

**Graduate Studies in Plant Pathology**  
**Summary of Department and Graduate School Policies**

**UPDATED May 2016**

**A. Plant Pathology Degree Programs**

The Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology offers three degree options: Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Master of Science (M.S.), and Master of Agriculture (M.Ag.). For each option, requirements are summarized below. Refer to the current edition of the [Auburn University Bulletin](#) for additional details on credit hours and course requirements.

**Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D.).** The Doctor of Philosophy degree prepares the student for a professional career in teaching, research, and/or extension. Students pursuing a Ph.D. have a residency requirement, are required to conduct original research, make seminar presentations, and prepare a dissertation under the direction of their advisory committee.

**Master of Science Degree (M.S.).** The Master of Science degree prepares the student for teaching, research, or extension careers or for further studies toward a Ph.D. Students pursuing M.S. degrees are required to conduct research, present seminars, and prepare a thesis under the direction of their advisory committee.

**Master of Agriculture (M.Ag.).** The Master of Agriculture degree is a non-thesis degree offered by many departments in the College of Agriculture. The M.Ag. degree offers specialized education beyond the Bachelor's degree, as preparation for a career in plant pathology that does not require a research-based degree. Students in this program will be required to complete a writing assignment, which may be done under the direction of any individual faculty member within the department. This assignment might be the preparation of an extension bulletin, completion of a short research report, or other approved document. The M.Ag. is not intended to prepare the student for continuation into a Ph.D. program.

**SUMMARY of credit requirements**

**The Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.)** is a research based dissertation degree program usually supported with an assistantship. It requires 60 credit hours minimum beyond the Bachelor's degree. Thirty (30) credit hours must be in graded (e.g., A, B, C) course work in 6000-level or higher courses after the Bachelor's degree. At least 30 additional credit hours are required and these may include up to (but no more than) 10 hours of research (PLPA 8990). Students on assistantships MUST register for at least one hour of 8990 per semester.

**The Master of Science degree (M. S.)** is a research-based thesis degree program usually supported with an assistantship. Completion of this degree requires a minimum of 30 credit hours (beyond the Bachelor's degree) in 6000-level (or higher) courses, with 21 of the credit

hours consisting of plant pathology courses, and 9 credit hours in subjects determined by the committee. The 21 credit hours of plant pathology can include up to (but no more than) 6 hours of research (PLPA 7990). Students on assistantships MUST register for at least one hour of 7990 per semester.

**The Master of Agriculture degree (M. Ag.)** is a non-thesis degree that is not supported with an assistantship. Completion of this degree requires a minimum of 32 credit hours in 6000-level (or higher) courses after the Bachelor's degree, with 21 credit hours in plant pathology. The 21 credit hours of plant pathology will not include any research hours (PLPA 7990).

## **B. Course Requirements for Graduate Students in Plant Pathology**

### **Core Curriculum**

The Core Curriculum in **Plant Pathology** consists of:

- PLPA 6200 Mycology, (4 credits)
- PLPA 6300 Plant-Bacterial Interactions, (4 credits)
- PLPA 6400 Plant Virology, (3 credits)
- PLPA 6500 Plant Nematology, (4 credits)
- STAT 7000 or CSES 7080 One Statistics course
- \*\*Seminar, PLPA 7950/8950
- \* Teaching Practicum, PLPA 8910

\*Required for Ph.D. students; \*\*required for all students

Master's students in Plant Pathology must complete Introductory Mycology (PLPA 6200) and two additional PLPA core courses; Ph.D. students must complete all five courses in the core curriculum for Plant Pathology. In addition to these core courses, it is strongly recommended that M.S. candidates complete one course from each list below; Ph.D. candidates should complete two courses from each list.

#### List A:

- PLPA 6050, Plant Disease Diagnosis (3 credits)
- PLPA 6060, Plant Disease Management (3 credits)
- PLPA 7860, Plant Disease Epidemiology (3 credits)
- PLPA 7080, Field Survey (3 credits)

#### List B:

- PLPA 8880, Molecular Plant Pathology (3 credits)
  - PLPA 7930 Journal Review for Entomology and Plant Pathology (1 credit)
- Courses suggested by the Advisory Committee

New students without an introductory course in Plant Pathology on their transcripts will be required to take PLPA 3000 (4 credits), General Plant Pathology. Students who have not been recently enrolled or working in a field related to Plant Pathology, or non-native English speakers, also may be required to take PLPA 3000 by their Advisory Committee. It is worth noting that

Undergraduate level courses cannot be considered towards the Graduate Degree, but they will still count towards the tuition fellowship.

