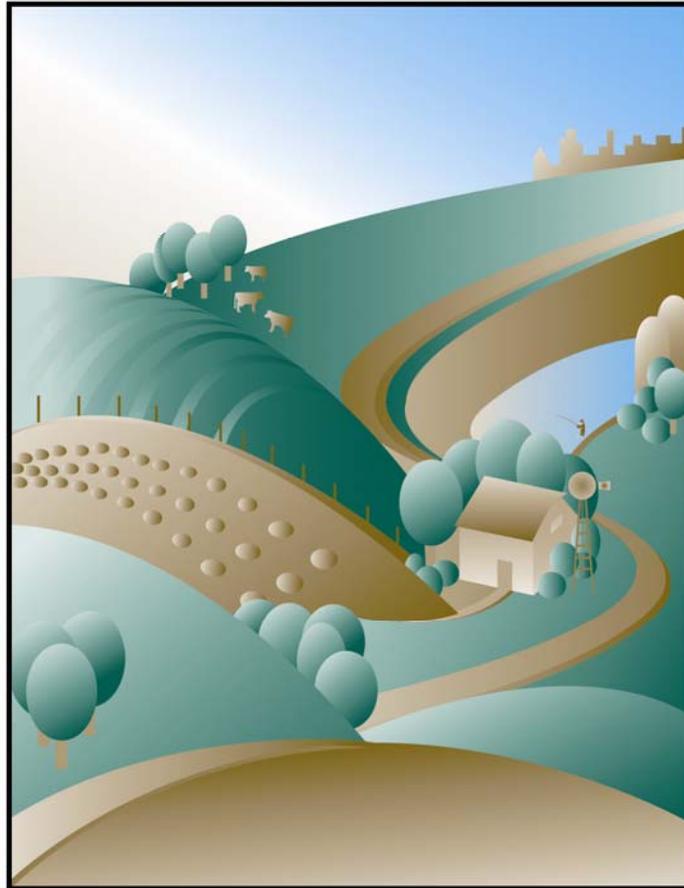


SUSTAINABLE

GRADUATE PROGRAM



AGRICULTURE

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

**GPSA FACULTY AND
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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Table of Contents

KEY RELATIONSHIPS	1
Graduate College	1
Home College	1
Home Department	1
Faculty Advisor	1
ADMISSION CATEGORIES	2
THE GRADUATE COLLEGE ENGLISH REQUIREMENT	3
STUDENT SUPPORT	3
REPORTING OBLIGATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	4
VACATION AND SICK LEAVE	4
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS	5
Overview	5
The Program of Study Committee, Program of Study and Individual Curriculum Plan	5
Degree Paths	6
New Admissions	6
Transfers for Existing ISU Students	7
Adding a GPSA Co-Major for Existing ISU Students	7
PhD-Track Status for Existing GPSA Students	7
Majors, Co-Majors, Minors, and Double Degrees	8
Common Curriculum Features	8
Curriculum Requirements for Majors, Co-Majors, and Minors: MS and PhD	9
New Curriculum Thematic Area Course Requirement	10
Details Relating to Co-Majors, Minors, and Double Degrees	10
Examinations	11
Final Projects	11
EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY	12
Alternatives to Required Courses	12
Alternative Degree Paths	12
PROGRESS TOWARDS A DEGREE	13
ACADEMIC CONDUCT	14
CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	15

Welcome to Iowa State University's Graduate Program in Sustainable Agriculture (GPSA). You have joined a unique and dynamic program that will provide you with outstanding opportunities to develop your understanding of sustainable agricultural systems. This handbook is intended to provide you with guidelines and information to enhance the quality of your experience in the GPSA.

Key Relationships

The quality of your experience as a GPSA student will be strongly affected by your relationships with the faculty members and students with whom you work and the university entities that supervise and sponsor your work. It is important that you learn about these relationships as soon as possible so that your studies proceed smoothly and productively. Improving your knowledge of these relationships can put more of the university's resources at your disposal.

