



**UNIVERSITY OF  
GEORGIA**

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN AGRICULTURAL  
LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, AND  
COMMUNICATION**

**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2024-2025**

**Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and  
Communication**

## • INTRODUCTION

The **Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication** promotes the study and practice of messaging, educational strategies, and personal leadership as vehicles for influencing societal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about agricultural and environmental science. With a focus on strategically promoting and strengthening the food and fiber sectors through scholarship, experiential teaching and learning, and outreach, ALEC is committed to improving lives through Georgia's land-grant mission. We strive to recruit, retain, and mentor the best and brightest faculty and students.

The mission is accomplished through efforts in the following eight strategic goals:

- 1) Scholarly merit measured by research productivity, attracting external funding for our research.
- 2) Exceptional teaching and training of undergraduate students, graduate students and consumers outside of the higher education setting.
- 3) Empowering learners to build capacity and apply skills that address the critical issues facing their local communities, the state of Georgia, the United States of America and the world.
- 4) Supporting agricultural and natural resource industries through timely, appropriate information that increases opportunities for our stakeholders and community partners.
- 5) Providing expertise to academic peers and collaborators on the human dimensions of critical issues through the lens of education, communication and leadership theory and practice.
- 6) Elevating the visibility and prestige of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the University of Georgia through continuous improvement and opportunity seeking.
- 7) Cultivating a culture of mutual support, respect and collegiality within the department, across the College, throughout the University, and all we engage with through our work.
- 8) Striving to make each day productive and fun while maintaining a focus on our fundamental goal of improving the lives of those we serve; to approach this mission with humility, enthusiasm, accountability and hopefulness.

### **ALEC Graduate Degree Overview**

The department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication (ALEC) offers multi-disciplinary teaching, research and outreach programs aimed at developing and supporting professionals for leadership, teaching and communication careers in agricultural and environmental fields. Students receive personal attention and a challenging and supportive learner-centered educational environment. We offer a small school atmosphere amidst the abundant opportunities and resources at the University of Georgia.

The Master of Science in Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication (MS ALEC) degree develops professionals to lead, teach and communicate about food, the environment, and social systems. Graduates of the program work in leadership positions within the agricultural and environmental sciences industry, educate the public about agricultural and environmental sciences, communicate with the public concerning agricultural and environmental sciences issues, use leadership skills to solve the most challenging problems of society, and conduct original research that promotes food, environmental, and social sustainability.

### **MS ALEC Program Components**

- The MS in ALEC is a 36-credit hour degree.
- Graduate instruction and research may be undertaken in the following areas of specialization:
  - Agricultural and Environmental Science Leadership

- Agricultural and Environmental Science Education
- Agricultural and Environmental Science Communication

### **ALEC Admissions Process**

Applicants to the ALEC graduate program will submit the standard UGA **Graduate School application in addition to supplemental materials** required by the ALEC Department. All materials listed below can be submitted through the online application found at this link: <https://gradapply.uga.edu/apply/>

- Grad School application/minimums:
  - The University of Georgia Graduate School requires the following minimum for admission to Graduate Programs at UGA:
    - 3.0 GPA for U.S. students
    - Transcripts from undergraduate and graduate institutions
    - Resume or Curriculum Vitae
    - Three letters of reference.
  - ALEC Department also requires the following additions to your application to be considered for admission into the graduate program:
    - TOEFL score of 80+ for international students from non-English speaking nations
    - Statement of Purpose - In two pages or less discuss 1) your **future** career goals, 2) how the degree you are seeking will benefit you professionally, 3) how your research ideas fit within the ALEC disciplines, and 4) any communication you have had with ALEC faculty and if he/she is willing serve as your advisor.
    - Academic Writing Sample with scholarly citations
    - Entrance exams are optional (GRE Verbal score of 150+ and Quantitative score of 140+ or a MAT score of 400+)

Applicants seeking an assistantship must email a letter of interest and resume/CV by the admission deadline to the Graduate Coordinator: Dr. Alexa Lamm ([alamm@uga.edu](mailto:alamm@uga.edu)) through December 31, 2024, and after January 1, 2025, Dr. Abigail Borron ([aborron@uga.edu](mailto:aborron@uga.edu)).

