STUDENT GUIDE
TO THE
GRADUATE PROGRAM IN
WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
CONSERVATION

Department of Natural Resources Conservation
160 Holdsworth Way, University of Massachusetts
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the graduate program in Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation. We trust your courses, the experience you gain, and the interactions that you have with your colleagues will serve you well throughout your professional career.

This guide is an attempt to inform you about some practicalities of working within the program, to make you aware of the requirements and traditions of the program, and to offer some suggestions to help your work go more smoothly. It is not the final word, however, and will undoubtedly be updated throughout the duration of your stay here.

For specific information regarding official Graduate School policies and regulations, you should obtain copies of the "Graduate School Bulletin" and the "Graduate School Handbook" which together contain nearly all of the technical information you will need to know.

PRACTICAL NEEDS

Desk Space

Regardless of whether or not you are supported on a research project, a teaching assistantship, or on your own, your advisor/major professor, via the Department Head (DH), is responsible for finding desk space for you on campus. W&FCON graduate students have offices in Holdsworth Natural Resources Center (NRC), the top floor of Draper Hall, the Telecom trailer near the Campus Police building, and the Special Projects Trailer just west of Holdsworth. Priority for desk space in these locations is dependent on a combination of how long you have been here, if you have special equipment needs (e.g., GIS access), if you are a Teaching Assistant, and if you are currently taking classes. If you need additional file cabinets, bookshelves, paint on the walls, etc., see your major advisor.

Keys

After you have been assigned a desk by the DH, see your major professor for instructions on how to get the keys you need (through Linda or Lori in the Main office, Room 225). Keys often take several weeks to obtain, so don’t be dismayed if you don’t have immediate access to places you need to go. Note that the outside door key for Holdsworth NRC also opens the mail room door (Room 204) and the graduate computer room (Room 302A).

Copy and Coffee Machines

If you need to copy something for your project, you might borrow your major professor's copying code/card for the copy machine located in the mail room (Room 204). Please don't use this machine for more than 50 pages of copying at any one time. If you need personal copies, you may borrow the Main Office card and pay 10 cents per page. Also, you may purchase (possibly with grant funds) a copy card at the Library which may be used on the copy machines in the Biological Sciences and Tower Libraries (but NOT in the Department’s machine). Professional copiers in Amherst such as Collective Copies or Copy Cat can be used for bigger jobs.

Coffee/tea is available for 50 cents per cup in the mail room (Room 204). The refrigerator in the Mail Room is not for long-term storage, and all items that are not clearly marked as to ownership will be discarded. It is also definitely not for project/research specimens; they can go in the walk-in freezers in Room 113 if properly labeled and registered (see your major professor for directions).
Phones and mail

Campus calls can be made on office telephones by dialing just the last 5 digits of the number. Locals calls can be made on office telephones by first dialing 9. If you need to make long distance calls as part of your project, ask your major professor for the Authorization Code for the project. To use it, dial *6*, Auth. Code, #, 9, 1, Area Code, Number. Do not make it easy for anyone else to use your Authorization Code! Note also that the project will be billed for long distance information (555-1212 numbers).

You will have a mail box in the mail room (Room 204) with your name on it, and both professional and personal mail can be delivered there. For outgoing mail, regularly stamped mail will be picked up in the lower-most, lefthand-most mailbox. If postage is to be charged to a research account, get the account number from you major professor, stamp the envelope with that number, and put it in either of the two boxes immediately to the right of the regular mail box. Campus mail will be delivered if put into the box immediately right of those boxes. Packages that won’t fit in these pickup boxes can be left on the floor immediately below the boxes.

Computers and e-mail accounts

Computers and a printer for general use by graduate students are available in Room 302A Holdsworth. Many professors are able to provide computers for specific projects, and graduate offices may have at least one computer that can be used by students to check their e-mail account. You are strongly encouraged to purchase your own computer; it undoubtedly will serve you well in your professional future.

All graduate students are REQUIRED to have an e-mail account, as most intra-departmental correspondence is sent out electronically. See Lori in the Main office regarding how to get an e-mail account and to get on the department list server.

THE PROGRAM

Major Professor

You should know upon entry into your degree program who your major professor/advisor will be. This person will play a major role in the many academic decisions you will face while enrolled. Your major professor will chair your thesis committee and, in the case of Ph.D. candidates, your comprehensive exam committee, as well.

Schedule regular (weekly) meetings with your major professor to discuss your research and your courses, and other professional interests and concerns, too.

Each major professor will have a slightly different way of keeping track of project or other expenses so it is necessary to check with her/him, even for small amounts, before purchasing or ordering items. Be sure you are aware of the specific requirements from our bookkeepers regarding purchases, too.

Also, it is better to ask early about expectations regarding work hours, methods of data collection and handling, etc. before a problem arises. Note: there really is no assumed "vacation" time for graduate students. If you are receiving a 52-week stipend, you are expected to be working full-time on the project that is paying you. Again, each major professor will have his/her own concept of what constitutes reasonable "flex" time. It is prudent to ask questions before rather than after a problem arises, so clear any proposed time-off with your advisor well ahead of time.

At times, emergencies arise and it may be important to contact you quickly. Please make it easy for your major professor, the Graduate Program Director, or office staff to find you by filing
your departmental and home phone numbers with each of them. If you move, be sure to update the listing. Also, check your mail box and e-mail daily.

**Graduate Program Director (GPD)**

Much of the red tape associated with your program, such as thesis committee appointments and the forwarding of thesis defense results, will involve the Graduate Program Director (GPD), as well as your major professor. The GPD is the program link with the Graduate School and can help you cope with its procedures.