Graduate College

The Graduate College is the entity that admits graduate students to the university, oversees their studies, and awards degrees. The Graduate College's rules, services, and expectations for students are described in the Graduate College Handbook, located at URL <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/publications/gchandbook/homepage.html>. This document is a primary resource when seeking answers to questions about your graduate studies.

Home College

GPSA students are also affiliated with the college for which their major professor works. Currently, faculty members in the GPSA are distributed among four different colleges: Agriculture, Business, Design, and Liberal Arts and Sciences. Various college-level programs may provide funds for research, travel, participation in special workshops, and other activities.

Home Department

Each GPSA student has a home department: the department with which your major professor is affiliated. The home department provides office and desk space and possibly other resources. The available resources, policies, and cultures of departments participating in the GPSA differ, sometimes significantly. Some departments have considerable experience with students in interdepartmental majors, whereas others have little. As a GPSA student, you are responsible for learning your department's policies and developing a respectful working relationship with the staff there. **As soon as possible after arriving on campus, you should officially establish your home department by obtaining a copy of the form "Request to Establish a Home Department for Students Admitted to Interdepartmental Majors,"** available at the GPSA program office or at the Graduate College Web site at URL <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/forms/files/EstablishDepartment.doc>.

Faculty Advisor

Your faculty advisor (also known as major professor) provides supervision of your research

work, guidance in course selection, access to a certain number of job-related contacts, and a wide range of other academic and professional functions. The faculty advisor is frequently the channel through which funds travel to support graduate assistantships. Thus, graduate students supervised by a particular faculty member may have responsibilities for specific research projects.

All students entering the GPSA must be matched with an advisor at the time they are admitted. Occasionally, a faculty member who has previously agreed to serve as an advisor may become unable or unwilling to serve. A faculty member who wishes to resign her/his role as advisor may do so by notifying her/his student and the GPSA chair in writing. Any student so affected must identify a new faculty member to assume the role of her/his faculty advisor within three months of the date upon which the GPSA chair was notified of the resignation. If the student cannot obtain this commitment from another GPSA faculty member, s/he will be required to leave the program.

Because graduate degrees in Sustainable Agriculture require a faculty-supervised project, it is impossible to complete a GPSA degree without a major professor. To maintain good standing and to earn a degree through the GPSA, a student must have a GPSA faculty member serving as a major professor.

A student also may elect to change her/his advisor. To do so, s/he should discuss the change thoroughly with her/his current advisor, the potential new advisor, the program chair, and the program director of graduate education (DOGE). Before the change may be approved, the new advisor must indicate in writing to the chair and DOGE that s/he is willing to accept the transferring student, and the current major professor also must indicate in writing to the chair and DOGE her/his recognition of the pending change. The chair and DOGE jointly will decide upon approval or disapproval. Students are advised that assistantship funding does not necessarily transfer from an existing relationship with a faculty advisor to a new relationship with a new advisor; the individual student bears responsibility to research the full effects of any such change,

Admission Categories

Students are admitted into the GPSA in three categories, which are defined by the ISU Graduate College. These categories differ in regard to the specific requirements that students must meet after admission.

- Full Admission – granted to students who rank in the upper 50 percent of their undergraduate class and who meet established program admission criteria. Regular curriculum requirements apply for these students.
- Provisional Admission – granted to students who rank in the upper 50 percent of their undergraduate class but who also have certain deficiencies in background preparation or training. To transfer from Provisional to Full Admission status, a student must remove the background deficiencies (if through coursework, with a grade point average of B (3.0) or better); meet the Graduate College English requirement (for students whose native language

is not English); secure a written recommendation from the GPSA DOGE or her/his major professor; and obtain approval from the dean of the Graduate College.

