

# **Master of Science in Food and Resource Economics Academic Assessment Plan 2012-2013**

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*Office of the Provost*

*University of  
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*Institutional  
Assessment*

*Continuous Quality  
Enhancement*

## Table of Contents

2012-2013 Academic Assessment Plan for M.S. thesis in Food and Resource Economics.....	3
A. Mission .....	3
B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures .....	3
C. Research.....	4
D. Assessment Timeline.....	5
E. Assessment Cycle .....	5
F. Measurement Tools.....	6
G. Assessment Oversight.....	6

# 2012-2013 Academic Assessment Plan for M.S. Thesis in Food and Resource Economics

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

## A. Mission

Through a distinctive tradition of core-discipline excellence, interdisciplinary collaborations and productive partnerships, the Food and Resource Economics Department (FRED) teaches students to think critically, objectively and creatively and to be lifelong learners, engaged leaders and productive citizens; pursues research to advance knowledge and to address state, national and global challenges; and engages and educates the public.

The Food and Resource Economics Department supports the missions of the college and university to serve the nation's and state's critical needs by contributing to a well-qualified and broadly diverse citizenry, leadership and workforce through graduate education and to expand our understanding of the natural world, the intellect and the senses through graduate student research.

## B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

SLO Type	Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Degree Delivery
Knowledge	Explain relevant principles and apply theory to economic problems including possible quantitative approaches that could be used address the economic problem.	Student assessment will occur through monitoring of progress and maintenance of a 3.0 GPA minimum in core economic classes. After successful completion of the first two semesters of core courses, students will take an examination over this core material. Core classes include: AEB 6106 Microeconomic Principles and Analysis, AEB 6225 Public Policy and the Agribusiness Firm, AEB 6553 Elements of Econometrics, and AEB 6817 Survey Research Methods for Economists. The exam questions are submitted by faculty and graded using a faculty-developed rubric.	Campus

Skills	Identify relevant economic problems and conduct an original research project, the results of which contribute to the discipline's knowledge; and communicate those results to an appropriate audience.	Student will submit a research proposition in their primary field of specialization (Agribusiness, Agricultural Economics, Development Economics or Natural Resource and Environmental Economics) to a faculty committee identified by the graduate coordinator in consultation with the student's faculty adviser. The proposition will be evaluated by this committee using a faculty-developed rubric.	Campus
Professional Behavior	Display ethical behavior, cultural sensitivity, teamwork, professional conduct and effective communication.	During their degree program, students adhere to the University of Florida's Honor Code. Observations will be made by faculty of professional behavior during class activities, seminars, research project work and research project defense. These observations will be shared with and evaluated by the student's supervisory committee, using a faculty-developed rubric.	Campus

### C. Research

Students in the MS thesis program in Food and Resource Economics are expected to develop an original research project, the results of which contribute to the discipline's knowledge; and communicate those results to appropriate audiences including presentation of research papers at discipline related conferences. The students prepare for this research by completing core classes in Food and Resource Economics, including a core class in survey research methods (identified in SLO Knowledge above).

In addition to the core classes students are also required to take a minimum of 12 elective hours. This includes courses in finance, marketing, agribusiness, natural resources and the environment and quantitative methods. In all classes students are exposed to some of the current peer refereed literature and the applied applications of the literature.

During new student orientation in the department, students are also required to visit with graduate studies faculty in the department on research interests, grants for research projects, etc. Students are encouraged to identify their supervisory committee chair as quickly as possible, and no later than at the end of their second semester of classes, and begin work with these faculties as research mentors.

Finally, to facilitate and encourage presentation of research results at professional conferences, students are eligible for a portion of travel expenses to be paid by the department when the student is an author and presenting the paper at the professional conference. These funds are further enhanced and expanded through external funds solicited for this purpose.

