

**Graduate Student Policies & Procedures**  
**Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology**  
**Montana State University**  
**Bozeman, MT**

This document should familiarize new graduate students with policies and procedures of the Department of Plant Sciences and Plant Pathology (PSPP) and of The Graduate School at Montana State University. The guidelines presented here are sometimes flexible and amenable to modification. The graduate student and primarily the graduate student's major professor (graduate advisor) and secondarily the student's graduate or thesis committee ultimately implement these guidelines to create a productive academic experience for the student.

The Graduate School website <http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/> includes frequently asked questions, Graduate School forms, dates & deadlines, information for new students, current tuition & fees, policies and procedures (<http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/index.html>), and additional resources that should be consulted. The PSPP website for graduate students is <http://plantsciences.montana.edu/studentinfo/grad/index.html>. PSPP guidelines are aligned with those of The Graduate School.

Prospective graduate students should be in communication with a prospective major professor. This allows for the student's application to be readily identified, processed, and evaluated for entry criteria (e.g., GRE scores and letters of recommendation). This also enables the new graduate student to readily identify a research problem at the start of graduate school.

***Graduate (thesis) committee***

A new PSPP graduate student needs to be in communication with a prospective major professor such that by arrival in the Department they can begin to outline a program of study, including an initial assessment of what coursework might be needed, as well as developing the composition of the graduate or thesis committee. The graduate committee is formed by mutual consent of the student, the student's major professor, and prospective committee members. The new graduate student develops a tentative committee list in consultation with the major professor. Once agreed upon, the student contacts prospective committee members to determine their willingness to serve. The thesis committee should be established at least by the end of the second semester, if not first semester. The graduate student files a record of that committee with The Graduate School (<http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html>).

Once a graduate or thesis committee is formally established, the student should request a meeting of the committee to discuss the proposed thesis research, courses to be taken at MSU, and any other items of concern. The makeup of the graduate committee and proposed course work can be changed with the approval of the major professor and committee and by filing a Program Change form, which is available from <http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html>.

The composition of the graduate committee is as follows. For master's degree students, a minimum of three committee members is required. Most members must be PSPP faculty. Adjunct faculty, faculty affiliates, faculty from other departments and institutions, and non-academic experts may serve as members but may not chair a committee. Off campus and non-

faculty appointees must submit a curriculum vitae to The Graduate School for approval (see [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq\\_masters.html#degreq\\_masters\\_committee](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_masters.html#degreq_masters_committee)). For PhD students, departments have the choice of appointing either four or five committee members. At least three members must be within a student's major. At least one, but not more than two, must represent the student's supporting area or minor, if applicable. Adjunct faculty, faculty affiliates, faculty of other institutions, and non-academic experts may serve as members but not as the committee chair. Off campus and non-faculty appointees must submit a curriculum vitae to The Graduate School for approval (see [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq\\_doctoral.html#doc\\_committee](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_doctoral.html#doc_committee)).

### ***Research focus***

The selection of a research topic should be done in consultation initially with the major professor and later with the graduate committee. Identifying a research focus should be done as soon as possible after beginning graduate school, if not beforehand. Once the graduate committee is formed, the graduate student submits a written thesis research outline for feedback to the graduate committee. Students typically present their proposed research as part of the PSPP seminar series during their second semester. This initial seminar focuses more on the aims and background of the proposed research than on the results.

### ***Proposed course work***

Prospective PSPP graduate students are expected to have a strong understanding of the biological sciences, which typically includes an undergraduate degree in one of the many disciplines of biology. By the end of the second semester in graduate school, the graduate student will submit the Program of Study and Committee form (see <http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html>) to The Graduate School. The form identifies courses to be taken as part of the student's graduate school education. PSPP graduate students are responsible for obtaining the signatures of each of the committee members listed on this form. This completed form involves a one-time filing fee of \$50 ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/fees\\_holds.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/fees_holds.html)).

There are no set course requirements for Plant Sciences graduate degree programs. Course requirements are set by the student's graduate committee. However, all students are required to participate regularly in the PSPP seminar series, which includes presenting a research seminar once a year for each academic year enrolled in graduate school. To facilitate the seminar participation and presentation requirement, graduate students can enroll in PSPP 594, Seminar (1 credit), which is offered every Fall and Spring semester.

