

Handbook for MSc Students in Viticulture and Enology

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**Department of Viticulture and Enology
Washington State University
Richland, Washington 99354**

(509) 372-7224

ve.department@wsu.edu

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Preface

Welcome to Washington State University and the Department of Viticulture and Enology. The Master of Science (MSc) in Viticulture and Enology is designed to provide advanced training in grape growing, wine science, and related areas through close work with faculty, modern facilities, and strong engagement with the Washington wine and grape (table, juice, wine) industries.

This handbook is intended to acquaint students with departmental expectations, degree milestones, and key Graduate School processes. It should be read alongside the WSU Graduate School Policies and Procedures, the current Graduate School forms and deadlines, and any program bylaws or policies adopted by the Department of Viticulture and Enology.

How to use this handbook

Students should refer to this document throughout the degree program, not only at the time of admission.

Questions should first be directed to the student's major advisor and then to the program's academic contact or department chair as needed.

Introduction

The Department of Viticulture and Enology is committed to graduate education that integrates research, education, and extension in support of student success and the wine and grape industries. The MSc program launched in Fall 2026 and is presented by WSU as a pathway for advanced study in viticulture and enology. Students will work with faculty on specialized research projects and benefit from statewide resources, including the Ste. Michelle Wine Estates WSU Wine Science Center and the Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Prosser and other WSU locations as appropriate.

University, College, Graduate School, and program level policies all shape the student experience. This handbook should be treated as a department-level guide that complements, rather than replaces, official university policy. The [WSU Catalog](#) and the Graduate School's [Policies and Procedures Manual](#) contain most of the general policies on admission, courses, policies and procedures.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Washington State University prohibits discrimination in its education programs and activities and is committed to an inclusive, respectful, and equitable learning environment. Students should review current [WSU Notice of Nondiscrimination](#), Title IX, and reporting resources and use university channels when concerns arise.

Professional and Academic Integrity

Integrity in research, scholarship, instruction, and professional conduct is essential to graduate education. Students are expected to follow university standards related to academic honesty, research ethics, authorship, data management, respectful conduct, and responsible use of university resources. Cases involving plagiarism, inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) software (per WSU University policy), falsification or fabrication of data, inappropriate authorship, misuse of funds or facilities, or failure to comply with university, state, or federal requirements may result in disciplinary action.

Graduate students must also complete any required responsible conduct of research training and should discuss expectations for publication, authorship, lab culture, and communication early with their advisor. Integrity in scientific research and academic matters is important for individual conscience and professional development but is also a collective commitment of the university as set forth in various documents ([Faculty Manual](#), [Standards of](#)

[Conduct for Students](#), the [Graduate Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities](#), and [Responsible Conduct of Research](#)).

WSU has established an executive policy on consensual relationships between faculty and students and between supervisors and subordinates, which states that “faculty or anyone in a supervisory role is prohibited from having supervisory responsibility over a student or subordinate with whom he or she is currently having a romantic and/or sexual relationship.” If a consensual relationship occurs, the faculty member or supervisor must disclose the relationship to their supervisor, with students disclosing the relationship to the Department Chair. Sanctions will not ordinarily be imposed when developing romantic and sexual relationships are promptly self-reported and measures are taken to remove the conflict of interest, so long as the relationship is not alleged by one of the parties to be nonconsensual or discriminatory. Review BPPM 60.13 [Consensual Romantic or Sexual Relationships Between Faculty, Staff, and/or Students](#) for more information.

Graduate Program Administration

Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program Bylaws

The MSc in Viticulture and Enology is governed by official bylaws, approved by the Graduate Faculty in Viticulture and Enology, The Graduate School, and the WSU Faculty Senate. The Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program Bylaws define the administration of the Viticulture and Enology Graduate program, composition of graduate student committees, and participation of Viticulture and Enology graduate students in the administration of the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program.

The Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program is administered by the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Executive Committee, which advises the Department Chair on the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program. At the discretion of the Department Chair, a graduate student representative can be appointed to the Executive Committee and other ad hoc committees.

Viticulture and Enology Graduate Executive Committee

The Viticulture and Enology Graduate Executive Committee is responsible for upholding the quality, integrity, and standards of graduate education within the MSc in Viticulture and Enology at Washington State University. The Committee is composed of active graduate faculty in Viticulture and Enology and may also include a graduate student representative appointed by the Department Chair.

The Committee provides recommendations on graduate policies, procedures, and curriculum matters to the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Faculty and the Department Chair, who are responsible for ensuring their implementation and adherence.

The Graduate Executive Committee, or its Chair, is available to meet with graduate students to discuss matters related to graduate education, including questions about program requirements, academic progress, advising, or concerns that may arise during the course of study. Students may choose to consult with an individual member of the Committee, meet with the full Committee, or submit concerns in writing to the Department Chair. Students who wish to discuss policies or challenges with someone other than their faculty advisor are encouraged to contact the Chair of the Committee or any of its members.

Additional responsibilities of the Graduate Executive Committee include reviewing applications and making recommendations for admission to the MSc in Viticulture and Enology; assisting with the identification of faculty advisors for incoming students as needed; making recommendations to the Department Chair regarding graduate assistantship assignments when applicable; and serving as a recognized grievance body to help mediate concerns that may arise within the normal graduate student advisor relationship when requested by either party. Any formal action based on Committee recommendations proceeds in consultation with and upon approval by the Department Chair.

Chair of the Graduate Executive Committee

The Chair of the Graduate Executive Committee's role is to: a) direct the Executive Committee in carrying out its functions, b) serve as a contact person with the Graduate School regarding policies and activities, and c) actively recruit prospective students and arrange for initial contacts with Viticulture and Enology Graduate Faculty.