- The letter of interest should include the following:
  - Reasons for pursuing an assistantship
  - How your experience and education contribute to the department's teaching, research and extension missions
  - Which ALEC faculty member you are interested in working with and why
  - Details regarding a specific assistantship opportunity you've discussed with a faculty member (if applicable)

Graduate students will only be admitted to the ALEC department if they have a faculty member willing to advise them through their degree program. While it is not essential you communicate with a faculty member prior to applying to the ALEC program, it is strongly encouraged. Only tenure track faculty members with graduate faculty status can advise graduate students. No faculty member is required to serve as a major professor for any student.

A graduate degree is a significant commitment; therefore, we encourage any interested students to visit the ALEC Department to get to know our faculty and so they can get to know you. To arrange a visit, email Brian Brennan, Graduate Coordinator Assistant, at [Brian.Brennan@uga.edu](mailto:Brian.Brennan@uga.edu).

**Deadlines for ALEC Graduate Program Admission are as follows:**

- Fall Admission
  - February 1 – Fall applicants seeking assistantships or applicants desiring to start in the summer.
  - April 1 – Applicants not seeking assistantships and Double Dawg applicants
- Spring Admission - October 1

**Global expectations of all students:**

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior while enrolled in the graduate program and to act in a manner that demonstrates integrity and respect for others and the campus environment. In alignment with the strategic plan of the American Association for Agricultural Education, we expect our students to foster excellence in the discovery and exchange of evidence-based solutions for social science challenges in agriculture and related sciences by embracing inclusivity, collaboration, professionalism, impact, and innovation.

**Adherence to university policies:**

- **Academic Honesty:** In keeping with the academic honesty policy of the University of Georgia, all participants in the MS ALEC program are expected to be academically honest in all their work and not tolerate academic dishonesty of others. Academic honesty means performing all work without plagiarism, cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, receiving unauthorized or illegitimate assistance from any other person, or using any source of information that is not common knowledge. Academic dishonesty means knowingly performing, attempting to perform, or assisting any other person in performing academic work that does not meet this standard. A full statement of the policy is available online at [http://www.uga.edu/honesty/aphd/culture\\_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/honesty/aphd/culture_honesty.htm).
- **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment:** For procedures and official policy statements relating to all phases of living, working, and studying at the University of Georgia, see the important information provided by the UGA Office of Legal Affairs at <http://www.uga.edu/inside/policies.html>. This site includes information on the University of Georgia's **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy**, which includes official policy statements on discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, academic freedom, student-to-student complaints, and the right to appeal. For a direct link to UGA's **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy**, see <https://eoo.uga.edu/policies/non-discrimination-anti-harassment-policy>.
- **Workplace Violence:** The University of Georgia (UGA) is committed to the prevention of workplace violence and the maintenance of a respectful working environment. A safe and secure environment is a fundamental prerequisite for fulfilling UGA's mission of teaching, research and public service. UGA reaffirms the basic right of employees to a safe and humane working environment.

**Departmental Standards**

- Academic standards for ALEC graduate students
  - Maintain a 3.00 GPA in all required coursework
  - Maintain consistent contact with the major professor
  - Attend classes offered by the ALEC department

## **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Students are not only members of the academic community but are also members of the larger society. Students, therefore, retain the rights, guarantees and protections afforded to and the responsibilities held by all citizens. A student is not immune to prosecution by local, state, or federal law enforcement agencies irrespective of whether the University initiates judicial proceedings in a given situation. As members of the University community, students have a responsibility to know and follow the University conduct regulations. Violations of these regulations will result in action by the Office of Student Conduct.

As would be expected, standards for University of Georgia students are higher than those of communities not engaged solely in scholarly pursuits. Not every situation a student may encounter can be anticipated in a written document. Therefore, students are expected to act in a manner that demonstrates integrity and respect for others and the campus environment. In order to provide direction for that expectation, the University of Georgia has adopted The Pillars of the Arch as a means of articulating three guiding principles or values. By adhering to these principles, students can enjoy their own rights while also respecting others' rights. By doing so, students assist in furthering the University's aspirations to uphold The Pillars of the Arch.

### **The Pillars of the Arch**

As members of the University of Georgia community, we aspire to uphold the principles manifested in the three Pillars of the Arch:

#### ***Wisdom, Justice and Moderation***

- **Wisdom** challenges us to apply lessons received inside and outside the classroom to our everyday lives. Wisdom transcends knowledge, embracing curiosity, discovery, and expression throughout our community.
- **Justice** leads us to be fair in our dealings, accountable for our actions, responsible for ourselves, and empathetic for others. Justice requires honesty and celebrates diversity, establishing credibility and integrity for our community and ourselves.
- **Moderation** compels us to act with civility, bolstering our faith in others and the faith others have in us. Moderation accentuates our self-respect, promotes responsible citizenship, and enhances pride in our university.

