

# Division of Plant and Soil Sciences

## Graduate Student Handbook

### Welcome

Welcome to the Plant & Soil Sciences Graduate Program. This document has been prepared to help guide you through your graduate program in the Plant & Soil Sciences Division of the Department of Plant, Soil, & Insect Sciences. Please familiarize yourself with its contents and consult it as questions arise during your program. It should be your first source of information and is intended as a concise supplement to the Graduate School Bulletin, which you should receive from the Graduate School. Other useful campus information can be found on the UMass Website <http://www.umass.edu/> and on the Plant, Soil, & Insect Sciences Website <http://www.umass.edu/psis/>.

### Administration

The Department Head, Dr. Peter Veneman, is the chief administrative officer. Of particular importance to you, he is primarily responsible for funding decisions and preparation of contracts and appointments. His office is in Room 100, French Hall. The Personnel Administrator, Ms. Eileen Harris, is in Room 102C, Fernald Hall and will assist you with your contracts and appointments. The Graduate Program Director (G.P.D.) is Dr. Wesley Autio, and he is located in Room 205, Bowditch Hall. The G.P.D. is the administrative supervisor of your progress toward a degree and your liaison with the Graduate School on many matters. The division also has a Graduate Policy Committee, appointed annually by the Department Head, which serves in an advisory role on matters related to graduate education. The Committee includes a graduate student, currently Ms. Karen Heymann, who is your representative on the Committee. Your advisor is a member of the Graduate Faculty who will guide your academic progress, direct your research, and chair your Guidance/Examination, Thesis, or Dissertation Committee (depending on your program and progress).

It is essential that you assume primary responsibility for your progress toward a graduate degree. Make it your responsibility to remind your advisor of what needs to be done and when it needs to be done, because he/she is often absorbed in other responsibilities and cannot be relied upon to see that administrative actions are taken properly and in a timely manner. This guide tells you what needs to be done to obtain a degree in the Division. Read it, understand it, and use it! Maintain your own file of paperwork pertaining to your graduate program. Your advisor maintains a file, the Department maintains a file (in Fernald Hall), the GPD maintains a file, and the Graduate School maintains a file, but errors occur, and your own records can help correct them. You should receive a copy of all memos written about your progress.

Graduate education is one of the most important roles of this Division. We invested in you when we accepted you, and the return on this investment is as important to your advisor and the Division as it is to your own future. Please understand that your graduate program is a joint effort among these three parties. Its success will be a collective success. It is our most sincere hope that you will have a graduate experience that will contribute greatly to your future career and that it will be a very satisfactory period in your life. This guide is intended to promote both success and satisfaction in your graduate program.

### Funding Your Education

Graduate students are assessed tuition and mandatory fees (varying by residency status and the number of credits taken). If a student is funded as a Graduate Assistant, Tuition and the Curriculum Fee

may be waived. (The Curriculum Fee represents about two-thirds of the Mandatory Fees.) Graduate students are members of a labor union that bargains minimum pay rates with the University.

In the Department of Plant, Soil, & Insect Sciences, the level of funding full assistantships (teaching or research) varies with degree and progress, but in all cases, the student is normally expected to work up to 20 hours per week during the semester and varying numbers of hours per week during the summer, in addition to the time spent on his/her own degree program. Students funded by the department should not expect funding for more than two years on a M.S. program, or more than three years on a Ph.D. program.

Students are encouraged to seek funding of their own in the form of scholarships or grants. Sources of information include the Graduate Student Grant Office, Peterson's Grants for Graduate Study Guide, and the Sigma Xi Science Society.

## Department Policies

Students in the Department are expected to behave professionally and act in an ethical and moral manner. Please respect the fact that faculty and staff often are overburdened with work, and take care that you do not create any unnecessary administrative action. If you follow these policies, there should be no obstacles in satisfying all of your material and administrative needs resulting from your graduate work. If you are uncertain of a policy, ask your advisor.

