PLANT PATHOLOGY, PH.D.

The discipline of plant pathology is directed toward understanding and solving disease problems of plants. The field is broad and complex, integrating disciplines as varied as molecular biology, genetics, cell biology, organismal biology, population and community ecology, meteorology, statistics, computer science, chemistry, and physics. Plant pathology encompasses basic and applied research, employs both model systems and economically important plants, and requires both laboratory and field experimentation. Active research programs in the department encompass this full spectrum of questions and approaches, including research on virology, nematology, fungal genetics, tissue culture, soil microbiology and ecology, forest pathology, bacterial plant pathogens, molecular biology of parasite–host interactions, microbial ecology, epidemiology, and integrated disease management strategies.

The graduate program in plant pathology educates students in the science of plant pathology and prepares them for successful careers. Students develop the following skills required to meet diverse professional situations: excellence in research; breadth and depth in plant pathology; breadth in an allied field; strong critical and analytical thinking skills; and effective communication skills. Students become sufficiently knowledgeable in all aspects of plant pathology to identify key research questions, recognize significant discoveries, and think analytically about interpretation of data.

The level of proficiency in specific areas will vary with the student’s research area and career goals, and will be appropriate to the student’s degree program (M.S. or Ph.D.). Specific areas of proficiency addressed by the Ph.D. curriculum include etiology, diagnosis, and management of plant disease; ecology and epidemiology; genetics and physiology of plant–microbe interactions; and organismal biology. Ph.D. students may elect an optional professional development experience as part of their curriculum. Graduates of the program attain positions in teaching, research in academic positions, government services, industry, extension services, and private practice.

The program is comprised of about 100 faculty members, graduate students, and research and support staff. It is housed in an eight-story wing of Russell Laboratories, a teaching and research facility on the UW–Madison campus, which is surrounded by other facilities that are also devoted to biological research. Russell Labs, together with the extensive research facilities available on the rest of the UW–Madison campus and at field research stations throughout Wisconsin, provide a rich and comprehensive environment for research and graduate studies in all branches of plant pathology.

ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program’s admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program’s website. Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).

Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Deadline</td>
<td>December 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Deadline</td>
<td>December 1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Deadline</td>
<td>December 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)</td>
<td>Not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Proficiency Test</td>
<td>Every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English must provide an English proficiency test score and meet the Graduate School minimum requirements (<a href="https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency">https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation Required</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* This program does not normally admit students for the Spring term. Students should apply for Fall admission unless instructed otherwise by the program.

Students who are admitted to the department must meet the Graduate School requirements, including completion of a bachelor’s degree which typically consists of courses in biology, chemistry, math and physics. If foundation course requirements have not been fulfilled before matriculation, they must be completed as early as possible in the course of study. Successful applicants typically exceed the minimum requirement of a 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale); exceed the minimum required Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 92, or a 7 on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam (international applicants); and articulate a strong interest in the discipline in their application. Prior research experience is an asset for any applicant, and letters of recommendation from research advisors are viewed as one of the most useful means of evaluating applications.

The application deadline for the fall semester is the preceding December 1. Applications received after that date will be reviewed, but they are disadvantaged for admission and financial support.

Additional information can be found on the department’s application process webpage (http://plantpath.wisc.edu/graduate-apply/).

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The department offers stipends to the most highly qualified applicants, and students are funded throughout their programs by research assistantships, fellowships, or traineeships. The department nominates outstanding students for external fellowships and supports and assists students who apply for scholarships and other forms of financial support.
Additional information regarding funding can be found on the department’s funding information webpage (https://plantpath.wisc.edu/funding-information/).

**REQUIREMENTS**

**MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

**MAJOR REQUIREMENTS**

**MODE OF INSTRUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Instruction Definitions</th>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evening/Weekend: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS**

**Policies**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES**

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.
MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Work from Other Institutions
For well-prepared advanced students, the program may accept prior graduate coursework from other institutions toward the minimum graduate degree credit and minimum graduate coursework (50%) requirement. The minimum graduate residence credit requirement can be satisfied only with courses taken as a graduate student at UW–Madison. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

UW–Madison Undergraduate
For well-prepared advanced students, the program may decide to accept up to 15 credits numbered 300 or above completed at UW–Madison toward fulfillment of minimum degree and minor credit requirements. This work would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

UW–Madison University Special
The program may decide to accept up to 15 University Special student credits as fulfillment of the minimum graduate residence, graduate degree, or minor credit requirements on occasion as an exception (on a case-by-case basis). UW–Madison coursework taken as a University Special student would not be allowed to count toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PROBATION

The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor.

