

Graduate Student Handbook

2020–2021

Department of Plant Pathology
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



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1. Welcome

We are pleased that you have selected our department for the next phase of your education and career. This should be a challenging and rewarding time in your life. You will grow professionally and personally. As you begin your career as a scientist, we encourage you to become involved with the direction of your career early on and refer to this handbook periodically as a source of information relevant to your graduate program and opportunities for professional development. The Graduate Program at the University of Nebraska has a long and rich history, with many of our alumni leading successful careers across the world within and outside academia. Our goal is to help you achieve your highest potential. Welcome to the University of Nebraska and welcome to the Department of Plant Pathology!

1.1 Importance of Plant Pathology

Plant pathology is the science of plant disease. It encompasses the study of the organisms that cause disease in plants; the study of the interactions between these causal agents, the plant, and the environment during the disease process; and the development of strategies and tactics for managing or controlling plant disease. Plant pathology is interdisciplinary, interfacing with many scientific disciplines including mycology, bacteriology, nematology, virology, agronomy, microbiology, botany, biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, plant breeding, statistics, and computational biology. Thus, the training of plant pathologists includes research and coursework experience in plant pathology.

The Department of Plant Pathology strives to serve the University, the State of Nebraska, and the global agricultural and scientific community by training effective and impactful future scientists and leaders who will address current and future critical needs in agriculture. The most important of these needs is increasing plant productivity to feed the world's growing population using economically and environmentally sustainable practices. Training of plant pathologists is essential because there is high demand in the world's plant protection industries and research institutions for their expertise and scientific innovation to increase food availability and security and improve quality of life.

1.2 History of the Plant Pathology Graduate Program

Plant pathology training at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) began in 1884, with the creation of the Department of Botany, which included plant pathologists. When founded in 1920, the Department of Plant Pathology was a member of the Experiment Station and was not an instructional department in the College of Agriculture. Consequently, faculty members in the Department of Plant Pathology carried titles in the Department of Botany in the College of Arts and Sciences and all instruction in plant pathology was part of the Department of Botany course offerings. In 1973, the Department of Botany joined other units to form what is now known as the School of Biological Sciences (SBS) within the College of Arts and Sciences. The Department of Plant Pathology kept its affiliation with SBS for its teaching component, and retained funding and administration of the Department within the College of Agriculture in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR).

In 2006, the organizational mechanism by which the Department's graduate degrees were granted through SBS was modified so that the Plant Pathology "emphasis" in SBS was formalized as a Specialization in Plant Pathology. In the same year, the Plant Pathology Specialization in Agronomy and Horticulture (A&H) was also created. While the two Specializations were parallel (i.e., entry requirements were similar and a standard curriculum was required for students in both programs) creating Specializations in two graduate programs provided opportunities to attract students with a more agricultural or crop production focus, as well as students from traditional biology backgrounds. Since 2006, increasing numbers of students were admitted through both programs. By 2018, close to 90% of the department's graduate students were registered in A&H and the total number of students that were advised by faculty in our department was at a record high, 28 in September 2018, which made it feasible for the Department to offer and administer its own degree program. Coinciding with the 100-year anniversary of the Department of Plant Pathology, the graduate program offering M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Plant Pathology was formalized in 2020.

1.3 Importance of Graduate Degrees in Plant Pathology

The purpose of the Plant Pathology Graduate Program is to train students in all areas of plant pathology from basic to applied. Emphasis is placed on the development of solid research, teaching; and/or extension expertise that provides graduates a competitive advantage for employment in private industry, academia, government, and non-government positions. Currently, the main subject areas related to plant health are pathogenic and beneficial interactions between plants and microbes, diagnostics and management strategies, basic and applied mycology, bacteriology, nematology, virology, and epidemiology. All these areas are supported by foundational knowledge in other science disciplines including agronomy, microbiology, botany, biochemistry, genetics, molecular biology, plant breeding, statistics, and computational biology.

The goal of the program is to train our graduates in current knowledge of organisms and environmental conditions that cause disease in plants, the mechanisms of disease development, disease progression in time and space, the interactions between disease causal agents and plants, the effects of disease on plant growth, yield and quality, and the methods of diagnostics and disease management. Graduates will be able to generate new knowledge and make information- and research-based decisions that will enhance plant health and increase crop production and food security.

1.4 Learning Outcomes

As with other graduate programs in Science-Technology-Engineering-and-Math (STEM) fields, the Plant Pathology Graduate Program provides opportunities for students to develop the attributes and skills of cutting-edge scientists. These include the ability to think critically, conduct research using the scientific method, interpret research results, and communicate research findings to the scientific community and the general public in written and verbal forms. Regardless of whether a student's interest leads to a regulatory, research, or teaching/outreach career, the Plant Pathology Graduate Program trains and exposes its graduate students to diverse research methodologies and provides students with opportunities and experiences in teaching and outreach. These learning objectives are achieved by completion of the research and teaching requirements outlined below.

1.5 Plant Pathology Knowledge

Specialized training in Plant Pathology requires transferring and transforming skills and knowledge to research, outreach, and extension activities. Specific skills of plant pathologists include disease diagnosis, plant pathogen isolation and culturing, and identification of plant pathogenic organisms. Core knowledge areas specific to plant pathology include the biology and ecology of plant pathogenic organisms; plant disease epidemiology; evolution, phylogenetics, and systematics of plant pathogens; molecular, cellular and genetic interactions between plant pathogens and plants; and plant disease management strategies. To meet the plant pathology-specific learning objectives, a slate of graduate courses currently taught by faculty in the Department of Plant Pathology was identified as the plant pathology graduate curriculum for this program (see Course Requirements).

2. Purpose of the Graduate Handbook

Graduate training is overseen by the UNL Office of Graduate Studies (referred to as Graduate Studies in this handbook), but within their broad guidelines each department sets its own expectations for completing M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. The purpose of this graduate student handbook is to assemble in one place current departmental expectations, procedures, and forms together with a set of resources to support both students and their Faculty Advisors in navigating the program. The policies described in this handbook have been approved by the program faculty. Requirements set forth and supervised by the Plant Pathology Graduate Committee (PPGC) described herein include general requirements of the department, and it is expected that students will seek additional helpful resources and guidance from Graduate Studies, which is linked here: <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies>

Highly recommended resources are the online sets of degree milestones specific to both the master's and doctoral program that are found on the Graduate Studies website here: <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/degrees> These resources list the requirements for graduate studies at UNL that apply to all academic programs, including the Department of Plant Pathology. Each student is expected to satisfy the requirements in force at the time of admission to a degree program. The relevant parts of the degree milestones are reproduced in this document. The Department of Plant Pathology sets specific requirements to confer M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in addition to those listed in the degree milestones. 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 of the student with their Faculty Advisor and Supervisory Committee so that individual needs/interests and all degree requirements are met.

3. Plant Pathology Program Administration

3.1 Plant Pathology Graduate Committee (PPGC)

The Plant Pathology Graduate Committee (PPGC) oversees all matters related to graduate student admission, support, and progress. The PPGC is charged with coordinating recruitment of new graduate students, providing a timely review of graduate student applications, circulating application files, tabulating faculty votes, and recommending admission of new students. The PPGC also conducts an annual review of graduate student academic performance and progress, recommends changes in graduate student status, and Supervisory Committees. The Plant Pathology Graduate Coordinator (Madilyn McKay) schedules the initial guidance interview with the Chair of the PPGC, answers admission questions, sends applications, and keeps track of student eligibility for Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs).

 <p>Dr. Sydney Everhart Chair of the PPGC (2020–Present)</p>	 <p>Dr. Amit Mitra Member of the PPGC and SBS / AgroHort Rep. (2015 – Present)</p>	 <p>Dr. Gary Yuen, Member of the PPGC (2015 – Present)</p>	 <p>Dr. Richard Wilson, Member of the PPGC (2015 – Present)</p>	 <p>Dr. Hernan Garcia-Ruiz, Member of the PPGC (2018 – Present)</p>
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3.2 Plant Pathology Graduate Coordinator

The Plant Pathology Graduate Coordinator is Ms. Madilyn McKay. The role of the Graduate Coordinator is to assist in communications, recruiting, admissions, interviews, new student onboarding, annual reviews, program forms and milestones, and alumni relations. The Graduate Coordinator is an important point-of-contact for graduate students and Faculty Advisors. The Graduate Coordinator is responsible for processing applications and providing guidance to prospective students with an interest in the Plant Pathology Graduate Program. Graduate students are eligible for numerous scholarships, fellowships, and grants, and the Plant Pathology Graduate Coordinator announces the availability of these awards to students.



Ms. Madilyn McKay, Graduate
Coordinator and PPGC
Secretary

3.3 Plant Pathology Graduate Faculty

Only those faculty in the Department of Plant Pathology that have Graduate Faculty status, as defined by Graduate Studies, are eligible to teach graduate courses as the instructor of record, serve on final examining committees, serve on Supervisory Committees, and chair Supervisory Committees for both masters and doctoral students. Graduate Faculty status is automatically given to all faculty members in tenure leading positions, including pre-tenure faculty. Faculty members in non-tenure leading positions—including professors of practice, research professors, and adjunct faculty—may be nominated for appointment to the Graduate Faculty. Below is a list of the current faculty in the Department of Plant Pathology and their Graduate Faculty Status.

Table 1. Faculty in the Department of Plant Pathology

Faculty Member Name	Rank	Appointment*	Location	Graduate Faculty Status
Gerard Adams, Ph.D.	Assoc. Professor of Practice	33T, 15R, 2S	Plant Sciences	Associate (ends 2022)
Irina Agarakova, Ph.D.	Research Assistant Professor	100R	Morrison	No
Michael Boehm, Ph.D.	Professor and Vice Chancellor	100A	Agriculture Hall	Ex-officio**
Jeffrey Bradshaw, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	Courtesy	Panhandle	Yes
Kyle Broderick, M.S.	Extension Educator	100E	Plant Sciences	No
David D. Dunigan, Ph.D.	Research Professor	100R	Morrison	Yes
Rhae Drijber, Ph.D.	Professor	Courtesy	Keim	Yes
Sydney Everhart, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	20T, 78R, 2S	Plant Sciences	Yes
Deanna Funnell-Harris, Ph.D.	Professor	Adjunct	Filley	Yes
Hernan Garcia-Ruiz, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	10T, 88R, 2S	Morrison	Yes
Pravin Gautam, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor	Adjunct	BASF	No
Loren Giesler, Ph.D.	Professor and Head	100A	Plant Sciences	Ex-officio**
Steven Harris, Ph.D.	Professor	Adjunct	U. Manitoba	Yes
Robert Harveson, Ph.D.	Professor	48R, 50E, 2S	Panhandle	Yes
Gary Hein, Ph.D.	Professor	Courtesy	Plant Sciences	Yes
Josh Herr, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor	20T, 78R, 2S	Plant Sciences	Yes
Tamra Jackson-Ziems, Ph.D.	Professor	10T, 10R, 78E, 2S	Plant Sciences	Yes
Jeewan Jyot, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor	Courtesy	NIC	No
Greg Kruger, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	Courtesy	WCREC	Yes
Gang Li, Ph.D.	Research Assistant Professor	100R	Plant Sciences	No
Amit Mitra, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	20T, 78R, 2S	Plant Sciences	Yes
Ken Nickerson, Ph.D.	Professor	Courtesy	Beadle	Yes
Thomas Powers, Ph.D.	Professor	15T, 83R, 2S	Plant Sciences	Yes
Brandi Sigmon, Ph.D.	Asst. Professor of Practice	75T, 25R	Beadle	Yes
James Steadman, Ph.D.	Professor	Emeritus	Plant Sciences	Ex-officio**

Satyanarayana Tatineni, Ph.D.	Professor	Adjunct	Filley	Associate (ends 2021)
James L. Van Etten, Ph.D.	Professor	98R, 2S	Morrison	Yes
Anne Vidaver, Ph.D.	Professor	Emerita	Plant Sciences	Ex-officio**
Stephen Wegulo, Ph.D.	Professor	40R, 58E, 2S	Plant Sciences	Yes
Richard Wilson, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	10T, 88R, 2S	Plant Sciences	Yes
Gary Yuen, Ph.D.	Professor	40T, 58R, 2S	Plant Sciences	Yes
Lirong Zeng, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	20T, 78R, 2S	Beadle	Yes
<p>* Appointments are: T = Teaching, R = Research, S = Service, and A = Administration ** <i>Ex-officio</i> status is being used here to denote faculty who hold a title of Graduate Faculty but are no longer active in research and therefore only advise students under rare or special circumstances. These individuals may be contacted to serve on committees.</p>				

3.4 Special Committee Members

Students may request the appointment of a faculty member from another institution outside the University of Nebraska system to serve on their Supervisory Committee. These external “special” members must hold a terminal degree appropriate to the discipline and have academic accomplishments comparable to the criteria for Graduate Faculty. Special Members are appointed as voting members of the Supervisory Committee and must be willing to participate in the student’s doctoral program in a manner consistent with this role. The Special Member may serve as one of the two appointed readers; but may not serve as committee chair, co-chair, or outside representative. Consult with the Graduate Studies website for details.

