

OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The departmental graduate student assessment policy described below is supplemental to the general policies for satisfactory progress described in the OSU Graduate Catalog.

The Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management requires an annual assessment of each graduate student's progress towards completion of their graduate degree. The assessment creates a written record of both their academic progress and of their committee's approval of their actions. Satisfactory progress is evaluated via this process.

The objectives of the assessment are to: (1) provide students and faculty with feedback on the student's progress towards a graduate degree; (2) identify students who may need additional assistance; and (3) when appropriate, provide a framework for the student and their major professor to develop a specific plan of action to facilitate degree completion. In general, the assessment is designed to facilitate positive communication between the student and their committee and to maintain a high-quality graduate education program within the department. The student is responsible for initiating and completing the assessment, while the Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee has oversight responsibilities and ensures that assessments are completed in a timely manner.

A. Annual Review

The progress of each graduate student will be reviewed annually. The first review is to occur within 1 year of the student's admission to the department. The review consists of four steps: (1) student's assessment of his/her progress; (2) a review by the student's graduate committee (including a committee meeting if possible); (3) a student-major professor interview and annual evaluation; and (4) a student's optional review of their major professor and graduate committee. The Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee will review all documents and report to the faculty (Fig. 1).

Step 1. Student Evaluation of Progress: The student assesses his/her progress during the past year using the Graduate Student Self-Evaluation Form (see attached). This form has two parts. Part A is a record of completion dates of major steps in the graduate program (e.g., committee formed, research study plan, course program, etc.). It is to be updated at each annual review. Part B is a written narrative of activities the student has completed since the last review, and is to be attached to the form (see attached form for detail of content). Narratives are to be typed on a separate page that clearly indicates the name of the student, major professor, and the date of the self-evaluation.

The student forwards a copy of the following documents to **each member of his/her graduate committee:**

- (1) Graduate Student Self Evaluation Form (with Part A updated)
- (2) Written Narrative of progress (as outlined in Part B of the Self-Evaluation)

(3) Graduate Committee Student Evaluation form (See Step 2)

After the review is complete, all forms will remain in the student's file until graduation.

Step 2. Student Graduate Committee Evaluation of the Student: The student's graduate committee will assess the student's progress towards completion of their graduate degree at an annual meeting (or through one-on-one discussions with the student if a meeting is not possible). It is the student's responsibility to provide all committee members with the materials outlined in Step 1 **prior** to the meeting. The meeting is for information exchange and discussion of future plans, and is **not** a structured evaluation. The student will summarize their thesis research, course work, and professional development; and committee members will ask questions, respond to student's questions, and provide suggestions. At the conclusion of the meeting, each committee member will sign and provide written comments on (if desired) the Graduate Committee Student Evaluation form (see attached), return it to the student, and retain the remainder of the materials for their records. The student will return all Graduate Committee Student Evaluations to the Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee with the rest of their Assessment documents. The Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee forms remain in the student's file until graduation.

Step 3. Student-Major Professor Interview and Annual Evaluation: Within 2 weeks of the committee meeting (and after absent committee members have completed their Graduate Committee Student Evaluations), the student's major professor will arrange a student-major professor interview. During the student-major professor interview, the major professor and student will discuss the student's progress, feedback from committee members, issues of concern, and plans for the coming year. The major professor gives the completed Graduate Committee Student Evaluation form to the student (who returns it to the Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee with the rest of the assessment documents). If desired by either the student or the major professor, the major professor will write a detailed, one-page written Annual Evaluation of the student's performance. In cases where the major professor believes the student has performed below expectations or that the student's goals and plans for the coming year are inadequate or are not consistent with the professor's evaluation, the major professor will work with the student to develop a written Graduate Education Performance Plan (see attached) for improving the student's performance. The major professor's Annual Evaluations (and Performance Plan if necessary) remain in the student's file until graduation.