To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME CONSTRAINTS

Doctoral degree students who have been absent for ten or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may be required to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/)
- Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/)
- Dean of Students Office (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (http://www.eao.wisc.edu/) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (https://grad.wisc.edu/) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (https://compliance.wisc.edu/) (for concerns about harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/) (for concerns about discrimination)

Plant Pathology Grievance and Appeals Procedures

If a student feels unfairly treated or aggrieved by faculty, staff, or another student, the University offers several avenues to resolve academic and non-academic grievances. Students’ concerns about unfair treatment are best handled directly with the person responsible for the objectionable action. If the student is uncomfortable making direct contact with the individual(s) involved, they should contact the Plant Pathology Department Chair, the Student Services Coordinator, or the Russell Labs Department Administrator.

Students are encouraged to also use campus resources (above) if the issue involves sexual harassment or assault, violence, discrimination, bias or hate, hostile or intimidating behavior, employment concerns, or disability accommodations.

Procedures for proper accounting of student grievances:
1. The student is encouraged to speak first with the person toward whom the grievance is directed to see if a situation can be resolved at this level.

2. Should a satisfactory resolution not be achieved, the student should contact the Plant Pathology Department Chair, the Student Services Coordinator, or the Russell Labs Department Administrator to discuss the grievance. Students can also contact any of the Russell Labs Department Chairs to discuss the grievance. Any of the above people will facilitate problem resolution through informal channels and facilitate any complaints or issues of students. The first attempt is to help students informally address the grievance prior to any formal complaint. Students are also encouraged to talk with their faculty advisors regarding concerns or difficulties if necessary.

3. If the issue is not resolved to the student’s satisfaction the student can submit the grievance to the Department Chair and Student Services Coordinator in writing, within 120 calendar days of the alleged unfair treatment.

4. On receipt of a written complaint, a faculty committee will be convened to manage the grievance. The program faculty committee will obtain a written response from the person toward whom the complaint is directed. This response will be shared with the person filing the grievance.

5. The faculty committee will determine a decision regarding the grievance, and will report on the action taken by the committee in writing to both the student and the party toward whom the complaint was directed within 15 working days from the date the complaint was received.

6. At this point, if either party (the student or the person toward whom the grievance is directed) is unsatisfied with the decision of the faculty committee, the party may file a written appeal. Either party has 15 working days to file a written appeal to the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Academic Affairs Office.

7. Documentation of the grievance will be stored for at least 7 years. Significant grievances that set a precedent will be stored indefinitely.

The Graduate School has procedures for students wishing to appeal a grievance decision made at the school/college level. These policies are described in the Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures: https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/.

OTHER

Applications to graduate studies act as the application for financial support. Offers of financial support accompany most offers of admission for students admitted to Plant Pathology. Most students hold research assistantships (RAs). The availability of RAs is limited.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic processes of pathogenesis, plant defense, and defense circumvention at the molecular, genetic and physiological level for each of the major groups of plant pathogens and other plant associated microorganisms.

2. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic biology of microorganisms that are symbiotic with plants including fungi, bacteria, viruses, oomycetes, and nematodes.

3. Demonstrate an understanding of the etiology, ecology, and epidemiology of economically significant diseases caused by the major groups of plant pathogens.

4. Construct disease management strategies for the different groups of important plant pathogens.

5. Demonstrate excellent problem solving skills and a deep conceptual understanding of the science of Plant Pathology.

6. Convey knowledge in a variety of formats to diverse audiences including the public, students, and fellow scientists.

PEOPLE

FACULTY

Ahlquist, Paul
Allen, Caitlyn
Barak-Cunningham, Jeri
Bent, Andrew
Gevens, Amanda (chair)
Handelsman, Jo
Kabbage, Mehdi
Koch, Paul
Lankau, Richard
MacGuidwin, Ann
Rakotondrafara, Aurelie
Rioux, Renee
Rouse, Douglas
Silva, Erin
Solís-Lemus, Claudia
Smith, Damon

AFFILIATED FACULTY

Ane’, Jean-Michel (Bacteriology)
Groves, Russell (Entomology)
Havey, Michael (Horticulture)
Keller, Nancy (Medical Microbiology & Immunology)
Pringle, Ann (Botany)
Whitman, Thea (Soil Science)
Yu, Jae-Hyuk (Bacteriology)

FACULTY ASSOCIATE

Hudelson, Brian

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Students in the Department of Plant Pathology are strongly encouraged to participate in events through the Plant Pathology Graduate Council. (http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/ppgc/)