Without each of these pillars, the Arch would lose its strength and balance. Likewise, all three qualities are necessary for us to be strong and complete citizens.

#### • **ACADEMIC/CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS**

- **Mentoring Compact:** Students starting Fall 2024 will be required to work with their faculty advisor/major professor on a mentoring compact that should be completed by October 1. The purpose of a mentoring compact is to communicate goals and expectations for working together. The faculty member will take the lead on this document and invite your input. The exact format and content of the mentoring compact will vary across faculty members/labs and projects.
- **Minimum Enrollment:** All enrolled students pursuing graduate degrees at the University of Georgia must register for a minimum of 3 hours of credit during any semester in which they use

University facilities and/or faculty/staff time. This includes semesters in which they are completing comprehensive examinations (MS ALEC non-thesis) and defending their thesis/dissertation.

Students enrolled full-time and on departmental assistantship are expected to enroll in the maximum of 18 credit hours in the Fall and Spring semesters. This includes 9 hours of content and 9 hours of research, internship, independent study, and/or seminar (or additional content course(s) as advised by the student's major professor).

Students enrolled utilizing the TAP program can enroll for a maximum of 9 credit hours in the Fall, Spring and Summer semesters.

- **Seminar Requirement:** All incoming graduate students must take a 1 credit hour GradFirst Seminar (GRSC 7001 or GRSC 7001E). Students are encouraged to take it within the first year. The Program of Study will not be approved if this course has not been taken at the time of submission.

Additionally, all students on assistantship through the department must take a 1 credit hour departmental seminar (ALDR 7005) each semester. Students not on assistantship who are interested in the seminar's subject matter for the semester may enroll as well – although this is not required.

- **Continuous Enrollment Policy:** All enrolled graduate students must maintain continuous enrollment from matriculation until completion of all degree requirements. Continuous enrollment is defined as registering for a minimum of three (3) credits in at least two semesters per academic year (Fall, Spring, Summer) until the degree is attained or status as a degree-seeking graduate student is terminated. All students must be enrolled for at least three graduate credits in the semester in which degree requirements are completed.

**Leave of Absence:** A leave of absence provides a mechanism for students experiencing unusual circumstance to be exempt temporarily from the continuous enrollment policy. A leave of absence requires approval of the graduate program coordinator and the dean of Graduate School. A leave of absence will be granted only for good cause such as serious medical and health-related issues, major financial and employment issues; pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, elder care, and other significant family issues; and other major personal circumstances that interfere with the ability to undertake graduate study. An approved leave of absence does not stop the clock unless the leave is granted for pregnancy, childbirth or adoption (see below): time on leave counts toward any University, Graduate School, or program time limits pertaining to the degree being sought.

- **Time Limits:** Graduate students must complete all course work on their approved program of study within **six-years** of matriculation. For all degrees the six-year limit begins with the semester the student matriculated into the program and ends with the last semester before the beginning of the sixth year.
- **Extension of Time:** A special request for an extension of time on the six-year expiration of coursework or the five-year expiration of candidacy may be made to the dean of the Graduate School. This request must include specific reasons that the student did not complete requirements in the time allotted by Graduate School policy. A petition of this type must include

1) a specific timeline for the completion of requirements, 2) an approved advisory committee form, if required for the degree, 3) an approved program of study and a letter of support from both the program graduate coordinator and the major professor.

**Forms:** All required forms referred to in this handbook can be found on the Graduate School website at: <https://grad.uga.edu/current-students/forms/>

### **Selection of Major Professor**

Graduate students will only be admitted to the ALEC department if they have a faculty member willing to advise them through their degree program. Working with this advisor, along with an appointed Advisory Committee, the candidate will complete coursework, take comprehensive exams (non-thesis students) or conduct research and complete a thesis (MS ALEC thesis students). Comprehensive exams are given when a student has completed all of their content courses.

- Only faculty members with graduate faculty status may serve as major professor or members of the advisory committee.
- No faculty member is required to serve as a major professor for any student.
- The major professor will serve as the primary point of contact for advisory committee member selection, program of study selection, research efforts, comprehensive exams, thesis writing and defense. The major professor is expected to offer support to the students they advise, answer questions and mentor their students.
- Students are solely responsible for their own progress through the program. While the major professor offers advisement to their students, they are not responsible if a student misses a deadline or has not fulfilled the requirements of the degree program.
- If a major professor needs to be replaced or switched for any reason, the graduate coordinator and department head must be notified of the change including approval of the change by both the past and future major professor. Once this is received, the graduate coordinator will contact the graduate school Dean who approves the change.

