University of Idaho
Department of Soil and Water Systems

www.uidaho.edu/cals/sws

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE MAJOR SOIL AND LAND RESOURCES

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By

Graduate Faculty of the Soil and Water Systems Department

Contents

1 Introduction

This handbook provides students and faculty with policies and procedures for the Soil and Land Resources graduate degree in the Soil and Water Systems Department (SWS) at the University of Idaho. It is intended to supplement the College of Graduate Studies guidelines and requirements. General requirements of the College of Graduate Studies for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees appear in the University of Idaho Catalog. In case of conflict, the College of Graduate Studies and Faculty-Staff Handbook supersede this document.

- Student Resources-College of Graduate Studies-University of Idaho (uidaho.edu)
- College of Graduate Studies < University of Idaho (uidaho.edu)
- Faculty Staff Handbook (uidaho.edu)

Master of Science (M.S.), thesis or non-thesis, and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) programs are offered with a degree in Soil and Land Resources in the Soil and Water Systems Department. Areas of specialization include environmental quality, soil and water quality, soil fertility, soil morphology and genesis, soil chemistry, soil biochemistry, soil microbiology, microbial ecology, soil ecology, soil and environmental physics, water resource use efficiency, and precision agriculture.

Within the SWS Department, students may also pursue interdisciplinary graduate degrees in Environmental Science or Water Resources advised by faculty members in SWS and affiliated programs. Policies and procedures for those programs are listed in separate handbooks.

This document provides students and faculty with information concerning the graduate policies and procedures for Soil and Land Resources M.S. and Ph.D. majors.

2 Program Overview

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Soil and Land Resources M.S. and Ph.D. are authorized degree granting programs in the College of Graduate Studies approved by the Idaho State Board of Education. The SWS department head is responsible for administering the program. The program follows the requirements for graduate programs in COGS, and the requirements and guidelines established herein by the SWS faculty in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. The degree program supports the goals of the education, research and extension missions of the University, College, and Department. It is the joint responsibility of the major professor and the graduate student to follow these guidelines.

2.2 Responsibilities of the Graduate Student

First and foremost, it is the responsibility of the student to grow as an independent thinker and contributor to the scientific community. Graduate students are afforded great flexibility in choosing their coursework and in pursuing research, but this freedom comes with an important responsibility: Students must take charge of their education and show civic and social responsibilities such as spelled out in the Student Code of Conduct. The student is solely responsible to fulfill all program requirements and meet deadlines for program advancement and completion.

All graduate students completing a thesis or dissertation are expected to undertake research and generate data that are publishable in peer-reviewed journals and present research findings at regional, national, and/or international meetings.

Participation in relevant national organizations, such as the Soil Science Society of America, American Geophysical Union, or Ecological Society of America is strongly encouraged. These organizations offer opportunities for scientific, as well as networking interactions.

2.3 Responsibilities of the Graduate Advisor

It is the responsibility of the advisor to guide the student in choosing a course of study and completing the coursework requirements, act as a mentor in the planning and execution of research projects, educate the student as necessary to develop their understanding of how scientific research is carried out in a methodical and ethical manner, and facilitate the execution of research projects by providing access to equipment, field sites, or research funding.

2.4 Responsibilities of the Department Head

The department head approves the program of study and the final thesis or dissertation.

2.5 Responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Studies

The departmental director of graduate studies (DGS) provides information to prospective graduate students and coordinates the review process for consideration of applications by the faculty. The DGS also helps with the initial orientation for students upon their admission to the program. Problems that may develop between a student and members of their graduate committee (including the advisor) can be arbitrated by the DGS or the department chair.

3 Forming the Degree Committee

Prior to admission, each graduate student must secure a graduate advisor who becomes the chair of the student's graduate committee and major professor. Major professors must be graduate faculty. **The major professor must be designated during the student's first semester, and prior to submitting the study plan.** It is the student's responsibility to file the appropriate form with the COGS (www.uidaho.edu/COGS/forms).

3.1 Responsibilities of the graduate committee

The graduate committee is an advisory and supervisory committee. All members of the candidate's committee share responsibility in ensuring that the candidate produces high-quality scholarship. The members of a student's graduate committee advise and evaluate the student through their graduate school tenure. The graduate committee is responsible for the following: (i) review and evaluate past education; (ii) identify academic deficiencies; (iii) recommend course work; (iv) advise on development of the thesis or dissertation proposal; (v) review, evaluates, and approves research proposal, final report (MS non-thesis), thesis (M.S.), and dissertation (Ph.D.); and (vi) for PhD students conduct qualifying exam. The major advisor is primarily responsible for guiding the student's research, but the research must be approved by all members of the graduate committee.