Graduate Programs Coordinator and Student Services Advisor

The WSU Tri-Cities Graduate Programs Coordinator and Student Services Advisor, Dr. Niamh O'Leary (niamh.oleary@wsu.edu) administers the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program with respect to handling graduate student records. The Coordinator is available to answer questions related to the implementation of Graduate School and program policies and procedures.

Major Advisor

Each student will have a major advisor who serves as the primary mentor and main point of contact for research planning, coursework, professional development, and degree progress. The advisor should work with the student to identify a suitable advisory committee, review degree milestones, and help the student develop a realistic timeline for completion. A description of who can serve as chair or co-chair of a Viticulture and Enology graduate student committee is described in the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program Bylaws.

If a graduate student in the MSc in Viticulture and Enology wishes to change their Major Advisor, it is the student's responsibility to identify a member of the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Faculty who is willing to assume that role. The student must also consult with the Department Chair regarding the proposed change. In situations where a change in Major Advisor is necessary because a faculty member is leaving Washington State University or is otherwise unable to continue in the role, the Graduate Executive Committee will work with the student, the Department Chair, and relevant faculty to identify the most appropriate alternative Major Advisor and support a smooth transition.

Faculty Advisory Committee

The student's Faculty Advisory Committee is responsible for establishing, assessing, and maintaining the academic and research standards for the student's program. In consultation with the student, the Committee helps define the program of study, including coursework and independent research, in a way that supports the student's academic interests, research goals, and professional development.

It is the responsibility of the student and the Major Advisor to form the Faculty Advisory Committee. A summary of the responsibilities of the graduate student, Major Advisor, and committee members is provided in Appendix A.

Members of the Faculty Advisory Committee are selected by the Major Advisor in consultation with the student. Committee composition must comply with Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program bylaws and Graduate School policy. All committee appointments are subject to approval by the Department Chair and the Graduate School. Committee members should be selected based on their expertise and their ability to support the student's successful completion of the degree and preparation for a professional career.

For students in the MSc in Viticulture and Enology, the Faculty Advisory Committee must include **at least three members**, including the Major Advisor, who serves as Chair. The Major Advisor, or at least one co-advisor, must be a tenured or tenure-track member of the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Faculty. At least two members of the committee must be affiliated with the Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program, and at least one of those two must be tenured or tenure track. The third member must be a current WSU faculty member but need not be affiliated with the program or hold a tenured or tenure-track appointment.

Advisory committees may include more than three members, provided all members meet Graduate School requirements and program bylaws. All committee members must hold a degree comparable to, or higher than, the degree sought by the student.

Individuals who are not current WSU faculty may serve as additional committee members when their expertise is important to the student's program. Such appointments require program nomination and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School, along with submission of a current curriculum vitae.

A student's Faculty Advisory Committee may be changed at any time through the appropriate committee change process, subject to program and Graduate School approval.

Students are encouraged to meet with their Faculty Advisory Committee regularly, ideally once each semester and at minimum once each academic year, to review progress, discuss research and academic planning, and receive guidance toward timely degree completion.

Program Requirements

The MSc in Viticulture and Enology is expected to be a research-based master's degree culminating in a written thesis and final oral examination. In general, the degree should prepare students to conduct independent research, communicate effectively in professional settings, and contribute to the science and practice of viticulture and enology.

General Expectations

- Maintain good standing under Graduate School policy, including minimum GPA requirements.
- Remain continuously enrolled as required by the Graduate School unless an approved leave applies.

- Meet regularly with the major advisor and at least annually with the advisory committee, though once each semester is strongly encouraged.
- Complete all university and laboratory or facility training required for the research project.
- Participate in professional development activities, including seminars, conferences, industry interaction, outreach, or teaching-related experiences when possible.

Review of Graduate Student Progress (Annual Review)

Annual reviews are required by the Graduate School and are intended to support students in making timely progress toward completion of all degree requirements. These reviews also provide an opportunity to discuss professional development, research progress, and the overall degree program. However, students should not rely on the annual review as a reminder of program or Graduate School requirements. It is the student's responsibility to comply with all regulations, policies, and deadlines established by the WSU Graduate School and the MSc in Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program.

Each year, typically in January or February, the Academic Coordinator will distribute the annual review form to all graduate students. It is the student's responsibility to complete the form in a timely manner and obtain comments and signatures from both the student and the Major Advisor. A current curriculum vitae must be submitted as part of the annual review.

Annual reviews are evaluated by a designated member of the Graduate Executive Committee, typically the Chair, along with one additional reviewer. Based on this review, the Chair of the Graduate Executive Committee may make recommendations to the Department Chair regarding the student's progress.

If progress is determined to be unsatisfactory, or if concerns are identified during the review process, the Department Chair will notify the student in writing and may make recommendations to the student, the Major Advisor, and/or the Graduate School to address deficiencies. If progress is determined to be unacceptable, a copy of the notification will be provided to the Graduate School. In some cases, an additional progress review may be required following the Fall semester. Two unacceptable annual reviews may result in dismissal from the MSc in Viticulture and Enology Graduate Program.

The Graduate School also requires that students meet minimum academic standards for continued enrollment. This includes maintaining a cumulative GPA and program GPA of at least 3.0.

Failure to meet annual review expectations and/or Graduate School academic standards may result in restrictions on future registration.

Publications and Scholarly Output

Publication of refereed scholarly work is an important component of graduate education and professional development in Viticulture and Enology. Expectations related to publication should be discussed early between the student and Major Advisor so that clear goals are established.

