



Entomology, MS and PhD **Program Handbook**

2025-2026

Department of Entomology

Reference this handbook to learn about the unique policies, requirements, procedures, resources, and norms for graduate students in the MS & PhD programs.

Table of Contents

How to Use This Handbook.....	1
<i>Who to Contact for Questions.....</i>	<i>1</i>
Department & Program Overview	2
<i>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>How to Get Involved</i>	<i>3</i>
In Our Discipline	4
In Our Department.....	4
Getting Started as a Graduate Student	5
<i>New Graduate Student Checklist.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>In Our Program</i>	<i>5</i>
Advising & Mentoring	6
<i>Finding & Selecting an Advisor.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Changing Your Advisor</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Mentoring Networks.....</i>	<i>8</i>
Degree Requirements	8
<i>Master's Degree.....</i>	<i>8</i>
Requirements	8
Recommendations.....	8
Advisory Committee	9
Thesis	9
Master's Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines	10
<i>Doctoral Degree.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Requirements	11
Recommendations.....	11
Advisory Committee	11
Preliminary Exam	12
Dissertation & Final Oral Exam/Defense.....	15
Doctoral Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines	17
<i>Doctoral Minor Requirement for Entomology PhD students.....</i>	<i>17</i>
Requirements	17
Enrollment Requirements.....	18

Funding, Employment, and Finances	19
<i>Guaranteed Funding</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Finding Funding Without a Guaranteed Appointment</i>	<i>20</i>
Campus-Wide and External Sources	20
In Our Program/Department.....	20
<i>Additional Policies & Resources</i>	<i>20</i>
Academic Exception Petitions	20
Satisfactory Academic Progress	21
<i>Definition</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Annual Progress Report</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Not Meeting Academic Expectations</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Grievance Process</i>	<i>23</i>
Personal Conduct Expectations	24
<i>Professional Conduct.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Academic Misconduct.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Non-Academic Misconduct</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Research Misconduct</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Hostile and Intimidating Behavior (Bullying)</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Process and Sanctions for Violations of Conduct Standards</i>	<i>26</i>
Incident Reporting (Hate, Bias, Sexual Assault, Hazing, Students of Concern, Bullying).....	26
Professional Development	27
<i>On Campus.....</i>	<i>27</i>

Navigating Policy and Resources at UW-Madison

This handbook is one of many sources to consult as you become familiar with the policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms of graduate education at UW-Madison:



How to Use This Handbook

The UW-Madison Graduate School is the ultimate authority for granting graduate degrees at the University. 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 Entomology program faculty.

This handbook is intended for graduate students who are pursuing an Entomology MS or PhD degree. The policies described in this handbook have been approved by all faculty in the program. Degrees and course requirements may change over time. However, students must meet the degree and course requirements in effect when they entered the program. In addition, administrative procedures and processes can change over time. Students are required to follow the procedures and processes listed in the current handbook. The information in this handbook should also be supplemented by individual consultation with your advisor and committee so that individual needs/interests and all degree requirements are met.

Who to Contact for Questions

Many of your questions about how to meet expectations and thrive as a graduate student will be answered by the various sources of policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms listed above.

Graduate Program Manager

Serves as the point person for program policy and procedures. Graduate Program Managers are well versed in most elements of graduate education that extend beyond academic instruction in your program and will likely be your first stop for questions related to anything in this handbook.

Director of Graduate Studies

Each graduate program has one faculty member designated to direct its educational vision and structure.

Graduate Program Manager and Director of Graduate Studies contact information can be found on your program's page in the *Graduate Guide* (guide.wisc.edu/graduate). Simply navigate to the "Major/Degree" tab, click on your program's name, and find the contact information box on the righthand side.

Faculty Advisor

Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor in each graduate program in which they are enrolled. Your faculty advisor(s) will be a key source of guidance for your academic development. Further definition can be found here: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232. Guidelines for finding, changing, and working with your advisor can be found in the Advising & Mentoring section below.

The name and contact information of your faculty advisor can be found on your Student Center on MyUW (my.wisc.edu) under “Academic Progress” and then “Advisors.”

Graduate School Services

For general inquiries and graduate student services from the Graduate School, see the operations and front desk contact information on this contact page: grad.wisc.edu/contacts.

Department & Program Overview

The Entomology department is a diverse unit of researchers whose work spans the areas of suborganismal, organismal, and applied entomology. Research programs of the faculty are broadly interdisciplinary employing cutting-edge technology in all areas. Individual faculty web pages provide in-depth descriptions of the diversity of research in entomology.

Suborganismal: Focuses on insect physiology and population genetics. Areas of specialization include the molecular action of insect hormones and the insect/microbiome interface. Studies of gene flow utilize various molecular methods. Genomic data are used to understand adaptation, gene flow on landscapes, the genetic basis of phenotypes, and the phylogenetic relationships of insect species.

Organismal: Entomology faculty members are leaders in the areas of basic ecology of insects in a variety of natural and managed systems, such as forests, lakes and agroecosystems. Studies in taxonomy, chemical ecology, spatial analysis, vector biology, behavioral ecology, and landscape ecology have strong representation in the department. Research examines how they affect crops and forests, influence ecosystem processes such as nutrient and carbon cycling and the "services" they provide in natural and managed ecosystems such as pollination and pest suppression.

