



PNNL-WSU Distinguished Graduate Research Program Guidelines

Objective: The Distinguished Graduate Research Program (DGRP) is intended to increase the quality and quantity of STEM Ph.D. students across the WSU system, provide an enhanced experience for the students through research in a U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratory, and align WSU faculty with scientists and the unique capabilities and research programs at PNNL and vice versa. The DGRP is particularly interested in helping to recruit outstanding students to WSU graduate programs representing the existing and emerging areas of collaboration [within PNNL’s core capability areas](#) of: nuclear science and materials, engineering, resilient electric power grid, bioenergy and bioproducts, chemical and materials science, biological and earth systems science, computer science, and other emerging areas.

Application: The DGRP is jointly coordinated by the Director of Research Partnerships at PNNL, the Vice President for Research, WSU and Vice Chancellor for Research, WSU Pullman, and the WSU Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education. Students are nominated to the program by a WSU faculty member and a PNNL scientist.

DGRP Application Due Dates, 2024 Cohort

Priority deadline for advisor applications	November 5, 2023
<i>Hard deadline for advisor applications</i>	<i>February 4, 2024</i>
Priority deadline for student applications	February 4, 2024
<i>Hard deadline for student applications</i>	<i>March 10, 2024</i>

The application process is intended to use the DGRP to recruit top-tier Ph.D. student applicants to WSU and to provide outstanding current WSU Ph.D. students an opportunity to participate in the DGRP. Interested advisors from WSU and PNNL should submit a joint-DGRP application [online](#) by the priority deadline of **November 5, 2023**, but no later than the hard deadline of February 4, 2024.

The application must include:

1. A two-page document (11-point font and 1” margins) that contains:
 - a. Statement outlining nature of collaborative research between the WSU faculty and PNNL scientist.
 - b. A description of the specific student project within this collaborative research.
Note: DGRP student research conducted at PNNL must be directly associated with the student’s dissertation research.
 - c. An outline of plans to ensure that student research conducted at PNNL will be directly associated with the student’s dissertation.
2. Two signed letters of intent (one from the WSU faculty and one from the PNNL scientist) to mentor and provide funding support to a student.

These initial applications will be reviewed and screened by the DGRP executive committee. Approved applications may then be used in student recruitment.



Once a student has been identified and accepted into their respective Ph.D. program, the PIs must submit the student's curriculum vita and graduate application material for review by the DGRP executive committee via the online student application link that the DGRP provides to approved applicants. The deadline for student applications is February 4, 2024 for priority consideration. The final deadline to submit student applications is March 10, 2024 for consideration in the Fall 2024 DGRP Cohort.

Students selected for participation in the DGRP will receive an additional DGRP acceptance letter to augment their official departmental offer letter from their respective Ph.D. program.

Once the DGRP acceptance letter has been received, the WSU faculty advisor is required to [submit a pre-proposal eREX](#) on behalf of the DGRP student by May 15th, following the [DGRP pre-Proposal eREX Guidelines](#). Additional information on this process can be found at <https://orso.wsu.edu/submit-a-proposal/> and by contacting ORSO@wsu.edu.

Eligibility: Prior to final appointment to the DGRP, the student must be accepted into a Ph.D. program at WSU. The DGRP involves students working on government-funded research at PNNL, a DOE-owned facility. DOE requires that all DGRP candidates and WSU advisors who are foreign nationals be reviewed for meeting DOE access requirements before the student or faculty member is approved for access to PNNL and access to information generated at PNNL. Continued participation in the DGRP will be contingent upon meeting the access requirements in effect. *Students must remain in good academic standing with the WSU Graduate School to participate in the DGRP.*

Financial Support: The DGRP is designed to provide funding support jointly from both the WSU and PNNL advisors.

- DGRP students are funded through their WSU department or advisor and PNNL advisor. ***Funding does not come directly from the DGRP.***
- Prior to All But Dissertation (ABD) status, DGRP students will be funded by their WSU department or advisor with means typical of the department. This support can include but is not limited to grant or gift funds from any source, a teaching assistantship, or a state funded research assistantship. Assistantships provide a stipend, a tuition waiver and health insurance ([Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 9](#)).
- After achieving ABD status, DGRP students will receive a stipend at Step 85, or five steps higher than the WSU department norm—whichever is higher—with funds provided by the PNNL advisor for up to 2 years (24 months total) while the student continues his/her dissertation research at PNNL. During this period of PNNL funding, the student will also receive a full, academic year tuition waiver (up to four semesters) provided by the WSU Graduate School. The elevated stipend level and tuition waiver are intended to recognize the prestige of the DGRP. **DGRP student research conducted at PNNL must be directly associated with the student's dissertation research.** The PNNL advisor will provide funds for the assistantship stipend, insurance, and mandatory fees on existing or future research funds.



