This handbook contains information from the ISU Graduate College Handbook as it pertains to MS Agronomy students.
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Contact Information

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ISU Solution Center: (515.294.4000, solution@iastate.edu); NetID, CyMail, AccessPlus

ISU Accounts Receivable: (515.594.7388, ubill@iastate.edu) ; UBil

ISU Financial Aid: (515.294.2223, financialaid@iastate.edu); Scholarships, FAFSA

ISU Graduate College: (515-294.4531, grad_college@iastate.edu)

ISU Admissions: (515-294-5836; 800-262-3810, Grad_admissions@iastate.edu)
**Student Handbook: Student Accounts**

**University ID Number (UID) & ISU Card**

You are assigned a 9-digit student ID number as soon as you are admitted. Your ID number is incorporated into your ISU Card number (below), which has 17 digits.

Where can you find your ID number? In AccessPlus (see page 3).
- After you log in, click the A+ tab.
- On the left menu click ISU ID’s.
- Your NetID, University ID and ISUCard number are located there.

What is on an ISU Card?
1. The first group of 6 is the University code. It is the same for everyone.
2. **The second group of 9 is your University ID number (UID).** This is unique to you. All of your student records are linked to this 9-digit number, including transcripts, class registration, class schedule and UBil.
3. The last two numbers are a security code.

The ISU Card number and UID are used for:
1. **AccessPlus:** Using your UID is one of the login methods.
   - You can also log into A+ from the OKTA dashboard, using your NetID (see page 2).
2. **ISU library:** you will need the last 11 digits of your ISU card number (UID and security code).
3. If you need to resolve issues with on-campus offices (Graduate College, Accounts Receivable, Registrar), the first thing they will ask for is your UID.

Can you get a card as a distance student? Yes! In one of two ways:
1. On campus: The ISU Card Office is located in 0530 Beardshear Hall. You need to fill out an ISUCard application, and get your picture taken. They require a photo ID.
2. Off Campus: You can also request a card by email (this will not have a picture).
   - Email distance@iastate.edu, and
   - Include your name, full mailing address, UID and the department and course number of the course(s) which you are currently registered for (for verification purposes).
   - You get your card in the mail after 7-10 days.
**Student Handbook: Student Accounts**

**Network ID (NetID)**
Your NetID (and password) is used for logging in to all protected networks at ISU: NetID Registration Link
You will need it to gain access to the OKTA Application Dashboard (see below).

Your NetID becomes the first half of your Cymail (ISU email) account address. It will be NetID@iastate.edu.

**OKTA Application dashboard**
1. OKTA is a single sign-in application, which means that once you log into OKTA, you will have access to all ISU systems.
2. In the dashboard, you can add URL’s for the systems you will use – some suggestions:
   - Canvas - Learning Management System
   - MS Agronomy Website
   - Agronomy department Virtual Laboratory (AGRON 513 uses this)
3. Adding URL’s to the OKTA dashboard:
   - On the upper right side, click the +Apps button (it’s blue)
   - You can search for an app managed by ISU in the search bar or by scrolling. Click the Add button and it will be added to your dashboard.
   - In the search bar, if a URL is not matched, a note will appear that says “No Apps Found”. Click the button that says “Add a Bookmark instead”. Enter the URL in the field provided.
4. At some point you will be required to set up multifactor authentication. Instructions will be provided when it becomes MFA becomes mandatory.

**ISU Email: CyMail**
*Once you are admitted and have your NetID, all communication from ISU offices will go ONLY to your CyMail.* These offices include Admissions, Accounts Receivable, Financial Aid, Graduate College, Registrar’s office, etc.

Communication from the MS Agronomy office is a bit different. The MS Agronomy database system contains personal and/or work email addresses – those you used when you submitted your preapplication. When you get admitted, we add your CyMail address your contact information, and keep both. Any messages sent from the MS Agronomy office will be sent to all email addresses for you listed in our database.

**It is extremely important that you either use or check your CyMail account regularly.** If you prefer, you can forward your CyMail to another email account that you use on a regular basis. Here are directions:
1. Account Services on the Web Login
2. Log in with NetID and password, and you will find a menu of functions for Account Services on the Web
3. Go to Manage Net-ID, and another menu list appears
4. Go to View/Edit your email delivery
   a. Click button Delivered to Email Address and enter your preferred email here
5. Click Update Now
6. Then Logout
**Student Handbook: Student Accounts**

**AccessPlus (A+)**
This system contains all of your personal & private student information. The easiest way to log into AccessPlus is with the OKTA Dashboard (see page 2).