Sometimes, the GPD is useful as a sounding board if you have a problem you are reluctant to raise with your major professor. Remember, the GPD is the graduate student advocate. Problems regarding money ultimately should be resolved through discussions among the Department Head, the GPD, your major professor, and you.

The GPD maintains your basic file, the Graduate School keeps additional formal records. However, students should maintain their own file of important documents and records.

**Stipends**

Most research students in the program will receive monetary support in the form of a teaching assistantship (T.A.) or research assistantship (R.A.). The amount of this varies somewhat among students, but is usually sufficient (e.g., 10-hr/week T.A.) to merit a tuition and partial fee waiver.

It is your major professor's responsibility to expedite your appointment as an R.A. or T.A. with the office. If you don't receive a payroll or expense check when you expect it, don't delay in asking your major professor to help you. Do not go and ask about your stipend in the Main Office unless your major professor has specifically instructed you to do so.

Undertaking employment outside the University in addition to a TA or RA is at the discretion of the student and his or her Major Advisor, although OEB greatly discourages this. Students who elect to pursue outside employment remain responsible for meeting all requirements mandated by their assistantship, the W&FCON Program, and the Graduate School.

**Fellowships**

Fellowships allow a student to focus on his or her own research instead of TA or RA duties. The stipend level varies according to the source of the funds. Graduate School Fellowships and extramural fellowships are available. The GPD nominates students for Graduate School Fellowships in the spring semester based on academic records, GRE scores, progress, and other factors. Students may ask their advisor to be considered for nomination. Competition for the limited number of Graduate School Fellowships is University-wide. The period of these fellowships is one academic year.

**Travel Grants**

Small travel grants are available through the Graduate School (see [www.umass.edu/gradschool/](http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/)).

**Graduate Student Grants Service**

The Graduate Student Grant Service (GSGS) helps graduate students identify and apply for grants from non-university sources. More information can be found at [www.umass.edu/gradschool/gsgs/](http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/gsgs/). GSGS is located in 517 Goodell, 545-3428.
Academic Honesty Policy

Read and understand sections VIII Academic Honesty Policy and IX Graduate Student Honor Code found in the Graduate Student Handbook. Also, all graduate students should try and obtain a copy of: Sigma Xi. 1986. Honor in Science. The Scientific Research Society, Research Triangle Park, NC, 41pp.

Animal Use Protocol/Research Permits

If you will be conducting research on vertebrate animals, and by doing so causing any discomfort, distress, or pain to animals, there must be an approved Animal Use Protocol on file in the Animal Care Office on Campus (Research Administration Building; 5-0668; iacuc@resgr.umass.edu; http://www.umass.edu/research/aco/). Your major professor may already have prepared a protocol and had it approved, but you need to make sure you have a copy. If one has not been prepared, you will need to collaborate with your major professor to prepare one and have it approved prior to any affiliated research. The IACUC requires that all personnel listed in an animal use protocol that have contact with living vertebrate animals receive appropriate training for animal users, including graduate and undergraduate students. The Compliance Coordinator conducts monthly one-hour classroom training sessions for new animal users that meets federal requirements. All animal users must take the animal users’ update training each year on or before the anniversary of their first training. You also need to make sure that any needed State or Federal permits are in hand prior to any affiliated research.

Publishing

It is expected that your research or special project work will lead to publication in refereed journals. In spite of the fact that Ph.D. Dissertations must be copyrighted and Master's Theses may be copyrighted, you and your major professor have a responsibility to make sure your work is indeed published and made accessible to the broader scientific community.

Normally, you should write the articles stemming from your work. It is generally expected that your major professor will be included in the author list even if you have done most of the writing. If a year passes after your thesis defense and the appropriate rough draft is still not written, your major professor is entitled to write the article and assume first authorship even though you have the copyright to the dissertation or thesis. Determining who should be included and in what order in the author list is sometimes a problem. R. H. Schmidt (Bull. Ecol. Soc. 68:8-10, 1987) gives a worksheet approach to help determine the relative contributions to the five areas of "conception, design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation." R. A. Day (see reading list) asks "And what do these colleagues do when everything suddenly falls into place as a result of a searching question by the traditional 'guy in the next lab' who had nothing whatever to do with the research?" J. G. Dickson et al. (Wildl. Soc. Bull. 6:260-261, 1978) suggest "if the professor conceives and designs a project and is instrumental in other areas, he should be the first author." In short, it is a tricky business, one that should be discussed at length with your major professor. In general, our advice is to do it her/his way as you have too much at stake to risk a fight over this issue. After you leave your program of study you can "do it your way..."

All oral and poster presentations and publications should acknowledge sources of funding and other support behind the research.

The department requires an additional bound copy of theses and dissertations for the Departmental Library. Your paperwork may be held up by the GPD or Department Head if you don't provide one. A list of binderies is available at the office of degree requirements in the Graduate School. Also, you should provide your major advisor a copy of your thesis or dissertation.
on computer disk in a common word processing format. Theses and Dissertations should be bound with black covers.

Also, when your thesis/dissertation is complete (or perhaps even during your research) you are required to prepare a short summary that can be used for a news release to make your work known to the public. Collaborate on this with your major professor, ask the GPD if you need help, and submit it to the GPD at least 5 days before the defense.