Applied/Extension: Faculty in the department extend a long tradition of research on insects as they impact humans. Excellence in agricultural research continues in

vegetable crops, field and forage crops and the turf and ornamental "green industry" where work has continued to advance the application of integrated pest management in agricultural systems. Basic research conducted by faculty in cropping systems also has implications for pest management, conservation, bioenergy, and resource management. This research extends to global health issues focusing on arthropod borne diseases and insects as a novel food source.

Research in the department explores the interconnections across scales of biological organization, from molecular and cellular interactions to ecosystem-level studies, in both managed and natural systems, and from basic to applied research. Faculty members collaborate with colleagues in other departments in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and beyond the college and university.

Graduate education in the Department of Entomology provides many opportunities for collaborative research. Faculty members participate in joint instructional programs with other departments on campus and with scientists at other universities, in federal and state agencies, and in industry. Because several entomology faculty members are also adjunct professors in zoology, forest and wildlife ecology, molecular and environmental toxicology, and other departments, they may serve as primary advisers to graduate students majoring in those fields. Opportunities exist to conduct research in a variety of distant tropical and temperate regions, to gain experience in classroom instruction and individual mentoring, and to participate in outreach activities such as addressing K–12 classes, naturalist groups, and commodity producers.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Everyone in the Department of Entomology has the right to work in a safe environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, and violence. The Department of Entomology has established a [Code of Conduct](#), which lays out the standards that we expect everyone in the department to uphold, and the Guidelines for graduate students and advisors.

Students can also search for a list of inclusion resources. Some events have passed; some are ongoing. We encourage you to reach out to organizers for more information. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/inclusion-resources/>.

How to Get Involved

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 often enhances your academic, professional, and personal growth through developing advanced

leadership, communication, and collaboration skills. It also provides opportunities for professional networking.

In Our Discipline

The Entomology Department has compiled an extensive list of professional societies graduate students can join. Below are a few students can explore.

- [Entomological Society of America](#)
- [Ecological Society of America](#)
- [Society for Conservation Biology](#)
- [American Society for Microbiology](#)
- [All the Virology on the WWW](#)
- [Society of Nematologists](#)
- [American Horticultural Society](#)
- [American Society for Horticultural Science](#)
- [Botanical Society of America](#)
- [American Phytopathological Society](#)
- [American Society of Agronomy](#)
- [Crop Science Society of America](#)
- [Soil Science Society of America](#)
- [Society of American Foresters](#)
- [Golf Course Superintendents Association of America](#)
- [USGA](#) (United States Golf Association)

In Our Department

Participating in the Entomology Department is important. Involvement in the department provides students the opportunity to work closely with faculty, staff, and other students in the program to discuss a variety of issues pertaining to departmental affairs, social events, and community education.

Entomology Graduate Student Association (EGSA) is an organization for entomology graduate students. Students are elected and hold a seat in all Entomology departmental committees. You can learn more at

Outreach is another way to become involved in the department. Check out those opportunities [here](#).

On Campus & In the Community

The Wisconsin Idea is the principle that education should influence and improve people's lives beyond the university classroom. For more than 100 years, this idea has guided the university's work.

You will find a list of ways to engage in campus and local community life at:

The Graduate School's Current Student Page

grad.wisc.edu/current-students

If you are a student actively involved in leadership and service activities, consider nominating yourself for membership in the following honor society:

Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society

grad.wisc.edu/diversity/bouchet

Getting Started as a Graduate Student

This section guides you through important steps to take as you begin your journey as a graduate student at UW-Madison. All new students are invited to partake in a New Graduate Student Welcome before the start of fall term.

New Graduate Student Checklist

Be sure to review all steps listed on this webpage for new graduate students: [The Graduate School's New Student Page](#)

In addition to a checklist for all new graduate students, review specific additional steps to take if you are a new international student, student with a disability, student veteran, student with children, or student with funding.

Newly admitted international students should review the step-by-step guide, [Becoming a Global Badger](#), on the International Student Services (ISS) website.

In Our Program

As a newly admitted graduate student, you will work with the Graduate Program Manager, your faculty advisor, and the department HR representative to finalize admission, discuss beginning coursework, and complete necessary HR paperwork before you matriculate.

All new graduate students in Russell Labs programs will attend an orientation in late summer. This event is meant to introduce you to Russell Labs, review policies and procedures, answer questions, and meet other new and current students. Review the Russell Labs New Student Canvas course to understand policies, procedures, and expectations. More information will be provided over the summer from the Graduate Program Manager.

Prior to orientation, you should begin to talk to your advisor about prior coursework, and first semester enrollment.

Advising & Mentoring

Advising relationships are a central part of academia, important to both the experience and development of students and faculty members alike.

The Graduate School's definition of an advisor can be found here: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232. Your advisor has two main roles: 1) To assist you in acquiring the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field, and 2) to chair the committee that will determine whether you have performed at an acceptable level in each of your degree milestones (see "Degree Requirements" section below for further information on building your committee). Other roles of your advisor may include tracking your progress in completing your degree (note: this may include use of the Graduate Student Tracking System at gsts.grad.wisc.edu), assisting with course selection and planning your academic path, and helping you identify possible research mentors, committee members, and research opportunities.