For students in the MSc in Viticulture and Enology, publication of one to two manuscripts arising from thesis research are generally encouraged, as appropriate to the scope of the project, the student's professional goals, and the expectations of the Faculty Advisory Committee. In most cases, these publications will be refereed journal articles. In some instances, peer-reviewed Extension publications, such as those published through WSU Extension or PNW Extension, may also be appropriate.

Continuous Enrollment Policy

Full-time graduate students in the MSc in Viticulture and Enology must register for a minimum of 10 credit hours each semester, excluding summer. Part-time graduate students must register for a minimum of 2 credit hours and a maximum of 9 credit hours each semester, excluding summer. International students in F-1 or J-1 visa status should consult with the [Office of International Student and Scholar Services](#) regarding applicable enrollment requirements.

Except in cases of approved graduate leave or internship leave, master's students are required by the Graduate School to maintain continuous enrollment by registering for at least 2 credits each semester, excluding summer, until completion of the degree. Students who do not enroll for a semester and have not received Graduate School approval for leave must apply for reenrollment, pay the applicable fee, and obtain departmental approval. Reenrollment is not guaranteed.

Students should consult [Chapter 5 of the WSU Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual](#) for full details regarding enrollment, leave, and reenrollment policies.

Exit Survey and Interview

Each student completing the MSc in Viticulture and Enology must submit an exit survey and a current curriculum vitae at the conclusion of the degree program. The exit survey will be provided by the Academic Coordinator in conjunction with final examination information. In addition, graduating students are invited to meet with the Department Chair for an optional exit interview.

The required exit survey and optional exit interview provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience at Washington State University and to offer feedback and recommendations that may help strengthen the graduate program for future students.

General Degree Checklist

Please note the checklists provided in Appendix B to assist with navigating your degree and timeline.

Graduate Coursework

Graduate Program of Study

The Program of Study is the official Graduate School document that identifies the student's area of study, Faculty Advisory Committee, and the coursework to be applied toward the MSc in Viticulture and Enology. Once approved, it serves as the formal basis for the student's degree requirements. The Program of Study may include recommended courses for the program as well as other courses approved by the Major Advisor and Faculty Advisory Committee as appropriate to the student's academic and research goals. Students may take additional courses beyond those listed on the Program of Study with approval of the Major Advisor, but such courses will not normally appear on the official Program of Study.

The Program of Study should be developed by the student, the Major Advisor, and the Faculty Advisory Committee and completed by the end of the student's second semester. Preparation of the Program of Study is the responsibility of the student, and Graduate School deadlines and procedures must be followed carefully. The student should first submit the completed Program of Study to the Academic Coordinator for review. Once reviewed, the student must obtain signatures from the full Faculty Advisory Committee and the Department Chair. The completed form is then submitted to the Academic Coordinator for transmittal to the Graduate School for final approval. A copy of the approved Program of Study should be retained by the student and the Major Advisor.

Students in the MSc in Viticulture and Enology should submit a Program of Study to the Graduate School before the end of the second semester of graduate study. The master's degree requires a minimum of 30 total credits, including at least 21 credits of graded coursework. At least 15 of those graded credits must be at the 500 level. Up to 6 credits of graded coursework at the 300 or 400 level may be included when taken after admission to the graduate program and when approved as part of the student's degree plan. Courses taken on a pass/fail basis may not be used to satisfy program requirements. Unless an extension is approved by the Graduate School, all requirements for the master's degree must be completed within six years from the beginning date of the earliest course applied toward the degree.

The precise coursework pattern for the MSc in Viticulture and Enology should follow the approved curriculum and each student's Program of Study. At minimum, the program should include graduate level coursework, research credits, and any required seminar or proposal-related courses established by the department.

Planning area	Typical content
Core graduate coursework	Advanced topics in viticulture, enology, grape and wine chemistry, physiology, microbiology, statistics, research methods, or related areas
Seminar / proposal training	Department seminar participation and a formal proposal or research presentation
Research credits	Master's research credits in the semester of enrollment and final defense
Supporting coursework	Courses selected with the advisor to strengthen research design, analytics, communication, or disciplinary breadth

Required Courses

All full-time Viticulture and Enology MSc graduate students must enroll in the following courses during their degree program:

- **HORT 508 – Research Orientation and Presentation (2 credits):** Focuses on developing research proposals and communication skills through presentations, posters, and summaries. Taken within the first year.

- **CROP_SCI 511 – Science Writing Workshop (2 credits):** Provides instruction and support for writing research proposals or journal articles.
- **STAT 512 – Analysis of Variance of Designed Experiments (3 credits):** Covers principles of experimental design, data analysis, and interpretation.
- **VIT_ENOL 590 – Seminar in Viticulture and Enology (1 credit):** Focuses on current topics in the field and career development. Conjoint with VIT_ENOL 490.
- **VIT_ENOL 591 – Graduate Seminar (1 credit):** Requires students to deliver an exit seminar based on their research. Taken during the final semester.
- **VIT_ENOL 700 – Graduate Student Research (1-18 credits):** Students must enroll in at least 1 credit of VIT_ENOL 700 every semester. A minimum of 4 credits is required for graduation, with at least 2 credits taken during the term of the final exam.

Recommended Courses

To ensure a broad understanding of both viticulture and enology, students are encouraged to take courses from the following lists, depending on their research focus. This is not a comprehensive list of possible courses. Students should consult with their thesis committee to determine which courses best support the student's educational and career goals.