- Restricted Admission – granted to students who rank in the lower 50 percent of their undergraduate class and/or who lack undergraduate preparation in a field related to the selected graduate field of study. Transfer from Restricted to Full Admission status requires that a student complete at least nine semester hours of graduate-level courses as an ISU graduate student; earn a cumulative grade point average of B (3.0) or above; meet the Graduate College English requirement (for students whose native language is not English); secure a written recommendation from the GPSA DOGE or her/his major professor; and obtain approval from the dean of the Graduate College. **Please note: students admitted under Restricted status do not qualify for graduate tuition scholarships made in association with assistantship awards.** Please contact the GPSA program office, gpsa@iastate.edu or 515.294.6518, for more information on this point.

Full admission status must be attained at some time prior to graduation as it is one of the required conditions to receive a degree.

The Graduate College English Requirement

Graduate students whose native language is not English and who do not have a Bachelor's degree from ISU or a US institution must take the English Placement Test at the beginning of their first semester of enrollment. This test is administered by the Department of English. It must be taken in addition to the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), which is required as part of the admissions process. A student who does not pass this examination is assigned to one or more courses in the English 99 and 101 series. Assigned courses must be completed during the first year of study.

A graduate student whose native language is not English, but who did graduate from a US institution, may fulfill the English requirement by completing the form "Request for the Graduate College to Approve the Graduate English Requirement for a Student Whose Native Language is NOT English" and submitting it to the Graduate College. This form is available from the Graduate College or at the Graduate College Web site at www.grad-college.iastate.edu/forms/forms.html.

Two conditions must be met and confirmed on the form:

- the student must have received a Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD degree from a US college or university and
- the language of instruction at that college or university must be English.

Student Support

GPSA students are funded through a variety of mechanisms, including departmental assistantships, international fellowships, and extramural grants obtained by faculty members. Levels of financial support vary among sources, as do expectations for the amount of work for which a student is responsible over and beyond her/his own research. Provisions for work-

related equipment (e.g., computers) and office space also differ among different funding sources. You should discuss issues related to financial support, work responsibilities, equipment, and space with your major professor.

Reporting Obligations for International Students

Immediately upon arrival to the ISU campus, international students should first visit International Education Services (IES) in 250/252 Memorial Union, telephone 515.294.1120, e-mail intlserv@iastate.edu to report their presence on campus.

IES is obligated under US federal law to report the following information about international students to the US government through the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS).

- Confirmation that a student has enrolled within 30 days, or notification of failure to enroll.
- All changes of legal name or address.
- Graduation prior to the end date listed on the I-20 or DS-2019.
- Academic or disciplinary actions taken due to criminal conviction.
- A student's drop below a full course of study without prior authorization from IES.
- Dismissal or withdrawal date, and reason for dismissal or withdrawal.
- Procedures such as program extensions, school transfers, changes in level of study, employment authorizations, and reinstatement.
- Any student who fails to maintain status or complete her/his program for any reason.

It is essential that you report to IES any change in your status as a student, e.g., a change from full-time to part-time enrollment, termination of an assistantship appointment, early graduation, etc. If you have questions about your reporting obligations, please contact IES directly at the office, telephone, or e-mail listed above.

Students who fail to report changes in their status may lose the privilege to study in the US and may be subject to deportation. Specific consequences may include denial of re-entry to the US, denial of requests for Practical Training, denial of requests to change visa status, and possible denial of future visa applications.

Vacation and Sick Leave

Vacation and/or leaves of absence should be planned in advance and cleared through your major professor and department. This process is particularly important for students on assistantship as you have specific work obligations related to your appointment. Vacation and sick leave policies and related reporting obligations (e.g., some departments require students to complete vacation and sick leave request cards) vary among departments; it is your responsibility to learn the rules that are operative for your home department.

Course Requirements and Expectations

Overview

The intent of the GPSA is to develop student expertise in the design, implementation, and evaluation of sustainable agricultural systems. In addition, the program's curriculum is intended to satisfy the formal requirements established by the ISU Graduate College for MS and PhD degrees. A key objective of the GPSA curriculum is to foster interdisciplinary and systemic thinking. Consequently, the curriculum requires an education that integrates multiple areas of inquiry. A student from any given academic background will be expected to complement her/his previous education with a set of courses and experiences chosen from areas outside her/his previous academic trajectory.

