

# SAFE GRADUATE HANDBOOK

## FALL 2020 COHORT



Sustainable  
Agriculture &  
Food  
Environment



**Department of Agricultural Sciences**

College of Science and Engineering Technology  
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

# GRADUATE STUDENT CONTRACT

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD ENVIRONMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have received a copy of the SAFE Graduate Student Handbook from the Department of Agricultural Sciences. I understand that I am expected to abide by all policies, deadlines, and time lines set forth both in this handbook and those found in the Graduate Catalogue, Guidelines for Admission to Candidacy, Schedule of Classes, and Internship Requirements. I also acknowledge that it is **my** responsibility, and not the Graduate Coordinator nor members of the university, to see that I meet these obligations and deadlines. Additionally, I agree that any financial assistance provided by the Department of Agricultural Sciences may be withdrawn should it be found that I have not followed these policies in good faith.

Signed (electronic signature): \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ A mark in this box validates your electronic signature/typed name.

Semester of Acceptance (Semester, Year): \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:**

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

SHSU and Personal Emails: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

## APPLICATION / ACCEPTANCE PROCEDURES

**Regular Admission.** Suggested guidelines for regular admission to graduate school are set forth in the Graduate Catalogue and are summarized below:

### I. Program Admission Requirements

A. A minimum undergraduate GPA, from the baccalaureate granting institution, of 2.5 (on a 4 point scale).

### B. MAg Program in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Environment

1. A bachelor degree from an accredited baccalaureate granting university in any field (degree need not be in Agriculture).
2. A resume of professional work experience.
3. A personal essay that addresses your interest in the program, post-graduation intentions, learning expectations, and current involvement in agriculture
4. Three letters of recommendation from professional references.
5. Applicants from non-English speaking countries must present a score of at least 550 on the paper version, or 79 on the internet-based version of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), 6.5 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or successful completion of the English Language Institute (ELI) program at SHSU.

**Conditional Admission.** An applicant whose records are incomplete may be granted conditional admission and be classified as a conditional graduate student until all records are complete and all regular admission requirements are fulfilled. Conditional admission allows for the completion of **no more than six hours** of graduate credit and is valid for only **one semester**. All requirements for regular admission must be met prior to enrollment for more than six hours graduate credit.

**Probationary Admission.** An applicant whose records are complete but did not qualify for regular admission can be granted **probationary admission** with department recommendation and approval from the Dean of College of Science and Engineering Technology. Regular admission is not guaranteed once deficiencies are met.

**Non-Degree Seeking or Post Baccalaureate Admission for SAFE Certification.** Non-degree seeking admission may be granted to a student who does not intend to pursue a graduate degree but who wishes to take courses for professional advancement, licensure, certification, or self-education purposes, and who holds a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited university.

**International students** must meet the same requirements for admission and candidacy as students from the United States. In addition, prospective students must demonstrate their ability to speak, write, and understand the English language.

**Transfer Credit.** A total of six (6) credit hours may be transferred to SHSU from another accredited graduate program. Exceptions to this require approval by the department chair and the academic dean.

## ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

### **Grading System.**

A	Academic Excellence
B	Acceptable Performance
C	Passing, yet Insufficient Performance
F	Failure

**Scholastic Expectations.** A minimum cumulative grade point of 3.0 (4.0 scale) is required. When the grade of C is earned in any course, it must be balanced by a grade of A in an equivalent course taken in the same academic program.

**Academic Probation and Suspension.** For a student to remain in academic good standing at Sam Houston State University and graduate, a graduate student must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 (B) on all graduate course work attempted.

A student who falls below a 3.0 overall grade point average at the end of any semester or completion of the summer session (both sessions) during which one or more semester hours are attempted will be placed on probation. If a probationary student does not achieve a minimum 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of the next semester or summer session, the student will be suspended.

A student who earns a total of one grades of C in any courses during their degree program will have his or her graduate status reviewed by a committee of the department and/or college Graduate Faculty. The committee will consider the status of the student as probation or suspension. A student who earns a total of two grades of C or one grade of F in any combination of courses during their degree program will be terminated. Any appeal for a review of termination should be directed in writing to the appropriate academic dean.

## CREDIT HOURS AND FINANCIAL AID

A full-time course load is a minimum of 9 credit hours for fall and spring terms with a maximum financial aid benefit (via FAFSA). A reduced/limited amount of financial aid (via FAFSA) may be available for students enrolled in 3-6 credit hours.

Students may register between 3 – 12 credit hours each semester. Over 12 credit hours during a semester is considered an overload and requires approval from the Academic Dean from the College of Science and Engineering Technology.

## AGRICULTURE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR MASTER OF AGRICULTURE DEGREE IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD ENVIRONMENT (SAFE)

**Graduate Coordinator.** Dr. Mark J. Anderson, Pirkle Engineering Technology Center, 450E, 936.294.3367, [mjanderson@shsu.edu](mailto:mjanderson@shsu.edu), serves as the graduate coordinator for all graduate students seeking a graduate degree in Agricultural Sciences.