Statute of Limitations (SOL)
The Graduate School expects you to finish your program in a timely manner which means within three years for the M.S. and four years for the Ph.D. (assuming the candidate already has the M.S.). Sometimes, it is necessary for the GPD to authorize and notify, or to petition, the Graduate School for an extension. To do this, you must write a memo to your major professor that summarizes your progress to date, what remains to be done, justification for the extension, and your timeline for completion. Your major professor will send a cover memo to the GPD supporting the request, and the GPD will normally forward a copy of this memo as an attachment to his/her notification or request for the SOL extension.

Time Limitation On Courses
The deadline for all course changes (add, drop, or exercising the pass/fail-option) is the mid-semester date. Incomplete grades remain as such for one calendar year. The Registrar then lists the grade as an IF (Incomplete-Fail). To change this grade, the professor in charge of the course must send a memo to the Graduate School.

Full-Time Status
The Graduate School considers nine credit hours per semester to be full-time status. Students who register for less than nine credit hours (including thesis/dissertation credits) and who are not on the program fee should check with the Graduate Program Director as s/he can request full-time status from the Graduate School. Students remain eligible for financial assistance whether on full-time status or by payment of the program fee.

TIMETABLE

You bear the major responsibility for completing your degree in a timely manner. You may find that your major professor doesn't keep track of how long you have been enrolled in your program. This doesn't mean the following responsibilities are unimportant, it just means that you need to push your major professor to help you meet these scheduling goals which apply to both M.S. and Ph.D. candidates.

First semester:
Work with your major professor to define your thesis/dissertation topic (for research students) or your project/internship topic (for professional degree M.S. students).
Through discussions with your major professor, pick a thesis/dissertation/advising committee. Meet with the committee members to discuss your proposed work and your core requirements check list. Get their approval to be named to the committee. Have your major professor forward the list of names to the GPD so s/he can write the appropriate memo to the Graduate School.
Prepare the list of courses you plan to take (see following "Core Requirements check list") and get your committee’s endorsement.
M.S. Candidates: While the Graduate School allows a graduate committee to consist of only one person, the W&FCON program expects at least three. The Chair (almost always, your major professor will serve as chair) must be a member or adjunct member of the W&FCON Graduate Faculty who regularly attends the meetings called by the GPD. At least one member of the committee must be a University employee. People not listed as W&FCON Graduate Faculty can be included as either as "Consultants" or "Members." If such people are included as Members, the GPD has to forward a memo to the Graduate School (along with the curriculum vitae which is required with either title) to convince them to allow it. The Graduate School strongly prefers such people to be named as Consultant.

Ph.D. Candidates: You need at least three Graduate Faculty (as named so by the Graduate School) on your committee. One must be from "outside" the list of W&FCON Graduate Faculty (at this time, Forestry faculty are considered eligible to serve as "outside members"), but must be a UMass or Five Colleges faculty member. People not listed as Graduate Faculty can be included as "Consultant" or "Member" but can not replace any of the three required Graduate Faculty members. Again, the Graduate School prefers "Consultant" over "Member" status. The Chair of the committee must be someone who regularly attends the W&FCON Graduate Faculty meetings called by the GPD.

Second Semester:

Present your thesis proposal (outline) to your committee. The proposal should be written in an appropriate publication format but with the "Results" and "Discussion" sections replaced with "Anticipated Results." Your experimental plan, plans for data analysis, a time line and your publication plans should also be included.

Practicum for Professional Degree M.S. students

Internship experience - Students will sign up for 6 credits of Practicum (W&FCON 698Y) on a Pass/Fail basis; these credits will be earned based upon completing an internship and final paper. You may take 3 credits of Practicum credit in consecutive semesters (6 total) if that fits your schedule better.

The student’s committee must be formed before the internship project is approved and pre-internship agreement signed. Additions can be made later at the request to the GPD of the major advisor.

Prior to starting the internship, a student must prepare a proposal describing: 1) the work to be conducted, 2) the responsibility of the student while on that assignment, 3) the responsibility of the sponsoring agency in the training of the student, and 4) the nature of the professional paper that will serve as the major basis for assigning a P or F grade to the student for the experience. This proposal must be signed by the student, the sponsor, and the student's advisory committee members prior to start of the internship.

Upon completion of the internship, the sponsor will complete an evaluation form focusing upon the student's meeting the specific objectives agreed to in the original "contract", and forward the evaluation to the faculty advisor. In addition, the student will complete an evaluation form focusing upon the value of the experience, and the manner in which the sponsor met the objectives of the contract.

The student’s committee will review these evaluations when members grade (P/F) the Practicum (after completion of the professional paper). A poor evaluation from the sponsor will not
mandate that the student receive an “F” for the practicum credits; it will serve as an indication of the success of the internship experience in the eyes of the sponsor.

Professional Paper - Upon completion of the internship, the student must prepare a professional paper related to the internship experience. If the professional paper concerns a topic other than the internship experience, then this must be agreed to in writing by the student, the advisor and the student's committee prior to taking the final examination. This paper will be reviewed by the student's advisory committee. No practicum is completed (thus no grade assigned) until the advisory committee grades (P/F) the professional paper.

Writing your Thesis or Dissertation

When writing the thesis itself, carefully follow the guidelines published by the Graduate School. See "Typing Guidelines for Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertation" available from the Graduate School. Also, you can contact the Office of Information Technologies/Personal Computer Support Services (5-9730) which offers workshops to help users of common word processing packages deal with annoying formatting tasks of thesis/dissertation preparation.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR M.S. and Ph.D. PROGRAMS

The only required courses all W&FCON graduate students are required to take are NRC 601 - Research Concepts and WFCON 791C – Communicating Science. Once one's thesis or dissertation is near completion, each research student should give a 15-minute professional presentation in the spring semester offering of W&FCON 791C that could be given at a regional or national professional conference (i.e., complete graphics, well-rehearsed, etc.). Professional degree M.S. students must also give a presentation on the Practicum project and paper in W&FCON 791C.

