GENERAL COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS
M.S. or Ph.D. Degree in LAAS

Graduate Tenure
The recommended maximum period of full-time study (equivalent to half-time appointment) leading to the M.S. degree is 2.5 calendar years, and that of the Ph.D., 3.5 calendar years beyond the M.S. degree. These time periods may be extended by non-resident status or by formal written petition, signed by the advisor, to the Graduate Advisory Committee. Duration of assistantships should be established at the time of the appointment.

The University of Minnesota does NOT have a residency requirement for graduate degrees.

Academic Performance
The Graduate Advisory Committee maintains surveillance on the overall academic standards of the graduate program and works closely with all staff advisors to carry out this function. Evaluation of student performances is generally made on receipt of Progress Reports from the Graduate School.

Students are expected to maintain an average of 3.0 in the M.S. and Ph.D. program course work to remain in good standing. The Graduate Advisory Committee may place a student on probation for failure to meet scholastic or other requirements, including thesis research. Removal from probation is accomplished upon specific recommendation from the student’s major advisor to the Graduate Advisory Committee. Generally, registration beyond the second semester will be refused a student whose GPA is less than 3.0.

Seminar - LAAS 8128
The departmental seminar provides a forum for the presentation of topics of interest and significance to soil science. As such, all faculty and graduate students are expected to attend, support the seminar, contribute to it, and enter into the discussions. One credit in seminar is required for each M.S. and two seminar credits are required for each Ph.D. program in LAAS. One of these at the Ph.D. level should be a presentation which reviews literature available in the student’s specific field of research, and which lays out a possible research program for discussion. This should be scheduled within the first 18 months after acceptance to the program. Seminar requirements are to be satisfied and grades recorded before defense of thesis is scheduled. Arrangements for satisfying the seminar credit are made with the Department Seminar Committee. This involves formal presentation of a seminar topic. All seminar credits are graded on the (S-N) system. If requested by the student or advisor, the seminar committee and the advisor will meet with the student to discuss and constructively evaluate formal seminar presentations.

Graduate Student Education in Research and Professional Ethics - LAAS 8123
Students must take this required class to meet the requirement for professional ethics in research. This course is usually offered during J-term under spring session and is usually taught along with Plant Pathology and Applied Plant Sciences programs.

Minor Programs Relating to LAAS
Minor programs in other fields include Agronomy, Chemistry, Ecology, Forestry, Geography, Geology, Microbiology, Microbial Ecology, Plant Pathology, and Water Resources. Course requirements for these minors vary from 6 to 9 credits for the M.S. minor to 12-14 for the Ph.D. minor, and will often include specific courses. The minor program must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies in the minor field. Where a formal minor is proposed, both external members of the student’s committee must be from that program.

Important notice regarding commencement attendance
Commencement attendance does not imply that you have completed all degree requirements and officially graduated. For information specifically related to eligibility requirements and deadlines for attending the Graduate School commencement ceremony, please refer to the Graduate School’s Commencement Attendance Approval form, available in your graduation packet and online.

More information and forms for the Master's Degree can be found at http://www.grad.umn.edu/current-students-forms/forms-masters

More information and forms for the Doctoral Degree can be found at http://www.grad.umn.edu/current-students-forms/formsdoctoral
The Minor in LAAS

The minor in LAAS for doctoral students requires a minimum of 12 graduate level credits of regular course work (not special problems) in Land and Atmospheric Science. The minor in LAAS for master’s students requires a minimum of 9 graduate level credits in LAAS. All courses for use in the minor must be taken using the A-F grading system, unless approved by the Graduate Advisory Committee, or if they are offered on an S-N basis only. All students seeking a minor in LAAS must take LAAS 5050, Integrated Topics in Land & Atmospheric Science (3 cr). The remaining 9 or 6 credits for the doctoral or master’s minor, respectively, must come from other graduate-level LAAS courses. Courses for use in the minor must be selected with the consultation of the Land and Atmospheric Science graduate faculty member serving as the minor adviser and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Contact the Director of Graduate Studies for a leave of absence request. These are considered on a case-by-case basis and must be justified by exceptional circumstances.

Sick Leave
Graduate assistants are entitled to paid sick leave, not to exceed two weeks (10 days) consecutive pay for absences caused by occasional or serious illness or injury to themselves, their dependent child, or the dependent child of a registered same sex domestic partner. In the case of repeated absences due to illness, the responsible administrator/supervisor may request a healthcare provider’s certification verifying the inability to work. For GAs on an hourly pay appointment, sick leave shall be unpaid except in the following circumstances: (1) work hours are fixed on a weekly basis, and the sick day falls on the day of the week normally scheduled for work; OR (2) the work schedule is variable with sick pay prorated for the work week.