3.5 Graduate Faculty Emeriti

Upon recommendation of the departmental, school, or interdepartmental graduate committee, retired Graduate Faculty who have been appointed to emeritus status may retain the rights and privileges associated with their Graduate Faculty status. These rights and privileges include permission to teach graduate courses, to serve as members of graduate programs, or to co-chair the Supervisory Committees of doctoral students with a resident Graduate Faculty member.

4. Degree Options

4.1 M.S. and Ph.D. Degrees in Plant Pathology

The Department of Plant Pathology awards the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and Master of Science (M.S. Option I or II) degrees as currently defined by Graduate Studies. The department recommends that all graduate students complete a non-terminal M.S. degree before entering a Ph.D. program. Students wishing to bypass the M.S. may petition to advance to the Ph.D. after admission to the program (see M.S. Bypass Option). Direct admission to the Ph.D. is granted only for a student who has already qualified for an outside fellowship or training grant support that requires a direct Ph.D. program.

4.2 Minor in Plant Pathology

Students majoring in fields of study outside plant pathology may obtain a minor in plant pathology. A minor in plant pathology for the M.S. degree requires at least 9 hours of graduate coursework in plant pathology; a minor in plant pathology for the Ph.D. degree requires at least 15 hours of graduate coursework in plant pathology (course prefix PLPT), with 6 of those hours in 900-level courses or 800-level courses without a 400-level counterpart. One member of the student's committee must be from the Department of Plant Pathology as the minor representative and approve credits for the minor. Credit hours used to complete the minor in plant pathology must be in courses that originate from the Department of Plant Pathology (i.e., not courses cross-listed as PLPT and having some other original designation).

5. Application Procedures

Application instructions and general information are posted online (plantpath.unl.edu) and the official application form for admission to a graduate program at UNL can be found at the UNL Graduate Studies website (<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/>). The Graduate Coordinator is responsible for processing application materials and providing guidance to students expressing an interest in the Plant Pathology Graduate Program. To apply for admission, the following must be submitted in the online application:

1. Application for admission with \$50 non-refundable fee paid by credit/debit card or electronic check
 - a. M.S. <https://go.unl.edu/plantpath-ms>
 - b. Ph.D. <https://go.unl.edu/plantpath-phd>
2. One set of transcripts (original transcripts of all prior undergraduate and graduate coursework and degree confirmations)
3. CV/Resume
4. Letter of intent: Applicants should write a letter of intent that describes professional goals and reasons for applying to the Department of Plant Pathology, including a description of research interests and/or area of focus.
5. If interested in research, applicants should identify up to two faculty members with whom they would be interested in working with
6. Three letters of recommendation
7. If international: Upload copies of all college- or university-level transcripts or mark sheets (records of courses and marks earned), with certificates, diplomas, and degrees plus certified English translations. ** Official documents are required from all students who are admitted and enroll. Photocopies of certified records are not acceptable. International students enrolled in other U.S. institutions may have certified copies of all foreign records sent directly to the Office of Graduate Studies by their current school's registrar office.*
8. If the applicant is not a U.S. citizen and expects an F or J visa: [financial information](#).

Application Deadlines

All required materials for the application (including letters of recommendation) must be received no later than December 15 for Fall semester admission and no later than August 31st for Spring semester admission, unless stated otherwise in published advertisements. To be considered for a departmental GRA, it is recommended that students apply for the Fall semester admission. Applications for Spring admission are considered only at the request of a faculty member on behalf of an applicant and will be given consideration for GRA support, as available. Some students arrange with their advisors to begin research prior to formal matriculation (for example in May or June for field studies over the summer).

5.1 Admission Requirements

Minimum Test Scores and GPA

A GPA of 3.0 or above is generally required, although strong letters of recommendation or a trend toward academic improvement later in the undergraduate or graduate program may warrant provisional admittance (see below). The GRE is not required.

Prerequisite Coursework

Students entering the Plant Pathology Graduate Program are more likely to be successful if they already have a fundamental knowledge of math and science. In addition to admission requirements, the following courses are required for full admission into the M.S. (Option I and II) and Ph.D. programs:

- One semester calculus and/or statistics
- Two semesters basic chemistry
- One semester advanced chemistry (e.g., analytical, bio-, inorganic, or organic chemistry)
- One semester physics
- Two semesters biological science
- One semester advanced biological science (e.g., botany, cell biology, ecology, evolution, plant physiology, systematics)
- One semester genetics

These requirements can be met by any of the following:

- Completing the above courses with a minimum C grade or equivalent
- Completing equivalent courses
- Providing the syllabus from a prior course that included the required subject matter
- Provisional admission may be granted for students not meeting the above requirements, however the student will be required to make up any deficiencies by passing the relevant undergraduate course approved by the PPGC (see below)

These prerequisites may be satisfied at either the undergraduate or graduate level. Otherwise qualified applicants with prerequisite course deficiencies will receive: (1) provisional admission or (2) a waiver of prerequisite course requirements based upon recommendation of the advisor, as explained below.

English Proficiency Requirements

A fundamental knowledge of the English language is required for admission into the Plant Pathology Graduate Program. International students and/or applicants from non-English speaking countries must show evidence of adequate proficiency in the English language. Therefore, the following minimum scores are required for admission of international students whose native language is not English: 79 on Internet iBT TOEFL; 550 on Paper PBT TOEFL; 6.5 on IELTS. Exemptions for the English proficiency requirement are granted for non-native speakers who have received a bachelor's or more advanced degree either from an accredited U.S. institution or from an institution outside the U.S. at which English is the official language of instruction.

Provisional Admission

Prerequisite course deficiencies will be listed in the student's admission letter. Students admitted provisionally are expected to remove any deficiencies by the end of their first year. Students admitted on this basis will submit a written plan to the Chair of the PPGC within 30 days of enrollment, detailing how the deficiencies will be met. A grade of ≥ 2.0 (C) or "pass" is required to remove a deficiency. In certain circumstances, a student may be allowed to take a test to remove a deficiency. Students who fail to fulfill deficiencies by the end of their first year will be prohibited from course registration.

Waiver of Prerequisite Course Requirements

On a case-by-case basis, prospective advisors can request a waiver of prerequisite course requirements according to program needs, which will be stated in the student's admission letter. Advisors of students that have been given a provisional admission may submit a letter to the Chair of the PPGC requesting waiver of these requirements. If approved by the PPGC, the student will be granted full admission status.

M.S. Bypass Option

Admission to the Ph.D. program requires an M.S. degree involving research or approval to advance to the Ph.D. program after completion of at least one year in the M.S. (Option I) program. Advancement to the Ph.D. program without an M.S. degree will require PPGC approval, as per policy the below.

Students admitted to the M.S. program will follow the procedure below to request approval to bypass completion of the M.S. degree. Students desiring to advance to the Ph.D. program without having previously obtained an M.S. degree must demonstrate a high level of academic achievement, have excellent written and oral communication skills, and provide evidence of scholarly creativity. The procedure for changing from the M.S. to the Ph.D. program is described in detail below (see "M.S. to Ph.D.")

5.2 Application Review and Decisions

Credentials of applicants are evaluated without consideration of gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.

Campus or Online Interview:

An interview with the PPGC is required for full admission. Interviews may be conducted through online video conference (Skype or Zoom) or by an on-campus interview. The PPGC will coordinate the initial evaluation of applicants, send invitations to interview, and make the final ranking of applicants. For students applying for the M.S. Option II program, interviews need only be online.

Admission Decisions

Acceptance for admission to the program is determined by the PPGC and the Dean of Graduate Education. After the interview is complete, the PPGC will make the final recommendation to Graduate Studies regarding admission and recommendation to the department head regarding financial support. Although the PPGC makes the recommendation on all degree applications, the final admission decision is the responsibility of the Dean of Graduate Education. Notification of acceptance by a department PPGC or faculty member is advisory only. Admission is granted solely by Graduate Studies and is confirmed by the issuance of a Certificate of Admission. The department head is responsible for notifying applicants concerning awards of financial assistance. Negative admission decisions are not appealable.

6. Support from the Department

6.1 Our Commitments

We value diversity in all its forms and are committed to providing a positive and welcoming environment for all staff, colleagues, students, volunteers, and visitors regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, socioeconomic status, political perspective, career status, culture, or ethnicity. We commit to being a nexus of cooperation, inclusivity, and unity to nurture personal and professional growth. Our broad disciplinary umbrella provides valuable opportunities to reach across all demographics with the timely and vital messages of environmental and social stewardship.

6.2 Financial Support

Nearly all of our graduate students receive a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA). These GRAs are awarded on a competitive basis. Funding supporting the GRA may come from the Department of Plant Pathology or grants to the Faculty Advisor's research program. Other sources of funding include fellowships from federal and international sources. In addition, regular full-time (1.0 FTE) UNL

employees may be eligible for the UNL tuition remission scholarship for up to 15 credits per year. Department and college-level awards and fellowships are an additional source of funding that are available on a competitive basis for currently-enrolled students.

6.3 Physical Facilities

The Department of Plant Pathology is primarily housed on the 4th floor of Plant Sciences Hall (main office 406 Plant Sciences Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583), located on the East Campus of UNL. Faculty in the Department of Plant Pathology who guide graduate students are concentrated in Lincoln, but some with research and extension appointments (Robert Harveson) are located in Scottsbluff (Panhandle Research and Extension Center), with laboratories equipped for microbiological and molecular research equal to those on the UNL main campus. Some Lincoln-based faculty members are in the Beadle Center (Lirong Zeng) and in Morrison Hall (James Van Etten and Hernan Garcia-Ruiz). All of the sites are well-equipped for plant pathology research. Field work by graduate students is conducted both at Research and Extension Centers and in grower fields, depending upon the nature of the work. Most graduate students focus their field research activities at one or more of the Research and Extension Center farms. Considerable research is conducted in the Plant Pathology Greenhouse Complex, which consists of four ranges, fifteen rooms, and 11,232 square feet of greenhouse space. Space is provided in the Greenhouse Complex as needed for instructional purposes.

6.4 Personnel and Accounting

The staff at the HAPPI Business Center can assist with GRA, payroll, travel authorization, supply order etc. For more information, visit the [HAPPI Business Center](#) website.

7. Course Requirements

A distinctive element of the Plant Pathology Graduate Program is a compulsory curriculum comprising a set of graduate-level courses in the Department of Plant Pathology (**Table 1**). Successful completion of the curriculum is required for Plant Pathology graduate students to achieve the program's learning objectives (described above).