On the left menu, items most relevant to MS Agronomy students include:

1. **Account/UBill:** ISU does not send paper bills for tuition. Students must manage payments from this menu.
2. **Address Change:** Make sure your contact information is up-to-date. Note! The MS in Agronomy Office database is not linked to AccessPlus. If you need to update contact information, you will need to let the MS Agronomy office know AND update A+.
3. **Class Registration:** You can search for courses and follow the prompts to get registered from this menu.
   - Help Video
   - Be sure you know in advance what courses you want to register for (see page 9).
4. **Class Schedule:** This is the only official record of your registration.
   - Do not look for your registration by checking your UBill or Canvas.
5. **Current Student Info:** Shows contact information, Major Professor and Major.
   - When a registration period is active, you will find an assigned date and time to access the system.
6. **Enrollment Certification:** This provides a link to a clearinghouse that will provide an Enrollment Verification Certificate. Students use this mainly for proof of enrollment to their employers or for funding support.
7. **Financial Aid:** This will contain your financial aid award information, if relevant.
8. **Grad Student Status:** VERY IMPORTANT! This is a snapshot of your graduate progress as tracked by the Grad College. Items highlighted in Green mean you are on track with Grad College policies and no action needs to be taken. Items highlighted in Orange are those that need attention at some point. Below is an explanation of different sections:
   - Required to Apply for Graduation (upper left block)
     - Status: Active or Inactive (see page 7)
     - Admission type: Full or Inactive
     - GPA: will stay green if 3.0 or above (see page 21)
     - Met English Requirement: this is determined at the time of Admission (see page 5)
     - POSC Approved: (see page 14)
     - Graduation Application submitted: Shows the semester a student has applied for graduation.
   - Alerts (upper right block)
     - Will list either Grad College (GPA) or Accounts Receivable (UBill) holds (see page 21)
   - Department, Major and Minor Information (middle right block)
     - Major: Agronomy
     - Department: Agronomy
     - Degree Currently Sought: Master of Science
     - Thesis: Not required
     - Credits Earned in Graduate Status: your cumulative credits completed so far
     - First Registered: the semester you registered for your first class
**Student Handbook: Student Accounts**

**AccessPlus, continued...**

- Last Term Registered: the semester most recently registered (whether or not a class was completed)
- Graduation Application: Semester/year
- Final Oral Exam: Semester/year

- Required to take Final Exam (middle left block)
  - GPA of at least 3.0 – you cannot graduate with a GPA below 3.0
  - Currently Registered: yes/no
  - Incompletes, NonReports & F’s on transcript: yes/no
  - C or above on POSC: Yes/no – go to POSC
  - Completed or Enrolled in POSC courses: Yes/No – go to POSC
  - No Overage Courses on POSC: OK/no
  - POSC approved: will list month/year
  - Final Oral Exam Scheduled: scheduled month/year or passed month/year

- POSC: Program of Study Committee (bottom right block)
  - My POSC form: this is the official list of your committee members and program courses (see page 14)
  - My Program Audit: Each course in your POSC is given a status and highlighted according to how you have completed courses according to your POSC.

- Committee Members
  - Your major professor and committee members are listed here after your POSC has been completed and approved.

9. **Grades/Transcripts:**
   - Grade report from your most recent term
   - Full unofficial transcripts
   - Order official transcripts

10. **Graduation:** When ready to defend, this is the link to apply for graduation. [Grad College Graduation Deadlines](#)

11. **Tax Info (1098):** Some students submit their tuition for tax purposes. The 1098-T (Tuition) statement is located here.
MS Agronomy Program students are ISU graduate students, and must abide by ISU policies. Students may have contact with these offices at some point during their time in the program. **NOTE: Dawn Miller can handle all correspondence with Admissions, the Registrar and the Graduate College on your behalf. If you have questions, please contact her and she can assist you.**

**Office of Admissions**  
100 Enrollment Services Center  
Phone: 515-294-5836; 800-262-3810  
Fax: 515.294.2592  
Grad_admissions@iastate.edu

**Program Contact:** Dawn Miller, Academic Advisor, 515-294-2999; msagron@iastate.edu

During the Admissions process, the selection committee determined that you could be admitted on Full status. You must remain on this status in order to register for classes or graduate (see page 21).