### Buildings Keys and Security:

Every Graduate Student can obtain keys to the buildings and rooms where he/she works. If you need a key for French Hall Greenhouse, you must get one from Dr. Thomas Boyle in 202 French Hall. For all other keys, you should first fill out and sign a Plant, Soil, & Insect Sciences Key Request form (available from the main office in Fernald Hall). Give this signed form to your advisor and have him/her fill out a UMass Key Request form. Both forms must then be sent to the Department Head for approval and signature. Once signed, the request will be submitted to the Physical Plant Lock Shop. You will obtain your keys directly from the Lock Shop, and you must return them to the Lock Shop at completion of your program (see Key Return and Laboratory Checkout below).

Our buildings, laboratories, and offices should be kept locked when not occupied. The buildings are secured by campus personnel nights and weekends, unless classes or conferences are scheduled inside. Never obstruct a building door from closing and locking. Do not allow unauthorized people into the buildings or rooms inside.

The person issued the key is fully responsible for its proper use. Misuse of keys could result in loss of privilege to have them. Keys need to be kept secure, and never copied, loaned, or left where they can be stolen. If keys are lost or stolen, report it to the Department immediately.

### Offices:

Every student is entitled to desk space in either a graduate student office or in a laboratory. The location depends on space availability and the wishes of your advisor.

### Photocopying:

Department photocopiers are provided for use by faculty, staff, and teaching assistants (T.A.'s). They cannot be used without a personal identification code. T.A.'s will be given a code for each course taught, but these codes will be terminated at the end of the semester. Otherwise, graduate students will not be given user codes unless authorized by their advisors, who thereby assume any charges for photocopying. Office copy machines are not intended for copying textbooks, chapters, or class notes. Your advisor may authorize copying drafts of your Thesis Proposal for submitting to your committee members. Final copies should be done on commercial copiers. Important journal articles or reviews

should be copied in the libraries.

#### Greenhouses:

If you need to use greenhouse space for your experiments, you will need to make sure that you and your advisor fill out a Greenhouse Request Form. These forms are sent to each faculty member in the semester prior to the need. You must have Safety Training and Worker Protection Standard training before using a greenhouse where pesticides are applied (see Required Safety Training and Safe Practices).

#### Research Fields:

If you need to use field space for your experiments, you will need to make sure that you and your advisor cooperate with the coordinator of the appropriate farm facility. You must have Worker Protection Standard training before using a field where pesticides are applied (see Required Safety Training and Safe Practices).

#### Laboratories:

Most members of the faculty have their own research laboratories. Most of your work will be done in your advisor's laboratory. On occasions, however, your work may require equipment or space that is not available in your advisor's laboratory. If you need to work in another person's laboratory, your advisor should make such arrangements. Respect for the equipment and space in any laboratory in which you work is critical. Remember to report any broken equipment and to clean up your work space immediately. You will lose laboratory privileges if you adversely affect the work of others. You must receive Laboratory Fire & Safety training before beginning laboratory work (see Required Safety Training and Safe Practices) and follow all rules and regulations set by the University. When you complete your program, you will be expected to properly dispose of samples and laboratory materials in consultation with your advisor (see Key Return and Laboratory Cleanout).

#### Equipment:

Laboratory and field equipment is expensive and frequently difficult to maintain. If you need to borrow a piece of equipment from another person, make sure that person is aware of your intentions. You should take care of the equipment and return it in a timely manner. If you need training before use of equipment in another laboratory, your advisor should arrange for it.

#### Telephones/FAX:

The Department does not pay for personal calls or FAXES. You do not have access to long distance phone calls unless your advisor provides you with a TMS code number. Long distance calls and FAXES related to research should be made with your advisor's knowledge. He/she is responsible for the cost of these calls. The Department provides local telephones as a privilege and as funds permit. FAX machines are located in the main Department offices and are for official use only.