### **Selection of Advisory Committee**

Graduate students must select their graduate advisory committee by the end of their second semester or 18 credit hours in residence.

- **Role/responsibilities of the committee**  
The advisory committee, along with the major professor, share responsibilities to monitor graduate student progress and guide the student toward timely completion of their degree program. The advisory committee is charged with framing and approving programs of study, advising students on required research skills, directing and approving the comprehensive examinations, guiding the design of dissertation research projects, reading and approving the final thesis document and approving the final oral examination (defense).
- **Departmental Graduate Advisory Committee Requirements:** Graduate education is a negotiated process between the student, their major professor and their graduate advisory committee. In conjunction they will select coursework and determine the direction of the thesis. A student's graduate committee is chaired by their appointed academic faculty advisor. A

committee approval form (G130) should be submitted on GradStatus to the Graduate School for this degree.

The MS ALEC advisory committee must consist of at least:

- Chair 1: An ALEC faculty member holding at least a 50% appointment in ALEC with graduate faculty status at UGA.
- Member 2: An ALEC faculty member holding at least a 50% faculty appointment in ALEC with graduate faculty status at UGA.
- Member 3: An ALEC faculty member or a faculty member of another department holding graduate faculty status at UGA.

Additional voting members may be appointed to the committee, including no more than one non-UGA faculty, who must hold the terminal degree in their field of study. Upon the recommendation of the departmental graduate coordinator, the dean of the Graduate School shall appoint the advisory committee for the student.

### **Program of Study**

An approved MS ALEC program of study (both thesis and non-thesis) must carry a minimum of 36 hours of graduate course work. This must include:

- Four core courses (12 hours) including research methods and the required communication, leadership and teaching and learning course as designated by the MS ALEC core at the time of admittance;
- 15 hours (thesis) or 21 hours (non-thesis) of coursework specific to their focus area: AES education, AES leadership or AES communication (Non-thesis students may include up to 6 hours of master's research as required electives);
- 3 hours of quantitative and qualitative research methods; and
- A maximum of six hours of thesis research (thesis option only).

The final Program of Study must be approved by the student's major professor and the Graduate Coordinator. The student should submit the final Program of Study (POS) form using the Program of Study Form (G138) in GradStatus at the beginning of the semester they plan to graduate.

***The Degree Objective is: Master of Science.*** Only add the courses listed above on the POS (GRSC 7770 and ALDR 7005 should not be placed on the POS). All content courses on the Program of Study must fall within a six-year time limit.

**Required Course Substitutions:** Substitutions are strongly discouraged by UGA and ALEC. Any student interested in substituting a course must first discuss the situation with their major professor. The student must then submit a departmental course substitution form to the graduate coordinator. The graduate coordinator (with advisement from the departmental graduate committee and the course instructor of the required course) and the department head must approve the change.

### **MS ALEC Non-thesis Comprehensive Examinations**

The ALEC department requires all non-thesis MS ALEC students pass a Written Comprehensive Examination. The written comprehensive examination is given after a student has completed the bulk of their course work as deemed appropriate by their major professor. Students planning to take their Comprehensive Examination must meet with their major professor to discuss the examination. The



student will report when they are taking their exam to the Graduate Coordinator through email at least two weeks prior to the exam being given.

Written exam procedure:

- Major professor assigns question focus areas to each of the three faculty members on the student's advisory committee to develop 3-4 questions that test the student's ability to assimilate and apply their coursework.
- Questions will be turned in to the major professor and assimilated into the test with care taken to be sure questions are not duplicative.
- The student will have one work week to complete the set of questions with their resources at their disposal.
- Any potential use of Generative AI must be discussed with the major professor and parameters agreed upon. Any use of Generative AI outside of those established parameters will be considered a violation of the UGA Academic Honesty policy.
- Upon completion, the major professor will send the full set of responses to the committee who will review the responses and provide a pass/fail response within one week of their receipt to the student's major professor.
- The major professor will submit the Non-thesis Final Exam Results form to the Graduate Coordinator Assistant who will keep a copy for the departmental files and forward the signed form to the Graduate School.

### **MS ALEC Application to Graduate, Thesis Defense, and Final Submission**

Submit the Application to Graduate form during your final semester to notify the Graduate School of your intent to graduate.

