

Zoology & Physiology Graduate Student Handbook

Welcome to the Zoology & Physiology Department at the University of Wyoming! We are happy to have you joining our community and hope that you will find it a rewarding and enjoyable place to be during your graduate studies.

This document is intended to offer guidance and resources for navigating through the often complicated process of being a graduate student. Much of the information in this document is available in greater detail through the Zoology & Physiology Department's graduate studies policy page (https://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/students/grad-degrees/policy_gradstudy.html) and the Office of Graduate Education's informational page (<https://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/index.html>). Also, this is a living document and changes to requirements may have been made between the time this document was written/provided. Be sure to check those sites for any additional questions not answered here.

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I - Contact Information

(For further information on contact and other office related processes - e.g. pay schedules, p-cards, vehicle renting, etc. - see the LSSC Office Procedures document)

Life Science Service Center Office - Located in Biological Sciences, Rooms 314D and 428A.

Laura Cole (lcole9@uwyo.edu) – LSSC Business Manager overseeing office operations.

Jack Ross (jross26@uwyo.edu) – LSSC Office Associate Senior handling P-cards, room/building access, website, part-time hires, work-study hires, TAs, GA hires.

Diane Gorski (dpgorski@uwyo.edu) - Laboratory and Course Coordinator for Zoology & Physiology courses. Point of contact for questions about lab facilities or TA'ing for Physiology.

Plum Schultz (iguana@uwyo.edu) - Office Associate for the Wyoming Co-op unit. Point of contact for anything specific to that unit, including vehicle or equipment rentals.

Vanessa Simoneau (vsimonea@uwyo.edu) - Business Manager for the Wyoming Co-op unit, overseeing office operations including GA hires, grant administration, budgets.

Brian Cherrington (bcherrin@uwyo.edu) – Department of Zoology and Physiology Graduate Student advisor board (GAB) chairman handles graduate student applications and admission.

Amy Navratil (anavrati@uwyo.edu) - Department Head; contact in cases of advisor conflict or other major administrative issues.

II - Overview of Program Requirements

The Zoology & Physiology Department offers:

A) Thesis and non-thesis based Master's degrees

(https://acalogcatalog.uwyo.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=14&poid=14657)

B) PhD (https://acalogcatalog.uwyo.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=14&poid=14658).

All forms are available from the Registrar's website: (<https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/graduate-students/graduate-student-forms.html>)

1. Course requirements

A) MS students are required to take a minimum of 30 credit hours. No more than 4 credit hours can be thesis research (ZOO 5960). Of the remaining 26 credit hours, at least 18 must be structured coursework (in-person or online classes with syllabi and assignments). The final 8 credit hours can be a mix of structured and unstructured coursework.

- Unstructured coursework can consist of lab meetings or advisor meetings in which projects are developed or papers read and discussed (e.g. Research in Ecology (ZOO 5750), Research in Physiology (ZOO 5600). It is also possible to receive course credit for attending the weekly Zoology & Physiology Brown Bag lectures (ZOO 5890). Speak with your advisor, other graduate students, and refer to this document for help determining which courses fulfill your requirements.

B) PhD students are required to take 72 hours of course work, of which 42 must be structured coursework (in-person or online classes with syllabi and assignments). The remaining 30 hours can come from unstructured coursework. Credit hours from graduate level coursework can be transferred from a previous institution.

2. Committee Requirements

Both MS and PhD students should form a committee **before the end of their second semester**. The form is now online and can be found here: (https://uwyo-erx.my.salesforce-sites.com/UWStudentForms/apex/ERx_Forms_PageMaker?pageId=GraduateCommitteeAssignmentForm). Other required forms (e.g. Program of Study, Anticipated Graduation Date) will not be accepted before a committee assignment form has been submitted. The committee should also meet before the end of the third semester to discuss the student's research and plan of study. A committee must have a minimum of 5 members for a PhD student and 3 members for a MS student. One of the committee members for both MS and PhD students must be a tenured faculty member from outside of the Zoology & Physiology Department. This committee member is intended to be independent of potential conflicts of interest that might arise in the case of student-advisor disagreements and should

be a resource for the student in these situations. Some professors are not eligible to be an external committee member because they either have a partial appointment in Zoology & Physiology or are not tenure track. Committees can be larger than the minimum requirement if you invite collaborators outside of University to be involved. If you are including additional collaborators on your committee, you need to communicate with the office of registrar and the school of graduate education for additional requirements because they often require a CV of the collaborator for proof of expertise if the collaborator is not an adjunct faculty member in the department.

In general, it is best to seek out faculty with some expertise in aspects of your intended research and which is complementary to that of your advisor. It is also helpful to consider the resources they can offer, such as access to equipment, help with complex analyses, connections to outside organizations, etc. Also be aware of faculty's existing commitments as faculty with expertise in popular fields may have many demands on their time and not be able to offer much help or commit to additional committees.

3. Other Requirements & General Timeline

Program of Study - All students should submit a Program of Study (MS - https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/_files/docs/program-of-study-master-new.pdf, PhD - https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/_files/docs/program-of-study-doctoral-new.pdf) **by the end of their second semester or beginning of third semester.** The Program of Study is a list of courses the student intends to take to fulfill all their requirements, which must be approved by each member of the committee. In practice, it can be quite difficult to predict which courses will be available, as many are not offered on a regular basis, or changes in faculty and sabbaticals can prevent courses from being offered. Programs of Study are thus often submitted after the second semester deadline, however, due to common delays within the registrar's office it is strongly encouraged to submit your program of study by your second semester even if you intend to make changes. If you end up taking different courses over the course of your degree you will need to submit a 'request for change in graduate program' form (http://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/_files/docs/request-for-change-in-graduate-program-new.pdf). You do not need to submit a new program of study or gather committee signatures for this change.

There are some suggested courses in section III of this document to help students with planning their course of study.

Preliminary Exams/Proposal Defense –

PhD students must complete preliminary exams, but MS students do not. Guidelines for prelim exams can be discipline specific and should be discussed in advance with your major advisor. Although not a strict requirement of the Zoo/Phys department and office of registrar, students often write a proposal and present their proposed research in the form of a public presentation. This is often a requirement of the advisor to have students present their proposed research to the department and committee, and this presentation is open to the public. After the proposal presentation, it is

common for the student to have a closed door meeting with their committee to review concerns about the proposed research and to probe the student's depth of knowledge regarding their field of study.