3.2 Appointment of the graduate committee

Qualified faculty members who serve on the graduate committee are chosen by the student with advice and final approval from the major professor. **The graduate committee must be appointed by the end of the second semester.** One of the committee members may be appointed as co-advisor and co-chair of the student's graduate committee.

At least half of the members of a committee must be members of the faculty in COGS. A committee member may only serve on a committee for a degree level in which they have attained.

The graduate committee for an M.S. thesis degree will consist of a minimum of three members, including: (1) the major professor as chair, (2) a second member from the SWS faculty, (3) a member from outside the SWS faculty (at least 50% of committee must be COGS faculty).

The committee for the Ph.D. degree will consist of a minimum of four members, including: (1) the major professor as chair, (2) one or two members from the SWS graduate faculty, (3) one or two members from outside the SWS faculty.

4 Program Components/Degree Plan Options/Degree Requirements

4.1 Admission requirements

Applicants should have a bachelor's degree in soil science or a related field, for example, geology, environmental science, hydrology, ecology, or geography. Students should have completed courses in natural resource sciences, including atmospheric, water, and soil sciences. Students with a strong record and willingness to make up for deficiencies may be accepted. Prospective candidates must meet both the minimum admission requirements for the College of Graduate Studies and the departmental requirements. All applications for admission to the graduate program are made online through the Graduate Admissions Office.

In the application, graduate students must have at least two referees submit reference letters. The applicant must include a letter of interest and experience in their application.

4.2 Degree program requirements

4.2.1 University degree requirements

The University degree credit requirements for the MS and PhD degrees are listed on the following COGS links:

- masters-study-plan-and-degree-audit.pdf (uidaho.edu)
- doctoral-study-plan-and-degree-audit.pdf (uidaho.edu)

Table 1. Summary of the University degree requirements.

Degree	Research Credits	Seminar (SWS 501)	Credit Minimum 500/600 Level	Credit 300*/400/500/600 Level	Total Credits Required
MS thesis	10 credits of 500 course	2	18 (including research and seminar credits)	12	30
MS non-thesis	5 credits of 599 course	2	18 (including research and seminar credits)	12	30
PhD	No minimum; 45 credits of 600 course are allowed*	3	52 (including research and seminar credits)	Remaining credits	78*
***Notes**	*6 credits can be MS thesis research credits			*300 level must be outside of major	*Up to 39 transferable credits allowed if within the 8-year time limit rule

4.2.2 Soil and Land Resources Degree Requirements

This section describes degree requirements specific to the Soil and Land Resources degrees, which comply with and are synchronous to the University degree requirements.

The Graduate Committee plays the major role in tailoring the course of study for each student to meet the student's degree objectives.

4.2.2.1 Subject area competency

A graduate degree in Soil and Land Resources requires that students have a demonstrated competency in soil physics, soil chemistry, soil biology, soil fertility, and soil genesis and morphology that is equivalent to the level of understanding in an undergraduate course on these topics. This requirement is typically met by taking courses in these topics as an undergraduate or graduate student. The requirements may also be met by independent or self-study. It is the responsibility of the major professor to ensure that these requirements are met by the completion of the degree program. Fulfillment of the requirements will be confirmed by the Department Chair upon study plan and/or degree sign off.

4.2.2.2 Master of Science (Non-Thesis)

a. Minimum of 30 credit hours
b. A minimum of 2 cr. of Soil and Water Science seminar
c. A final project report or product
d. An exit interview with the department chair

4.2.2.3 Master of Science (Thesis)

a. Minimum of 30 credits hours
b. A minimum of 2 credits of Soil and Water Science seminar
c. A written proposal and a proposal defense
d. A thesis
e. A thesis defense
f. An exit interview with the department chair

4.2.2.4 Doctor of Philosophy

a. Minimum of 78 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree including 52 at 500 level or above
b. A minimum of 3 credits of Soil and Water Science seminar
c. A qualifying examination
d. A written proposal and a proposal defense
e. A dissertation
f. A dissertation defense
g. Teaching experience
h. An exit interview with the department chair

4.2.3 Degree requirements notes

- Students that are on Visas have additional course requirements to fulfill the Visa requirements. The requirements should be requested from the International Programs Office and COGS.
- Full time graduate students are required to be registered for 9 credits per semester. This applies to both M.S. and Ph.D. students. The credits can include research credits. International students must check with the International Programs Office to ensure their credit hours fulfill the student visa requirements.