The ALEC department requires all MS ALEC thesis students submit a final draft of their thesis to their Advisory Committee no later than two weeks before their thesis defense. The draft is one which has already been approved by the student's major professor as being complete and editorially correct. Students are required to open their thesis defense to the public (e.g., friends/family, other students and faculty members, and any interested party). To make the required public announcement, send an email with thesis title, date, and location (scheduled with Brenda Hamilton) to Brian Brennan at least three weeks prior to the defense.

The master's thesis demonstrates independent judgment in developing a problem from primary sources. It is the responsibility of the advisory committee to review and evaluate the thesis as a representation of a student's individual effort. As such, the use of generative AI in theses and dissertations is considered unauthorized assistance per the Academic Code of Honesty and is prohibited unless specifically authorized by members of the advisory committee for use within the approved scope. If approved by the advisory committee, the extent of generative AI usage should be disclosed in a statement within the thesis.

Thesis defense procedure:

- All members of the Advisory Committee must be physically present or have electronic means of meeting for the entire period of this Examination.
- It is suggested the MS ALEC advisor contact other committee members several days prior to the defense to see if they have issues with the candidate's thesis.
- Oral exams will last approximately 2 hours.
- At the beginning of the defense, the candidate will give a presentation providing an overview of

their thesis that is open to the public.

It is suggested the MS ALEC advisor then ask the candidate and those in attendance other than their committee to leave the room and ask the committee if they have specific areas of concern prior to the defense beginning. The candidate will be brought back in, and each committee member will be allowed to ask questions about the thesis.

- Upon completion the candidate will be asked to leave, and the committee will then decide on the outcome of the defense.
- The MS ALEC advisor will retrieve the candidate and present them with the outcome back in the room.

A Defense Form must be completed by all Advisory Committee members after the defense. The Approval Form for Master's Thesis and Final Oral Examination (G140) in GradStatus should be submitted by the student prior to the exam. The Graduate Coordinator will forward the form to the Advisory Committee to record their votes.

By [the deadline listed for the graduation semester](#), a complete formatted copy of the thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School for a first format check (G121). **Upon passing the oral exam, a final copy of the thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School through the Electronic Thesis Dissertation system (G129) on GradStatus.**

## Graduation

Submit the application for graduation at the beginning of the semester in which you intend to graduate. See dates and deadlines on the [Graduate School Website](#). The deadline is typically two weeks after the beginning of the semester. Failure to apply for graduation by the deadline will result in a late filing application fee.

Students who have not completed degree requirements as determined by the Graduate School and by published deadlines will not be allowed to walk in the ceremony but may return to walk in a subsequent commencement event. **There are NO exceptions to this policy.**

Notes about walking in graduation: There is no summer commencement ceremony so plan accordingly if desire to walk.

### • INTEGRITY IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

See links below to applicable UGA compliance and training materials:

- [SecureUGA \(mandatory for all UGA employees\)](#)
- Teaching Assistants should complete the following:
  - [Mandatory TA Orientation](#)
  - [Register for ALDR 7770E](#) – consult with major professor
- [Institutional Review Board \(IRB; human subjects\)](#)
- [Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\)](#)

### • EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC / RESEARCH PROGRESS

#### Expectations

Graduate students must earn a grade of B- or higher in all four core ALEC courses. Students who earn less than a B- will be allowed to repeat the course one time. In the event they do not achieve a grade of B- or higher during the second enrollment, they may petition the graduate faculty. Graduate faculty may, after consultation with the instructor of the class, recommend that the student be terminated from the program or recommend an alternative means of demonstrating mastery of the content taught in the course in question.

### **Annual Evaluation by Student**

Students are required to submit an Annual Degree Progress Report to graduate faculty each spring semester. The purpose of the report is to provide a detailed description with which to monitor annual degree progress. It is also designed to allow the student to self-monitor degree progress and to assist in planning for degree completion.

The Annual Degree Progress Report form will be sent to students to complete prior to the annual evaluation by graduate faculty. The student's faculty major professor must sign the report before it is submitted to graduate faculty.

### **Annual Evaluation by Faculty**

The graduate faculty will evaluate each graduate student every spring semester. Based on a student's progress in the program, the graduate faculty will then make one of three recommendations: (a) student may continue in the program; (b) remedial assignments must be successfully completed by the student before the student may continue in the program; or (c) student should withdraw from the program.

The evaluation and recommendation will be transmitted in writing to the student by the student's major professor and the Graduate Coordinator. The Annual Evaluation by faculty is also an opportunity for faculty to acknowledge excellence in student performance and reinforce a student's progress toward degree completion. The written progress/evaluation report must be signed by the student's major professor and the student. A copy will then be kept by the department with a copy provided to student.

