

# PLANT PATHOLOGY, MS

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 (MS or PhD). Specific areas of proficiency addressed by the PhD curriculum include etiology, diagnosis, and management of plant disease; ecology and epidemiology; genetics and physiology of plant–microbe interactions; and organismal biology. PhD 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

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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/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 1
Spring Deadline	This program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	December 1
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/</a> ).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

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, mathematics, and physics. Successful applicants typically exceed the minimum requirement of a 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) 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. Additional information can be found on the department's application process webpage (<https://plantpath.wisc.edu/application-process/>).

Applications received after the deadline will be reviewed, but they are disadvantaged for admission and financial support.

A completed admission application acts as the application for financial support. All students who are admitted are offered financial support, generally in the form of a research assistantship (RA).

## FUNDING

### 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/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

### MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

#### MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

#### Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

### CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	30 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	15 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/</a> ).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/</a> ).

Other Grade Requirements n/a

Assessments and Examinations Students in the Plant Pathology MS must complete certification paperwork to outline their coursework and prepare, publicly present, and defend a thesis.

Language Requirements None.

### REQUIRED COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Core</b>		<b>9</b>
Students must complete at least 9 credits of plant pathology, including the following courses.		
PL PATH 300	Introduction to Plant Pathology (or equivalent)	
PL PATH 875	Special Topics (1 credit)	
PL PATH 923	Seminar (1 credit)	
<b>Additional Coursework<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>21</b>
In consultation with advisor, students must complete course work taken as a graduate student at UW–Madison numbered 300 or above and taken for credit.		
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>30</b>

<sup>1</sup> Up to 15 credits of PL PATH 990 Research may count for these remaining credits.

## 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 Credits Earned at Other Institutions

With MS committee approval and Academic Affairs Committee approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 14 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

##### Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW–Madison

Students may transfer up to 7 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above upon approval of the MS committee and the Academic Affairs Committee. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

## Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

## Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

With MS committee approval and Academic Affairs Committee approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 15 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW-Madison University Special student. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

## PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

## ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Refer to the Graduate School: Advisor (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232/>) policy. A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

## CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

## TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

## 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://employee disabilities.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 class 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

n/a

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## 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/>)

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic biology of microorganisms that are symbiotic with plants including fungi, bacteria, viruses, oomycetes, and nematodes.
2. Demonstrate a basic understanding of: a. 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. b. the etiology, ecology, and epidemiology of economically significant diseases caused by the major groups of plant pathogens and be able to apply the understanding from a. and/or b. above in research.
3. Conduct project related to the discipline of Plant Pathology that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting experiments, analyzing the resulting data, and reporting results/solutions.
4. Convey scientific knowledge to fellow scientists in a variety of formats.

## PEOPLE

## PEOPLE FACULTY

Ahlquist, Paul  
 Allen, Caitilyn  
 Barak-Cunningham, Jeri  
 Bent, Andrew  
 DiGennaro, Peter  
 Gevens, Amanda (chair)  
 Gluck-Thaler, Emile  
 Holland, Leslie  
 Handelsman, Jo  
 Kabbage, Mehdi  
 Koch, Paul  
 Lankau, Richard  
 Rakotondrafara, Aurelie  
 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