

M.S. Assistantship: Evaluating Professional Readiness in the Forestry Sector

Job Description

The Department of Forestry in the College of Forest Resources and the Forest and Wildlife Research Center at Mississippi State University is seeking applicants for a funded M.S. assistantship to examine the professional readiness of forestry graduates and the competency needs of employers across public, private, and non-profit natural resource sectors. The student will be advised by Dr. Arun Regmi and will join the social dimensions research program in the Department of Forestry.

This research will investigate how existing educational experiences prepare students for careers in the field and evaluate employer expectations for entry-level professionals. By engaging recent graduates, employers, and other stakeholders, the project will identify areas of alignment and potential gaps between educational preparation and professional competency needs. The student will contribute to all aspects of the research, including survey and protocol development, data collection, stakeholder engagement, qualitative and quantitative analysis, scientific writing, and dissemination of findings. The position offers opportunities for professional development, conference presentations, interdisciplinary publications, and applied research training, along with engagement with the state and federal natural resource agencies that partner with MSU as a land-grant institution.

Funding: \$20,000 annual stipend, plus tuition waiver and health insurance. **Start date:** January 2027 preferred; Summer or Fall 2027 start dates are negotiable.

Qualifications

Minimum: Candidates must hold a bachelor's degree in forestry, natural resource management, applied social science, or a related field. Candidates should have strong written and oral communication skills, the ability to work both independently and collaboratively as part of a research team, and an interest in social science research in natural resource contexts. The successful candidate will be self-motivated, creative, and eager to collaborate in a multidisciplinary environment.

Desired: Previous coursework or experience in human dimensions of natural resources or related social science disciplines, experience with survey research or program evaluation, familiarity with statistical software (e.g., R, Stata), and a record of scientific writing would be a plus.

To Apply

Email Dr. Arun Regmi (a.regmi@msstate.edu) a cover letter describing your interest, a CV, unofficial transcripts, test scores (e.g., GRE, IELTS, TOEFL), and contact information for two professional references. Review begins immediately and continues until the position is filled. Please contact Dr. Regmi with any questions.

A full application to the Graduate School will be required for an official offer to be made. Additional information can be found on the MSU Office of the Graduate School (www.grad.msstate.edu) and the MSU Department of Forestry website (www.cfr.msstate.edu/forestry/graduate.asp).