

Graduate Student Admission

Plant Science and Landscape Architecture Graduate Admissions Committee

Updated October 27, 2020

Graduate Degrees

The Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture (PSLA) at the University of Connecticut offers qualified students with a B.S. or B.A. degree (or equivalent) the opportunity to obtain the degrees of Master of Science (M.S.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

- The M.S. and Ph.D. degrees may be awarded in Plant Science, including Agronomy, Horticulture, Plant Breeding, Plant Environment, Soil Science, and Soil Chemistry.
- The M.S. degree may be awarded in Landscape Architecture.

Master's degree options include: Plan A and Plan B.

- Plan A (Thesis option) has a research component and candidates are eligible for graduate research assistantships, departmental scholarships, or departmental teaching assistantships.
- Plan B (Non-thesis option) consists of additional coursework beyond Plan A and there is less emphasis on research. The Plan B option does not provide for graduate research assistantships, departmental scholarships, or departmental teaching assistantships.

Admission Process

The procedure for the admission to the PSLA graduate program is as follows:

1. Identify a Major Advisor:

Identify a PSLA faculty member who can potentially be your Major Advisor. Prospective students must contact individual faculty members directly about their research programs and

available opportunities to join their research team¹. If that person agrees to become your Major Advisor, then you proceed to step 2.

If you do not have a particular faculty member in mind, you may review the research interests of PSLA faculty here: <http://plantscience.uconn.edu/People/Faculty/index.php>

Note that once you have secured a faculty member who is willing to serve as your Major Advisor, this person will serve as the contact person for further discussions about the admission process, research opportunities, and financial support.

Faculty members are not obliged to take on new graduate students. If no faculty member is willing to serve as your Major Advisor, then you should not apply to this Department. Our graduate programs are based on independent research and projects under direct mentorship by a PSLA faculty member. Therefore, a Major Advisor is required for admission.

2. Apply to The Graduate School:

Applicants should follow the guidelines for admission:

<https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/requirements/>. Include the name of your Major Advisor (from Step 1 above) on the application form.

In addition to the Graduate School, the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture **requires** the following items to consider for applications:

- Three letters of recommendation from previous mentors, instructors, or direct supervisors. Letters from academics are preferred.
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score. This requirement may be waived if the following criteria are met:
 - a. The student has a high-grade point average (GPA above 3.2).
 - b. The student has excellent letters of recommendation.
 - c. The designated future Major Advisor in the graduate program formally requests the PSLA Admissions Committee to waive the GRE requirement.
 - d. The PSLA Admissions Committee votes to waive the GRE requirement based on the details and discussion of items (a) to (c) above.

The TOEFL (an overall score of 79 or higher on the Internet based TOEFL test (iBT) or receiving scores of 22/30 or higher on each of the Listening, Reading, and Writing sections of the (new) Paper-based TOEFL test (PBT)), or IELTS (an overall score of 6.5 or higher), or PTE (an overall score of 53 or higher) scores (for non-native speakers of English) are required by the university. Note that international students who are not native English speakers, but expect to receive teaching assistantships, must also satisfy the University's English Proficiency Policy (ita.uconn.edu) before being allowed direct instructional contact.

¹ Faculty commonly interview prospective students via videoconference to request more information from you and to see if you fit into their programs.

Requirements specific to each program or circumstance:

Regular admission for M.S. Degree. The minimum requirements are a bachelor's degree (B.S. or B.A.) or its equivalent, a 3.0-grade point average (GPA), and appropriate training or experience in biological and soil sciences, or landscape architecture.

Provisional status. Occasionally, students who hold the baccalaureate degree but do not fully qualify for admission to regular status may give sufficient evidence of ability in their chosen fields to warrant their provisional admission to a master's degree program only. Applicants are not admitted provisionally to a doctoral program. However, regular (not provisional) status is required for degree conferral. Students admitted provisionally must have a cumulative baccalaureate grade point average of 2.7 or higher. If a provisional student's initial 12 credits of completed coursework (excluding 1000-level courses) meet the minimum scholastic requirement of 3.0, the student is accorded a regular status (GC).

Students admitted on a provisional status for the M.S. degree are not eligible for research or teaching assistantships, departmental scholarships, or other departmental funding until provisional status is lifted.

Regular admission for Ph.D. Degree. The minimum requirements are a bachelor's degree (B.S. or B.A.) or its equivalent, and a 3.0-grade point average (GPA). Previous research experience is encouraged. A M.S. degree is desirable, but not required for the Ph.D. program.

Conversion from M.S. to Ph.D. Program. Students who are currently enrolled in M.S. program may transfer to the Ph.D. program with or without completion of their Master's degree, following a new application review by the PSLA Admissions Committee. These students must have demonstrated research capabilities and overall academic excellence.

Conversion from Ph.D. to M.S. Program. Students who were admitted to the Ph.D. program but fail to complete the program may request transfer to the M.S. program. This transfer must be approved by the student's Major Advisor and Advisory Committee. It does not need approval from the PLSC Admissions Committee.

Language-Conditional Status. International graduate applicants whose English language proficiency does not meet the minimum standards necessary to qualify for regular admission may be admitted as Language-Conditional Students by the program to which they apply. Applicants will have 12 months to meet the language requirement by receiving a Certificate of English Proficiency from UCAELI (University of Connecticut American English Language Institute) and/or receiving a passing English proficiency score (GC).

Application deadlines. Applicants should submit their applications for admission at least several months in advance of the first semester of coursework. In all cases, students must be admitted and accept admission one month before the first day of classes for that term (GC).

See deadlines for admissions at <https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/apply-to-uconn/>

The review of admission applications by the PSLA Graduate Faculty Admissions Committee begins when all materials are available. These documents are available for any faculty member in the department to review.

Admittance decision. When a faculty member has agreed to be your Major Advisor, then that person will represent you at a Departmental Graduate Admissions Committee Meeting. The Committee makes a recommendation for admittance to The UCONN Graduate School, and The UCONN Graduate School makes the final decision regarding admission.