

# GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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### Graduate Programs at the University of Connecticut

The basic structure and rules for all graduate programs at the University of Connecticut (UConn) are established by its Graduate School. These rules include admission requirements, degree requirements, eligibility for Graduate School scholarships, important deadlines, and other vitally important details. The M.S. and Ph.D. graduate programs in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ARE) follow UConn Graduate School requirements, which may be periodically updated by the University. Prospective and all current students are strongly encouraged to refer to the [UConn Graduate Catalog](#), for the latest information about these requirements. While ARE makes every attempt to keep its Graduate Student Handbook up to date, UConn Graduate School rules apply in the case of any discrepancies that might occur. It is also to the benefit of our graduate students to regularly visit the [Graduate School web page](#) for announcements, scholarships, research fellowships, conference travel funds, and other information about opportunities that are available to all UConn graduate students.

### ARE Graduate Programs

ARE offers an [M.S. program in Applied and Resource Economics](#) and a [Ph.D. program in Agricultural and Resource Economics](#). Both programs provide rigorous training in microeconomic theory and quantitative methods, with applications to economic and policy issues involving food, health, natural resources, and the environment. These programs also allow students to specialize in an area of interest, examples of which are:

- environmental and resource economics
- food marketing and industrial organization
- international economic development
- demand and price analysis
- production economics
- health economics and policy

Each student has considerable flexibility, given the approval of his/her advisory committee, to define an area of specialization in terms of coursework and research.

## II. ADMISSION AND FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

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While most applicants to our graduate programs have undergraduate majors in agricultural economics, resource economics, or economics, we strongly encourage prospective students from other backgrounds to apply.

## Admission

When evaluating applications for admission, ARE's Graduate Admissions Committee bases its assessment of a prospective student's credentials on (1) grade point average in prior undergraduate and graduate coursework, (2) grades in economic theory, mathematics, and statistics courses, (3) English language proficiency, (4) motivation for applying and writing skills, as reflected in the student's personal statement of purpose, (5) scholarly potential and other qualities as indicated by three letters of reference, and (6) any research output (such as publications in professional journals) that provide evidence of ability to pursue graduate study and succeed as an applied economist.

While the considerations listed above are given particular importance by the Departmental Graduate Admissions Committee, all applicants must additionally be compliant with University of Connecticut's Graduate School admissions requirements, described in detail at <https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/requirements/>.

## Funding

All applicants who wish to apply for Departmental graduate assistantship support are also required to report their scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test. Strong performance in this test is viewed as another indicator of the ability to do well in our graduate programs.

## III. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

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The major requirements of the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees include Departmental requirements, in addition to Graduate School requirements listed in the [University of Connecticut's Graduate Catalog](#). Nothing contained in this handbook may be interpreted in a way that contradicts these University requirements. Departmental requirements for M.S. and Ph.D. degrees are described below.

### MASTER OF SCIENCE

The Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics offers a Master of Science (M.S.) in Applied and Resource Economics. The program for this M.S. degree provides a foundation in economic theory and quantitative methods, along with applications involving economic and policy issues related to food, health, natural resources, and the environment. For some students, the M.S. degree is terminal, while other students obtain it as a component of their Ph.D. degree program.

## **Terminal M.S. Degree Program Structure and Courses**

Students in the terminal M.S. degree program should select an advisory committee as early as possible. The advisory committee is made up of three or more graduate faculty members. The chair of the committee is the student's major advisor. This person may or may not be the major advisor assigned initially at the time of admission but must be a faculty member in the Department. Approval from the advisory committee is required in all phases of the program, starting from selection of courses to completion of a thesis or independent study paper. A [Plan of Study](#) listing approved coursework should be filed by the student with the Office of the Registrar, and a copy given to the Department Main Office. This should be done during their second semester in the program and no later than the beginning of the final semester. Subsequent changes in the Plan of Study are possible with approval of the student's advisory committee.