To provide academic rigor and breadth, as well as flexibility for integrative thinking and learning, the GPSA prescribes a minimum number of core courses, while vesting in the student and her/his Program of Study Committee the prerogative to develop a Program of Study tailored to her/his specific needs and interests.

The Program of Study Committee, Program of Study, and Individual Curriculum Plan

The Program of Study Committee, Program of Study, and Individual Curriculum Plan are key components in effective planning and achieving a productive educational experience within the GPSA. *Regardless of their degree objectives, all students should meet with their POS Committees and use these tools within the first year of study.*

The **Program of Study (POS) Committee**, including the student's faculty advisor, provides oversight, advice, and access to information and facilities. The committee is composed of a group of faculty who are invited to serve by an individual student to supervise her/his MS and/or PhD study. The committee is chaired by the student's faculty advisor. The remaining members are drawn from departments and/or programs relevant to the student's disciplinary and research focus.

Specific rules govern the makeup of the committee. MS committees must consist of at least three members, two of which must be GPSA faculty (including the student's faculty advisor), and must include faculty from departments or programs outside of the GPSA to ensure diversity of perspective. PhD committees must consist of at least five members, three of which must be GPSA faculty (including the student's faculty advisor), and must include faculty from departments or programs outside of the GPSA to ensure diversity of perspective.

Regular meetings between a student and her/his POS committee are strongly recommended as a means of promoting effective communication and monitoring progress toward a degree.

The **Program of Study (POS)** is a list of courses that constitutes the essential conditions for obtaining a graduate degree. Each student, in consultation with her/his POS Committee, formulates a POS, based on the guidelines established by the GPSA and the ISU Graduate

College. All the courses listed on the POS must be successfully completed to graduate and obtain the degree.

The **Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP)** is a form similar to the POS but employed only by the GPSA to help ensure students, faculty, and POS committee members effectively monitor progress in completing GPSA degree requirements. *The ICP should be drafted and signed by all POS Committee members at the same time as the POS.*

Students should adhere to the following timeline:

Within the first two weeks of the second semester, students will

- (a) select their POS committee members;
- (b) file a POS Committee appointment form; and
- (c) convene a meeting of the POS Committee to begin drafting:
 - the Program of Study (POS) and
 - the GPSA Individual Curriculum Plan (ICP).

Before the end of the second semester, students will file signed copies of the POS with the Graduate College and the ICP with the GPSA Director of Graduate Education (DOGE).

Copies of Graduate College forms are available at
<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/forms/forms.html>

The GPSA ICP forms for both the new and old curricula are available at
<http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/forms.html>

Questions about the POS Committee, POS, and ICP may be directed to the GPSA program coordinator at gpsa@iastate.edu.

Degree Paths

New Admissions

Admission to the program is gained by submitting a Graduate College application and a GPSA program application for competitive review by the GPSA Admissions Committee and DOGE. The complete application process is outlined at
<http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/application.html>

Applicants, seeking the MS degree, must possess, or be in the process of completing, a Bachelor's degree and demonstrate a strong record of achievement in one of the natural, social, or engineering sciences.

Applicants seeking the PhD degree must already possess a Master's degree and also hold either an undergraduate or Master's degree in one of the majors in the College of Agriculture. This policy is based on the premise that a student's academic and professional development require a

combination of mentorship, research experience, formal course work, and maturation through stages wherein the student:

- (1) acquires basic skills for conducting research,
- (2) gains familiarity with the major research questions in the discipline, and
- (3) applies those research skills and an informed perspective to develop innovative knowledge or approaches within the discipline.

