Please use this *Graduate Study Handbook* as a tool to guide you through your program, but note that University, Graduate School, College, and Section policies and procedures are subject to change. Be sure to confirm your plans with your Special Committee, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), or the Graduate Field Assistant (GFA).

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Field of Plant Breeding – Graduate Study Handbook

Welcome to the Field of Plant Breeding. The Section of Plant Breeding and Genetics (PLBRG) at Cornell University is composed of numerous facilities and faculty members housed at several different locations. For most issues, the Section is equivalent to a Department elsewhere at Cornell and at other institutions. The organizational structure is as follows, from largest to smallest:

* Cornell University
* College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)
* School of Integrative Plant Science (SIPS)
* Section of Plant Breeding and Genetics

SIPS was first established in 2014 to foster cross disciplinary collaboration among its various Sections, which include; Plant Biology, Horticulture, Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology, and Soil and Crop Sciences.

The Field offers qualified students the opportunity to obtain an advanced graduate degree in a Master of Science (M.S.) degree program, the Masters of Science/Doctor of Philosophy (M.S./Ph.D) and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree program.

Upon Arrival

Newly admitted graduate students should correspond with the DGS in their Field to clarify program details. Upon arrival on campus, students should report to their major advisor (if you have one), the GFA, and the DGS. New graduate students should take the responsibility of meeting professors, other graduate students, office staff, technicians; and greenhouse, and field staff. Students should also become familiar with campus buildings, laboratories, and staff offices. The DGS, as well as other faculty members and staff, can provide assistance to become familiar with University, Graduate School, and Section policies. An orientation program for all incoming graduate students is held during the week of registration in January and August.

This handbook will help you understand how the section operates, what is expected of you, and what you may expect from the section. The faculty, DGS, and the Section chair have an open-door policy and make every effort to address student needs. This handbook provides supplemental information that applies specifically to the Field of Plant Breeding and should be used in conjunction with information published by the Graduate School (www.gradschool.cornell.edu). Please feel free to ask questions as you adjust to your new surroundings.

Desk Assignments

The section has several rooms in Bradfield Hall set aside for graduate students to share, and a desk will be made available for each graduate student upon their arrival. Assignments will be made by the GFA. Students on a Leave of Absence or with space elsewhere (such as in Geneva, or have lab/desk space) may be asked to forfeit their desk space to others, if there is a need for space when new students arrive. Students should not “take over” another desk area while they are here; and they must empty and clean their assigned desk prior to departure.
Major Advisor & Special Committee

The faculty person who directs a student's thesis work is usually considered the major advisor/chairperson of his/her special committee. This advisor identified upon your arrival, unless you are initially doing rotations. If a student is doing rotations, then the DGS will be their chairperson. The chair is a primary mentor who will guide the student. The Special Committee Chair should be recorded with the Graduate School within the first 3-weeks of admission. The Special Committee Selection and Change form should be used to assign the chairperson. This can be done on-line at www.gradschool.cornell.edu/forms or directly through the 'Student Center’ website.

Other members of the special committee represent the minor fields chosen (one additional faculty member/field for a M.S. degree and two additional faculty members/fields for a Ph.D.), plus any additional members students wish to add.

Choosing a Special Committee

The Special Committee should be chosen by the end of the first semester at Cornell for M.S. students. Ph.D. students need to have their Special Committee selection done by the end of their third semester. Selection of the minor members is best done in consultation with the major advisor/chairperson. Feel free to meet with, and interview, various members of the graduate faculty before making a decision. Common goals and interests should be discussed.

One minor member is required for an M.S. and two for a Ph.D. degree.

The selection of a major chair and other committee members should be done through “Student Center”.

In-House Application to a Ph.D. Program

Students who were admitted into the M.S. degree program, have fulfilled those requirements, and then wish to continue their studies in a Ph.D. program must complete a new on-line application for admission to the Field of Plant Breeding Ph.D. program. Application fee waiver information can be found here: http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/admissions/fees.

Note: The Application for Readmission (Form R3) is only used for students who have let their registration lapse in their current program and wish to return to finish their degree.