The UConn Graduate School requires a minimum of 30 credits to be completed for the award of a master's degree. ARE offers three program options for accomplishing this objective: M.S. Plan A (Thesis), M.S. Plan B (Major Paper), and M.S. Plan B (Coursework). All three program options are based on courses mostly at the 5000-level or higher, consistent with UConn Graduate School policies on transferring credits and using a maximum of 6 credits from 3000 and 4000-level courses. These program options also have a common core of required courses in microeconomics and applied econometrics. The complete requirements for each option are described below and summarized in Table 1.

### **M.S. Plan A (Thesis)**

This option emphasizes research activities and culminates in the completion of a thesis. Students choose a thesis topic with approval of the advisory committee by the end of their second semester. The completed thesis is presented at an oral public defense and must be approved by members of the student's Advisory Committee. Typically, completion of the thesis and defense will occur during the spring or summer of the second year. Students in this option take no fewer than 9 credits for thesis research (GRAD 5950 or 5960), and a minimum of 21 credits in other coursework that includes the 6 credits from the M.S. common core, a maximum of 6 credits from independent study unrelated to the thesis (ARE 5499) or internship (ARE 5991), and a minimum of 6 credits from additional coursework in ARE or Economics.

### **M.S. Plan B (Major Paper)**

This option is designed to promote a comprehensive understanding of applied economic theory and methods. With approval of their advisory committee, students choose a research topic by the end of the second semester. The paper must be approved as an independent study project by the student's Advisory Committee and its public presentation is required. Typically, completion of the major paper and presentation will occur during the fall or spring of the second year.

Students also complete 3 to 6 credits of independent study (ARE 5499) associated with writing the major paper. The grade for the independent study course shall be issued after public presentation of the written paper. The required minimum of 30 credits includes 6 credits from the M.S. common core, a maximum of 6 credits of independent study (ARE 5499) or internship (ARE 5991), and a minimum of 6 credits from additional coursework in ARE or Economics.

### M.S. Plan B (Coursework)

This option entails completing the largest number of credits through regular coursework and does not require engagement in supervised research. It may be particularly useful for students who desire achieving understanding of multiple areas of application or who wish to round out their expertise with graduate courses in other disciplines. The required minimum of 30 credits includes 6 credits from the M.S. common core, a maximum of 6 credits of independent study (ARE 5499) or internship (ARE 5991), and a minimum of 6 credits from additional coursework in ARE or Economics.

**Table 1. Requirements for Students Pursuing a Terminal M.S.**

<b>M.S. Plan A (Thesis)</b>	<p><b>Required Courses:</b> ARE 5201 (Microeconomics) or ECON 5201 (Microeconomics); ARE 5311 (Applied Econometrics I).</p> <p>Complete at least 12 credits of formal coursework in ARE or ECON (excluding independent study and internship courses, and including required courses above).</p> <p>Meet UConn Graduate School’s <b>minimum of 21 course credits</b> (excluding credits from thesis), and including up to 6 credits from independent study (unrelated to the thesis) or internship courses.</p> <p><b>Thesis:</b> 9 credits for thesis research (GRAD 5950 or 5960); defense of thesis.</p>
<b>M.S. Plan B (Major Paper)</b>	<p><b>Required Courses:</b> ARE 5201 (Microeconomics) or ECON 5201 (Microeconomics); ARE 5311 (Applied Econometrics I).</p> <p>Complete at least 12 credits of formal coursework in ARE or ECON (excluding independent study and internship courses, and including required courses above).</p> <p>Complete <b>at least 30 course</b> credits, of which total credits from independent study and internship courses may not exceed 6 (including credits from major paper and other independent study courses unrelated to major paper).</p> <p><b>Major Paper:</b> 3 to 6 credits of ARE 5499 (Independent Study in Agricultural and Resource Economics). Grade for this independent study course shall be issued after public presentation and submission of written paper.</p>

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<b>M.S. Plan B (Coursework)</b>	<p><b>Required Courses:</b> ARE 5201 (Microeconomics) or ECON 5201 (Microeconomics); ARE 5311 (Applied Econometrics I).</p> <p>Complete at least 12 credits of formal coursework in ARE or ECON (excluding independent study and internship courses, and including required courses above).</p> <p>Complete <b>at least 30 course</b> credits, which may include up to 6 credits from independent study or internship courses.</p>
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Depending on a student’s plan of study, the terminal M.S. program may be completed in a period of one to two years (see Table 2). Financial support from the Department should not be expected beyond the second year.