The coordinator oversees the official academic records of all graduate students within their specific program area. The coordinator will be the contact person for graduate students submitting any official paperwork and to assist you with course selection until you have chosen your graduate advisor and committee.

**Graduate Advisors.** A standing committee of faculty will serve as the Student Advisory Committee. The graduate advisory committee will be responsible for advising the student on course choices and research efforts. Chair: Dr. Mark J. Anderson, Members: Dr. Marcy Beverly and Dr. Robert Lane.

**Degree Plan.** A degree plan will be on file within the second semester of entry into the degree program and will be filed by the Graduate Coordinator.

**Course Rotation and Course Descriptions.** Course rotation and a list of courses and their description is found in Appendix A.

**Course Requirements for the Master of Agriculture in SAFE.** A list of required courses is found in the Appendix. The degree requires 36 hours of course work. The core curriculum of 15 hours is composed of five required courses. The remaining 21 hours are elective but must be selected from the list of approved courses (see Appendix B).

**Course Requirements for the Certificate in SAFE.** A list of required courses is found in the Appendix. The certificate degree requires 12 hours of course work. The core curriculum of 6 hours is composed of two required courses and selection of 6 hours as electives from the list of approved courses (see Appendix C).

**Scholarships.** The department has numerous scholarships that are available for graduate students based on financial need, academic performance, and leadership. Scholarship applications are available from the department web page: [www.shsu.edu/agr](http://www.shsu.edu/agr). Applications must be electronically filed by February 1 for fall awards.

60x30 Scholarship will be available for new 100% online students enrolled in select degree programs. Applications for the \$1,000 scholarship will be accepted through Scholarships4Kats (<https://shsu.academicworks.com/>). The deadline for this scholarship is typically late August.

**Documentation and Communication.** Each student is responsible for submitting necessary paperwork and correspond to the graduate coordinator/advisory committee in a timely manner. All email correspondence from the faculty, coordinator and advisory committee will be via the student's SHSU assigned email.

**Graduation and Application for Candidacy.** During the semester in which graduation is expected students must apply for graduation via the Registrar's Office website:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/registrar/graduation/apply-to-graduate>.

Deadline for filing without late fees is the 12<sup>th</sup> class day of each Fall and Spring Semester and 4<sup>th</sup> class day of Summer Session I for August Graduation. Students participating in commencement ceremonies must arrange for a cap and gown at the University Bookstore at least 2 months before expected graduation.

# APPENDIX A

## TENTATIVE COURSE ROTATION†

Course	Fall Semester	
	Odd Years*	Even Years*
SAFE 5371 – Alternative Agriculture Enterprises	X	
AGRI 5064 – Agricultural Internship	X	X
SAFE 5391 – Soil Ecology	X	
AGRI 5360 – Contemporary Issues of Ag Business	X	
SAFE 5312 – Ag Sales and Communication		X
SAFE 5313 – Agritourism		X

	Spring Semester	
	Odd Years	Even Years
AGRI 5064 – Agricultural Internship	X	X
SAFE 5311 – Ag and Food Entrepreneurship		X
SAFE 5372 – Diversified Animal Production		X
AGRI 5394 – Applied Horticultural Science		X
SAFE 5351 – Agricultural Advocacy	X	
SAFE 5331 – Sustainable Energy and Resources	X	

	Summer Semester	
	Odd Years	Even Years
AGRI 5064 – Agricultural Internship	X	X
AGRI 5362 – Principles of Crop Protection		X
SAFE 5373 – Food Safety and Regulation	X	

†Schedule is subject to change based on departmental need

\*Note. Odd Years = 2021, 2023, 2025 etc. Even Years = 2020, 2022, 2024 etc.

## SAFE COURSE DESCRIPTION

### **AGRI 5360 Contemporary Issues of Agricultural Business.**

Analysis and discussion of current issues in agricultural business with appropriate principles and theories. Issues may include marketing, management, finance, policy, international, legal and ethical topics. Student participation is expected via reports throughout the semester or term reports. Credit 3.

### **AGRI 5362 Principles of Crop Protection.**

Diagnosis, epidemiology, and control of plant pests. Causative and limiting factors are stressed. Designed for prospective or practicing teachers and technicians in the agro-chemical industry or in federal or state plant pest control agencies. Credit 3.

**AGRI 5064 Agricultural Internship.**

A directed study utilizing industry to develop an understanding of agricultural production and management principles. Credit 3, not to exceed 6 credits.

**AGRI 5394 Applied Horticultural Science.**

Identification, selection, and use of plants to improve the human environment. Evaluate problems and create solutions to environments where plants and human interact. The course also focuses on the soil-water-plant relationship of ornamental plants. Credit 3.

**SAFE 5311 Ag and Food Entrepreneurship.**

This course will examine the initiation of new ventures and growth of existing firms in sustainable agriculture and food production through opportunity recognition, innovation, and change. An emphasis will be placed on developing effective entrepreneurial skills and behaviors, and risk management for start-ups. The preparation of a structured business plan will be required. Credit 3.