Ph.D. students must, at a minimum, prepare and give at least one lecture in an academic course. Attainment of additional teaching experience is expected, as well, but can take a variety of forms; meet with your committee to agree on how you will fulfill this requirement.

For doctoral students, the Graduate School requires a minimum of one academic year as a full-time graduate student (at least 9 credits per semester) in residence at the University. The residence year must consist of either a fall-spring or spring-fall sequence.

M.S. “On-the-Way”

Students who pass the Preliminary Comprehensive Exam may obtain a M.S. degree "on the way" by submitting a Degree Eligibility Form to the Graduate School. They must have fulfilled the residency requirements for the doctorate and course requirements for the master's degree. Dissertation credits may not be counted towards your M.S.

Requirement For Joint Ph.D. Degree

A Ph.D. student may enter a joint Ph.D. program, providing the following requirements are met:

Students will apply for admission to a single doctoral program of their choice.

Following residence on campus for at least one semester, a student interested in a joint degree will apply for admission to the second program, provided that the Graduate Council has approved the joint degree program.

If the student is admitted to the second program, the original admitting program will still be credited for that student and the transcript will ready “Program 1” for the original admitting department, and “Program 2” for the second program.

When the student is accepted into the second program, the statue of limitations will automatically be extended by two years.
The requirements of the Graduate School and all requirement of both graduate program must be met, including passing preliminary comprehensive examinations in both programs.

Only one dissertation and one dissertation defense are required. There must be at least one member of the dissertation committee from each program.

A joint degree means one Ph.D. in Programs 1 and 2, not two separate Ph.D. degrees. A joint degree will be awarded only when all requirements have been met for both graduate programs.

**Core topics checklist**

On this form, indicate the course work your have taken to complete these minimum requirements. Remember that you may be expected to actually remember and expound upon the content of courses you have taken. Discuss these with your major professor and committee members, and before your defense, make sure each of the members has a completed copy of this checklist.

____________  FOREST/W&FCON 601  Research Concepts in Natural Resource Management

____________FOREST/W&FCON 791C Professional Communication

____________Graduate-level statistics course (500-level or higher*)

Which one? ________________________________________________

Three courses (600-level or higher*), one in each of the following areas:

A. Biology/basic science

B. Management

C. Human dimensions/ policy/economics

* Courses in AN SCI, ANTH, BIOL, ECON, EDUC, ENT, FOREST, GEO, MGT, MICBIO, POLSCI, PSYCH, REG PL, RES EC, SOCIOL, STATIS, & W&FCON are considered as in the “major field”. Also, check to see if courses in BIOEPI, LD ARC, MC-BIO, NRC, NSB, OEB are currently considered in the “major field”.
**M.S. Research Degree Requirements**

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Graduate School</th>
<th>W&amp;FCON Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Graduate Credits</td>
<td>Minimum of 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credits in Major</td>
<td>Minimum of 21</td>
<td>Major fields include W&amp;FCON, FOREST, BIOL, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>600-800 level</td>
<td>Minimum of 6 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>Maximum of 6 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter Grades</td>
<td>Half of credits must be letter grades, rest P/F with Dept. approval</td>
<td>More than 1P/F must have majority approval of program faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis credits</td>
<td>Maximum of 10</td>
<td>From 1 to 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer credits</td>
<td>Maximum of 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td></td>
<td>Must enroll in W&amp;FCON 791C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credits per semester</td>
<td>Maximum of 16, or 18 with GPD endorsement</td>
<td>Usually, 9 is considered a full load</td>
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<td>Thesis Proposal</td>
<td>Must be submitted at least 4 months prior to defense</td>
<td>Should be submitted in second semester on campus</td>
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M.S. General Professional Degree Requirements

Minimum Graduate School requirements:
- 30 academic credits, of which ≥12 must be 600-800 level courses
- A Master's General Exam

Minimum W&FCON requirements:

Completion of a W&FCON faculty-approved professional curriculum leading to a specific Concentration Area of expertise that includes the following:

1. Curriculum description/justification, internship (see below) and employment opportunities, and list of prerequisites
2. A total 36 academic credits
   A. >12 credits must be in 600-800 level courses
   B. includes a 6-credit degree internship/project (i.e., W&FCON 698 Practicum) that:
      i. results in a publishable professional paper (e.g., internship evaluation, short research project, literature review, etc.) based on
         a. a 6- to 12-week professional internship in a government or non-government organization pertinent to the curriculum, or
         b. if student already has such experience, a 6-credit project that pertains directly to such experience,
      ii. is designed by the student and major advisor and reviewed by the committee members (see below),
3. Two semesters registration in the W&FCON graduate seminars on Research Methods and Communicating Science, including a presentation in Communicating Science related to the degree project (W&FCON 698 Practicum, see above)
4. Demonstrated knowledge in at least 1 area of each "core" subject area outlined in the W&FCON Student Guide to the Graduate Program.
5. A general Master's examination by a committee composed of three persons, including your major advisor; two of these persons must have W&FCON graduate faculty status (one of which must be a university employee). This exam will include a defense of the Independent Study paper/project, but focus on a review of academic knowledge based on course requirements.
### Ph.D. Degree Requirements