All PhD students must complete a proposal defense and preliminary examination to be administered by their committee prior to defending their dissertation. Preliminary exams are required from the transition between PhD student to PhD candidate. Report of preliminary exam must be signed by all committee members and submitted to the office of registrar for the admission to candidacy (http://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/_files/docs/report-of-on-preliminary-exam-new.pdf).

Detailed information on this is available here:

A) MS (https://acalogcatalog.uwyo.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=14&poid=14657)

B) PhD (https://acalogcatalog.uwyo.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=14&poid=14658)

Thesis/Dissertation Defense - All PhD and MS students are required to give a public defense, which must be publically advertised at least one week in advance of the defense date. The public defense deadline is a minimum of 10 calendar days before the end of the semester – this date changes every semester so be aware of your timeline. After the public presentation, a closed door committee meeting is held for your committee to review edits and comments to your thesis/dissertation. At the time of this committee meeting, if your committee agrees that you passed your thesis/dissertation you should have your committee sign the report of final examination (https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/graduate-students/report-of-final-exam-mastersphd-new_11.2022.pdf). Your committee may require you to incorporate changes to your written thesis/dissertation prior to signing the report of final examination. The end of the semester can be a busy time for faculty so make sure to schedule the dates for your preliminary exams and defenses well in advance.

Thesis/Dissertation Submission - When you are starting to write at the end of your graduate studies, be sure to follow the University's formatting requirements (https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/_files/docs/thesis_dissertation_guide2020.pdf). Additionally, it is suggested you request a recent graduate's thesis/dissertation to mimic the formatting. If you have already formatted chapters for submission to journals this is generally accepted, but the combination of chapters and beginning of your thesis/dissertation requires specified formatting.

Graduation - Prior to graduation, all students must declare an Anticipated Graduation Date through WyoWeb (https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/_files/declaring-graduation-date-online-through-wyorecords.pdf). The Report of Final Exam is required for graduation along with previously submitted documents like the program of study. You should check that all your degree requirements are met prior to graduating in your degree evaluation, which can be found under your student records

page in WyoRecords (WyoWeb-WyoRecords-Students). If you plan to walk at the graduation ceremony, make sure to communicate this to your advisor so they have time to order the appropriate academic regalia.

Request of Course Load Reduction - Finally, many students may wish to take fewer than the required 9 credit hours, but still remain a full-time student with access to healthcare and University facilities. In these cases, it is possible to request a reduced course load using the Optional Student Fee Petition (<https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/files/docs/optional-student-fee-petition-new.pdf>). In order to be eligible for this reduction, PhD students must have completed their Prelims and MS students must have completed 90% of their coursework. PhD students can only request this reduction three times and MS students two times.

III – Registering for Courses & Course List

In order to register for courses on WyoWeb, you will need a PERC number. Your advisor should send you this number prior to registration opening each semester. If your advisor is out of reach, you can also request your PERC number from the Life Science Service Center Office. It is important to register for classes by August 1st for the fall semester and January 1st for the spring semester so that you can be hired in a timely fashion and receive a paycheck.

You should only **register for 9 credits in the spring (by January 1st) and fall (by August 1st) semester, and 1 credit in the summer semester**. If you go above 9 credits you will be charged fees you will have to pay for out of pocket. The 9 credits can be a mix of courses and thesis/dissertation research credits. Taking 1 credit in the summer ensures you keep health insurance coverage.

Prior to registration every semester, you will be required to complete emergency contact, health insurance acceptance, and some additional information that WyoWeb requires. WyoWeb has a lot of “excess” courses listed that are not available to every graduate student so the best way to search for and register for classes is using the “advanced search” option and listing the instructors name and course number. Many advisors offer lab meetings for credit, but students outside of the lab are not always meant to register for the course, so be aware of courses that are truly available to take. Often, professors email a notice of a course offering the semester prior as a reminder for students to register.

Be aware there are a lot of cross-listed courses offered for registration on WyoWeb, and often these courses are not ideal for graduate students with basic understandings of ecology, biology, or physiology, but they are offered for graduate students that need to meet additional degree requirements. Additionally, many cross-listed courses require a lot of additional course work which is intended for undergraduates. If you are unsure if a cross-listed course is worth taking you should inquire with the listed instructor.

Many times, courses require permissions to register. If you are trying to register for a course but it requires an override, email Diane Gorski (DPGorski@uwyo.edu) and the instructor of the course with your W# and course information. Make sure the instructor is ok with you registering first because some overwrites are required for acceptance based on experience of the graduate student prior to taking the course.

Thesis and Dissertation Research credit and some courses allow you to manually adjust the amount of credits you are registering for per semester. For example, if you wanted to take 9 credits of thesis research you would register for the 1 credit listed in WyoWeb under your instructor's name, and then proceed to the "Schedule and Options" Tab in the Register for classes window and click on the underlined number under "Hours" and change 1 to 9.

The suggested course list below is divided by Zoology or Physiology courses to aid students in which classes are best for their area of research. Graduate level classes can be taken across departments, so they do not all have to be listed as a "ZOO" class. Often, other graduate students have a good grasp of what classes to take based on expertise so reach out to your peers.

SUGGESTED ZOOLOGY COURSES:

ZOO 5530– Intro to R – Merkle – 3 credits

Introduction to R from the basics to data visualization. This is a very useful course for every beginning graduate student planning on completing data analysis in R. Offered every fall semester.

STAT 5050/5051 - Statistics for Biology

Good overview of basic statistical concepts. Good for those who need to brush up on the basics. Offered every fall (5050) and spring (5051) semesters.

BOT 5550 - Computational Biology

Introduction to statistical methods using R including distributions, basic modeling, and introduction to Bayesian. Offered every spring semester.

BOT 5600 - Ecological Modeling

Good coverage of statistics from linear regression to Bayesian to multiple regression to structural equation modeling in R. Offered even spring semesters.