Viticulture Focus:

- VIT_ENOL 311 – Viticulture I (3 credits)
- VIT_ENOL 312 – Viticulture I Lab (1 credit)
- VIT_ENOL 414 – Viticulture II (3 credits)
- VIT_ENOL 415 – Viticulture II Lab (1 credit)
- HORT 430 – Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology (4 credits)
- HORT 480 – Plant Genomics and Biotechnology (3 credits)
- PLP 511 – Viruses and Virus Diseases of Plant (3 credits)
- VIT_ENOL 515 – Composition of Grapes (3 credits)
- SOIL_SCI 514 – Environmental Biophysics (2 credits)
- PL_P 525 – Field Plant Pathology and Mycology (3 credits)
- PL_P 551 – Epidemiology and Management of Plant Diseases (3 credits)
-

Enology Focus:

- VIT_ENOL 501 – Special Topics (1-4 credits)
- VIT_ENOL 518 – Instrumental Analysis of Grapes and Wine (2 credits)
- VIT_ENOL 519 – Evaluation of Chromatographic and Mass Spectrometric Data (2 credits)
- VIT_ENOL 526 – Sensometrics of Wine (2 credits)
- VIT_ENOL 538 – Advanced Wine Chemistry (3 credits) [Conjoint with VIT_ENOL 438]
- VIT_ENOL 539 – Advanced Wine Chemistry Lab (1 credit) [Conjoint with VIT_ENOL 439]
- VIT_ENOL 582 – Advanced Microbiology and Molecular Biology of Wine (3 credits) [Conjoint with VIT_ENOL 482]
- VIT_ENOL 583 – Advanced Microbiology and Molecular Biology of Wine Lab (1 credit) [Conjoint with VIT_ENOL 483]

Transfer Credits

With approval from the student's Faculty Advisory Committee, the Department Chair, and the Graduate School, certain transfer credits may be applied toward the MSc in Viticulture and Enology. Eligible transfer credits must be graduate level coursework completed at an accredited institution with a grade of B or higher.

Graduate coursework taken as part of a completed master's degree at another institution may not be applied toward the MSc in Viticulture and Enology at WSU. However, graduate coursework completed as a graduate student that was not applied toward a completed graduate degree may be considered for transfer with the appropriate approvals.

Students who intend to include transfer credits on the Program of Study must provide official transcripts from the institution where the credits were earned. In accordance with Graduate School policy, transfer credits may account for no more than one half of the total graded coursework required for the degree. Transfer credits are also subject to Graduate School time limits and must fall within the allowable timeframe for completion of the master's degree.

Students should consult the WSU [Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual](#) for additional details regarding transfer credit eligibility and limitations.

Seminars

All graduate students in the MSc in Viticulture and Enology are expected to participate in department seminar activities as part of their professional development. Seminar participation supports the development of public speaking skills, encourages timely refinement of research ideas, and provides an opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to engage with current graduate research in the program.

MSc students are required to present two seminars during their graduate program. The first seminar is the thesis proposal presentation and is completed as part of the program's required seminar or proposal development coursework. This presentation is intended to support early development of the student's research direction and should normally be completed before the end of the second semester of study. The presentation in HORT 508 counts towards this requirement.

The second seminar is the final research seminar and should summarize the student's research findings, significance, and implications. This presentation is typically given near the time of the final thesis defense and may occur on the same day, immediately prior to the defense. Students should coordinate scheduling of the final seminar in consultation with the course instructor, Major Advisor, and program leadership as appropriate. VIT_ENOL 591 counts toward this requirement.

Students normally complete the final seminar requirement during the last semester of their graduate program. If degree completion is delayed, the seminar should still be presented as scheduled unless circumstances beyond the student's control warrant an exception. If the final seminar is presented well in advance of the thesis defense, the Major Advisor and Faculty Advisory Committee may determine whether an additional presentation is needed at the time of the final examination.

Research Proposals

In addition to the Program of Study, all students in the MSc in Viticulture and Enology are required to prepare a written research proposal that is reviewed and approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee by the **end of the first year of study**. The proposal is intended to help students think carefully and systematically about their research project while also building experience in a core professional skill: clearly presenting and justifying a research plan in a form relevant to academic, industry, or grant supported work.

In general, the research proposal should be approximately 8 to 12 pages in length. The proposal should include a clear justification for the research and its potential short-term and long-term significance; a review of relevant literature; a statement of the project objectives and, where appropriate, the hypotheses to be tested; a description of the experimental design; and a summary of the materials and methods to be used. Depending on the expectations of the Faculty Advisory Committee, the proposal may also include anticipated resource needs, timelines, and estimated project costs.

All members of the Faculty Advisory Committee should sign and date the proposal cover page to indicate approval. The student is responsible for providing an electronic copy of the approved proposal to all committee members.

The research proposal is intended to serve as a guide for the student's work rather than as a fixed contract. Every effort should be made to prepare a proposal that can be carried through as written, but research projects may evolve as results emerge, priorities shift, or new opportunities arise. Students are therefore expected to remain flexible and work closely with their Major Advisor and Faculty Advisory Committee as needed. If substantial changes to the project occur, the Committee may require a revised proposal, although submission of a completely new proposal is not normally required.

Research Involving Animal or Human Subjects, Certain Biological Materials, or Radioactive Materials or Machines

All projects involving animal or human subjects, certain biological materials, or radioactive sources must be reviewed and approved by WSU's [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) (IACUC), [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB), [Institutional Biosafety Committee](#) (IBC), and [Radiation Safety Committee](#) (RSC), respectively, before the research is conducted. For example, if people will taste samples of a product or if people will be asked to fill out a questionnaire or survey, then the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before any data is collected. Or, if any recombinant DNA, human fluids or tissues, or other infectious agents related to research involving biohazardous materials is anticipated, prior approval from the IBC is required. For use of radioactive materials and radiation-producing machines, prior approval by RSC is necessary. The approval process may require a few weeks to a few months, depending on the complexity of the project and the invasiveness of the activities, so plan ahead. For more information on these approval processes, contact the [Office of Research Assurances](#) or the [Radiation Safety Office](#).