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<th>W&amp;FCON Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Graduate Credits</td>
<td>None beside Dissertation</td>
<td>Only those determined by your committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Credits</td>
<td>Minimum of 10</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer credits</td>
<td>Maximum of 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residency</td>
<td>2 consecutive full-time Semesters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminars</td>
<td></td>
<td>Must enroll in W&amp;FCON 791C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits per semester</td>
<td>Maximum of 16, or 18</td>
<td>Usually, 9 is considered a full load</td>
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<td></td>
<td>With GPD endorsement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>Must teach or assist in teaching at least one semester. Outside experience at college level may apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive exam</td>
<td>Must complete to become a candidate</td>
<td>See section “Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam” below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Proposal</td>
<td>Must be submitted after passing the Comprehensive Exam and at least 7 months before Defense</td>
<td>Should be completed ahead of any research work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
<td></td>
<td>See details in section on “Thesis and Dissertation Defense Procedures” below</td>
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</table>
Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam

Before the Graduate School considers you to be a Ph.D. degree candidate by appointing your dissertation committee and examining your dissertation proposal, you have to pass the Comprehensive Exam (“Prelims”).

In W&FCN, you are not expected to pass a single general exam written for all candidates. Instead, a unique exam will be prepared for you taking into account your dissertation area. Your major professor is responsible for initiating the process by coordinating with the GPD at such time as you and s/he feel you should take the exam. Normally, you should take your prelims the semester following completion of your coursework. The exam is in two parts, first a written and then an oral exam. Normally, the same faculty will serve as your comprehensive exam committee and your dissertation committee.

Normally, three subject areas are specified by W&FCN faculty for all students in the program (see below). Additional specialized subject areas will be specified that will tailor the exam to your research. Committee members will work with you to mutually agree on the subject areas to be examined. They will also give you some indication of the level of competence they expect.

Core Areas

The comprehensive examination is a graduate faculty assessment procedure to determine whether a Ph.D. applicant shall proceed as a candidate with a thesis study. The examination is a basis for assessing an individual’s capacity to be able to communicate meaning to peers from a research endeavor where his/her design, analysis and synthesis capabilities are used. The results of the exam should permit prediction about the candidate’s success as a professional resource biologist.

All comprehensive examinations should be conducted according to guidelines adopted as departmental policy. Core subject areas and selected readings to aid in preparation are listed below. More specific detailing and identification of the background and knowledge expected of each candidate will be the responsibility of the examining committee. Additional specialized subject areas may be selected upon agreement of the student and the examining committee. You are also expected to document your knowledge of the Core Topics (pp. 23-24) for the Committee.

Core Area I. Biology and Ecology

It is mandatory that resource scientists have a sound understanding of the biological systems with which they are dealing, therefore the first core area is biology and ecology. The examinee will be expected to have an understanding of the following:

A. Principles of evolution and the manner in which natural selection functions; systematic principles and the systematics of the taxa (i.e., either fish or wildlife) in the examinee’s field of study.
B. Organismal biology
C. Ecological interactions and relationships of individuals, populations and communities.
D. An overview of systems ecology and its function in analysis of biological systems.
Core Area II. Resource Values, Policies and Programs

Resource conservation is an expression of social values assigned to specific resources and the systems that support them. These values are manifested primarily through various forms of social action in public policies, laws and organizations. It is necessary that degree candidates have a critical understanding of the historical and contemporary social conditions that have and do foster conservation efforts for fish and wildlife. Examinees should be prepared to be examined on any of the following:

A. The social and scientific history of conservation in general and fish and/or wildlife. in particular.
B. Current major policies and laws that direct federal, state and local government conservation activities.
C. Commonly used methods for measuring and evaluating social values (i.e. economic, anthropological, political).
D. The structure and function of social organizations (public + private) engaged in resource conservation.
E. Efforts to create interdisciplinary or interagency actions in resource conservation (i.e. land use planning, river basin organization, environmental impact assessment).

Core Area III. Fisheries and Wildlife Management and Science

The educational components of a graduate student in the fisheries and wildlife program must not only have considerable breadth spanning contemporary problems, principles and practices in all areas, but also provide an in-depth understanding in his/her specific science. Only then can the student properly address the problems of the management of fisheries and wildlife resources. The student must be broadly versed in knowledge of specific techniques of assessment and of the management of habitat, species and communities likely to be encountered in his/her area. Included in the area of techniques is a basic knowledge of experimental and -model design at both the population and individual analysis level. Thus, the third area for which examinees are responsible can be generally outlined in the following manner:

A. Techniques in...
   Experimental design and the use of the scientific method.
   Population assessment.
   Analyses of individual organisms (i.e., behavior, physiology)
   Model design.
   Statistical analyses.
B. Management of habitat, species or communities.
Written Exam:

Your major professor will forward a memo to the GPD recommending members of the Examining Committee. The committee will have at least three members of which one will be from outside the Program. The GPD appoints these members by approving the memo. The Graduate School is not notified.

The Committee and you will agree on appropriate dates for the exams (oral and written) at least one week ahead of the written exam. The announcement of the written exam goes only to the Examining Committee and you. Your major professor shall solicit questions from all the members of the Examining Committee. The exam may be conducted over 2 to 5 days, and examining committee members may ask closed-book (no reference materials available) or open-book questions, as agreed to by you and your major professor. Your major professor is responsible for assuring the exam gives reasonable weight to each of the subject areas and that the exam is given under conditions conducive to good work.