Transfers for Existing ISU Students

Graduate students who have already been admitted to a graduate program at Iowa State University may request transfer to the GPSA. The degree requirements outlined for new admissions above apply equally to transfer students. Transfer requests are subject to review by the GPSA Admissions Committee and DOGE.

Current ISU students seeking to transfer to the GPSA should submit to the GPSA program coordinator (1126L Agronomy Hall, gpsa@iastate.edu)

- a completed copy of the form “Request To Transfer From One Major/Program/Department To Another,” available at the Graduate College forms Web site <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/forms/forms.html>,
- a complete copy of their original graduate application file,
- a current ISU transcript (an unofficial copy from AccessPlus is acceptable),
- a completed copy of the GPSA program application, including the statement of purpose (available at <http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/application.html> under point no. 2), and
- three letters of recommendation.

Adding a GPSA Co-Major for Existing ISU Students

Graduate students who have already been admitted to a graduate program at Iowa State University may request to co-major in the GPSA. The degree requirements outlined for new admissions above apply equally to students adding a co-major. Co-major requests are subject to review by the GPSA Admissions Committee and DOGE.

Current ISU students seeking to add a GPSA co-major should submit to the GPSA program coordinator (1126L Agronomy Hall, gpsa@iastate.edu)

- a completed copy of the form “Request to Add a Co-Major,” available at <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/forms/forms.html>,
- a complete copy of their original graduate application file,
- a current ISU transcript (an unofficial copy from AccessPlus is acceptable), and
- a completed copy of the GPSA program application, including the statement of purpose (available at <http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/application.html> under point no. 2).

PhD-Track Status for Existing GPSA Students

Current GPSA students who will be completing their MS degrees and who wish to continue their education at the PhD level in the program may request PhD-track status. Such requests are

subject to review by the GPSA Admissions Committee and DOGE.

MS students seeking PhD-track status should submit to the GPSA program coordinator (1126L Agronomy Hall, gpsa@iastate.edu)

- a completed copy of the form “Masters Students on PhD Track in Same Department” available at <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/forms/forms.html> and
- a memo drafted and signed by the student’s current POS Committee that endorses the PhD-track request.
- Students are also encouraged to submit a current CV that includes awards, grants, and/or honors won/earned since their admission to the MS program.

Majors, Co-Majors, Minors, and Double Degrees

Common Curriculum Features

- Core Courses – three courses - **SUSAG 509, 600, and 610** - constitute the core courses of the program. In addition, the program offers four additional topical, interdisciplinary courses: **SUSAG 515, 530, 546, and 571**. Three courses – **SUSAG 590, 599, and 699** – are available to students for earning special topics, creative component, and research credits. Complete descriptions of each course may be found at <http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/courses.html>
- SUSAG 509, Agroecosystem Analysis – All majors and co-majors must successfully complete 509. This course is offered each year as a fall session course but encompasses a field component that meets for two weeks (usually in early August), before the official start of the fall term. Newly admitted students should plan to take 509 upon their entry to the program as it is a prerequisite for all other SUSAG courses.
- Statistics – All students must successfully complete at least three graduate credits in statistics prior to graduation. This requirement may be fulfilled by taking the Iowa State course Statistics 401, or by completing an equivalent course at another institution.
- Examinations – All degree options require the successful completion of examinations. See details provided below.
- Thematic Area Courses – In order to ensure students attain an integrated, inter-disciplinary education, the program requires enrollees to fulfill a cross-disciplinary course requirement. This goal is realized through the thematic area course requirement. See the detailed description below for additional information about required credits and course selection.
- Foreign Language Proficiency – There is no foreign language requirement for either the MS or the PhD degree; however, given the international character of many of the issues involved in this field, competence in one or more languages in addition to English is highly recommended.

Curriculum Requirements for Majors, Co-Majors, and Minors: MS and PhD

In Fall 2006, the GPSA adopted a new curriculum. Students admitted in Fall 06 and after are subject to the requirements described under the “New Curriculum” given below. Students admitted prior to Fall 06 have the option of completing their degrees under the rules of either the “New Curriculum” or “Old Curriculum.”