ZOO 5500 - Quantitative Analysis of Field Data – Kelley – 4 credits

Lessons in statistical analysis and modeling messy field data. Most of the semester is spent with the students' own data in R therefore students that are further along in their program are accepted and should take this course. An ample amount of data is required to take this course. Offered every fall semester.

ZOO 5890 – Animal Movement Modeling – Merkle – 4 credits

Course that covers the basics to more complex analysis of spatial data (GPS collars, remote sensing data, etc). Generally taken with some experience in R and with the purpose to apply specific methods to understand GPS collar data. Offered every spring semester.

ZOO 5890 – Topics and Discussions in Ecology – Merkle & Tarwater – Postdocs/PhD students lead -1/2 credits
This class is designed for incoming Masters Students to read and review foundational papers in Ecology, and build a community and cohort of new masters students in the department. Class is teaching/discussion based with a broad overview of the field of ecology and graduate student success.

ZOO 5620 - Advanced Topics in Ecology – Instructors vary – 3 credits
A review of the fundamental literature spanning population, community, and ecosystem ecology. This class was designed with PhD students in mind, as exams are written like questions presented in Preliminary exams, but masters students can gain a lot from this broad ecological class.

ZOO 5890 - Advanced Topics in Evolution
A review of the fundamental literature in genetics, speciation and evolutionary ecology.

ZOO 5270 - Writing and Reviewing Science – Montieth & Chalfoun – 4 credits
Overview of scientific writing practices and understanding of how the publication process works. Must have analyzed data for preparation of a manuscript in class.

ZOO 5520 – Habitat Selection - Chalfoun
Discussion based course centered on readings and discussion of habitat selection studies. Offered every other fall semester (Offered for fall 2024).

ZOO 5890 – Conservation Decision Making – Bernard – 3 credits
The objective of the course is to train students to either become conservation decision makers or scientists who can communicate with natural resource decision makers and stakeholders. Practical aspects of conservation will be emphasized, including conflict resolution among diverse stakeholders, adaptive management, and structured decision making using realistic, real-life examples where possible. Offered in the fall semester.

ENR 5890 – Data Driven Storytelling – Aikens
Course designed for students to use their own data to learn and practice “telling the story” of their data for different audiences and outlets. Teaches students to prepare publication ready figures, and effectively communicate scientific results to different outlets.

ZOO 5890 – Foundation in biological Programming – Koger – 3 credits
Course aimed at teaching basic principles of biological programming in Python to explore biological software applications such as agent-based modeling, remote sensing, and basic image processing. No prior experience with programming is expected, and you do not need to use your own data.

ENR 5530 – Data Analysis & Viz in EnvSci – Holbrook – 2 credits
Course focused on the motivation behind different analytical procedures common in ecology and environmental science with examples of analyses and data visualization techniques for publication ready figures.

BOT 5000- Learning and Teaching in Biology
Overview of the teaching literature and practices, great way to build curriculum.

SUGGESTED PHYSIOLOGY COURSES:

STAT 5050/5051 – Statistics for Biology

Good overview of basic statistical concepts. Good for those who need to brush up on the basics. Offered every Fall (5050) and Spring (5051) semesters.

ZOO 5740 – Biological Confocal Microscopy

With the advances of technology, confocal microscopy is an increasingly important tool for biological research. Teaches students the basic principles of confocal microscopy and its biological applications. This is a hands-on course and students have the chance to practice on a state-of-the-art confocal microscope.

ZOO 5735 – Transmission Electron Microscopy

With the emphasis on modern techniques, course prepares students via theory and technical experience to use transmission electron microscopy in biological and material science research. An individual research project is required.

ZOO 5735 – Advanced Topics Calcium Signaling

Designed to cover advanced topics in Physiology for students specializing in Physiology or related fields.
Dr. Yun Li

ZOO 5735 – Advanced Topics Circadian Rhythms

Designed to cover advanced topics in Physiology for students specializing in Physiology or related fields.
Dr. Trey Todd

ZOO 5715 – Seminar in Neuroscience

A continuing seminar. All students in the graduate neuroscience program are expected to register for this seminar each semester. The interdisciplinary approach to the nervous system is used employing work from physiology, neuroanatomy and neurochemistry, psychology, pharmacology, and biochemistry.

ZOO 5685 – Neurophysiology

Designed to investigate the structure and function of nervous systems, drawing information from both vertebrate and invertebrate organisms. Topics such as sensory systems, motor coordination and central integrative mechanisms are covered in addition to the basic neurophysiology of nerve cells. The laboratory complements the lecture sequence.

ZOO 5340 – Developmental Biology and Embryology

Introduces study of vertebrate embryology and cellular differentiation. Includes gametogenesis, fertilization, blastulation and organogenesis, growth and differentiation, teratology, metamorphosis, regeneration, and asexual reproduction. Emphasizes mechanisms that create form and cellular differentiation.

ZOO 5295 – Neurodevelopment

Through lecture and discussion of research articles, students learn mechanisms of nervous system development, from the birth and differentiation of neurons to the formation of synapses and circuits. Focus is on classical experiments done in vertebrates (*Xenopus* tadpole, chick, zebrafish, and mouse) and invertebrates (nematode and *Drosophila*).

ZOO 5100 – Structure and Function of the Nervous System

Aimed at understanding the structure and interconnections within the nervous system, and how structure gives rise to the complex functions mediated by the brain. This is an essential feature of neuroscience. Covers gross anatomy of the central and peripheral nervous system, followed by detailed consideration of the divisions of the brain and their functional significance.

MOLB 5051 – Molecular Biology Departmental Seminar

Required attendance at a series of weekly seminars presented by visiting faculty on a diverse set of research topics. Undergraduates are able to use one credit hour to partially fulfill the seminar requirement.

MOLB 5400 – Immunology

Biology of immune system; cellular and molecular mechanisms; host resistance to infectious agents; as well as hypersensitivities, autoimmunity, tumor and tissue rejection. Includes laboratory for immunological techniques.

MOLB 5260 – Quantitative Microscopy

Acquaints students with principles of light microscopy, use of fluorescent probes and image processing software. Students use phase contrast, fluorescent, and confocal microscopes learning to measure and compare size and intensity of images.