**ISU English Requirements**  
There are several English placement requirements for students whose native language is not English. These requirements start with Admissions. The ISU Graduate Admission Application instructions state: **For the purpose of applying to Iowa State, English may be considered your primary language if you have been raised in an environment where English is the only official language of your locality and nation, and English is the language used in your home.**

For students who’s primary language is not English, in order to fulfil Admissions and Grad College policy, each requirement must be completed in the progression listed below:

1. **English examinations:** These tests measure a student’s understanding of the English language. The Admissions and the Graduate College requires a **minimum** score of one the following to qualify for Admission (within 2 years of application), based on International Grad Student Application:  
   - Internet Based TOEFL (iBT) = 79  
   - Paper-Based TOEFL (PBT) = 550  
   - IELTS = 6.5  
   - Pearson Test of English = 53

2. **English Placement Test (EPT)** is required for students who meet the minimum score for admission, but fall short of the high score necessary to fulfill the English requirement. The EPT is a test of a student’s ability to communicate (write & speak) using the English language.

   EPT Exemptions: Students who meet or exceed the following TOEFL or IELTS cores will fulfil ISU English placement requirements and are exempt from taking the EPT:  
   - Internet-based TOEFL (iBT) = 100 (and above)  
   - Paper-based TOEFL (PBT) = 600 (and above)  
   - IELTS = 7.5 (and above)  
   - Pearson Test of English = 72 (and above)
**Student Handbook: ISU Offices**

If EPT is required: The Graduate College requires students to take the EPT at the beginning of their first semester of enrollment (Grad College Handbook, Section 4.4.3).
- If the EPT is not taken before the end of the first semester, the Grad College will place a registration hold on a student’s account.

Distance students can take the EPT online. Instructions from FAQ page #18:
- Email ept@iastate.edu with your name, 9-digit ISU number, NetID (email address), and the time and date that you wish to take the test.
- You will receive an email from the EPT office confirming your request to take the online EPT exam. Further instructions will be provided about taking the test and receiving your results online.
- The EPT is scored by staff in the English department, and is pass/fail.

**EPT Results:** Results are found in AccessPlus 2-5 days after exam has been completed.
- On the left menu, click “Current Student Information”
- There will be English courses listed, and scores below to indicate action:
  - **W** = course is waived, all English requirements are fulfilled
  - **Y** = You must register for the course to continue English requirements (ENGL 101D)
  - **I** = you must complete another part of the test

**ENGLISH 101D:** This class must be completed the next available semester it is offered. There are online sections of this course. A grade of D or above is acceptable to fulfill the ISU English placement requirement.

**Graduate College (GC)**
1137 Pearson Hall
Email: grad_college@iastate.edu
Phone: 515-294-4531

Program Contact: Dawn Miller, Academic Advisor, 515-294-2999; msagron@iastate.edu

MS Agronomy students must abide by GC policy during the program.

The main expectation is that students will maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 (B). The most common issues handled by the GC are as follows:

1. **GPA holds:** If a student’s GPA falls below 3.0, the GC will put a hold on registration (See page 20)
2. **Graduation Holds:** If a student’s GPA is below 3.0 at the end of the program, then the GC will not allow that student to graduate. Courses must be retaken to improve GPA.
3. **POSC Approval:** The online POSC form is used to formally identify a major professor and form the graduate committee. It is also the program of study - a list of all courses and projected timeline in which classes will be completed. The POSC system is managed by the GC.
4. **Reinstatement to Active Status:** If a student has not taken courses for 2 years or more (4 consecutive semesters, not including summer), the GC flags this student as inactive. In order to resume coursework, a Reinstatement to Active Status form must be completed.
Graduate College, continued

5. **Application for Graduation**: Submitted before the beginning of the semester a student intends to defend and graduate. In AccessPlus, on the left menu is the Graduation link.

6. **Request for Final Oral Examination form**: Submitted as soon as student and committee set a defense date, it must be a minimum of 3 weeks in advance of the chosen date. Submitted by Dawn Miller.


8. **Graduate Student Approval form**: Submitted after final defense when final copy of CC has been sent in to the MS Agronomy office. Prepped and submitted by Dawn Miller

**Online and Distance Learning**

10 Enrollment Services Center
Email: distance@iastate.edu
Phone: 515-294-2331

**Tuition and fees**: Costs are a combination of tuition, technology fees, and department of Agronomy course delivery fee. These fees are subject to change. Use the Tuition and Fees page to get the most accurate information.

1. ISU Distance Graduate Tuition [Experiential Learning Based Majors](#) (resident tuition, regardless of location)
   - $605/credit (as of Fall 2019)

2. ISU technology fee (depends on number of credits/semester)
   - 4 credits or less = $61.00
   - 4.5 – 8 credits = $91.50

3. Agronomy Department delivery fee (the department cost of providing distance courses)
   - 3 credit class = $250 (you will not find this in the Tuition and Fees page, as it is course-specific. The delivery fee will be posted in the schedule of classes.)

Sample of fee breakdown: You decide to take one 3-credit course in any given semester. The UBill would be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$1815.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Fee</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech Fee</td>
<td>$61.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2126.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fees do not include textbooks or any travel or lodging expenses for the practicum.