Both the student and advisor are responsible for making their expectations clear to each other. Clearly outlining expectations for both the student and advisor are a crucial starting point for a strong relationship. You will discuss these expectations in your initial committee meeting and document that conversation and its outcome on the Certification Form.

Finding & Selecting an Advisor

Your major advisor should be a faculty member in the program whose expertise and project/research interests match closely with those that you intend to acquire. Your faculty advisor will be selected upon admission into the program as they will have recommended you based on prior conversations.

To learn more about the faculty in your program, consider consulting the following sources:

- Courses and seminars you attend
- Our [program website](#)
- Faculty publications
- Students currently in a prospective advisor's group/lab

No faculty member is obligated to accept a student's request to serve as advisor. Formal acceptance to serve as an advisor is indicated by verbal or written agreement and an offer letter.

Changing Your Advisor

As the advisor-student relationship is one of mutual agreement, it may be terminated by either party. If you decide that you would prefer working with a different advisor, discuss this with your prospective advisor to seek the change. Funding may be impacted. Be sure to address funding issues/implications in your conversations. If you change your advisor, you must notify your Graduate Program Manager by email.

Below are some questions to consider asking in your initial discussion, though it is not a complete list. You should spend some time identifying what is most important to you in your graduate training and ask questions accordingly.

Questions to Ask Prospective Advisors

Adapted from IPIB handbook

- What thesis projects would be available to me if I were to join your group?
- Would these projects expose me to a variety of different approaches?
- In general, how available will you be to answer questions I might have?
- What is your philosophy regarding the amount of guidance the advisor should provide to a student during preparation of the thesis proposal, literature seminars, thesis writing, etc.?
- What are your expectations for the amount of time I should spend each day/week in your group/lab?
- What regularly scheduled activities (e.g., group meetings, joint group meetings, research clubs) does your group participate in that provide an opportunity to get outside input on my research project and to hear about the work of other students and postdocs?
- Do you encourage your students to attend seminars and journal clubs, including those that may be outside of their narrow field of interest/research?
- Do students in your group/lab have the opportunity to attend professional meetings where they can interact with colleagues/researchers from other institutions?
- Do you include your graduate students in professional activities that will familiarize them with their field of interest/research, such as reviewing manuscripts and meeting with visiting speakers?
- How long do you think it should take me to get my degree?

- What are your former graduate students (if any) doing now?
- What is your general philosophy of graduate training and what goals do you have for your graduate students?

Every graduate student must have an advisor or else they may be suspended from graduate study at UW-Madison by the Graduate School. You can confirm that the name of your advisor has been updated in the official record by looking in your Student Center on MyUW (my.wisc.edu) under “Academic Progress” and then “Advisors.”

Mentoring Networks

In addition to your formal advisor, you are encouraged to develop a broad network of individuals who can provide academic and professional mentorship during and beyond your time as a graduate student. This may include members of a student’s advisory committee or other faculty and staff at UW or elsewhere.

Degree Requirements

Master’s Degree

All students in the Entomology MS program are responsible for being aware of the following requirements to complete the degree.

Requirements

For all current requirements to complete your degree (e.g., credits, courses, milestones, learning outcomes/goals, etc.) see your program’s page in the *Graduate Guide*.

<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/entomology/entomology-ms/#requirements>

Recommendations

The [Entomology Proposed Course Rotation Schedule](#) can be helpful when planning your coursework. Some courses are only offered once a year. Careful planning should be exercised. Core requirements should be taken early in the student’s program. The advisory committee may require a student to take additional courses outside of what is listed on the rotation schedule. These will be noted on the student’s Certification Form.

The acceptability of equivalent courses taken at other institutions may be determined by the student's Academic Committee but must meet the Graduate School’s prior course

work rule if they are to also count towards the minimum enrollment of 30 credits or 15 credits of graduate-level work (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/prior-coursework/>).

Waivers of course requirements may be granted by the departmental Academic Affairs Committee, but only under exceptional circumstances.

Advisory Committee

Your advisory committee will advise you on your degree requirements. It is in your best interest to form this committee early on, ideally by the end of your first year.

Master's committees advise and evaluate satisfactory progress, evaluate a thesis, and/or sign a degree warrant. The following are the minimum department requirements:

- The chair or one of the co-chairs of the committee must be graduate faculty from the student's program. Affiliate appointments may be used to satisfy this requirement.
- The committee must be comprised of at least three members.
- Two of the committee members must be UW–Madison graduate faculty or former UW–Madison graduate faculty within one year of resignation or retirement.

If a student wishes to have a non-faculty member or non-UW Madison person serve as a committee member, an [external committee member request form](#) will need to be submitted to the Graduate Program Manager. UW-Madison faculty more than one year past retirement or resignation are considered external committee members.

For general guidance from The Graduate School on the role and composition of committees see the following policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201.

Thesis

Research Topic

Your faculty advisor will provide guidance on selecting your thesis topic. If you find that your topic and/or mentoring needs no longer align with your advisor, see “Advising & Mentoring” section on how to change advisors. Note that your committee composition may or may not need to change as well in this scenario, depending upon your new advisor's guidance.

The initial meeting between you and your advisory committee will involve completing the [Certification Form](#). This form details your intended progress in the program by listing prior coursework and recommended coursework to be completed.

Form & Content

The Department of Entomology does not have distinct formatting requirements; instead, students should follow the Graduate School's requirements which can be found online [here](#).