MOLB 5450 – Cell and Developmental Genetics

Integrates the genetic control of cell regulation and animal development in both vertebrate and invertebrate model systems such as *Drosophila*, *C. elegans* and the mouse. Includes studies of eukaryotic signal transduction, gene control, and current transgenic technologies.

MOLB 5600 – Advanced Biochemistry

Emphasis will be placed on identifying essential chemical features of select biomolecules, understanding molecular mechanisms of representative biochemical and bioenergetic processes, and detailing experimental approaches for addressing important research questions in biochemistry.

MOLB 5610 – Biochemistry 2: Molecular Mechanisms

Biochemical and molecular mechanisms underlying cell function, including gene expression and epigenetic regulation, RNA and protein modification and function, assembly of macromolecular complexes, signaling and regulation of the cell cycle, are discussed.

MOLB 5670 – Advanced Molecular Cell Biology

Key concepts in eukaryotic cell biology will be presented with a focus on cellular processes that form the basis for human diseases. Cellular organization, dynamics, and signaling will be emphasized. Students will also explore principles of research design by critical reading and discussion of scientific literature.

IV - UWYO Student Health Insurance

The University of Wyoming is contracted with UnitedHealthcare Student Resources (UHCSR) to provide insurance plans for domestic and international students. Plans are purchased for fall and spring coverage to ensure year-round coverage is available. Insurance is available over the summer but isn't necessarily covered by Teaching Assistantships. Students **are not required** to purchase the student health insurance and can seek out their own insurance plans.

A Brief Overview

You must go to the Student Healthcare Center (SHC) on campus for any non-emergency health issues if you are in Laramie and the Center is open. They provide many services for free. If they cannot provide assistance, they will refer you to an outside facility. It is important that you go to the SHC first and keep a copy of the referral, otherwise you may not be reimbursed for your costs by the insurance company.

As of 2024, the deductible for the student health insurance is \$400. This means that you must pay at least \$400 in documented medical expenses before the insurance will provide any payments for services. Once you have met the deductible, the company will pay 80% of the total cost for 'in network providers'. If you are going to a facility outside the SHC, it is important to find out **if the facility and the specific doctor** you are seeing are in network. You should check this even if SHC referred you to a doctor as they don't necessarily know who qualifies as in or out of network. The coverage for out of network providers is only 60% of expenses (after meeting the \$800 out of network deductible)! You can check network status using the insurance company's website: <https://www.uhcsr.com/school-page>

For purchasing medications, you pay a copay (an amount required regardless of your payment of the deductible) that corresponds to the expense of your medication. Drugs are ranked in tiers - tier 1 drugs are more common and have a \$10 copay. You should check the insurance provider's website to see what tier your medication is and the corresponding copay.

There is a long list of exceptions for which the provider will not pay on the benefits summary document on the UHCSR website. When planning health procedures, it is very important to do your research ahead of time. If you have any questions, call UHCSR or the Student Health Insurance office (info below) and ask questions until you are satisfied that they have explained everything so that you understand. It is your financial and physical health that are in jeopardy and these people's jobs are to answer questions about the insurance that you are paying for, so do not be afraid to push until you are satisfied they have answered your questions.

Finally, you will not be mailed an insurance card. You will need to go to the UHCSR website and create an account using your school information and then access your insurance card

information through the website. You should print out a copy of this card and keep it with you at all times.

Plan Information

Insurance plan information including plan cost, deductible, out-of-pocket maximum, coinsurance, prescription drug prices, preventative care services and per service copays and deductibles for preferred and out-of-network providers is available here:

<http://www.uwyo.edu/risk/smi/plan.html> Please see additional links below to access further details and plan information including the academic year plan brochure.

Referral Information

A referral from the Student Health Center is required for medical care outside of the SHC. A new referral is required per academic year and diagnosis. The insurance company will not cover (pay) for any treatment or appointments without a referral (exceptions apply). The following circumstances do not require a referral:

- Medical Emergency. The student must return to SHC for necessary follow-up care.
- When the Student Health Center is closed.
- When service is rendered at another facility during break or vacation periods.
- Medical care received when the student is more than 40 miles from campus.
- Medical care obtained when a student is no longer able to use the SHC due to a change in student status.
- Maternity, obstetrical and gynecological care.
- Mental Illness treatment and Substance Use Disorder treatment.

Additional Benefits

United Healthcare Student Resources has multiple tools to help students navigate their health including:

- Health Discount Program through [United Health Allies](#) that offers discounts to certain healthcare providers, books/media, and fitness supplies.
- Healthiest You 24/7 Doctor Access where students can speak with a doctor via phone and/or video regarding medical questions. The phone number is listed on the student's insurance card.
- Student Assistance 24/7 Counseling Support and other assistance services. More information is available to students in the student's My Account with UHCSR.

Enrollment Process

Domestic students are required to accept or decline the Student Health Insurance option through their WyoWeb account prior to registering for classes. A confirmation email will be sent to their University email after a selection has been made. Changes to one's insurance choice may be made by selection "Health Insurance" under the "To-Do" list on their WyoWeb account. The

deadline to make any changes to the insurance selection is the drop/add deadline for the semester and is published on the Registrar's website.

International (non-citizen) students are automatically enrolled in the medical insurance every fall and spring semester when they enroll in classes. International students may waive the student medical insurance if they meet requirements outlined in the University Regulation 2-201 Admission of Students. Please see details on website: <https://www.uwyo.edu/risk/smi/>

Eligibility

Domestic students: enrolled in at least 4.5 hours. Students are not eligible if they are online or remote only and should not elect the insurance if they are not taking classes in person, on campus.

International students: Students are not eligible for student health insurance if they are only online or remote and should review their registration closely. Contact the Student Health Insurance Office if you are online/remote and insurance charges appear on your account.

Tax Information

If necessary, you can obtain 1095 tax forms which demonstrate that you have been insured through the UHCSR website.