**Financial Aid**

0210 Beardshear Hall
Email addresses: financialaid@iastate.edu; loaneducation@iastate.edu
Phone numbers: Main office 515-294-2223; Student Loan Ed Office 515-294-0677

The MS in Agronomy office does not offer whole-program scholarships. Students should use the services of the Financial Aid office to search for tuition assistance. [Financial Aid Office Scholarship List](#)
Financial Aid, continued
NOTE: In order to receive financial aid, students must be enrolled for 5 or more graduate credits per semester. This means 2 program courses/semester (6 credits).

Other Scholarship Opportunities: See the Scholarship Guide on the MS Agronomy Website

Accounts Receivable (AR)
0880 Beardshear Hall
Email: ubill@iastate.edu
Phone: 515-294-7388

The MS Agronomy office cannot access or process your financial information. Please contact the AR office for the following matters:

1. Accounts Receivable registration hold: this means that your UBill has not been paid and you will not be able to register for classes.
2. Graduation hold: your official transcripts or diploma not be available until the graduation fee and/or any leftover tuition has been paid.
3. Payment Options
4. Employer Reimbursement Deferment Plan: fee payment will be deferred until 30 days after grades are posted. The benefit certification form must be submitted at the start of summer semester. It costs $35/semester and must be renewed annually.
5. Itemized tuition billing statement: Some employers require a student to provide an itemized billing statement, which the AR office provides upon request.
Course Progression
All of the MS in Agronomy courses are required for graduation. It’s not a matter of what courses to take, but when to take them. Dawn serves as an advisor to all students regarding course progression. The following list contains program courses, their prerequisites and availability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Prerequisite</th>
<th>Semester offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>501</td>
<td>Crop Growth and Development</td>
<td>Program admission</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>502</td>
<td>Chemistry, Physics and Biology of Soils</td>
<td>Program admission</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>503</td>
<td>Climate and Crop Growth</td>
<td>Program admission</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>511</td>
<td>Crop Improvement</td>
<td>Agron 501</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>512</td>
<td>Soil-Plant Environment</td>
<td>Agron 502, Recommended: 501</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>513</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods for Agronomy</td>
<td>Program admission</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>514</td>
<td>Integrated Pest Management</td>
<td>Agron 501</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>531</td>
<td>Crop Management and Ecology</td>
<td>Agron 501, 502, 503; Recommended: 512, 514</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>532</td>
<td>Soil Management</td>
<td>Agron 501, 503, 512; Recommended: 513</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>533</td>
<td>Crop Protection</td>
<td>Agron 514</td>
<td>Summer &amp; Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(may change 2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>591</td>
<td>Agronomic Systems Analysis</td>
<td>Agron 511, 513, 531, 532, 533</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>592</td>
<td>Current Issues in Agronomy</td>
<td>Agron 501, 503, 511, 512, 513, 514</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>594</td>
<td>Practicum in Agronomy</td>
<td>Agron 501, 502, 503; Recommended: 511, 512, 513</td>
<td>Summer; 1 week on-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>campus in mid-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599M</td>
<td>Creative Component Seminar</td>
<td>Must have workable idea, preferably 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} semester</td>
<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599M</td>
<td>Creative Component, Defense of CC</td>
<td>Defense date set</td>
<td>Fall, Spring, Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buying Textbooks
The MS Agronomy Office will include textbook information in registration announcements. Text information is also listed on the websites where class registration information is posted. You can purchase textbooks from a retailer of your choosing, but we recommend the following places: University Bookstore, Amazon.com, Half.com, and BN.com.

The University Bookstore has a comparison tool when you look up your class using the UBS site. UBS books are usually only available a month before courses start, so it may be easier to get them from another source.
**Student Handbook: Course Lists and Registration**

**Semester Course Offerings**
REMEMBER – all MS in Agronomy courses posted for registration are section “XW” (off-campus). For example, if you’d like Agronomy 501, you would look for **AGRON 501 Section XW**.

**Course Searches – checking availability**
1. **College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Online Learning**
   a. From the menu bar, click **Courses**. There are drop down boxes with your options.
      • Semester – Spring, Summer, Fall
      • Department – choose Agronomy – this will show all Agronomy courses
      • Program – choose Agronomy MS – this will show only MS Agronomy courses

2. Registrar’s Office **Schedule of Classes**
   a. Be sure the semester you want is in the Term field.
   b. In the Subject field, in the drop down list click Agronomy.
   c. Course number field: You can enter a specific course number
   d. Select a Level field: you can select 500 Level
   e. Click Search. You will find course details listed here, with a link to the University Bookstore.