#### Email:

Email use is encouraged, and important Departmental announcements are sent out via Email. You may obtain your own campus account name from the Office of Information Technology (see <http://www.oit.umass.edu/services/students.html>). Contact Eileen Harris at Eileen or 545-1059 to make sure that your email address is included on the department's Graduate Student Network.

#### Travel:

Any student who travels without authorization should be prepared to pay for the cost of the travel. There is no reimbursement for the costs of the travel after it has occurred if the appropriate forms

were not completed prior to the travel.

Occasionally you may need transportation to one of the farms or to present a talk at a local meeting. In order to use a vehicle owned by the State, you must be on the State payroll (i.e. receive your paycheck from the State). The Department possesses some trucks and vans that may be made available for you to travel to your field work. Gas is available on campus for State vehicles with gas cards and authorized operator ID codes. Ask your advisor for assistance with reserving a department or rental vehicle. For all travel that requires expenses, if you are authorized for reimbursement, you must complete a Travel Authorization Form prior to the trip if it is out of state, and an Expense Voucher Form immediately after the trip. If you use your own vehicle, you must keep accurate records of mileage. All original receipts, except for meals, must be submitted with the Expense Voucher Form. Meals are reimbursed per diem.

#### Office Supplies:

If you are a teaching assistant, you may need office supplies such as pencils and paper. The Department does not provide for graduate student use of supplies for non-teaching related activities. If you are doubtful as to whether or not your request for such supplies is reasonable, discuss it with your advisor.

#### Secretarial Help:

The Department has very limited secretarial staff. Please do not ask for secretarial help for anything related to your coursework, teaching assistantships, or thesis. However, you may need to consult with the accountants and payroll staff with regard to ordering supplies or to paperwork for your salary.

#### Ordering:

Some advisors prefer to place all of their own orders, while others encourage students to learn the procedures. If your advisor wishes to have you order items on your own, please learn and follow all departmental procedures. Consult with your advisor or his/her designated account Bookkeeper before placing any order to be sure that there is sufficient funding available. Always have permission from your advisor to place the order, and have all of the purchasing information necessary to place the order. Unless the order is being placed on an open Blanket Order or Procard (University Credit Card), a Departmental Purchase Request form must be filled out and signed by your advisor before submitting the order to a Bookkeeper. Before placing any order on an open Blanket Order, check to be sure there is enough money encumbered to cover the purchase. If you have been issued a Procard, ask a Bookkeeper for a Procard Ordering Instruction packet. All of the Departmental and University Procard purchasing rules must be followed, and all necessary paperwork completed by the cardholder.

#### Key Return and Laboratory Cleanout:

At completion of a graduate program, every student must submit a University Degree Eligibility Form to the Graduate School. This form must be signed by both the Graduate Program Director and the Department Head. For any student who has used departmental facilities, The G.P.D. will not sign this unless the student submits a Department of Plant & Soil Sciences Key Return Receipt form and a Plant & Soil Sciences Laboratory Checkout List, both signed by the advisor verifying that these have been done properly. Instructions and forms may be obtained from your advisor or from Phyllis Berman, the Departmental Safety Coordinator.

#### Required Safety Training and Safe Practices:

The University, the State, and the Federal government require safety training for all who use laboratory, greenhouse and field facilities. Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S), located in N-414

Morrill Science Center (545-2682), provides all necessary training. Immediate Supervisors are responsible for assuring that all of their personnel, including students, have received required training before allowing them to enter their facilities. If you are going to work in a greenhouse or field where pesticides are applied (even if you do not apply them yourself), you must take Worker Protection Standard training. This training is only available online at EH&S's OWL training site (ask your advisor or Phyllis Berman at 545-2364 for more information). Before using a laboratory or any facility where hazardous materials are used, you must have taken a UMass Fire and Safety 2-hr class (call EH&S to find out when the next class is and to sign up for a class). You must also retrain and be recertified every year on Right-To-Know and Hazardous Waste Management. This can be done by either repeating the 2-hr class, or going online to the EH&S OWL Training site. Ask your advisor or Phyllis Berman for more information.

