



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Agronomy Graduate Program Handbook

2026

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Academic Policies and Procedures Handbook

Agronomy MS and PhD

<https://pasdept.wisc.edu/academics/graduate/agronomy/graduate-handbook/>

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I. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Intention/Role of Handbook

This handbook is intended for graduate students who are pursuing an Agronomy degree. The Graduate School is the ultimate authority for granting graduate degrees at the University. The Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences administers the Agronomy graduate program under the authority of the Graduate School.

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures provide essential information regarding general University requirements. Program authority to set degree requirements beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the Agronomy faculty. The policies described in this handbook have been approved by the program faculty as a whole.

Degree and course requirements may change over time. You as a student must meet the degree and course requirements in effect when you enter the program. In addition, administrative procedures and processes can change over time. You are required to follow the procedures and processes listed in the current handbook. This information should be supplemented by consultation with your advisor and committee so that your individual needs and interests and all degree requirements are met. You may also wish to consult the [Agronomy website](#) and [Graduate School website](#).

Mission Statement

The mission of the Agronomy program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is to generate, integrate, and apply knowledge about crop plants grown by humans for food, feed, fiber, and fuel. Through the integration of teaching, research, and extension/outreach efforts, we address problems and discover opportunities concerning the efficiency and sustainability of production, improvements in quality, and methods for safe and environmentally- sound practices. While cultivating a positive, diverse, and inclusive working and learning environment, we strive to ensure that agricultural systems and products in Wisconsin, the USA, and international communities are able to meet rapidly-changing current needs and those of future generations.

Department Structure

- The department will assign new graduate students an office space upon arrival. Keys for the building and office are rented through the Department Administrator, Sandy Bennett. There is a \$5 deposit for an office key and a \$10 deposit for a building key. Deposits will be returned to you when you complete your time here.
- In the event that you have forgotten your keys or need other quick access, a master key is available in the main office to borrow. This key must be used and returned promptly.
- Copiers are located in Rooms 371 and 373. Office supplies, mailboxes, and the fax machine (608-262-5217) are in Room 371. There is one color copier and one copier that is connected to the network. Each lab has an assigned copy number to track copy charges.
- USPS mail comes to the office every day around one pm; UPS comes to the loading dock in the morning and is picked up around four pm. FedEx can come throughout the day. If you are bringing a package to be sent out by FedEx, the deadline is one pm.
- We will not notify you of the arrival of packages, unless the package contains dry ice or needs other quick attention. It is your responsibility to track your packages and retrieve your mail.
- Departmental mailing address to be used for professional correspondence is:
Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences
UW-Madison

1575 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706

- Office hours are 7:45 to 4:30 M-F; we are closed for lunch from 11:45 to 12:30.
- The HR contact is Tricia Check, tlcheck@wisc.edu
- Travel and purchasing contact is Amy Cottom amy.cottom@wisc.edu.
- Building and facilities contact is Erik Duerr, erik.duerr@wisc.edu
- The Graduate Program Manager is Caitlin Collies, 369 Moore Hall caitlin.collies@wisc.edu.
- The Graduate School maintains a [checklist for new graduate students](#). We encourage every new graduate student to visit this checklist and take care of as much as possible before the new school year.

Administration

Amaya Atucha, Chair
Shawn Conley and Natalia de Leon, Associate Chairs
Tricia Check, Department Administrator

Learning Outcomes

MS

Knowledge and Skills Learning Goals

- Articulates, critiques, or elaborates the theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry or schools of practice in the field of study.
- Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
- Demonstrates understanding of the primary field of study in a historical, social, or global context.
- Selects and/or utilizes the most appropriate methodologies and practices.
- Evaluates or synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in the field of study.
- Communicates clearly in ways appropriate to the field of study.

Professional Conduct Learning Goals

- Recognizes and applies principles of ethical and professional conduct.

PhD

Knowledge and Skills Learning Goals

- Articulates research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the field of study.
- Formulates ideas, concepts, designs, and/or techniques beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within the field of study.
- Creates research, scholarship, or performance that makes a substantive contribution.
- Demonstrates breadth within their learning experiences.
- Advances contributions of the field of study to society.
- Communicates complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.

Professional Conduct Learning Goals

- Fosters ethical and professional conduct.

Areas of Specialization

Crop Production and Management

The majority of this research is of an applied nature generally conducted under field conditions. Presently, research in this area emphasizes:

- forage crop nutritive value
- chemical composition and preservation
- cultural practices for maximizing crop returns including fertilizer practices and mineral nutrition of crop plants
- the use of chemical growth regulators for crop yield enhancement
- crop sequence
- tillage interactions
- weed control practices
- sustainable agriculture

Botany, soils and agronomy courses are recommended for students specializing in crop production and management. Ph.D. students in this area frequently minor in botany or plant pathology, but other options, including soils or plant breeding and plant genetics, exist.

Agroecosystems

The majority of this research is of an applied nature generally conducted under field conditions. Presently, research in this area emphasizes:

- cropping systems
- organismal interactions
- soil ecology
- atmospheric science
- plant ecology
- simulation modeling

Botany, soils and agronomy courses are recommended frequently for students specializing in agroecosystems. Ph.D. students in this area frequently minor in botany or soils, but other options exist, including entomology, plant pathology, and plant breeding and plant genetics.

Molecular Biology

The techniques of molecular biology are being used to analyze various traits affecting crop productivity or quality. Some of the specific areas of interest in the Agronomy Department include:

- the identification and use of DNA restriction fragments as genetic markers in crop plants and the analysis of molecular events associated with the generation of new genetic variation
- the molecular analysis of the expression of genes affecting crop quality
- the genetic construction of Rhizobium strains that are competitive for nodulation and provide increased legume productivity

Courses in molecular biology, genetics, biochemistry and botany are emphasized to students with interests in molecular biology. These students may choose from a wide variety of minors including genetics, plant pathology, bacteriology and biochemistry. The University also offers a graduate program in Cell and Molecular Biology which

has separate admissions requirements. Students admitted to this program can be advised by Agronomy professors who are members of the program.

Plant Physiology and Biochemistry

Plant Physiology and Biochemistry research involves the study of fundamental processes of growth, development and metabolism in crop species. Current research being conducted in the Agronomy Department emphasizes:

- nitrogen and carbon metabolism
- enzyme functions, seed development and germination
- interfacing plant biochemistry, molecular biology and physiology with breeding and genetics

Plant physiology and biochemistry students obtain a strong background in chemistry, biochemistry and botany. Biochemistry and/or botany are frequently chosen by these Ph.D. candidates for a minor field of study.

Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics

Plant breeding and genetics research focuses on the major Wisconsin crops:

- corn
- forage legumes and grasses
- small grains
- soybeans and peas

Both basic and advanced research is conducted utilizing whole plant, biochemical, molecular and cytogenetic techniques. Most research involves concentrated field work in the summer, supplemented by greenhouse and laboratory research during the fall and spring semesters.

Many students interested in plant breeding and genetics elect to obtain their degree under the Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics program. Those electing this option must fulfill the requirements of that program. However, they are housed in Agronomy (if their advisor is in Agronomy) and participate fully in activities of the Agronomy Department.

Weed Science

Research in the area of weed science is of both an applied and basic nature. Applied research is primarily directed towards control of annual and perennial weed species in row crops and forages.

Applied (field) research includes:

- experiments studying crop rotation
- minimum-tillage practices
- control of problem weeds
- herbicide evaluation
- modifications of cultural practices

Basic research (weed physiology and biochemistry) currently emphasizes:

- absorption and translocation of herbicides by plants
- enzymology of herbicide metabolism

- mechanisms of herbicide action and selectivity
- herbicide properties and persistence in soil

Botany, soils, entomology and plant pathology course work is emphasized for students working on an applied project in weed science, whereas biochemistry and/or botany courses are emphasized for students working on a basic project in weed science. Opportunities also exist for cooperative study with scientists in closely related fields.

II. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement

The Graduate School's minimum graduate residence credit requirement for graduation can be satisfied only with courses numbered 300 and above taken as a graduate student at UW-Madison (this includes but is not limited to online, thesis/research, independent study, practicum/internship credits).

Graduate Residence Credit Minimums:

- Master's degree: 16 credits
- Doctoral degree: 32 credits

(Must be completed prior to achieving dissertator status; may include master's degree credits taken at UW-Madison.)

In rare circumstances, courses taken as a University Special student maybe allowed to count toward the minimum graduate residence credit requirement. These credits generally are not allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum.