### **Annual evaluation response/appeal process for students**

The student has the opportunity to write a response to the annual evaluation. The student must submit the response to the ALEC graduate coordinator and their major professor within two weeks of receiving the results of their annual evaluation. Within two weeks of receiving the annual evaluation response, the graduate student, graduate coordinator and the student's major professor meet to converse, discuss the response and make a recommendation to the department head on how to move forward together.

### **Grade Appeals**

Any student, undergraduate or graduate, who believes that he or she received an incorrect or unfair grade due to factual error, improper or unprofessional bias, or evaluation different from the stated course objectives/criteria or other public criteria, may appeal the grade. Grades are appealed within the department and college in which they are earned, not in the department and college in which the student's major resides. Exception: Grade appeals, when a grade of I (Incomplete) has lapsed to a grade of F, must go directly to the UGA Educational Affairs Committee. Please note that all grade appeals must be initiated within one calendar year from the end of the term in which the grade was recorded.

Appeal route:

1. Instructor
2. Department Head\*
3. Dean's Office
4. Graduate School
5. UGA Educational Affairs Committee\*
6. UGA President
7. Board of Regents

\*Prior to review at each of these levels, the faculty member who assigned the student's final grade will receive a copy of the student's letter of appeal and be given the opportunity to provide a response for those reviewing the appeal.

## **Dismissal**

Students (1) not making sufficient academic progress or (2) exhibiting conduct not befitting a professional or (3) exhibiting a pattern of behaviors which are judged very likely to hinder the student from adequate performance as a professional will be reviewed for possible dismissal from their program of study at the end of any academic semester.

The following indicators will precipitate a review at the Program level which may be cause for dismissal.

- Student is found guilty of academic dishonesty.
- Student exhibits a pattern of behaviors which are judged very likely to hinder the student's performance as a professional. The faculty will use as guides behaviors as described in the Code of Ethics of relevant professional associations.

The Graduate Coordinator is charged with maintaining oversight of each student's progress. When any of the above indicators are identified, the Graduate Coordinator will convene a committee of at least two faculty members from the program to review the student's progress and to determine whether the student should be dismissed from the program. The committee's decision is final. Graduate students will be dismissed through the Graduate School. For more information about the Graduate School's Dismissal Policy, please go to: <https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/probation-and-dismissal/>

## **Request for Reconsideration by Graduate Committee**

A student dismissed from the graduate program may submit a letter to the Graduate Committee to ask for reconsideration if the letter provides new information regarding reasons for the failure to make adequate progress towards degree.

## **Dismissal Appeal to the Department Head**

A student dismissed from the graduate program may submit an appeal letter to the Department Head. Upon receipt of the appeal letter, the Department Head will appoint a committee of three faculty members not serving on the Graduate Committee to handle the appeal. The appointed committee will decide based on information obtained from the student, their major professor, and the Graduate Committee.

## **Dismissal Appeal to the Graduate School**

Dismissal by the Institute may be appealed to the dean of the Graduate School after all avenues of appeal

have been exhausted within the Institute. When students are terminated by the Institute, but not simultaneously by the Graduate School, they may apply for admission to another graduate program if they wish to do so.

### **Graduate School Dismissal**

In addition to departmental dismissal policies, students must also adhere to the standards for Dismissal outlined by the [Graduate School](#). Students who wish to appeal dismissals by the Graduate School should follow the [graduate school appeals process](#).

### **Grievance Process**

If a student has a grievance against their major professor, the student can file a formal written grievance with the graduate coordinator outlining their concerns and what has been done thus far to resolve the issue. Within a week of receiving the grievance the graduate coordinator will contact the student's major professor and department head to inform them of the grievance. Within two weeks of receiving the written grievance, the graduate student, graduate coordinator, and student's major professor will meet to converse, discuss the grievance and make a recommendation to the department head on how to move forward together.

If a student has a grievance against a faculty member who is not their major professor (e.g. advisory committee member or faculty assistantship supervisor) they must first discuss the issue with their major professor to determine the best way forward. If the issue is not resolved at this level, the student can file a formal written grievance with the graduate coordinator outlining their concerns and what has been done thus far to resolve the issue. Within a week of receiving the grievance the graduate coordinator will contact the student's major professor and department head to inform them of the grievance and best way forward. Within 30 days of receiving the written grievance, the graduate student, graduate coordinator student's major professor, and the faculty member involved will meet to converse, discuss the rebuttal and make a recommendation to the department head on how to move forward together.