Step 4. Student's Optional Evaluation of Major Professor and Graduate Committee: At this time, the student assesses their need to provide feedback (positive or negative) on the performance of their major professor and committee members. If the student wants to provide feedback, there are several options:

- (a) Written Evaluation of the major professor and/or committee member: According to University policy, faculty members are able to view all documents in their file used for their annual evaluations or promotion and tenure assessments. Thus, the student can submit to the department head either of the following types of evaluations of their major professor or committee members:

- (1) Non-confidential Evaluation that could be read by their major professor upon request;
-AND/OR-

(2) Confidential Evaluation that explicitly states it is confidential. The contents of a confidential letter could not be used in a formal evaluation of the professor's performance.

- (b) Discussion with the Department Head: The student may meet with the Department Head to discuss the performance (both positive and negative) of their major professor or committee members. This allows students an opportunity to provide input to the Department Head concerning any problems, which may compromise successful completion of the degree, or an opportunity to recognize special efforts of a major professor or committee member(s). The Department Head will keep this meeting strictly confidential if requested by the student. Information from a confidential discussion cannot be used in a formal evaluation for promotion and tenure review.

It is the graduate student's responsibility to forward all completed documents (from Step 1-Step 4) to the Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee.

Departmental Graduate Committee Review and Oversight: The Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee has the following responsibilities:

- (1) Document the timing of Annual Reviews;
- (2) Obtain list of incoming students at beginning of each quarter and inform them of their GSA responsibilities;
- (3) Record dates of student's Research Reviews;
- (4) Send reminders to students whose reviews are past due;
- (5) Review and discuss documents produced during each student's review;
- (6) Identify any "red flags" or potential problems/issues and notify department head;
- (7) Record completion of annual review; and
- (8) Return documents to each student's file.

At an annual spring faculty meeting or retreat, the Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee shall report to the faculty all issues concerning graduate students' program completion including any unsatisfactory performance.

B. After the Annual Review

1. Satisfactory Progress. In most cases, students have made satisfactory progress, and any issues that surfaced in the review are adequately addressed. After review by the Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee, all paperwork will be placed in the student's file until graduation.

2. Unsatisfactory Performance Evaluation. The annual assessment may result in an unsatisfactory performance evaluation of the student. In cases of unsatisfactory performance the major professor will work with the student to develop the written Performance Plan for improving the student's performance (See attached). The plan will become part of the student's file and will contain tangible mileposts or benchmarks for improvement. The Department Head will review and monitor progress of this plan on a quarterly basis.

In cases where the Department Head is the student's major professor, this review will be conducted by the chair of the Departmental Graduate Committee. Two unsatisfactory performance reports may result in terminating the student's graduate program.

3. Dissolution of the Major Professor-Student Relationship. The Major Professor-Student Relationship is the most basic component of the Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management graduate program. Acceptance of a student into the program is initiated by a major professor willing to act as the student's mentor. However, both the Graduate School and the Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management are responsible for providing a reasonable opportunity to complete degree requirements for students that are accepted into the program. In cases where the Major Professor-Student Relationship dissolves, the Department and Graduate School still have a responsibility to that student. Either the student or the faculty member may terminate the Major-Professor-Student Relationship. A student may terminate the Major Professor-Student Relationship in writing by resigning. Resigning from a Graduate Research Assistantship will immediately terminate the student's employment by the Department resulting in the loss of the Graduate Research Assistantship. A faculty member may terminate the Major Professor-Student Relationship in a letter to the student and Department Head. Mutually acceptable arrangements shall be negotiated by the major professor, graduate student and the Department Head. Students may request the Graduate School to appoint an advocate to assist them in negotiating a satisfactory settlement. In cases where the faculty member dissolves the Major Professor-Student Relationship, the student's Graduate Research Assistantship will continue through the end of his/her appointment (usually through the academic year).