Contact Information

Student Health Insurance
Knight Hall room 248
Phone: (307) 766-3025
Fax: (307) 766-3024
Email: stuins@uwyo.edu

United Healthcare Services

Website: <https://www.uhcsr.com/uwyo>

Customer Services: 800-767-0700 (7:00 AM - 7:00 PM, CST, Monday - Friday)

Additional Links:

Student Health Insurance homepage: <https://www.uwyo.edu/risk/smi/>

Student Health Insurance Plan Information: <http://www.uwyo.edu/risk/smi/plan.html>

V - Finances

Salaries

The standard graduate assistantship provides payment of a stipend payable in installments over the academic year (September through May). Graduate students who receive a full stipend are expected to work an average of 20 hours per week for the stipend. As of August 2024, a full-time **doctoral level graduate assistantship** is estimated to equal **\$33,218 (stipend: \$21,762; tuition/fees/student health insurance: \$11,456)** and a full-time **master's level graduate assistantship** is estimated to equal **\$27,098 (stipend: \$15,642, tuition/fees/student health insurance: \$11,456)** (<https://www.uwyo.edu/fsbo/student-financial-services/tuition-and-fees.html>). Please note, the figures listed are based on the estimated set minimum amounts for one academic year. Departments and mentors may offer a higher amount if funding is available. Information provided from the University of Wyoming Graduate Education and Graduate Assistantship Information Page Spring 2024 (<https://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/financial-assistance/assistantship-funding.html>)

The assistantship funds are paid from September through May and **does not include funding for summer**, which must be obtained separately. Summer funding is generally procured either through departmental scholarships, independent grants you are awarded, or funding your advisor has.

Pay Schedule and base rates for GA's for Academic Year 2024-2025 (starting August 2024):

MS

Month	August	September	October	November	December	Semester Total
Pay Monthly	\$0.00	\$2,607.00	\$1,738.00	\$1,738.00	\$1,738.00	\$7,821.00

Month	January	February	March	April	May	Semester Total
Pay Monthly	\$1,564.20	\$1,564.20	\$1,564.20	\$1,564.20	\$1,564.20	\$7,821.00

PhD

Month	August	September	October	November	December	Semester Total
Pay Monthly	\$0.00	\$3,627.00	\$2,418.00	\$2,418.00	\$2,418.00	\$10,881.00

Month	January	February	March	April	May	Semester Total
Pay Monthly	\$2,176.20	\$2,176.20	\$2,176.20	\$2,176.20	\$2,176.20	\$10,881.00

It is also important to note that there are sometimes issues with the WyoCloud system that can delay payment of these stipends. To help avoid this, make sure that you are registered for classes by August 1st for the fall semester and January 1st for the spring semester so that you can be hired in a timely fashion. It is important to email Rachel Dobjeski in the LSSC Office if you notice

that you have not been paid after the end of the month you started (usually September or January).

Assistantships

Funding will come in the form of teaching assistantships (TAs), research assistantships (RAs), or graduate assistantships (GAs). A TA entails teaching a course or lab section; you are responsible for working up to 19 hours per week on teaching duties and must attend the GA Teaching & Learning Symposium the first semester you TA (<http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/enrolled-students/symposium.html>). Before the start of the semester, an email will be sent to all graduate students asking if they want to be considered for a departmental TA and classes they previously taught. Generally, students who have been around longer will TA upper-level classes and newer students will TA the large introductory LIFE Science classes. It is usually possible to TA the class that your advisor teaches if you ask and are requested by your advisor. MS students are limited to 4 semesters of support through TAs and PhD students are limited to 8 semesters.

An RA entails working on a research project that is not your own, either for your advisor or another professor. A GA entails working on your own research/projects with independent funding acquired either by your advisor or yourself. For each of these you are expected to work 20 hours per week.

TAs provide a base salary guaranteed by the university. You or your advisor can opt to pay a higher salary through a GA or RA if you have independent funding. The expected hours of work are supposed to be a running average. In practice you will find that some weeks you work substantially less than 19 or 20 hours and some weeks you work much more. If you feel like you are consistently working more than this, it is a good idea to keep track of your hours. As a graduate student you are simultaneously a student, an employee, and a researcher, often with different supervisors in each realm. As such, you have multiple people demanding your time and efforts, so it is important to maintain a balance for the sake of your health. If an advisor or teaching professor seems to be demanding too much and is not responding to your objections, you can follow the conflict resolution procedure further down.

In almost all cases, your assistantship should cover the cost of university fees, health insurance for a full year, and 9 credit hours of courses. The GTA tuition & fees package does not cover such things as International fees, computing/technology fees, graduation fees, or credits over 9, but your advisor may have additional funding for these fees.

Departmental Scholarships

The Department of Zoology and Physiology awards multiple scholarships and fellowships every year, by application. Fellowships and Scholarships are available to both graduate and

undergraduate students with some awards based on a nomination process. Applications are typically due late in the Fall term with deadlines varying by year. A current list of Fellowships can be found here (https://www.uwyo.edu/zoology/dept-scholarships/zooscholannouncement-2022_23.pdf)

Use of award money varies depending on the award and its intended application. Some scholarships can go directly to the student, while others must be used for research or tuition. It is therefore recommended to discuss with your advisor how scholarship money is to be used prior to applying. Note that any scholarships given directly to students are taxable.

There are also a number of broader scholarships available through the university which can be accessed here (<https://uwyo.academicworks.com/>). Among these are the Cheney Study Abroad scholarship (dollar amount varies), the Graduate Travel Funding Request (\$350), the Paul Stock Award (\$500), and the Scott Walters Travel Fund, all of which can be used to fund travel to conferences. Each student is limited to one award from each of these sources per year.

VI - Advisor Conflict

In an ideal world, all students and their advisors would form friendly and professional relationships that are mutually beneficial and productive. However, given it's often loosely defined and hard to measure boundaries, graduate education can sometimes be a difficult and frustrating process for both students and advisors. If such a situation develops into conflict between advisor and student, it's important for both parties to know the proper course of action to resolve the conflict.

