

Earning a graduate degree in the Harvey Lab (UW School of Environmental and Forest Sciences)

This document serves as a short primer on earning a Master of Science (MS) or a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the Harvey Lab, School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, University of Washington. My philosophy is to thoroughly prepare graduate students to successfully and confidently pursue their dream job (e.g., research, teaching, or management in an academic institution, government agency, private industry, or NGO). In the process, students will challenge themselves, learn a ton, and have fun! Graduate school is an exciting time, and mentoring grad students is one of my favorite parts of my job!

The typical time to complete a MS degree is 2-2.5 years, and a PhD is typically 3.5-5 years. Below is a brief overview of what that process looks like, but please feel free to ask any questions you may have. For more detailed additional information on the SEFS departmental requirements, see the SEFS website (<http://www.cfr.washington.edu/>), and specific guidelines for earning a MS or PhD in the “Red Book” (<http://www.cfr.washington.edu/academicPrograms/graduate/RedBook.pdf>). The Harvey Lab website (<https://depts.washington.edu/bjhlab/>) will contain information about opportunities that are more specific to our lab group and research projects. Of course, we can always talk more about any of this!

Research in the lab

Research projects in the Harvey Lab are generally focused on different components of disturbance ecology in conifer forests, with a geographic focus (but not limited to) the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Northwest. Primarily, we study the nature of forest fires and insect outbreaks, mostly from the lens of how forests respond to these disturbances and their interactions. All our research is viewed in the context of a changing climate and other environmental drivers, and we draw connections between our ecological research and forest management. Please contact me if you are interested in discussing specific research ideas that might align with our efforts in the Harvey Lab.

Pay and benefits

Graduate student compensation at the University of Washington is generous. The pay is generally much higher than peer institutions, thanks to Research Assistants (RAs) and Teaching Assistants (TAs) at UW being unionized. For example, a graduate student working towards their MS or PhD degree in the 2018-2019 academic year can expect the following compensation package, whether they are working as an RA, TA, or on a Fellowship:

- Salary/stipend: \$2,500/mo. for a MS student; \$2,650/mo. for a PhD student)
- Full medical, dental, and vision insurance
- Full tuition costs covered

In other words, you should never have to pay to go to grad school for a research degree. Instead, grad school will pay you through a combination of RA, TA, and Fellowship support! I do not accept students into my lab unless I can guarantee funding for their graduate studies, most of which will be RA support.

Coursework

The MS and PhD programs in the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences are fairly flexible in that the coursework that a student takes as part of their degree can be tailored to their needs. Generally, students in the Harvey Lab will take courses in (or have a sufficiently solid background in) statistics, forest ecology, disturbance ecology, GIS/Remote sensing, and landscape ecology. However, specific

course plans really are case-by-case, and are designed around the students' needs for success beyond their degree. This is usually something we will design together at the start of your graduate training.

Graduate Committee at UW

The University of Washington is one of the best places in the world to study ecology, largely due to the strong network of graduate students and faculty across campus. Graduate students in SEFS can assemble a “dream team” graduate committee with members ranging from faculty in SEFS, faculty in other departments at UW (e.g., Biology, SAFS, Atmospheric Sciences), collaborators in agencies (e.g., US Forest Service, US Geological Survey, Washington Department of Natural Resources), private industry (e.g., consulting firms), and non-profit organizations (e.g., The Nature Conservancy). In sum, there is no shortage of world-renowned experts in many fields at UW and our partner institutions/organizations for you to invite to join your graduate committee.

Living in Seattle and exploring the Pacific Northwest

Seattle is routinely ranked as one of the most desirable cities to live in throughout the entire US. As an international, creative, and diverse city, Seattle has a ton to offer in terms of cultural activities (major professional sports teams, art museums, music venues, expansive city parks, and community festivals year-round). Step outside the urban core of Seattle, and within minutes you can be exploring the natural beauty and recreational opportunities of Puget Sound region – Mount Rainier National Park, the Pacific Ocean, the San Juan Islands, the Olympic Peninsula, and the North Cascade Mountains – just to name a few places. Seattle is located approximately two hours south of Vancouver, BC (Canada), and approximately three hours north of Portland, OR, and is served by a major international airport (SEA-TAC) with direct flights to over 100 destinations (domestic and international).