The Department is responsible for providing a reasonable opportunity for students to complete degree requirements for students whose Major Professor-Student Relationship has dissolved but who are otherwise still in good standing in the program. In such situations, the Department Head will act as the student's Major Professor or will assign a Major Professor to the student. The student will have a minimum of six months to find a new Major Professor.

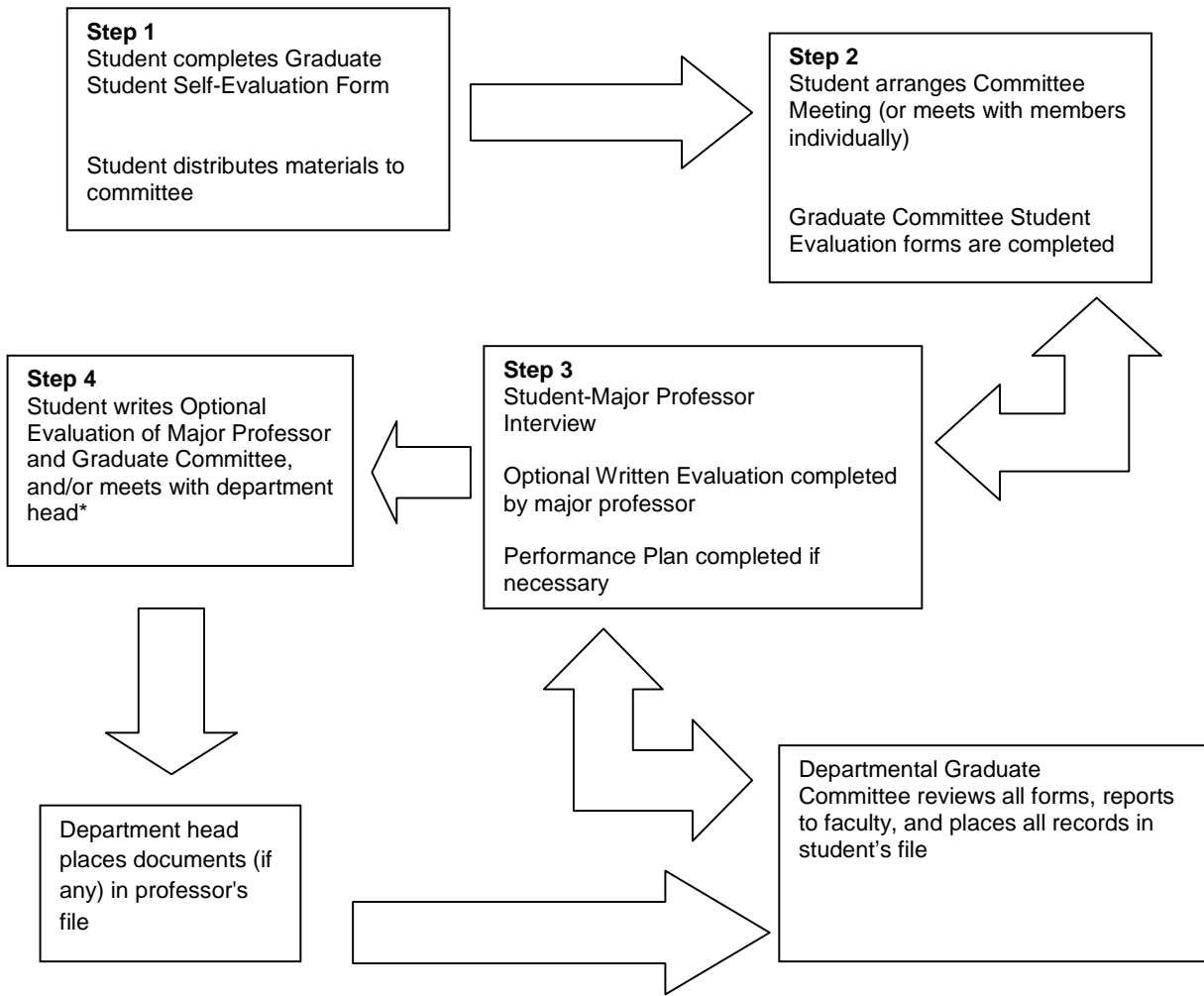
C. Grievances

If all other efforts to resolve problems fail, students who believe that they have been unfairly treated during their graduate program may file a grievance with the Graduate School. Contact the Graduate School for grievance guidelines.

