

# BASIC GRADUATE PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE

## Southern Illinois University Forestry Program

Approved with revisions by Forestry Program Faculty August 30, 2022

### I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- A. 32 semester hours of graduate level course work, with a grade of Satisfactory or B or better in each course.
- B. A grade of Unsatisfactory or C will not count toward the total 32 semester hours required for the graduate degree. Any grade below C (D, E, ABS, W or Unsatisfactory) will not be accepted as meeting the standards of Forestry Program requirements.
- C. At least 16 hours of the approved academic program must consist of 500 level courses.
- D. At least three of the 500 level courses must be formally structured courses.
- E. Core Course Requirement. These courses are required of all Forestry Program Graduate students.
  - 1. Forestry 500 Research Methods 2 hrs  
(or equivalent experience to be selected by the student's graduate committee and approved by the Program Coordinator).  
Recommended for first or second semester.
  - 2. Minimum of one course in statistics at 500 level, achieving a grade of B or better Variable hours
- F. The student must achieve a B or better grade point average each academic term. Failure to attain a 3.0 or better will mean automatic placement on academic probation within the Graduate Program and ineligibility for financial assistance through the Forestry Program. A second consecutive term of below 3.0 will mean suspension from the program. The student may regain eligibility for financial support consideration and return to good academic standing (after one semester of below 3.0) at such time as they regain both a 3.0 grade point overall and a 3.0 or better academic term performance.

## II. GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

A. For new graduate students having been accepted into the Forestry graduate program and carrying at least the minimum full graduate course load (as defined in the Graduate Catalog or by the Graduate School Office), the following applies:

1. 2.85 GPA, minimum for 1/2 time assistantship.
2. 2.70 GPA, minimum for 1/4 time assistantship.

Funds for financial support of graduate students are limited and competitive. Acceptance into the Forestry Graduate Program does not imply automatic financial support.

B. Active students must receive a 3.0 GPA each semester and maintain a 3.0 GPA or better to remain eligible for financial assistantship.

C. To be eligible for an assistantship and/or a University waiver of tuition, the student must be enrolled in a minimum of eight (8) semester hours spring or fall semester or three hours summer semester (see Graduate School Catalog).

D. Graduate students are eligible for financial assistantships for a maximum of 24 months. In cases where the program wishes to extend a student's assistantship beyond this, an application to extend the graduate assistantship can be submitted for review by the Graduate Dean and Provost. (Forms and instructions on Graduate School website.)

E. Students with 3.0 GPA or better may be eligible for Fellowships as they become available (see Graduate School Catalog).

F. Work Responsibility

Students receiving a financial assistantship through the Forestry Program are obligated to work for the program in various capacities as follows:

one-half time assistantship	20 hours/week
one-fourth time assistantship	10 hours/week

The nature of the student's assignment depends on the source of funds and program needs. Arrangements are made between the Program Coordinator, the student's graduate committee chair, and the student.

G. In order to remain in a graduate program, the student must be in compliance in a manner consistent with the Forestry Program's Degree Requirements.

### III. STUDENT'S GRADUATE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The student's graduate committee structure for students in the Forestry Master's Degree Program consists of:

- A. Three to five members of the graduate faculty. Other individuals may be asked or permitted to participate in an advisory or consulting manner on an ex officio basis.
- B. At least two of the student's graduate committee members must be Forestry faculty members. The inclusion of additional committee members from outside the Forestry Program is encouraged.
- C. Emeritus and adjunct faculty may serve on or co-chair students' thesis and dissertation committees. Adjunct Graduate Faculty status can be requested by the Program Coordinator for a non-faculty person (in or outside of SIU) and sent for the Graduate Dean's approval. No more than one emeritus or adjunct faculty shall serve on such committees except on cooperative agreements with other universities.
- D. All graduate students working on forestry related thesis research and receiving financial support from funding administered through or by the Forestry Program, but housed in other University Programs, will have at least one Forestry faculty person as a member of the student's graduate committee.
- E. The student and his/her graduate committee chair will work together in selecting the other committee members. The members should be selected in such a manner as to form the possible best group of individuals for assisting and guiding the student through a quality graduate experience.

### IV. STUDENT'S GRADUATE COMMITTEE FUNCTION

The primary responsibility for the student's graduate committee rests with the student's graduate committee chair. The committee membership should participate in guidance, advisement, and assistance to the individual student. The student is responsible for scheduling committee meetings with the advice of the committee chair. Committee meetings should occur as frequently as necessary to ensure that the student receives a quality program and educational experience.

- A. The committee will, under the direction of its Chair and participation of the student, outline an academic program of course work.
- B. The committee will participate in establishing objectives, scope, and methods for the student's thesis research. They will review the originality of the research, evaluate the response from external (outside the committee) sources, review the research proposal, and ensure that the final product satisfies all requirements of the Forestry Program.
- C. During each meeting, the committee will review and evaluate the student's progress in their academic program and thesis research topic. It is the responsibility of the student to prepare a summarized report of each graduate committee meeting and to distribute this to each committee member.
- D. Upon completion of the thesis, an oral examination should be scheduled at a time and

date so that all committee members may be present. In the event that a committee member is unable to attend in person, accommodations for virtual attendance via video conferencing may be made. The oral examination should not be scheduled until all committee members have agreed that the student's thesis is in an acceptable form.

#### V. CHANGE OF MAJOR PROFESSOR OR PROGRAM

- A. Procedure should be one of common courtesy with full and open discussion between all parties involved.
- B. If student wishes to change advisors, it should be done with the knowledge and permission of the Program Coordinator.