Table 1. Plant Pathology Graduate Curriculum (Course Requirements)*

M.S. Students (Option I and II)	Ph.D. Students
<p>Coursework (12-13 cr): PLPT 801 Biology of Pathogens, 3 cr PLPT 802 Ecology & Management of Plant Pathogens, 3 cr PLPT 891 Plant Disease Across Nebraska, 1 cr PLPT 968 Plant Pathology Seminar, 2** cr <u>One course from the following***:</u> PLPT 866 Plant Pathogenic Nematodes, 3 cr PLPT 867 Plant Associated Microbes, 4 cr PLPT 963 Genetics of Host-Parasite Interaction, 3 cr PLPT 965 Plant Virology, 3 cr</p>	<p>Coursework (16-17 cr): PLPT 801 Biology of Pathogens, 3 cr PLPT 802 Ecology & Management of Plant Pathogens, 3 cr PLPT 891 Plant Disease Across Nebraska, 1 cr PLPT 968 Plant Pathology Seminar, 3** cr <u>Two courses from the following***:</u> PLPT 866 Plant Pathogenic Nematodes, 3 cr PLPT 867 Plant Associated Microbes, 4 cr PLPT 963 Genetics of Host-Parasite Interaction, 3 cr PLPT 965 Plant Virology, 3 cr</p>
<p>Minor: M.S. Option II students are required to complete a 9 credit hour minor (but are not required to obtain a Specialization). No minor is required for the M.S. Option I student.</p>	<p>Minor: No minor is required for the Ph.D.</p>
<p>Remaining credit hours to meet total: Other courses as designated on Memorandum of Courses and/or PLPT 899 Masters Thesis, up to 10 cr per semester and maximum of 99 cr total****</p>	<p>Remaining credit hours to meet total: Other courses as designated on Program of Studies and/or PLPT 999 Doctoral Dissertation, up to 24 cr per semester and maximum of 99 cr total****</p>
<p>Course credit hours in PLPT: 12* Total credits required for Masters Option I: 30 Total credits required for Masters Option II: 36</p>	<p>Course credit in PLPT: 16-17* Total credits required for Doctorate: 90</p>

*In addition to completion of these required courses, M.S. (Option I and II) and Ph.D. students must also meet other credit hour requirements as specified by UNL Graduate Studies

**PLPT 968 is a 1 credit hour course that must be taken multiple times to satisfy the total number of credits specified above

***For students transferring to the Plant Pathology Graduate Program from the SBS Specialization can subtract one course from this section and the overall PLPT credit requirement

****For students transferring to the Plant Pathology Graduate Program from the Specialization, AGRO 899 and 999 will be counted as equivalents towards the degree

7.1 Registration and Advising

Students should seek the advice of their Faculty Advisor and the Chair of the PPGC concerning registration for all coursework. If additional assistance is needed, support is also available from the Masters and Doctoral Programs Coordinators in Graduate Studies. Students should try to register before the beginning of each semester in order to avoid fees associated with late registration. Some courses require a permission code, which can be obtained from the Administrative Associate in the Department of Plant Pathology.

7.2 Transfer Credit

Master's students may transfer up to one half of the program (normally 15 to 18 hours), provided the courses are being transferred from an accredited institution, are graduate level with satisfactory grades, and have not been used for any other degree. Professional courses may not be transferred toward a graduate degree. All transfer credits must be approved by the academic department, typically the PPGC.

Doctoral students may use graduate credit hours received from an institution other than UNL to fulfill up to half of the total credit hours on the program of studies required by the Supervisory Committee to meet the degree requirements. The minimum number of credits required to obtain a doctorate at UNL is 90. These courses are reviewed by the Supervisory Committee at the time of the approval of the Program of Studies. All credits must be from graduate level, non-professional courses.

7.3 Departmental Seminar

All students in the Plant Pathology Graduate Program are required to participate in departmental seminars. In the case of schedule conflicts, a student may register for an alternative seminar with the approval of their Supervisory Committee.

7.4 Research Requirements

The subject of the thesis/dissertation should be chosen from the student's area of interest that includes aspects of research with implications in plant pathology, and with input provided by the student's Faculty Advisor and Supervisory Committee.

The research project enables the student to pursue their thesis/dissertation objectives and to satisfy the research objectives of their Faculty Advisor. The thesis/dissertation should reveal the student's capacity to carry out independent study or research and should demonstrate the student's ability to use the techniques employed in their field of investigation and to communicate research results. The expected end result is a thesis or dissertation for the student, completion of grant objectives for the

professor, and manuscripts published in scientific journals jointly authored by the student and Faculty Advisor.

7.5 Residency Requirements

Departmental guidelines are the same as those stipulated by the UNL Graduate Studies.

8. Requirements

8.1 M.S. Requirements (Options I and II)

M.S. Supervisory Committee:

This committee must be formed by the student before the end of the first academic year, and must meet at least annually to discuss and evaluate the student's progress. This deadline to form the Supervisory Committee is set by the Department of Plant Pathology. It is the student's responsibility to call meetings with their Supervisory Committee. The M.S. Supervisory Committee must have three members and at least one member must be a faculty member in the Department of Plant Pathology with graduate faculty status (see Table 1). M.S. students can obtain the M.S. Supervisory Committee form from the Department of Plant Pathology Graduate Coordinator.

Composition of the M.S. Supervisory Committee:

1. Faculty Advisor who serves as the Chair of the Supervisory Committee
2. Two other faculty members (at the rank of assistant professor or above)
 - a. Two members of the M.S. Supervisory Committee must be from the Department of Plant Pathology, but it is recommended that one member of the committee be from outside the department or from one of the other departmental disciplines. For example, if you are in the Department of Plant Pathology, another committee member may be from the Department of Entomology.
 - b. If the student is pursuing a minor, one faculty member on the committee must be a member of the minor degree home department.
 - c. All professors on the Supervisory Committee must have Graduate Faculty status, full or associate (see Table 1).

M.S. Memorandum of Courses:

Students must submit their Memorandum of Courses (MOC) form by the end of their first academic year. The MOC is a list of all courses that must be completed before the degree is granted. Typically, students discuss their MOC with their Supervisory Committee at their first committee meeting. It is the student's responsibility to submit this form to Graduate Studies and provide a copy to the Department of Plant Pathology Graduate Coordinator.

M.S. Comprehensive Exam:

M.S. students must complete the written Comprehensive Exam, administered by the Plant Pathology Curriculum Committee, before the beginning of their second year. This exam is to assess the breadth of content knowledge and should be taken only after completion of PLPT 801 and 802. This exam is intended to assess the student's mastery of the fundamentals in their field and evaluate their potential to conduct Masters level research. The Curriculum Committee will determine whether or not the student passed the exam. The Faculty Advisor will notify the PPGC in writing of the outcome. If a student fails the Comprehensive Exam, a second chance will be offered within six months. A second failure will be grounds for dismissal from the M.S. program.

M.S. Option II Project:

M.S. students pursuing the Option II must complete an Option II project in place of the thesis. Although the word "project" is used here, the creative product developed by the student is not limited to a traditional research project. Students may write an essay or review paper, conduct a research project that is not as in-depth as a thesis, or choose to develop lesson plans, Extension materials, online resources, or other creative works. Ultimately, the final work presented should represent the student's best professional work. The format and nature of the creative work pursued should be developed with guidance and approval of the student's Supervisory Committee.

Final Oral Exam

The final oral exam includes both the public exit seminar and the closed-door defense. The thesis/paper and abstract in preliminary form must be approved by the Faculty Advisor prior to applying for the final oral examination. The student will present a public talk describing their thesis/paper. A closed-door oral examination by the Supervisory Committee will follow. The student passes the oral defense if no more than one member of the Supervisory Committee votes to fail the student. The Chair of the Supervisory Committee will notify the PPGC in writing of the outcome. In the rare occasion of a student's failure to pass the Final Oral Exam, a written description of what the student must do before taking a second oral exam must be filed with the PPGC. Only one additional opportunity will be given to pass the Final Oral Exam and will be available no earlier than the next semester/term. All actions must comply with UNL Graduate Studies guidelines.

8.2 Checklist for M.S. Students

- Establish the M.S. Supervisory Committee before completion of the first year. This form can be obtained from and remitted to the Graduate Coordinator.
- The Memorandum of Courses for the Master's Degree form must be received by Graduate Studies before completion of one-half of the program of study, which is typically prior to the beginning of the third semester. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.
- Each Spring, complete the Graduate Student Annual Progress Report (described in detail below in *Progress and Performance Evaluations*) and meet with your Supervisory Committee. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.

- ❑ Complete the Comprehensive Examination in the final year of the program and no later than the final semester in the program.
- ❑ Students must file an “Application for Graduation” early in the semester in which they intend to graduate. Application for Graduation may be submitted electronically via MyRED or by contacting the Office of the University Registrar, 107 Canfield Administration Building South. A diploma will not be ordered nor will degree conferral be noted on the transcript unless this form is filed.
- ❑ A "Final Examination Report" form must be submitted to the Graduate Studies at least four weeks prior to the final examination. Receipt of this form generates the final examination check. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.
- ❑ For Option I students, copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Chair of the PPGC and a copy emailed to the Master’s Degree Coordinator in Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the scheduled final examination.
- ❑ For Option II students, the Option II paper must be submitted to the advisor at least two weeks prior to the intended graduation date.

8.3 Ph.D. Requirements

Ph.D. Supervisory Committee:

This committee must be formed by the student by the end of the first academic year, and must meet at least annually to discuss and evaluate the student’s progress. It is the student’s responsibility to call meetings with their Supervisory Committee. Guidelines for the committee are provided above.

Composition of the Ph.D. Supervisory Committee

1. Faculty Advisor who serves as the Chair of the Supervisory Committee
2. The Supervisory Committee must consist of at least four resident Graduate Faculty members (full or associate); three faculty members at the rank of assistant professor or above (see Table 1).
 - a. At least one member of the Ph.D. committee must be from an academic unit other than the student’s major field.
 - b. If the student is pursuing a minor, one member of the committee must be from the minor department.
 - c. Ph.D. students are encouraged, when appropriate, to seek a fifth member in the field of specialization from outside the university to serve on their dissertation committee, called a Special Member. Students will need to have this person fill out a form to be added as a Special Member to the committee.

Ph.D. Program of Studies

Students must submit their Program of Studies form by the end of their first academic year. The Program of Studies lists all courses that must be completed before the degree is granted, as well as any Research Tool (e.g. computer language or statistical expertise) required by the Supervisory

Committee. Typically, students discuss their Program of Studies at the first meeting of their Supervisory Committee.

Ph.D. Qualifying Exam

Ph.D. students must complete the Qualifying Exam, administered by the Plant Pathology Curriculum Committee, no later than the end of their third semester. This evaluation is intended to assess the student's mastery of the fundamentals in their field and to evaluate their potential to conduct doctoral level research. This exam should be taken only after completion of PLPT 801 and 802, or equivalents. The Curriculum Committee composes the qualifying exam for each graduate student and administers the exam. It is recommended that the student notify the Curriculum Committee of their intent to take the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam before the semester in which they plan to take the exam. The Curriculum Committee will determine if the student's performance is Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory, and the Chair of the Curriculum Committee will notify the Faculty Advisor in writing of the outcome. If a student fails the exam, the student will be given an opportunity to take the exam a second time within six months following the first decision. A second failed exam will be grounds for dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam

Ph.D. students must take their Comprehensive Exam by the end of their sixth semester (end of their third year), and they are encouraged to take this exam by the beginning of their third year; the student should take the Comprehensive Exam one year before they plan to graduate and no later than the semester in which they plan to graduate. The exam is administered by the student's Supervisory Committee and examines the student's breadth of knowledge and understanding as it pertains to their general research area. The exam consists of a written and oral portion. The type and format of the examination will be determined by the student's Faculty Advisor and Supervisory Committee, following the guidelines for each portion below. Immediately following the oral portion of the exam, each member of the Supervisory Committee will vote to pass or fail the student. A majority vote is required for the student to pass. The Faculty Advisor will notify the PPGC in writing of the outcome. If the student fails the examination, a second chance may not be given within the same semester as the original attempt. A second failure will be grounds for dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

Written Portion: The student will write a proposal using a NIFA or NSF grant proposal format. The student will propose a research topic that must be pre-approved by their Supervisory Committee. The written proposal will be provided to the Supervisory Committee no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled oral component of the exam.