If a student has a conflict with another student, they must first discuss the issue with their major professor to determine the best way forward. If deemed appropriate, the student's major professor should reach out to the other student's advisor to discuss the issue further. The four individuals (two graduate students and two faculty advisors) should meet in person to discuss the issue and way forward. If the issue is not resolved at this level, the student with their grievance and their major professor can file a formal written grievance together with the graduate coordinator outlining their concerns and what has been done thus far to resolve the issue. Within a week of receiving the grievance the graduate coordinator will contact the department head to inform them of the grievance. Within two weeks of receiving the written grievance, the two graduate students in conflict, both of the student's major professors, and the graduate coordinator will meet to converse, discuss the rebuttal and make a recommendation to the department head on how to move forward together including moving the issue to remediation at the university level.

## **• FUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS**

### **ALEC Departmental Assistantships**

#### **Assistantship Offers**

Assistantships to support teaching, research and extension in the department are available for highly qualified candidates who plan to pursue a graduate degree full-time. Assistantships are awarded based on contents of the Letter of Intent, faculty preference, grade point average, GRE scores, and letters of recommendation.

Graduate research and teaching assistantships (GRA/GTA) are paid positions within the ALEC department. A graduate assistant on contract also receives a tuition waiver for both in-state and out-of-state tuition that reduces tuition to \$25 per semester; however, students must pay UGA fees and have health insurance.

Graduate students will not be granted tuition waivers for semesters during which they do not have a graduate assistant contract. Students may qualify for summer semester reduced matriculation if they held an assistantship contract either before or after the summer term. Students eligible for this reduced fee must submit a formal request through the ALEC Business Manager.

GRA/GTA assist faculty with research and/or teaching and are expected to work 13-20 hours per week during the semester. Assistantships may be offered on a 9-month (academic) or 12-month basis (annual). Students who are on assistantship, or working on-campus jobs, may not exceed 20 work hours per week per university policy.

Students on a departmental GRA/GTA are expected to enroll in ALDR 7005 Departmental Seminar during Fall and Spring semesters. This seminar does not count toward degree requirements.

Students interested in an assistantship should submit a Letter of Intent and resume to the Graduate Coordinator detailing their reasons for pursuing an assistantship and how their experience and education contribute to the department's teaching, research and extension missions.

**Deadline:** Letters of intent for assistantships are due February 1 for Fall admission and October 1 for Spring admission.

- Students on assistantship are expected to be active members of the ALEC community. This includes attending relevant events, maintaining a presence in the office as negotiated with their faculty supervisor, being respectful and courteous to others both inside and outside of the department, adhering to the requests of the faculty member they have been assigned to, and following through on expectations established in the mentoring compact.
- Students on assistantship will be evaluated by the faculty member they are assigned to annually.
- Assistantship assignments will be renewed annually based on availability of funding, the student maintaining the proper academic standing, previous job performance, and professionalism. Renewal of an assistantship is not guaranteed; therefore, regular communication with your assigned faculty member is strongly suggested to ensure you are meeting their needs and expectations.
- A student can be terminated from their assistantship and receipt of support at any time. Grounds for termination include inability to complete tasks assigned, lack of responsiveness, and lack of professionalism.
- Department funded assistantships end upon graduation regardless of the contract end date.

### **Vacation Time**

Graduate Research Assistants do not earn vacation time. Vacation/time off must be coordinated with

the student's major professor and assistantship supervisor. Plan ahead and let both know at least one month in advance.

### **Resources Available**

Offices in the ALEC Section of Four Towers for Athens students and NESPAL for Tifton students will be reserved for students whose assistantship supervisors are in these respective buildings. Each student with an ALEC Departmental Assistantship will have access to the following resources:

- Office space
- Dell or similar computer
- Black & white printer access for materials supporting your research, faculty, etc.
- Key to designated office space to be returned prior to departure
- Computer lab with research software

### **Office Policies**

Assistantship students must agree to comply with the following office policies:

- Do not hang any items with nails on the walls of offices
- Lock all offices when not in use
- Doors and door frames should not be used as display boards
- Inform ALEC staff of any maintenance and technology issues
- Respect others in the office by being aware of excessive noise; our walls are very thin!
- Do not leave open food in your office space and keep the office neat and clean
- Use provided refrigerators responsibly, and be sure to keep it cleaned out
- Provide Advisor and Graduate Coordinator Assistant a tentative plan of working hours each week including keeping Outlook calendar up to date with class schedule and other meetings
- Empty trash/recycling regularly to maintain a clean office space

### **Graduate Student Employment Policy**

Policies concerning the employment of graduate students at the University of Georgia are administered by the Graduate School business office. Highlights of these policies are listed below. For questions, please call the business office at 706-542-4798.