Degree Requirements

M.S. Degree Requirements

- Coursework and credits required for the M.S. degree are determined by the student’s Special Committee.
- Attend at the PLBRG 6200: Seminar in Plant Breeding and Genetics, which meets every Tuesday throughout the academic year from 12:20-1:15pm. The seminar requirement is firm and must be met by all students. Satisfactory seminar attendance involves attending at least seven presentations each semester.
- Register for PLBRG 8900: M.S. Level Thesis Research after the first semester of study. Credit hours may vary and should be discussed with your chair.
- Select a Special Committee composed of one professor representing the major field committee/chair and at least one professor representing a minor field; more than one minor member is acceptable.
  - Committee members advise students in the selection and conduct of research problems for the thesis.
• Submit a complete thesis draft to all members of your Special Committee at least six (6) weeks before the final masters exam (your Special Committee may modify this requirement). At least five (5) days before the exam, you must provide all members of your Special Committee with a complete, formatted, and editorially acceptable copy of the thesis or dissertation for final approval (your examining committee may still require modifications.) Final Examinations may not be scheduled until this requirement has been met. Per code VI.G.4, Guide to Graduate Study, “You must submit a Schedule of Masters Exam form to the Graduate School at least seven days prior to your oral exam.” The form can be found on the Graduate School website.

• Schedule an exit seminar to take place during a meeting of PLBRG 6200: Seminar in Plant Breeding and Genetics.

• Pass a final oral examination.

• Fulfill a minimum of 2 registration units for at least two semesters (Code of Legislation, V.C.).

• A teaching experience is required and can be satisfied by assisting a faculty member in teaching a course, working in extension, or taking a course in education.

• Candidates must submit an acceptable thesis based on a research project.

• M.S. degree candidates are expected to complete degree requirements in two years but have up to 4 years to complete requirements.

Ph.D. or M.S./Ph.D. Degree Requirements

• Students who desire a Ph.D., may enroll in a M.S./Ph.D. program or be directly admitted into a Ph.D. program. Our M.S./Ph.D. students will be expected to take a master’s exam and submit a thesis. Once the thesis has been submitted and approved, the student can continue on in the Ph.D. program. To complete the Ph.D. program, the student would take an A exam and then a B exam, and then submit a dissertation. The Master’s and A exam can be combined; but a thesis is always required.

• Selects a Special Committee composed of one professor representing the major field committee/chair and at least two (2) other professors as minor members, representing Fields other than Plant Breeding. This approach permits the student to work with faculty members who can best direct the student’s graduate study, regardless of College, Section, or Field affiliation.

• Coursework and credits required for the Ph.D. degree are determined by the student’s Special Committee

• Attend PLBRG 6200: Seminar in Plant Breeding and Genetics, which meets every Tuesday throughout the academic year from 12:02-1:15pm. The seminar requirement is firm and must be met by all students. Satisfactory seminar attendance involves attending at least seven presentations each semester.

• Register for Ph.D. thesis/research credit each semester, PLBRG 7900, Graduate Level Dissertation the first semester of study, and prior to A exam. After passing the A exam, students need to register for PLBRG 9900, Graduate Level Dissertation. Credit hours may vary and should be discussed with your chair.

• Committee members advise the student in the selection and conduct of research problems for the dissertation.

• Pass the “A” exam; an oral exam reviewing the student’s mastery of subject matter related to his/her thesis topic and the course work taken.

• Candidates must have two semesters of credit between passing the A exam and before taking the final “B” examination.

• Submit a complete draft to all members of your Special Committee at least six (6) weeks before the final masters or B exam. (Your Special Committee may modify this requirement). At least five (5) days before the exam, you must provide all members of your Special Committee with a complete, formatted, and editorially acceptable copy of the thesis or dissertation for final approval.
(Your examining committee may still require modifications.) Final Examinations may not be scheduled until this requirement has been met. Code VI.G.4, Guide to Graduate Study, “You must submit a Schedule of Masters Exam form to the Graduate School at least seven days prior to your oral exam”. The form can be found on the Graduate School website.