**SAFE 5312 Ag Sales and Communication.**

This course will include the application of economic, marketing, sales, and communication principles to small-scale, intensive agriculture including organics and natural products. A focus will be placed on finding a competitive niche through market segmentation/demography, market research, product choice and differentiation, product positioning and pricing, product outlets and advertising, selling strategies, and the use of current and emerging communication tools. Credit 3.

**SAFE 5313 Agritourism.**

This course will present the variety and depth of agritourism/ecotourism practiced globally and cover aspects of the economics and organization of agritourism. Topics include agricultural economics, rural development, marketing, rural policy, products and services, and characteristics of agritourists. Credit 3.

**SAFE 5331 Sustainable Energy and Resources.**

This course will focus on determining energy requirements of various sustainable agricultural operations. Available energy sources will be examined as alternatives for traditional sources provided by fossil fuel. Innovative and emerging on-site production technologies for environmentally sensitive energy will be investigated. Credit 3.

**SAFE 5351 Agricultural Advocacy.**

This course will examine common issues facing agriculturists in relation to the production of a safe and abundant food supply. A primary focus will include small-scale and direct-marketing producers and the challenges they frequently encounter from industry opponents. Positive and factual promotional strategies will be explored. Social issues, political influences, and topics such as food safety and ethics, biotechnology, genetically-modified organisms, and animal welfare will be addressed. Credit 3.



### **SAFE 5371 Alternative Agriculture Enterprises.**

This course will evaluate various alternative agricultural enterprises available to producers, including an examination of the resources necessary to establish a successful production enterprise. Alternative enterprises to be discussed include forage crops, grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, horticultural and forestry products, animals, and enterprises that promote education, recreation, and tourism. On-farm processing of products and methods of adding value to products before they leave the farm will also be explored. Credit 3.

### **SAFE 5372 Diversified Animal Production.**

This course examines various animal production systems in relation to alternative animal agriculture and integrated ranch and farm management strategies. Various livestock production and management strategies for small land owners and urban food production will be studied. Livestock species and breed choices for sustainable production regimens and organic food systems will be explored. Credit 3.

### **SAFE 5373 Food Safety and Regulation.**

In this course, students examine fundamental principles of microbiology as they relate to food safety and product development. Safety intervention methods, such as the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) methods and Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP), are examined to learn how to restrict microbiological growth from harvest to plate. In addition, state, federal, and international policies and laws as they relate to the regulation of food production methods, product development, labeling, and product sales for organic, all natural, value-added, and other alternative food production methods are studied. Prerequisite: None. Credit 3.

### **SAFE 5391 Soil Ecology.**

This course examines living organisms in the soil and their influences on each other, plant health, nutrient cycling, soil organic matter, and other important soil properties. The role of soil biodiversity and its importance in agricultural systems will be addressed along with strategies for enhancing soil productivity under human management activities. Credit 3.

# APPENDIX B

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD ENVIRONMENT MASTER OF AGRICULTURE STUDENT DEGREE PLAN

Name \_\_\_\_\_ SAM ID \_\_\_\_\_

### Required Courses

Course	Hours	Semester Completed
SAFE 5311 – Ag and Food Entrepreneurship	3	
SAFE 5371 – Alternative Agriculture Enterprises	3	
<b>Required Total</b>	<b>6</b>	

### Elective Courses (choose 10 of the following courses)

Course	Hours	Semester Completed
AGRI 5360 – Contemporary Issues in Ag Business	3	
AGRI 5362 – Principles of Crop Protection	3	
AGRI 5394 – Applied Horticultural Science	3	
SAFE 5312 – Ag Sales and Communication	3	
SAFE 5313 – Agritourism	3	
SAFE 5331 – Sustainable Energy and Resources	3	
SAFE 5351 – Agricultural Advocacy	3	
SAFE 5372 – Diversified Animal Production	3	
SAFE 5373 – Food Safety and Regulation	3	
SAFE 5391 – Soil Ecology	3	
AGRI 5064 – Agricultural Internship (Can be taken twice)	6	
Other Departmentally Approved Electives	-	
<b>Elective Total</b>	<b>Need 30</b>	

# APPENDIX C

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM STUDENT DEGREE PLAN

Name \_\_\_\_\_ SAM ID \_\_\_\_\_

### Required Courses

Course	Hours	Semester Completed
SAFE 5351 – Agricultural Advocacy	3	
SAFE 5371 – Alternative Agriculture Enterprises	3	
<b>Required Total</b>	<b>6</b>	

### Elective Courses (choose 2)

Course	Hours	Semester Completed
SAFE 5311 – Ag and Food Entrepreneurship	3	
SAFE 5312 – Ag Sales and Communication	3	
SAFE 5313 – Agritourism	3	
SAFE 5391 – Soil Ecology	3	
<b>Elective Total</b>	<b>Need 6</b>	