EH&S personnel periodically inspect all labs unannounced to ensure that proper procedures are in use. They also are responsible for removing accumulated hazardous waste when requested. Proper Hazardous Waste Management regulations are presented in the EH&S training sessions. Correct laboratory practices and disposal of waste materials are of utmost importance for any graduate student who uses chemicals during his/her graduate program.

Any student who will be using radioactive materials must first receive special training from EH&S. They may be provided with a badge from EH&S that must be worn whenever these materials are in use. Other specialized training is available at EH&S as well.

## Graduate Seminars

While you are encouraged to attend seminars in other departments, the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences requires all candidates for graduate degrees to complete four different seminar courses. M.S. candidates must complete PLNTSOIL 691A, 791,792 (twice), and 793; Ph.D. candidates must complete PLNTSOIL 691A, 791, 892 (twice), and 893. Specific courses are listed below.

### PLNTSOIL 691A Research Proposal Seminar:

Early in their graduate degree work, M.S. students must complete a thesis proposal and Ph.D. students must complete a dissertation prospectus. To aid in the process of developing these proposals, students must enroll in the Research Proposal Seminar. Each student will present their proposal to the other enrolled students and a member of the faculty in charge of the course.

### PLNTSOIL 791 Seminar Preparation and Presentation:

This seminar is taught by a member of the Graduate Faculty and teaches the techniques involved in preparing and presenting a professional scientific seminar. Students should consider enrolling in this seminar early in their graduate program. Ph.D. candidates who have completed this course during their M.S. program need not repeat it.

### PLNTSOIL 792 (892) Departmental Seminar:

This seminar is offered each semester and consists of presentations by faculty, visiting scholars, and graduate students completing their research. M.S. and Ph.D. candidates must formally enroll in this seminar at least once.

### PLNTSOIL 793 (893) Student Presentation Seminar:

All graduate students are required to present a Departmental Seminar on the results of their research or project (non-thesis M.S. program). If you anticipate completing your program during the summer, you should present your seminar during the preceding Spring Semester unless you plan to officially enroll at the University in the Fall Semester. You should enroll in this seminar in the semester

closest to the completion of your work. During the first week of the semester, you should meet with the Chair of the Departmental Seminar Committee to schedule your presentation.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### About Funding:

*Q: How many hours must I work per week on my assistantship and on my thesis or dissertation research?*

A: Most students receive an assistantship from the Department. The number of hours of work required by this assistantship will be defined by the Department Head in your contract. Teaching Assistants will be required by individual faculty to complete specific tasks associated with one or more courses. The average number of hours required to complete these tasks per week should not exceed the number given by the Department Head. Research Assistants will be required by their major advisor to complete specific research activities. These may or may not be related to the student's own research projects. The number of hours required per week to complete work outside of the student's research project should not exceed the number given by the Department Head. Beyond the time devoted to an assistantship, students are expected to spend a significant number of hours per week on their own projects.

*Q: How many hours can a student work a week?*

A: Without written approval from the G.P.D., a graduate student may not work more than 40 hours per week. The Graduate School counts all assistantship hours, all extra compensation hours, and any credit hours (1 credit = 1 hour worked; thesis and dissertation credits are not counted). In no case may a student's assistantship and extra compensation hours exceed 40 hours.

*Q: How many credits does a student have to be registered for to hold an assistantship?*

A: If you are on a research assistantship, you may receive that assistantship while only paying the program fee (i.e., registered for no courses or thesis/dissertation credit but maintaining active status); however, teaching assistants must take a minimum of 6 credits in the semester in which they are funded.

*Q: What does a tuition waiver cover in the summer?*

A: A summer tuition waiver only covers thesis and dissertation credits. It does not cover Continuing Education course fees.