Course work taken during graduate school should be designed to make up for deficient areas of knowledge, which is determined by the student and the student's major professor and graduate committee. Ultimately, the graduate student and the student's major professor and graduate committee determine the specific combination of required formal course work credits and PSPP 590 credits designated as Master's Thesis (Master's research) or PSPP 690 credits designated as Doctoral Thesis (Doctoral research). General degree requirements are included in The Graduate School website ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq\\_general.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_general.html)).

The Graduate School and PSPP Department require a minimum of thirty (30) credits for a master's degree, both thesis and non-thesis (Plan A, Plan B, Plan C). For a master's degree with a

thesis, the PSPP Department combines the required comprehensive examination and thesis defense such that they can be offered simultaneously. Additional master's degree requirements are found at [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq\\_masters.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_masters.html).

The Graduate School and PSPP Department require a minimum of sixty (60) credits for a PhD degree, of which eighteen (18) to twenty-eight (28) must be thesis credits (e.g., PSPP 690). A maximum of thirty (30) credits from a previously earned master's degree (from MSU or another accredited University) may be applied toward the sixty (60) credit minimum required for the doctoral degree. Doctoral students who have previously earned a master's degree must take at least twelve (12) coursework credits and eighteen (18) to twenty-eight (28) dissertation (690) credits beyond the master's degree credits. For a PhD degree, the PSPP Department combines the required comprehensive examination and thesis defense such that they can be offered simultaneously. Additional PhD degree requirements are found at [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq\\_doctoral.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_doctoral.html).

<i>Suggested MSU courses for PSPP graduate students</i>	Cr.	Semester
AGED 506 – Research Methods	3	F
AGSC 401 – Integrated Pest Management	3	F
AGSC 441 – Plant Breeding and Genetics	3	S odd
AGSC 450 – Plant Disease Control	3	S odd
AGSC 454 – Agrostology	3	S alt
AGSC 455 – Molecular Pl. Microbe & Insect Interactions	3	S alt
ARNR 524 – Adv. Animal Breeding	3	S even
BCH 524 – Mass Spectrometry	3	F odd
BCH 526 – Adv Protein NMR Spectroscopy	3	F even
BCH 543 – Proteins	3	F odd
BCH 544 – Molecular Biology	3	F even
BCH 545 – Advanced Physical Biochemistry	3	S even
BIOB 430 – Plant Biotech	3	S even
BIOB 476R – Gene Construction	3	F
BIOB 477 – Genome Science and Gene Expression	5	S
BIOB 484 – Population Genetics	3	F even
BIOB 524 – Ethical Practice of Science	2	S
BIOM 421 – Concepts of Plant Pathology	3	S
BIOM 423/523 – Mycology	3	F even
BIOM 465 – Plant-Pathogen Interactions	3	S
BIOO 433 – Plant Physiology	3	S
BIOO 435 – Plant Systematics	3	F even
BIOO 437 – Plant Development	3	S
BIOO 460 – Plant Metabolism	3	S odd
BIOO 465 – Insect Identification	4	S odd
CSCI 550 – Data Mining	3	F even
CSCI 591 – Special Topics in Bioinformatics	3	S