**Registering for a Class**
You can always find out when the registration period starts by looking at the **Academic Calendar**, Details link.
General rules of thumb:
   • Registration for spring semester starts approximately October 20th
   • Registration for summer and fall starts approximately March 20th

Dawn Miller will send out registration announcements before the registration period begins. Be sure to register as soon as the registration period begins.
1. Register yourself through **AccessPlus**. On the left menu click **Class Registration** and follow the prompts. **Help video**
2. Newer students may be asked to enter a Registration Access Number (RAN) or given a specific time/date in which they can access the system (this is found in the Student Info in Access Plus). To bypass these requirements, please contact the MS in Agronomy office at: **msagron@iastate.edu** or 515-294-2999. Dawn can send a registration request on your behalf, and let you know when you are registered.
**Student Handbook: Course Lists and Registration**

**Drop schedule/Critical Dates for Fees**
The student scheduling office will send out critical drop dates to registered students before each semester begins. Keep this information if you get into a situation in which you must drop a class.

If you must drop a class once the semester has started, **IMMEDIATELY** do so in one of the following ways:

- AccessPlus (can only be used until the end of the first week of class)
- Contact the MS Agronomy office by phone 515-294-2999 or email msagron@iastate.edu
- Be sure to include your full name, course & section

**INFORMING YOUR INSTRUCTOR OF YOUR WISH TO DROP A COURSE IS NOT SUFFICIENT; DROPS MUST BE PROCESSED THROUGH THE REGISTRAR’S OFFICE.**

Failure to actively participate in a course (submitting assignments, reflections and discussions) or failure to pay tuition does not constitute a drop.

**Drop fee assessment/reimbursement schedule:**
Your UBill is posted in AccessPlus the beginning of the month the semester starts. The ISU [Academic calendar](#) shows fee postings, billing dates, drop dates, etc. Click on the **Details** link to get a full list.

1. **Fee payment due dates for deferred billing.** Students can either pay in full or in installments.
   a. First Payment: 20th of the 1st month of semester (January, May or August)
   b. Second Payment: 20th of the 2nd month of class (February, June or September)
   c. Third/Final Payment: 20th of the 3rd month of class (March, July or October)

2. **Dropping one course of multiple (reduction in credits):** this applies if you drop a class, but still remain in at least one other class.
   a. If you drop before the 10th day of the term, you will be refunded 100% of your tuition and fees, including the Agronomy delivery fee.
   b. After the 10th day of the term, you will forfeit any reimbursement and ISU will retain 100% of your payment for the dropped class. This includes the Agronomy delivery fee.

3. **Dropping all or your only class:** This is considered a withdrawal from the semester. **You are responsible for tuition even if you drop the first day of class.** In general (specific dates are determined each semester), tuition and fee reimbursement is as follows, according to the [Tuition Adjustment webpage](#):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drop Date</th>
<th>You are reimbursed</th>
<th>You are responsible for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During week 1</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During week 2</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During week 3</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During week 4</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After week 4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Preparing for Online Coursework:
Technology Requirements

Learning Management System
All course materials are hosted in the Learning Management System, CANVAS. Course access will be granted to students shortly before the start of the term. Students are notified when course materials are ready. Canvas is found on the OKTA dashboard (see page 2).

Canvas is used in the following way:
1. All course content is hosted in Canvas, and lessons are organized by modules.
2. Students submit assignments, reflections and participate in discussions in Canvas.
3. Instructors grade student work and enter scores in the grade center.
4. The grade center lists grades for individual student submissions and calculated fields tally a total score.
5. Students find their scores for their work in Grades.
Student Handbook: Program Progression

Advisor vs Major Professor
Dawn Miller is academic advisor to all students as they progress through the program. She is the main contact person for questions related to course availability, developing course plans, registration, interpretation of Grad College rules, defense planning, graduation requirements, etc. Any and all questions should start with Dawn.

Dawn sends a progress check by email once per year in January/February. She will assess your progress based on the following criteria:

- Number of credits completed, as compared to total
- Courses completed, in relation to course prerequisites
- Cumulative GPA
- Agronomy 594 requirement
- Admission & Graduate Status
- POSC submission/or changes
- Creative Component progress
- Grad College 7-year rule compliance

A student’s major professor provides guidance strictly on the creative component. The sooner the major professor is involved in the creative component process the better.

Agronomy 594
Students are encouraged to attend Agronomy 594 (Practicum in Agronomy) when they have completed 6 classes (18 credits), as this is the halfway point in the program. The following courses are prerequisites: Agronomy 501, 502 and 503. It’s recommended, but not required to also have taken Agronomy 511, 512 and 513.