#### VI. SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

- A. Students must present a formal seminar, preferably during the semester in which thesis findings are completed.
- B. All graduate students in residence will be expected to attend seminar.
- C. The student's seminar will be a scholarly presentation, based upon the student's thesis research effort.
- D. Consistent seminar attendance together with guidance by the student's graduate committee chair should adequately prepare the student to present the student's seminar topic.
- E. Under normal circumstances, graduate students must present their seminar during the fall and spring semesters due to the unavailability of many faculty and graduate students during the summer months. If it becomes necessary for a graduate student to present their seminar during the summer, the following applies: 1) the Program Coordinator or a designated representative must attend the seminar; 2) the student's graduate committee must attend the seminar; and 3) at least 3 Forestry faculty must attend. This attendance requirement may be satisfied via in-person or virtual means (see Section IV., Part D. above). It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the above conditions are met. The seminar may or may not be associated with the student's oral examination, depending on the discretion of the student's graduate committee/Program Coordinator and the student.

#### VII. THESIS REQUIREMENTS

- A. Thesis Proposal

At the discretion of the student's graduate committee, each student may be required to complete and submit a research proposal for review and approval to guide thesis research. A copy of approved proposal may be kept in the student's graduate file.

B. Thesis Writing

Each graduate student must prepare an acceptable written thesis based upon the student's own original research. Research Reports and/or Literature Reviews are not acceptable as a substitute for an appropriate thesis. The student's thesis must be approved by all of the student's graduate committee members, the Program Coordinator, and the University Graduate School.

C. Thesis Defense

1. Each graduate student is required to participate in an oral examination, normally about two hours in length. An oral examination cannot be scheduled until all of the student's graduate committee members have agreed that the thesis is ready for oral defense. All of the student's graduate committee members should be present by either in-person or virtual means. Under rare circumstances, committee members may be represented by a proxy.
2. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements for the location, scheduling, and public announcement of his/her oral examination. The student's graduate committee chair will provide information pertaining to oral examination format and procedures and any other relevant items.
3. Please note that any interested faculty member may sit-in on any graduate student's oral examination and has the privilege of participating in questioning and discussion. However, balloting concerning the student's performance is restricted to those faculty who are on the student's graduate committee and who hold appropriate University Graduate Faculty Rank.
4. In the event that the student fails to perform adequately as judged by the committee, the student may schedule a second attempt (see Part D. below).

D. Thesis and Oral Examination Review or Appeal

1. If the first oral examination is not satisfactory to all of the student's graduate committee members, the student will be informed explicitly to what extent or in what respects the student will be expected to further prepare and a second oral examination will be scheduled. The second oral examination should be scheduled within one month, and must be conducted within 120 days, of the date following the first examination. If agreement on a student's performance cannot be reached after the second oral examination, the Program Coordinator and the chair of the student's graduate committee (with other persons if deemed appropriate by any of the above) shall meet to resolve the situation. At the second oral examination, a maximum of one negative vote is permissible. However, this negative vote may not originate with either the chair of the student's graduate committee or the Program Coordinator.
2. Any student not able to develop a thesis acceptable to all of their graduate committee will be considered not to have met minimum Forestry Program requirements and will not be granted a degree through this Program. In this event, the student may request a joint meeting of their graduate committee and the Program Coordinator for a special hearing and review of the situation. Any

special consideration or alternatives would be developed by participants in the review based on the merits and conditions of the case.

3. The student is reminded that the University Graduate School has precise, clearly defined standards for thesis format, presentation, and appearance. A set of guidelines are available concerning these standards from the Graduate School office and can be found on their website. University standards and regulations must be met for each thesis. The Forestry Program cannot waive or over-rule University procedures and policies. It is the student's responsibility to make certain that their thesis meets Graduate School guidelines.
4. The student should keep in mind that all matters pertaining to thesis preparation are the student's own responsibility.

E. The student is responsible for providing electronic copies of the approved thesis as follows:

1. The Graduate School, according to its current policies.
2. One copy each to the student's graduate committee chair and to the Forestry Program office for permanent file.
3. One copy to each of the student's graduate committee members formally requesting a copy.
4. The Forestry Program will provide a bound hard copy thesis to any faculty member who requests one for their library. Students may purchase their own bound copies from the SIU Bookstore, or from ProQuest.

F. It is the responsibility of the student to complete all degree requirements within the 6 year time limit as set forth by the Graduate School (see Graduate Catalog: Time Limits).

APPENDIX: GRADUATE PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

Master of Science in Forestry, Southern Illinois University  
Program Requirements and Timeline

Required Materials:	Approximate Deadlines
Graduate Committee Approval Form (Approved and signed by committee chair, program coordinator, & grad school)	Semester 1-2; first committee meeting
Academic program course outline (Approved and signed by committee)	Semester 1-2; first committee meeting
Thesis topic and research objectives (Approved by advisor)	Semester 1-2
Copy of Research Proposal (Approved and signed by committee)	Semester 1-2; second committee meeting
Schedule seminar/oral defense (Generally AG 209 for seminar, AG 107 for oral defense)	Final semester
Graduation application	Beginning of final semester
Draft of thesis sent to committee	(at least two weeks prior to oral exam)
Seminar announcement and abstract (Approved by advisor)	(at least one week prior to seminar)
Thesis approved for defense by advisor/committee chair	Final semester
Oral Examination Approval Form (Approved and signed by committee)	Final semester; Oral Examination
Thesis Approval Form (Approved and signed by committee)	Final semester; Oral Examination
Thesis submission to Graduate School (Electronic via ProQuest)	Final semester; once all edits are completed