

A Guide for New and Prospective Graduate Students

**Department of Agricultural
Economics and Agribusiness**

Created by: The Agricultural Economics
Graduate Student Association (AEGSA)





Photo by Dr. Trina Biswas (2016 Graduate)

Welcome!

The Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at LSU is nationally and internationally known for teaching, research, service programs, and providing outstanding undergraduate and graduate degrees. The department conducts research and offers training in: food, agriculture, natural resources and environment, community development, international trade, transportation, and agribusiness.

This package provides information that you may need all along your program at LSU.

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I. Important Contacts

Here is a list of contacts, who can help you get started as a graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Economics.

Contact	E-mail Address and Office
Dr. M. Salassi <i>Department Head</i>	MSalassi@agcenter.lsu.edu 101 Martin Dr. Woodin Hall
Dr. P. Lynn Kennedy <i>Director of Graduate Studies</i>	LKennedy@agcenter.lsu.edu 181 Martin D. Woodin Hall
Marla Jones <i>Administrative Funding Specialist</i>	MJones@agcenter.lsu.edu 107 Martin D. Woodin Hall
Jody Bissett <i>Administrative Coordinator</i>	JBisse1@lsu.edu 101 Martin D. Woodin Hall
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Alejandra Brevé <i>AEGSA President</i>	ABFerrari@agcenter.lsu.edu 21 Martin D. Woodin Hall

II. LSU Student ID (Tiger Card)

LSU Student ID is called Tiger Card. Tiger Card is the official LSU identification card for all students, faculty, and staff. The card also serves as an electronic key for

residence halls. You can deposit money into a TigerCASH account and use Tiger Card as a debit card at select locations on and around LSU campus. More detailed information can be found at [Tiger Card](#).

The LSU student ID card can be obtained at the Tiger Card office located in the Student Union Tiger Card Office. In addition, the card also allows you to use other services for which you have privileges, including: libraries, printing, Recreation Center, meal plans, testing centers, athletic events, etc.



LSU UREC aquatics facilities

III. myLSU Account

The Graduate School generates a myLSU account for you. Since the ID is computer-generated, a student cannot request a specific account. For more information about the email account visit [LSUMail Account](#).

myLSU account is used to complete your semester registration (adding/dropping courses). For detailed instructions please go to [Semester Registration](#).

You can also do various things with your myLSU account, such as pay fee bills, request transcripts, access to Moodle and WorkDay (accounting portal), etc.

IV. Graduate Handbook in Agricultural Economics

The Graduate Handbook in Agricultural Economics is designed as a reference for the graduate students, providing basic information on degree requirement, regulations and departmental policies that apply to graduate study in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at Louisiana State University. This handbook is a supplement to LSU General Catalog and Graduate Bulletin. The current issue of the Graduate Bulletin may be obtained from the Graduate school, 134 David Boyd Hall, LSU, and Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803.

Graduate students assume full responsibility for knowledge of rules and regulations of both the Graduate School and the Department of Agricultural Economics

and Agribusiness. You can find the Graduate Handbook [here](#).

V. Assistantship

Graduate assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis to both MS (thesis option) and PhD students.

- The current term for assistantships is a maximum of two years for MS students and three and a half years for PhD students.
- When you are offered assistantship, it is very important that you carefully read the offer letter that you received from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness regarding the terms and conditions of your appointment.
- The department will usually assign your major advisor prior to or at the time of your arrival. In some cases, you could change your major advisor later on with the approval of the department. If you are on assistantship, the source of funding may determine the possibility of you changing your major professor.

There are mainly two sources of funding held by graduate students (MS and PhD) in the department: Departmental funding and Grant funding.

- Departmental funding is the case where the source of money comes from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness. With departmental funding, you have relatively more flexibility to change your major professor if necessary. However, the departmental funding has less stability in terms of the flow of money. With departmental funding, it is unlikely that you receive assistantship beyond the maximum terms (two years for MS students and three and a half years for Ph.D students).
- Grant funding is the case where the source of money comes from entities other than the department, such as US government agencies, the state of Louisiana, etc. With grant funding, you are often expected to work on specific projects under the supervision of your major professor. Hence, there is relatively less flexibility in terms of changing your major professor when necessary. You may have to secure another source of funding, departmental

funding or another grant funding from a new advisor who is willing to offer you assistantship. However, grant funding may give students more stability; your major professor may support your assistantship beyond the maximum terms as long as you make a timely progress in the program.

To be able to stay eligible for assistantship, you are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA at all times. Aside from that, you are required to register as a full time student at all semesters. That means registering for at least 9 credit hours during each fall and spring semester, while in the summer semester you are required to register for at least 6 credit hours.

VI. Work Permit (Only for International Students)

In the case of international students holding an assistantship, you are required to have a work permit. The work permit could be obtained by filling out the work permit form at the International Student Office/ISO (101 Hatcher Hall) office. For more information, please go to [Work Permit](#).