Agronomy 594 is a one-time on-campus requirement, held in mid-July (Tues-Fri). Students register for this course just like all other courses, via AccessPlus or the MS Agronomy office.

It is not recommended to wait until other courses are finished before attending 594, if at all possible. The practicum experience is important to reinforce coursework completed in the beginning of the program, and gives a second wind to complete the rest of the program.

NOTE: The program student population is so large that priority to register for 594 will be given to those students who are furthest along in the program (completed the most credits) or tracking in the program faster than others (2 courses per semester). Dawn takes a look at program progress and will determine a priority list. Students will be contacted directly.

Program of Study Committee (POSC) Form
The POSC can be broken down into two parts:

Graduate Committee: A major professor is a faculty member who specializes in or has an interest in your topic and has the time to work with you. Committee requirements of for MS students who work on creative components differ:
**Student Handbook: Program Progression**

**POSC, continued**
- The Grad College requires one committee member, the major professor.
- The Agronomy Department requires a committee of two members, the major professor and one faculty committee member. If your major professor is outside the department, an Agronomy faculty member is co-Major Professor with that person.
- Dr. Allen Knapp, as program director, will serve as your second committee member in either the co-major professor or committee member capacity.
- You are welcome to choose a work supervisor as an unofficial (non-voting) 3rd committee member if your creative component is work related.

**Program of Study:** This is the second part of the POSC. It is a list of your courses in the order that you plan to take them.

Submitting the POSC is completed when the graduate committee is formed. The Grad College hosts a [POSC home page](#) which has videos and training guides to completing and submitting the form.

The POSC is completed during the Agronomy 599M Creative Component Seminar (see page 16).

**Creative Component – getting started**
The creative component is an essential part of getting your MS in Agronomy degree. It is highly recommended to start a project by the time you have completed 4 courses. Unlike the other classes, this is an independent project, on the student’s own timeline. How to get started?

**Idea generation**
- Can you apply MS Agronomy coursework to address issues faced in your everyday work?
- Is there an issue discovered in your coursework you’d like to pursue?
- Is your topic relevant to your career interests?
- Do you have an area of specialization you want to expand upon?
- Is there a project you have at your job that you can also use for a creative component?
- Are you experiencing an issue on your home farm?
- Make sure your topic is interesting to you.
- Make sure the project is manageable (a major professor can help with this).

**Types of projects (ideas are not limited to this list)**
- Extensive literature reviews
- Field and/or laboratory research projects
- Instructional modules for teaching or training purposes
- New techniques to provide agronomic information (example: field guides for a Kindle)
- Case study analysis

**Additional requirements for the CC**
- The project must show independence and creativity.
**Student Handbook: Program Progression**

- A written report about the project must be developed. The project must demonstrate understanding of agronomic principles in the context of the project topic. The MS Agronomy office has templates for different projects.
- The project must be approved by instructor of the 599M seminar, and then by the major professor.
- The results of the creative component must be defensible in terms of its findings, conclusions, or recommendations to the POS Committee.
- Results must be publishable, the final results will be public information. This means students must be able to present their information during the final oral exam, and there will be a printed a copy of the CC for the student and our library.
- **If a student is conducting a research project for their company that is handling proprietary information, be sure to get permission from the work supervisor and corporate legal department.** There can be legal issues with using company data, due to intellectual property rights. The MS Agronomy program does not handle confidentiality agreements.

**599M – Creative Component Credits**

MS Agronomy students are required to take a total of 3 credits of 599M: Creative Component. These credits will be divided between the Agronomy 599M Seminar (1 credit) and the creative component defense/Final Oral Exam (2 credits).

**Agronomy 599M Seminar, 1st credit**

The seminar was developed to guide students through the first stages of the creative component process. Keep these things in mind:

- Students should have a topic in mind when registering for the seminar.
- The seminar has exercises and discussions geared towards creative component development.
- Students will be expected to write a proposal.
- Students will search for a major professor, with guidance from the seminar instructor.
- Once the major professor is identified, then the POSC form will be completed.
- Students should be ready to commit to doing the writing and organization necessary to get their project going, and keep it going while finishing coursework.

The Agronomy 599M Creative Component Seminar is offered fall and spring semesters. Registration is by permission only. Please email msagron@iastate.edu or call 515.294.2999.

**Alternative to the 599M seminar**

Should an opportunity arise to start a project and the timing is not feasible to take the 599M seminar, a student can write a preproposal and start the process independently. The preproposal should be 1-2 pages and include background information about the issue, what the project is about, and how you will go about accomplishing it. Dawn can pass the preproposal to Dr. Knapp, who can make recommendations about major professors based on the topic.