Final Examination and Thesis Completion

Thesis Defense: Final Oral Examination

Passing the final defense examination of the student's thesis is the concluding step in the successful completion of the MSc in Viticulture and Enology. Decisions regarding the format and content of the thesis must be discussed with and approved by the student's Faculty Advisory Committee. The student should also work closely with the Major Advisor to ensure that a thoroughly reviewed and revised thesis is provided to the Faculty Advisory Committee members for review prior to the defense.

It is important for graduating students to participate in the peer-review research publication process. To support this goal, thesis chapters may be prepared as research manuscripts or professional publications using the style of the journal or publication to which they may be submitted. An introductory chapter, often including a literature review, and a final chapter including conclusions and future directions from the overall body of research may also be included. Each manuscript contained within the thesis must be internally consistent in form, and the overall document must comply with the Graduate School's required thesis formatting guidelines, including title, abstract, signature, and table of contents pages. Some or all thesis chapters should be submitted to an appropriate journal or professional publication for peer review prior to or soon after completion of the degree program. Students

should seek guidance early from the Major Advisor and Faculty Advisory Committee regarding authorship and the role of coauthors for chapters prepared as manuscripts.

After a successful defense and committee acceptance of the thesis, the final document must be submitted through ProQuest in accordance with Graduate School requirements. No material in the thesis may be restricted in a way that prevents required public access through Washington State University Libraries and ProQuest. If any portion of the thesis has been published or accepted for publication elsewhere, any required copyright permissions must be obtained and submitted to the Graduate School at final acceptance. Students should consult the WSU Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual for additional guidance.

As students approach completion of the MSc in Viticulture and Enology, they should consult the Graduate School's current academic year deadlines and procedures for graduation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all critical deadlines established each semester. These deadlines include:

1. The last date to [submit an Application](#) for Degree.
2. The last date to submit the [Final Examination Scheduling Form](#), which must be submitted no fewer than 10 working days prior to the final examination.
3. The last possible date to complete the final thesis defense examination.
4. The last date to submit the final approved thesis, typically within 10 working days after a successful final defense examination.

These deadlines are the student's responsibility. Extensions are not granted for poor planning or oversight and missing a deadline may delay graduation and increase student expenses.

Critical caution

Department and Graduate School deadlines can shift. Students should always verify the current semester deadlines, submission procedures, and thesis formatting rules directly with the WSU Graduate School before scheduling the defense.

All students in the MSc in Viticulture and Enology must defend their thesis. In most cases, the defense will include a public seminar presented prior to the oral defense examination as part of the program's seminar expectations. A separate public presentation may also be arranged, provided the student still fulfills any required seminar course obligations. Faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Viticulture and Enology are encouraged to attend final seminars. Audience members may be permitted to ask questions, but such participation should not unduly influence the outcome of the examination. Following the public seminar or presentation, the formal oral defense examination may be conducted.

The final thesis defense oral examination is restricted to the student's Faculty Advisory Committee and any other WSU Graduate Faculty eligible to participate. The chair of the student's committee will serve as chair of the examination and will be responsible for overseeing the examination process and balloting in accordance with Graduate School policy. The examination portion of the oral defense should ordinarily not exceed two and one-half hours.

The examination must be held in an academic setting during an official academic term and during normal working hours, either on the WSU Tri Cities campus, the WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center, or other WSU location as permitted by Graduate School policy. The examination may be conducted by videoconference when appropriate. If the exam is held by videoconference, at least one Faculty Advisory Committee member must be physically present with the student unless otherwise permitted by Graduate School policy.

All members of the Faculty Advisory Committee must be present for the entire examination. If any committee member must leave during the examination or the balloting discussion, the examination or discussion must be recessed until that member returns. At the conclusion of the question-and-answer period, the Major Advisor will ask

the student to leave the room or online session so that the committee may discuss the student's performance and cast their votes.

All members of the student's Faculty Advisory Committee must vote to pass or fail the final examination, and any other eligible Graduate Faculty in attendance for the entire examination may also vote if permitted by Graduate School policy. The student's thesis defense and achievement of program learning outcomes may be evaluated using the program's thesis defense assessment rubric.

Evaluation may include the student's ability to review and synthesize relevant literature, identify and address an important research question, design and carry out appropriate research, analyze and interpret data, demonstrate disciplinary knowledge, engage in independent scholarly work, and communicate research effectively in written, visual, and oral forms.

After the examination, each member of the Faculty Advisory Committee must complete the required ballot and any associated assessment materials in accordance with Graduate School and program procedures. The committee chair is responsible for ensuring that all required balloting materials are submitted promptly following the examination.

The student will be determined to have passed the exam if the number of affirmative ballots is equal to or greater than the minimum listed in the table below. If the number of ballots exceeds the numbers listed in the table, then a minimum of 75% of the ballots must be affirmative for the student to pass:

TABLE OF MSc FINAL EXAM BALLOTS	
<i>Number of Ballots</i>	<i>Minimum Number of Affirmative Ballots</i>
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	4
7	5
8	6

At the exam, each committee member will notify the major advisor of their vote. The major advisor will call the student back into the room and notify him/her of the result. After the exam, each member of the Faculty Advisory Committee must submit a ballot and an assessment rubric:

- Final balloting is done electronically via myWSU. The chair/liaison is responsible for ensuring the ballots are submitted as soon as possible and no later than 5 business days following the exam.
- Each member of the Faculty Advisory Committee will complete the Thesis Defense Examination Assessment rubric after the final exam.