Once the work permit is approved, bring it to the Payroll office (204 Thomas Boyd

Hall) and the AgEcon department office (101 Agricultural Administration Building). They will make a copy of it and you keep the original. The work permit has to be renewed every semester and it is your responsibility to do this. The renewal should be done prior to the current work permit's expiration date.

VII. Office Assignment

The president of AEGSA will assign the office and desk for incoming students. Most MS students will be assigned to room 21. This room has plenty of desks allowing new students a chance to get to know others, share materials and help each other. When the MS students are moving towards the end of their program, they may be assigned to a smaller office but the priority may be given to PhD students.

Keys to your office: Speak with Ms. Jody Bissett in Room 101 about keys to your office and to the building.

Computer Access: See Zack in Room 34 for access to the office computer.

Printer: You can use the printer in your own office. If you need paper, please check with Ms. Jody Bissett in Room 101.

Copier: There is a copier located in room 107. They allow research-related copying only. Check with Ms. Jody Bissett.

Mail box: Mail box for each office is located in room 107. You can also use outgoing mail box to mail your intercampus mail or business mail.

VIII. Academic Resources

This section provides you with academic resources available for research and course work at LSU. First, we introduce you to some of the general resources available to all LSU students. Then we will cover important resources (mainly online) that are unique to our major, Agricultural Economics and its subfields.

General Resources

- **LSU libraries:** The Middleton library is the main library on our campus and it offers a wide range of academic resources. LSU libraries websites have a lot of useful information to get you familiarize with the services available.
- **Interlibrary Loan:** When you need a book (or any other form of resources) that are not in the Middleton library's collection, you

can request it through Interlibrary Loan. See here for more information.

- E-journals and Online Databases: If you are looking for an article in an academic journal, you may be able to access a pdf copy of the article from E-journals section of LSU libraries website.
- If you are looking for articles on a particular topic of your interest, you can go to Indexes and Databases section, go to one of online databases and search multiple academic journals by keywords of your choice.

Tigerware

Tigerware is a website where LSU students can download various computer software applications for free. Available software includes Windows 7, Microsoft Office 2010, Symantec Endpoint Antivirus, and Endnote. You need to log in to your PAWS account to download any software applications from Tigerware.

Virtual Lab (V-lab)

LSU Virtual Lab is a website where LSU students can access a collection of software applications that is only available on LSU

computer labs from personal computers. See [here](#) for more information.

Gear 2 Geaux

Mobile computing devices are available for check-out at the Middleton Library Circulation Desk. A student ID is required to check out these items. Any items not returned will be charged to your fee bill. You can also check-out equipment through [Communication Across Curriculum](#)

Available Gear:

- Apple Macbooks
- Lenovo Laptops
- Apple iPads
- Student Response System (*Clickers*)
- Canon SD700 Digital Cameras
- Sony Mini DV Digital camcorders
- Tripods
- Power Cords
- Phone Chargers: iPhone 5 and 4, and Android.

Lynda Campus

Lynda Campus provides LSU students with online workshops that focus on the use

of various software applications. See [here](#) for more information.

Microsoft IT Academy

IT Academy provides LSU students with online workshops that focus on the use of Microsoft Office. See [here](#) for more information.

Moodle

Moodle is an online platform where course instructors can upload files, make announcements, post grades and students can access them. More and more instructors at LSU are using Moodle and it is important that students are familiar with how to use Moodle. See [here](#) for more information.

LSU GROK Knowledge Base

LSU GROK Knowledge Base is the first place to go if you need to know more about any of the online resources introduced above.

IX. How to get around LSU

LSU Tiger Trails Transit System

LSU Tiger Trails Transit System provides free bus service on and off campus. See [Tiger Trails Transit System](#). You can find the Tiger

Trails routes with detailed information on [Routes](#). The hours of operation can be found on [Hours](#). There is also an [app](#) for smartphones that you can download to track your bus.

Capital Area Transit System (CATS)

For citywide transportation, transfers with Capital Area Transit System (CATS) are free with your student ID. For more detailed information about routes and hours, please visit [CATS](#).

LSU Parking

If you are planning to drive to campus, then you need to have a student-parking permit to park your vehicle. Instructions on how to purchase parking permit can be found on [Parking Permit](#). After completing the purchase, the parking permit along with parking map will be mailed to your address.

Campus map and parking map can also be obtained at the Visitor Information Center (intersection of Highland Rd & Dalrympale Dr), International Cultural Center/ICC (3365 Dalrymple Drive), Student Union, and Google Maps.

Louisiana Driver's License and ID

If you're new to Louisiana, you may be able to have your out-of-state driver's license transferred to the OMV. You must do this within 30 days of moving to the state. In the case of international students you will have to apply for a driver's license. Do this after receiving your Social Security Card.