Credits applied to the minimum graduate residence credit requirement must be earned while enrolled as a graduate student at UW-Madison and can also count toward the minimum graduate degree credit requirement.

Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement

The Graduate School's minimum graduate degree credit requirement is a degree requirement instituted by the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee to ensure that a graduate degree meets institution accreditation standards (this includes but is not limited to online, thesis/research, independent study, and practicum internships credits).

Graduate Degree Credit Minimums

- Master's Degree: 30 credits
- Doctoral Degree: 51 credits

The doctoral degree minimum graduate degree credit requirement may be achieved with credits earned before or after dissertator status. The credits applied towards a master's degree, a doctoral minor, or taken as a dissertator shall count towards the related doctoral graduate degree credit requirement.

Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement

	**Prior Graduate Coursework from Other Institution(s)	** Coursework from Undergraduate Career at UW–Madison (up to 7 credits total)	**Transfer from University Special Student Career at UW–Madison (up to 15 credits total)
Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement	No	No	*Allowed up to 15 credits numbered 300 or above
Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement	*Allowed	*Allowed up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above	
Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement	*Allowed	*Allowed up to 7 credits numbered 700 or above	*Allowed up to 15 credits numbered 700 or above

*Fulfillment of requirements is allowed in these instances only if approved by the student’s graduate program.

** Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master’s degree or a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Graduate Transfer Credit Policy

See full policy on the [graduate school website](#)

- **Transfer Credits from other graduate institutions.** A student’s program may decide to transfer graduate credits completed at another institution (earned post-baccalaureate). There are no limits on the number of credits that can be transferred except that the program’s minimum graduate residence credit requirement can be satisfied only with courses taken as a graduate student at UW–Madison. Further, the graduate-level credits taken as a Big Ten Academic Alliance Traveling Scholar may count as credits taken in residence at UW–Madison. The credits from this work will appear on a UW–Madison transcript as transfer credits into the graduate career.
- **Transfer Credits from an undergraduate career at UW–Madison.** A student’s program may decide to transfer up to seven credits numbered 300 or above from the undergraduate career completed at UW–Madison. Exceptions to this limit must be approved by the Graduate School. However, these credits would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. The credits will be noted on the transcript in the graduate career as transfer credits, but the courses will remain in the undergraduate career.

III. MASTER'S DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements

As a candidate for the MS degree in Agronomy, you are required to have completed the following courses by the time you request your MS warrant:

- 1 year of general chemistry with labs
- 1 semester organic chemistry with lab
- 4 semesters of biology distributed among three of the following four areas: biochemistry; genetics; plant morphology, anatomy or physiology; and taxonomy, evolution, or ecology.

In addition, one semester of Agronomy Seminar (920, 950, or 957) for credit is required. All students enrolled in the Agronomy Graduate Program are required to attend Agronomy 920 seminar, even when not enrolled for credit. Requests for deviations from these requirements can be made to the Graduate Studies Committee with permission and advice from your advisor.

Your undergraduate courses may be used towards this requirement, if the courses were rigorous and met the expectations of graduate work. These undergraduate classes can only count towards this requirement; they cannot count towards the **Minimum Graduate Credit Residence Requirement (16 credits)**. See [Prior Coursework](#).

Teaching experience is not required but it is highly recommended.

Plan of Study

A Master's Plan of Study is a document prepared early in your program together with your advisor, to be reviewed by your committee. Included in the plan will be a section outlining how and when you will obtain your recommended teaching experience. A copy of the approved plan of study will go to the Department Chair, the Teaching Committee Chair, and the Graduate Committee Chair.

Committee Selection

Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the student is expected to meet with their advisor on a regular basis. The advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes two members, from the Agronomy graduate program responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. Students are usually admitted to the Agronomy graduate program directly into the mentorship of a specific advisor, without completing any rotations.

You will choose your thesis committee together with your advisor. The composition of the committee complies with Graduate School policy (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/committees/>).

Program Options

All candidates for the M.S. degree in the Agronomy program must satisfy the requirements of one of the following two program options:

Option A: Thesis required. You will prepare a formal thesis and file it in Memorial Library as outlined by the Graduate School. You must also provide a hard-bound copy of their thesis to your advisor.

Option B: Comprehensive report required. A comprehensive report (not a formal thesis) is prepared and filed

with the department and with your advisor. The report does not need to be defended or published. In rare circumstances, and under the advice and permission of the advisor, you may choose option B.

Under both options, each member of the examining committee must receive a copy of the thesis or report at least 7 days before your oral examination. All requirements of the Graduate School must be met.

Minor Requirement

No minor is declared for the M.S. degree in Agronomy.

Exit Seminar

Students intending to terminate their graduate program at the UW with the M.S. degree are required to present an exit seminar, preferably prior to their M.S. oral exam.

You should contact office staff to find a suitable room for your seminar and exam several weeks before the event. Most students use room 462 or room 473. You are allowed to provide refreshments such as coffee and cookies, but the department will not provide those.

You may send a PDF of a flier advertising your seminar to the office staff for distribution to other grad students, faculty, and academic staff.

M S Oral Exam

You must sit for a comprehensive oral examination given by your committee before the MS degree will be conferred. A form called a warrant must be requested at least three weeks before the exam. **To request a warrant, go to the Links For Current Students page on the Agronomy website.** You are encouraged, but not required, to provide refreshments for your committee during this exam.

Thesis Deposit

All Agronomy MS students are required to deposit a copy of their thesis with the Memorial Library. For guidelines and requirements, see [Guide to Preparing Your Master's Thesis](#).

Timelines and Deadline Requirements

- Graduate School deadlines/time limits (including graduation deadlines: [Deadlines](#))
- Checklist for Thesis/Defense/Graduation
 - Please see the Graduate School's checklists: [Completing Your Degree](#)

IV. DOCTORAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements

The following courses are entrance requirements to pursue a Ph.D. in the Agronomy program. Applicants are required to have taken the following course work:

- 1 year general chemistry with labs
- 1 semester organic chemistry with labs
- 1 semester physics
- 1 semester calculus
- 1 semester statistics
- 4 semesters of biology distributed among three of the following four areas: biochemistry; genetics; plant morphology, anatomy or physiology; and taxonomy, evolution, or ecology.

Two semesters of Agronomy Seminar (920, 950, and/or 957) are required beyond the MS seminar requirement. All students enrolled in the Agronomy Graduate Program are required to attend Agronomy 920 seminar, even when not enrolled for credit.

These classes can be taken in your undergraduate or master's career. At the department's discretion, you may be admitted with deficiencies. These deficiencies are expected to be completed within the first semester of study. The Agronomy Department requires two full-time semesters in residence for a Ph.D. Your certification committee can petition the Graduate Studies Committee for a deviation from the residence requirement under unique circumstances.

Teaching experience is not required, but is highly recommended by the department and the time for completion of this recommended experience should be included on the certification form. Please see the Teaching section for information on the department's policy.

Minor Requirement

Students completing a Ph.D. in Agronomy must also complete requirements for a minor. Graduate school minor policy: <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1200>

Option A: a minor in a single department or program. You are required to have at least 9 credits in the minor. Credits must satisfy the requirements of the minor department.

Option B: a minor distributed among two or more departments/programs. Option must have at least 9 credits in the minor. The student must have formal approval from the major department, both for the request to choose the distributed option, and for the content of the proposed program.

The course work for completion of the minor requirement is decided at the time of certification, with approval of the Committee. You must declare the minor in your [grad portal](#), before your prelim warrant is requested.

Committee Selection

Students are usually admitted to the Agronomy graduate program directly into the mentorship of a specific advisor, without completing any rotations. You are required to form, under the guidance of your advisor, a committee to oversee your Ph.D. degree progress. The composition of the committee complies with Graduate School policy (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/committees/>). While not strictly required, continuity in membership of the student's Certification Committee, Preliminary Examination Committee, and Final Examination Committee is strongly encouraged.

Certification

Certification is the means by which you and a faculty committee, referred to as the Certification Committee, jointly determine the courses that are necessary to ensure your adequate preparation in the graduate program. It involves a review of your previous course work and discussion of your proposed field of study within Agronomy, as well as your proposed minor study. Each Ph.D. student and their advisor will select a four- or five-member Certification Committee, which shall include the major and minor advisors. A completed Certification of Candidate Form showing current and completed courses should be given to the Certification Committee at least 7 days before the scheduled certification meeting. The completed, signed certification form should be filed with the Chair of the Graduate Committee and the Graduate Coordinator within the first two full semesters of the student's Ph.D. program. The Certification form will then be presented to your committee before your preliminary exam.