Parental Leave
Graduate assistants may be eligible for parental leave, paid or unpaid. Refer to the Administrative Policies: Parental Leaves for Academic Employees and Family & Medical - FMLA Leave. https://policy.umn.edu/hr/parentalleave

FMLA
Graduate assistants generally do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements (average 60 percent appointment) for FMLA. If a graduate assistant meets the FMLA requirements, they may be eligible for up to twelve weeks’ absence during a fiscal year for reasons of:
1. the employee’s own serious health condition;
2. the serious health condition of an employee’s immediate family member; or
3. caring for a newborn or newly-placed adopted child or foster child.


Bereavement Leave
Graduate assistants are provided, at the discretion of the department, up to three workdays paid bereavement leave upon death of an immediate family member. This leave is granted for purposes of (1) attending the funeral services, ceremonies, and/or interment; (2) making necessary arrangements; (3) travel related to the death; and (4) bereavement time. Responsible administrators/supervisors are encouraged to make special arrangements to accommodate granting of leave.

Vacation Leave
Graduate assistants do not receive paid vacation leave.

For the following leaves, please refer to the Administrative Policy: Military, Court and Civic Duty Leaves. https://policy.umn.edu/hr/milcourtcivicleave

Military Leave
Graduate assistants are entitled to fifteen days leave in a calendar year for active military duty; such leave falling within a paid appointment period shall be with pay. Verification of notice to report for duty (including dates of leave) shall be provided to the responsible administrator/supervisor. Refer to the Administrative Policy: Military, Court, and Civic Duty Leaves.

Jury Duty
Graduate assistants are entitled to paid leave for jury duty. A copy of the court notice shall be provided to the responsible administrator/supervisor. If released early from jury duty by the court administrator, the GA shall return to work.

Voting Leave
Graduate assistants are eligible for a paid leave of absence to vote in any state-wide general election or state-wide primary election, or in any election to fill a vacancy in the office of a United States senator or representative during the morning of the election day.

GRIEVANCES

Grievances related to graduate study are limited to non-academic matters: i.e. decisions or judgments concerning a student’s scholastic performance are not considered grievable. The grievance procedure follows the guidelines established by the University. Information on the procedures in filing a grievance can be obtained by contacting the Departmental Grievance Officer.

To initiate formal grievance procedures, graduate students should contact the thesis advisor, the head of the Departmental Grievance committee, the Director of Graduate Studies or the Department Head, whichever is more appropriate. If the issue cannot be resolved informally through this mechanism, the student should contact the Student Conflict Resolution Center, the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action or the Graduate School Grievance Committee. Normally formal grievance claims need to be submitted in writing within 30 working days after the action occurred or commenced.

Parental Leave
Graduate assistants may be eligible for parental leave, paid or unpaid. Refer to the Administrative Policies: Parental Leaves for Academic Employees and Family & Medical - FMLA Leave. https://policy.umn.edu/hr/parentalleave

FMLA
Graduate assistants generally do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements (average 60 percent appointment) for FMLA. If a graduate assistant meets the FMLA requirements, they may be eligible for up to twelve weeks’ absence during a fiscal year for reasons of:
1. the employee’s own serious health condition;
2. the serious health condition of an employee’s immediate family member; or
3. caring for a newborn or newly-placed adopted child or foster child.


Bereavement Leave
Graduate assistants are provided, at the discretion of the department, up to three workdays paid bereavement leave upon death of an immediate family member. This leave is granted for purposes of (1) attending the funeral services, ceremonies, and/or interment; (2) making necessary arrangement; (3) travel related to the death; and (4) bereavement time. Responsible administrators/supervisors are encouraged to make special arrangement to accommodate granting of leave.

Vacation Leave
Graduate assistants do not receive paid vacation leave.

For the following leaves, please refer to the Administrative Policy: Military, Court and Civic Duty Leaves. https://policy.umn.edu/hr/milcourtcivicleave

Military Leave
Graduate assistants are entitled to fifteen days leave in a calendar year for active military duty; such leave falling within a paid appointment period shall be with pay. Verification of notice to report for duty (including dates of leave) shall be provided to the responsible administrator/supervisor. Refer to the Administrative Policy: Military, Court, and Civic Duty Leaves.

Jury Duty
Graduate assistants are entitled to paid leave for jury duty. A copy of the court notice shall be provided to the responsible administrator/supervisor. If released early from jury duty by the court administrator, the GA shall return to work.

Voting Leave
Graduate assistants are eligible for a paid leave of absence to vote in any state-wide general election or state-wide primary election, or in any election to fill a vacancy in the office of a United States senator or representative during the morning of the election day.