Oral Portion: The oral exam will cover focal areas identified in advance by the members of the Supervisory Committee and more specific questions relating to the written portion of the exam. Upon request, each member of the Supervisory Committee will provide focal areas of questioning and/or reading materials for the oral exam no later than four weeks prior to the exam.

Admission to Candidacy

Once the student completes their Research Tool (if any) and passes their Comprehensive Exam, they are eligible to advance to candidacy by completing the Candidacy Form; this form is typically filled out at successful completion of the oral portion of the Comprehensive Exam. Students should be aware that once they have become a Doctoral Candidate, and thus reach ABD (“all but doctorate”) status, they are eligible to reduce their minimum credit hour enrollment for full-time status. For Doctoral Candidates, the minimum credit hour enrollment to maintain full-time status is 1 credit hour in the Fall semester and 1 credit hour in the Spring semester, which reduces the cost of fees associated with enrollment. Prior to each semester, the student is required to submit an online “Request for Full-time Status” in order to obtain full-time status at a reduced registration rate for the semester. If the form is not filed out, the student is not considered to be at full-time credit load with just 1 credit hour.

Ph.D. Final Oral Examination

The student presents a public talk describing their dissertation research, also sometimes called the “exit seminar”. A closed door examination by the Supervisory Committee follows. The student passes the Final Oral Exam if all but one member of the Supervisory Committee votes to pass the student. The Faculty Advisor will notify the PPGC in writing of the outcome. If the student fails the examination, a written description of what the student must do before taking a second oral exam must be filed with the PPGC (see Graduate Studies website for more details).

Final Oral Exam

The final oral exam includes both the public exit seminar and the closed-door defense. The thesis/dissertation and abstract in preliminary form must be approved by the advisor prior to applying for the final oral examination. The student will present a public talk describing their thesis/dissertation research. A closed-door oral examination by the Supervisory Committee will follow, yet need not be completed on the same day as the exit seminar. The student passes the oral defense if all but one member of the Supervisory Committee votes to pass the student. The Chair of the Supervisory Committee will notify the PPGC in writing of the outcome. On the rare occasion of a student’s failure to pass the Final Oral Exam, a written description of what the student must do before taking a second oral exam must be filed with the PPGC. Only one additional opportunity will be given to pass the Final Oral Exam and will be available no earlier than the next semester/term. All actions must comply with UNL Graduate Studies guidelines.

8.4 Checklist for Ph.D. Students

- ❑ The "Appointment of the Supervisory Committee" form must be filed with Graduate Studies at least three weeks prior to the initial committee meeting, and must be completed within the first year. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.
- ❑ A "Program of Studies for the Doctoral Degree" form must be submitted to Graduate Studies before the student has completed 45 credit hours (including M.S. or transfer credits) and in the

same semester as the Appointment of the Supervisory Committee. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.

- ❑ Each Spring, complete the Graduate Student Annual Progress Report form and meet with your Supervisory Committee. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.
- ❑ The written Qualifying Exam must be taken in the semester following completing PLPT 801/802 or equivalents.
- ❑ The written Comprehensive Exam must be taken prior to completion of 25 credit hours (including research credits) beyond the M.S. degree (35 credits if the student has a M.S. in a field other than Plant Pathology).
- ❑ The Comprehensive Examination includes a written and oral defense, which must be accomplished within eight months of the initial written examination.
- ❑ The "Application for Admission to Candidacy" must be filed after the student has successfully completed both phases of the Comprehensive Examination. This report must be filed with Graduate Studies at least seven months prior to the final examination. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.
- ❑ Students must file an "Application for Graduation" early in the semester in which they intend to graduate. This form may be submitted electronically via MyRED or by contacting the Office of the University Registrar, 107 Canfield Administration Building South. A diploma will not be ordered nor will degree conferral be noted on the transcript unless this form is filed. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.
- ❑ Copies of the dissertation must be presented to the Reading Committee for review and comments at least two weeks prior to submission of the "Application for Final Oral Exam" to Graduate Studies and to the Supervisory Committee.
- ❑ An "Application for Final Oral Examination" along with a copy of the dissertation and abstract approved by the Reading Committee. This form must be submitted to Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the date of the final oral examination. A copy of this form must also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.
- ❑ After approval by the Reading Committee, a copy of the dissertation should be distributed to the Supervisory Committee at least three weeks before the scheduled date of the final examination.

8.5 Thesis/Dissertation Requirements

The student's Supervisory Committee will determine if they wish the student to present them with bound or digital copies of the thesis/dissertation. Graduate Studies requires all graduating Option I masters to upload their thesis to UNL Digital Commons to complete their graduation requirements. All doctoral students are required to upload an electronic copy of their dissertation to ProQuest and, if making public, also to UNL Digital Commons in order to complete their graduation requirements. Refer to the graduate program milestones on the Graduate Studies website for the most up-to-date information.

8.6 Change in Degree

Students wishing to change their degree program within Plant Pathology must complete a Change of Degree form. The general procedure in making such changes is to first get approval of the Faculty Advisor, the Supervisory Committee, and then the Chair of the PPGC.

Ph.D. to M.S.

Students wishing to change from the Ph.D. to the M.S. program are required to obtain approval of their Ph.D. Supervisory Committee and the PPGC. Note that Graduate Studies guidelines are that a student cannot defend their M.S. thesis in the same semester in which they switched from the Ph.D. to the M.S. program.

M.S. to Ph.D.

Masters students may request a change to the Ph.D. program no earlier than their third semester. A student may defend their M.S. thesis and obtain a M.S. degree en route to the Ph.D., or move directly into the Ph.D. program without completing an M.S. In order to request transfer from a M.S. to a Ph.D. program, the student must first have approval of their Faculty Advisor. Evidence supporting the student's ability to successfully pursue a Ph.D. degree is to be submitted to the PPGC for review and final approval. Materials submitted to the PPGC in support of the student's application or petition to bypass the M.S. degree should include:

1. A letter of intent from the student describing the proposed research (4 page limit);
2. Academic transcripts;
3. A letter of support from the Faculty Advisor;
4. Candidate's current CV;
5. Delivery of a proposal seminar advertised in the Department of Plant Pathology.

8.7 Time Limits to Obtain Degrees

Master's students have ten years from the first year of courses listed on the memorandum of courses to complete the degree. Courses exceeding the ten-year limit may not be used toward a master's degree. Doctoral students have eight years from the end of the semester in which their program of studies is approved by Graduate Studies. All coursework, including any required research/language tools, must be completed, comprehensive exams taken and the dissertation written, defended, and deposited within that time frame.

9. New Student Checklist and Policies

9.1 New Student Checklist

- Obtain N-card, parking pass, and/or bus pass;
- Obtain building access and keys (see below);
- Update email, address, phone, and other information with the main office;
- Locate departmental mailbox;
- Students on GRA should get on the payroll by going to Human Resources in the HAPPI Business Center;
 - U.S. Citizens need to bring their driver's license, social security card, and a voided check
 - International students need to bring their passport, I-94, social security card, and a voided check
- Make sure you have health insurance (see below);
- Take all required safety training (see below);
- Schedule a guidance interview with the Chair of the PPGC;
- Schedule a meeting with your Faculty Advisor to discuss expectations, including those outlined in this graduate handbook;
- To avoid late registration fees, register for classes before the beginning of the semester;
- Email the Graduate Coordinator or Administrative Associate a digital copy of your headshot (head and shoulders) photo for use on the website and hallway photo board.

International Students:

- Go to International Student and Scholar Office:
 - To receive information on obtaining a Social Security number for tax purposes;
 - Take the English Language Test (ELT);
 - Check in at Graduate Studies to enable registration.

9.2 Office Space and Building Access

Priority for office space is given to plant pathology graduate students. Students who have offices in Plant Sciences Hall will be given a desk space with a computer. Plant pathology students in other locations or those advised by plant pathology faculty that are not enrolled in the plant pathology graduate program will be given space as it is available. Students conducting research or having an office in Plant Sciences Hall will be issued key-card access to the building (you will need your NUID before the request) and issued keys to the office and/or lab. Request key access at the main office during your first week on campus.

9.3 Safety Training

The University requires each person to take online training in safety prior to commencing paid work and/or research in the laboratory, field, or greenhouse. At a minimum, everyone who receives a paycheck (employees) must complete the following EHS training online modules: Core-Injury and Illness Prevention Plan and Core-Emergency Preparedness. If working with chemicals you must take either Chemical Safety (4-unit training) or the Chemical Safety training targeted toward certain worker types. When certain hazards are associated with tasks performed in your research, other EHS related training is required. Additional training includes: autoclave training and biosafety and environmental safety. Most safety training will be through Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) web-based training (ehs.unl.edu/web-based-training), while some training will be arranged by the student's Faculty Advisor, safety managers in the department (Kyle Broderick and Tim Harris), the Safety and Facilities Committee, or the Office of the Director. Training completion will be documented using class attendance rosters and web forms that, at the end of web-based training, are to be printed, completed by the student, and provided to the student's Faculty Advisor. Consult with your Faculty Advisor about the safety training that is required for you to conduct research in their lab group.

9.4 Health Insurance

Any student registered for at least 6 credit hours each semester is eligible to purchase health insurance. Graduate assistantships also come with a reduced rate, basic individual student health insurance plan. The student and the University will share in the cost of the premium. Approximately 21% of the annual cost of the health insurance premium will be billed directly to the student's account. The student will be notified at a later date of the amount for which they will be responsible. All students must confirm acceptance or opt out of the University health insurance. If the student does not require the University health insurance, the student will need to complete a "Waiver of Insurance" form online each semester. If the "Waiver of Insurance" has not been submitted within 14 days of the start of the semester, the student's account will be charged for the basic student health insurance. The student also has the option of purchasing additional health insurance for family members from the same plan by contacting the business office at the University Health Center. International students are always required to have student health insurance coverage, unless proof of comparable insurance from an outside source is provided. For up-to-date information on health insurance coverage, options, and estimated costs, consult the UNL Financial Services website: <https://studentaccounts.unl.edu/student-health-insurance>.

9.5 Tuition Benefits and Registration Requirements

All graduate students receiving an assistantship qualify for tuition waiver. Students should consult the Graduate Studies Catalog for current guidelines on requirements for eligibility. Students holding assistantships may not exceed established registration limitations. During regular academic semesters, students holding full assistantships (0.49 FTE) must register for a minimum of 9 credits and a maximum of 10 credits, while students with 0.33 FTE assistantships may enroll for a maximum

of 12 credits. Doctoral students that have advanced to candidacy need only register for 1 credit hour per semester, so long as they have submitted a “Request for Full-time Status” form each semester (see *Admission to Candidacy* in this handbook for more information). Students who do not hold an assistantship may enroll for up to 15 credits per semester. All related semester fees are the responsibility of the student. For up-to-date information on the estimated cost of tuition and fees, consult the UNL Financial Services website here: <https://studentaccounts.unl.edu/graduate-tuition>.

Summer Registration:

Students do not have to be registered during the summer. If a graduate student has a qualifying assistantship that includes a summer tuition benefit, the student may choose to register in the summer terms (for a total of 4 credit hours; 2 credit hours in 8-week session and 2 credit hours in the second 5-week session) but is not required to do so. If you do not enroll, you will have limited access to university facilities, such as campus recreation, health center, etc. International students should visit with the International Student Scholar Office to determine the status of their VISA. For more information, see the Guidelines for Graduate Assistants on the Graduate Studies website.

9.6 Work Hours, Vacation, and Leave

The actual amount of time spent on research can vary considerably from week-to-week, depending on the timing of important deadlines and requirements of the laboratory or field experiments. For example, research projects with living organisms may require prescribed timelines for experiments or maintenance. Students are not required to work when University offices are closed (University identified holidays and inclement weather closures); however, it is often necessary to work on research or other projects when the University is closed or beyond normal work hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.). The student should seek guidance from their Faculty Advisor to request time off (vacation, sick leave, etc.) and all time off should be approved by the Faculty Advisor.