Research Proposal

You will prepare a thesis research proposal in consultation with your major advisor. The proposal is to be reviewed by a faculty committee, which includes your major and minor professors. The proposal should be delivered to committee members one week in advance of the review. The proposal review should take place no later than one year after certification.

Preliminary Examination

The preliminary examination is a comprehensive oral exam given by a four- or five-member faculty committee, hereafter referred to as the Preliminary Examination Committee, when you have completed all or nearly all of the prescribed course work (all of the course work for the minor must be completed). In the exam, you will be expected to demonstrate competency in your field of study as well as in other areas that the committee deems necessary. The Preliminary Examination Committee must include your major and minor professors. Students are not eligible to take the comprehensive preliminary examination until they have cleared their records of all incomplete grades.

At least three weeks before your preliminary exam contact the graduate program manager to request a warrant. **To request a warrant, go to the 'For Current Students' page on the Agronomy website.** When special conditions exist, you may request you Preliminary Examination Committee to provide a comprehensive written examination in addition to the oral examination.

Students expecting to take their prelims should see the office staff to reserve a room for their examination; most students use 462, 346, or 473. While it is not required, traditionally most students provide their committee with refreshments.

After you pass your preliminary examination, the members of the Preliminary Examination Committee must sign the warrant; then you must return the form to the Graduate Coordinator who will submit it to the Graduate School. The chair of the department signs as the minor professor for a distributed minor.

Dissertator Status

To be eligible to register as a dissertator, you must:

- pass the preliminary exam
- submit the signed preliminary exam warrant to the Graduate School
- complete the minor course requirements
- complete the major course requirements
- clear all incompletes or “P” grades in non-research courses
- complete a minimum of 32 graduate level credits.

The Graduate School requires that all dissertators maintain continuous enrollment. Dissertators must enroll in the semester in which they defend, submit their dissertation, and graduate. In cases where this is not possible, a [degree completion fee](#) can be assessed.

As a PhD student you must take your final oral exam within five years of passing the prelim or you will be required to take another preliminary examination and be admitted to candidacy for a second time.

Graduate School policy on [dissertator status](#)

Dissertation

The dissertation must be your own work. It may be the result of research enterprises in which others have collaborated, but in such cases you are required to present a substantial portion which represents your own contribution.

A copy of your dissertation must be submitted to the members of the Final Examination Committee at least one week prior to the final examination. Three members of the Final Examination Committee serve as a reading committee to review the dissertation in critical detail. Upon passing the final examination and making changes in the dissertation required by the examining committee, you must provide your major professor with a hard-bound copy of your dissertation. You must file an unbound copy of the dissertation with the Memorial Library. For more information, see [The Doctoral Guide](#).

Exit Seminar

All Ph.D. candidates are required to present an exit seminar. This often is most convenient just prior to the final examination, or you may present the seminar as part of the Agronomy Colloquium.

You should contact office staff to find a suitable room for your seminar and exam several weeks before the event. Most students use room 462 or room 473. You are allowed to provide refreshments such as coffee and cookies but the department does not provide those.

You may send a PDF of a flier advertising your seminar to the office staff for distribution to other grad students, faculty, and academic staff.

Final Examination

The members of the Final Examination Committee are suggested by your major professor and approved by the

Dean of the Graduate School. The committee consists of five or more members of the graduate faculty, with your major professor as chairperson. The committee will include at least one member from outside the department. This committee may or may not be the same as the Preliminary Examination Committee. The examination ordinarily covers your thesis and the general fields of your major and minor studies.

A form called a warrant must be requested from the Graduate School at least three weeks before the exam. **To request a warrant, go to the For Current Students page on the Agronomy website.** If you pass the examination, the act is recorded on the warrant. Copies of the warrant are submitted to the Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate School and filed along with the dissertation.

You may not take the final oral examination until all other requirements for the degree have been satisfied. Your record must be cleared of incomplete grades.

Timelines and Deadline Requirements

- Program deadlines/time limits; GS deadlines/time limits, including graduation deadlines: [Degree Deadlines](#)
- Checklist for Dissertation/Defense/Graduation:
 - Please see the Graduate School's checklists: <https://grad.wisc.edu/academics/doctoral-guide/>
 - Graduate School Doctoral Dissertation Format Guidelines: <https://grad.wisc.edu/academics/doctoral-guide/>

Double, Joint and Dual Degrees

Double, Joint, and Dual Degrees at a Glance

Double Degree

- 2 degrees, 2 diplomas
- 2 graduate majors
- 2 advisors, 2 committees
- 2 theses or dissertations
- Minimum Graduate School requirements for each degree
- 2 prelims (PhD)
- 2 warrant requests, 2 warrants
- List of courses used for each major must be submitted to GS when requesting warrants.
- No more than 25% overlap (of the total credits for the program with lowest credit requirement).

Joint Degree

- 1 degree, 1 diploma
- 2 graduate majors
- 2 advisors, 1 committee
- 1 thesis or dissertation
- Joint prelim, if both major programs agree, or 2 prelims (PhD)
- 1 warrant request, 1 warrant
- Must submit proposal to GS before beginning of second year. Need signatures of both advisors and both program directors, and Graduate School approval.

Dual Degree

- One graduate degree and one professional degree (i.e. a degree from the School of Medicine and Public Health or the Law school).

For more information on Double, Joint, and Dual Degrees, see [Academic Policies and Procedures](#).

Seminars

Three student seminars are offered for credit in the Agronomy Department. **Agronomy 920, Seminar - General Agronomy**, is offered during the spring semester. Attending students are asked to present a seminar on some aspect of a topic of general interest. **Agronomy/Horticulture 950, Seminar - Crop Physiology**, is offered intermittently. A professor from each of the sponsoring departments is in charge of selecting a topic of interest to physiologists. Student presentations are critiqued for scientific content and presentation.

Agronomy/Horticulture/Genetics 957, Seminar-Plant Breeding is offered each fall and spring. It covers topics such as plant disease resistance, breeding methodology, students' research projects, and more.

Students also have the opportunity to attend and participate in seminars offered outside the Department. Many departments in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and the Botany Department in the College of Letters and Sciences offer seminars and colloquiums of interest to graduate students. Announcements of these are regularly posted on bulletin boards and are listed in the course guide when offered for degree credit.

Agronomy Colloquium

In recent years, the Agronomy Colloquium has been held in spring semester and may be conducted jointly with Horticulture. Faculty, post-docs, visiting scientists, and exiting students will be featured speakers. Students may enroll in **Agronomy 875, Special Topics** and receive credit for participating in the Colloquium.

Teaching

All graduate students are encouraged to obtain teaching experience by participating in the departmental instructional program. As a graduate student, in consultation with your advisor, you should indicate on the Ph.D. certification form how and when this teaching experience is to be obtained. Teaching experience may be obtained as a TA in Agronomy 100 or 300 or as a volunteer in these or other departmental courses.

- 799: Practicum in Agronomy Teaching
One option is to enroll in **Agronomy 799, Practicum in Agronomy Teaching**. This option is available every semester, can be taken for 1-3 credits, follows the conventional grading system, and requires the consent of the supervising instructor. The practicum consists of four principal phases which must be satisfied in order for credit to be awarded to a graduate student:
 - Instructional Orientation
 - Direct Teaching Experience
 - Experience in Testing and Evaluation of Students
 - Analysis of the Graduate Student's Performance

For a more complete description of the requirements please see the folder "Practicum in Agronomy Teaching" available, from the Chair of the Curriculum Committee.

V. ENROLLMENT

The Agronomy program follows the Graduate School guidelines for full time, minimum, and maximum enrollment. **It is your responsibility to be aware of enrollment rules and enroll each semester in the required number of credits in order to ensure tuition remission and other benefits.** For detailed information on enrollment requirements, and for all versions of assistantship appointments and their specific requirements, please see [Enrollment Requirements](#).

The Agronomy program follows all Graduate School policies on Auditing Courses, Continuous Enrollment, Residence for Tuition Purposes, and Credit Requirements. Please see [Academic Policies and Procedures](#).

VII. ACADEMIC EXCEPTION PETITION

Academic exceptions are considered on an individual case by case basis and should not be considered a precedent. Deviations from normal progress are highly discouraged, but the department recognizes that there are, in some cases, extenuating academic and personal circumstances. Petitions for course exceptions and substitutions or exceptions to the Satisfactory Progress Expectations shall be directed to the Chair of Graduate Studies Committee. The following procedures apply to all petitions:

1. The specific requirement/rule/expectation pertinent to the petition must be identified.
2. The student's academic advisor must provide written support for the petition.
3. All course work substitutions and equivalencies will be decided by appropriate area-group faculty or curriculum chair.