- Schedule an exit seminar to take place during a meeting of PLBRG 6200: Seminar in Plant Breeding and Genetics.
- Pass the “B” exam or final examination which covers the subject of the dissertation.
- Teaching experience is required and can be satisfied by assisting a faculty member in teaching a course, working in extension, or taking an education course.
- Fulfill a minimum of 6 registration units (semesters), 2 of these between the A and B exam. For students completing an M.S./Ph.D., registration units beyond the 2 units required for the M.S. may be put towards the 6 registration units required for the Ph.D. (Code of Legislation, V.C.)
- Submit an acceptable dissertation based on a research project.
- Complete all requirements within 7 years. This is the maximum period allowed by the Graduate School; the normal expectation is that you should finish within 3-4 years. Note that funding may not be available beyond the period specified in your offer letter.

Coursework
The Graduate School has no course requirements for obtaining a M.S. or Ph.D. advanced degree. The course program is developed with the advice and direction of a special committee. Specific courses may be required by members of the committee and are usually suggested as a means to obtain essential training to save students from having to spend more time and effort in mastering the subject independently. Students should use their own judgment, along with the advice of the committee, in deciding which courses will provide the best training for future needs.

Graduate students must; however, be enrolled in at least one course with a minimum of one credit hour per semester. An exception to this would be students in the Employee Degree program (see below).

The International Students and Scholar’s Office (ISSO) defers to the Field or section re: course requirements. As long as the student maintains adequate standing with his/her Field or Section, there are no different requirements according to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or Department of State (DOS).

All students in the Employee Degree Program (EDP) are eligible to enroll in up to eight (8) credits per semester. While participating in the EDP, you are also eligible to enroll in more than eight (8) credits during any two semesters. During these two semesters, you may reduce your work status to no less than part time. EDP students have no anticipated graduation date, and they may take longer to fulfill their course requirements. For more information, please visit the Employee Degree Program website: https://hr.cornell.edu/benefits/education/edp.html.

Assistantships
Most graduate students in the Field of Plant Breeding are assigned on a half-time basis as Graduate Research Assistance (GRA), Teaching Assistants (TA), Graduate Assistants (GA), Research Assistants (RA), or Extension Assistants (EA). Their assignment time may be distributed throughout the year in various ways, depending on the requirements of the project. Graduate Research Assistants generally
work more than half time (15-20 hours a week) during the growing season and have more than enough time for their studies during the academic year.

There is likely to be an occasional demand on the student's time. Assistantship assignments should not be so engrossing that graduate work is neglected, nor should the opposite occur. Time management is extremely important and will reflect recommendations for future Section positions and after graduation.

**Graduate TA Policy**

**Background:**
The faculty in the graduate Field of Plant Breeding believe that it is important for graduate students to participate in activities that support the section, while simultaneously gaining experiences that will be useful in a career. Graduate students are expected to contribute to the Section/Field in meaningful ways, particularly if support is coming from a Section assistantship. A major way that graduate students contribute is by serving as a teaching assistant. Nearly all graduates will eventually be in a position where they have to teach others. In order to have a well-rounded education, we expect all students to have substantive and meaningful experience teaching. Serving as a teaching assistant (TA) or, in exceptional circumstances, playing a major teaching role in extension/outreach programs, can satisfy this expectation.

In turn, the Field and Section will strive to allocate TA responsibilities and other Section assignments equitably and fairly among all graduate students. Students are also encouraged to obtain TA responsibilities with other departments within the University.

In addition, when a student's limited proficiency in English prevents them from serving as a TA in the classroom, the student may be required to take a course aimed at developing his or her English proficiency and teaching skills in order to teach in the future. They may be asked to help out with section activities such as web site development, curriculum or outreach program development and delivery, to satisfy the obligations of accepting section assistantship support.