<i>Suggested MSU courses for PSPP graduate students</i>	Cr.	Semester
ENTO 510 – Insect Ecology	3	S alt
ENTO 516 – Biosystematics	3	F
ENTO 520 – Insect Physiology	3	F even
ENTO 525 – Insect Morphology	2	S even
GPHY 426 – Remote Sensing	3	S
LRES 511 – Environmental Data Mgmt.	2	S alt
LRES 525 – Applied Remote Sensing	3	S
LRES 529 – Sustainable Cropping Systems	3	S
LRES 534 – Environmental Data Analysis	3	S
LRES 535 – Tech Of Spatial Analysis	3	F alt
LRES 536 – Ecology of Invasive Plants II	3	Su
LRES 561 – Belowground Plant Ecology	3	S odd
LRES 565 – Environmental Biophysics	3	S
LRES 569 – Ecol. Of Invasive Plants in GYE	3	Su
LRES 572 – Frontiers in Remote Sensing	1	S
MB 528 – Advanced Genetics	3	S
MB 530 – Virology	3	F
MB 535 – Genomic Analysis Lab	3	F
MB 538 – Cell & Molecular Biol.	2	Su
MB 544 – Advanced Bioinformatics	4	S even
MBSP 579 – Programming for Life Scientist	3	S
MBSP 613 – Scientific Proposal Writing	3	Su
PSPP 516 – Research Design and Analysis	3	F
PSPP 524 – Advanced Plant Pathology	3	F odd
PSPP 530 – Crop Physiology	3	F
PSPP 541 – Advanced Plant Genetics	3	F even
PSPP 542 – Genetics of Plant Improvement	3	S odd
PSPP 546 – Herbicide Physiology	3	F even
PSPP 548 – Flower Plants of North Rock Mtn	2	Su odd
PSPP 565 – Plant Pathogen Interaction	3	S even
PSPP 590 – Master's Thesis		F,S,Su
PSPP 594 – Seminar	1	F,S
PSPP 642 – Structural and Functional Genomics	3	F odd
PSPP 690 – Doctoral Dissertation		F,S,Su
STAT 408 – Stat. Computing and Graphical Analysis	3	F
STAT 411 – Methods for Data Analysis I	3	F
STAT 412 – Methods for Data Analysis II	3	S
STAT 437 – Intro to Appl Multiv. Analysis	3	S
STAT 446 – Sampling	3	F
STAT 448 – Mixed Effects Models	3	F
STAT 502 – Intermediate Mathematical Statistics	3	S

<i>Suggested MSU courses for PSPP graduate students</i>	Cr.	Semester
STAT 505 – Linear Models	3	F
STAT 506 – Advanced Regression Analysis	3	S
STAT 511 – Methods of Data Analysis I	3	F
STAT 512 – Methods of Data Analysis II	3	S
STAT 534 – Spatial Data Analysis	3	S odd
STAT 446/536 – Time Series Analysis	3	F even
STAT 541 – Experimental Design	3	S

### **Grades**

Graduate students must maintain a GPA of 3.00 for all courses listed on the Program of Study form. Any listed course for which a grade lower than a C- has been received is considered failing (see [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/grades\\_academicstanding.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/grades_academicstanding.html)). Two or more courses with failing grades could result in dismissal from the PSPP graduate program.

### **Teaching**

The PSPP department requires that all graduate students have teaching experience during graduate school. This includes teaching at least one biology course offered on the MSU campus, as determined by the student and major professor. To assist with the teaching of a course, a student must receive an invitation from the course instructor.

### **Departmental exams**

*Master's comprehensive exam and defense of thesis.* During the final semester of a master's thesis project, the student will be examined over both research and general knowledge of coursework. Course work thus should be finished preferably well before the final semester. The oral exam and thesis defense usually lasts about 3 hours. Immediately prior to the exam, the student will be expected to present a seminar on the thesis research. Topics covered in the exam are the prerogative of the committee members but are usually related to a general knowledge of plant sciences, topics covered in graduate classes, and any aspect of the thesis research.

*PhD comprehensive exam.* Typically, the PhD comprehensive exam occurs at the end of the second year, which is generally when formal course work is completed. The comprehensive exam comprises two parts. The first is written and includes a set of questions presented to the major professor by each graduate committee members. The student answers each committee member's set of questions usually within four hours. Within 10 days or so after the written comprehensive exam, the oral comprehensive exam is scheduled. The student may be allowed to see the results of the written exam prior to the oral exam and this is determined by each committee member. The oral exam usually lasts three hours and includes questions from each committee member. Oral questions can follow up those on the written exam or they may cover any other area a committee member chooses. To pass the comprehensive exam the student must perform satisfactorily on both the written and oral portions of the exam. If the student fails the exam, a second opportunity at least six months later may be provided by the graduate committee (see [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq\\_doctoral.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_doctoral.html)).

*PhD final exam and thesis (dissertation) defense.* When a student has completed the thesis

research, a final examination will be scheduled. The student is expected to present a seminar covering the thesis research, which occurs commonly immediately prior to the final exam. The PhD final exam usually covers the thesis research, but the student should also be prepared to answer questions covering any material pertaining to the student's prospective career. If the final exam is failed, it may not be repeated for at least two months (see website immediately above).