More generally, the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee, in consultation with your advisor, may grant extensions to your normal progress requirements when you face circumstances as noted in university regulations, including childbirth, adoption, significant responsibilities with respect to elder or dependent care obligations, disability or chronic illness, or other circumstances beyond your personal control. Where warranted, your petition should provide good evidence of plans to and ability to return to conformance with the standard and to acceptably complete the program. The normal extension will be one semester; anything beyond this will be granted *only in the event of highly extraordinary circumstances*. Extensions will be granted formally with a note of explanation to be placed in your file.

Course Waivers

You may petition the Graduate Studies Committee for a waiver of any required course. The basis for such a waiver shall be evidence of previous work of the same level and content, to be determined by the committee in consultation with the faculty member currently responsible for the course concerned. A requirement which is completed by waiver carries no credit toward the Graduate School's credit requirements, or toward the program's credit requirement for the degree.

Graduate Studies Committee procedures are designed to encourage you to work closely with your advisor and other faculty, who will be aware of your work and personal circumstances. A student petitioning for a deadline extension or waiver of any type must obtain an endorsement from his or her advisor, and/or members of their committee. Advisors may petition the Graduate Studies Committee on behalf of their advisees. The Committee may ask the advisor for further information beyond that written on the petition.

IX. SATISFACTORY PROGRESS – ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Please see “[Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress](#)” chart.

Your failure to comply with the above-mentioned expectations for satisfactory progress may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

Continuation in the Graduate School is at the discretion of your program, the Graduate School, and your faculty advisor.

The Graduate School requires that all students maintain a minimum graduate GPA of 3.00 in all graduate-level work (300 or above, excluding research, audit, credit/no credit, and pass/fail courses) taken as a graduate student, unless probationary admission conditions require higher grades. If you receive less than a B in any course you may be required to repeat that course if your advisory committee or advisor deems it necessary. The Graduate School also considers Incomplete (I) grades to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the subsequent semester of enrollment; the instructor may impose an earlier deadline.

You may be placed on probation or suspended from the Graduate School for low grades or for failing to resolve incompletes in a timely fashion. In special cases the Graduate School may permit you to continue on probation upon recommendation and support of your advisor.

X. CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

Professional Conduct

You are responsible for reading the information here as well as the information published on all the relevant web sites. Lack of knowledge of this information does not excuse any infraction.

All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behavior and ethics. You should avoid even the appearance of improper behavior or lack of ethical standards while in Graduate School at UW-Madison, in all professional settings, and in your personal life. **There are no non-professional interactions.** As a student, you should conduct yourself according to the standards expected of members of the profession to which you aspire. Concerns about infractions of professional conduct may be effectively handled informally between you and your instructor/advisor. If a resolution is not achieved, a graduate program representative may be included in the discussion. Separate and apart from a violation of professional conduct, you may face university disciplinary action with regard to the same action.

1. **Professional Ethics:** Students shall show respect for a diversity of opinions, perspectives and cultures; accurately represent their work and acknowledge the contributions of others; participate in and commit to related opportunities; aim to gain knowledge and contribute to the knowledge base of others; understand the UW Student Code of Conduct; represent their profession and the program; and strive to incorporate and practice disciplinary ideals in their daily lives. Resumes/CVs must reflect accurate information.
2. **Honesty and Integrity:** Students shall demonstrate honesty and integrity as shown by their challenging of themselves in academic pursuits; honesty and ethics in research and IRB applications—including honesty in interpretation of data, commitment to an unbiased interpretation of academic and professional endeavors; and the need to document research activities, and protecting subject/client confidentiality and HIPPA regulations. Students shall follow through and pull their weight in group activities and understand where collaboration among students is or is not allowed; not plagiarize others or past work (self-plagiarism), cheat, or purposefully undermine the work of others; and avoid conflicts of interest for the duration of their time in the program. As a professional, honesty and integrity also extends to personal behavior in life outside of the academic setting by realizing that students are representatives of the program, UW-Madison, and the profession as a whole.
3. **Interpersonal and Workplace Relationships:** Students shall interact with peers, faculty, staff and those they encounter in their professional capacity in a manner that is respectful, considerate and professional. This includes and is not limited to attending all scheduled meetings, honoring agreed upon work schedules, being on-time and prepared for work/meetings, contributing collaboratively to the team, keeping the lines of communication open, offering prompt response to inquiries and employing respectful use of available equipment/technology/resources. Chronic or unexplained absences are unprofessional in the workplace and could be grounds for termination or removal of funding. To facilitate the free and open exchange of ideas, any criticism shall be offered in a constructive manner, and the right of others to hold different opinions shall be respected.
4. **Commitment to Learning:** Students are expected to meet their educational responsibilities at all times. Be actively prepared for class and be ready for questions and answers. Be on time for every class and always show courtesy during class or if you have to leave class early. If possible, students should notify the instructor at least

one day in advance of a planned absence. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for finding out what occurred that day and should not expect instructors to give them individual instruction. Recognizing that the pursuit of knowledge is a continuous process, students shall show commitment to learning by persevering despite adversity and seeking guidance in order to adapt to change. Students shall strive for academic excellence and pursue and incorporate all critique, both positive and negative, in the acquisition of knowledge in order to understand and respect the community in which they work.

5. Professional Appearance: Students shall convey a positive, professional appearance in order to represent the program in a dignified manner. Appearance includes a person's dress, hygiene and appropriate etiquette/protocols for the environment (including safety protocols and protective clothing in environments that require them). Students are expected to attend class clean and appropriately dressed.

The Agronomy graduate program, the Graduate School, and the Division of Student Life all uphold the UW-System policies and procedures in place for academic and non-academic misconduct. Graduate students are held to the same standards of responsible conduct of research as faculty and staff. Furthermore, unprofessional behavior towards clients/subjects, faculty, staff, peers and public are significant issues in the evaluation and promotion of students. In turn, we hold expectations for the highest level of academic integrity and expect professional, ethical, and respectful conduct in all interactions. **Students may be disciplined or dismissed from the graduate program for misconduct or disregard for professional conduct expectations regardless of their academic standing in the program.** Separate and apart from a violation of Professional Conduct, a student may face University disciplinary action with regard to the same action.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student (UWS 14.03(1)):

1. seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
2. uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
3. forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
4. intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
5. engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
6. assists other students in any of these acts.

Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to:

1. cutting and pasting text from the Web without quotation marks or proper citation;
2. paraphrasing from the Web without crediting the source;
3. using notes or a programmable calculator in an exam when such use is not allowed;
4. using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one's own by not properly crediting the originator;
5. stealing examinations or course materials;
6. changing or creating data in a lab experiment;
7. altering a transcript;
8. signing another person's name to an attendance sheet;
9. hiding a book knowing that another student needs it to prepare for an assignment;
10. collaboration that is contrary to the stated rules of the course; or
11. tampering with a lab experiment or computer program of another student.

Additional information regarding Academic Misconduct:

Graduate School Policy & Procedure: [Academic Misconduct](#)

Non-Academic Misconduct

The university may discipline a student in non-academic matters in the following situations:

1. for conduct which constitutes a serious danger to the personal safety of a member of the university community or guest;
2. for stalking or harassment;
3. for conduct that seriously damages or destroys university property or attempts to damage or destroy university property, or the property of a member of the university community or guest;
4. for conduct that obstructs or seriously impairs university-run or university-authorized activities, or that interferes with or impedes the ability of a member of the university community, or guest, to participate in university-run or university-authorized activities;
5. for unauthorized possession of university property or property of another member of the university community or guest;

6. for acts which violate the provisions of UWS 18, Conduct on University Lands;
7. for knowingly making a false statement to any university employee or agent on a university-related matter, or for refusing to identify oneself to such employee or agent;
8. for violating a standard of conduct, or other requirement or restriction imposed in connection with disciplinary action.