First, every effort should be made to prevent such conflicts from arising in the first place. Students and their advisors should meet periodically (at least once per semester) to discuss expectations and progress in the student's graduate program. Often conflicts can be avoided by creating a set of benchmarks and a timetable that both the student and their advisor agree to meet. When conflicts arise that can't be resolved between the student and their advisor, the student should discuss the issues with the department chair or their outside committee member. This can be a useful way for a student to informally voice their concerns and get advice on what steps they should take from an experienced faculty member. If the student does not feel comfortable discussing their conflict with either of these two resources, or otherwise feels that their issue can't be resolved within the department, they should contact the Department of Graduate Education (GradEd@uwyo.edu). As the administrative department responsible for overseeing all graduate students at the university, they can provide an impartial voice to mediate a resolution. In extreme cases where students feel they can no longer continue with their advisor or department, this resolution may include a change in the student's graduate degree program or a switch to a new advisor. Students can also contact the Office of the Ombuds (<http://www.uwyo.edu/ombuds>) whose goal is to provide the university community an informal

setting in which to share dilemmas, ideas, questions, without fear of exposure, retaliation, or recrimination.

The final recourse if a student feels that they have not been treated fairly according to the department and university's own guidelines is to make an appeal to the Graduate Student Appeals Board (GSAB). This is an appellate body that reviews appeals of graduate students concerning retention in graduate programs and employment as graduate assistants, among other issues. GSAB members are faculty and graduate students from the Graduate Council and represent campus-wide disciplines. Further information about the appeals process can be found on the Office of Graduate Education website (http://www.uwyo.edu/uwgrad/_files/docs/graduate_appeal_policy.pdf).

Finally, threats, discrimination, and sexual harassment are not acceptable in any form. If a student feels they have experienced any of the above, they should report to the University's Title IX Coordinator, Jim Osborne (report-it@uwyo.edu). Further information, including links to confidential reporting, can be found here: <http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit/make-a-report/index.html>

VII - Special Information and Resources for International Students

ISS: The first thing to do, if you haven't already, is to contact the International Students and Scholars office (<https://www.uwyo.edu/iss/index.html>). Everyone in this office is working hard to make you feel at home at the University of Wyoming and has a package for you, including workshops on how to start your life as a grad student, how to build skills as a teaching assistant (TA), etc. ISS will send you the important updates on your immigration status. Never ignore any emails coming from the ISS office. They may redirect you to an online newsletter, but it is extremely important that you don't miss any important deadlines they may be trying to inform you of. They also offer special graduate assistantships and various events to meet with other International students. The ISS and Center for Global Studies (<https://www.uwyo.edu/globalcenter/index.html>) may also help fund part of your field work abroad, so always keep an eye to their websites or and the WyoWeb scholarship/fellowship portal (<https://uwyo.academicworks.com/>).

Taxes: As a graduate student, you are legally earning income and are therefore required to pay US income taxes. The first thing you need in order to pay taxes is a Social Security number. The ISS organizes a field trip to obtain Social Security Cards in Cheyenne for all International students at the beginning of the semester. The Social Security Card is a form of legal identification but is very CONFIDENTIAL and should only be shared in limited circumstances, such as with Human Resources when being hired for a job. It is a good idea to keep the Social Security Card in a safe location with your other important documents (e.g. I-20, other

immigration forms) rather than carrying it with you. Once you have your Social Security Card, there is a series of tutorials created by Casey Green to help with tax document preparation. Be on the lookout for any emails that contain workshops/office hours for tax-related issues that he will be providing in person or online. When meeting in person with Mr. Green or visiting the ISS for any tax/immigration related issues, always make sure you bring all your original immigration documents with you (the I-20 or other forms, passport, Social Security Card, etc).

International students will sometimes receive personalized scam calls about our legal immigrations status/tax identity in the US. Do not answer these calls or give any confidential information over the phone, unless someone from the ISS office approves it first.

Driver's License: Obtaining driver's license in Wyoming is not difficult but can be necessary. Don't wait too long to do it. Keep an eye on social media for used cars in Laramie or Colorado and if possible, ask the opinion of a native US citizen to double check that you are making a good choice. Then visit the ISS office to obtain pamphlets on how to obtain your license and read about the theory/practice exams. It is important that, when driving with locals, you ask questions about things you may find that are different from your home country in terms of symbols or unwritten rules for the road. What to do if there is an emergency vehicle approaching? What are the all stop signs at every corner? What to do in a police stop? Be aware of this reality: <https://www.aclu.org/report/driving-while-black-racial-profiling-our-nations-highways>. The WyDOT driver license test is the bare minimum and will not provide you with all the necessary knowledge to be safe on the road, so do your own homework on how to become a good, safe driver in the U.S.

- Leaving and entering the country: Make sure your passport is stamped when entering or leaving the U.S. and always carry your immigration forms with you. Before leaving the embassy's office, double check that the SEVIS form and passport numbers match or request a letter from ISS explaining such an error (always carry this with you along with other forms). **Note that your form with the SEVIS information needs to be signed every time before you leave the country so that you can come back to U.S./Wyoming (always double check this signature is valid for the time frame of your travels).**
- Note that the University has a lot of resources for student health: doctor's appointments, therapy/counselling, meditation workshops, group counselling, international student social, cultural celebrations, sport activities, half acre gym, swimming pool, soccer, etc. Although you may feel a bit intimidated or out of place when accessing these, it is important that you know that you can take full advantage of all the student services because you are paying for them every semester!

- This is not an exhaustive list, but ISS and the other many student-focused offices will be extremely helpful for your introduction to graduate life in Laramie. People are very friendly and courteous so don't be afraid to smile/greet/thank every time you meet someone at an office when looking for information.

VIII - Campus / Community Resources

1) Social Resources

- Talk with your fellow students! Be sure to reach out to other students in your lab and the rest of the department. Much of the knowledge of navigating grad school is passed down by word of mouth. Students further along in the program can be a great resource for figuring out which classes to take or common stumbling blocks.
- Graduate Student Network: The official organization for graduate students on campus. They organize social events with free food, opportunities to present your research to the public, and write-ins to get work done (<https://www.facebook.com/gradstudentnetwork>).
- WiMSE: Women in Math, Science, and Engineering Group hosts a lot of events focused around Women in STEM on campus.
- Zoology & Physiology Mental Health and Wellness Group: This is a unique group that is dedicated to promoting conversations around mental health and wellness in our department. **Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical and mental health.** Taking time for yourself can be hard, and we want to promote and encourage members of our department to take time away from the stressors of work/school/academic life!