Guidelines for GRAs

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) are part-time salaried positions that expect 19.6 hours of work per week (.49 FTE) during the academic year and 40 hours per week during academic breaks and summer sessions when the University is open and classes are not in session. Additional time directed towards research is expected when you are enrolled in credit hours of research and/or thesis/dissertation writing. Because a GRA is a salaried position, these work hours are the expectation and not recorded on a timesheet. Duties assigned to fulfill the time requirements of the GRA need not be in support of your thesis/dissertation project and may be assigned at the discretion of your advisor and/or department, based upon the source of funding for the GRA. You are expected to manage your time effectively and maintain communication with your Faculty Advisor about their expectations for your work and progress.

Guidelines for Students on Research Fellowships / Scholarships

Students not on an assistantship, partial assistantship, or employed by UNL and pursuing a M.S. Option I or Ph.D. should work with their Faculty Advisor to determine class loads and research schedule on a case-by-case basis to ensure timely progression through the program.

Family Considerations

Pregnant and parenting students may have difficulty balancing academic or research duties with family responsibilities. The University [encourages faculty members and supervisors to be flexible and accommodating for these students](#), so it's important that you let your mentors and colleagues know that family responsibilities may keep you from attending class or working in the lab during certain times. It may also be beneficial to ask professors for a schedule of assignments, so that you can work ahead or otherwise integrate them into your schedule. Time management skills are essential for all students, including parenting students. The Graduate Studies website [provides tips on how to more effectively manage your time](#).

Disability Resources

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (including chronic or temporary mental or physical health conditions), it is recommended that you communicate this with your Faculty Advisor and discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, it may be recommended to register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD can be contacted at 117 Louise Pound Hall or 402-472-3787.

If you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers regarding responsibilities related to your assistantship, it is recommended that you contact Jill Flagel, University Coordinator of Faculty/Staff Disability Services, at 402-472-2322 or jill.flagel@unl.edu. Please follow-up with the Graduate Chair to discuss reasonable accommodations for employment-related responsibilities.

Emergency Funds

Students who are experiencing financial hardship due to an event outside of their control may be eligible to receive financial support to help with the expenses. Examples may include: an emergency flight home for a close family member's illness or death, or hospital bills due to an accident, or an emergency medical issue. Funding is provided by the Dermot Coyne Foundation Fund. Dr. Coyne was a faculty member for over 40 years whose research and teaching was in the field of genetics and plant breeding. Dr. Coyne advised over 50 graduate students in his career and experienced times when special funding, such as this fund, would have been a valuable resource for helping his students. Decisions to grant funding are made on a case-by-case basis by a committee that must adhere to the guidelines specified for use of the funds when the Dermot Coyne Foundation Fund was established. If you are a current graduate student in the Department of Plant Pathology and experiencing a situation you think may qualify for this support, please send your inquiry to Dr. Sydney Everhart, Committee Member of the Dermot Coyne Foundation Fund.

9.7 Travel and Awards

Funding for Research/Travel

It is unlikely that funding from any single source alone will be sufficient to cover all expenses related to research or attending meetings and conferences. It is advised that any funding you receive for research supplies or travel should be disclosed to your Faculty Advisor so that there can be efficient use of all sources of funding to support your research and professional development. This type of open communication allows the student and advisor to find the best possible use of funding.

Travel Procedures

Prior to traveling for University-related activities, students must submit a pre-trip travel authorization request via Concur Travel in advance of the trip. The travel authorization requires approval of the student's Faculty Advisor, staff in accounting, and the department head. The Concur Travel website can also be used to book your flight so it can be directly billed to the approved account at the University. However, such actions cannot be taken until the travel authorization is approved. Your pre-trip travel authorization request must be approved before you will be able to request reimbursement for expenses incurred during the trip. Students should consult with their Faculty Advisor if funding is requested from the advisor's grants or accounts. If you do not anticipate having expenses to be reimbursed, you are to submit a zero dollar trip request. When traveling is of a personal nature, a travel authorization is not required. For additional information, including up-to-date IRS Standard Meal Allowance per diem rates and the Mileage Reimbursement Rate, refer to <http://travel.unl.edu>. The following individuals may be contacted for further assistance:

- Amber Hadenfeldt, Administrative Associate, Department of Plant Pathology, ahadenfeldt@unl.edu
- Financial Associate TBD, HAPPI Business Center, HappiBusCtr@unl.edu

Awards for Graduate Students

Plant Pathology graduate students are eligible for numerous competitive scholarships, fellowships, and grants. Some are offered through the Department, College, or University, whereas others are from professional societies or other organizations. The Plant Pathology Graduate Coordinator keeps track of these competitions and announces the availability of these fellowships via emails, newsletters, and the department website. However, it is up to you to make sure you are eligible and that you submit the required materials by the specified time. Below is a list of some of the Scholarships and Fellowships for which Plant Pathology graduate students are eligible.

UNL Department of Plant Pathology

- The Goss Memorial Scholarship is awarded to principally graduate students on a graduate assistantship in the Department of Plant Pathology on a competitive basis in recognition of demonstrated scholarship and scholastic and creative promise. The primary intent of this scholarship is to help defray expenses for students who are presenting research at regional,

national/international meetings, attending and participating in relevant workshops, or any other appropriate scholarly activity beyond the normal execution of their research. Applications due around mid-May.

- The Plant Pathology Graduate Student Association (PPGSA) Professional Development Award recognizes graduate student involvement and engagement through their student organization. Eligible applicants include graduate students advised by a faculty member in the Department of Plant Pathology that have completed at least one semester of involvement in the PPGSA. The selected awardee is provided financial assistance that can be used to travel to scientific meetings or attend workshops and training events. Applications are typically due in April, and awards are announced in June.

Awards within UNL

- The Widaman Trust Graduate Fellowship is awarded to students conducting research in agriculture and medicine. Nominations are generally due late June.
- Larrick Graduate Student Travel Grants support graduate student travel to professional and scientific meetings. The deadlines for submissions are May 15 and November 15.
- The Shear-Miles Fellowship is awarded annually to outstanding graduate students. Nominations are generally due late June.
- The Skala Fellowship provides stipends to M.S. and Ph.D. students engaged in research related to industrial uses of agricultural products.
- The Milton Mohr Program offers fellowships for graduate students enrolled in biotechnology-oriented programs. Applications are due around mid-March.
- The Milton E. Mohr (Agronomy) and Farmers National Fellowships enhance the educational experience of graduate students, including teaching and other competencies. Nominations are generally due late June.
- The Hardin Distinguished Graduate Fellowship supports research in plant physiology with an emphasis on genetic mechanisms influencing plant responses to stress. Nominations are generally due late June.
- The Wirth/McGowen Memorial Fellowship benefits and supports the education and research efforts of graduate students pursuing degree programs that will contribute to significant advancements in ensuring global food and nutrition security for a growing world population through innovative research within agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. Applications are due around mid-October.
- The Presidential Fellowship is awarded to advanced doctoral students. The fellowship is \$24,000. This award also includes tuition, fees, and the University's portion of the student health insurance for one academic year. Applications are due early February.
- The Fling Fellowship is awarded to advanced masters or doctoral students. Masters students must be within one year of graduation and doctoral students must be within two years of graduation. The fellowship is \$20,000. This award also includes tuition, fees, and the University's portion of the student health insurance for one academic year. Applications are due early February.
- The Dean's Fellowship will be awarded to advanced masters or doctoral students. The fellowship is \$5,000. Applications are due early February.

APS-North Central Division Award

- Travel Awards from the North Central Division of the American Phytopathological Society (APS). To support student travel to the annual North Central Division APS meeting. Applications are submitted to the department head along with an abstract and a letter of recommendation, usually due in May.
- Students presenting at the APS-North Central Division meeting can also elect to compete in the poster and oral competition held during the meeting. The student who receives the first place oral presentation award receives a travel award and an opportunity to speak at the APS national meeting in the following calendar year as part of a symposium that highlights student talks from the divisional meetings.

APS National Awards

- Named Travel Awards from the national American Phytopathological Society (APS). To support student travel to the annual national meeting of APS. Eligible students are APS members planning to give an oral or poster presentation at the next APS Annual Meeting who did not receive a travel award the previous year. Applications are submitted concurrently with abstract submissions for the meeting, usually mid-March.
- Raymond J. Tarleton Student Fellowship is awarded to one plant pathology graduate student in the U.S. annually. This is considered a top award within APS and provides support to plant pathology graduate students for expenses related to their research, equipment, education, and skill development. Applications are due December 1.
- I.E. Melhus Graduate Student Symposium provides travel support for graduate student research presentations around a central theme that changes annually. Applications due around the end of February.

International Society of Molecular Plant Microbe Interactions (IS-MPMI) National Awards

- IS-MPMI provides travel awards for eligible students, postdocs, and early career professionals to attend the IS-MPMI Congress. Award selection is based on the quality of the applicant's science reflected in the research abstract, impact statement and curriculum vitae. Applications are due around mid-March.

North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) Travel Awards

- For students involved in teaching, there are travel awards (approx. \$500) that students can apply for in order to attend and present at the annual meeting of NACTA. See www.nactateachers.org for the latest information about how to apply. Applications are typically due at the end of April to attend and present at the annual meeting typically in mid- to late-June.

Grants to Graduate Students

There are a small number of grants for students to apply for and below are the most popular for students within the plant pathology discipline. This is not a complete list and students are encouraged

to talk with others within our discipline and related disciplines to identify opportunities and investigate databases of funding opportunities, such as the UCLA Grapes Database online.

Sigma Xi Grants in Aid of Research Awards

- The Sigma Xi Grants in Aid of Research (GIAR) program has provided undergraduate and graduate students with valuable educational experiences since 1922. The program awards grants of up to \$1,000 to students from most areas of the sciences (average award is \$600). Students may use the funding to pay for research supplies specific to their project, research-related travel expenses to and from a research site, or for purchase of non-standard laboratory equipment necessary to complete a specific research project. Priority in funding will be given to members of Sigma Xi and are eligible to receive the award twice. U.S. citizenship is not required. Applications are due March 15 and October 1. Go to <https://www.sigmaxi.org> for more information.

NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program

- The National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) recognizes and supports outstanding students in NSF-supported science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines who intend to pursue research-based master's and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions. The fellowship provides a three-year annual stipend and an allowance for tuition and fees (paid to the institution). Applicants must be US citizens, nationals, or permanent residents by the application deadline. Students in their fourth-year of college or first year of graduate school, and recent college graduates are eligible to apply. Students must be beginning or continuing a research-based graduate degree in an NSF-approved field. More information and a list of approved fields of study are on the GRFP [web page](#). Deadlines vary from mid-October to early-November each year. Check the website for the deadline in your field.

USDA-NIFA Education and Workforce Development Program

- The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) - Education and Workforce Development (EWD) focuses on developing the next generation of research, education, and extension professionals in the food and agricultural sciences. The purpose of AFRI is to support research, education, and extension work by awarding grants to solve key problems of local, regional, national, and global importance in sustaining conventional, organic, and urban agricultural systems, including mitigating impacts of biotic and abiotic constraints on food production. Eligible applicants must hold U.S. citizenship and have advanced to doctoral candidacy. Grants are normally provided to the predoctoral scholar through their institution. The maximum award amount for FY2020 was \$180,000 for project periods of up to three years. There is a small institutional allowance for supplies and travel, in addition to support for the student stipend, fees, and tuition. The deadline for applications is announced each year, with the current cycle of applications due June 16, 2020. Consult with the USDA-AFRI NIFA EWD [website](#) for more information.

