M.S./M.Ag. Degree

Student Learning Outcome #1: Graduates will be knowledgeable of scientific advances related to their chosen fields of study, and the impact of these on modern science, industry and society.

Method of Assessment: Students are evaluated on content, organization and delivery of academic-credit and exit seminars (evaluation instrument attached). Students prepare a 1-page abstract of their seminar that is distributed to faculty, staff and graduate students several days in advance of the seminar. Evaluation instruments are distributed to and completed by members of the graduate faculty at the seminar. On average, approximately half of the department’s 15 graduate faculty members are available to attend any given seminar and complete evaluation instruments.

Findings: Three M.Ag. and eight M.S. students presented exit seminars (no academic credit), and five M.Ag. and nine M.S. students presented academic-credit seminars (ANSC 7950) for which a total of 199 evaluation instruments (range: 4 to 12 per seminar) were completed by departmental graduate faculty members in the current reporting period. Non-weighted, per capita mean scores of 4.2 and 4.3 (5 = highest, 1 = lowest) were recorded in graduate-faculty evaluations of seminar content/organization and presentation techniques, respectively, which may be compared with mean scores of 4.5 and 4.6, respectively from the previous (2012-2013) reporting period.

How findings were used for improvement: Two M.Ag. students were required to repeat their academic seminars before receiving a final grade of S in ANSC 7950. Evaluation scores in 2013-2014 were slightly lower than in 2012-2013. At its 2-day retreat in August 2014, faculty discussed how graduate student performance in academic and exit seminars might be improved. Beginning in 2014-2015, we instituted a new practice in which faculty are excused following the seminar question/answer and general discussion period, and the seminar speaker, his/her major professor(s), all graduate students and the ANSC 7950 instructor of record immediately discuss the presentation and identify areas needing improvement. Faculty evaluation instruments are returned to the graduate student’s major professor, after which it is incumbent upon the major professor to discuss each of the critical elements in the seminar evaluation instruments with the student. An appropriate improvement strategy is prescribed for each student on the basis of specific deficiencies that are identified in evaluation process.

Student Learning Outcome #2: Students will demonstrate independent technical ability at the completion of their programs as evidenced by completion of original research (M.S.) or creation of an original scholarly product (M.Ag.).

Method of Assessment: Students will be evaluated at their thesis defense (M.S.)/final comprehensive examination (M.Ag.) on five critical elements described in the attached
evaluation instruments. Evaluation instruments are distributed to and completed by the members (typically three) of the student’s advisory committee.

Findings: Three M.Ag. and nine M.S. students completed their programs and were evaluated by their advisory committees for independent technical ability. Twenty-six evaluation instruments (range: 1 to 3 per defense/final comprehensive examination) were completed in which students were rated on each of five critical elements:
(i) Conversational knowledge of the significance of the research or creative/scholarly product, including scientific merit and originality was rated as excellent by 65%, good by 31% and fair by 4% of faculty respondents.
(ii) Ability to communicate the relevancy and impact of the research or creative/scholarly product to the discipline and society was rated as excellent by 55%, good by 41% and fair by 4% of faculty respondents.
(iii) Technical skill, including experimental design, laboratory/field methodology and data analysis was rated as excellent by 67%, good by 27% and fair by 4% of faculty respondents.
(iv) Grammar, clarity and style of organization of the thesis or creative/scholarly product were rated as excellent by 31%, good by 50% and fair by 19% of faculty respondents.
(v) General scholarship was rated as excellent by 62%, good by 34% and fair by 4% of faculty respondents.

How findings were used for improvement: Overall, evaluation ratings in 2013-2014 were largely unchanged from 2012-2013, the notable exception being ratings of written communication, (critical element iv) which were decreased slightly. Assessment data are placed into students’ permanent file, discussed with the student in exit interviews with the department head, and utilized as a professional development resource in annual workload planning conferences and performance evaluations of graduate faculty.

Program Outcome #1: Graduates will present findings from their original thesis research and/or creative/scholarly activity at professional meetings, and publish same in refereed journals.

First Method of Assessment: Annual surveys of programs completed in the immediately preceding reporting period will be conducted to track citations of abstracts of papers/posters presented at local, regional, national, and/or international scientific meetings; and citations of published papers, or pre-publication status of manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals. Data are provided to the Graduate Program Officer by members of the department’s graduate faculty who supervised programs to completion the previous year.

Findings: Four M.Ag. students completed their programs in the previous (2012-2013) reporting period. One of these has an abstract of a paper/poster presented at a professional meeting. Three M.S. students completed their programs in the previous (2012-2013) reporting period. One has one, one has three, and one has four published abstracts of presentations at professional society meetings; and one has one, and two each have two refereed journal articles to their credit.