### ***Thesis (dissertation) writing and preparation of papers for publication***

The thesis or dissertation must be written in the format and style prescribed by The Graduate School (<http://www.montana.edu/wwwetd/>). Any concerns here should be taken up with the staff of The Graduate School. PSPP encourages graduate students to put their thesis research into a broad context by writing a literature review. The following books on scientific writing might well be consulted prior to thesis writing:

DAY, R.A. 1983. How to write and publish a scientific paper. 2nd Edition. ISI Press, Philadelphia. ISBN 0-89495-002-3.

O'CONNOR, M., & WOODFORD, F.P. 1975. Writing scientific papers in English. Elsevier-North Holland. New York. ISBN 0444-15165-6.

A goal of a student's thesis research is to have their work nationally recognized and readily available to the scientific community. Students are therefore expected to prepare appropriate portions of their thesis for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The student's priority is to conduct thesis research and write the thesis while simultaneously preparing manuscripts for publication in a refereed journal. In the end, thesis writing should expedite peer-reviewed journal publication. This could involve the inclusion of manuscripts in preparation, in press, and published as separate thesis chapters.

### ***Seminar preparation and procedures***

Each student is required to present at least one seminar per academic year. In the semester the student presents their seminar, they must also register for PSPP 594-01. All students are also required to regularly attend the department seminar series. The purpose of seminar is twofold. It promotes camaraderie among students, staff, and faculty, and the ever-important social face of the scientific enterprise. It also serves to provide the student with the experience of presenting information before a group of peers and colleagues. Such communication experience is invaluable to becoming a public speaker and lecturer, which is crucial for success as a scientist. The seminar topic must be approved by the student's major professor. Students are encouraged to use PSPP 594-01, seminar, for presenting their thesis proposal and defense.

In general, seminars should be structured like a journal article. The introduction should comprise a background and literature review to acquaint the audience with the topic. This should be followed with explanation of the scientific approaches and methods. Results and discussion should be explained in enough detail to be understood by a scientifically literate audience. The seminar should conclude with a general discussion of the implications and applications of the work.

The department provides the facilities, equipment, and expertise such that a graduate student can give an excellent presentation. This includes preparing slides that report information in an aesthetically appropriate manner, managing time limits, and finding an audience with which to practice seminar presentation more than once before the formal presentation. The major



professor and possibly the thesis committee members or other PSPP faculty should approve in advance any seminar presented by a graduate student.

