residence is Montana, a state which they have supported through the payment of appropriate taxes. In general, a person must meet all seven requirements listed below to qualify for in-state status:

1. A person must be physically present in Montana for twelve or more consecutive months without an absence in excess of a total of thirty days. One must demonstrate by appropriate actions during the twelve month period the intent to make Montana one's permanent home. The required twelve month period does not begin until specific actions are taken to change legal ties to Montana.
2. The twelve month period does not begin until one or more acts, that clearly indicate the intent to become a resident, are taken. Mere presence in Montana alone will not serve to start this period. The legal action date must occur in the preceding year, on or before the fifteenth day of class of the term for which reclassification is requested. Sufficient actions to begin the period are:
    a. Montana vehicle registration
    b. Montana driver's license
    c. Montana voter registration
    d. Purchase of a principal residence where a Montana title is obtained
    e. Filing of a resident Montana income tax return
    f. If none of the above is applicable, an affidavit of intent may be filed with the Registrar's Office.
3. An individual must be at least fifty-one percent financially self-sufficient during the entire twelve month period, and that person must not be claimed as an exemption under federal income tax regulations by someone filing an out-of-state federal tax return, commencing with the tax year in which the twelve month period begins.

4. A person must file a Montana income tax return

5. If a person drives a motor vehicle in Montana or possesses a driver's license from another state, he or she must obtain a Montana operator's license within the required legal time limit.

6. If a person owns a motor vehicle in Montana, he or she must license the vehicle in Montana within the required legal time limit.

7. An individual must register to vote in Montana if she or he expects to exercise the right to vote.

An individual who is enrolled for more than half-time status during any semester that falls within the twelve month period is presumed to be present in the state primarily for educational purposes, and such periods may not generally be applied toward the physical presence requirement of the policy. At Montana State University, six credits is considered half time enrollment.

There are additional regulations concerning married persons and others with special circumstances. Persons interested in gaining residency should request the pamphlet "Montana University System Student Guide to Montana's Residency Policy." For more information, new students should contact the Office of Admissions. Currently enrolled students and former students can obtain petition forms and more information from the Registrar's Office.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Welcome to Montana State University and the Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology (PSPP)! The mission of the Division of Graduate Education (DGE) and PSPP is to develop, nurture and sustain high quality programs of post-baccalaureate study, set and maintain standards for graduate courses and programs, develop the resources to recruit and support quality graduate students, and guide MSU's graduate program into the twenty-first century. While you will get a general overview of how your program of study will work from your advisor, ultimately it is your responsibility to understand and follow the policies of DGE. Please carefully review the DGE catalog and ask questions of any information you do not understand. Here is a list of common questions and concerns of new graduate students:

1. How do students establish in-state residency?

This issue is of particular concern for primary investigators who support graduate students since resident students naturally require fewer funds for tuition assistance than do non-resident students. In-state admission and fee status is granted to persons who demonstrate that their permanent residence is Montana and that they have paid appropriate taxes over a period of time. To qualify, students must meet seven basic

requirements, which can be found at:
http://www.montana.edu/wwwcat/academic/acad1.html. Students initially classified as out-of-state or non-residents must live and pay taxes in Montana for one year, while taking no more than six credits a semester, to successfully petition for residency. Students that come to Montana based on a verifiable offer of full-time employment may be eligible for residency in less than the standard one-year minimum.

2. Can students transfer courses taken at another university to MSU?
Yes. The number of semester hours transferred from other institutions (non-degree or degree status) combined with credit(s) taken as a non-degree graduate at MSU may not exceed nine (9) credit hours on a Program of Study. Individual departments may have stricter standards on the number of credits to be transferred. There are a number of conditions on the credits that can be transferred, which can be reviewed at:
http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/cat_trans_credits.html

3. Before taking a semester off, what do students need to do?
MSU has a continuous enrollment policy. The full details can be reviewed at:
http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies/cat_continuous_enrollment.shtml Students wishing to take time away from their programs should inform their advisors and departments of their plans. Students must understand that the six and ten year limits for the completing Master's and Doctoral degrees are calculated from the start of their programs. Time away from a program is not considered a valid reason for extending deadlines. When students wish to return, they will need to submit an "Intent to Register" form to the Registrar's Office.