Each subject area of the written exam will be graded pass/fail by the examiner who wrote the questions. Questions not graded within 10 days after the exam will be assumed passed. All areas must be passed to pass the exam. A second, final exam is permissible if only one or two areas are failed. The second exam will be only in the areas failed, and must take place within six months of the date of the first exam.

Oral Exam:

The examining committee for the oral exam will be the same as for the written exam. The committee will focus on the subject areas from the written exam, particularly any weak areas. An underlying intent shall be to examine your ability to think and expound “on your feet.” Questions need not be limited to the original subject areas but may include knowledge essential to complete understanding of information in the field. (See the suggested reading list attached.)

Your oral exam will be scheduled within four weeks after passing the written exam and will be announced at least one week in advance. The announcement will include your name, the place and time of your exam, names of the examining committee (and Moderator, if there is one), a list of all your graduate courses and background work, the areas of your written exam, and your research area. The announcement shall be distributed to all Graduate Faculty in the Program.

The oral is expected to be a closed exam. Faculty not on the examining committee may request, at least two days before the exam, permission from your major professor to attend. You have a right to know, however, who is expected at your exam. A moderator may be selected by the Department Head or the GPD from among the Department's Graduate Faculty at your or your major professor's request. You may invite student observers. The Department Head and the GPD are welcome to attend without notice.

Your major professor (or the Moderator) will chair the exam. The exam will normally take three to (no more than) four hours. The Chair will first outline the procedures and introduce all people present. You will then be expected to give a brief (no more than five minutes autobiographical sketch. There will then be two rounds of questions with each voting examiner given up to 20 minutes per round. One examiner may yield the floor to another. A break may be requested between the two rounds if you desire. Following the examiners questions, other faculty may ask up to a total of 10 minutes of questions.

When the questioning is completed, you and the other graduate students will be asked to leave. Non-voting faculty may address comments to the examining committee. Then all non-voting faculty except for the Moderator will be asked to leave.
The voting will proceed by secret, written ballot, PASS or FAIL. Only officially appointed examiners will vote, the Moderator will not. After a brief discussion, a trial vote will be taken. If the votes are unanimously PASS, no further discussion is needed and you will be immediately notified of the results.

If there are FAIL votes, there will be further discussion regarding the extent and seriousness of the weakness. There will then be a final ballot. If there is only one FAIL vote, you will have passed the exam. If there are two or more FAIL votes, you will have failed the exam. At the discretion of the examining committee, you may have a second, final exam which will be conducted as the first.

If you fail parts of the exam, the committee has the responsibility to tell you, either verbally at the time of the exam or in writing within two weeks, of why you failed those sections. You should expect such sections to reappear in the questioning at your dissertation defense.

After you take the oral exam, your major professor will ask the GPD to send the results (PASS or FAIL) to the Graduate School.

**M.S. Thesis and Ph.D. Dissertation Defense Procedures**

These program guidelines are in addition to but do not supersede Graduate School guidelines set forth in the Graduate School Bulletin, the Graduate School Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students, and the Graduate School Handbook.

You may wonder why (especially in light of the W&FCON requirement for signed statements from all your committee members to the effect that each feels your thesis is complete and defensible) the Graduate School and the W&FCON faculty feel a final thesis/dissertation defense is needed. The final defense is really much more than just a rehash of your thesis or dissertation. The defense is intended to determine if you see the larger picture within which your work fits, if you have assimilated the various core requirements to the level appropriate to your degree and area of specialization, and, in general, whether or not you are ready to take your place as a graduate of the program.

**Before the Defense:**

1. You must have prepared and submitted a thesis/dissertation proposal (see above) describing fully the work to be done. This proposal must be approved and signed by all members of the Committee and the GPD or, and forwarded to the Graduate Dean at least four (4) months before the M.S. thesis defense or seven (7) months before the Ph.D. dissertation defense. Submit two signed copies of the proposal to the GPD. S/he will then forward one copy of the proposal to the Grad School and at the same time write the memo appointing your committee. The other copy will remain with the GPD.

2. You must obtain tentative approval of the thesis/dissertation as to subject matter and syntax by all members of the Committee and the Department Head in writing before the defense can be scheduled (form on pp. 28). The thesis/dissertation need not be in its final version for tentative approval; the Committee may require amendments following the defense. You must put a copy of the tentatively approved thesis/dissertation in the department office at least five (5) working days before the defense.

3. Your major professor must distribute an announcement of the defense to all faculty and graduate students in the program at least one (1) week before the defense. The announcement will include your name, thesis title, the place and time of the defense, names of the examining committee members (and the Moderator, if there is one), and a list of your graduate courses.
Defenses should be scheduled only when the University is open and not on holidays or religious holy days.

4. For Ph.D. Defenses, a copy of the announcement (written on form D.5) needs to be forwarded via the GPD at least three (3) weeks before the defense to the office of Degree Requirements. The announcement will then be posted online in the Weekly Bulletin (http://www.umass.edu/loop/weeklybulletin/).

5. All department graduate students and faculty may attend M.S. Thesis and Ph.D. Dissertation defenses, and students and their major professor may invite other guests.

**Content of the Defense:**

The emphasis of the defense will be on your thesis/dissertation and closely related subjects but examination of your general knowledge in the program (especially for the M.S., including Core Topic Areas – pp. 23-24) may also be included.