Some students like to see what others have done before committing to their project. The MS Agronomy creative component archive is a compilation of all the creative components completed by MS Agronomy graduates.
**Student Handbook: Program Progression**

**Creative Component Progress**
Once the seminar semester is over, students can continue to work on their projects and writing without registering for additional credits 599M until the end of the program. It is the student’s responsibility maintain communication with their major professor during this time by providing updates and sending written drafts for review and editing.

**Planning a Defense (Final Oral Exam)**
The Grad College has a list of deadlines, the main items on this list are Application for Graduation and Last Date for Final Oral Examination.

The MS Agronomy office handles defenses as follows:
1. Program deadline: full draft of CC due the first day of the semester a student plans to defend
2. The major professor reviews the CC and makes a decision before the Application for Graduation deadline. **The major professor must give the OK to defend.** No plans are made without major professor approval.
3. When the major professor gives the green light to defend, the following actions take place:
   - Complete the graduation application. Log into AccessPlus and on the left menu click Graduation. Follow the prompts – it’s a very simple form.
   - Set a defense date. You and your major professor narrow down a week and let Dawn know. Dawn can check the calendars of other committee members.
   - When a defense date is set, then Dawn will send a request to register you for the final 2 credits of Agronomy 599M.
   - Your CC is due 2 weeks before your defense for committee review.
4. Dawn arranges the following details:
   - Completion/submission of Request for Final Oral Examination to the Grad College
   - Completion of Graduate Student Approval form and Report of Final Oral Examination
   - Conference room reservation, usually in Agronomy Hall.
   - Agronomy 599M credit registration request to registrar
   - Announcements to other students and faculty.

**Defense Day: What to Expect**
1. Seminar Presentation
   - Most CC presentations are about 30-40 minutes long, but work with your major professor to determine the proper length
   - A computer will be available for the seminar, no need to bring your own
   - It will be up to you whether you want the audience to ask questions during or after your presentation.
   - Your graduate committee, M.S. Agronomy faculty/staff, Department of Agronomy faculty/students are usually invited to your seminar.
   - You are welcome to bring any family, friends, or coworkers to attend your seminar.
   - Zoom will be used to stream your presentation live and recorded for the CC archive.
Defense day, continued

2. Committee Meeting/Discussion
   - At the end of the seminar, staff & visitors will be asked to leave. Your committee will meet with you to discuss your project in private.
   - The committee will then ask you to step outside the conference room to discuss your status in private.
   - When the committee is done, they will then finalize the exam with you, sign the Report of Final Oral Exam form, and discuss any corrections/edits to your written document.

3. Exit Interview
   - The MS Agronomy program conducts a formal in-person exit interview, as well as an online survey. These are part of the ongoing evaluation of the program.

Post-Defense & Graduation

1. Students are given two weeks to complete any edits recommended by the graduate committee.
2. When the final copy CC is turned in, and approved by the major professor, Dawn submits the Graduate Student Approval Form, which was signed the day of the defense.
3. The creative component needs to be uploaded to the ISU Digital Repository.
4. Graduation website
5. Students must pay all tuition and graduation fees

Earning the Graduate Certificate in Agronomy
The Graduate Certificate in Agronomy program was launched Spring 2015. It consists of 6 MS Agronomy courses: 501, 502, 503, 511, 512 & 514. MS Agronomy students can be granted the Certificate when these courses have been completed as they work toward the full master’s degree.

Students interested in being granted the Certificate must complete some paperwork:
   - Request to Pursue a Certificate in Addition to a Graduate Degree
   - Certificate Program of Study (CPOS)
Students usually start the program with a definite plan in mind for getting their degree. However, life, work and family responsibilities can sidetrack these plans. Examples include busy seasons at work, changing jobs, getting deployed, getting married or divorced, illnesses, having babies, traveling, etc.

Please communicate with Dawn Miller if you have any impediment to course completion or program progress. You should never feel like you have to handle a situation on your own. Listed below are common situations students find themselves in and how they can be handled.

**Active Duty Military & Civil Service Deployment**

Students who are called to active duty, and who will not be able to either 1) cancel registration before classes start; or 2) complete a class already in progress, need to contact the MS Agronomy office as soon as they know. If documentation is needed from the Program regarding your student status, Dawn will provide any information requested.

[Veterans Center Active Duty procedures](#)

MS Agronomy students involved with the [Civilian Expeditionary Workforce](#) also have options. Any registration issues that arise will need to be handled according to registrar’s office guidelines.