Examples of non-academic misconduct include but are not limited to:

1. engaging in conduct that is a crime involving danger to property or persons, as defined in UWS 18.06(22)(d);
2. attacking or otherwise physically abusing, threatening to physically injure, or physically intimidating a member of the university community or a guest;
3. attacking or throwing rocks or other dangerous objects at law enforcement personnel, or inciting others to do so;
4. selling or delivering a controlled substance, as defined in 161 Wis. Stats., or possessing a controlled substance with intent to sell or deliver;
5. removing, tampering with, or otherwise rendering useless university equipment or property intended for use in preserving or protecting the safety of members of the university community, such as fire alarms, fire extinguisher, fire exit signs, first aid equipment, or emergency telephones; or obstructing fire escape routes;
6. preventing or blocking physical entry to or exit from a university building, corridor, or room;
7. engaging in shouted interruptions, whistling, or similar means of interfering with a classroom presentation or a university-sponsored speech or program;
8. obstructing a university officer or employee engaged in the lawful performance of duties;
9. obstructing or interfering with a student engaged in attending classes or participating in university-run or university-authorized activities;
10. knowingly disrupting access to university computing resources or misusing university computing resources.

Additional information regarding Non-Academic Misconduct

Graduate School Academic Policies & Procedures: [Non-Academic Misconduct](#).

Research Misconduct

Much of graduate education is carried out not in classrooms, but in laboratories and other research venues, often supported by federal or other external funding sources. Indeed, it is often difficult to distinguish between academic misconduct and cases of research misconduct. **Graduate students are held to the same standards of responsible conduct of research as faculty and staff.** The Graduate School is responsible for investigating allegations of research misconduct. This is often done in consultation with the Division of Student Life as well as with federal and state agencies to monitor, investigate, determine sanctions, and train about the responsible conduct of research. For more information, contact the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Policy and Compliance, 321 Bascom Hall, (608) 262-1044.

[Research Misconduct Policy](#)

Please see section on “Grievance Procedures and Misconduct Reporting” for further information on reporting research misconduct of others. Additional Information:

Research.wisc.edu: [Introduction & Guide to Resources on Research Ethics](#)

[KB: Reporting Research Misconduct](#)

[KB: Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

XI. DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND DISMISSAL

Failure to meet the program's academic or conduct expectations can result in disciplinary action including your immediate dismissal from the program. If you are not making satisfactory progress in regards to academic or conduct expectations, your advisor will consult with your committee to determine if disciplinary action or dismissal is recommended.

Your progress will be reviewed through coursework and/or annual meetings. If your advisor and graduate committee find at the annual meeting or at any other time that you have failed to achieve satisfactory progress with academic or conduct expectations, you may be dismissed from the program. If you are placed on probation, you may be dismissed or allowed to continue based upon review of your progress during the probationary semester.

The status of a student can be one of three options:

1. Good standing (progressing according to standards; any funding guarantee remains in place).
2. Probation (not progressing according to standards but permitted to enroll; loss of funding guarantee; specific plan with dates and deadlines in place in regard to removal of probationary status).
3. Unsatisfactory progress (not progressing according to standards; not permitted to enroll, dismissal, leave of absence or change of advisor or program).

Earning a semester GPA below 3.0 will place you on **academic probation**. In the subsequent semester, if you cannot achieve a 3.0 GPA, you may be dismissed from the program. This rule is for one full time semester, or the 12 subsequent credits if enrolled part time. You may be allowed to continue for one additional semester based on advisor appeal to the Graduate School. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to graduate. See the Graduate School Academic Policies & Procedures: [Probation](#)

If you earn a grade below a B in a required course, the course must be repeated. Required courses may only be repeated once. Failure to receive a B or higher in the repeated course may result in your dismissal from the program. You must do all the work in the repeated course, including laboratory; attend regularly; participate in class discussions; take examinations; and write papers. You will earn a final grade in the course. Both grades will be used in calculating your graduate grade-point average; however, the course will count only once toward meeting degree credit requirements for the program. See [Repeating Courses](#).

You may be disciplined or dismissed from the graduate program for **any type of misconduct** (academic, non-academic, professional, or research) or failure to meet program expectations regardless of your academic standing in the program. Separate and apart from a violation of Professional Conduct, a student may face University disciplinary action with regard to the same action. Concerns about infractions of professional conduct may be effectively handled informally between you and your advisor/faculty member. However, if a resolution is not reached, the issue may be advanced for further review by the program.

Disciplinary Actions

One or more of the following possible disciplinary action options may be administered:

- Written reprimand
- Denial of specified privilege(s)
- Imposition of reasonable terms and conditions on continued student status
- Removal of funding
- Probation
- Restitution
- Removal of the student from the course(s) in progress
- Failure to promote
- Withdrawal of an offer of admission
- Placement on Leave of Absence for a determined amount of time
- Suspension from the program for up to one year with the stipulation that remedial activities may be prescribed as a condition of later readmission. Students who meet the readmission condition must apply for readmission and the student will be admitted only on a space available basis. See the Graduate School Academic Policies & Procedures: [Readmission to Graduate School](#).
- Suspension from the program. The suspensions may range from one semester to four years.
- Dismissal from the program
- Denial of a degree

Depending on the type and nature of the misconduct, the Division of Student Life may also have grounds to do one or more of the following:

- Reprimand
- Probation
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Restitution
- A zero or failing grade on an assignment on an assignment/exam
- A lower grade or failure in the course
- Removal from course
- Enrollment restrictions in a course/program
- Place conditions/terms on continuing as a student

Additional Information

[Misconduct Flowchart](#)

[Academic Integrity](#)

XII GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES & REPORTING MISCONDUCT AND CRIME

You have the right to pursue your education in an environment free from harassment of any kind. All local/school procedures should be exercised first before appealing to the Graduate School. The Graduate School can provide informal advice at any level of grievance review.

Grievance Procedures

In the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences any student who feels unfairly treated by a member of the College of Ag & Life Sciences (CAL S) faculty or staff has the right to complain about the treatment and to receive a prompt hearing. Some complaints may arise from misunderstandings or communication breakdowns and be easily resolved; others may require formal action. Complaints may concern any matter of perceived unfairness.

To ensure a prompt and fair hearing of any complaint, and to protect the rights of both the person complaining and the person at whom the complaint is directed, the following procedures are used in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Any student, undergraduate or graduate, may use these procedures, except employees whose complaints are covered under other campus policies.

1. The student should first talk with the person at whom the complaint is directed. Most issues can be settled at this level. Others may be resolved by established departmental procedures.
2. If the student is unsatisfied, and the complaint involves any unit outside CAL S, the student should seek the advice of the dean or director of that unit to determine how to proceed.
 - a. If the complaint involves an academic department in CAL S the student should proceed in accordance with item 3 below.
 - b. If the grievance involves a unit in CAL S that is not an academic Department, the student should proceed in accordance with item 4 below.
3. The student should contact the department's grievance advisor within 120 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment. The departmental administrator can provide this person's name. The grievance advisor will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days of receiving the complaint, in discussions with the student and the person at whom the complaint is directed.
 - a. If informal mediation fails, the student can submit the grievance in writing to the grievance advisor within 10 working days of the date the student is informed of the failure of the mediation attempt by the grievance advisor. The grievance advisor will provide a copy to the person at whom the grievance is directed.
 - b. The grievance advisor will refer the complaint to a department committee that will obtain a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed, providing a copy to the student. Either party may request a hearing before the committee. The grievance advisor will provide both parties a written decision within 20 working days from the date of receipt of the written complaint.
 - c. If the grievance involves the department chairperson, the grievance advisor or a member of the grievance committee, these persons may not participate in the review.
 - d. If not satisfied with departmental action, either party has 10 working days from the date of notification of the departmental committee action to file a written appeal to the CAL S Equity and Diversity Committee (Room 116 Agriculture Hall). A subcommittee of this committee will make a preliminary judgement as to whether the case merits further investigation and review. If the subcommittee unanimously determines that the case does not merit further investigation and review, its decision is final. If one or more members of the subcommittee determine that the case does merit further investigation and review, the subcommittee will investigate and seek to resolve the dispute through mediation. If this mediation attempt fails, the subcommittee will bring the case to the full committee. The committee may seek additional information from the parties or hold a hearing. The committee will present a written recommendation to the dean who will provide a final decision within 20 working days of receipt of the committee recommendation.
4. If the alleged unfair treatment occurs in a CAL S unit that is not an academic department, the student should, within 120 calendar days of the alleged incident, take his/her grievance directly to the associate dean of academic and student affairs. The dean will attempt to resolve the problem informally within 10 working days

of receiving the complaint. If this mediation attempt does not succeed the student may file a written complaint with the dean who will refer it to the CALS Equity and Diversity Committee. The committee will seek a written response from the person at whom the complaint is directed, subsequently following other steps delineated in item 3d above.