4.3 Study Plan

4.3.1 Development of a Study Plan

An effective graduate degree program requires that course work, research, and assistantship duties reinforce the student's educational objectives. To facilitate this coordination, a comprehensive plan of

study should be formulated as soon as practical. The graduate student and the major professor are expected to draft a plan of study during the student's first semester in Graduate School.

After completion of the study plan with the major professor, the student and graduate committee should meet as soon as possible after appointment of the graduate committee to develop a final study plan and discuss the students research goals and proposal development. Course requirements for each graduate student are evaluated by the graduate committee and must meet standards set forth by the Graduate School:

- masters-study-plan-and-degree-audit.pdf (uidaho.edu)
- doctoral-study-plan-and-degree-audit.pdf (uidaho.edu)

The study plan is routed to the major professor, the department chair, and COGS for approval. The student is expected to conform to the study plan approved by these parties.

4.3.2 Example of classes for graduate students

*If 400-level class, check for graduate level offerings

1. Environmental Soil Chemistry (Soil 422)
2. Soil and Environmental Physics (Soil 515)
3. Pedology (Soil 444)
4. Principles Environmental Toxicology (Soil 509)
5. Principles of Sustainability (Soil 436)
6. Soil Microbial Ecology (Soil 425)
7. Landscape Nutrient Management (Soil 434/534)
8. Environmental Water Quality (Soil 452)
9. North Idaho Field Trip (Soil 556)
10. Soil Fertility (Soil 446)
11. Pesticides in The Environment (Soil 438)
12. Environmental Hydrology (Soil 450)
13. Soil and Plant Water Relations (Soil 420)
14. Soil and Water Seminar (Soil 501)
15. Environmental Chemistry (Chem 418)
16. Experimental Design (STAT 507)
17. Hydro Apps/GIS & Remote Sensing (GEOG 524)
18. Limnology (FISH 415)
19. Water Economics and Policy (WRW 552)
20. Water Resource Seminar (WR 501)
21. Interdisciplinary Methods in Water Resources (WR 506)
22. Water Law of the American West (Law 942)
23. Water Quality in the Pacific Northwest (ENVS 544)
24. Principles of Geochemistry (Geo1 423)
25. Chemical Hydrogeology (Geol 531)

5 Research Plan and Proposal

Students working on a thesis degree at the M.S. or Ph.D. level will need to work closely with their major professor and graduate committee to develop a research outline early in the program. Each M.S. and Ph.D. student is expected to complete and present a research proposal plan (thesis/dissertation option) or non-thesis activity plan to their graduate advisor and committee. This is typically completed within the first semester for MS students, and first year for PhD students. The research plan should have a

timeline of tasks and expected accomplishments (the timeline should be updated periodically with the committee). The student will present the plan to their committee in a meeting where suggestions and modifications will be discussed.

5.1 Required research approvals

Before beginning any research project, approval must be granted by whichever of the following groups applies to the research that you are undertaking.

- Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research involving human subjects
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for research using vertebrate animals
- Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) for research using any biological agent or recombinant DNA
- Environmental Health & Safety for research using radioactive materials
- Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) for research that has the possibility of patent or license outputs as well as involving agents or federal controls on the development, use and distribution of technology
- Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) for activities funded through external grants and contracts. Should the research methodology or source funding change, the appropriate group must be notified.
- Office of Research Assurances (ORA) works in conjunction with faculty run compliance committees to review and approve research projects that involve animals, humans, potentially infectious materials, Select Agents and Toxins and recombinant DNA activities.
- Responsible conduct of research/training schedule offers several courses on research training guidelines and rules, including training on discussion of rights, responsibilities, and ethics concerning research publication and authorship.

6 Dissertation or Thesis Development

The thesis or dissertation is to be an original contribution by the student that advances soil science understanding, and/or provides new information valuable for managing natural resources.

6.1 Preliminary draft

The first draft of a dissertation or thesis is prepared by the student in close consultation with the major professor. The initial draft is rewritten until it is in acceptable condition for review by the graduate committee. The dissertation or thesis should be prepared in a format as agreed upon by the student, major advisor, and committee. Typically, chapters are written in a style and format consistent with a major journal in the discipline of study. The final thesis or dissertation is required to have page, section, figure, and table formatting that complies with COGS requirements. The thesis or dissertation must comply with the COGS editorial standards and guidelines. COGS provides templates in MS Word and LaTeX for preparing theses and dissertations (https://www.uidaho.edu/cogs/resources/student-resources/thesis-dissertation).