**Policies:**
- All M.S. and Ph.D. students, regardless of funding source, are required to serve as a TA for at least one semester, or provide some equivalent service in curricular activities during their time at Cornell.
- M.S. and Ph.D. students funded on an assistantship or endowment from the Section of Plant Breeding may be required to TA. Such expectations will be spelled out in their acceptance letter. Faculty members shall accommodate the need for their graduate students to TA, and alter research and coursework expectations accordingly. Every effort will be made to ensure that teaching or section curriculum assignments are distributed fairly and that any special circumstances of individual graduate students are considered. Students with previous coursework and expertise in a particular area may be required to TA courses in that area, and that expectation may be stipulated as a condition of their financial support by the Field of Plant Breeding when they are accepted into the graduate program. Faculty will advise students if they need to take or audit a course in order to gain more expertise in an area where they will be TA-ing. For multiple semesters of funding, students are encouraged to apply for BIO TAships.
• Students supported by a Graduate School Fellowship shall not be required to serve as a TA during their fellowship year.
• If an extension/outreach teaching experience is substituted for classroom TA-ing, the student's major professor, DGS, and committee will have to approve the substitution. This should include a plan that helps the student achieve the equivalent educational goals of classroom teaching.
• No extra Plant Breeding Field funding is allocated for students who TA.
• **Students will keep the GFA, informed of their TA or equivalent experiences so accurate records can be kept.**
• All instructors should meet with and discuss what is expected of the TA prior to the beginning of class. Students should also discuss what they want to gain during the TA experience with the instructor.
• Any dispute regarding the assignment of TA's may be addressed to the student's major advisor in consultation with the DGS.

**Fellowships & Other Funding Sources**

Fellowship information is available from the Graduate School, 143 Caldwell Hall, or [www.gradschool.cornell.edu](http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu). Additional information is usually forwarded via e-mail to the graduate student list in the Section when it becomes available.

**Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence can be granted for personal or medical reasons, but the process is different for each type of leave. A health leave of absence requires filing with Gannett Health Services. More information is available at [www.gannett.cornell.edu/HLOA.html](http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/HLOA.html)

The maximum number of years allowed for leave of absence is four. A student who takes a leave of absence relinquishes the access to campus facilities and personnel that normally accompanies student status. For more information see the Code of Legislation: [www.gradschool.cornell.edu/code](http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/code) or obtain information directly from the Field Graduate School Representative, 143 Caldwell Hall or your Plant Breeding Grad Field Assistant.

**In Absentia**

In absentia status provides an opportunity for graduate students to engage in approved study in a location at least 100 miles away from the University’s Ithaca campus during the academic year, while continuing to work under the guidance of the Special Committee. Students can earn 1 registration unit (RU) if the arrangement enhances the student's program of study. For more information see the Code of Legislation: [www.gradschool.cornell.edu/code](http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/code) or obtain information directly from the Graduate School Representative, 143 Caldwell Hall or the Plant Breeding GFA.

**Student Progress Report**

The Student Progress Review (SPR) requirement was implemented in 2017 at the request of students and faculty to support the regular exchange of constructive, written feedback between advisees and advisors. It codifies a process for research degree students and their special committees to have at least one formal conversation per year about academic progress and future plans. Using the SPR form, students are asked to reflect on their recent accomplishments, identify challenges, and set goals. The Special Committee Chair (major advisor) then reviews his/her student's SPR form and enter constructive feedback. The Special Committee Chair indicates whether progress has been excellent, satisfactory, needs improvement, or is unsatisfactory. Feedback that is documented on the SPR will be made
available to the student, all members of the student's special committee, and the DSG/GFA of the student's field. These are due annually, by May 1.  
https://dynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com/Submit/Form/Page?form=717f5341-bc13-4041-9959-e9242cdbe2b&page=97999&section=74296&token=AxNcr%2FO4q5Y2czUcFF34En6aun6QWhFNaLShG0IFL6Y%3D

Examinations

All members of the graduate faculty are notified of examinations and all are welcome to attend. However, only rarely does a faculty member outside the student's special committee attend. Students are responsible for notifying the GFA at least two weeks in advance to reserve a room and send a notice to graduate faculty. Students must submit a Schedule of Exam form for all exams to the Graduate School at least one week in advance otherwise the exam results are not valid. Extensive information on Exams, Doctoral Dissertation and Master's Thesis production can and should be obtained from the Graduate School. After each examination, a Results of Examination form must be filled out and submitted to the Graduate School within three business days and a copy to the GFA. (Forms can be found at https://gradschool.cornell.edu/forms).