2) Academic Resources

- Writing Center: Receive one on one help with your writing (<http://www.uwyo.edu/writing-center/>).
- Oral Communication Center: Get help practicing your oral communication skills (<http://www.uwyo.edu/cojo/occ/>).
- Ellbogen Teaching Center: They can assist in improving your TA skills and offer a certification in teaching to any grad student (<https://www.uwyo.edu/ctl/index.html>).
- Disability Support Services: Offers help to any student with physical or learning disabilities, including making arrangements with professors for class accommodations (<http://www.uwyo.edu/udss/>).

- Non-traditional Student Center: Offers academic support, links to scholarships, and social events with free food. All graduate students are non-traditional by definition, so all grad students can access these resources.

3) Safety Information

- University of Wyoming Violence Prevention Office (<https://www.uwyo.edu/dos/sexualmisconduct/sm-prevention.html>)
- Green Dot Program: A program on campus committed to reducing and preventing power-based personal violence such as sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking. Green Dot is a bystander intervention program to reduce these forms of violence (<https://www.uwyo.edu/greendot/index.html>).
- SAFE project: Emergency shelter and support for victims of violence (<http://www.uwyo.edu/stop/advocacy-and-support/index.html>).
- Equal Opportunity Report and Response (EORR): Who to report harassment or violence of any form to on campus (<http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit/eorr/index.html>).

4) Health Resources

- **Student Health Services:** Medical services for students at reduced or no cost, and they also offer counseling services on a sliding scale (<http://www.uwyo.edu/shser/>).
- **Albany Community Health Clinic:** Affordable community health care if you don't have student health insurance (<https://albanycommunityhealthclinic.com/>).
- **Laramie Reproductive Clinic:** Reproductive healthcare on a sliding pay scale (<https://laramiereproductivehealth.org/>).
- **University Counseling Center:** Free individual and group counseling offered quickly with no waitlist, but only offered for 5 sessions and usually focused on crisis intervention (<http://www.uwyo.edu/ucc/>).
- **Wellspring Counseling Clinic Uwyo:** Free counseling services that are more long term than the Counseling center, short waitlists, and only available during the school year. You usually work with a graduate student training to become a counselor alongside of a licensed provider (<https://www.uwyo.edu/clad/counseling/-resources-wellspring-counseling-clinic.html>).
- **Psychology Clinic:** Low-cost mental health care, usually they have very long waitlists because they are consistently used for help. They use a lot of CBT (Cognitive behavioral therapy). You are usually seen by a graduate student earning their degree with a licensed provider overseeing their work. This is by far the most suggested place by students for students to seek help (<https://www.uwyo.edu/psychology/center/index.html>).

- **Overcomer Counseling Services:** A community-based counseling clinic in Laramie that offers counseling on a sliding scale. You can work with your counselor to set the deductible cost of \$400 and then you usually pay around \$25 a session.
- **Wellness Center:** Offers mindfulness workshops, cooking classes, massage chairs, and other wellness activities (<https://www.uwyo.edu/rec/wellness-center/>).
- **Peak Wellness Center:** An affordable community mental health program if you're seeking to get outside of the university system.

5) Food and Clothing Assistance

- **Ridley's Grocery Store:** Every 1st Saturday of the month there is a 10% discount off of all groceries at the Ridley's store for University students and employees. Bring your WyoOne card!
- **Laramie Soup Kitchen:** Free lunch M-F 10:30-1:30 (<https://www.laramiesoupkitchen.org/>).
- **Interfaith - Good Samaritan Food Pantry:** Income-requirement-free food pantry and emergency assistance (<https://www.laramieinterfaith.org/>).
- **On-Campus Food Share Pantries:** There are multiple food share pantries available to all students on campus. The locations of all 15 food share pantries on campus can be found at the following link: https://www.uwyo.edu/food-security/access_food_uw/index.html.
- **Wyoming Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** Income based food assistance (<https://dfs.wyo.gov/assistance-programs/food-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/>).
- **Clothing Cottage:** Low price and free clothes (<https://www.stmatthewscathedralaramie.com/the-cottage-at-st-matthew-s>).

IX - Life Outside of Graduate School

Laramie is centrally located to a plethora of outdoor activities ranging from hiking, biking, snowshoeing, skiing, fishing, hunting and trail running. There is no shortage of open space, trails, and natural areas to explore and indulge in!

If you're not the outdoorsy type, Laramie still has some cultural amenities, though you may find yourself driving down to Fort Collins to expand your options.

Mentions of businesses and activities below does not constitute endorsement by the University in any capacity. These are simply the personal recommendations of students writing this document.

1) Outdoor Activities

- a) Hiking / cross-country skiing trails nearby:

Head east 15 minutes on I-80 to access the Tie City, Pole Mountain and Vedauwoo regions of the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest area (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/mbbr/home>). There are miles of hiking (all difficulty levels) and mountain biking trails that are easily accessible during the Spring, Summer, and Fall. These areas transition to great cross-country ski trails during the winter with grooming and maintenance conducted by the Medicine Bow Nordic Association (<http://www.medicinebownordic.org/>). Dispersed camping is available in designated spots along the 700 road and several other access points, in addition to regulations per the USFS website.

West of Laramie, HWY 130 will take you to the beautiful Snowy Mountain Range and Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest. Established trails provide beautiful scenery and hiking opportunities, with many trails accessible for backpacking and longer camping trips. Dispersed camping is available in designated spots and per the USFS website.

b) Downhill Skiing

The Snowy Range Ski Area (<https://www.snowyrangeski.com/>), about 45 minutes west of Laramie at the base of the Snowy Mountain Range, provides an excellent outdoor reprieve during the colder months of the year. Daily and season passes are available for purchase online (48 hours in advanced) and in person at the lodge. Prices are very reasonable in comparison to other ski resorts; however, this also reflects the smaller size and easier ski run diversity at Snowy Range Ski Area. Additionally, Snowy Range Ski Area typically partners with Steamboat Resort in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. With the purchase of a Snowy Range Season pass, you can purchase 5 days at Steamboat for ~\$169 (incredible savings!!). These Steamboat Resort days do not have any blackout dates or restrictions, do not have to be used on consecutive days, but are not transferable. If you're new to skiing, the Snowy Range Ski Area is a great place to learn and expand your skills. Rental skis are available at the Snowy Range Lodge and through the UW Outdoor Program.