The Committee Chair (or Moderator) will chair the defense. The recommended length is two hours but with a maximum of three hours. You or any member of the Examining Committee may request the option of having a moderator which may then be appointed either by the Department Head or by the GPD. You may appeal to the Department Executive Committee for a variance of rules either before or following the defense.

1. The Chair (or Moderator) will review the ground rules of the defense.
2. Your major professor will introduce you and the committee members.
3. You will summarize your research in a seminar presentation. You will be expected to do this in about 30-45 minutes.
4. The Chair will invite questions from other faculty and invited guests; the presentation and questions session will not to exceed 60 minutes in total. After questions, there will be a break and the candidate and committee members will reconvene to begin the formal examination.
5. You will be asked two rounds of questions by each voting examiner (including Consultants) with each questioner given up to 20 minutes in each round. An examiner may yield the floor, with permission of the Chair, if another examiner wants to pursue a line of questioning to its logical conclusion or to resolve ambiguities. A break after the first round of questions is recommended.
6. After the examiners are through, the Chair may invite questions from other faculty and invited guests, not to exceed 10 minutes per person.
7. When questioning is complete, you and all graduate student observers will be asked to leave.
8. Non-voting faculty and invited guests may address comments to the Examining Committee. Non-voting faculty and guests, excepting the moderator and Consultants, will then be asked to leave prior to the voting.
9. Voting: All voting will be by secret, written ballot for PASS or FAIL. Only officially appointed examiners vote, the Moderator or Consultants do not vote. After brief discussion, a first ballot will be taken. If the votes are unanimously PASS, no further discussion is necessary and you will have passed the defense.
   If there are FAIL votes, there will be further discussion regarding the extent and seriousness of your weakness. There will then be a final vote. The vote must be unanimously PASS for you to pass the defense.
   You will be informed verbally of the result as soon as it is reached. You may pass the defense, but still be required to make changes in the thesis/dissertation before it is signed in its final form.
10. After the defense: The Committee will inform you of any changes required in the thesis. All members and the Department Head (but not necessarily the Consultants) must sign your thesis/dissertation in its final form before it can be accepted by the Graduate School.
The Chair of the Committee will notify the GPD via memo who then notifies the Graduate Dean of the date and results of the defense.

If you pass the defense, you must complete and sign the Degree Application Form, obtain the required signatures, and deliver it to the Graduate School (Office of Degree Requirements) together with the thesis/dissertation and required fees. You also must see that bound copies are provided for the Department (give it to Linda in the Main Office) and your major professor. Make sure to check on the deadlines set by the Graduate School for delivering theses/dissertations and other materials.

If you fail the defense, you may petition (in writing) the Executive Committee of the Department within two weeks of the Examination. If Executive Committee finds that the Thesis/Dissertation Examining Committee has committed one or more procedural errors, it may ask the Thesis/Dissertation Examining Committee to reconsider. If there are serious personality conflicts involved, it may ask the GPD to petition the Graduate School for a new examining committee to be appointed which may conduct a new defense. Also, you may seek help from the Graduate School directly either by contacting the Assistant Dean or by contacting the Graduate Council. Be aware that they may refuse to hear your petition. Be aware also, that if things get to this point, it is most difficult to ever resolve the situation to everyone's mutual satisfaction. For example, it may prove impossible to find faculty willing to serve on a new examining committee. Finally, you may find help and/or advice through the university's Ombuds Office.

The Examining Committee may decide to table a FAIL vote and conduct a second (last) defense after allowing you time to make changes in your thesis/dissertation and presentation.

**Final Exam for Professional M.S. Degree Students**

Upon completion of the review, the advisory committee may allow the student to proceed to the final examination for the professional degree. The advisory committee must sign a form (pp. 29) stating that the professional paper is acceptable, that the committee has reviewed the student's course work, and are satisfied that the student is prepared to take the final examination. This signed permission must be delivered to the GPD no later than one week prior to holding the exam.

Notice of the final exam must be posted in the same manner as thesis defenses at least one week prior to the exam. Guidelines for attendance will be the same as those guiding attendance at department thesis defenses. The exam will consist of:

A. A 15-20 minute presentation by the student concerning his/her professional paper.

B. An exam conducted by members of the committee. Examiners may test the student on his/her knowledge of the topic covered in the professional paper, on required course work, and on core subject areas of knowledge required of all students who are conferred an MS degree in W&FCO. The format of the examining process will be identical to that required of thesis defenses.

Upon completion of the examination, the committee will vote pass or fail, with majority rule. The manner in which the vote is taken will be identical to that used for thesis defenses. If the vote is affirmative, the advisor must provide the GPD with a statement that the student has taken all required course work, has written an acceptable professional paper, and has passed the final examination.

The student must file, with Graduate Records of the Graduate School, required paperwork (Grad School Eligibility form) that signifies, via signature of major advisor and GPD, that all department requirements of the degree have been fulfilled.