6.2 Reviewed draft

This draft is prepared by the student, incorporating ideas and suggestions made by the major professor. The student submits a copy to each committee member (format, i.e., PDF or Word file as agreed upon by the committee members). The student must allow **at least two weeks for review** of the draft by the committee members prior to defense. If major modifications are recommended by the committee members, this procedure may need to be repeated.

6.3 Final draft

After the reviewed draft meets the general approval of the graduate committee, the final version is prepared by the student in consultation with the major professor, incorporating suggestions made by the graduate committee. The final thesis or dissertation is submitted to members of the graduate committee, and the department chair and uploaded to COGS using the COGS protocol. A minimum of 2 days is required for the department signatures.

Students are encouraged to prepare and submit papers for publication before graduation. Students are responsible for complying with all copyright requirements. A student cannot submit a manuscript from their thesis or dissertation research for publication without notification, discussion, and agreement of major professor and/or faculty that supervised the research. Students are responsible for following all authorship credit guidelines and should consult their major advisor and/or committee to ensure authorship credit. For reference, authorship criteria are published in most journals.

7 Preliminary Qualifying Exam (Ph.D. only)

Ph.D. students are required to pass a preliminary exam to advance to Ph.D. candidacy and be allowed to conduct further research in pursuance of the degree. **The exam is to be scheduled after completing the majority of course work (typically at the end of year 2 or the beginning of year 3).** The specific format of the exam is at the discretion of the major professor and must be agreed upon with the graduate committee. Below are required elements of the exam:

1. The qualifying exam will have both written and oral components from the PhD advising committee.
2. The length and format of written questions are to be determined by the advising committee. If the committee elects to use a proposal, the proposal must be separate from the PhD dissertation proposal but can be on a related topic.
3. All committee members must be present during the oral exam and submit questions to the student. The oral exam is open to all faculty in SWS upon prior request and approval of major professor, or invitation by the major professor.
4. The written or oral exam cannot be waived.

All other PhD qualifying exam criteria are as described in the UI COGS graduate bylaws and catalog.

7.1 Evaluation

The decision as to whether the student passes or fails the exam rests with the student's graduate committee.

The written exam is to be reviewed by the graduate committee and feedback provided to the student. The committee may use the written exam as a basis for the oral exam but can also ask questions on other relevant topics. The majority of the graduate committee must agree that the written exam is sufficient to advance to the oral exam. A tie vote is decided by the major professor's decision.

A favorable majority vote by the committee is required to pass the qualifying exam. A tie vote is decided by the major professor's decision. An advisory vote of the Soil and Land Resources graduate faculty in attendance at the oral exam will be taken and considered by the graduate committee. In the event of a non-passing vote, the graduate committee should agree on one of the following actions: 1) a plan to address deficiencies in the student's knowledge, and allow for a second exam, or 2) the student be removed from the PhD program. If the recommendation is removal from the PhD program, the major advisor will work with the student and department head in deciding if a MS degree (thesis or non-thesis) is an alternative. If the student already has a MS degree in a discipline directly related to soil science,

they cannot be enrolled in the Soil and Land Resources MS program. Continuation of the student on funding from the major advisor and research projects is the sole discretion of the major advisor.

8 Thesis or Dissertation Defense

All M.S. and Ph.D. students are required to defend their research at the completion of their degree requirements. Students are required to get approval of their major advisor before scheduling the defense. The major advisor has the right to cancel the defense of a student who is not ready.

8.1 Scheduling

The defense may be scheduled after the student has completed the "Application for Final Defense" form, submitted it to COGS and received the "Final Defense Report" form. The major professor, in consultation with the student and the graduate committee, selects a time and place for the defense. The major professor then informs the SWS graduate faculty and the university community at large of the time and location. **The defense announcement should be made at least one week prior to the scheduled date.**

8.2 Defense procedure

The defense meeting is attended by the student and all graduate committee members. The defense cannot be held without all graduate committee members present in person or via a live communication (video or voice meeting). If a member cannot be present a request to COGS can be made for the removal and replacement of this committee member. The candidate will provide a presentation of their research open to the public. Following the open defense presentation, the student will defend the thesis or dissertation in a closed meeting with committee members.

8.3 Evaluation

The decision as to whether the student passes or fails the defense rests with the committee members. A favorable majority vote by the committee is required to pass.