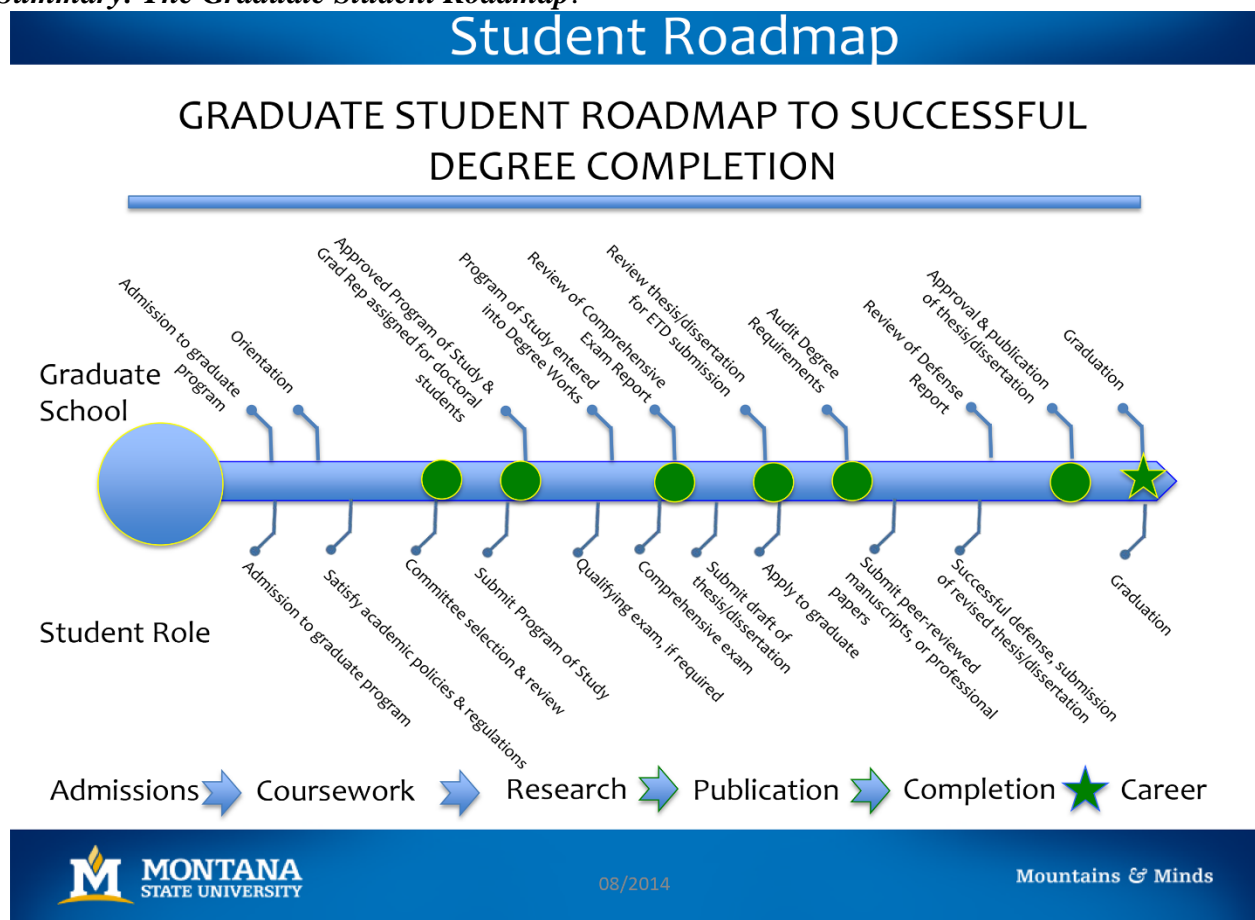
### ***Graduating***

Before a graduate degree and approval for graduation can be completed, each student's Program of Study must be evaluated to ensure that all requirements have been met. This is an important step for a student and the university as it ensures that proper credit has been given for all student effort. Once approved and complete, the student has full assurance that they have met all the degree requirements and can file for graduation. The Degree Audit Fee (\$20) will be a recurring fee each time a student files an Application for Advanced Degree. This fee will be applied directly to your student account. The graduation fee (\$30) is a one-time fee incurred at the time a student applies to graduate. This fee will be applied directly to your student account (see [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/fees\\_holds.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/fees_holds.html)).

### ***Deadlines and dates***

One of the responsibilities of a graduate student is to meet all the dates and deadlines reported by The Graduate School (<http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/dates-deadlines.html>).

### ***Summary: The Graduate Student Roadmap.***



The above graphic ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/resources/coffee\\_talk/Roadmap.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/resources/coffee_talk/Roadmap.pdf)) is from a possibly orphaned website but it might provide some direction to students planning their graduate school agenda.

***Residency requirements***

For non-resident domestic graduate students wanting resident status in the state of Montana, see <http://www.montana.edu/registrar/Residency.html>. Out-of-state graduate students can expect to pay in-state tuition while enrolled in the graduate school.

***Stipends, fellowships, and awards***

Students are often supported by Graduate Research Assistantships and Fellowships (GRAs) from a variety of sources, or perhaps their own personal funds. Usually this is determined prior to admission to study in the department. In addition to the above, there are several awards available on campus for which students may compete and which can serve to supplement their regular stipend.

E.L. Sharp Graduate Achievement Award – A fund established in honor E.L. Sharp, who retired from the department in 1987, is to reward the graduate student in Plant Pathology who makes a significant accomplishment. This can include an outstanding thesis, poster, or oral presentation at a meeting. Usually the award is presented each year. The faculty members or students may nominate a student for this award, or a student may apply for it. A faculty committee determines the winner using the documentation provided.

Leonard Chvilicek Award – This award is given to a graduate student who is working on a problem related to wheat production or improvement. Preference is given to a Montana high school graduate, and recipient must have an agricultural background (i.e., from a farm or agribusiness family). Plant breeding faculty select the recipient annually.