There are also many backcountry skiing opportunities in the Medicine Bow National Forest and through the Front Range. The Outdoor Program leads Avalanche Safety classes and rents out backcountry skis.

c) Fishing

Wyoming is known for its incredible fishing opportunities. Fortunately, Laramie offers multiple opportunities within 1-2 hours. Here are a few great places for fishing of any variety:

- Laramie River
- Plains Lakes
- N. Platte River
- Miracle Mile
- Snowy Range Mountain lakes (Mirror, Marie, North and South Gap, Telephone, Brooklyn, etc.)

d) Climbing

Half Acre gym has a climbing wall and bouldering, top roping, and sport routes are available.

Vedauwoo is also a famous climbing destination and offers a wide variety of options. For all levels of sport climbing Beehive Buttress is the best option (<https://www.mountainproject.com/area/106189339/beehive-buttress>). Beehive Buttress is the best place for new climbers. The rest of Vedauwoo offers all levels but is primarily trad climbing and famous for its cracks and offwidth climbs.

The Outdoor Program has many different climbing clinics and trips that can teach you to climb if you're a complete beginner!

e) Mountain Biking

The Prairie (<https://www.mtbproject.com/directory/8020400/schoolyard-trails>) has several beginner level mountain biking trails east of town.

The Medicine Bow National Forest has many good networks of biking trails. The Happy Jack and Tie City trails offer a wide variety of mostly forested biking from flowy dirt trails to rocky, technical options. Curt Gowdy State Park has many trails as well in a high desert system interspersed with forest biking. Harder trails in Curt Gowdy are very technical. The Outdoor Program rents out bikes and has several biking trips and clinics if you're a beginner.

f) Places to get gear

Outdoor Gear is easy to come by in Laramie. Keep an eye on Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace for a variety of used gear options. Additionally, NU2U (Laramie) has a gear and used clothing store that are usually fairly well stocked all year round.

Laramie's Basecamp typically hosts a used gear sale every spring - community members can drop off gear they are interested in selling and Basecamp will sell it for you and return your proceeds. They also offer a wide variety of new gear for purchase (great option to shop and support local) and rental equipment.

Another gear swap is organized by the Outdoor Center on campus around the beginning of the Spring semester every year. This is a great place to sell your old gear or pick up cheap gear

If you are willing to travel, Fort Collins has several great stores including The Gearage (<https://gearageoutdoorsports.com/>) and Eco Thrift (<https://eco-thrift.com/shop/>). Feral (<https://feralmountainco.com/gear-used/>) is one of many stores in Denver with reasonable prices for used gear as well. You can find further results by asking friends and an internet search.

2) Indoor activities & Other things around town

- a) The Gryphon theater is a great local resource for plays, live music, and movie screenings that are a bit different from what the University offers (<https://www.gryphontheatre.org/>).
- b) The Albany County Public Library hosts many free events for the community, including free movie screenings, board game nights, and book clubs (<https://www.acplwy.org/events/library-events>).
- c) Laramie has two great farmers markets in the summer and fall that are fun to explore, buy seasonally available produce, or grab some food at some of Laramie's fine food-truck establishments. The Tuesday market is located on the south-east corner of Undine Park and is a smaller market starting around 3pm (<https://laramielocalmarket.net/>). The main farmer's market runs from June 28th – September 27th on Friday's from 3-7pm in the parking lot north of Depot Park on S. 1st St in downtown Laramie (<https://laramiemainstreet.org/farmersmarket>).
- d) 7220 Entertainment, an on campus student group, organizes free movie screenings most weeks during the semester as well as live music and comedy performances (<https://www.facebook.com/7220entertainment/>).

- e) There are Beer Education events in The Gardens (downstairs of the Union) most weeks during the school year. They are advertised cryptically so be on the lookout for free beer opportunities.
- f) There are several bars that do trivia on different nights of the week, if you're looking for a pub quiz.
- g) Several places downtown and around town offer activities for when it's too unpleasant to go outside. You can paint ceramics at Art & Soul Pottery, do a Pop Up Paint Party at a few of the studios downtown, throw pottery at the Civic Center (<http://lpccwy.org/7th-street-studio>), play board games at some of the bars (cribbage at Coal Creek, a big selection of board games at the Great Untamed, and a more modest selection at Bond's), or maybe even do the ninja warrior course at LEAP. There's also the territorial prison, Ivinson mansion, and an art museum if you're so inclined.
- h) There are several plays (<http://www.uwyo.edu/thd/whats-playing/>) and concerts (http://www.uwyo.edu/music/upcoming_performances/) put on each semester by the drama and music departments, including visiting performances by traveling groups.
- i) It's not inside, but it's not out of town: there are great murals around town (https://visitlaramie.org/laramie_mural_project), including a bike route (<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapTour/index.html?appid=38ebb29857cc466692f04bd13969849f>) and multiple public art pieces (<https://www.laramiepublicart.org/>).
- j) There are many city leagues for various sports including basketball, volleyball, softball, ice hockey and curling (<https://cityoflaramie.org/181/Adult-Sports-and-Activities>).
- k) The Geological Museum at the University is a great quick activity if you want to learn about Wyoming's geological history, look at dinosaur bones, rocks, and play with an interactive sand experience. <https://www.uwyo.edu/geomuseum/index.html>
- l) The Berry Biodiversity center has a lot of fun activities for kids and adults. There is always a kids play area located on the North-west corner of the first floor of the building. The Biodiversity center also has a lot of art exhibitions that transition through the downstairs, and there are a lot of talks/events that take place in the auditorium.
- m) Laramie Jubilee Days is a fun event held in the middle of July every year. Jubilee days is a week long, and a time to celebrate Laramie life with a rodeo, parade, street festival with live music, and a carnival with rides. Tons of food and drink vendors line the streets of downtown. Brew fest is also held on the Saturday of Jubilee days and allows you to try local beers from the inter-mountain west. <https://www.laramiejubileedays.org/>