**Table 2. Timeline for Terminal M.S. Degree**

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<b>First Year</b>	
<i>Fall I:</i>	Coursework.
<i>Spring I:</i>	Continued coursework. Select advisory committee and file Plan of Study.
<i>Summer I:</i>	Continued coursework (Optional). Identification of research topic for thesis (Plan A- Thesis) or Independent Study (Plan B – Major Paper)

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<b>Second Year</b>	
<i>Fall II:</i>	Continued coursework.  Continued research (Plan A– Thesis, Plan B – Major Paper).
<i>Spring II:</i>	Complete and defend thesis (Plan A- Thesis).  Complete and present independent study research (Plan B – Major Paper).

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### Accelerated Master’s Degree Program

A fast-track to the M.S. in Applied and Resource Economics is available for suitably prepared undergraduate students who are currently enrolled in an ARE B.S. degree program. This fast track allows such students to complete all requirements for the M.S. degree within one calendar year. To achieve this objective, the 120 credits that students take for their B.S. degree should include 6 credits from the required M.S. common core courses (ARE 5201 or ECON 5201, and ARE 5311) that would also be applied towards the 30 credits required for the M.S. degree. The remaining required 24 credits for the M.S. degree would then be completed following one of the three program options described above (Table 1). Please see the [graduate catalog](#) for more information related to the Accelerated Master’s Degree Program and its requirements. Undergraduate students interested in this program should discuss it with their academic advisor

as early as possible, but no later than the beginning of the junior year.

### **M.S. Degree as a Component of the Ph.D. Program**

A student enrolled in the Ph.D. program can earn a Master's degree while pursuing that program under the M.S. Plan B (Coursework) option. The student is eligible to receive the degree if he/she has completed at least 30 credits on an approved Ph.D. plan of study (other than credits from GRAD 5950/5960 or GRAD 6950/6960) and has been recommended by their major advisor or the Dean of the Graduate School for award of the degree. This recommendation may be made using the [Report on the General Examination for the Doctoral Degree](#) that is filed with the Office of the Registrar.

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

The Ph.D. program in Agricultural and Resource Economics is intended for students who wish to develop their ability to make original contributions to scientific knowledge. Award of the degree testifies to broad mastery of economic theory, quantitative methods, and one or more fields in agricultural and resource economics. All doctoral students are assigned the same faculty member as major advisor at the time of admission. Upon completion of a common core of coursework in the first year and satisfying the first-year core course standards, each student selects an advisory committee which consists of a major advisor (who may or may not be the major advisor assigned initially) and two or more associate advisors. The major advisor and at least one associate advisor must be faculty members in the Department with appointments that allow them to be advisors of doctoral students. Approval of the advisory committee is required in all phases of the program, starting from selection of coursework to completion of a thesis or independent study paper. A [Plan of Study](#) listing approved courses must be filed by the student with the Office of the Registrar when no more than 18 credits of the coursework are completed, and a copy given to the Department Main Office. Subsequent changes in the Plan of Study are possible with approval from the student's advisory committee.

### **Ph.D. Program Structure and Courses**

Ph.D. students in ARE go through a rigorous program of courses and examinations designed to meet our professional needs while also complying with UConn Graduate School regulations. The latter requires students who begin our Ph.D. program with a master's degree in a related subject area to complete at least 15 credits of content coursework, while all other students must complete at least 30 credits of content coursework. Content coursework is defined as any coursework other than [GRAD 5950/5960](#) and [GRAD 6950/6960](#). Ph.D. students must also take at least 15 credits of [GRAD 6950](#) (Doctoral Dissertation Research) or [GRAD 6960](#) (Full-Time Doctoral



Research).

Table 3 summarizes the course requirements established by the Department for all students seeking a doctoral degree in Agricultural and Resource Economics.