MS Requirements – New Curriculum		MS Requirements – Old Curriculum	
Two core courses: SUSAG 509 and SUSAG 610	6	Three core courses: SUSAG 509, plus two from among 515, 530, 546 & 610	9
Statistics 401 or equivalent	3	Statistics 401 or equivalent	3
SUSAG 600, Colloquium (4 times)	4	SUSAG 600 Colloquium (4 times)	4
Thesis research (SUSAG 699) or creative component (SUSAG 599)	6	Thesis research (SUSAG 699) or creative component (SUSAG 599)	6
Thematic area courses	6	Cross-disciplinary courses	6
Free electives	9	Free electives	9
Total Graduate Credits	34	Total Graduate Credits	37
PhD Requirements – New Curriculum		PhD Requirements – Old Curriculum	
Two core courses: SUSAG 509 and SUSAG 610	6	Five core courses: SUSAG 509, 515, 530, 546, and 610	15
SUSAG 600, Colloquium (6 times)	6	SUSAG 600, Colloquium (6 times)	6
Statistics 401 or equivalent	3	Statistics 401 or equivalent	3
Dissertation research (SusAg 699)	18	Dissertation research (SusAg 699)	18
Thematic area courses	12	Cross-disciplinary courses	12
Free electives	30	Free electives	21
Total Graduate Credits	75	Total Graduate Credits	75
Minor – MS & PhD – New Curriculum		Minor – MS & PhD – Old Curriculum	
SUSAG 610	3	Three core courses: SusAg 509, plus two from among 515, 530, 546 & 610	9
SUSAG 600, Colloquium (3 times)	3	SusAg 600 Colloquium (3 times)	3
Thematic area courses	6	n/a	
Total Graduate Credits	12	Total Graduate Credits	12

New Curriculum Thematic Area Course Requirement

The thematic areas selected by the GPSA represent critical issues in the study of agricultural sustainability. The requirement for study within thematic areas is intended to enhance a student's ability to succeed professionally in interdisciplinary contexts. Therefore, to satisfy the thematic area requirement, students must take courses **outside their respective home departments and, if applicable, outside their co-major program.**

There are six thematic areas:

- landscape and watershed management,
- international development and food security,
- crop and livestock production and protection,
- policy, governance, and economics,
- engagement and communications, and
- philosophy, ethics, and history.

MS majors and co-majors must include a minimum of six credits across at least two thematic areas in their Program of Study.

PhD majors and co-majors must take 12 credits from a minimum of two thematic areas, with a minimum of three credits in at least two areas.

Both MS and PhD minors must complete six credits across at least two thematic areas.

The GPSA has compiled a list of **recommended** courses for each thematic area. Other courses not found on this list, however, **may also be appropriate to apply to thematic area requirements.** Each student and her/his POS Committee should discuss and agree upon the selection of courses that satisfy a particular thematic area, subject to the approval of the GPSA Director of Graduate Education (DOGE).

The list of recommended courses may be found at
http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/docs/GPSA_thematic_courses.pdf

A matrix, plotting a selection of the recommended courses against applicable thematic areas may be found at
http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/docs/TA_matrix.xls

Details Relating to Co-Majors, Minors, and Double Degrees

Students pursuing a **co-major**, involving two different majors, receive a single degree but must satisfy the requirements established for both, which are monitored by each major's representatives on the POS Committee and the DOGEs of the two majors. For co-majors, the POS Committee may include co-chairs (i.e. two major professors), each of whom represents one of the co-majors, or the chair of the committee may be a single person (i.e., one major professor) if s/he is a member of the graduate faculty of both majors. A co-major may be selected at the

time of admission or a current student may elect to add a co-major. In both cases, requests to co-major in the GPSA will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee and DOGE.

