



The On Line Master of Agriculture Program in Poultry Science at Texas A&M University

What is a Master of Agriculture in Poultry Science?

The Master of Agriculture ("MAG" program) in the Poultry Science Department is intended to prepare individuals for leadership roles in professional careers in agriculture and life sciences. This is a non-thesis, professional degree program which emphasizes the development of problem solving skills and the practical aspects of academic coursework. Because of the diverse nature of the careers selected by MAG graduates, degree plans will vary considerably and are generally unique for each individual.

How do you get the class content?

The primary delivery system for course materials and student-teacher communication is the Internet. Using the Blackboard Vista (formerly WebCT) platform as the interface for the course, students can view streaming videos of lectures, access supplemental notes, slide presentations, and resource materials through the TAMU Library. Required textbooks may be purchased online as well. Streaming video gives the student the sense of being in the actual classroom. These are not just "canned" courses. All lectures are presented in an asynchronous format, in other words, you do not have to be logged into the course website at the same time as the class here on campus. You may view the lectures online at anytime of the day or night. Another added benefit to viewing streaming videos is that you can view the lecture more than once. Other learning tools used by some instructors include threaded discussions where the instructor posts a topic and the discussion of that subject is supplemented as students post their own thoughts on the topic. Of course no class would be complete without interaction between the instructor and the student which is usually accomplished through emails and telephone conversations.

However, taking a distance education course is not for every one. Each student has a unique learning style and personality and not all students are capable of learning at a distance. Therefore it is important that you assess your own learning style and capabilities before you enroll in a distance education course. There are several online tools available to help you determine if you would be a good fit for online distance learning. Please visit the Poultry Science Department website (<http://posc.tamu.edu/>) or the TAMU Office of Distance Education (<http://distance.tamu.edu/>) for links to these and other helpful information.



What courses will I need to take?

The Poultry Science MAG degree plan offered through the Poultry Science Department consists of 36 hours of course work, a professional paper (which is a scholarly report of a problem solving nature), and a comprehensive final oral examination to be administered by the advisory committee. The courses are selected by the students and his/her advisory committee to develop skills and expertise in specific academic areas to meet the student's career objectives. These areas may include but are not limited to:

- Live Production (nutrition, physiology, diseases, waste management, etc.)
- Nutrition (nutrition, feed formulation, vitamins, minerals, etc)
- Processing/Safety (poultry meat processing, microbiology, HACCP etc).

The degree plan is created during the first year of graduate study and is filed with the Office of Graduate Studies. Some courses may be transferred from other academic institutions and used in the degree plan if approved by the Office of Graduate Studies and your committee.

It will take approximately 3-4 years to complete this degree online if the student takes only one or two courses a semester (one or two 3-credit courses per spring, summer and fall semester). For a time-frame reference, students attending those same courses here on campus at a full course load of 9 hours a semester would complete those same 36 hours in about 1.5 years.

All courses are recorded for delivery via the internet in the same semester as they are taught here on campus. This allows the instructor to present the most up-to date information in their lectures. Courses that are currently available online and applicable to the MAG degree include:

Advanced Undergraduate Level courses

- POSC 333 - Instincts and Behavior
- POSC 326 – Commercial Egg Industry
- POSC 411 – Poultry Nutrition
- POSC 412 – Poultry Feed Formulation
- POSC 427 – Animal Waste Management

Graduate Level courses

- POSC 609 – Avian Physiology
- POSC 611 – Poultry Processing and Distribution Technology
- POSC 615 – Avian Nutrition
- POSC 625 – Least Cost Feed Formulation
- POSC 645 – Nutrition and Metabolism of Vitamins
- POSC 649 – Immunology
- POSC 689 – Special Topics – Diseases of Poultry
- POSC 689 – Special Topics – Advanced Poultry Meat Processing

Other courses in Lipids and Further Processing are in development at this time. Additional courses from other Texas A&M departments or other universities can also be used (eg. statistics, food plant sanitation, food law, feed milling, etc.)



What is an Advisory Committee?

The student's advisory committee consists of no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty who represent the student's field of study. The chair or one of the co-chairs of the advisory committee must be from the Poultry Science Department. The chair of the committee assists the student in identifying appropriate advisory committee members. The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the professional paper and the final examination.



How much will it cost?



Texas A&M University is a state-supported institution. Tuition and fees for distance education programs can vary significantly depending on factors such as Texas residency, and other costs necessary to deliver a course. The following figures are general estimates of tuition and fees for a 3 credit hour course and are based on the latest rate structure (which can change annually). The university does the exact determinations at the time of registration each semester.