Minimum Timeline for Scheduling the Final Exam

Students should submit the Application for Degree early in the semester to avoid late fees and should consult the Graduate School's current Deadlines and Procedures for Graduation for all applicable deadlines. The application fee remains valid for up to one calendar year. Before scheduling the final examination, the student must have an approved Program of Study on file with the Graduate School.

Four weeks or more prior to the final thesis defense:

The student must provide a **complete** draft of the thesis, approved by the Major Advisor, to all members of the Faculty Advisory Committee for review. Before distributing the thesis, the student should consult with each committee member regarding availability and anticipated review time. If committee members have not had sufficient time to review the thesis, suggest revisions, and determine whether those revisions have been satisfactorily addressed, the student may not be able to proceed with exam scheduling as planned.

At least 10 working days prior to the final thesis defense:

A completed Final Examination Scheduling Form, signed by all members of the Faculty Advisory Committee and the Department Chair, must be submitted to the Academic Coordinator for processing and submission to the Graduate School.

Approval of the Final Examination Scheduling Form by the Faculty Advisory Committee indicates that the student has completed, or is expected to complete during that semester, all degree requirements and is enrolled in the required number of graduate credits. It also indicates that the committee has given preliminary approval to a thesis draft that is suitable in content and format for final revision and submission. Any revisions requested by the committee and or the Graduate School are required and are the responsibility of the student. All required revisions must be completed within 10 business days following a successful examination, unless otherwise directed by the Graduate School.

A PDF copy of the thesis must be uploaded to [ProQuest](#) at the time the Final Examination Scheduling Form is submitted for preliminary Graduate School format review. Where applicable, verification of approval for the use of human or animal subjects in research must be provided before the final examination can be scheduled. Students should include the appropriate approval documentation with the scheduling materials.

At least 5 working days prior to the final thesis defense:

A copy of the defensible thesis must be provided to each member of the Faculty Advisory Committee (*note that this is separate than the copy that is shared at least 2 weeks prior to the Faculty Advisory Committee signing the defense scheduling form*). A PDF copy must also be provided to the Academic Coordinator for departmental records and preparation of the defense announcement. The abstract may be shared as part of the final examination announcement.

Failure to meet these deadlines may require the examination to be rescheduled and may result in additional expenses or a delay in graduation.

Within 10 business days following a successful final defense:

The student must complete all final submission requirements established by the Graduate School. These typically include submission of the required approval forms and upload of the final, corrected thesis to ProQuest. The final thesis must include all revisions required by the Faculty Advisory Committee and the Graduate School.

Students are responsible for ensuring that the thesis title listed in ProQuest matches the title on the final approved thesis. The title entered at final submission becomes the official title of record.

Academic Student Employment and Procedures

WSU/UAW Union Affiliation/Collective Bargaining Agreement

Unless otherwise noted, graduate students employed as Academic Student Employees, including Graduate Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, Project Assistants, Summer Research Assistants, Summer Teaching Assistants, or graduate summer hourly employees, are represented by and subject to the collective bargaining agreement between Washington State University and the United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW). Students can elect to not be affiliated with the student union. Students should refer to the applicable collective bargaining agreement for information regarding employment-related terms and benefits, including leave, holidays, and other conditions of appointment.

ASE Offer Letter and Job Description

Students appointed to Academic Student Employee positions will receive an offer letter for the academic year appointment and, when applicable, a separate offer for summer employment. The offer letter outlines the terms of the appointment, and the job description provides additional details regarding expected duties and responsibilities. In general, offer letters are issued in advance of the appointment period, followed by a position description prior to the start date, except in cases involving extenuating circumstances such as grant funding timelines or changes in appointment terms.

In many cases, the faculty member supervising a student's Research Assistant appointment will also serve as the student's Major Advisor and will determine the nature of the assigned duties. These duties may relate directly to the student's graduate research project, although in some cases students may also be assigned responsibilities connected to other projects within the faculty member's research program.

Teaching Assistant assignments are made based on instructional needs, faculty needs, and the student's schedule, qualifications, and experience. Tentative assignments may be adjusted if needed due to course scheduling changes, enrollment shifts, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Minimum salary levels for Academic Student Employee appointments are established by the WSU/UAW collective bargaining agreement and may vary based on educational experience and work location.

Research Assistant (RA) duties

As a 0.5 FTE Academic Student Employee (ASE), RAs are expected to devote an average of 20 hours per week to the duties outlined in their appointment letter, which may include tasks such as programming, data collection and analysis, lab maintenance, attending meetings, writing papers, conducting activities related to grant-funded project goals, and more, as defined by their supervisor.

RA overlap with academic research and training

In many cases, the 20 hours per week of paid RA work will align with and contribute to the student's academic research and training. In this case, the RA appointment is intended to provide financial support for time spent on activities that fulfill the student's employment obligations and advance their academic progress. However, it is recognized that not all RA duties will directly relate to the student's academic research and training.

Summer Expectations

Students supported during the academic year may also receive summer support through an assistantship or hourly appointment, depending on available funding and program needs. In most cases, summer work is expected to focus primarily on the student's graduate research project and, when appropriate, on related research activities within the Faculty Advisor's program. Summer expectations should be discussed directly between the student and the Faculty Advisor in advance of the appointment period.