10. Professional Development and Your Career

10.1 Careers in Plant Pathology

The Department of Plant Pathology has a long and distinguished history of training highly talented and motivated professionals who, through innovations and discoveries, have had and will continue to have a significant positive impact on the future of the world. The expanding interest in the quality of our global environment and increasing global demand for high-quality food, fiber, trees, and ornamental plants provides many opportunities for plant pathologists. These professionals often are sought by government and nonprofit organizations and corporations to participate in teams of specialists addressing international agricultural development. Such employment may be on a continuing or a consulting basis. Our graduates can be employed in any of the following institutions, organizations, or companies in addition to several others:

- Agricultural consulting companies
- Agrochemical companies
- Biological control companies
- Biotechnology firms
- Botanical gardens and arboreta
- Colleges and universities (research, teaching, and extension)
- Diagnostic laboratories
- Environmental, agricultural, and patent law firms
- EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)
- International agricultural research centers
- Lawn and landscape maintenance firms
- Nurseries and garden centers
- Private practice
- Public policy organizations
- Seed and plant production companies
- State departments of agriculture
- Tissue culture laboratories
- USDA-Agricultural Research Service
- USDA-Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
- USDA-Forest Service

It will be important to communicate your employment interests with your Faculty Advisor soon after you have entered the program. For some of you, there may be uncertainty about what you want to do. The first half of your graduate program is a good time to explore the various career tracks by pursuing volunteer opportunities in teaching, assisting others in their research, writing grant proposals, conducting informational interviews with established scientists, investigating internship opportunities, and looking up current job descriptions to see what sparks your interest.

10.2 Professional Skill Development

All components of the student's program come together to build a strong and confident professional that can be a contributor to our world's future needs. Just like the disease triangle used in plant pathology, each component has several pieces that may or may not be critical for each student. Below a selection of opportunities that may be of interest to students developing their abilities in teaching, industry, extension, or public policy. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list and students are encouraged to consult with their Faculty Advisor to identify opportunities that are most relevant to their interests, abilities, knowledge, and skills.



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Teaching Opportunities

All on-campus graduate students in the Department of Plant Pathology are encouraged to incorporate meaningful teaching experiences in their programs. Examples include: teaching or assisting in lab or lecture; organizing seminars; giving presentations; and contributing to extension and other educational outreach efforts. The student's advisor should assist in contacting faculty with teaching appointments to arrange for appropriate teaching opportunities.

SCIL 101 Learning Assistant

Formal opportunities at UNL exist to gain experience in teaching. One such opportunity is to serve as Learning Assistants in SCIL 101: Science and Decision-making for a Complex World. The course focuses on big questions about socio-scientific issues related to food, fuel, land and water systems in Nebraska, and on helping students engage in science-informed decision-making, evaluate popular and scientific media, and engage in systems-thinking. If selected for the program, the graduate student would be required to meet with 30 students 15 times during the semester to lead discussions about food, fuel, land and water issues, assess student learning, give students key feedback on their final project, and meet weekly with instructors. This program provides significant leadership and professional development in teaching and communication, as well as the opportunity to experience active learning in large lectures, the opportunity to lead active learning discussions with smaller recitation groups, and opportunity to hone your scientific argumentation and critical thinking skills. In the 2019–2020 academic year, a stipend of \$1500 was offered for 10 hours a week (for graduate students, in addition to a regular assistantship). For more information, contact Dr. Jenny Dauer at jenny.dauer@unl.edu.

Publish Teaching Materials

Several organizations allow publication of case studies, instructional resources, and assessments of learning, for example, the APS Plant Health Instructor (apsnet.org/edcenter/resources/Pages/authorinfo.aspx) and the North American Colleges and

Teachers of Agriculture Journal (nactateachers.org). Both are outlets for publishing peer-reviewed articles.

UNL Teaching and Learning Symposia

These one-day workshops are offered typically in the middle of the Fall and Spring semesters. This symposium provides an opportunity to engage in conversations about teaching and learning, to hear from experts on emerging issues in improving student outcomes, and to network with others seeking to improve teaching at UNL. More information about the symposia can be found here:

executivevc.unl.edu/faculty/teaching-learning-symposium

| Internship Opportunities

NUtech Commercialization Analyst Internship Program

NUtech's Commercialization Analyst Internship Program is open to UNL students with backgrounds in life sciences, engineering, chemistry, physical sciences, or other STEM fields, and preferably pursuing an advanced degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.B.A.). Commercialization analysts have excellent communication and analytical skills, with the ability to quickly learn about new technologies. Over the course of the one-year program, NUtech Ventures provides training in intellectual property rights and protection methods, technology commercialization, industry knowledge, and market analysis. NUtech also provides professional development workshops taught by staff members. Topics include resume and cover letter writing, career exploration, and more.

Commercialization analysts assist technology managers in the [Technology Screening Evaluation process](#). They are involved in inventor interviews and perform intellectual property prior art searches and market analysis using advanced database resources. After conducting research, analysts work with the responsible technology manager to help recommend a potential IP protection and commercialization strategy. The final decision to move forward with a technology into the intellectual property protection and commercialization stage is made by the NUtech Ventures team. However, the research conducted by commercialization analysts provides critical data in the decision-making process. For more information about this program, contact Dr. Jeewan Jyot at jjyot@nutechventures.org.

Industry Internships

Internship opportunities in industry are often advertised via online job websites (linkedin.com, indeed.com, monster.com, ziprecruiter.com, etc.). However, it is essential that students form professional relationships with people in industry and reach out to those people when they are seeking an internship opportunity. It is recommended that students communicate their interest in an industry internship early on with their advisor; such arrangements often require investment from the advisor in terms of time and/or financial resources, and may not always be possible to facilitate.

APS Public Policy Early Career Internship

This is a competitive program and is open to all APS early career members (current graduate students or postdoctoral associates and junior professionals; U.S. citizenship not required). It provides an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in public policy at the national level that relates

generally to agricultural science and specifically to matters of interest to APS. By working with the APS Public Policy Board, the intern will learn how scientific societies, non-governmental organizations, executive branch agencies (e.g., USDA, NSF, EPA, etc.), and the legislative branch interact in crafting public policy. The internship also provides opportunities to build connections and collaborations with renowned scientists and administrators from academia, industry, and government. Applications are typically due May 15. For more information, check the APS website: www.apsnet.org.

Extension/Outreach Experience

There are regular opportunities for graduate students to gain experience in Extension / Outreach, both through presentations at local and regional events, such as the field days (typically scheduled May through September), crop production clinics (held in January), and *ad hoc* Extension meetings that are not regularly programmed. Another opportunity for Extension/outreach is in co-authoring Extension newsletter articles or Extension publications, such as NebGuides, case studies in the APS Plant Health Instructor, review articles in APS Plant Health Progress, and APS Feature Stories. The best strategy for identifying appropriate opportunities for Extension/outreach experience is to contact faculty with Extension appointments, including Dr. Tamra Jackson-Ziems, Dr. Stephen Wegulo, and Mr. Kyle Broderick.

Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic Experience

The Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic (PPDC) provides plant diagnostic support for Nebraska farmers and stakeholders, and to the county and area Extension faculty. The diagnostic clinic is operated by Extension and offers skilled and objective diagnostic services by professionals collaborating between the Departments of Plant Pathology, Entomology, Agronomy (Weed Science), and Horticulture. It is recommended that students interested in this experience first enroll in the plant disease diagnosis course by Dr. Gerard Adams. There are informal opportunities for students to work in the diagnostic clinic, which can be arranged on a case-by-case basis. Interested students would need to be able to commit at least 6 hours each week during the months of May to August, when the number of samples submitted to the clinic is high. Opportunities for students to work on greenhouse-based diagnostic projects may occasionally arise that would allow a student to conduct their internship during times from September through April, when samples submitted to the clinic are typically low. For information about how to get involved, contact Mr. Kyle Broderick, Coordinator of the Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic.

10.3 Professional Societies, Clubs, and Leadership Opportunities

Faculty, postdocs, and students in our department are members of several scientific and professional societies and clubs. These include but are not limited to: The American Phytopathological Society, APS North Central Division, Virology, Mycological Society of America, Tri-Societies, Society of Nematologists, North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture, Entomological Society of America, Missouri Mycological Society, and Toastmasters International East Campus (EC) Speakers.

American Phytopathological Society

APS Subject Matter and General Policy Committees

If you would like to get involved in APS at the national level, one of the best ways is to attend one of the Subject Matter and General Policy Committee meetings at the annual APS meeting. Joining a committee is an effective way to network with people that have interests relevant to your own and are at different institutions. At the meeting, there are usually opportunities for graduate students to get immediately involved in leadership, from working with others to co-organize an APS Special Session or workshop or volunteering to lead the group as vice-chair / chair of the committee.

General Policy Committees: Collections and Germplasm, Early Career Professionals, Extension, Graduate Student, Industry, Committee for Diversity and Equality, Regulatory Plant Pathology, and Teaching.

Subject Matter Committees: Bacteriology, Biological Control, Biotechnology, Chemical Control, Crop Loss Assessment and Risk Evaluation (CLARE), Diagnostics, Diseases of Ornamental Plants, Emerging Diseases and Pathogens, Epidemiology, Evolutionary Genetics and Genomics, Forest Pathology, Host Resistance, Integrated Plant Disease Management, Molecular and Cellular Phytopathology, Mycology, Mycotoxicology, Nematology, Pathogen Resistance, Phyllosphere Microbiology, Plant Pathogen and Disease Detection, Postharvest Pathology, Seed Pathology, Soil Microbiology and Root Diseases, Tropical Plant Pathology, Turfgrass Pathology, Vector-Pathogen Complexes, and Virology.

PPGSA: Plant Pathology Graduate Student Association

Graduate students are encouraged to be involved in the PPGSA. This student organization provides educational and social activities for the students interested in plant pathology.

Objectives and Purpose

Provides educational, leadership, and extension opportunities and training outside of the classroom.

- To serve as the representative body for graduate students in the Department of Plant Pathology
- To promote interaction and a closer relationship among graduate students
- To serve as a channel of communication between graduate students to faculty and staff
- To investigate problems and issues unique to graduate students and propose solutions to them as well as provide an outlet for implementing these solutions when possible

Positions and Roles within PPGSA

Officers of the Executive Committee include the following: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Graduate Student Association (GSA) Representative. Duties and responsibilities of specific officers are described within the PPGSA bylaws available by request from the current president.



Plant Pathology Graduate Student members in the 2019-2020 academic year. Shown from left-to-right are: Rosalba Rodriguez Pena, Natalie Holste, Sourav Pal, and Gabriela Martens.

1. President (Abigail Borgmeier) – schedule and preside over the meetings of the PPGSA and communicate club activities to the department
2. Vice President (Gabiella Martens) – Assume responsibility of the President in case of their absence; coordinate and direct the activities of all Special Committees of PPGSA
3. Treasurer (Michael Richter) – Maintain and report on financial records, transactions, expenses, and income for the PPGSA
4. Secretary (Katherine LaTourrette) – Record and file records, report minutes, maintain correspondence, and chair committees involving document revisions and amendments for the PPGSA
5. GSA Representative (Natalie Holste) – Attend a GSA meeting monthly, practice governing procedures involving graduate students at UNL and collaborate with the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska Senate, officers, and committees on issues affecting the entirety of the University's student body
6. Faculty Advisor to PPGSA (Dr. Richard Wilson) – Nominated by the department head, this person serves as an advisor to the graduate student organization

Student Representatives in the Department

Occasionally there are opportunities for graduate students to serve on special committees within the department, including search committees and *ad hoc* committees involving student-related topics. Opportunities for graduate student participation will be solicited from the department head with prior permission obtained from the student's Faculty Advisor.

Association of Students of the University of Nebraska

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN) is the student government at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). Its primary goal is to serve as the representative voice of UNL's student body. ASUN Student Government derives its authority from the Board of Regents. ASUN Student Government elected officials represent the student body in a variety of ways. The ASUN President, Internal Vice President, and External Vice President serve as liaisons to the Board of Regents, University administration, and a variety of other stakeholders in the University system. Forty

senators are elected to represent students from every college, and membership of the Senate is organized proportionally by college population. Elections occur every March. See <http://asun.unl.edu> for more information.

11. Code of Conduct

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Plant Pathology promotes discovery in the life sciences and the improvement of the human condition through innovative research, high-quality education, effective extension and public outreach, and mentorship. We work in a variety of settings and engage in multiple capacities on and off-campus. It is vital that all members of the department adhere to appropriate and acceptable conduct in all of their official capacities as representatives of Plant Pathology and UNL.