Based on the style of your research proposal, you may find these examples helpful: [NSF](#); [NIH](#); [USDA](#).

Final Defense

The Final Oral Examination is a 2-to-3-hour process. A public defense of the student's thesis occurs first. Immediately following, an examination administered by the full Graduate Committee. The purpose of the examination is to question the student intensely about the work presented in their thesis and ascertain that it meets all the committee's expectations.

Master's Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School maintains a list of steps to complete your master's degree, including deadlines and important things to know as you progress toward graduation: grad.wisc.edu/current-students/masters-guide. In addition to what is posted on this webpage from the Graduate School, you must meet all required steps of the program.

- Review [important dates and deadlines](#) early on to ensure timely graduation.
- Schedule final defense. All committee members must be present for the final defense.
- Submit the [final warrant request](#) at least two weeks before final defense.
- [Apply](#) for graduation in Student Center.
- Obtain all advisory committee members' e-signatures on electronic warrant.
- Email Graduate School the following by the term deadline:
 - a. PDF copy of final thesis
 - b. A signed copy of the [Minds@UW Distribution License form](#)
 - c. A signed copy of the [Proxy authorization form](#)

Russell Labs will cover the cost of up to three hard bound copies of a student's thesis. Staff will be in touch to complete this request.

Doctoral Degree

All students in the Entomology PhD program are responsible for being aware of the following requirements to complete the degree.

Requirements

For all current requirements to complete your degree (e.g., credits, courses, milestones, and learning outcomes/goals) see your program's page in the *Graduate Guide*.

<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/entomology/entomology-phd/#requirementstext>

Recommendations

The [Entomology Proposed Course Rotation Schedule](#) can be helpful when planning your coursework. Some courses are only offered once a year. Careful planning should be exercised. The advisory committee may require a student to take additional courses outside of what is listed on the rotation schedule. These will be noted on the student's Certification Form.

The acceptability of equivalent courses taken at other institutions may be determined by the student's Academic Committee but must meet the Graduate School's prior course work rule if they are to also count towards the minimum enrollment of 51 credits or 26 credits of graduate-level work (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/prior-coursework/>).

Waivers of course requirements may be granted by the departmental Academic Affairs Committee, but only under exceptional circumstances. Core requirements should be taken earlier (rather than later) in the student's program.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee (AC) has several key functions and responsibilities:

- in consultation with the student and the advisor, certify the student's major and minor coursework and general area of specialization;
- administer the certification, preliminary examination, and exit seminar/final defense examination;
- meet with the student at least once each year to discuss research progress and the content and form of the proposed dissertation.

Entomology doctoral advisory committee requirements differ from The Graduate School minimums. Entomology doctoral advisory committees must meet the minimum requirements:

- At least four committee members consisting of the faculty advisor and three other committee members; all members are dissertation readers.
- At least one member must have a major appointment outside of the Department of Entomology.
- At least 2 of the committee members must be Entomologists which includes departmental faculty members, affiliate faculty members, adjunct faculty members, and designated staff in the department.

If a student wishes to have a non-faculty member or non-UW Madison person serve as a committee member, an [external committee member request form](#) will need to be submitted to the Graduate Program Manager. UW-Madison faculty more than one year past retirement or resignation are considered external committee members.

Preliminary Exam

The preliminary examination (PE) or “Prelim” is a defense of a student's proposed PhD dissertation research to the student's advisory committee (AC). It is intended to determine whether a student demonstrates sufficient background and understanding needed to complete the proposed PhD research. The PE must include two sections: (1) a written research proposal and (2) an oral examination.

The PE should be taken prior to completion of the bulk of the work so that the committee is able to critique, suggest modifications to, and agree upon the proposed work. The Prelim is usually taken on the third year of the student PhD. program, but it can be deferred to early fourth year if there are reasonable circumstances (e.g., unconventional fieldwork requirements, major setbacks in critical parts of the project, or as the result of unplanned life events).

The AC is expected to provide clear guidelines, structure, and expectations to the student for the PE. The student should consult each member of the AC, as each member may assign foundational readings in areas where the student might need to prepare for the Prelim. Each member of the advisory committee is expected to identify areas of focus, and to provide constructive and practical feedback to improve the students' research. Prior to taking the PE, students must schedule the meeting, arrange a meeting room, and request a “warrant.” To complete the PE requirement, the student will be required to submit a signed warrant and a copy of the written research proposal.

Written Proposal

The intent of the written research proposal is to evaluate a student's proposed research design and the ability to communicate in writing. The proposal should be written as either a dissertation outline or a grant proposal in the format of a NSF, USDA, or NIH-style grant proposal (to be determined by the AC). Examples are available to the student by the AC upon request. The proposal should be sent to the AC in advance of the PE (at least 2 weeks). The proposal should be examined and approved by the primary advisor of the student before it is sent to the AC. If the student is unable to comply with this timeline, they should send a notification to their committee members with a new proposed deadline as soon as it becomes evident.