**Course checklist:**

Description	Course number	M.Ag. credits	Course number	M.S. credits	Course Number	Additional Credits for PhD
Research and (Thesis or Dissertation)		0	PLPA 7990	6 <sup>1</sup>	PLPA 8990	10 <sup>1</sup>
Mycology	PLPA 6200	4	PLPA 6200	4		
Seminars			PLPA 7950	1	PLPA 8950	1
Additional core courses <sup>2</sup>	2 to 3 courses	3 to 10	PLPA XXXX	3 or 4	PLPA XXXX	3 or 4
List A courses <sup>3</sup>	1 to 4 courses	3 to 12	PLPA XXXX	3 to 5	PLPA XXXX	3 to 5
List B courses <sup>4</sup>	Options	1 or more	Options	3 or more	Options	3 or more
Teaching Practicum <sup>5</sup>		0			PLPA 8910	1 to 3
Electives	1 or 2 courses	1 or more credits	1 or 2 courses	1 or more credits	1 to 3 courses	3 or more credits
Required		32		30		30

<sup>1</sup>This is the maximum number of research credits that can be applied to the minimum credits for the degree; M.S. and Ph.D. students may take more hours of these research credits.

<sup>2</sup> Core courses other than Mycology are Plant Nematology (PLPA 6500), Plant-Bacterial Interactions (PLPA 6300), Plant Virology (PLPA 6400), and a statistics course (e.g. STAT 7000 or CSES 7080 or CSES 6010). Other than Mycology, two additional PLPA core courses are required for the M.S. degree. It is strongly recommended that all core courses (= 5 courses) be taken by Ph.D. students.

<sup>3</sup> List A courses are those in “applied” subjects: Plant Disease Diagnosis (PLPA 6050), Plant Disease Management (PLPA 6060), Plant Disease Epidemiology (PLPA 7860), and Field Survey (PLPA 7080).

<sup>4</sup> List B courses are those in “basic” areas: Molecular Plant Pathology (PLPA 8880), Journal Review for Entomology and Plant Pathology (PLPA 7930)

<sup>5</sup> “Teaching Practicum” is required for Ph.D. students and number of hours of enrollment should reflect actual time involved with course. Generally, 2 to 3 hours of weekly classroom time is 1 credit hour of registration.

**C. GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES**

All graduate students must be registered for 9 credit hours per semester to be considered full-time students until completion of the formal course work on their approved plan of study. This includes undergraduate courses, including Research and Thesis/Dissertation, ENTM/PLPA 7990/8990.

Domestic students may be considered full-time if registered for 1 credit hour of Research and Thesis/Dissertation ENTM/PLPA 7990/8990 and with successful petition to the Graduate School to register them for [GRAD7@@0 THESIS / GRAD8@@0 DISSERTATION COMPLETION](#).

International students must fill out an [Authorization to Drop Below Full Time Enrollment Form](#) from the Office of International Affairs that will permit them to be designated as full-time with 1 credit hour of Research and Thesis/ Dissertation ENTM/PLPA 7990/8990.

Note that among the qualifiers for candidacy for the Ph.D., doctoral students must successfully complete the written and oral Qualifying Examination (referred to as the “Prelim” or “Candidacy” exam). Graduate students may carry a maximum course load of 16 credit hours per semester (14 hours in summer for any combination of terms).

#### **D. Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology Policies**

Courses that a graduate student might take are determined in consultation with his/her major professor and advisory committee. Required courses that must be taken by every graduate student are listed above.

All students in residence on assistantship in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology must register for at least 1 credit of Research and Thesis/Dissertation ENTM/PLPA 7990/8990 each semester. Additional credits in 7990/8990 courses should reflect time involved with research. An additional requirement includes Seminar (PLPA 7950/8950); 1 credit is required for Master’s students and 2 credits are required for Doctoral students. Both Master’s and Doctoral students must present a research “proposal” seminar (scheduled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of the program for M. S. and Ph.D., respectively) and a final research “results” seminar (“exit seminar”). The “Proposal” seminar will be scheduled at a time different than the Departmental Seminar series, but should be advertised and open to all Department members, therefore an adequate room (capacity > 15 people) should be selected.

Students on graduate research assistantships (GRA) in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology must generally maintain full-time status. Exceptions may be granted in semesters when no courses are being taken and only research efforts are on-going (see above).