### About Grades:

*Q: How long can a grade remain "INC" before reverting to "IF" (Incomplete/Failure)?*

A: One year from registration for the course, e.g., a course taken Fall 2005 converts to "IF" on Registration Day in September 2006.

*Q: How do I change an "IF" to a grade or change a grade?*

A: A Change of Grade Card should be completed, especially the "Reason for Change" section, and signed by the instructor and the Department Head. This is not an automatic change. Such changes require justification and will be reviewed by the Graduate School prior to recording the change of grade.

*Q: What grades can graduate students receive?*

A: The grading policy follows the level of the student, NOT the level of the course; therefore, graduate students cannot receive C-, D+, D, or D- grades.

## About Registration:

*Q: What is Late Registration?*

A: Late Registration begins on the first day of classes and continues until the fifth class day without penalty. After that deadline, students who have failed to register or pay the Program Fee must be readmitted to Graduate School before they will be allowed to enroll.

*Q: Who pays a Program Fee?*

A: Students who will not be enrolling for classes or thesis/dissertation credits in a particular semester must pay the Program Fee. The fee is due by the fifth class day of the semester or the student will be disenrolled. Enrollment in a course at another university does not substitute for enrollment in a UMass course.

*Q: Will Incomplete (INC, IP) grades keep a student enrolled?*

A: No, an incomplete grade from a previous semester does NOT comprise or maintain enrollment. Students who are working only on incompletes should pay the Program Fee.

*Q: How many credits may a student take per semester?*

A: The maximum credit load is 15 (9 in summer). An overload of up to 18 credits will be approved if the G.P.D. endorses it. Over 18 credits per semester requires a memorandum of justification and must be approved by the Graduate School.

*Q: How do graduate students register for summer courses?*

A: The Division of Continuing Education (DCE) handles the registration and grade collection procedures for all divisions of the University during the summer. Courses taken are recorded on the student's permanent record in the department where he/she is enrolled, e.g., a graduate student would register through DCE but his/her grades would appear on the Graduate School and Plant and Soil Sciences record.

*Q: What is the deadline for changing from credit to audit status in a course?*

A: The last day to make this change is the last day of classes in the term, providing the instructor is willing to allow this change and providing the student is passing the course at the time of the change.

*Q: How do students enroll for Five-College courses?*

A: Graduate students enrolled in degree programs are eligible to register for most courses offered at Amherst, Smith, Mount Holyoke, and Hampshire Colleges through the Five Colleges Interchange Program. Special registration forms are available in the Graduate Records Office.

## About Records:

*Q: Can graduate students receive simultaneous degrees?*

A: Students may be enrolled in more than one degree program at a time, although they cannot apply to more than one program in a semester. They must apply to and be accepted by each program. Courses used for one degree may not be used toward any other degree. The Statute of Limitations (SOL) for each degree is calculated separately. The degrees may be received as long as the requirements for each are met.

*Q: How is Statute of Limitations (SOL) determined?*

A: The SOL is determined as part of the acceptance process. The Graduate School determines a

student's SOL when the applicant is recommended for admission. The pertinent criteria for that determination are as follows: (1) for the M.S. Degree, the SOL is 3 years; (2) for the Ph.D. Degree without a prior M.S. in the major field, the SOL is 6 years; and (3) for the Ph.D. Degree with a prior M.S. in the major field, the SOL is 4 years.

*Q: How do I request an extension of a Statute of Limitations?*

A: The G.P.D. can grant one 1-year extension of the SOL for a M.S. candidate, and one 2-year extension for a Ph.D. candidate. Any further extensions can only be granted by the Graduate Registrar following a recommendation from the G.P.D. Before a SOL expires, a student requesting an extension should meet with his/her committee to discuss progress toward the degree and further expectations of the committee. The committee should vote on a request to extend the SOL, and following a positive vote, the committee chair should submit a rationale for the extension, the committee vote, and the requested extension length to the G.P.D., who then can grant an extension or, if necessary, recommend an extension to the Graduate Registrar.