Students seeking a **minor** in sustainable agriculture must complete a total of 12 credits as indicated in the curriculum description above. At least one member of the minor student's POS committee must be a member of the GPSA faculty (the major professor and the representative for the minor field cannot be the same person). Minors must be noted on the POS form. PhD minors must be declared before the preliminary examination. Minors are not subject to review by the Admissions Committee or DOGE; however, students adding minors to their POS are requested to advise the GPSA program coordinator in 1126L Agronomy Hall, gpsa@iastate.edu, of their intention.

A **double degree** involves fulfilling the requirements for two graduate majors for which two differently named degrees and two diplomas are granted at the same time. A double degree is available only at the Master's level. At the present, there are eight double degree combinations possible at ISU. Requests to develop a double degree outside of the framework of these programs must be submitted to the Graduate College for special consideration. More information about double degrees and this process may be found in the Graduate College Handbook, or obtained from the GPSA program coordinator, gpsa@iastate.edu.

Examinations

POS Committees are responsible for the administration of preliminary examinations for PhD students and final oral examinations for both MS and PhD students. Preliminary examinations for sustainable agriculture include both written and oral components, the format of which is determined by the POS Committee.

For students with a minor, the final examination for the MS degree and the preliminary oral and final oral examinations for the PhD must test for the minor. A minor cannot be added to a POS after the preliminary oral examination is taken.

Students pursuing a co-major or double degree will not be required to complete two preliminary or final examinations by the GPSA; however, the examinations must cover material from both majors/degrees and the final project, i.e., the Creative Component of non-thesis MS degrees, the MS thesis, or the PhD dissertation.

Final Projects

POS Committees are responsible for quality control and approval or denial of Creative Component projects, MS theses, and PhD dissertations. Each of these types of final projects involves a large amount of work; adequate time should be budgeted to draft, edit, revise, and refine them.

Students pursuing a co-major or double degree will not be required to complete two final projects; however, the final project should integrate subject areas from both programs.

Exceptions to Policy

Alternatives to Required Courses

In cases where a student seeks an alternative to GPSA course requirements, the student should initiate the process by discussing the issue with the members of her/his POS committee. If the committee concurs that alternative courses are warranted, the student and POS committee should develop a petition, including a completed Individualized Curriculum Plan (ICP), and file it with the program's Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) before the end of the student's second semester in the program. The ICP should be accompanied by a justification signed by all members of the POS committee. The justification should describe why a waiver or substitution is appropriate and should include discussion and documentation of one or both of the following circumstances:

- (a) the student has taken the equivalent of the required course/s through another university; and/or
- (b) the student has taken or will take another ISU course that is substantially equivalent to the required course.

Decisions concerning petitions for alternatives to GPSA course requirements shall normally be made within one month of submission. In reviewing the petition, the DOGE may consult with the program's chair and vice-chair and the student's major professor.

Alternative Degree Paths

GPSA students are normally expected to earn an MS degree before obtaining a PhD. In rare instances, an MS student, with guidance from her/his POS Committee, may petition to directly pursue a PhD. To do so, a completed Individualized Curriculum Plan, a draft POS for the PhD degree, and the following items should be filed with the chair of the GPSA admissions committee and the program's DOGE (one copy to each).

- [1] **Student Memorandum.** A 10-12 page (maximum) memorandum written and signed by the student and drafted in consultation with the POS Committee, describing how, within a specified period of time, the student will acquire the skills and depth of perspective that are commensurate with earning a PhD in Sustainable Agriculture. The memorandum should address:
- (i) How the student would develop doctoral-level competence in inquiry and the generation of new knowledge, including research techniques.
 - (ii) How the student would develop doctoral-level competence in the discipline of sustainability studies.
 - (iii) How the student's proposed course work and Program of Study extend beyond levels used for the MS degree and suit the student's personal needs beyond the minimum standards and requirements established by the program.
 - (iv) How the student's proposed research extends beyond levels used for the MS degree and leads to original and novel contributions to the field of sustainability studies.