It is also recommended for international students to get an official Louisiana ID in order to avoid carrying a passport as form of identification. See here for more information about Louisiana State ID.

Zip Cars

If you do not own a vehicle there are other options besides public transportation. Zip Cars are located around and near campus. They offer affordable hourly rates.

- Drive cars by the hour or day. Gas & insurance included.
- In neighborhoods, cities and airports across the globe.
- Choose from sedans, hybrids, vans and more.

See here for more information about Student Car Sharing/Zip Car program.

X. Housing Information

Looking for housing is perhaps the most pressing matter to take care of when moving into a new place. Unfortunately, finding a place to live in Baton Rouge can be more difficult than it is in other college towns in the U.S. for several reasons. First, public transportation in Baton Rouge is inconvenient, to say the least. Second, there are some parts of the city around LSU campus that are not ideal for students to live due to safety reasons. These reasons make it difficult to find affordable housing that is safe, convenient and comfortable, especially prior to coming to Baton Rouge.

Although we are not housing experts by any means, the aim of this section is to provide the prospective and incoming students a quick overview of things to know to help them find a place to live that meet their needs, wants and the budget. Due to the fact that most graduate students who are from out of the state live in an apartment, our focus is also on finding an apartment in Baton Rouge.

Temporary Housing (for Incoming International Students)

If you are an international student and decide to come to LSU without securing a place to live, which some of us do, the

International Cultural Center (ICC) provides a temporary housing for incoming international students. They also provide transportation from the Baton Rouge airport to the ICC for incoming international students. Please be warned, however, that the ICC does not accept reservations for the temporary housing and beds are offered on a first-come first-serve basis. See here for more information about the ICC.

LSU Residential Life

The first place you should go to when you begin your apartment hunt is the LSU Residential Life website. Although the website is mostly dedicated to undergraduate students and on-campus dormitories, they do have information that can be useful to graduate students as well. In particular, LSU has two on-campus apartments (Nicholson and Edward Gay apartments) only for graduate students and students with family. If you are interested in these on-campus apartments, you should check out their Family & Graduate Housing website.

LSU Off Campus Housing

If you are interested in off-campus housing options, you should definitely spend some time at the LSU Off Campus Life website. They have a collection of resources that students need to know in looking for off-

campus housing. If you are looking for roommate(s) this is a good place to start.

Safety around LSU Campus

We mentioned earlier that some parts of the city around LSU campus could be unsafe, so extra precautions should be taken in choosing a place to live. If you are trying to look for an apartment off-campus and want to know the atmosphere of the neighborhood, Google Street View can be quite useful. However, please do not solely rely on on-line resources including Google Street View to determine the safety of the place you are interested in. It is advisable for you to actually see the place before signing a lease or making any legally binding agreements with the landlord to make sure you get what you really want, especially if you are looking for off-campus housing.

Where to look for off-campus housing

So far we have talked about what you should know before you start your housing search. In this section, we would like to introduce a list of websites where you can find information about apartments or classifieds for off-campus roommate search.

- Google Map: [Google Map](#) can be the most helpful on-line resource to find an apartment around LSU

campus. Simply locate LSU campus on Google Map and use search nearby function and type “apartments” for example. It will generate a list of apartments (most of them with links to the property and/or a phone number) around the campus.

- ICC Roommate Search: Current international students can send a roommate search request to the ICC, and the ICC staff will post your request on their website. You may find a housing option that suits interest [here](#).
- LSU Off Campus Housing: The Residential Life Off campus website has a profile database of students in search of roommate(s).
- Craigslist Baton Rouge: Craigslist is a website featuring free online classifieds including housing. Baton Rouge section also has classifieds for housing
- Facebook: If you have a Facebook account, you may find classifieds on housing and various sales in public groups.
 - LSU SVM - Buy, Sell, Trade, Rent, & Roomies
 - Buy and Sell LSU marketplace

- International Students @
LSU

If you are to find housing information through classifieds, such as Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace, please be extra careful as some of the postings on such websites could be a scam. If you see some classifieds that looks suspicious or too good to be true, please use your caution and common sense (as an economist in training). Always keep in mind that there is no free lunch after all.

XI. Other Information

We hope that this guide for new and prospective graduate students have been helpful for you to get ready for your graduate study at the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at LSU. In case you have any questions or need any help, please refer to the contact information at the beginning of this document. If you wish to ask a question to graduate students in our department, feel free to contact the Welcoming Committee of the AgEcon Graduate Student Association. We are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

If you are a current student in this department and need help on anything about your graduate study, the Welcoming

Committee of the AgEcon Graduate Student Association will be happy to assist you.

Please be advised that you should always talk to your major professor about any concerns you may have, and you may need to talk to the graduate coordinator and/or the department head as necessary. However, if you wish to seek advice from fellow graduate students in the department, do not hesitate to let us know. Our past experiences may be able to help you to solve your problem or relieve you from unnecessary stresses.