Extensions will be granted only if the student is making satisfactory progress toward the degree or if mitigating circumstances clearly warrant the extension.

*Q: How is a student placed on probation?*

A: A student is placed on probation only when the Department requests such action. A memorandum explaining the reasons for the recommendation is sent by the G.P.D. to the Graduate School along with recommended criteria which the student must meet before the probationary status can be removed. Official notification of the probation will be sent to the student only by the Graduate School.

*Q: How is probation removed?*

A: Probation can be removed by the Graduate School only upon recommendation from the G.P.D.

*Q: What are the procedures for dismissing a student?*

A: Dismissal is appropriate when the student has failed to meet University and/or Departmental criteria for being maintained in the program. A memorandum requesting the dismissal is forwarded by the G.P.D. to the Graduate School. Official notification of this action will be sent by the Graduate School to the student. A student who in any two semesters, consecutive or otherwise, has semester averages below 2.8 is subject to academic dismissal upon recommendation of the G.P.D. to the Graduate School. A student not making satisfactory or reasonable progress toward completion of a degree program within its Statute of Limitations is subject to a recommendation for dismissal.

*Q: Can non-degree credits be used toward a degree program?*

A: A maximum of 6 credits may be applied to the degree program. The G.P.D. must recommend "transfer" of the credits toward the degree program as early as practical in the student's program. More than 6 transfer credits are considered on a case-by-case basis following recommendation by the G.P.D. Transfer credits must have been taken within three years of admission to the Plant and Soil Sciences Program.

*Q: Is there a Pass/Fail option for graduate students?*

A: There is no Pass/Fail option for graduate students (not even for undergraduate level courses). Instead, the instructor and student may make an agreement that the student will receive a SATisfactory instead of a letter grade where this is agreeable. This agreement should be made at the beginning of the term. The Graduate Records Office does not need to be notified of this arrangement during the registration process; instead, the grade is simply recorded as "SAT" at the end of the term.

## About Requirements:

*Q: Which University courses are acceptable for graduating credit?*

A: All courses numbered 500 and above are considered graduate level. Courses in the 400 level are applicable for graduate credit only if they are from other departments.

*Q: The deadline for finishing my degree is either January 15, April 30, or August 31. What if, for example, I plan on finishing for April 30 but am taking a required course that finishes in May. Can I still graduate for the April 30 deadline?*

A: Yes. While the filing date is April 30, it is understood that courses ending shortly after that date will be considered toward your degree.

*Q: Thesis and Dissertation research must be original. Can I publish parts of my research which will later appear in my thesis or dissertation?*

A: Yes, and this is often a desirable action. You can include a published paper as a separate chapter in your Thesis/Dissertation.

## About Committees and Exams:

*Q: How many members do I need on my committee?*

A: For a Non-Thesis M.S. student, your Guidance/Examining Committee normally consists of 3 members, although it can be larger. This Committee is appointed by the G.P.D. and members do not have to be Graduate Faculty, although they are preferred members. For a Thesis M.S. student, the Committee normally consists of 3 members. This Committee is appointed by the Graduate School following recommendation by the G.P.D., and members must be on the Graduate Faculty. For a Ph.D. student, there are two committees appointed. The Guidance/Examining Committee guides a student through the Comprehensive Examinations. It consists of at least 3 members of the Graduate Faculty, and is appointed by the G.P.D. The Dissertation Committee is appointed by the Graduate School after recommendation by the G.P.D., following completion of the Comprehensive Examinations. In this division, it consists of at least 3 members of the Graduate Faculty, at least one of whom is from outside of the department. The Outside Member represents the Graduate School at the Final Defense and is a voting member of the Committee. The Dissertation Committee often includes the same faculty who served on the Guidance/Examining Committee.