**Table 3. Course Requirements for Students Pursuing a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Resource Economics**

<i>Economic Theory:</i>	ECON 6201 Microeconomic Theory I ECON 6211 Microeconomics Theory II
<i>Quantitative Methods:</i>	ARE 6311 Applied Econometrics I ARE 6313 Applied Econometrics II ECON 6301 Advanced Mathematical Economics I or ECON 5301 Mathematical Economics ECON 6310 Econometrics I ECON 6311 Econometrics II
<i>Area of Specialization:</i>	Three courses that define a coherent Area of Specialization (to be set in consultation with the student's advisory committee).
<i>Elective Courses:</i>	Three 6000 level courses, at least two of which are in ARE, while the third is in ARE or Economics. None of these courses can be part of the Economic Theory, Quantitative Methods or Area of Specialization requirements.
<i>Seminar:</i>	ARE 6495 Graduate Research Seminar

### **First year core courses**

ARE Ph.D. students must take the following core courses during their first year in the program:

ECON 6201 Microeconomic Theory I

ECON 6211 Microeconomic Theory II

ECON 6301 Advanced Mathematical Economics I or ECON5301 Mathematical Economics

ARE 6311 Applied Econometrics I

ARE 6313 Applied Econometrics II

ECON 6310 Econometrics I

ECON 6311 Econometrics II

It is expected that all students entering our Ph.D. program have the requisite background to enroll in the above courses during their first year of study. Nevertheless, students who have enrolled in the Ph.D. program, but believe they have inadequate preparation for any of the courses listed above, may petition the Departmental Ph.D. Steering Committee for a postponement in order to take remedial classes during their first year. The Departmental Ph.D. Steering Committee must approve all course substitutions made during this year for the purpose of remediation.

### **Additional course requirements**

Ph.D. students must also take more courses beyond the first year to help further develop their knowledge and skills in applied economics. These courses fall under several categories, as stated below. Explanatory comments are provided where necessary.

### **Area of Specialization**

Students must complete nine credit hours of coursework in an area of specialization. The area of specialization is not a formal degree designation. Rather, it is a departmental definition that organizes a student's scholarly activities and culminates in a completed dissertation. Coursework for the area of specialization is set by the Advisory Committee in consultation with the student, keeping in mind their intended field of research.

Examples of possible areas of specialization areas are:

- environmental and resource economics
- food marketing and industrial organization
- international economic development
- quantitative methods in applied economics

The coursework may come from a variety of departments and colleges, such as Agricultural and Resource Economics, Natural Resource Management and Engineering, Economics, Business, Mathematics, and Statistics.

### **Elective Courses**

Students must take three ARE or Economics courses (nine credits) at the 6000 level that are outside the designated area of specialization and not part of the Economic Theory or Quantitative Methods requirements. At least two of these courses must be in ARE, examples of which are:

ARE 6203 Economics Methodology: Praxis and Practice

ARE 6305 Applied Development Economics

ARE 6464 Experimental Methods for Program Evaluation

ARE 6466 Environmental Economics

ARE 6468 Economics of Natural Resources  
ARE 6470 Applied Research in Environmental Economics  
ARE 6472 Microeconomic Applications to Food Markets  
ARE 6474 Empirical Industrial Organization I  
ARE 6476 Empirical Industrial Organization II  
ARE 6478 Empirical International Trade and Investment

### **Seminar Requirement**

Students in their second year or above must satisfactorily complete a one-credit section of ARE 6495 Graduate Research Seminar each semester, including the seminar's presentation requirement(s). This requirement can be waived during some semesters, if a waiver is deemed to be in the student's academic interest.

### **Exceptions and Substitutions**

If a required course listed in Table 3 is not offered during the academic year, the department will recommend students an alternative course that would act as a substitute.

Students may petition the Departmental Ph.D. Steering Committee for an exemption to a particular course requirement based upon comparable courses previously taken in another program of study. To request such an exemption, students must provide a copy of the syllabus and examinations from the course they are proposing as a substitute.

### **Ph.D. Coursework Requirements and Performance Standards**

The Ph.D. coursework requirements for ARE students consist of two separate components:

- First-Year Core Course Standards, and
- Area of Specialization (or "Field" or "General") Examination.