1. Graduate students are employed in one of two categories: graduate assistants on the academic or monthly payrolls or as student assistants on the hourly payroll. All students must be registered any semester in which they are employed. The requirement also applies to summer semester.
2. Graduate assistantships from 33-50% time require students to be registered for 18 credit hours throughout the term of the assistantship. Requests to exceed the maximum course load must be approved by advisor and the Graduate Records Office prior to registration.
3. Graduate assistantships must be at least 33% time to qualify for the reduced matriculation fee. Written verification of assistantship must be received in the Graduate School business office prior to registration for fees to be properly assessed. An award letter in and of itself does not constitute verification of an assistantship.
4. Student with graduate assistantship of 33% time may work up to 7 hours per week on the University hourly payroll in addition to their assistantships.

All new GTAs (Graduate Teaching Assistants) who have instructional responsibility are required to

attend the university-wide orientation for Graduate Assistants held before the beginning of fall semester classes, which is sponsored by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Returning GTAs are encouraged to attend sessions of interest. Link to TA Orientation info page: <https://ctl.uga.edu/grad-student/ta-orientation/>

All new GTAs are also required to enroll in GRSC 7770 (does not count toward the degree). GTAs may have an opportunity to teach their own section of an ALDR, AGED, or AGCM course with approval from their advisor.

### **Travel Awards**

The Graduate School offers grants and other funding opportunities for master's and doctoral students. See [Graduate School Financial Information page](#).

### **Professional Development Opportunities (see Graduate School website for details)**

The following Professional Development Opportunities are available through the Graduate School. [Click here for full details.](#)

- Three Minute Thesis (3MT)
- Emerging Leaders
- Teaching Portfolio
- Interdisciplinary Certificate in University Teaching
- Individual Development Plan (IDP)

### **OTHER RESOURCES:**

#### **Relevant Professional Journals**

- Journal of Agricultural Education
- Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education
- Journal of Agricultural and Extension Education
- Journal of Extension
- Journal of Leadership Education
- Journal of Applied Communications
- NACTA Journal

#### **Relevant Professional Associations**

- American Association of Agricultural Education (AAAE) - <http://aaaeonline.org>
- Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE) - <https://www.aiaee.org>
- Association for Leadership Educators (ALE) - <https://www.leadershipeducators.org>
- International Leadership Association (ILA)
- Association for Communication Excellence (ACE) - <https://www.aceweb.org>
- International Association for Society and Natural Resources (IASNR) - <https://www4.iasnr.org/>
- Rural Sociological Society (RSS) - <https://www.ruralsociology.org>
- National Communication Association – <https://www.natcom.org>
- Eastern Communication Association – <https://www.ecacomm.org>



### Relevant Professional Conferences

- AAAE National and southern region meetings
- AIAEE annual meeting
- ALE annual meeting
- ILA annual meeting
- ACE annual meeting
- National Agricultural Communication Symposium (NACS)
- International Symposium for Sustainable Resource Management (ISSRM)
- Rural Sociology National and southern region meetings

**ALEC Graduate Student Association** - <https://alec.caes.uga.edu/graduate/graduate-student-association.html>

### UGA Graduate School [Financial Resources for Students](#) include:

- Dissertation Completion Grants
- Scholarships and Fellowships

### UGA Resources for Students

- Graduate Student Organizations: GPSA, GAPS, GRADS
- Career Services: <http://www.career.uga.edu/>
- Alumni office: <https://alumni.uga.edu/>
- Libraries: <https://www.libs.uga.edu/>
- Health Center: <https://uhs.uga.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS): <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/welcome>
- Parking: <https://tps.uga.edu/parking>
- Registrar: <https://reg.uga.edu/>
- Bursar (information on tuition and fees): <http://www.bursar.uga.edu/>
- Where to rent technology: <https://mlc.uga.edu/technology/lending>
- Financial Education / ASPIRE Clinic: <https://www.aspireclinic.org/>
- Office of International Education (OIE): <https://globalengagement.uga.edu/>
- International Student Life: <https://isl.uga.edu/>
- Writing Center: <https://www.english.uga.edu/writing-center>