4. What is difference between master's "A" and "B" Plans?
Master's programs in many fields may be taken under either of two plans. Plan "A" requires a thesis and is recommended for the students whose goals make early research experience desirable. Plan "B" requires a professional paper or project and is designed to serve those taking course work en route to a doctoral program who wish to defer original research until they formally begin their doctoral programs or those in terminal degree programs where original research is not necessary.

5. What is required or what can be included in a program of study?
The Program of Study is intended to allow graduate students to individualize their route to an advanced degree. There are, however, numerous requirements and limitations that individual departments and the DGE have set to ensure that all degrees represent a minimum level of academic achievement. Once approved, this document becomes a contract with the DGE that defines the work students must complete before receiving a degree. Programs may be revised and updated to reflect the availability of classes and shifts in academic foci.

6. What are the requirements of a graduate committee?

For master's students, three to five committee members are needed. The majority of members must be MSU faculty from the major department. Adjunct faculty, faculty affiliates, faculty of other institutions, and non-academic experts may serve as members but may not chair a committee. Off campus and non-faculty appointees must submit a curriculum vitae to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education for approval. For doctoral students, departments have the choice of appointing either four or five committee members. Three or four members must be within a student's major and at least one, but not more than two, must represent the student's supporting area or minor (if applicable). The Vice Provost for Graduate Education appoints a Graduate Representative to all doctoral committees. Adjunct faculty, faculty affiliates, faculty of other institutions, and non-academic experts may serve as members but not as a committee chairs. Off campus and non-faculty appointees must submit a curriculum vitae to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education for approval.

7. When do students need to submit a Graduate Program of Study and Committee Form?

This important planning tool must be submitted to the DGE by the end of the second term of study for master's students and by the third term for doctoral students. Failure to do so will result in the student being placed on academic probation for failing to make satisfactory progress toward a degree.

8. How can students change their programs of study?

A student must submit the changes on a "Change of Program" form with the signatures of the advisor and department head. Completed courses may not be removed and students must repeat any course in a program where a grade below a C- was earned. More information can be found at http://www.montana.edu/gradstudies.

9. How can students change their graduate committees?

Students must submit a "Graduate Committee Revision" form with the changes, reasons, and signatures of the faculty being added or removed.

10. What are the formatting requirements for theses and dissertations?

The requirements for formatting theses and dissertations are found in the "Style and Composition Guide" on the DGE Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Website at: http://www.montana.edu/etd/ These guidelines supercede all departmental and discipline standards and must be followed if students wish to have their work accepted by the DGE. Although it is the students' responsibility to see that their theses or dissertations conform to DGE requirements, advisors should ensure that students do not submit work with significant formatting errors. Please be aware of the specific

deadlines for submitting a thesis or dissertation each semester.

11. How do students set up their comprehensive exams or defenses?

After an advisor agrees that a student is ready, the student needs to schedule a comprehensive exam or defense so ALL members can be present. The time and location of the public presentation portion of a thesis or dissertation defense should be announced within the department at least two weeks in advance. Please email Jill at jscarson@montana.edu with the details of your defense. A flier will be created and sent to you to be approved before being distributed. The DGE asks that doctoral students submit this information to DGE for inclusion on the "What's New" section of its web-site. Students must be registered for at least three credits for these events to take place and must meet comprehensive examination deadlines each semester.

12. Can students change their committees if they have trouble scheduling their comprehensive exams or defenses to include all members?

The DGE frowns on any practice where expediency outweighs the quality of graduate education. The committee that advises a student from the beginning of his/her graduate career and was presumably selected based on their ability to support the student's program should be the same committee that examines the student. Students should schedule all committee meetings as far in advance as is practical to coordinate all members' schedules in time to satisfy all deadlines.

13. How does a student arrange to graduate?

Again, students need the agreement of their advisors. Then, assuming that students will complete ALL degree requirements by semester deadlines and are registered for a least three credits, they can file an "Application for Advanced Degree" with the DGE by September 20 for Fall Semester, February 5 for Spring Semester and June 10 for Summer Semester. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in a student having to register for three credits the following semester in order to graduate.

If you have additional questions, please contact Jill at 994-4832, 324 Leon Johnson Hall or jscarson@montana.edu or the Division of Graduate Education at 108 Montana Hall, 994-4145.