

PNNL-WSU Distinguished Graduate Research Program Guidelines

Objective: The Distinguished Graduate Research Program (DGRP) is intended to increase the quality and quantity of STEM PhD students across the WSU system, while providing an enhanced research experience by aligning WSU faculty and students with PNNL scientists and the unique capabilities and research programs at PNNL. The DGRP is particularly interested in helping to recruit outstanding students to WSU graduate programs representing the existing areas of collaboration with PNNL: nuclear science and engineering; electric power grid; bioproducts; catalysis; environmental, water and soil science and engineering; and other emerging areas of collaboration.

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

The application process is intended to use the DGRP to recruit top graduate student applicants to WSU.

Interested advisors from WSU and PNNL should submit a joint-DGRP application [online](#) by January 15th, 2021. The two-part 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.
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 PhD program, the PIs must submit the student's curriculum vita and graduate application material for review by the DGRP executive committee. Students selected for participation in the DGRP will receive an additional DGRP acceptance letter to augment their official departmental offer letter from their respective PhD program. **The official offer letter from the student's PhD department must include the required DGRP paragraph detailing the DGRP offer.**

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 PhD 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 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](#)). WSU departments must include the required DGRP paragraph detailing the DGRP offer in the departmental offer to the student.
- After achieving ABD status, DGRP students will receive a stipend at Step 85, or five steps higher than the 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.
- 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.**
- 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). 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 department norm—whichever is higher.

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 starting after the 2019 cohort 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.
- 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.