D. Review of Assessment Process

Every two years the Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee will review the Graduate Student Assessment process outlined above to determine if it is meeting its intended goals.

Figure 1. Flow Chart of the Graduate Student Assessment Process



The student may provide feedback (either written or verbal) to the department head **at any time of the year. A student need not wait until their annual review to talk with the department head.*

OSU Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management Graduate Student Self-Evaluation Form

This evaluation is to be filled out by the graduate student and serves as an assessment of progress towards completion of degree requirements. This form does not replace annual research reports required by the Department and should be viewed as the summary of the annual report. This form will be **updated** annually and filed no later than the end of each Winter term. Copies are to be distributed to the student's Graduate Committee and the department Graduate Acceptance and Review Committee.

Name: _____ Admission Date: _____

Degree Program: _____ Major Professor: _____

Field of Minor study: _____

Part A. Indicate date of completion:

Committee formed: _____

Committee Members

Name

Department

*Proposed Date _____ Completed Date _____

Program Filed with Graduate School: _____

Research Plan on file with department: _____

Research Plan Amendments filed with department: _____

Annual Research Report filed with the department: _____

Course work completed: _____

Written exams completed:

Oral preliminary exam (Ph.D.Only):

Defense:

***Please provide a copy of the projected timeline of completion of your degree filed with your Research Plan. Discuss deviations from this timeline under item 6 of the Narrative (below).**

Part .B Written Narrative:

Provide a summary (1 page, single-spaced, no smaller than 11-font, all margins 1 inch) of the activities you have undertaken since your last review. Format the top line of your evaluation with: your name, major professor, and the date of assessment. In the text include the following topics as separate paragraphs: (1) coursework taken (and grades received); (2) field work achieved, data collection/analysis and progress in writing your thesis; (3) major components of field work yet to be addressed, (4) participation in professional development opportunities; (5) service to the Department and the University; and (6) projected timeline to completion, including problems or impediments to your progress.

OSU Rangeland Ecology and Management
Graduate Committee Student Evaluation Form
(a separate copy to be given to each member of the student's committee)

To Committee member:

The Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management requires that all graduate students complete an annual review of their progress which requires feedback from all committee members. Please review the student's attached Self-Evaluation form and written summary of the past years' activities. This form is intended to evaluate the student's progress towards program completion and will be placed in the student's permanent file. Please complete this form at the conclusion of an annual committee meeting that the student has scheduled (or following a one-on-one discussion with the student if you could not attend the meeting).

Student _____ Date: _____

Please answer the following questions and sign the form below. Specific comments are encouraged.

1. The student is making satisfactory progress in completing his/her course work.
2. The student is making satisfactory progress in data collection, analysis or writing for this/her thesis.
3. The student has participated in professional development opportunities.
4. The student has provided service to the University, College, Department or community.

Question	Yes	No	N/A	Don't Know
1				
2				
3				
4				

Committee Member Signature **Date**

Committee Member Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Comments:

OSU Rangeland Ecology and Management Graduate Education Performance Plan

This form is intended to monitor a student's performance towards degree completion **resulting from an unsatisfactory review** at an annual assessment. This form should outline mutually agreed-upon (between student and major professor) benchmarks of performance.

Student _____

Major Professor _____

Plan (Identify deficiencies and outline plan to remedy them):

Benchmarks (Criteria used to evaluate progress):

Student _____ Date _____

Major Professor _____ Date _____

Department Head _____ Date _____