PNNL-WSU Distinguished Graduate Student Research Program Guidelines

Objective: This program has been established as a nationally-competitive effort to elevate the scientific and technical impact of PhD student research at PNNL and WSU. It is designed to attract a select cohort of PhD candidates with enhanced research opportunities unique to the National Lab system. Students selected to participate in the Program will receive an assistantship for financial support and will benefit from having graduate committee members and access to the world-class research infrastructure the two organizations can to provide.

Financial Support: The program is designed to provide funding support jointly from WSU and PNNL sources. To highlight the prestige of the program, assistantships will be provided at Step 85 or five steps higher than the department norm, whichever is greater. The funding model will be provided as follows:

- For years 1 and 2, an approved applicant will be appointed to an assistantship funded by departmental or faculty grant funds. This assistantship will provide a salary, a tuition waiver (based on the WSU Assistantship Policies), available benefits, and additional support to cover the mandatory fees. This period of support is intended to cover the time required to complete a majority of coursework and can be shortened to match the student progress.
- Years 3 and 4 would be funded for a 12-month duration at Step 85 or higher by PNNL through a contract to WSU via the WSU Office of Research Support and Operations (ORSO). The PNNL scientist is expected to provide funds for the assistantship salary, insurance and mandatory fees on existing or future research projects. The WSU Graduate School will provide tuition waivers for assistantships in these years.
- Consistent with WSU rules, the 12-month RA requires 3 credits of summer school. It is expected that the college, department, or a non-PNNL grant/contract will fund the summer school tuition, which is presently $1527. Please note that the college and department will receive the standard F&A distribution from the PNNL support contract (off-campus rate) that will provide funds that can be used to offset the summer support.
- It is recognized that additional years may be needed to complete the graduate degree program. In this case, the tuition waivers will revert back to follow the WSU Assistantship Policy for years 5 and beyond.

The students participating in this Program will be advised by individuals from both organizations. In addition, facilities at both organization will be available to advance the student research.

Eligibility: Since the DGRP program involves students working on government funded research at PNNL, a DOE owned facility, the following guidance will apply. All DGRP candidates and WSU advisors who are foreign nationals will be reviewed for 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 program will be contingent upon meeting the access requirements in effect.

Application: The Program is jointly coordinated by the WSU Dean of the Graduate School, the WSU Vice-President for Research, and by the Director of Research Partnerships at PNNL. Students are jointly nominated to the program by a WSU faculty member and PNNL scientist using an application available at the program website: https://gradschool.wsu.edu/pnnl/.
The application, available at the Graduate School website noted above, consists of:

- Basic information (name, email address, and Ph.D. program in which the student is admitted)
- Two letters of nomination from (1) the WSU faculty member responsible for the student’s research program and support while being funded by WSU and (2) from the collaborating PNNL scientist who will be responsible for the funding during the post-coursework period of the student’s program.
- A description of the proposed research from the WSU and PNNL researchers.
- The student’s CV.
- A Statement of Purpose/Objectives for the PhD study and subsequent career. The statement should specifically reference what the student hopes to gain from their research effort at PNNL.

The assessment criteria for evaluating applications include:

- Strength of the student’s academic credentials and experience – selecting for the highest caliber students for this prestigious program.
- Ability to work maturely and independently in a national laboratory environment as assessed by the student’s past experience, Statement of Purpose/Objectives, and the written recommendations from the proposed co-advisors.
- Quality of the proposed research and its relevance to the existing and emerging areas of collaboration with PNNL.

For questions contact Michael Wolcott (WSU) or Suresh Baskaran (PNNL) or email DGRP@wsu.edu.