Academic research and training (outside of RA)

Students are expected to dedicate additional time beyond the 20 hours of weekly RA duties to make timely progress on their academic research and training (including but not limited to their thesis). The amount of additional time required may vary depending on the requirements of their graduate program. During the regular academic

year, this research and training is required for their academic progress as measured by VIT_ENOL 700 research credits each term. Whereas students are not typically enrolled in research credits during the summer, they are still expected to make progress on their academic research and training. Summer progress should be determined by the student's graduate program and advisory committee and should align with their overall academic goals and timeline. Although the exact number of hours may fluctuate, students should anticipate spending a substantial amount of time on their academic work outside of their RA duties to ensure satisfactory progress in their graduate program.

Separate assessment of academic performance and employment duties

The student's academic research performance will be assessed independently from their performance of assigned RA duties. Academic research performance is measured by VIT_ENOL 700 research credits during the regular academic year and overall academic progress during the summer.

- Each year, the student's academic progress will be evaluated, at minimum, by their advisory committee based on factors such as academic milestones, quality of work, and overall progress toward completion of the thesis or dissertation.
- At least annually, the ASE's performance is to be assessed separately by their assistantship supervisor, as described in the WSU/UAW Contract Article 33.4.2. This assessment focuses on fulfilling assigned duties, quality of work, professionalism, and other relevant factors outlined in the appointment letter and job description.

Communication and Oversight

Regular communication between the student, RA supervisor, major professor/advisor (if different than RA supervisor), and graduate program leadership is crucial to ensure an appropriate balance between employment duties and academic progress. Students are to raise any questions they have about distinguishing between their RA duties and their academic research and training (including but not limited to their thesis or dissertation) to their supervisor or program director. Supervisors and program directors are to periodically review the RA's responsibilities and adjust as needed to optimize the student's overall academic and professional development.

Summary

Whereas an RA appointment at 50% FTE will support a student's academic research and training, often relating to their own independent research project, it is understood that some RA tasks may not directly align with the student's specific independent research topic. Likewise, to fulfill their academic obligations, students are expected to devote additional time to academic research and training beyond their RA duties and expectations. The student's academic research performance and employment duties are to be assessed separately each year to ensure a fair evaluation of both components. Open communication and regular check-ins between all parties are essential to support the students' success in their dual roles as researchers in training and as employees.

ASE Performance Evaluation

At least annually, the ASE's performance is to be assessed by their assistantship supervisor as described in the WSU/UAW Contract Article 33.4.2. This assessment focuses on fulfilling assigned duties, quality of work, professionalism, and other relevant factors outlined in the appointment letter and job description. This ASE performance evaluation is for employment purposes only and does not replace the required Academic Evaluation of Students. While ASE performance evaluations for assistantship employment and academic evaluations may be conducted at the same time, each type of evaluation must be retained separately at the academic unit level.

ASE Time Off / Vacation Time / Sick Leave

The ASE Paid Time Off guide describes time off for ASE employees, including vacation time off, sick leave, and short-term parental leave. Vacation time off requests are to be submitted to and approved by the supervisor prior to time off being taken. To request time off, ASEs are to provide written notice (i.e., email, text) to their supervisors in advance of the requested time as soon as the need for time off is known. Supervisors are expected to respond in a timely manner.

If an ASE is requesting vacation time off, they are to provide a work plan for any duties assigned and/or expected to be performed during their time off with their vacation request. Accurate time offs (sick, vacation, leave without pay) must be entered into Workday each pay period for which an ASE takes time off. See [Workday Knowledge Base Employee Request and Correct Time Off](#) for detailed instructions. ASEs are responsible for reviewing Workday notices to certify time offs submitted on their behalf. Sick leave time off may only be used for reasons described in Article 30.1.3. When ASEs need to be absent from work for sick purposes, they are to provide notice of the request to their supervisors as soon as the need is known. Academic year leave balances expire May 15 and will be wiped by June 1. Fall to Spring leave balances will roll over when reappointed. Summer Assistantship leave balances are separate from academic year and will be wiped on Aug 15.

Breaks in the academic calendar, such as finals week, the period directly following finals, the period directly before the start of a semester, and Spring Break, are not considered holidays unless they align with official University Holidays. RAs planning to take leave during these periods must seek advanced vacation approval from their supervisor. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in unscheduled absences and misunderstandings between the student and their supervisor as well as potential pay impacts.

Vacation Time Off (WSU/UAW Contract, Article 28)	Sick Leave (WSU/UAW Contract, Article 30)
Salaried ASEs with 50% FTE on a 9-month appointment will receive 48-hours	Salaried ASEs with 50% FTE on a 9-month appointment will receive 36-hours
Salaried ASEs below 50% FTE or appointed to a lesser term (i.e. Summer, or late start) will have prorated vacation time off	Salaried ASEs below 50% FTE or appointed to a lesser term (i.e. Summer, or late start) will have prorated sick leave
Hourly ASEs not eligible	Hourly ASEs are eligible with an accrual rate of 1 hour of sick leave for every 40 hours worked
Summer PAP not eligible	Summer PAP not eligible
Unless otherwise approved, vacation time off must be used in four-hour increments during academic semester breaks or as otherwise mutually agreed upon by the ASE and their supervisor. Vacation time off requests are to be submitted to and approved by the supervisor prior to the time off being taken.	Sick leave time off may only be used for reasons described in Article 30.1.3. When ASEs need to be absent from work for sick purposes, they are to provide notice of the request to their supervisor as soon as the need is known.

Payroll Deduction of Tuition and Mandatory Fees

For details on how to arrange for automatic deduction of tuition and fees from your paychecks, please see [Graduate Student Enrollment Procedure | Payroll Services | Washington State University](#).

Certification of Assistantship Duties

Tuition waivers associated with an assistantship appointment are contingent upon the following factors:

1. Remaining enrolled full-time during the period of appointment;
2. Maintaining a 3.0 cumulative GPA during the appointment (or approved exception to policy), and
3. Meeting the ASE service requirement of an average of 20 hours per week for a 0.5 FTE appointment as scheduled by your department/supervisor (based on hours required for partial FTE appointment).

This certification is completed annually by way of the Graduate Student Annual Review form. For graduating students, this may alternatively be done by way of the Post-Graduate Information form (in lieu of the Annual Review form).

Establishing Residency

Considering tuition is considerably less expensive for Washington residents than out-of-state students, you should take steps to establish residency within the first 30 days of arrival in Washington state. Please review Establishing Residency for more information and ensure a successful residency application at the start of your third semester.

For students holding an assistantship, non-resident domestic students will receive the non-resident differential tuition waiver for their first year of graduate studies, if living in WA state during enrollment at WSU. However, the non-resident differential tuition waiver cannot be guaranteed beyond one year.

Safety

A safe learning and research environment is a shared responsibility. Students are expected to complete all required safety training, follow laboratory and winery safety procedures, use equipment properly, report incidents promptly, and consult site-specific safety guidance for the Wine Science Center, IAREC, or any other WSU location where research is conducted.

Safety at WSU is regulated by the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries](#) and the [US Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA), through [WSU Environmental Health and Safety](#). A safe and healthy working environment at WSU must always be maintained. It is the responsibility of each graduate student to become familiar with safety policies and to follow safe procedures for the location they are working at. Departmental policies and procedures regarding safety are detailed in the WSU Safety Policies and Procedures Manual (SPPM) available at the [Office of Procedures, Records and Forms](#), while policies and procedures specific to individual labs are detailed in the Laboratory Safety Manual located in each lab. Information regarding physical and health hazards, entry routes, permissible exposure limits and precautions or controls for safe use, including emergency first aid procedures, and the name, address and telephone number of the chemical manufacturer or supplier for all chemicals is available on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) located in the individual labs in which the chemicals are used. [Environmental Health and Safety](#) (EH&S) is also responsible for laboratory and workplace safety, public health and environmental issues, hazardous materials and wastes (except radioactive materials), and training. All disposals of hazardous chemical wastes must be made through EH&S's Environmental Services. Report all accidents and injuries, however minor, to the administrative office at your location and complete an electronic accident/illness [Incident Report Form](#).

Services and Student Support

Students should take advantage of university resources that support academic progress and wellbeing. These include the [Graduate and Professional Student Association](#), [Graduate Writing Center](#) (Pullman), [Writing Center](#) (Tri-Cities), [library services](#), [Office of International Programs](#), [Counseling and Wellness](#) (Tri-Cities), [Accommodations and Disability Resources](#) (Tri-Cities), [campus safety resources](#) (Tri-Cities), and professional development opportunities.

WSU offers health insurance to eligible graduate student assistants, and for international students holding F-1 and J-1 visas. Complete information regarding the health plans is provided on the [Cougar Health Services](#) website. Graduate assistants and international students will be automatically registered for the proper health plan. You are strongly advised to review the Cougar Health Services website to learn more about your plan. Students who do not qualify as a dependent on another person's insurance and who are not eligible for one of WSU's plans can also purchase a plan through the Washington Health Benefit Exchange.

Facilities and Important Websites

The MSc in Viticulture and Enology may involve work at multiple WSU locations, especially the Ste. Michelle Wine Estates WSU Wine Science Center at the WSU Tri Cities Campus (Richland, WA) and research or field sites at the

WSU Prosser IAREC location (Prosser, WA). Students should become familiar with access procedures, laboratory expectations, safety protocols, and shared equipment norms at each site they use. Students are encouraged to work with their supervisor to connect with location specific administrative staff.

Appendix A. Responsibilities of Students, Advisors, and Committee Members

Responsibilities of the graduate student

- Know the policies, deadlines, and expectations of the Graduate School and the department.
- Develop a Program of Study and research plan in consultation with the advisor and committee.
- Meet regularly with the advisor and maintain professional, timely communication.
- Prepare for committee meetings and document progress toward degree milestones.
- Conduct research ethically and honestly.
- Provide draft writing with enough time for meaningful feedback and revision.

Responsibilities of the major advisor

- Provide intellectual guidance, mentoring, and a respectful research environment.
- Help the student define a research project and realistic timeline.
- Guide selection of the advisory committee and development of the Program of Study.
- Review drafts in a timely way and prepare the student for professional expectations.
- Discuss authorship, funding expectations, work norms, and research conduct early.

Responsibilities of committee members

- Provide expertise relevant to the student's coursework and research.
- Review proposals, progress, and thesis drafts in a timely manner.
- Participate actively in committee meetings and the final examination.
- Support the student's scholarly and professional development.

Appendix B. General MSc Checklist

Activity / milestone	Suggested timing	Date completed
Begin steps to establish Washington residency if eligible	Within 30 days of arrival	
Meet with advisor to review expectations and identify committee members	First semester	
Develop and submit Program of Study	First semester	
Complete any required research compliance training or approvals	First year	
Prepare and obtain committee approval of research proposal	First year	
Participate in seminars and program presentations	Throughout degree	
Complete annual review	Each academic year	
Prepare thesis draft and discuss graduation timeline with advisor	Final year	
Apply for degree and schedule final exam	Final semester	
Defend thesis and complete required revisions	Final semester	
Submit final thesis and all Graduate School paperwork	By semester deadline	