If the student does not pass the defense, the committee will recommend whether the student should be permitted to retake the exam. The defense may be repeated **once** within a period of not less than three months and not more than one year after the first attempt. The committee will make a recommendation for the student to prepare for the defense retake.

9 Teaching Requirement

All Ph.D. students are expected to obtain teaching experience or training. This requirement can be satisfied by taking responsibility for a section of the Soil 206, General Soils Lab, by taking responsibility for some portion of an upper division soils course, and/or taking appropriate University courses. Grading papers is not considered sufficient teaching experience. The major advisor is responsible for ensuring that the student has completed the teaching requirement.

10 M.S. Non-Thesis Option

10.1 Scope of degree

In some cases, with approval of the Soil and Land Resources graduate faculty, a student may be permitted to enter a M.S. non-thesis program. This program requires a final report on an appropriate subject. In cases of a student switching from a thesis or dissertation to a non-thesis degree, the student must get approval from the major advisor and department head and meet all the requirements of the non-thesis degree.

Only five credits of 599 non-thesis research credits can be applied to the non-thesis degree. Course 500 research credits do not count towards the credit requirement for non-thesis degree.

For non-thesis programs, advising can be done by a major professor selected by the student, or a committee.

10.2 Technical report or final product

The nature of the technical report or final product should be agreed upon by the student, major advisor, and graduate committee (if assigned) within the first semester. Final reports will typically be reviews of relevant scientific topics and may include development of research questions and needs in the topic. The major professor should provide examples of review articles from peer reviewed journals or edited books as example of the type of document the student is producing. The document may include research data produced by the student or provided to the student.

Other products representing MS-level independent scholarly work can be done instead of a final report. This may include software code, database development, and artistic or technical image works. In most cases these items will include a report describing the development and outcome of the product, including proposed value and comparison to similar products within the discipline.

Copies of the completed report must be given to the major professor and the committee (if appointed) at least two weeks before the end of the semester of graduation. The essential difference between this report and a regular thesis is that the former is not based on original research performed by the candidate.

10.3 Evaluation

The major professor and committee (if appointed) will evaluate the final report to ensure it meets the criteria and is produced at the level appropriate for a professional scientist. Completion of the final report criteria for the degree is determined as a pass or fail. The 500 or 600 level non-thesis research credits are typically graded based on the performance metrics of the report proposal and final report.

11 Exit Interview

At the conclusion of the degree program each student is required to have an exit interview with the department chair. This will typically be done in person or by video conference. Other exit interview methods can be used at the request of the student or department chair.

12 Performance and Annual Review

Following the policy of the College of Graduate Studies, all currently enrolled graduate students need to have an annual or more frequent evaluation. The purpose of the review is to evaluate a student's progress and to identify an ongoing pathway to educational and professional success. This allows the student and supervisor to meet and establish objectives, ensuring that both students are making timely progress and allow for constructive feedback. It is stressed that the primary purpose of this review is to provide feedback and discussion to assist students in their progress towards graduation.

The student is encouraged to provide several updates per year to the committee members on research and academic progress.

Below are some links that describe some of the University requirements for student performance.

12.1 Safety

- Laboratory Safety

https://www.uidaho.edu/dfa/division-operations/ehs/programs/lab
- College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Safety Training Resources https://www.uidaho.edu/cals/services/resources/safety-training-and-resources

12.2 Integrity in Research and Creative Activities

- Copyrights, Protectable Discoveries, and other Intellectual Property Rights https://www.uidaho.edu/governance/policy/policies/fsh/5/5300

12.3 Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

- Student Code of Conduct: https://www.uidaho.edu/governance/policy/policies/fsh/2/2300
- Responsible Conduct of Research Education www.uidaho.edu/apm/45/21

13 Graduate Assistant Employment Policies

13.1 Financial Support

Graduate Students may be eligible to receive financial support through either a teaching or research assistantship. Continuation of assistantships is based on availability of funds and satisfactory progress towards the graduate degree program and research requirements, as judged by the major advisor. Graduate students are required to be enrolled in at least nine credits during the fall/spring semesters of the assistantship.

13.2 Research Assistantships

Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis. Most assistantships originate from funds granted by state and federal agencies, industry and foundations. The awarding of these research assistantships (RA) is controlled by the individual faculty member or members who have received the grant funds. It is typical but not obligatory that the faculty member providing the assistantship assumes the role of the major advisor for the student's degree program. Unless otherwise indicated in the Letter of Appointment, activities performed with assistantship funding may or may not be in line with the student's research interests. When assistantship duties and student's research goals do not overlap significantly, the student is expected to work with the major advisor to delineate specific responsibilities. Tuition and health insurance can be provided at the discretion of the major advisor. The letter of appointment describes the financial support of the RA offer.