Robert F. Eslick Memorial Award – This award was established in memory of Robert F. Eslick, who had a long and distinguished career as a plant breeder and agronomist at Montana State University. The award is made to a full-time graduate student in crop science who shows academic and professional promise, with preference given to a graduate of a Montana high school. Plant breeding faculty select the recipient annually.

***Work expectations supported by graduate research assistantships***

The work performed by a graduate student, although contributing to the productivity of the major professor and the department, is nevertheless primarily for the benefit of the student. Research leading to publications is a major criterion by which the student will be judged for the rest of their career and is a crucial factor in obtaining a desirable job or postdoctoral appointment. A GRA is technically a half-time appointment requiring 20 hours per week spent on research. However, most students find it necessary and desirable to spend significantly more time to maintain a suitable rate of progress towards a degree. Normally, the student determines what rate of research progress is desirable to produce peer-reviewed publications. If needed, sufficient research effort and progress can be decided by the student, major professor, and graduate committee. Reappointment each semester will be contingent upon satisfactory performance in research and coursework, as determined by the major professor and availability of funds.

***Vacation and holiday policies and expectations***

Graduate students are regular University employees regarding vacations and holidays. Thus, on the days when the University has an officially scheduled holiday and offices are closed, students may also observe such holidays. If there are any questions as to what days are holidays, check in



the university calendar <http://calendar.msu.montana.edu/academic-term-calendar>. In some cases, classes are dismissed but the offices are open. Students should regard such days as regular work days. Students on GRA's are entitled to two weeks of vacation each year but they should consult with their major professor about when that time will be taken. In general, the time intervals between academic semesters and regular work commitments should be viewed as valuable opportunities to spend quality time on research.

### ***Attendance at regional and national meetings***

Professional meetings are an excellent means for getting up-to-date information and to meet colleagues working in your research area. In general, we encourage any student attending relevant professional meetings to present a paper or poster since this provides an excellent opportunity to present your work before a group of your peers. The major professor, principal investigator, or project leader provides the funds for students attending professional meetings.

### ***Job hunting***

Students interested in finding a position should check job announcements in the publications of major science journals, such as *Nature* or *Science*, websites such as HighEdJobs (<https://www.higheredjobs.com/>), or the journals of professional societies such as *Agronomy News*, *Phytopathology News*, *ASHS Newsletters*, *American Journal of Botany*, and *Crop Sciences*. For preparing a CV or resume and efficiently searching for jobs, Career Services offers advice at <http://www.montana.edu/aycss/careers/students/gettingajob.html>.

### ***Membership in professional societies***

Most academics and scientists belong to professional societies associated with their area of interest. The purpose is to benefit from the services provided by such societies. This includes publication in professional journals, job placement services, and organizing professional meetings at regional, nation, and international levels. Students are strongly encouraged to become members of relevant scientific society. Most societies have discounted rates for student members (e.g., Crop Science Society of America, <https://www.crops.org/>; Entomological Society of America, <https://www.entsoc.org/>).

### ***Departmental office and staff***

The staff in the main offices, Leon Johnson Hall 324 and Plant BioScience (PBB) 119, have an open-door policy for students. The PSPP staff can answer most general questions that you might have about the campus and the department. Use of office computers and printers is limited just to the office staff. If you have additional questions, please contact Jill Scarson at 994-4832, 324 Leon Johnson Hall, [jscarson@montana.edu](mailto:jscarson@montana.edu). Jill Scarson is the student affairs person.

Ordering of lab supplies is coordinated through the major professor or lab manager. Office supplies are ordered through the department staff. Please contact your major professor regarding ordering procedures. Irene decker ([decker@montana.edu](mailto:decker@montana.edu)), 119 PBB, is the administrative staff person knowledgeable about who at MSU should be contacted whether it be a question regarding ordering and billing or a general question related to anything about campus or the department.