*Q: How is the Comprehensive Examination organized?*

A: This department requires both written and oral examinations in at least 3 subject areas. The student and advisor should agree on these subjects as the Examining Committee is being constituted, with a Committee Member for each subject. The written exams are taken first, and the student should have a full day to take each exam. They do not need to be taken on consecutive days but should be taken in a timely manner. The oral exam may expand on the written exams or pursue additional topics at the discretion of the examiners. The oral exam is open to all members of the Graduate Faculty but only the Examining Committee votes on Pass or Fail. For each member of the Examining Committee, satisfaction with performance on either the written exam or the oral exam should constitute a "Pass" vote. A unanimous "Pass" vote is required.

*Q: Can someone from outside the University serve on a student's Committee?*

A: Yes. This is not too uncommon, especially on Ph.D. committees. This person can be a regular member of the Graduate Faculty, but most often is not and must be appointed to it by the Graduate School on a one-time-only basis if he/she possesses the appropriate credentials. The G.P.D. must

arrange for this one-time appointment. This person must agree to help guide the research and to attend Committee meetings and the Final Defense.

*Q: Can there be Co-Chairs of my Committee?*

A: Yes. While the Graduate School discourages this, it is sometimes appropriate, especially when the topic is interdisciplinary. The Co-Chair may be from another department.

*Q: How are Committees appointed?*

A: The student and advisor discuss appropriate composition of the Committee, and if all are willing to serve on it, the advisor sends a memo to the G.P.D. asking that the Committee be appointed and recommending its composition. When the G.P.D. agrees with the composition, he/she sends a memo to the Graduate School recommending its appointment if it is a Thesis or Dissertation Committee. For an Examining Committee, the G.P.D. makes the appointment.

*Q: Can composition of the Committee be changed?*

A: Yes, if there are satisfactory reasons to warrant a change. The advisor may submit a memo to the G.P.D. explaining the need for a change and recommending the persons involved in it. The G.P.D. must convince the Graduate School to make the change if it is a Thesis or Dissertation Committee.

*Q: What is the 4-Month/7-Month Rule of the Graduate School?*

A: A Thesis Proposal must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than 4 months before the Thesis Defense, a Dissertation Prospectus no later than 7 months before.

*Q: Must the Committee vote be unanimous for me to pass my exam?*

A: For a M.S. candidate, one negative vote does not force a failure. The advisor should thoroughly attempt to reconcile the disagreement, but with appropriate explanation by the G.P.D., the Graduate School may accept the less than unanimous result. For a Ph.D. candidate, both the Comprehensive Examinations and the Final Defense must produce unanimous votes for the student to pass the exam. If a Committee Member fails to attend an Examination, this can represent the “negative” vote that is tolerable at the M.S. level, but for a Ph.D. exam, the exam would have to be rescheduled.

*Q: How do I get my examination notice published?*

A: The Graduate School requires that all Dissertation Defenses be announced in advance in The Weekly Bulletin (online), and that the exam occur on campus. To do this, the advisor sends the G.P.D. a memo requesting the exam and providing the information and wording as seen in The Weekly Bulletin. The G.P.D. will request the Office of Degree Requirements to publish the announcement. This should be received by the Office of Degree Requirements three weeks before the defense. If you fail to announce the Dissertation Defense before the exam, the exam is invalid.

*Q: I went to the Graduate School to turn in my Eligibility for Degree Form, and they told me they have no record that I passed my exam. What do I do?*

A: Following your examination, your advisor must send the G.P.D. a memo reporting the exam’s outcome, and the G.P.D. must then inform the Office of Degree Requirements. In the excitement after an exam, advisors frequently forget to initiate this report. Contact the G.P.D. or your advisor and make sure that this report is submitted to the Graduate School.

*Q: What if I fail to meet one of the Procedural Requirements?*

A: Have your advisor contact the G.P.D. to discuss the possibility of a Waiver Request.