Our professional activities will empower the growth and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for all members of the department and of those with whom we work and interact. We promote a Code of Conduct to provide a respectful and rewarding experience where all members of the department flourish and all learners are respected and encouraged.

11.1 Expected Personal Behaviors

Appropriate, positive behavior towards others acknowledges and values who they are and what they are doing, and this reflects on one's own character, integrity, and values. All students and personnel working in the department, in any of its activities in any capacity, will:

- Treat everyone with respect and consideration, with sensitivity to personal and cultural concerns and differences.
- Maintain respectful dialogue at all times to promote constructive discourse.
- Evaluate the work of colleagues fairly and objectively.
- Recognize past and present contributors to science and accomplishments of others.
- Support the professional growth and success of others, especially when in a formal or informal mentoring role.

11.3 Prohibited Personal Behaviors

- Harassment and intimidation, including verbal, written, or physical conduct that demeans, denigrates, threatens, intimidates, belittles, or coerces another person.
- Discrimination or exclusion based on gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, political perspective, national origin, or culture.
- Physical, emotional, or verbal abuse of any person.
- Plagiarism, stealing, or assuming credit for the accomplishments of others.

11.4 Reporting

If you see or experience prohibited or disrespectful behavior or language (unacceptable personal conduct), or if you witness unacceptable scientific conduct, if you feel that you are in a position to do so, please speak directly to the offender. You should also notify as appropriate either your direct supervisor, lab director, advisor, mentor, or the department head.

If you feel uncomfortable with a situation or behaviors/language of others, and would prefer not to report to one of the people listed above, you should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (<https://www.unl.edu/equity/> or call 402-472-3417) as soon as possible after the situation occurs. You may submit your concerns to the Office of IEC using the online form - <https://www.unl.edu/equity/Fillable%20Intake%202015.pdf>. If the issue is more serious you may submit an anonymous report to the University of Nebraska Police at <https://www.unl.edu/tips-incident-reporting-system/>. For critical emergencies, call 911 or 402-472-2222 (2-2222 from a campus phone).

Violations of the expected behaviors described above will necessitate meeting with departmental and possibly IANR leadership to develop a corrective action plan that will be strictly enforced and time-bound. Egregious violations of policies, repeat offenses, or failure to conform to corrective action plans will lead to dismissal and exclusion from the department's premises.

11.5 Ownership of Research Data and Intellectual Property

Laboratory notebooks, research findings, and other research documents are the property of the University of Nebraska and the Faculty Advisor, and must be freely shared upon request from the Faculty Advisor. Labs are encouraged to develop shared online resources. Students must keep in mind that some research is proprietary and confidential; sharing with friends and other unauthorized personnel may be a violation of the agreement the mentor has with the funding entity. It is essential that the level of confidentiality be understood by all parties, since violation could result in the loss of funding.

12. Expectations for Faculty Advisors and Students

Graduate programs help to advance human knowledge, educate professionals, and resolve problems to address societal needs. Faculty Advisors and graduate students have a joint responsibility to accomplish these goals. Each graduate student should develop an understanding of and capacity for scholarship, independent judgment, academic rigor, and intellectual honesty. Faculty and students must work together to create an atmosphere that ensures freedom of inquiry, fosters mutual respect, and demonstrates professional integrity.

Faculty Advisors have the privilege of working with talented students and the student has the privilege of working with a global expert in the field. Good practice in graduate education centers on responsible interactions between the graduate student and their Faculty Advisor, supported by college and department staff. Faculty Advisors should strive to serve as a mentor to their graduate student and not just an advisor (see 12.4 UNL Faculty/Student Mentoring Guidebook below). The following guidelines are intended to be constructive and instructive to Faculty Advisors and graduate students; as such, they do not constitute statements of institutional policy or requirements. Each category below provides information for students and Faculty Advisors on their individual roles and responsibilities.

12.1 Faculty Advisor/Student Guidelines

Both Faculty Advisors and students should be aware of some general common-sense guidelines, as follows:

1. Entering a mentoring relationship is voluntary. Mentors and students should discuss their expectations of the mentoring relationship upon entering it.
2. Either party has the right to withdraw from the mentoring “contract” if, despite genuine attempts to make it work, the relationship is not satisfactory. The department head must be included in this discussion. Portability of assistantships should be discussed.
3. While often the mentor will have more experience on aspects of work, the relationship should be one of partners who jointly make decisions, with consideration of the budget and time limitations of the specific project.
4. Meetings should be held in a quiet environment where both parties feel they can speak freely without being overheard.
5. Meetings should be long enough and paced so as to allow the two people to get to know and feel comfortable with each other.
6. Information shared in mentoring meetings is subject to standard rules of professional confidence, which means that information shared to you in confidence should remain private unless permission is obtained to share that information. However, if information arises regarding situations harmful to the student or possibly others, obligation rests on the advisor to disclose such information to an appropriate party.
7. Commitments made should be honored. If meetings are canceled or delayed, adequate warning of non-availability or delay should be given. A postponed meeting should be re-booked promptly.
8. Either party has the right to ask for a review of how the mentoring is progressing, or for agreements or plans made at an earlier stage to be reviewed.
9. If either party feels unclear about the current status of the mentoring, that party should seek to clarify the views and wishes of the other party.
10. Mentors should recognize their limitations and avoid working with the student in ways that exceed those limitations.
11. Should either party sense there is a conflict of interest between the mentoring and any other role, this should be made known to the other as soon as is practicable.

12.2 Expectations of Faculty Advisors

Faculty are expected to provide consistent guidance for the student's program and research, teaching, and/or extension project(s). This will include the following:

1. Guide students through the degree program, including:

- a. Ensuring the student meets all graduate degree requirements.
- b. Advising graduate students on the selection of a thesis or dissertation topic that offers realistic prospects for successful completion within an appropriate time frame, and on the formation of the thesis or dissertation committee.
- c. Providing training and oversight in the design of research projects, in rigorous research methodologies, in theoretical and technical aspects of the thesis or dissertation research, and in professional integrity.
- d. Encouraging graduate students to stay abreast of the scholarly literature and of cutting-edge ideas in the field.
- e. Providing regular feedback on the progress of graduate students toward degree completion, including timely feedback on research, creative activities, and teaching, and constructive criticism if the student's progress does not meet expectations.
- f. Evaluating clearly and explicitly the strengths and weaknesses of the student's research.
- g. Encouraging an open exchange of ideas, including contemplation of the student's ideas if considered feasible by the Faculty Advisor.
- h. Providing and discussing clear criteria for authorship of collaborative research.
- i. Assisting in finding sources to support dissertation research; such as, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, internal and external fellowships, awards, etc.
- j. Being aware of the student's research needs and providing assistance in obtaining required resources.
- k. Encouraging and constructively criticizing oral and written communication.

2. Communicate expectations:

- a. Faculty should notify students when they plan to be unavailable and be accountable to their students.
- b. Faculty are expected to provide clear direction for the students program with regular and frequent contact (*e.g.* weekly meetings – or as needed).
- c. During the onboarding process, faculty are expected to provide knowledge of how to manage lab and field research responsibilities.
- d. Not all labs will have the same exact operational procedures, but all labs should operate under an ethical code of conduct that is professional and respectful of all students and workers in the lab. Faculty are expected to clearly communicate how they personally run their lab.
- e. Since graduate students do not accrue vacation or leave time, clear expectations should be communicated by the Faculty Advisor as to their policy for work schedule and time off. A recommendation is to expect no less vacation than a regular UNL

employee in the first 1-5 years of employment, however, this is up to the discretion of the Faculty Advisor and should be communicated with the student.

- f. With respect to family responsibilities, faculty should be alert to students who need extra support when having a child, raising a child alone, returning to school after child-rearing, caring for an elderly parent, etc. If a student holds an appointment as a GRA and is unable to fulfill his or her duties, every effort should be made to modify the GRA's duties for the remainder of the semester. If family responsibilities (as adequately demonstrated by the student through appropriate documentation) prevent the GRA from performing any duties, it is strongly urged that the student continue to receive a stipend from the department, contract or grant (if allowed by the funding source) for the leave period.

3. Support the student:

- a. Faculty Advisors should provide a work environment that fosters the academic, mental, and physical well-being of the student. Faculty should recognize and seek to understand the various cultures of their students.
- b. Faculty Advisors should build trust and create a comfortable working environment, especially for members of underrepresented groups in the program.
- c. Faculty Advisors should guide and/or supervise the student's development as a teacher, helping them find suitable employment as instructors on campus or elsewhere, visiting their classes, and providing constructive commentary and advice.
- d. Facilitating interactions with other scholars, on campus and in the wider professional community. Being the student's advocate in academic and professional communities as appropriate in the professional judgment of the Faculty Advisor.
- e. Helping graduate students develop into successful professionals and colleagues, including encouraging students to participate and disseminate the results of research or creative activities in the appropriate scholarly or public forums.
- f. Encouraging participation in professional meetings of regional groups and societies.
- g. Helping graduate students to develop professional skills in writing reports, papers, and grant proposals, making professional presentations, establishing professional networks, interviewing, and evaluating manuscripts and papers.
- h. Facilitate career development by advising graduate students on appropriate job and career options, as well as providing feedback on the preparation of application materials for appropriate fellowships, scholarships, and other relevant opportunities.
- i. Assisting with applications for research funding, fellowship applications, field placements, and other applications as appropriate for the respective discipline.
- j. Providing career guidance and support, including assistance in preparation of a CV and job applications, writing letters of recommendation in a timely manner, and helping the student prepare for interviews and other recruitment procedures.
- k. Provide guidance, if asked, about the intersection of concerns around physical and mental health, dealing with stress, or disability with the development of the student as a professional. This requires the faculty member to be cognizant of campus resources that address these issues.
- l. The Faculty Advisor is responsible for ensuring a student's continued GRA support when the student is able to achieve at least a Satisfactory annual evaluation.

12.3 Expectations of Graduate Students

For graduate students, this will be an exciting chapter in your career. It should also be an enjoyable and memorable time of your life. You should strive to achieve your highest potential. Keep in mind that unlike undergraduate education, you are responsible for guiding and seeking out opportunities to expand your skills and knowledge. Balancing multiple responsibilities of coursework, research, writing, presenting, and volunteering will require you to practice efficient time management and maintain close communication with your advisor. It is expected that graduate students should:

1. Become aware of and meet the deadlines associated with the degree program.
2. Apply themselves seriously and effectively to their research. Be careful, accurate and honest in measuring and recording data, and be honest and candid in reporting of results.
3. Cooperate helpfully and openly with others; conducting themselves in a professional, ethical, and pleasant manner.
4. Make steady progress and complete and write up work in a timely fashion.
5. Communicate regularly with mentors, especially with their major professor, and regularly ask for feedback on their research and overall progress in the program.
6. Maintain and seek regular communication with their mentors, especially the major professor.
7. Recognize that their mentoring needs must respect their mentor's other responsibilities and time commitments. One faculty member may not be able to satisfy all of a student's mentoring needs. Seek assistance from multiple individuals/organizations to fulfill the mentoring needs.
8. Be aware of their own mentoring needs and how needs change through their graduate student career. Graduate students should discuss these changing needs with their mentors. If concerns arise about physical or mental health, dealing with stress, or disability, these may be brought to the attention of the mentor for advice on campus resources. Students should not expect mentors to deal with longstanding health issues or major emotional events that are more properly the province of professional counselors, physicians, and psychotherapists.
9. Find ways to be involved in department activities, including extension events, mentoring undergraduate students, service to the department as a student liaison / representative, teaching lectures or serving as an undergraduate teaching assistant, and outreach with the public at various events. The extent and manner of involvement will depend on the student's career goals and should not interfere with progress or deadlines in the student's research or writing.
10. Graduate students do not accrue vacation or leave time, so the graduate students should communicate with their Faculty Advisor in advance to determine their policy for a work schedule and time off, and it is the responsibility of the student to gain approval from their Faculty Advisor for time off.
11. All non-sick leave must be approved by the major professor before it takes place. A student should notify the major professor if they will be out for medical reasons, although the privacy of the student is respected and therefore specifics need not be provided.
12. See to it, in cooperation with the department head and the Chair of the PPGC in the program, that all parties are informed if a change of advisor is contemplated. If specific research plans have been agreed upon with one advisor, see these through if possible before changing to another advisor.