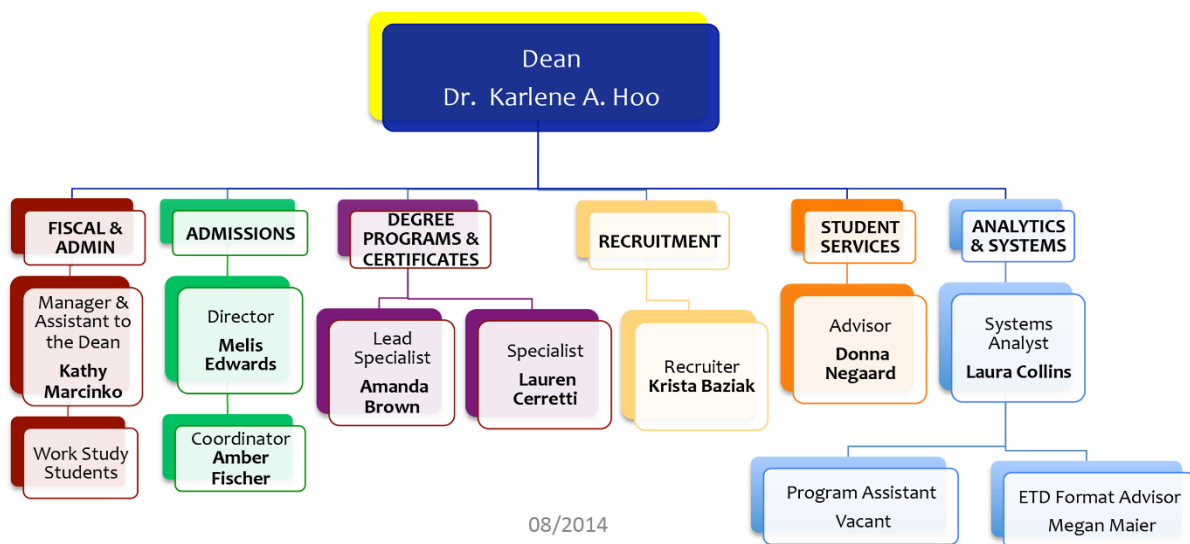
Regarding office space for graduate students, seniority determines assignment of student desks. Changes are made when space becomes available or when agreed upon between students.

Individual graduate student mailboxes are in 119 PBB or next to the elevators in 324 Leon Johnson Hall, depending on where your lab is located.

### ***The Graduate School staff***

The Graduate School main office is 108 Montana Hall. The Graduate School web site <http://www.montana.edu/gradschool> includes contact information and many other resources for new graduate students, including a list of staff who may be contacted for questions (<http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/staff.html>). A synopsis of The Graduate School staff organization ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/org\\_chart.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/org_chart.pdf)) is shown below:

## The Graduate School Organization Chart



All PSPP graduate student guidelines have been brought into alignment with those of The Graduate School. While the above Graduate School office staff can be contacted for guidance, the student's major professor should be consulted first in this regard.

### ***Use of departmental equipment, vehicles, and space***

The equipment and facilities owned and occupied by the department are here to be used for research. In many cases, however, specific pieces of equipment have been purchased by grants and/or are assigned to specific faculty members. To use such items, please contact the individual responsible for the item. Not only is it a common courtesy, but it will allow the best scheduling of and the proper use of the equipment. The various PSPP labs stock many chemical and other disposable items. Borrowing such supplies is typically possible if permission of the lab director is sought prior to borrowing.

Space for students in the Plant Growth Center (PGC) is requested via the student's major professor. Space in the PGC is under the control of the PGC Advisory Committee, headed by David Baumbauer, Manager of the PGC. To obtain permission to use such space, an application form must be filled out by the major professor and filed with David Baumbauer ([http://plantsciences.montana.edu/facultystaff/staff/baumbauer\\_david/index.html](http://plantsciences.montana.edu/facultystaff/staff/baumbauer_david/index.html)).

Research space on the Post Research Farm, the Ft. Ellis Research Plots, and on the Horticulture Farm is under the control of various committees. The student's major professor should be consulted about the procedures for obtaining use of such space. Usually there is a meeting of the various Farm Committees in the spring prior to the planting to determine space needs for the coming growing season, including space for fall-seeded crops. If a student uses space on any of the Research Farms, they are expected to maintain it in a weed-free condition.

### ***Frequently asked questions***

See <http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/faq.html>. Additional questions include:

#### **1. Can students transfer courses taken at another university to MSU?**

Yes. Thirty credits from a completed master's degree can be applied to the sixty required for a PhD degree. Otherwise, the number of semester hours transferred from other institutions (non-degree or degree status) combined with credit(s) taken as a non-degree graduate at MSU may not exceed nine (9) credit hours ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq\\_general.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_general.html)).