The proposal will contain preliminary data indicating the feasibility of the project. The PE gives the AC the opportunity to make extensive suggestions on the proposed research and set out expectations for a successful PhD research project. The proposal should be between 10 to 15 pages (1 inch margins all around, text in Times New Roman, Courier, or Arial, size 12), single space, including numbered figures (captions below) and tables (captions above). The student and committee can choose to include any figures and/or tables (if any) directly in the body of the proposal or in its own section at the end of the proposal, after the references. References will extend the page length as needed and should be in an appropriate format relevant to the field of study. The proposal should include the following basic elements (refer to a specific style if following a dissertation outline or grant format):

- Specific Aims or Pitch Page
- Background
- Objectives
- Proposed Methods
- Preliminary and Expected Results
- Rationale and Significance
- Timeline with deliverables
- References
- Appendices (optional)

Oral Exam

The oral component of the PE is expected to last from 1-3 hours. At the start of the oral exam, one committee member (not the major advisor) should be appointed chair and will be responsible for completing the exam elements with appropriate timing. The oral exam should include the following components: a student presentation, a period of questions and answers, a discussion of the student's performance among the AC (without the student), and a discussion with the student about major advising (without the major advisor). For this last discussion, members of the AC should inquire about the mentor-mentee relationship, whether sufficient and timely feedback is being provided to

the student, what financial arrangements and research expectations are being provided to the student, and if there is sufficient career advising.

An oral presentation of approximately 20 to 30 minutes in length should be prepared to explain the proposed research. The primary advisor is expected to review and approve the audiovisual tools employed by the student before the date of the examination. The oral presentation usually follows the same structure as the written proposal, but students can use multiple audiovisual tools in their presentation (e.g., power point, video, white board, etc.). The student should discuss at the start of the meeting whether committee members can interrupt the student as they present or wait until the end of the presentation to ask their questions.

During the question-and-answer period, the student should demonstrate capacity and knowledge to complete the proposed research, be able to satisfactorily answer questions on methods (proposed or alternatives), extrapolate the proposed work to its broader implications and significance, identify potential pitfalls, and demonstrate understanding of the basic knowledge and theoretical background related to the proposed work. Although the preliminary examination is designed to test the students' capacity to complete the proposed work and to identify potential setbacks and pitfalls with enough time, the graduate committee can also test the student on theoretical background and field fundamentals to test the bases of the proposed work.

Exam Outcomes

As part of proposal and defense meetings the advisory committee completes a rubric and reaches four potential outcomes regarding the performance of the student:

- Pass and become eligible for Dissertator status (see next section)
- Pass with qualifications specified by the AC.
- Fail with the option of retaking the Preliminary Examination within **2** semesters
- Fail without option to retake the Preliminary Examination.

Procedures

Students' eligibility to take the prelim examination(s) is determined by their program. Work with your committee to identify a date that everyone can participate in and administer the preliminary exam. Submit a [warrant request form](#) at least four weeks prior to the exam date.

A Certification Form must all be on file with the Graduate Program Manager to process your warrant.

Dissertator Status

Dissertator Status is a unique fee status for students who have completed all requirements for a doctoral degree except for the dissertation and is achieved in the semester following the preliminary exam. Achieving Dissertator Status comes with multiple benefits, including the reduction of segregated fees. For more information on dissertator status visit the [UW – Madison Graduate School Dissertator Status page](#).

Remember that once you have achieved dissertator status, you must enroll continuously (every Fall and Spring semester) for exactly 3 credits (no more, no less). To be eligible for dissertator fee status, a student must:

- Pass the Preliminary Examination
- Satisfy the 32 credits minimum doctoral graduate residence requirement
- Complete PhD minor or certificate requirement
- Complete all program requirements except the dissertation
- Clear all Incomplete grades or Progress grades in non-research courses (progress grades in 990 research may remain)
- Earn at least a 3.0 cumulative graduate GPA
- Return the signed and dated Prelim Warrant to the Graduate School

Dissertation & Final Oral Exam/Defense

Research Topic

Your advisor can provide guidance on selecting your dissertation topic. If you find that your topic and/or mentoring needs no longer align with your advisor, see “Advising & Mentoring” section on how to change advisors. Note that your committee composition may or may not need to change as well in this scenario, depending upon your new advisor’s guidance.

Form & Content

The Department of Entomology does not have distinct formatting requirements; instead, students should follow the Graduate School’s requirements which can be found online [here](#).

Based on the style of your research proposal, you may find these research proposal examples helpful. [NSF](#); [NIH](#); [USDA](#)

Other resources for writing your research proposal and dissertation.

- [UW Writing Center's Writers Handbook](#)
- [Writing Center's Rules on writing ethics and plagiarism](#)
- [Graduate School's Dissertation Help](#)

Final Oral Examination

All PhD students are required to pass their final oral exam before they can be allowed to graduate. The final oral examination will consist of a 45-minute public, oral thesis defense in seminar form presenting significant parts of the research, followed by questions from the audience. This will normally be scheduled as part of the department colloquium series and posted at least 24 hours in advance. Alternative scheduling is an option. After the public presentation and questioning, a separate closed meeting between the student and the AC will take place. Further questioning will resume. Logistical considerations may require that the public presentation and private meeting with the AC occur on different days but within the same semester.