12.4 UNL Faculty/Student Mentoring Guidebook

No single formula for successful mentoring exists, but we do know that frank and mutual exploration of expectations and interests should be the focus of the first meetings. Many people assume that good mentoring "just happens" naturally or is only for those who are "lucky enough" to stumble upon the right individuals to guide their intellectual and professional development. Good mentoring, however, is not a matter of luck. It is a matter of awareness, intention, and a genuine desire to succeed.

- [Mentoring in a Dynamic Learning Community](#) – understanding mentoring and how it is different from advising. Here you can explore the basic definition and qualities of good mentoring, the benefits of mentoring to you and your mentors, the changing graduate student population, and the various roles and responsibilities you and your mentors have. This section also stresses the importance of seeking multiple mentors.
- [Thinking about Your Mentoring Needs](#) offers practical strategies and concrete recommendations for establishing and maintaining effective relationships with your mentors.
- [Getting Started on Your Mentoring Journey](#) helps you lay the groundwork for building great relationships with your mentors. Its focus is on helping you clarify the mutual interests you share with your mentors, as well as your expectations of each other.
- [Common Themes Among Graduate Students](#) explores some common concerns about the graduate experience shared by a large number of students and offers advice about how mentoring can help you address and resolve them.
- [Mentoring Needs in a Diverse Community](#) expands your understanding of the personal, demographic, professional, and historical factors that may influence your goals and challenges, both during and beyond the graduate experience.
- [Mentoring Resources](#) provides sample worksheets to help you and your mentors implement the strategies and recommendations discussed in this guidebook. It also provides a list of further readings to expand your knowledge of mentoring and professional development.

12.5 Conflict Management

The relationship between the mentor and student should at all times be congenial, professional, and respectful. Both parties bear responsibility for a healthy relationship. The list below applies primarily to the relationship of the student to other university personnel. Problems and conflicts are best resolved if they are discussed when they first appear. Both mentor and student are expected to listen carefully to what the other has to say. The university, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR), and department have formal, well-defined avenues to take if conflict cannot be resolved, and a student can always speak informally about problems with any trusted faculty member or ask a faculty member to serve as an advocate.

If a problem is not resolved by mentor-student discussion, the following hierarchy of appeal should be followed:

1. Meeting of the student's Supervisory Committee
2. Seeking direction/action from the Chair of the PPGC

3. Department head –The department head and Chair of the PPGC may appoint an *ad hoc* committee to review the situation and recommend solutions. The Faculty Advisor and/or student can also request such a committee.
4. Dean of CASNR – If there is no resolution, contact the dean of CASNR to request an intervention.

All persons within the department, college, and University are deserving of respect and civil discourse. Unprofessional or hostile behavior or grossly intemperate language toward anyone, including faculty, technical staff, clerical staff or other students will not be tolerated and may be grounds for discipline. In the case of conflict, a student should not denigrate or cast aspersions on the professional reputation of the mentor, the mentor's lab and personnel, or the department in any manner including verbal, written, electronic, or Internet-based. Hurtful gossip, rumor-mongering, and attacks via social media are not only harmful to the target, they ultimately can cause severe damage to the reputation of the originator. Serious violations may result in dismissal from the program. Students are expected to follow the directions, advice, and counsel of the mentor and the Supervisory Committee on matters relating to university activities, including research expectations, agreed-upon work hours, laboratory practices, established deadlines and field work. All university regulations regarding best lab practices must be followed.

13. Progress and Performance Evaluations

13.1 Academic Performance

The department of Plant Pathology follows the Graduate Studies guidelines regarding satisfactory progress in terms of grades and GPA.

1. A minimum grade of "B" is required for graduate credit in 800-level courses with 400 or lower counterparts within the student's major department or area. A grade of "B-" is not acceptable.
2. A minimum grade of "C" or "P" (Pass) is required for graduate credit in 800-level courses in minor, collateral, or supporting areas of work. A grade of "C-" is not acceptable. Note: A grade of "B-" or lower received in a minor course will result in a minor comprehensive exam being required.
3. A minimum grade of "C" or "P" (Pass) is required for graduate credit in 900-level courses or 800-level courses without 400 or lower counterparts.

When applied toward an advanced degree program, only courses at the 900-level or 800-level *without* 400 or lower counterparts, *in the major department or interdepartmental area*, may be taken on a pass/no pass basis. In *minor, collateral, or supporting areas of work*, 800-level courses with 400 or lower counterparts can be taken on a pass/no pass basis.

A student failing to receive a minimum acceptable grade for graduate-level credit may not continue his or her program of studies without permission of the Supervisory Committee or the PPGC, which may require a special examination to determine the student's qualifications for further work.

13.2 Annual Progress Reports

Annual progress reports are requested from all graduate students whose Faculty Advisor is in the Department of Plant Pathology and require review by the student's Supervisory Committee, the PPGC, and department head. Progress reports can also be an effective tool for documenting achievements, receiving feedback from your committee and advisor, and planning your work for the coming year. Satisfactory progress in the program is also used in determining eligibility for GRA support.

1. You, as the student, are responsible for preparing your annual report according to instructions on the Annual Report Form (available on the Department website and also from the Graduate Coordinator). Following which, you should send it to your Faculty Advisor for preliminary review and approval of the final draft.
2. You are subsequently responsible for emailing the final draft of your annual progress report to your Faculty Advisor, Committee Members, and to the Graduate Coordinator no later than **March 1st**.
3. Your committee members are to send their comments within two weeks to your Faculty Advisor and you are responsible for sending reminders to the committee members to complete their review of your file.
4. After the committee's review is complete, you should schedule a meeting with your Faculty Advisor to discuss reviews received by the committee members and to discuss the Faculty Advisor's review.
5. You should submit signed review forms to the Graduate Coordinator no later than **April 2nd**, confirming that the student and Faculty Advisor discussed the reviews and comments.
6. Following submission, the Graduate Coordinator conducts a pre-review of files and calls a meeting of the PPGC to conduct a formal review.
7. Follow-up with the student may be made by the Graduate Coordinator, PPGC, and/or Department Head regarding recommendations for continued progress and success.

13.3 Probation and Termination

Grounds

For all graduate students at UNL, probation or termination recommendations may be made under the following conditions:

- Failure to make academic progress as defined in the program's graduate student handbook
- Violations of the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or the Plant Pathology Code of Conduct (above)
- Failure to satisfy [Scholastic Grade Requirements](#)
- Failure in qualifying examinations, preliminary examinations, comprehensive examinations, or final degree examinations
- Failure to master the methodology and content of one's field in a manner that is sufficient to complete a successful thesis or dissertation

- In fields leading to licensure or certification, ethical misconduct or lack of professional promise in the professional field
- Failure to satisfy the conditions required for removal of probationary status or provisional admission

Process

How It Happens: Graduate students who do not maintain satisfactory progress may be placed on probation, terminated from a degree or certificate program, and/or denied permission to continue graduate studies in the University.

1. After discussion with the student, probation or termination is initiated when the student's advisor or Supervisory Committee submits a recommendation to the PPGC.
2. If the PPGC approves a recommendation for termination, the Chair of the PPGC must communicate it in writing to the Dean for Graduate Studies and the student.

After Termination or Dismissal

Students dismissed from the University due to violations of the Student Code of Conduct are ineligible to reapply for graduate study at UNL. Students whose UNL graduate program has been terminated may apply for admission to another degree program or admission as a non-degree seeking student only with the approval of the dean for Graduate Studies.

14. Exit Interview and Final Check-Out

Congratulations on completing your degree! After successfully passing the final exam, each student will be invited for an exit interview with the department head. The purpose of the interview is to gain feedback on the experience for the student and to identify ways in which our department faculty or staff could improve the experience. Each student will also be invited to contribute their feedback in a written format so that we can gain more standardized feedback on how we are doing and what your plans are post-graduation. After you graduate, please stay in contact. We will want to know how you are doing and have your current contact information so that we can invite you back for alumni events.

Final Check-out

During your final weeks in the department, make sure to do the following:

1. Make a copy of any files or notebooks that you will need for future reference on your work and leave the original files and notebooks with your Faculty Advisor
2. Back-up old emails through your UNL email account
3. Establish a new email address and import contacts from your UNL email account
4. Return keys to the department's administrative assistant so that you do not incur any fees
5. Schedule a final walk-through of the laboratory with your Faculty Advisor so that there is someone who will know where to find all relevant materials and supplies related to your project
6. Return any library books you have checked out
7. Complete an exit interview survey

Appendix I. Links to Graduate Studies Policies

It is the responsibility of the student to be familiar with the information in this catalog and on the [Graduate Studies website](#), and to know and observe all regulations and procedures relating to the program he or she is pursuing. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because a student pleads ignorance of, or contends that he or she was not informed of, the regulations or procedures. A student planning to graduate should be familiar with the dates relating to application for graduation and other pertinent deadlines.

General

- [Conduct, Academic Integrity, and Related Policy](#)
- [Governance](#)
- [Guidelines for Good Practice in Graduate Education](#)

Admission

Registration, Credit, and Grades

- [Registration Requirements](#)
- [Tuition and Fees](#)
- [Academic Leave of Absence](#)
- [Graduate Credit](#)
- [Grades and Incompletes](#)

Academic Program Requirements

- [Doctoral Degrees](#)
- [Master's Degrees](#)
- [Educational Specialist Degree](#)
- [Certificate Programs](#)
- [Probation and Termination](#)

Funding

- [Assistantships](#)
- [Fellowships](#)
- [Loans and Need-Based Funding](#)

Faculty

- [Graduate Faculty and Associates](#)

- [Graduate Lecturers](#)

Appendix II. Helpful Resources

Mental Health Resources

Stress, depression, anxiety, alcohol abuse, eating disorders, and other mental health challenges affect at least 1 in 5 college students. Our department strives to support our students. Here are some strategies for supporting student mental health:

1. **Understand the importance of mental health.**

Mental health is just as important as physical health. When someone breaks a leg they go to the hospital. Mental illness is the same thing. If someone is feeling depressed they should seek treatment. Normalize mental health by talking about getting support if you notice your students struggling with stress, depression, anxiety, etc.

2. **Know the common stressors.**

College, while exciting, can also be a time of stress. Some common stressors for students are living away from home, living among strangers, loneliness, divorce or death of parents, breakup of an intimate relationship, illness, rejection, academic pressure or failure, identity development, discrimination, low motivation, financial problems, time management, and post graduation plans.

3. **Seek assistance from CAPS.**

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) has psychologists and licensed mental health counselors who provide programs and services to UNL students as well as outreach and education for faculty and staff. If a student tells you that they are struggling or you notice a student is having problems, encourage them to call CAPS at 402-472-5000 (even after hours). If the situation is more urgent, you might decide to accompany the student to CAPS (located inside the University Health Center). If the situation is an emergency, call the UNL police at 402-472-2222. If you're not sure what to do, call CAPS directly and ask to talk to the director, Dr. Tricia Besett-Alesch, about your concerns.

4. **Support your students.**

In some cases, mental health issues such as anxiety and depression qualify as disabilities, and students may receive individualized accommodation through [Services for Students with Disabilities](#) (SSD) (232 Canfield Administration; 402-472-3787). SSD recommends the following statement be included on your course syllabi, available at <https://www.unl.edu/ssd/content/syllabus-statement-faculty>.

Sources and Resources:

- <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/college-game-plan/opioid-crisis-how-america-s-colleges-are-reacting-epidemic-n797696>
- CAPS website: <https://health.unl.edu/caps/services>
- SSD website: <https://www.unl.edu/ssd/content/accommodations>

About the Graduate Handbook

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