Matters of interpretation of academic requirements not primarily involving questions of fairness should come via the student's advisor to the college's Scholastic Policies and Actions Committee.

Reporting Misconduct and Crime

The campus has established policies governing student conduct, academic dishonesty, discrimination, and harassment/abuse as well as specific reporting requirements in certain cases. If you have a grievance regarding unfair treatment towards yourself, please reference the procedures and resources identified above. If you learn about, observe, or witness misconduct or other wrongdoing you may be required to report that misconduct or abuse. Depending on the situation, it may be appropriate to consult with your advisor, Graduate Program Manager, or other campus resources (such as the [Graduate School](#), [Mc Burney Disability Resource Center](#), [Employee Assistance Office](#), [Ombuds Office](#), and [University Health Services](#)).

Research Misconduct Reporting

The University of Wisconsin-Madison strives to foster the highest scholarly and ethical standards among its students, faculty, and staff. Graduate students and research associates are among the most vulnerable groups when reporting misconduct because their source of financial support and the progress in their careers may be at risk by raising questions of wrongdoing. They are also often the closest witnesses to wrongdoing when it occurs and therefore must be appropriately protected from the consequences of reporting wrongdoing and be informed of their rights. Please find full details at research.wisc.edu/respolcomp/resethics/

Academic Misconduct Reporting

If you know a classmate is cheating on an exam or other academic exercise, notify your professor, teaching assistant or proctor of the exam. As a part of the university community, you are expected to uphold the standards of the university. Also, consider how your classmate's dishonesty may affect the overall grading curve and integrity of the program.

Sexual Assault Reporting

UW-Madison prohibits sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. These offenses violate UW-Madison policies and are subject to disciplinary action. Sanctions can range from reprimand to expulsion from UW-Madison. In many cases, these offenses also violate Wisconsin criminal law and could lead to arrest and criminal prosecution.

Students who experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking have many options and services available to them on and off campus, including mental health counseling, victim advocacy and access to the criminal and campus disciplinary systems. For a list a confidential support and reporting options, please visit [UHS Violence Prevention & Survivor Services](#).

Faculty, staff, teaching assistants, and others who work directly with students at UW-Madison are required by law to report first-hand knowledge or disclosures of sexual assault to university officials for statistical purposes. In addition, disclosures made to certain university employees, such as academic advisors or university administrators, may be forwarded to the campus Title IX coordinator for a response. For more information, please visit [Faculty and Staff Violence Prevention Resources](#).

Child Abuse Reporting

As a UW-Madison employee (under [Wisconsin Executive Order #54](#)), you are required to immediately report child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS) or law enforcement if, in the course of employment, you observes an incident or threat of child abuse or neglect, or learn of an incident or threat of child abuse or neglect, and you have reasonable cause to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred or will occur. Volunteers working for UW-Madison sponsored programs or activities are also expected to report suspected abuse or neglect. Please find full details at OED: [Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

Reporting and Response to Incidents of Bias/Hate

The University of Wisconsin-Madison values a diverse community where all members are able to participate fully in the Wisconsin Experience. Incidents of bias or hate affecting a person or group create a hostile climate and negatively impact the quality of the Wisconsin Experience for community members. UW-Madison takes such incidents seriously and will investigate and respond to reported or observed incidents of bias/hate. Please find full details at [Office of Student Assistance and Support](#).

XII. FUNDING AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Overview: Funding Landscape

As a graduate student, regardless of your source of funding, you are expected to conduct research towards your M.S. thesis or your Ph.D. dissertation, and to assist your major advisor's research project as requested. Contact with a diversity of research projects during graduate training enhances your professional growth.

Graduate research and teaching assistantships are awarded on a competitive merit basis.

Applicants or enrolled students with superior academic records may be considered for graduate fellowships.

Research Assistantships. Appointment as a Research Assistant is the most common type of appointment in the department. RAs are normally for a 12-month period with minimum compensation established on a university-wide basis each year. Research Assistantships generally involve 50% appointments. RAs are required to carry a full graduate load of at least eight credits per semester and two credits during the summer session.

Teaching Assistantships. Some voluntary TAs are available in the Agronomy program for assignment to Agronomy 100 and Agronomy 300. The TA assists in classroom instruction under the direction of a faculty member with duties that include preparing of instructional materials, directing labs, grading lab exercises and exams, etc. Voluntary unpaid TAs are also available in certain classes.

Fellowships and Scholarships. Several university, college, national, and special fellowship and scholarship programs are available for outstanding students. Application procedures, deadlines, qualifications, etc. may be obtained from the Graduate School Fellowships Office or the Agronomy Graduate Committee Chairperson. Many of the fellowships require departmental nomination. Fellows do not have specific job responsibilities, but are expected to participate in their advisor's research program. The student and advisor should discuss the extent of this involvement at the time the student initiates graduate training.

Program/Project Assistantships. A graduate student may be employed to assist with research, training, or other programs and projects undertaken by the funding professor, not directly associated with his or her thesis project.

Time Limits

A student may not hold an appointment for more than 3 years for a M.S. Degree or 5 years for a Ph.D. Degree. Requests from the major professor for extensions of these time limits will be considered by the Graduate Committee.

Tuition Remission and Payment of Segregated Fees

TAs, PAs, RA, and Lecturers (Students Assistants) with appointments of 33.3% or higher (approximately 13 hrs/week) receive remission of their full tuition (in- and out-of-state, as applicable). **Students with these appointments are still responsible for paying segregated fees.**

Maximum Appointment Levels

The Graduate School sets the maximum levels of graduate assistantship appointments. International students should be especially aware of maximum levels of employment. For more information on these policies, please visit Policies and Procedures: [Maximum Levels of Appointments](#).

Stipend Levels and Paychecks

Minimum stipend rates for graduate assistantships are set by the University. Current rates for TAs, PAs, RAs and LSAs can be found on the website for the Office of Human Resources: [2017-2018 Student Assistant Stipends](#).

Graduate assistants are paid on a monthly basis and stipends are usually deposited directly into student's bank accounts. You can authorize direct deposit by filling out the [Authorization for Direct Deposit of Payroll form](#) and returning it to the Graduate Coordinator. If you do not authorize direct deposit you will have to collect your paycheck at 21 N Park St.

Working Hours, Sick Leave, Vacation Time

There is no specific written policy concerning hours of work, vacation, or sick leave for graduate students holding appointments. However, graduate study, including class work and research or project work, should be regarded as your main activity while pursuing the degree. Students holding appointments are not to engage in major outside activities, such as second jobs. In fact, some appointments specifically prohibit retaining outside employment.

To avoid conflicts with research or project activities, you are expected to arrange vacation time in advance with your advisor. You are expected to work even when classes are not in session, except official university holidays. Students not holding appointments are still expected to assist their major advisor's professor's project as requested since full involvement in a research project is a vital part of the graduate training program.

If problems arise concerning work hours, sick leave, or vacation, first discuss them with your advisor. If resolution is not possible at that level, the matter should be discussed with the Department Chair.

Income Taxes

For further information on income taxes contact your payroll specialist.

If you have questions concerning your tax status, call University Payroll 265-2257. For specific questions about income from outside the University or allowable deductions, contact the IRS.

Health Insurance

See XVI. STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS.

Information about health insurance options can be found at [OHR – Benefit Plans](#).

Current monthly premiums can be found at [OHR- Benefits Premiums](#). Questions about health insurance can be directed to the PAS Main office.

A life insurance plan, an FSA, and a 403(b) are also available. See [Benefits Services](#) for more information.

Fellowships

There are many different kinds of fellowships on campus. Some are awarded by the program, some are awarded by the school/college, and still others are awarded by the Graduate School. In addition, a number of students have applied for and won fellowships from federal agencies, professional organizations, and private foundations. The terms and conditions of fellowships across campus vary widely. If you have a fellowship, make sure you understand the obligations and benefits of that fellowship, including stipend, health insurance eligibility, eligibility for tuition remission, pay schedule, etc.

Graduate School Fellowships

The Graduate School administers a number of different fellowships on campus, including: the University Fellowships, Chancellor's Fellowships, Mellon-Wisconsin Fellowships, the Dickie Fellowships, and a variety of [external fellowships](#).

Departmental/Campus Fellowships

University Fellowships. Fellows are selected in a campus-wide competition, and are nominated by the department upon recommendation of the graduate committee. Although there are categories for incoming, intermediate and advanced graduate students, most awards are given to incoming students. Stipends are generally equivalent to a half-time research assistantship. Application requirements vary. Students interested in being considered should speak to their advisor or graduate coordinator.