To pass the final oral defense, the AC will sign the warrant as evidence of successful defense of the thesis with at most one member dissenting (as per Graduate school regulations). The final oral examination meeting must include the entire AC (either in person or via teleconference if necessary). The student is responsible for preparations for the final dissertation defense:

- Setting a meeting time with the committee (at least one month before the defense) and reserving a room
- Scheduling the exit seminar - each student must present an exit seminar summarizing research results as part of the regular Departmental colloquium series (these seminars need not be coupled with the final oral defense meeting with the committee) it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with the colloquium organizers to identify an appropriate date for the exit seminar usually within six months before completion of the degree;
- making accommodations for committee members participating via phone, Internet, etc.
- sending a copy of the dissertation to the AC (at least two weeks prior to the defense) and,
- submitting a final warrant request to the Graduate Program Manager

Doctoral Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School maintains a list of steps to complete your doctoral degree, including deadlines and important things to know as you progress toward graduation: grad.wisc.edu/current-students/doctoral-guide. In addition to what is posted on this webpage from the Graduate School, you must meet all required steps of the program.

- Review [important dates and deadlines](#) early on to ensure timely graduation.
- Submit your [final warrant](#) request
- [Apply](#) for graduation in Student Center
- Complete Doctoral Exit Surveys
 - a. [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#)
 - b. [Graduate School's Doctoral Exit Survey](#)
- Pay the dissertation deposit fee (\$90) in GradPortal and submit dissertation.

Russell Labs will cover the cost of one personal hard-bound copy of a student's dissertation. Staff will be in touch to complete this request.

Doctoral Minor Requirement for Entomology PhD students

The Graduate School requires all PhD students to complete a minor before they can be granted dissertator status. There are two minor options:

1. Option A External Minor
2. Option B Distributed Minor

Requirements

Option A External Minor: Requires a minimum of 9 credits in a single department/program. Selection of this option requires the approval of the minor department/program. In an Option A minor please contact the department for more information on the minor requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/academic-programs/>).

Option B Distributed Minor: Requires a minimum of 9 credits in one or more departments/programs and can include course work in the major department/program. Selection of this option requires the approval of the major department/program.

Option A minors appear on the transcript with the name of the minor (e.g., Statistics). An Option B minor always appears on the transcript as Distributed. For more information on the Graduate School's minor requirements go to <https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/minors/>.

Students are required to list the courses being used towards the minor requirement on their Certification Form. If a student is pursuing an Option A minor, and the minor department requires paperwork for their needs, the student should also submit a copy of this additional minor paperwork as part of the certification.

Some students are exempted from the minor requirement. There are additional academic opportunities available to graduate students. Students may pursue a joint or double degree or earn a graduate-level certificate while pursuing an Entomology PhD. Often PhD students who pursue a joint degree or a graduate-level certificate are exempt from having to pursue a minor. Students interested in these options should contact their faculty advisor or check out the Graduate School's information online at <https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/minors/> for more information.

Enrollment Requirements

You are responsible for following Graduate School policies related to course enrollment requirements and limitations:

Minimum Enrollment Requirements

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208

Adding / Dropping Courses

grad.wisc.edu/documents/add-drop

Auditing Courses

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1224

Canceling Enrollment

grad.wisc.edu/documents/canceling-enrollment

Continuous Enrollment Requirement for Dissertators

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1204

Enrollment Accountability

grad.wisc.edu/documents/enrollment-accountability

Non-dissertator maximum credit load is 15 graded credits taken at 300-level or above during the fall and spring semesters and 12 credits during the summer term. Any exceptions to the maximum credit load permitted must be obtained via the [Credit Overload Request](#) form.

A valid enrollment minimum does not count the following types of courses,

- courses numbered below 300
- courses taken pass/fail
- audited courses

Funding, Employment, and Finances

“Funding” is a term used to describe university employment or support to cover some or all your costs of graduate education. It varies in kind, amount, and level of guarantee.

- Most students are funded through Research Assistantships with their faculty advisor. Teaching assistantships are another source of funding students may opt to explore. Their availability on campus is limited. Please work with your advisor to discuss options.
- Funding is generally year-round.

The Graduate School maintains policies related to graduate student funding/employment:

[Maximum Levels of Appointments](#)

[Concurrent Appointments for Fellows/Trainees](#)

[Enrollment Requirements for Graduate Assistants](#)

[Eligibility for Summer RA, TA, PA, and LSA Appointments](#)

Guaranteed Funding

Students must secure guaranteed funding commitments from their faculty advisor prior to being recommended for admission to the Graduate School.

- A MS student will not be accepted unless two years of funding support is provided.
- A PhD student will not be accepted unless three years of funding support is provided.

Students who secure funding on their own through employment benefits, veterans benefits, or an external fellowship, can be considered for recommendation. Our department does not offer TA support. Therefore, TA only support is not sufficient due to our concerns about providing a supportive learning environment.

Finding Funding Without a Guaranteed Appointment

Campus-Wide and External Sources

To help you find resources to pay for costs related to graduate education, the Graduate School provides a comprehensive overview of the funding process on campus as well as descriptions of the types of funding available, sources of funding, minimum stipend rates and benefits, and links to applicable human resources policies (e.g. GAPP) at:

[Graduate School: Funding and Financial Aid](#)

[External Fellowship Database](#)

[UW-Madison Libraries Grants Information Collection](#)

In Our Program/Department

In addition to campus-wide and external sources of funding, our program/department offers sources of funding that are awarded on a competitive or need-basis.

Students do find Teaching Assistant (TA) positions within the department and outside. Discuss options with your advisor or browse [UW Graduate Assistantships](#) openings.

College and Departmental Scholarships can be found [here](#).

Additional Policies & Resources

[Graduate School Policy: Residence for Tuition Purposes](#)

[Employee Disability Resources](#)

[Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures \(GAPP\)](#)

Academic Exception Petitions

Requests for exceptions to those requirements set by the Entomology Department will be considered by the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee. Email academic exception requests to the Graduate Program Manager.

The request should include a justification statement and a detailed explanation of the substitution proposed to meet the requirement. The following requirements for the MS and PhD degrees are under the purview of the UW Graduate School and cannot be modified:

- composition of the advisory committees
- standards defining Academic Satisfactory Progress
- minimum credit requirements

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Your continuation as a graduate student at UW-Madison is at the discretion of your program, the Graduate School, and your faculty advisor. Any student may be placed on probation or dismissed from the Graduate School for not maintaining satisfactory academic progress, and this can impact your academic standing (detailed below), financial aid (see this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1040), or funding (consult your sources of funding, as applicable). Our program has its own definition of satisfactory academic progress and related procedures that supplement Graduate School policy, as described in this section.

Definition

Information about how the Graduate School determines satisfactory academic progress can be found at this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1218. In addition to the Graduate School's monitoring of satisfactory academic progress, this program regularly reviews the satisfactory academic progress of its students, defined as the following:

The Department of Entomology follows the Graduate School's guidelines regarding satisfactory progress in terms of grades and GPA. Graduate students are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher every term for courses in the 300-level and above. If a student does not meet the minimum GPA the Graduate School will put them on probation and the student may ultimately be suspended if they are not able to raise their GPA to the minimum level. The same holds true if a graduate student carries two or more incomplete grades over multiple semesters.

Continuation in the Graduate School is at the discretion of a student's program, the Graduate School, and a student's faculty advisor. Students 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 their academic standing in the program. Students should meet regularly with their faculty advisor to ensure that they are meeting program expectations. If a student is not meeting program expectations this will be communicated in writing to the student by the faculty advisor.

Separate and apart from a violation of Professional Conduct, a student may face University disciplinary action regarding the same action. Concerns about infractions of professional conduct may be effectively handled informally between the student and the advisor/faculty member. However, if a resolution is not achieved, the issue may be advanced for further review by the program. Examples of disciplinary actions could include, but are not limited to written reprimand, imposition of reasonable terms and conditions on continued student status, removal of funding, probation, restitution, removal of student from an in-progress course, failure to promote, suspension, or dismissal.

Annual Progress Report

All PhD students are required to meet with their advisory committee annually to discuss their academic and research progress. The faculty advisor and student will be responsible for completing and submitting the Annual Progress Report form to the Graduate Program Manager by July 1 through degree completion.

Not Meeting Academic Expectations

Student progress will be reviewed through coursework and their research development. If the advisor and advisory committee find at any time that a student has failed to achieve satisfactory progress in the academic expectations set in this handbook, the student will be notified and given an opportunity to submit a response within a set time period (typically two weeks). The advisor and graduate committee will review the response within two weeks and determine if further action is needed.

Students may be dismissed from the program. Students may, alternatively, be placed on probation for one semester and then reviewed by their advisory committee and Academic Affairs Committee following the probationary semester. Students placed on probation may be dismissed or allowed to continue based upon review of progress during the probationary semester. If a student wishes to appeal any decision stemming from this review process, they can do so within two weeks of the date of the decision letter through submitting a letter to the chair and requesting a new hearing with the addition of a faculty member external to the original advisory committee.

Graduate School's information on satisfactory progress:

<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1218>

Graduate School's information on GPA:

<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/gpa-requirement/>

Graduate School's information on probation:

<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/probation/>

Graduate School's information on incomplete grades:

<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/incompletes/>

Grievance Process

The Department of Entomology has a formal code of conduct for faculty, students and staff. Please review it and refer to it for guidance: <https://entomology.wisc.edu/graduate-study/code-of-conduct/>.

If a student feels unfairly treated or aggrieved by faculty, staff, or another student, the University offers several avenues to resolve the grievance. Students' concerns about unfair treatment are best handled directly with the person responsible for the objectionable action. If the student is uncomfortable making direct contact with the individual(s) involved, they should contact the Entomology Department Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Program Manager, or the Russell Labs Department Administrator.

Procedure

1. The student is encouraged to speak first with the person toward whom the grievance is directed to see if a situation can be resolved at this level.
2. Should a satisfactory resolution not be achieved, the student should contact any of the Russell Labs Department Chairs, the Graduate Program Manager, or the Russell Labs Department Administrator to discuss the grievance. Any of the above people will facilitate problem resolution through informal channels and facilitate any complaints or issues of students. The first attempt is to help students informally address the grievance prior to any formal complaint. Students are also encouraged to talk with their faculty advisors regarding concerns or difficulties if necessary. University resources for sexual harassment, discrimination, disability accommodations, and other related concerns can be found on the UW Office of Equity and Diversity website: <https://oed.wisc.edu/>.
3. Other campus resources include:
 - The Graduate School - <http://grad.wisc.edu/>
 - McBurney Disability Resource Center - <http://mcburney.wisc.edu/>
 - Employee Assistance Office - <http://eao.wisc.edu/>
 - Ombuds Office - <http://ombuds.wisc.edu/>
 - University Health Services – <http://uhs.wisc.edu/>