How findings were used for improvement: No changes are necessary to make at this time. Perhaps more so at this time than at any other time in the past, our department has aggressively
encouraged and created more opportunities for professional development of our graduate students such as presentation of research results at scientific meetings. Graduate student participation in such meetings is at an all-time high, and rates of thesis-research publication in the refereed literature are increasing.

Program Outcome #2: Graduates will be nationally competitive for advanced certification, accreditation and/or placement in industry government or academia as appropriate to their degree and chosen field.

First Method of Assessment: Annual surveys will be conducted to track success of the previous year’s graduates in seeking advanced professional certification, admission to terminal-degree and professional programs, or employment in the private sector, government or academia as appropriate to their degree and chosen field. Data are provided to the Graduate Program Officer by members of the department’s graduate faculty who supervised programs to completion the previous year.

Findings: Four M.Ag. students completed their programs in the previous (2012-2013) reporting period. One is currently enrolled in the professional D.V.M. program in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Auburn University, one is co-owner/operator of Tennessee River Music, a registered Hereford and Angus cattle operation in Ft. Payne, AL, and the whereabouts of two are unknown. Three M.S. students completed their programs in the previous (2012-2013) reporting period. One is a Regional Extension Agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, another is co-owner/operator of Tennessee River Music, a registered Hereford and Angus cattle operation in Ft. Payne, AL, and another is manager of Murphy-Brown LLC, the pork production subsidiary of Smithfield Foods, Inc. in Warsaw, NC.

How findings were used for improvement: At its retreat in August 2014, the faculty discussed possible strategies for creating more opportunities for post-graduation professional development, but none have been finalized and implemented.
GRADUATE STUDENT SEMINAR EVALUATION FORM  
(Graduate Faculty Use Only)

Graduate Student_____________________________________________Date_______________
Ph.D. M.S. M.Ag. Title_____________________________________________________

Please rank all items 5 - 1; 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Score 5 - 1 ; or N/A</th>
<th>Comments and Suggestions for Improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Content and Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Introduction/Justification/Statement of problem</td>
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<td>2. Objectives stated clearly</td>
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<td>3. Organization/Followed in logical order</td>
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<td>4. Explanation of experimental procedures and statistical analyses (as appropriate)</td>
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<td>5. Results: Presented in appropriate detail followed by interpretations based on data presented</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Conclusions/Summary</td>
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</table>
7. Overall implications of presented research and future applications in research and/or animal production

8. Academic Rigor

### B. Presentation Techniques

1. Speaking Technique (Relaxed, eye contact, etc.)

2. Vocabulary-Pronunciation/ Grammar/Enunciation/Word choice and phraseology

3. Appropriate and well designed slides

4. Response to questions

5. Operated within time limit (30 min)
M.Ag. STUDENT EVALUATION FORM
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

Name of Student:                                                                 Date:

Description of Project Completed under ANSC 7960 (Special Problem):

Please evaluate the student with respect to the following critical elements by checking the appropriate response and providing additional comments:

I. Conversational knowledge of scientific and technical dimensions of the project:
   ___ Excellent        ___ Good        ___ Fair        ___ Poor
   Additional comments:

II. Ability to communicate the relevancy and impact(s) of the project to the student’s field of study and to society
   ___ Excellent        ___ Good        ___ Fair        ___ Poor
   Additional comments:

III. Technical skill in use and application of methodology in completion of the project:
   ___ Excellent        ___ Good        ___ Fair        ___ Poor
   Additional comments:

IV. Written and oral communication skills appropriate to the student’s field of study:
V. General scholarship:

___ Excellent     ___ Good     ___ Fair     ___ Poor
Additional comments:
M.S. STUDENT EVALUATION FORM
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SCIENCES

Name of Student: 

Date: 

Title of Thesis: 

Please evaluate the student with respect to the following critical elements by checking the appropriate response and providing additional comments:

I. Conversational knowledge of the significance of the research problem, including scientific merit and originality of hypothesis(es) tested:
   ___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor
   Additional comments: 

II. Ability to communicate the relevancy and impact(s) of the thesis research to the discipline and society
   ___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor
   Additional comments: 

III. Technical skill in use and application of methodology, including experimental design and laboratory and data analysis:
    ___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor
    Additional comments: 

IV. Grammar, clarity and style of organization of the thesis:

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

Additional comments:

V. General scholarship:

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

Additional comments: