

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Doctoral students in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology at the University of Tennessee are expected to obtain varied professional skills during their graduate program. To help students meet this expectation, five Professional Experiences must be incorporated into their graduate Plan of Study and completed before graduation. In addition to your Advisor and Advisory Committee, numerous other faculty members are available to serve as mentors for any of these experiences. The five Professional Experiences are described below:

Academic Outreach Experience: The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, defines academic outreach and engagement as integrated scholarship, which engages its academic missions of research, creativity, teaching and service with its community. This engagement is a reciprocal relationship, which informs and shapes the academic mission, and extends the University's intellectual resources to serve its constituents. Graduate students will have numerous opportunities to gain meaningful academic outreach experience through the department's ongoing K-12 activities focused on students and teachers. Graduate students who participate in this experience will learn the philosophy and practice of successful academic outreach.

Examples of outreach experiences include but are not limited to:

- ✓ K-12 teaching lessons
- ✓ Academic outreach and engagement council activities (<http://engagement.utk.edu/aoec/>)
- ✓ Academic outreach programs (Gadget Girls program, judging science fair projects, etc.)
- ✓ 4-H activities

Extension Experience: Extension is one of the three missions of the land grant university. UT Extension provides a gateway to the University of Tennessee as the outreach unit of the Institute of Agriculture by bringing research-based information about agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and resource development to the people of Tennessee. UT Extension's mission is to help people improve their lives through an educational process that uses scientific knowledge to address issues and needs. The department provides opportunities for graduate students to gain meaningful Extension experience as part of their graduate education. This experience should involve one of the EPP faculty members with an Extension appointment. Students participating in this activity are expected to learn the philosophy and practice of Extension education.

Examples of an Extension experience include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Developing an Extension article for a blog, newsletter or website delivery
- ✓ Working with stakeholders to implement/demonstrate a practice or policy
- ✓ Solving stakeholder pest management issues, including diagnostics, in collaboration with Extension specialists or agent, etc.
- ✓ Developing an Extension App
- ✓ Developing an Extension Fact Sheet
- ✓ Presenting an original EPP-related Extension talk to stakeholders

Leadership/Service Experience: Leadership skills are essential in all walks of life and are paramount for success in academia, industry, non-profit organizations, government, and other professional careers. Students may meet the leadership experience expectation by leading one or more of the department's activities, including social activities, fundraising, visibility and branding, alumni networking, and K-12 and public engagement. Students may also fulfill this requirement by providing leadership in the EPP Graduate Student Association or they may design their own leadership activity in consultation with their Advisor, Advisory Committee, Department Head, and/or a faculty member. Participating in activities/committees without an identified leadership role will be considered a service experience, rather than a leadership experience, which will also fulfill the activity requirement for this category.

Mentoring Experience: A successful mentor can contribute greatly to another student's success. Doctoral graduate students may gain formal mentoring experience by working with high school, undergraduate, M.S. graduate students or incoming Ph.D. graduate students at the University of Tennessee. Graduate students are connected with potential mentees through participation in the department's teaching, research, and outreach programs. To fulfill the mentoring experience, students can arrange to work as a mentee with one or more undergraduate students, M.S. graduate students, or new Ph.D. graduate students. The mentee must agree with the arrangement. The graduate student could assist the mentee(s) for one semester/one month/etc. with class projects, answer questions about different majors, provide information about job prospects, particularly in agbiosciences, involve her/him in her/his own research project, etc.

Teaching Experience: Students have a multitude of opportunities to gain significant teaching experience in the department's academic program. Students seeking to fulfill the teaching experience requirement should contact an EPP faculty member with a teaching appointment slated to teach an undergraduate or graduate course, and work with them, assisting and engaging in various teaching activities. Depending upon her/his prior experience and language skills, the student may conduct laboratories and/or deliver one or more formal lectures.

Examples of teaching experiences include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Serving as a teaching assistant (can take for credit - AGNR 512 or volunteer)
- ✓ Best Practices in Teaching Program (3-month program - seven lectures offered during fall and spring semesters. Final product is a teaching portfolio) through the UT Graduate School
- ✓ Giving lectures to university students in an undergraduate or graduate course in EPP or related department, as applicable
- ✓ Writing and publishing a teaching lesson for educational sections of professional scientific societies or journals
- ✓ Developing a K-12 EPP-related lesson plan

PROCEDURE FOR COMPLETION OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

In consultation with her/his Advisor, a student will determine which experiences are appropriate to fulfill the professional skills requirement. For each chosen experience, a student must complete a 'Ph.D. Professional Experience Application Form' with an attached written proposal (the Form must contain approval signatures from her/his Advisor and the Experience Mentor [if other than Advisor]. Once the Professional Experience Application Form is completed and all of the appropriate signatures are obtained, the student will submit the completed Form to the Chair of the Seminar and Program Assessment Committee (SPAC) before he/she initiates the activity. Once the SPAC approves the Application, the student may begin her/his experience. The role of the SPAC is to evaluate all Applications and reply to the student within two working days of receiving the submission. The purpose of these evaluations is to ensure that Applications are consistent and that experiences are appropriate.

Upon completion of each experience, students are required to: 1) submit a brief written report documenting the activities conducted and lessons learned (expected length is 1-2 paragraphs) and 2) make a brief (3 to 5 minute) presentation detailing the experience to the department. This presentation will be part of a Professional Experience Extravaganza to be held each year. All students who completed Professional Experiences during that year will share their outcomes with the department. For students whose graduation timeline does not fit this annual Extravaganza, they may share their outcomes during their Final Exit Seminar. Students with substantial experience/skill in any experience(s) may be exempted (i.e., receive a waiver) from that Professional Experience by completing the same Form and obtaining written approval from their Advisor and SPAC.

The following step-by-step procedures will guide the student through the process of completing her/his Professional Experiences:

1. Select an experience.
2. Develop an activity to satisfy that experience.
3. Discuss your activity with your Advisor; together select (or agree upon) the person with whom you would like to complete your experience (i.e., Faculty Mentor).
4. Discuss your activity with your Faculty Mentor; finalize the specifics of the activity.
5. Complete a Ph.D. Professional Experience Application Form and obtain all necessary signatures.
6. Submit your completed Form to the Chair of SPAC.
7. Wait to receive reply from SPAC (within two working days).
8. Once you receive approval from SPAC, begin your activity.
9. Once your activity is completed, develop a written report (typically 1-2 paragraphs), attach it to your approved Form, obtain signatures from your Advisor and Faculty Mentor, and submit it to the SPAC Chair (prior to the end of the semester in which your activity was completed).
10. Present a brief (3-5 min) overview of your Professional Experience to the department; be sure to indicate your completion of this Experience on your Ph.D. Tracking Form.
11. Repeat Steps 1-10 to complete the remaining four Professional Experiences.
12. Once you have completed all five Professional Experience categories, reflect and enjoy your accomplishments in expanding your professional skills.