In-State Student	\$1,350.00
Out-of-State Student	\$2,250.00

Most distance education students qualify for the Federal Stafford Loan. This is a low-interest bearing loan available to students to assist in paying for educational costs. The Texas A&M University Student Financial Aid website (<http://financialaid.tamu.edu/>) contains additional information on obtaining financial aid. Additionally, **many companies provide financial assistance to their employees for educational expenses** so students should check all potential assistance sources.

What do I need to do to apply for admission to the MAG program?

For admission to Graduate Studies as a degree-seeking student, applicants must meet minimum entrance requirements as set by the Texas A&M University Office of Admissions and Records and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Satisfying the minimum criteria qualifies an applicant for consideration but does not guarantee admission to the program. The faculty will review each applicant taking into consideration:

1. Undergraduate academic record (a bachelor's of science in an agriculture or related science curriculum is strongly recommended but not necessarily required)
2. Recommendation letters
3. GRE (Graduate Record Examination) test scores
4. Applicant statement of desire/purpose



In some cases, additional prerequisite course work may be required before full admission to the program can be granted. It is recommended that you contact the Poultry Science Department Distance Education Coordinator and discuss your background with a faculty advisor before you apply. Questions about the MAG program, potential benefits to your career, and the application process can be answered at this time.

To allow time for processing, applications should be filed by the following deadlines:

- May 1— for the fall semester
- September 1— for the spring semester
- February 1—for the summer term

Please refer to the TAMU Graduate Admissions website (<http://admissions.tamu.edu/>) for further information regarding the application process. International students will need to check the current TAMU Graduate Catalog for additional deadlines and requirements.

I haven't taken the GRE but I would like to enroll in an online course this semester and take the GRE later, is this possible?

Yes, it is possible to take graduate level courses without first taking the GRE, and still get college credit for it. This is called a G6 non-degree-seeking admission. This type of admission requires the same application process as the G7 degree-seeking admission except you do not need GRE scores. It is possible to take up to 12 credit hours (approximately 3 courses) as a G6 student and still be able to transfer them into a degree plan as long as the courses meet with the approval of the department head and your committee. This would allow you to start taking courses right away, and then also have some time to study for the GRE. Once your GRE scores have been submitted to Texas A&M University, you may submit another application requesting degree-seeking status. We have had several students who have started this way and are now in the degree-seeking program.

Computer Requirements:

Access to a T-1 line, cable modem, or DSL is recommended for quality purposes. Those who have a 56K modem should still be able to access the streaming video but download time may be long and the video quality may be poor. Required software includes:

- Real One Player (free version), Windows Media Player, Flash Plug-in - used to view streaming videos
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (free) - used to access articles & notes posted on course websites by professors.
- Word and Excel (Microsoft) or Word Perfect and Lotus (Corel) - for class papers and assignments

Because the computer plays an important role in distance education, it is recommended that students acquire basic computer skills (word processing, email, and internet access) as soon as possible.

Helpful Website addresses:

Texas A&M University — <http://www.tamu.edu/>
 Distance Education at Texas A&M University — <http://distance.tamu.edu/>
 Online Graduate Orientation — <http://distance.tamu.edu/current/orientation>
 TAMU Masters of Agriculture at a Distance — <http://mag.tamu.edu/>
 Office of Graduate Studies — <http://ogs.tamu.edu/>
 TAMU Office of Admissions and Records — <http://admissions.tamu.edu/>
 TAMU Graduate Catalog — <http://www.tamu.edu/admissions/catalogs/index.html>
 TAMU Department of Student Financial Aid — <http://financialaid.tamu.edu/>
 TAMU Department of Student Financial Services — <http://finance.tamu.edu/sbs/>
 Graduate Record Examination for Test Takers — <http://www.gre.org/ttindex.html>



Who do I contact for further information?

For specific questions about the Online Masters of Agriculture in Poultry Science, please visit our website or contact us at:

<http://posc.tamu.edu>

John Carey.
 Professor and Department Head
 979-845-1931
 Email: jcarey@poultry.tamu.edu

Elizabeth Hirschler, M.Agr.
 Distance Education Coordinator
 979-862-7694
 Email: lhirschler@poultry.tamu.edu

Our Mailing Address is:
 Texas A&M University
 Department of Poultry Science
 Kleberg Center, Rm 101
 2472-tamu
 College Station, TX 77842-2472