#### **2. Before taking a semester off, what do students need to do?**

A continuous enrollment policy (<http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/enrollment.html>) of MSU requires students wishing to take time away from their programs to inform their major professor (graduate advisor) and department of their plans. The six- and ten-year limits for completing master's and Doctoral degrees are calculated from the start of their programs. Time away from a program is not considered a reason for these time limits. Returning students need to submit an Intent to Register form (<http://www.montana.edu/registrar/Returning.html>).

#### **3. What is difference between master's "A" and "B" Plans?**

See the website [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq\\_masters.html](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/degreq_masters.html).

#### **4. What is required or what can be included in a program of study?**

The Program of Study allows graduate students to customize their advanced degree ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program\\_of\\_study.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program_of_study.pdf)). Once approved, this document becomes a contract with The Graduate School and graduate student that defines the work that must be completed before a degree is received. Programs may be revised and updated to reflect the availability of classes and shifts in academic foci ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program\\_change.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program_change.pdf)).

#### **5. During pursuit of a master's degree, can I switch to a PhD program of study?**

File the form [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/change\\_graduate\\_status.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/change_graduate_status.pdf). The PhD committee is then formed by filling out a new program of study form: [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program\\_of\\_study.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program_of_study.pdf). The policy of The Graduate School is to **NOT** allow Master's Thesis credits (590 credits) to transfer to Doctoral Thesis credits (690 credits) when a student switches from a Master's program to a PhD program.

#### **6. When do students need to submit a Graduate Program of Study and Committee Form?**

This must be submitted to the Graduate School by the end of the second term of study for master's students and by the third semester for PhD students. Failure to do so will result in the

student being placed on academic probation for failing to make satisfactory progress toward a degree ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program\\_of\\_study.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program_of_study.pdf)).

**7. Can students change their committees if they have trouble scheduling their comprehensive exams or defenses to include all members?**

Students should schedule all committee meetings as far in advance as is practical to coordinate all members' schedules in time to satisfy all deadlines.

**8. How can students change their programs of study?**

A student must submit the changes on a Change of Program form with the signatures of the major professor and department head. Completed courses may not be removed and students must repeat any course in a program where a grade below a C- was earned. This form can be found at [http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program\\_change.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/program_change.pdf).

**9. How can students change their graduate committees?**

Students must submit a "Graduate Committee Revision" form with the changes, reasons, and signatures of the faculty being added or removed ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/committee\\_revision.pdf](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/documents/forms/committee_revision.pdf)).

**10. What are the formatting requirements for theses and dissertations?**

The requirements for formatting theses and dissertations are found on The Graduate School website <http://www.montana.edu/etd/>. These guidelines supersede all departmental and discipline standards and must be followed if students wish to have their work accepted by The Graduate School. Although it is the students' responsibility to see that their theses or dissertations conform to The Graduate School requirements, the major professor should ensure that students do not submit work with significant formatting errors. Please be aware of the specific deadlines for submitting a thesis or dissertation each semester.

**11. How do students set up their comprehensive exams or defenses?**

While coordinating with the major professor, the graduate student schedules a comprehensive exam or defense so that all members can be present. The time and location of the public presentation portion of the thesis defense should be announced within the department at least two weeks in advance. Please email Jill Scarson at [jscarson@montana.edu](mailto:jscarson@montana.edu) with the details of the thesis defense. A flier will be created and sent for approval by the student before being distributed. Students must be registered for at least three credits in the semester in which the thesis defense occurs. The Graduate School deadline to complete all requirements including approval of thesis precedes the last day of the semester (<http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/dates-deadlines.html>).

**12. How does a student arrange to graduate?**

Complete all degree requirements by the end of the final semester, during which register for at least three credits and file a Graduation Application with The Graduate School ([http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html#forms\\_graduation](http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/forms.html#forms_graduation)) by September 20 for Fall Semester, February 5 for Spring Semester and June 10 for Summer Semester (<http://www.montana.edu/gradschool/policy/dates-deadlines.html>). Failure to meet these deadlines requires registering for three credits and graduating the following semester.