**Interruptions in coursework during a semester: Drop vs Incomplete**

There are times students fall behind when a situation beyond their control forces them to stop participating in a class. If a student cannot complete a course (or catch up) in a timely manner, they have two choices:

1. Incomplete: Students who are passing the class at the time can use this option.

   - By taking an incomplete, the instructor will give the student an “I” when grades are submitted. Once the “I” grade is submitted, the student has one calendar year to finish the class. It is NOT recommended to take much time to complete the class.
   - An [contract](#) will be completed. This form is an agreement between student and instructor. It does not need to be submitted to the Registrar or Grad College. Complete this form by identifying the work the student has yet to finish, and a date upon which all must be complete. This must be agreed upon between both student and instructor.
   - There are two options for an Incomplete depending on how much of the semester has passed.
     1. If it is early in the semester, then the student should plan on participating in the class from start to finish the next time it is offered.
     2. If there are just a few requirements left to submit, then agreeing upon a deadline to submit those after the class has ended will suffice.
   - Dawn can request that the Canvas section for that class remains open so the student can submit the necessary work.
   - If the year does go by without completing the class, the I grade will turn into an “F”.

2. Drop: Students who are failing a class, or do not know when they will be able to continue coursework, should drop. Dropping all courses is considered a withdrawal, and is subject to [tuition reimbursement adjustments](#) depending on time of drop. See page 11 for detailed explanation.
**Student Handbook: Student Situations**

**Holds on Registration or Graduation**

Accounts Receivable Hold: Students who are delinquent on their Ubill will not be able to register for classes, and will not receive a diploma if they have graduated. Please see “Accounts Receivable” section, page 8.

GPA Hold: The Graduate College’s expectation is that a graduate student will maintain a 3.0 GPA. If a student’s GPA falls below 3.0, this is what will happen:

1. New students (1st semester) will get a one-semester grace period to bring the GPA back up. More advanced students will do not receive this grace period.
2. The Grad College will inform a student if he/she has been placed on Academic Probation for a GPA under 3.0. There will be a hold placed on registration for future semesters.
3. If this happens, please contact Dawn (millerdm@iastate.edu) at the MS Agronomy office. She can send a request to the Grad College to get the hold lifted to take a class.
4. A request to lift the hold will be required for every semester the student’s GPA is under 3.0.

**C Grades vs Cumulative GPA**

The most common confusion for students is how C grades relate to cumulative GPA. The program follows all Grad College policies - this is addressed in the ISU Graduate College Student Handbook – Chapter 5, section 5.2, paragraph 5.2.6:

In a nutshell: 3.0 GPA IS MANDATORY

- All ISU graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0
- C grades are OK only if you still have a GPA of 3.0 or better
- Any courses with C grades must be retaken if GPA is below 3.0. You must show you can succeed before moving on to other courses. This is a program policy.
- Any courses with grades of C- or lower must be retaken, they are not allowed on the POSC. This is a Grad College policy.
- **You cannot register for courses or graduate without a GPA of 3.0 or above**
Student Handbook: Student Situations

Time off from program
There are times when students just can’t manage coursework in addition to other commitments. A semester or two away from the program will likely not affect program progression. If that time extends beyond a semester, this triggers some changes in accounts & status:

- After 6 months a student’s NetID will be suspended. It will be reactivated the next time a student registers for and starts a course.
- Library access gets suspended. It will resume when a student is registered for a class, or a special request is made to keep access available after coursework is completed.
- If a student does not register for classes for two years (equivalent of 4 semesters) the graduate college will flag a student’s records Inactive.
  ✓ Dawn follows this policy - students remain on the MS Agronomy active student list until the Grad College flags records as Inactive. Students are then notified that they will be taken off the program active student list. They will no longer receive communication from the MS Agronomy office.
  ✓ In order to continue the program, the Graduate College will require the “Reinstatement to Active Status” form.

Degree Completion Timeline/7-Year rule
Determining the length of time students have to complete the MS Agronomy program is based on a number of factors:

1. The minimum number credits to graduate with a master’s degree at ISU is 30. The MS Agronomy degree program is 40 credits. This means 9 credits can go overage and a student can still graduate with 31 credits.
2. The Graduate College has a 7-year policy to complete an MS degree at ISU. However, this policy states that up to 6 course credits can be 8-10 years old and still be accepted for graduation. This is explained in detail in the Graduate Student Handbook Section 6.3.4
3. The pace at which students complete coursework (1 or 2 courses/semester).

Other notes about timeline:

- If you transferred in a course from another institution, this course may not be counted towards graduation if it was taken more than 7 years prior to your graduating semester.
- The clock starts ticking from the time the first class is completed. If courses are completed in 4 years, but then it takes 4 years to finish the creative component, the 7 year rule is applied from the very first course.