#### **First-Year Core Course Standards**

Students must complete core courses listed below during their first year of study and attain the standards specified by the cumulative GPA in each of the three categories described in Table 4.

**Table 4. First-Year Core Course Standards**

Course Number	Course Title	Standard (Cumulative GPA)
ECON6201	Microeconomics I	} GPA = 3.0 (B)
ECON6211	Microeconomics II	
ECON6310	Econometrics I	} GPA = 3.0 (B)
ECON6311	Econometrics II	
ARE6311	Applied Econometrics I	} GPA = 3.0 (B)
ARE6313	Applied Econometrics II	

Students who fall below the specified standards must retake the course(s) in which they received a lower grade to improve their average GPA. The recalculated average will be based on the higher grade obtained in each course. If a student still does not meet the standard after retaking the course once, they must appeal to the PhD Steering Committee within one week after the last day of exams in the spring semester of their second year. The committee’s decision will take into account various factors, including but not limited to, a supporting letter from the major advisor (the first-year advisor), the student’s performance in second-year courses, and the quality of their second-year paper. The appeal decision requires the submission of the second-year paper regardless of whether the field exam takes the form of an exam or a paper. The decision will be made within two weeks from the date of appeal submission.

**Area of Specialization Examination**

The area of specialization (or “field” or “general”) examination is the second part of ARE’s Ph.D. coursework requirements. Only students who have satisfied the First-Year Course Standards and have filed their Plan of Study may take this exam. The examination covers course work in the Area of Specialization and any related courses. The exam is administered by the student’s advisory committee, which is also responsible for its format and scheduling. The exam may be of the traditional type or may take the form of an independently written high quality research paper. In either case, this requirement is expected to be completed by the end of the student’s second year in the program, and no later than the end of the first semester of the third year.

The final decision as to whether the student has completed the requirement, and thereby passed their Ph.D. general examination, shall rest solely with the student’s advisory committee. The major advisor shall communicate the results to the candidate as soon as a final decision is made and immediately send the official report on the general examination to the Registrar. A copy of the report must also be filed with the Department Main Office. The major advisor should report the procedure and the outcome of the general examination at the following Departmental faculty meeting. If a student fails the area of specialization examination, the student may retake it at the

next scheduled opportunity, provided their advisory committee approves.

## Dissertation Research and Defense

Ph.D. students in ARE must write and defend a high-quality dissertation. The dissertation is the scholastic culmination of a student's ongoing research. It starts with the preparation of a dissertation proposal, typically soon after the Ph.D. general examination is passed. The proposal needs to be approved by the student's advisory committee after its oral presentation and defense that includes at least two faculty members from outside the advisory committee. These persons will serve as the required external reviewers. The [dissertation proposal approval form](#) will also need to have the Department Head's signature and be filed with the Office of the Register no later than when 9 credits of Dissertation Research (GRAD 6950 / 6960) are completed.

Students become candidates for the degree of Ph.D. upon filing their dissertation proposal. The dissertation needs to be written under close supervision of the advisory committee. Its oral defense must be announced publicly at least two weeks prior to the date of this defense. At least five members of the faculty, including all members of the candidate's advisory committee, must participate at the defense. Approval of the written dissertation and success in its oral defense is determined by the advisory committee, based upon their expertise in the subject matter while considering the opinions of other qualified individuals, and in accordance with the policies of the Graduate School. The approval by the advisory committee must be unanimous. Following the dissertation defense, the major advisor communicates the results to the student and the Office of the Registrar, and reports them at the next Departmental faculty meeting.

The time necessary for completing the Ph.D. varies depending upon curriculum selected and student preparation. Students who enter the program with a Master's degree in a related subject area should expect to spend no more than 5 years (see Table 5), while students who enroll without this preparation may expect to take a year longer. Financial support from the Department may be subject to discontinuation beyond these expected degree completion times.

**Table 5. Timeline for Completion of Ph. D. for Students Entering the Program with M.S.\***

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<b>First Year</b>	
<i>Fall I:</i>	Coursework.
<i>Spring I:</i>	Continued coursework.
<i>Summer I:</i>	Identify area of dissertation research and potential major advisor.