A Exam

Exam for Admission to Doctoral Candidacy for Ph.D. students

The A Exam is a comprehensive exam given by the student's committee to test his/her general knowledge in the areas of plant sciences and related fields relevant to the student's Ph.D. program in Plant Breeding. It is designed to determine the student's ability to begin research. It is not to discuss the student's specific research topic or research results, although it may enter the discussion. Although questions of specific factual nature are common, emphasis is also placed on the student's ability to utilize and synthesize their knowledge to address more complex problems. A minimum of 3-hours should be scheduled; although there is no time limit, some have gone more than 4-hours. It is typically an oral exam but some written questions are allowed if a faculty member so chooses. It is appropriate and useful to discuss examination expectations with your committee members, either at a meeting of the Special Committee or in individual meetings or both, well in advance of the exam. Other faculty members in the Field are invited to participate, though the rarely do, and are allowed to ask questions, typically do not ask many questions. Each exam is unique. Therefore others' experiences only represent what can happen, not what will happen.

The student generally provides a list of courses s/he has taken as a graduate student. Questions relating to these classes as well as background information relating to the student's current research are fair game.

By Graduate School rules, this exam must be taken a minimum of 1 year before the thesis defense exam.

B Exam

Final Defense for Ph.D. or Thesis Defense Exam for M.S.  Ph.D. students must have earned at least 2 registration units (RU) between the passing of the A exam and the scheduling of the B exam.
The “Doctoral Dissertation, Master's Thesis, and Advanced Degree Requirements” guide has the detailed instructions and procedures that can be found at https://gradschool.cornell.edu/thesis-dissertation. The Graduate School also maintains a resource list of typists, editors, and couriers.

This oral exam will discuss the student's research and dissertation or thesis manuscript. It is expected that at the start of the exam the student will prepare and give a brief 10-15 minutes oral presentation of the main methods and results of the project to set the stage for the discussion and to demonstrate the ability to present their work. Questions may address the scientific background of the research and hypotheses, the general approaches and specific methods used, the results, and the interpretation of the results. At least 3-hours should be scheduled for the Ph.D. and 2-hours for the M.S. thesis defense. Normally, there are some changes required in the dissertation or thesis after the exam and may require from a few days to a few weeks to complete.

Thesis - Dissertation

Thesis or Dissertation Deadlines (Code VI.G.4) Guide to Graduate Study:

**Student's must submit a complete draft to all members of their Special committee at least six (6) weeks before the final masters or B exam;** however, your Special Committee may modify this requirement. At least five (5) days before the exam, the student must provide all members of their Special committee with a complete, formatted, and editorially acceptable copy of the thesis or dissertation for final approval but keep in mind, your examining committee may still require modifications. **Final Examinations may not be scheduled until this requirement has been met.**

A suggestion: It can be extremely difficult to re-write thesis chapters for journal publications after a student has left to assume new duties elsewhere. It is strongly recommended that the thesis be written in the “manuscript” format where the publishable chapters are in the complete form of a manuscript for submission to a scientific journal. The publisher will then require only minor editorial revisions and it can be submitted quickly.

When you have a finished an approved manuscript:

The Grad School encourages all students to submit their final, approved thesis on-line using ProQuest. This requires you to convert your document to PDF format. The approved digital document is automatically forwarded to a local printer. Any charges, including printing, will appear on your bursar bill.

M.S. and Ph.D. – Submit the thesis electronically through the Graduate School website, ProQuest. **Complete details for thesis and dissertation submission requirements can be found in the Thesis and Dissertation Guide.**

Publishing Your Research Work

Students are encouraged to publish their research results in professional journals so their work can be widely disseminated. This is easily accomplished if the thesis is organized and written with this intent. Professional journal articles are a source of pride for the student, enhances career opportunities, and reflects well on the reputation of the Section. Few academicians read theses from other institutions, so
the only practical way of sharing scientific contributions is through professional journals. If you expect to publish part, or all, of your thesis, you will be required to sign a License to Use Copyrighted Material form with the Graduate School.

**Commencement**

Information on degree conferral dates, commencement and diploma distribution can be obtained from the Graduate School, 350 Caldwell Hall, 255-5810, or [http://commencement.cornell.edu/](http://commencement.cornell.edu/).