#### D. Assessment Timeline

MS thesis in Food and Resource Economics      College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Assessment SLOs	Examination on Core	Research Proposal I	Annual Evaluation
<b>Knowledge</b>			
#1	X		
<b>Skills</b>			
#2		X	
<b>Professional Behavior</b>			
#3			X

#### E. Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle for:

MS thesis, Food and Resource Economics      College of Agricultural and Life Science

Analysis and Interpretation: August 31

Program Modifications: Completed by October 15

Dissemination: Completed by December 15

SLOs	Year	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
<b>Knowledge</b>					
#1		X	X	X	X
<b>Skills</b>					
#2			X		X
<b>Professional Behavior</b>					
#3		X	X	X	X

## F. Measurement Tools

Measurement tools are still in the developmental stage. The current knowledge SLO s are assessed by the faculty who teach the core courses (AEB 6106 Microeconomic Principles and Analysis, AEB 6225 Public Policy and the Agribusiness Firm, AEB 6553 Elements of Econometrics, and AEB 6817 Survey Research Methods for Economists). The grades of these core classes are then reviewed by the graduate program office where a C=improvement needed, B=satisfactory skills achieved and A=superior skill achievement. An overall skill level of B, measured by cumulative GPA in the core classes is required. Any student failing to achieve this level is then counseled by the associate chair/graduate coordinator.

For the entirety of the MS thesis program, a student checklist has been developed that assesses the student's progress on SLO #2 through presentation of an acceptable research proposal (admission to candidacy) and submission of the dissertation. Additionally, graduate students are invited and expected to attend the departmental seminar presentation and job interview candidate presentations to glean and enhance their research skills.

In terms of SLO #3, all MS thesis students are required to complete a UF Student Services Honesty and Ethics training offered during FRED graduate student orientation and recorded on the student checklist (A copy of the student checklist is located in Appendix A). Notations are made regarding observations of professional behavior and any concerns that arise.

## G. Assessment Oversight

Name	Department Affiliation	Email Address	Phone Number
Ray Huffaker, Chair	Food and Resource Economics	<a href="mailto:rhuffaker@ufl.edu">rhuffaker@ufl.edu</a>	352-294-7625
Rod Clouser, Assoc. Chair and Graduate Coordinator	Food and Resource Economics	<a href="mailto:rclouser@ufl.edu">rclouser@ufl.edu</a>	352-294-7623
James Sterns	Food and Resource Economics	<a href="mailto:jasterns@ufl.edu">jasterns@ufl.edu</a>	352-294-7621
Rick Weldon	Food and Resource Economics	<a href="mailto:rweldon@ufl.edu">rweldon@ufl.edu</a>	352-294-7635
Lisa House	Food and Resource Economics	<a href="mailto:lahouse@ufl.edu">lahouse@ufl.edu</a>	352-294-7653

## Appendix A MS Thesis Checklist

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ UFID: \_\_\_\_\_

First Term/Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Final Term/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Funding: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Grant \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Year 1**      1<sup>st</sup> Semester

_____	Fall	FRED Orientation	_____
		<i>(includes UF Student Services Honesty/Ethics training)</i>	
		Bio for website	_____
		Assistantship Hire	_____
		Signed LOA	_____
		Performance Evaluation	_____

Student completed UF Student Services Honesty/Ethics Training That Will Help Them Understand and Display Professional Behavior During Their Graduate Program (SLO #3).

Achieved:      Yes      No

	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	Signed LOA	_____
	Spring	Transfer of Credit from BA/BS	_____
		Supervisory committee	_____
		Program of Study Complete	_____
		Performance Evaluation	_____
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester	Signed LOA	_____
	Summer	Performance Evaluation	_____

Comments regarding professional behavior:

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Year 2</b> _____	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester	Signed LOA	_____
	Fall	Performance Evaluation	_____
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester	Signed LOA	_____
	Spring	Thesis Proposal Seminar	_____
		Performance Evaluation	_____
	Chair/Committee assessment of student ability to explain principles of economics, management, marketing, finance, quantitative analysis and policy in thesis proposal seminar (SLO #1).		
	Achieved:	Yes      No      Incomplete	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester	Signed LOA	_____
	Summer	Degree Application	_____
	Graduation Check	_____	
	Defense	_____	
	Submit Defense/Pub Agreement	_____	
	First Submission ETD	_____	
	Final Submission ETD	_____	
	ETD Signature Page	_____	
	Exit Surveys	_____	
	Performance Evaluation	_____	
	Assistantship Termination	_____	

Student applied, analyzed and synthesized content knowledge to solve management problems faced by food and agribusiness firms during thesis defense (SLO #2).

Achieved:      Yes      No      Incomplete

Comments regarding professional behavior:

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Core Courses**

AEB 6106  
 AEB 6225  
 AEB 6553  
 AEB 6817

**Grade**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_