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<b>Second Year</b>	
<i>Fall II:</i>	Continued coursework. Select advisory committee and file Plan of Study.
<i>Spring II:</i>	Continued coursework.

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<i>Summer II:</i>	Pass general examination. Participate in professional meetings. Carry out research. Apply for grants and scholarships.
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<b>Third Year</b>	
<i>Fall III:</i>	Continued coursework, as needed. Prepare proposal for dissertation.
<i>Spring III:</i>	Continued coursework, as needed. Complete and defend proposal for dissertation.
<i>Summer III:</i>	Participate in professional meetings. Work on dissertation and other research. Apply for grants and scholarships. Submit research findings for publication.

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<b>Fourth Year</b>	
<i>Fall IV:</i>	Work on dissertation and other research. Apply for grants and scholarships. Submit research findings for publication.
<i>Spring IV:</i>	Work on dissertation and other research. Apply for grants and scholarships. Submit research findings for publication.
<i>Summer IV:</i>	Participate in professional meetings. Work on dissertation and other research. Apply for grants and scholarships. Submit research findings for publication.

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<b>Fifth Year</b>	
<i>Fall V:</i>	Work on dissertation and other research. Apply for grants and jobs.
<i>Spring V:</i>	Complete a draft of the dissertation for review by committee. Submit papers for publication. Continue activity on job market, as needed.
<i>Summer V:</i>	Defend the dissertation. Participate in professional meetings. Continue research related work. Continue activity on job market, as needed.

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\* Students entering the Ph.D. program without a master's degree in a related subject area will be expected to follow a similar schedule, but may be staggered by a year since enrollment in some or all of the first-year core courses may have to be postponed.

## PROGRESS TOWARD DEGREE COMPLETION

An ARE graduate student's academic performance is monitored closely with respect to progress being made toward completion of degree requirements. The major advisor reports this performance annually to the Director of Graduate Studies. The performance may be evaluated along several dimensions, depending on the degree that the student is working toward and its program requirements. Examples of performance indicators include grades received in coursework, achievement of academic milestones associated with the program of the degree, and scholarly productivity outside the classroom. The performance evaluation process is interactive with the graduate student, providing them with opportunity for discussion and improvement, and is an integral component of the advisory structure developed for promoting academic development in a

supportive environment.

### **Grades in Coursework**

The UConn Graduate School requires each graduate student to always maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher during their studies. If a student's cumulative GPA should fall below 3.0, the student's advisory committee will review the student's progress and Plan of Study to determine whether the student shall be permitted to continue their graduate studies. Conferral of a degree requires that the student have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all courses listed on the final Plan of Study.

ARE graduate students are expected to receive grades that are no lower than a B- for any course. Consistently high grades and cumulative GPA's will contribute positively to performance reports. On the other hand, a grade in the C range will raise serious concern, while a grade of D, F, or U will require the associated course to be not included in the student's plan of study and may lead to recommendation by the advisory committee to the Graduate School for discontinuation of graduate study. Students may sometimes consider it desirable to repeat courses with lower grades, subject to approval from the advisory committee.

### **Achievement of Academic Milestones**

The Ph.D. program has significant milestones that students are expected to attain in accordance with a timeline laid out in Table 5. Examples of these milestones include the first-year core course standards, the general examination, and defense of the dissertation proposal. Compliance with the established timeline for achieving such milestones would be an important indicator of satisfactory progress towards degree completion.

### **Scholarly Productivity**

ARE graduate students pursuing the M.S. Plan A (Thesis) and M.S. Plan B (Major Paper) options, and those enrolled in the Ph.D. program, are expected to engage in research that leads to conference paper presentations and publications in journals. Ph.D. students are also expected to actively seek external grants and scholarships/fellowships to support their research. Success in such scholarly efforts and achievement of other forms of professional recognition will contribute positively to performance reports.