- To apply for the ABD tuition waiver, fill out an [application through the WSU Graduate School](#) and upload the document in myWSU via Graduate Research Management (GRM). **The application must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the first day of the semester** you are requesting the ABD tuition waiver (8/1 for Fall or 12/10 for Spring). More information can be found [here](#).
- The WSU faculty advisor must keep the PNNL advisor updated on the student's academic progress at WSU at least twice a year and must inform the PNNL advisor at least 90 days prior to the expected start date for the student at PNNL to allow sufficient time for the funding agreement to be placed for the student's cost.
- **WSU departments are required to notify the DGRP (DGRP@wsu.edu) of the student's transition timeline 90 days prior to the funding start date to ensure that both PNNL and WSU can process the student's subcontract ahead of the funding start date.**
- Funding will be provided by PNNL through a subcontract to WSU via the WSU Office of Research Support and Operations (ORSO). The [full eREX](#) process sets up a DGRP student's subcontract for the period that they are to be funded by PNNL post-ABD status, following the [DGRP Full eREX Guidelines](#). **The full eREX must be submitted to ORSO at least 60 days prior to the DGRP student's PNNL funding start date.**
- Student start dates at PNNL are January 1, May 16, or August 16 unless otherwise approved by the DGRP.
- If the student requires additional time, beyond the two years of PNNL funding, to complete his/her dissertation, the responsibility for providing stipend and tuition support reverts to the student's WSU advisor.
- Prior approval from the DGRP coordinator is required if both the WSU and PNNL advisors mutually agree that the student will be funded by the WSU advisor rather than the PNNL advisor post-ABD status (in lieu of funding by the PNNL advisor for this time period). Note that the same funding terms apply regardless of funding source during this 24-month period post-ABD status: DGRP students will receive a stipend at Step 85, or five steps higher than the WSU department norm—whichever is higher.
- Similarly, prior approval from the DGRP coordinator is required if both the WSU and PNNL advisors mutually agree that the student will be funded by the PNNL advisor rather than the WSU advisor pre-ABD status (in lieu of funding by the WSU advisor for this time period).

Summer Funding: DGRP students are encouraged to take advantage of summer funding opportunities that offer financial support as well as research development and experience. The following terms apply:

- Tuition waivers are not available during summer semesters; therefore, WSU and PNNL may elect to employ the student on a wage basis set equivalent to the stipend and benefit fees.



- Pre-ABD: DGRP students who are pre-ABD status and on a WSU campus are encouraged to leverage available summer funding opportunities if their WSU department only funds a nine-month appointment. Pre-ABD summer funding opportunities for DGRP students may include time-slip work through their home department, time-slip work through their advisor's lab, funding through an advisor's grant, or applying for funding in the form of a PNNL Internship.
- Post-ABD: When DGRP students achieve ABD status, students will move to funding support by PNNL for up to 24 months. During this period of the DGRP when students are funded by PNNL through a sub-contract to WSU from the PNNL advisor's project, the students are not eligible to apply for other PNNL Internships.

Thesis Committee and Forms: Students participating in the DGRP will be advised by individuals from both PNNL and WSU. This can occur by being officially co-advised or having one major advisor from either PNNL or WSU.

- **All DGRP participants are required have both their PNNL and WSU advisors officially on their graduate committee.**
- DGRP students must complete the [Institutional Transition Form](#) to ensure there is a smooth and transparent transition from WSU to PNNL. The form must be submitted online no later than the end of the student's first semester in the DGRP. Timelines listed on the form may be updated as needed by re-submitting.
- Once a student schedules his/her preliminary exam, the student must notify the DGRP Coordinator (DGRP@wsu.edu) to discuss the transition process from WSU to PNNL.

Additional information is available on the [DGRP website](#) and by emailing DGRP@wsu.edu.