CALS Fellowships. Two to three fellowships are reserved for students enrolled in CALS. Procedures for application and stipends are similar to those for the University Fellowships, except that the deadline is earlier. Selection is made by the CALS Scholarships Committee, among those recommended by each department.

Advanced Opportunity Fellowships. Advanced Opportunity Program funds are granted to UW-Madison's Graduate School by the State of Wisconsin and combined with other graduate education funds to support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified underrepresented students in UW-Madison graduate programs. Fellowships are competitive and merit-based. Advanced Opportunity funding is intended to increase the

racial and ethnic diversity of the graduate student population, as well as to support economically disadvantaged and first generation college students.

E. B. Fred Fellowships. These fellowships are open to students for graduate study leading to a Ph.D., who are returning to graduate school after a 5-year interruption in their formal education. Awards are for one semester. Applications are obtained from the Graduate School Fellowships Office, and do not need to be submitted through the Department.

Smith Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship. This fellowship is presented annually to the outstanding graduate student in the Agronomy Department. The recipient is chosen by the department upon recommendation of the graduate committee. Candidates are nominated by their advisors; selection is based on classroom performance, research competency and accomplishments, and leadership in department and student activities. Candidates must have been in residence for at least one year, and must be in residence for at least one semester after receiving the award.

Marie Christine Kohler Fellowships. The Kohler Fellowship Program brings together 12 single graduate students, at the dissertation stage, from a variety of fields in an interdisciplinary living situation. The fellowship provides a free room (double occupancy), but not meals. Kohler Fellows are expected to live and participate in the programs at the Knapp Memorial Graduate Center, 130 E. Gilman Street. Candidates must have a good academic record and must either have passed their preliminary examinations or expect to have passed them by the beginning of the fall semester. In awarding the fellowship the students personality, leadership qualities and breadth of interests are considered. Candidates are nominated by their advisor in March.

R. Gordon Harvey Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship in Weed Science.

Eligibility: Any incoming or first-year graduate student in the Agronomy program whose principal graduate research is in weed science. Minimum GPA of 3.5. Eligible once per graduate degree. Selection: The Agronomy Graduate Studies Committee will select the recipient based on academic performance, research competency, and leadership, as assessed from the vita and essay.

External Funding/Fellowships

We encourage all students to seek out and apply for funding from sources external to the university (e.g., federal agencies, professional organizations, private foundations). The Graduate School supports selected federal/private fellowships through the provision of tuition support and health insurance. A current list in the [Grad School KB is here](#).

You should be aware that fellowships and awards from external sources will each have unique terms and conditions that you should take time to understand.

The following are some sources of information on external funding:

1. [Major external fellowships](#)
2. [The Grants Information Collection](#) (GIC) on the 2nd Floor of Memorial Library -The GIC is a great collection of print and on-line resources to help students find external fellowships and scholarships. You can learn how to set up a personalized profile on several on-line funding databases, and get regular notices of relevant funding opportunities. PLEASE REMEMBER: the timetable for identifying, applying for and receiving such external

funding is generally quite long; plan on 9-12 months between the time you start your search and the time you may receive funding.

Once you find a fellowship, scholarship, or award to which you want to apply, consider contacting the [Writing Center](#). The Writing Center staff can provide valuable advice on crafting your application.

Fellows with Concurrent Appointments

Fellows may hold concurrent assistantships or student hourly positions along with their fellowship. In these cases, the maximum dollar amount earned per year is capped at 100% of the annual RA stipend (\$44,162 in 2016–17). Students with NSF Fellowships may not hold concurrent appointments funded by federal dollars. Fellows may hold multiple fellowships without limit. For more information about concurrent appointments, contact the Office of Fellowships and Funding Resources: offr@grad.wisc.edu.

Funding for Study Abroad

The [International Fellowships Office](#) provides information about opportunities for international research, grants, scholarships and other funding.

Loans

The [Office of Student Financial Aid \(OSFA\)](#) assists graduate students whose personal and family resources are not adequate to cover the expenses involved in attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The office also provides counseling to help students manage their money effectively, information on other potential sources of financial assistance (such as employment), debt management counseling, and small short-term loans for emergency situations.

XIII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER PLANNING

Campus-wide Resources for Professional Development

In addition to opportunities at the local level, the [Graduate School Office of Professional Development](#) provides direct programming in the areas of career development and skill building, and also serves as a clearing house for professional development resources across campus. The best way to stay informed is to watch for the weekly newsletter from OPD, Grad Connections Weekly, and to visit the [grad school events calendar](#) for an up-to-date list of events. Typical topics covered throughout the year are:

- Individual Development Plans (IDPs)
- Planning for academic success
- Dissertation writing support
- Communication skills
- Grant writing
- Teaching
- Mentoring
- Research ethics
- Community engagement
- Entrepreneurship
- Career exploration: academic, non-profit, industry, government, etc.
- Job search support

- Pursuing postdoctoral training

Be sure to keep a pulse on programs offered by the following campus services as well:

- [Writing Center](#)
- [Grants Information Collection](#)
- [Student Technology Training \(STS\)](#)
- [Delta Program](#)
- [UW Teaching Academy](#)
- [Wisconsin Entrepreneurial Bootcamp](#)

Individual Development Plan

You should be thinking about professional development and career planning from the very start, no matter what your intended career path. In particular, an [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) created with your advisor can be a great mechanism to start and maintain this conversation. The university recommends IDPs for all postdoctoral researchers and graduate students, and requires IDPs for all postdoctoral researchers and graduate students supported by National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding.

As you begin your Graduate School career, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an essential tool to help you:

- 1) Assess your current skills and strengths
- 2) Make a plan for developing skills that will help you meet your academic and professional goals
- 3) Communicate with your advisors and mentors about your evolving goals and related skills.

For graduate students in the natural sciences and engineering, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) online tool provides a comprehensive set of materials and exercises that will guide you through the process of self-assessment, career exploration, goal-setting, and implementation of your plan. Set up a free account to create and monitor your IDP at myidp.sciencecareers.org.

The [UW-Madison IDP template](#), which includes instructions and examples, is flexible and appropriate for all disciplines.

Travel to Meetings and Conferences

Specific travel policies change too frequently to include here. Speak to the department Financial Specialist; **before** you buy anything or make any travel plans, consult them by appointment, email, or phone. Failure to know and follow travel and expenditure rules will result in loss of reimbursement.

[UW Travel Center](#)

[Specific Travel Policies](#)

[Purchasing Cards](#)

Travel expenses must be submitted within 90 days of the first expense or they are ineligible for reimbursement.

These policies are not made at the departmental level and cannot be changed or have exceptions made.

Funding for Conference/Research Travel

The Graduate School provides a limited amount of funding for dissertators and final year MFA students whose research has been accepted for presentation at a conference. For more information about this funding, visit the [Student Research Grants Competition website](#).

In addition, the Graduate School runs the Travel Research Grants competition which provides funds to support travel related to your dissertation/thesis research. Students must be dissertators or final-year MFA students. For more information about this funding, visit the [Student Research Grants Competition website](#).

XIV. OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

As a graduate student at UW-Madison, you have a multitude of opportunities to become involved on campus and in your academic discipline. This involvement enhances your academic, professional, and social development.

Student Representation in Governance

Associated Students of Madison (ASM) - The Associated Students of Madison (ASM) is the campus-wide student governance organization at UW–Madison. Graduate and undergraduate representatives are elected to the 33-member ASM Student Council based on their respective college or school. The student council has regular biweekly meetings open to all students. Learn more here: asm.wisc.edu/

Teaching Assistants' Association (TAA) - The Teaching Assistants' Association (AFT Local 3220) is the labor union for all graduate student workers at UW-Madison. As a result of decades of organizing and by working together as a union, graduate students at UW-Madison have achieved good health benefits, tuition remission, and many other gains. The TAA is a democratic union run by the members. All key policy decisions are made at monthly membership meetings. Learn more here: taa-madison.org/

[Act 10](#) voided the TAA's [contract](#) with UW-Madison in 2011. However, UW's policy states that the TAA contract governs the employment relationship between graduate workers and the university until a new employment policy is developed. Although this agreement is no longer in force, the university is continuing to use the terms of the contract until final university policies are adopted. Since the TAA no longer represents TAs and PAs, sections of the contract referring to "union" rights and responsibilities are no longer in effect. TAs and PAs can find policies in the contract related to: grievance procedures; appointments; orientation, training, and evaluation; non-discrimination; termination; health and safety; and benefits, including sick leave, vacation, and leave of absence.