### **Assessment of Academic Performance**

The Department values strong academic performance by its graduate students in one or more of the above dimensions. Scholarships and grants that recognize this achievement are given annually to students who qualify. Substantial funds for such awards are available to the Department from the University and other sources including generous donors.

Continued financial support of students through graduate research and teaching assistantships requires diligent performance of assigned assistantship duties but is also conditional on satisfactory academic progress being made, measures of which include always maintaining a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher and timely achievement of academic milestones. A student who has their assistantship discontinued because of failure to make satisfactory academic progress may appeal in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies after consultation with their major advisor. The appeal would present (1) the extenuating circumstances that lead to the failure, and (2) a specific plan for how satisfactory progress will be achieved within the following semester. If the appeal is granted, the student would be eligible for renewal of funding, subject to the availability of resources, and Department needs.

### **Time Limits**

Finally, students enrolled in our M.S. and Ph.D. programs must abide by the time limits for degree completion established by the UConn Graduate School. The terminal M.S. degree is to be completed within six years and the Ph.D. degree within eight years. Failure to meet these limits or to maintain continuous registration may result in a notice of termination from the Graduate School.

### **Academic Guidance and Support**

Graduate students are expected to meet their major advisor and other advisory committee members at least once per semester for discussing various aspects of academic progress being made as well as plans for improvement. Circumstances may sometimes arise, however, in which a student requires additional guidance and support. The Director of Graduate Studies is an important resource in this regard and should be consulted first whenever the need arises, followed by the Department Head if necessary. Also, the University has [resources](#) available beyond the Department for assisting graduate students faced with difficult situations. The Graduate School, for example, has staff members dedicated for such purposes.

## **IV. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND WORK EXPERIENCE**

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Graduate research/teaching assistantships and fellowships are available on a competitive basis to well qualified M.S. and Ph.D. program applicants. Students who join our graduate programs without initial assistantship support may also be considered for it subsequently, depending on their academic performance after enrollment and availability of funds. While a fellowship does not involve any work commitment, graduate assistantship funding is to be viewed as compensation for helping faculty with their research or teaching activities. These assistantships also provide valuable professional experience, and students who hold them are expected to perform their duties in a satisfactory manner while showing good academic progress. Additional sources of financial assistance include the Paul L. Putnam Endowment Fund for Graduate Education in agricultural and



resource economics, which is used for subsidizing active participation of graduate students in professional meetings.

## **Graduate Assistantship Duties and Benefits**

Employment on graduate assistantships is arranged so that recipients devote a portion of their time to research and/or teaching duties and the rest to their own course work and research. A student's research for their Ph.D. dissertation or M.S. Thesis/Major Paper may have significant overlap with work being carried out under a research assistantship, but this need not always be the case. Graduate students could therefore find themselves working closely with more than one faculty member, learning about different academic fields, and publishing on a variety of topics. This diverse experience can lead to more well-rounded development for them as applied economists and result in better advancement career opportunities. Doctoral students and master's students interested in funding their own research are also encouraged to apply for external grants and fellowships. Faculty support and guidance is available for this purpose.

Graduate assistantships are awarded on a nine-month academic year or a semester basis. Additional support is often available from faculty who need help with research during the summer. Tuition fees may be waived for students on an assistantship that involves working for at least 10 hours/week in a semester. Fringe benefits include broad medical insurance coverage which is highly subsidized to employees and their family members. Detailed information on medical benefits for graduate students can be obtained at [www.hr.uconn.edu](http://www.hr.uconn.edu).

## **Assessment of Performance**

Continuation of graduate assistantship support is dependent on satisfactory academic progress (as discussed above), and on satisfactory performance of assistantship duties. The latter performance is reported to the Director of Graduate Studies by the faculty member who supervises the student's research or teaching assistantship related work. Note that this assistantship supervisor may be different from the student's major advisor, who would be responsible for reporting on academic progress and achievements. The student will have access to their work report so that they have opportunity to learn about any shortcomings and discuss possible ways of improvement with their assistantship supervisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. If an assistantship is discontinued due to unsatisfactory performance of duties, its renewal will be contingent upon Departmental assessment of the student's potential for improvement, faculty needs, and availability of resources.