13.3 Teaching assistantships

Teaching Assistants (TA) have teaching responsibilities for classes (typically undergraduate level classes). They grade assignments, assist with the delivery of instruction through technology, and provide other assistance related to instruction under the active supervision of a member of the university faculty. Students assigned TAs are provided stipends and tuition waivers, as well as health benefits. The renumeration amounts will be listed in the letter of appointment.

13.4 Other Financial Support

In addition, the Graduate School and the SWS department can help students identify and apply for competitive fellowships, scholarships, and awards.

13.5 Length of Research Assistantship Support

M.S. - Departmental research assistantships from appropriated funds are normally provided for two years. Support for students on programs taking longer than two years will depend on additional funding obtained by the student or major professor.

Ph.D. - Departmental research assistantships from appropriated funds are normally provided for three years*. Support for students on programs taking longer than three years will depend on additional funding obtained by the student or major professor.

*In some cases students are admitted from a BS degree program to a PhD program, in which case the degree program is expected to take 4-6 years to complete.

**Note: Graduate students on full-time assistantship are required to be registered for 9 credits per semester. This applies to both M.S. and Ph.D. students. Students who wish to register for fewer credits each semester should consult with their major professor.

14 University/Department Resources and Opportunities

14.1 COGS Resources

Comprehensive list of resources: https://www.uidaho.edu/cogs/student-resources

COGS/University award opportunities: https://www.uidaho.edu/cogs/awards-grants

14.2 Department Resources

Our website: https://www.uidaho.edu/cals/soil-and-water-systems

15 Example Graduate Student Timeline

Table 2. Example student timeline.

	Semester 1	Semester 2
Year 1	Committee appointment Thesis Proposal Dissertation topic focus	Dissertation Proposal
Year 2	PhD Qualifying exam	Thesis Defense
Year 3		Dissertation Defense

16 Frequently Asked Questions

1) *What if guidelines in this document conflict with COGS regulations?*
   Answer: COGS regulations are the authority over Department guidelines. All COGS guidelines are listed in the University Catalog under the COGS section. Additional information is provided on the COGS website.

2) *What do I do if I cannot meet department guidelines?*
   Answer: Work with your major advisor to determine if there is any flexibility in guidelines. Any deviation from the guidelines in the Department Handbook should be approved by the Department Chair.

3) *What if I disagree or cannot meet requirements for COGS Regulations?*

Answer: Work with your major professor and department chair to file a petition with COGS (see Catalog for petition procedures).

4) *How many classes do I need to take to graduate and in what discipline?*
Answer: Graduation requires a study plan that describes the classes the student will take to meet the unit requirements for the degree. The unit requirements are listed on the COGS website (Table 1 in this document provides a summary of unit requirements). Classes are chosen by the student with input from the committee and approval of the major advisor. Class topic requirements are not dictated by COGS or the SWS degree guidelines.

5) *Are there time limits on degree completion?*
Answer: Generally, no, however, credits for overage classes (more than 8 years old) are limited. Additionally, continuous enrollment or a leave of absence approval is required (See COGS Regulations in catalog).

6) *Can I change my committee members?*
Answer: You can make a request to change committee members. COGS has procedures for committee member change petition. Major professor reassignment is more limited but can be discussed. This requires careful planning and discussion and may result in removal from a research assistantship. You should work with the Department Chair to request consideration of change of major advisor.

7) *What do I do if I need help?*
Answer: The University of Idaho has many sources of information and help. If neutral party oversight is required, there is a University of Idaho Ombudsman to serve this roll. There are units within the University that support all aspects of student life, from academic issues to personal safety, health, and well-being. A good place to start to request help is your major advisor, the Department Chair, **OR** the Student Health Services.

Submit additional questions to the Department Director of Graduate Studies or The Department Chair for inclusion in this section in future versions.

17 Additional Resources

- Personal Safety on Campus
  https://www.uidaho.edu/infrastructure/i-safety/personal-safety

- Public Safety and Campus Security
  www.uidaho.edu/infrastructure/pss \
- Policy Against Sexual Harassment
  https://www.uidaho.edu/governance/policy/policies/fsh/3/3220
- Non-Discrimination Policy
  www.uidaho.edu/ocri/policy-procedure/nondiscrimination-policy