Registered Student Organizations

There are more than 750 student organizations on campus. The best way to seek out current organizations is to visit the [Center for Leadership and Involvement](#) (CFLI) and visit the [Registered Student Organization](#) directory. This list will not include unregistered student organizations, and you may find that there are groups in your department that you would like to get involved with as well. If you are interested in officially registering an organization in which you are involved, you must register it with the CFLI. Once registered through CFLI, your organization is eligible for funding from ASM, and your group can reserve rooms in the Union and access other resources.

Departmental Committees

The Agronomy Department has around 20 standing committees. These committees are appointed annually by the Department Chair and the Associate Chairs, and frequently include one or more graduate student members. Graduate students frequently provide fresh new ideas which assist committees in their duties. At the same time, involvement with these committees can provide students with valuable experience regarding the operations of the University and Department. If you are interested in serving on a departmental committee, you should let your interests be known to the chair of the Agronomy Department.

Plant Breeding Journal Club

In addition to the plant breeding seminar, interested faculty and graduate students may participate in the Plant Breeding Journal Club. Current and past research papers in the plant breeding area are discussed. Frequently, lectures are presented by visiting scientists, by faculty or students who have attended national or international meetings, and, occasionally, by members of other UW departments with interests relevant to members of the club.

Plant Sciences Graduate Student Council

PSGSC was founded in 2000 by combining the graduate student councils of Agronomy, Horticulture, and Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics, and has since expanded to include Agroecology, Botany, and Plant Pathology. PSGSC was created to foster enhanced communication and promote more social interaction amongst the grad students in the plant sciences field. The council serves to work with the faculty, staff, and students to promote educational and social outreach and to welcome new graduate students in the plant sciences.

The Council is composed of ten elected officers: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Journal Club Chair, Agroecology representative, Agronomy representative, Botany representative, Horticulture representative, Plant Breeding and Plant Genetics representative, and Plant Pathology representative. Officers are elected by plant sciences graduate students for one-year terms spanning the calendar year. More information is available at the [PSGSC website](#).

XV. STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

If you pay segregated fees, you are eligible for [University Health Services](#). There is no additional charge to students for many basic services, including counseling sessions, because services are paid through tuition and fees. Personal health and wellness services are also available in addition to medical services.

Health Insurance Coverage

Graduate students who hold an appointment of 33.33% or more or who have a fellowship may be eligible for health insurance and other benefits beyond University Health Services. Visit the [Benefits Services](#) page to read summaries of each benefit plan. Enroll in benefits within 30 days of your hire date through your MyUW page.

Graduate students without an assistantship or fellowship who are currently enrolled can use the services of University Health Services (UHS), the campus health clinic. Many services are provided at no extra cost, including outpatient medical care during regular business hours, Monday through Friday. UHS is located in the Student Services Tower at 333 East Campus Mall, Floor 7, or 608-265-5000. For more info, visit the [UHS website](#).

Prescription medications, emergency room visits and hospitalization are not included in UHS benefits. Therefore, supplemental insurance covering these drugs and services is recommended for all students and is **required for**

international students. The UHS Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) is an excellent option for many students. Contact the SHIP office at 608-265-5232 for more information.

Disability Information

Students with disabilities have access to disability resources through UW-Madison's McBurney Disability Resource Center. As an admitted student, you should first go through the steps to "[How to Become a McBurney Client](#)". Additional [non-academic] disability campus resources (not found through the McBurney Center) can be found at [Referrals to Non-McBurney Services](#).

The UW-Madison Index for Campus Accessibility Resources can be found at [Accessibility at UW-Madison](#).

Mental Health Resources On and Off Campus

University Health Services (UHS) offers a safe and confidential environment with a variety of support services available free of charge and open to all graduate students. These include [individual](#), [couple/partner](#), and group counseling, as well as [stress management](#) and [psychiatry services](#).

Beginning this fall, UHS is employing Access Consultation phone screening to replace the drop-in triage system. Students can call 608-265-5600 or log in to [MyUHS](#) for 24-hour appointment booking. Same day appointments are often available, and students will be able to have a consultation within two days.

If there is a risk of suicide or concern about well-being of a student, call [UHS 24-hour crisis service](#) to speak with an on-call counselor at 608-265-5600, option 9. If a situation is immediately life threatening, call 911.

In addition, UHS hosts a variety of group counseling opportunities:

Dissertators' Group - A supportive group environment focused on the emotional, behavioral, and organizational challenges associated with the dissertation process. [Click here and open Support-Theme Groups for the schedule.](#)

Graduate Students' Group - This group examines the sources of stress, ways of coping, and the role of peer support in adjusting to a role that often feels like it's 24/7 as a graduate student. [Click here and open Support-Theme Groups for the schedule.](#)

Graduate Women's Group - Through offering support to others and receiving support, group members are challenged to learn about themselves, initiate change, and exercise honesty in a safe space. [Click here and open Support-Theme Groups for the schedule.](#)

Drop-in Survivor Support Group - UHS provides weekly drop-in confidential support groups for victims of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. [Click here for more information.](#)

First-generation Students Support Group - Students who have not had the example of a parent graduating college often face numerous challenges and may feel at a disadvantage relative to college peers. [Click here and open Support-Theme Groups for the schedule.](#)

The groups listed above are just a few examples. [Additional groups](#) address relationships, depression, anxiety, and other topics. Groups typically meet one to two hours weekly, and may run from four to 12 weeks per semester.

Additional support and resources on campus include:

Wellness Initiatives – UHS’s [interdisciplinary program](#) is designed to assist students’ pursuit of healthy mind, body, and spirit. Programs include: healthy living, nutritional counseling, mindfulness, exercise consultation, yoga, massage, stress management, and more. And be sure to attend the November 15 [UW Wellness Symposium](#).

Let’s Talk – UHS offers drop-in consultations at locations around campus. It’s free, no appointment is necessary, and students are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. [Click here for the schedule](#).

Support for student military veterans – Student veterans transitioning to civilian life face unique challenges. UHS tailors support to this population including walk-in access to counselors experienced in working with veterans. [Click here for more information](#).

Sexual Violence Prevention Program - UHS provides an online violence prevention program, which all incoming graduate students at UW-Madison are expected to complete. [Click here for more information](#).

Victim Advocacy Open Access Hours – Drop-in support, information, and referral with confidential victim advocates for students who have experienced sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and/or sexual harassment. Located on the 8th floor of UHS (333 East Campus Mall), hours are M/T/W 1-4pm, and Th/F 9am-12pm.

UWell – This is a comprehensive wellness initiative aiming to advance the health and wellbeing of the entire campus community by promoting existing resources. [Visit UWell here](#).

Dean of Students Office – This office is committed to fostering a caring environment for all students. Responsibilities include the [Bias Reporting Process](#), addressing [Sexual Assault, Dating, and Domestic Violence](#), as well as many [other issues affecting student wellbeing](#).

Ombuds Office – University employees, including graduate students, can seek guidance regarding workplace concerns without fear of reprisal and at no cost to them. [Click here for more information](#).

In addition to utilizing UHS’s services, graduate students who hold assistantship appointments may seek mental health services covered by their [health insurance plan](#).

XVI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International Student Services (ISS)

[International Student Services \(ISS\)](#) is your main resource on campus and has advisors who can assist you with visa, social and employment issues. Immigration issues are resolved at the university level, not the department level and ISS should be your first contact.

Student Visas

Graduate Admissions issues the federal I-20 form for initial F-1 Visa procurement. Initial J-1 Visa document (DS-2019) is handled by [International Student Services](#) (ISS). The Graduate Admissions office sometimes must collect financial information for the DS-2019, which is then forwarded to ISS. After the student is enrolled, all Visa matters are handled by ISS. The Agronomy department cannot assist you with immigration matters.

Documents required of new international students

Many students are admitted with a condition that they submit their final academic documents after arrival on campus. Please submit your documents to the admissions office at 232 Bascom Hall. The [admissions requirements page](#) has a drop down menu under “Degree” which lists the documents required for each country.

Funding for International Students

International students are eligible for Teaching, Project, and Research Assistantships on campus as well as university fellowships through the Graduate School. They may not be employed more than 20 hours per week on campus while enrolled full-time.

New international students with assistantships should work with International Students Services to obtain [a social security number](#). New students with fellowships and no other appointment types are not considered employees and are not eligible for social security numbers. These students should work with ISS to obtain an [International Taxpayer Identification Number](#) (ITIN).