As with students pursuing thesis or dissertation degrees, the professional student is ultimately responsible for assuring that all paperwork required by the Graduate School is filed with the Graduate Records Office.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>M.S. Research Program Checklist</strong></th>
<th>Name____________________________</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>Admission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statute of limitations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis topic area chosen (1\textsuperscript{st} Semester)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee members chosen and letter sent to Graduate School via GPD (see Form M.3 in Graduate School Handbook) (1\textsuperscript{st} Semester)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Completion of Core Area requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scheduling of Thesis defense (see attached M.S. Thesis Defense form)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passing of Thesis defense (see Form M.5 in Graduate School Handbook)</td>
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<td>Thesis revised and submitted to Graduate School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publication plans finalized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desk and research areas cleaned; all keys returned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forwarding address and telephone numbers to office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree Eligibility Form (yellow) submitted to Graduate School via GPD and Department Head (also supply documentation of completion of all activities listed above)</td>
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<td>M.S. Professional Program Checklist</td>
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<td>Concentration area chosen</td>
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<td>Committee members chosen and letter sent to Graduate School via GPD (see Form M.4 in Graduate School Handbook) (1st Semester)</td>
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<td>List of courses chosen and okayed by Committee (1st Semester)</td>
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<td>Committee approval and submission of practicum proposal (2nd Semester)</td>
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<td>Completion of Core Area requirements</td>
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<td>Completion of internship and draft of professional paper</td>
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<td>Passing of defense (see Form M.5 in Graduate School Handbook)</td>
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<td>Professional paper completed and signed by committee, and submitted to GPD</td>
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CHECK LIST FOR MASTER’S DEGREE

GRADUATE SCHOOL - UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
Office of Degree Requirements
534 Goodell Building, Amherst, MA 01003
degreq@grad.umass.edu (413) 545-0025

DEADLINES:
February Degree - January 15th or next working day
May Degree - last working day of April (usually April 30th)
September Degree - last working day of August (usually August 31st)

REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL CANDIDATES:

_______ Course work completed. (Grades for courses being taken in the current semester will be reported at the end of the Final Examination Period.)

_______ Master’s degree eligibility form completed and filed with the Office of Degree Requirements by the deadline. The applicant, department graduate program director, and department head/chairman must sign the eligibility form.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT APPLY:

_______ Language Requirement satisfied.
_______ Thesis Committee appointed by the Graduate Dean.
_______ Thesis Outline received by the Graduate School.
_______ General Examination/Thesis Defense passed. (Must be scheduled and passed before deadline date.)
_______ Two unbound copies of your thesis, printed on acid free paper. Both copies must include original signatures on their signature pages.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT DEADLINES ARE ABSOLUTE AND NO EXCEPTIONS CAN BE MADE.

PLEASE CHECK WITH OFFICE OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR LATEST FORMS.

Revised 9/8/06
WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES CONSERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST

M.S. THESIS AND Ph.D. DISSERTATION DEFENSE FORM

The Department of Natural Resources Conservation requires that a thesis or dissertation be tentatively approved by the members of the examining committee as to subject matter and syntax before the oral defense can be scheduled. This does not constitute approval of the final thesis, and additional amendments may be required following oral examination. This form must be signed by all members of the Committee and on file with the Graduate Program Director before the oral exam/defense can be scheduled.

We have reviewed the draft thesis of _________________________________________
[Name in full]
entitled ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

and tentatively approve this draft as to subject matter and syntax.

____________________________________                ____________________
[Signature]                                                                 [Date]

[Chairperson's typed name]

____________________________________                ____________________
[Signature]                                                                 [Date]

[Member's typed name]

____________________________________                ____________________
[Signature]                                                                 [Date]

[Member's typed name]
M.S. PROFESSIONAL DEGREE DEFENSE FORM

The Department of Natural Resources Conservation requires that the professional paper be tentatively approved by the members of the examining committee as to subject matter and syntax, and that all coursework be completed, before the oral defense can be scheduled. This does not constitute approval of the professional paper, and additional amendments may be required following oral examination. This form must be signed by all members of the Committee and on file with the Graduate Program Director before the oral exam/defense can be scheduled.

We have reviewed the draft professional paper of __________________________________ [Name in full]
entitled ________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

and tentatively approve this draft as to subject matter and syntax.

_________________________                ____________________
[signature]                        [Date]

[Chairperson's typed name]

_________________________                ____________________
[signature]                        [Date]

[Member's typed name]

_________________________                ____________________
[signature]                        [Date]

[Member's typed name]
<table>
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<td>Passing of Prelim/Comprehensive Exam (see Form D.2 in Graduate School Handbook)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation revised and submitted to Graduate School (see Form D.7 &quot;Checklist for Doctoral Degree&quot; in Graduate School Handbook)</td>
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DEADLINES:

- **February Degree** - January 15th or next working day
- **May Degree** - last working day of April (usually April 30th)
- **September Degree** - last working day of August (usually August 31st)

There are now two methods by which you can submit your dissertation. We recommend electronic submission through the University of Massachusetts Amherst dissertation submission site (BePress) at http://dissertations.umi.com/umass/. If that is not possible, please use the traditional paper submission process.

You are responsible for submitting the eligibility form, your electronic or paper dissertation and other required forms and fees (as outlined below) to the Office of Degree Requirements by the posted deadline.

**THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE OFFICE OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS BY ALL STUDENTS:**

- **Final Oral Examination** - Graduate School must have announcement **1 month** before defense
- **Degree Eligibility Form** [green form] - must be completed and filed with the Office of Degree Requirements by the deadline.
- **Survey of Earned Doctorates Form** [available from Degree Requirements]
- **Microfilming Fee** - $55.00

If applicable (optional):

- **Copyright Fee** - $65.00 - this fee should be paid if you want UMI to register your copyright with the Library of Congress Copyright Office. This service is optional.

**IF YOU ARE SUBMITTING AN ELECTRONIC DISSERTATION, YOU MUST ALSO SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS:**

- **Electronic files delivered to BePress**
- **2 signature pages with original signatures to the Office of Degree Requirements** - an unsigned signature page should also be included after the copyright page in the electronic copy of your dissertation.

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*Rev 09/08/06*
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