- Teaching Assistants' Association - <https://taa-madison.org/>
 - UW Office of Equity and Diversity - <https://oed.wisc.edu/>
4. If the issue is not resolved to the student's satisfaction the student can submit the grievance to the Department Chair and Graduate Program Manager in writing, within 60 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment.
 5. On receipt of a written complaint, a faculty committee will be convened to manage the grievance. The program faculty committee will obtain a written response from the person toward whom the complaint is directed. This response will be shared with the person filing the grievance.
 6. The faculty committee will determine a decision regarding the grievance, and will report on the action taken by the committee in writing to both the student and the party toward whom the complaint was directed within 15 working days from the date the complaint was received.
 7. At this point, if either party (the student or the person toward whom the grievance is directed) is unsatisfied with the decision of the faculty committee, the party may file a written appeal. Either party has 10 working days to file a written appeal to the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Academic Affairs Office.

Documentation of the grievance will be stored for at least 7 years. Significant grievances that set a precedent will be stored indefinitely. The Graduate School has procedures for students wishing to appeal a grievance decision made at the school/college level. These policies are described in the Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures: <https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>.

Personal Conduct Expectations

Professional Conduct

The Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards maintains detailed guidance on student rights and responsibilities related to learning in a community that is safe and fosters integrity and accountability. You are responsible for keeping aware of their policies and procedures, found at the following page: conduct.students.wisc.edu

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is governed by state law, UW System Administration Code Chapter 14. For further information on this law, what constitutes academic misconduct, and procedures related to academic misconduct, see:

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies & Procedures: Misconduct, Academic](#)

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

[Academic Misconduct Website](#)
[Academic Misconduct Flowchart](#)

Non-Academic Misconduct

Non-academic misconduct is governed by state law, UW System Administration Code Chapters 17 and 18. For further information on these laws, what constitutes non-academic misconduct, and procedures related to non-academic misconduct, see:

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies & Procedures: Misconduct, Non-Academic](#)

Office for Student Conduct and Community Standards

[Non-Academic Misconduct Website](#)

University of Wisconsin System (UWS)

[Chapter 17: Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedures](#)

[Chapter 18: Conduct on University Lands](#)

Research Misconduct

Graduate students are held to the same standards of responsible conduct of research as faculty and staff. Further information about these standards and related policies and procedures can be found at:

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies & Procedures: Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

[Research Policies](#)

Hostile and Intimidating Behavior (Bullying)

Hostile and intimidating behavior (HIB), sometimes referred to as “bullying,” is prohibited by university policy applicable to faculty, academic staff, and university staff. For further definition, policy, and procedures related to HIB see: hr.wisc.edu/hib. Students who feel they have been subject to HIB are encouraged to review the informal and formal options on the “Addressing HIB” tab of this website.

Process and Sanctions for Violations of Conduct Standards

The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee (GAAC) administers the regulations established by the faculty. It makes sure students are meeting the program expectations and imposes sanctions when appropriate. Faculty and faculty committees determine whether the quality of a student’s work and conduct are satisfactory, while the GAAC determines whether the student is satisfying the academic requirements in a timely fashion and meeting program conduct expectations. Students who are falling behind academically or do not meet conduct expectations are first warned, then put on probation, and then dropped from the program if they cannot complete the requirements or remedy their conduct. Within boundaries set by the faculty, the GAAC is authorized to take account of individual circumstances and problems, and to grant extensions of deadlines and waivers of requirements.

The Office of Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) also have grounds to issue one or more of the following:

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

Incident Reporting (Hate, Bias, Sexual Assault, Hazing, Students of Concern, Bullying)

The Office of Student Assistance and Support maintains a portal to report incidents of hate, bias, sexual assault, hazing, dating/domestic violence, stalking, missing students, and students displaying other concerning behaviors at UW-Madison:

[Office of Student Assistance and Support Incident Reporting](#)

As noted above in “Personal Conduct Expectations,” students who feel they have been subject to hostile and/or intimidating behavior (i.e., bullying) are encouraged to review the informal and formal options for addressing this behavior (including filing complaints when desired) at:

[Human Resources Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Website](#)

Professional Development

When you participate in professional development, you build skills needed to succeed academically and thrive in your career. The following are professional development activities that we recommend for your consideration. Required professional development will be detailed in “Degree Requirements” above.

On Campus

The Graduate School develops and curates a wide variety of resources for professional development, including a tool to assess your skills, set goals, and create a plan with recommended activities on campus (e.g., the popular “Individual Development Plan” or IDP) as well as programming to help you explore careers, prepare for a job search, build your network and learn from alumni, manage projects, communicate about your research, and much more.

DiscoverPD helps master’s and doctoral students at UW-Madison advance their academic and professional goals with customized recommendations based on a skills self-assessment. The 400+ professional development recommendations available in the DiscoverPD database are available in a range of formats to best meet your diverse needs, including in-person, virtual, asynchronous, and synchronous opportunities. All of this can be found at:

[Professional Development from the Graduate School](#)

The Graduate School communicates professional development opportunities through an e-newsletter, *GradConnections*, that all graduate students receive at their wisc.edu email. Graduate students in traditional graduate degree programs receive the newsletter weekly during the academic year and every other week in the summer. Graduate students in online degree programs receive the newsletter every other week during the academic year and monthly during the summer.