- (v) A contingency plan for earning an MS in the event that doctoral-level activities are discontinued or unattainable. Such a plan should specify one of the options available at ISU, e.g., a thesis-based or non-thesis MS within the GPSA.

[2] **POS Committee Memorandum.** A memorandum written and signed by the POS Committee members, specifying the committee's recommendations concerning the student's petition. The memorandum should provide:

- (i) Evidence of the student's doctoral-level competence in inquiry and new knowledge generation, including research techniques pertinent to the prospective dissertation topic.
- (ii) Evidence of the student's comprehension of the discipline of sustainability studies.
- (iii) Evidence of the student's potential for original and novel contributions to the field of sustainability studies.
- (iv) A strategy to ensure the student has adequate financial support until her/his PhD degree is completed.

In cases where not all members of the POS Committee are in full agreement, a minority report should also be submitted.

Final decisions concerning petitions for direct-PhDs and other alternative degree paths are the responsibility of the GPSA Admissions Committee. The committee will consult the student's POS Committee members and the program's DOGE (who is a member of the Admissions Committee) during the decision-making process. It is recommended that ambiguous issues associated with the decision should be addressed at a face-to-face meeting that includes, as appropriate, members of the Admissions Committee, the DOGE, members of the student's POS committee, and the student.

The decision of the Admissions Committee will be based on a majority vote of a quorum of the committee. The decision will be provided in writing within approximately one month of submitting a petition. It will come from the Admissions Committee chair and will summarize factors underlying the decision and, as appropriate, substantive issues related to the petition. The same petition may not be resubmitted for reconsideration; however, a substantively different petition on behalf the same student may be submitted at a future date.

Progress Towards a Degree

The time required to earn a degree depends on the nature of a student's project and the student. Normally, GPSA students should complete a non-thesis or thesis MS in three years or less. PhD students entering the GPSA with an MS in a related field and strong preparation for dissertation research should complete their degrees in four years or less. Adjustments to these estimates are best developed through consultations among a student, her/his major professor, and the program of study committee.

To remain in good standing, students must demonstrate to their major professor and POS committee that they are making adequate progress toward their degree goal. Course grades, interim research reports, seminar presentations, committee meetings, and other sources of

information may be used in evaluating student progress. Lack of sufficient progress is grounds for dismissal from the GPSA. A student may be recommended for dismissal by her/his major professor, the POS Committee, or the Graduate College. Students may appeal a recommendation for dismissal. The procedures for doing so are described in Chapter 9 of the Graduate College Handbook, available at <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/publications/gchandbook/chapter09.html>

Academic Conduct

The GPSA promotes the highest ethical standards in the work of its students. The use of ideas and words from other people should always be accompanied by open and complete acknowledgement of where those ideas and words originated. Students should clearly understand that plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty, are entirely unacceptable and can result in dismissal from the university.

Iowa State University and its constituent units observe explicit policies relating to personal and professional conduct. The following list provides majors topics and related links for further reference.

- student conduct:
<http://www.dso.iastate.edu/handbook/Uniform.pdf>
- academic misconduct:
<http://www.dso.iastate.edu/handbook/SDR.pdf>
- sexual harassment, racial and ethnic harassment, conflicts of interest, professional ethics and research standards:
http://www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty/handbook/faculty_handbook/section8.html
- intellectual property:
http://www.techtransfer.iastate.edu/en/for_iowa_state/our_policies.cfm

Iowa State now also has a “policy library” available on-line, with a search function for key terms. Please see

<http://policy.iastate.edu/>

Contacts for Additional Information

Your first resource and point of contact is the GPSA program office. Questions about all aspects of the program may be directed to the program coordinator.

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Contact information for the GPSA chair, vice-chair, DOGE, and committee chairs is available and regularly updated at

<http://www.sust.ag.iastate.edu/gpsa/contact.html>

Contact information for the staff of the Graduate College, including areas of responsibility for each individual, is available and regularly updated at

<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/about/staff.html>