**Forms**

There are forms for everything one would need or would like to do regarding the graduate program. These include, but are not limited to, scheduling exams, exam results forms, leave of absence, in absentia, petitions, travel grants, etc. Forms can be found on the Graduate School website at [https://gradschool.cornell.edu/forms](https://gradschool.cornell.edu/forms). There are also Section forms that can be found on the Plant Breeding and Genetics website [https://plbrgen.cals.cornell.edu/graduate/current-students/forms/](https://plbrgen.cals.cornell.edu/graduate/current-students/forms/).

**Orientation for Use of Facilities**

We are required by law to make certain that all users of chemicals, equipment, and facilities are familiar with potential hazards and appropriate safety precautions. Graduate students are required to attend orientation and training sessions before using any of the laboratory, growth chamber, greenhouse, or field research facilities. Orientations for facility usage are held regularly and graduate students should watch for announced times (usually by e-mail). Worker Protection Standard (WPS) training is required annually [https://oeh.cals.cornell.edu/training-workshops/wps/](https://oeh.cals.cornell.edu/training-workshops/wps/). If you are unable to attend, please contact the GFA to make other arrangements. You may not use a facility or hazardous equipment if you have not been through the appropriate training session!

**Right to Know**

Federal and New York State law mandates and the university requires that all graduate students and employees attend an orientation on the “Right to Know” Act. This introduces the law, the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), general toxicology and laboratory safety. Students will receive a memo with times and locations of the orientation meetings. Students will receive a Safety Guideline checklist, mandated by the University, and are required to return the checklist to the Section safety representative. Safety Information notebooks are available for your reference in the main offices and in the Section laboratories. You will receive an index to the notebook as a quick guide to its contents.

**Growth Chambers**

Growth chambers, both reach-in and walk-in, are available for research use. Fees are paid by the research project and professor involved. At the beginning of each semester a meeting is held to establish growth chamber assignments. Be sure to clear the availability of funds with your major professor before reserving growth chamber space. There is high demand for this and the Section makes every effort to accommodate everyone’s needs. Greenhouse and growth chambers are requested online. You may reserve it with your advisor or likely use some of the space they regularly use. Pay attention to fees as they may be quite high [https://cuaes.cals.cornell.edu/greenhouses/information-researchers/](https://cuaes.cals.cornell.edu/greenhouses/information-researchers/).
Greenhouses

Greenhouse and growth chambers are requested online. You may reserve it with your advisor or likely use some of the space they regularly use. Pay attention to fees as they may be quite high. Use of chemical and pathogens in the greenhouse needs prior approval.

Use of chemical and pathogens in the greenhouse needs prior approval [https://cuaes.cals.cornell.edu/greenhouses/information-researchers/](https://cuaes.cals.cornell.edu/greenhouses/information-researchers/).

Field Research

Requests for experimental field plots are made early each spring and must carry the endorsement of the major advisor. Policies and procedures will be explained at an orientation and training session for field research. The policy is the same as The greenhouse except requests are managed by individual farm managers. Tractor driving is rare for graduate students and is mostly done by staff. Applications of pesticides, even over the counter products, can only be done with a pesticide applicators license.

Computing and Multimedia Facilities

Computer support for personal computers and Section-owned equipment is requested via a Remedy Incident Ticket: [http://cals.cornell.edu/cals/cals-it/remedy.cfm](http://cals.cornell.edu/cals/cals-it/remedy.cfm). New graduate students will need to have an anti-virus program installed and have their computer scanned, before they can get on our wired network. This process can take a half day or so. Please be prepared to leave your computer in the IT office (Rice 105) for this procedure. RedRover wireless can be accessed without any scanning: [http://www.it.cornell.edu/services/redrover/](http://www.it.cornell.edu/services/redrover/).

Students should read the, "Plant and Environmental Sciences - Faculty, Staff and Student Employee - Information Technology Orientation" packet to quickly become familiar with our IT support services.

Security

While campus is a generally a safe place, theft does occur and we urge you to be mindful of your and others property. Keep offices and valuables locked up, and secure windows upon leaving for the day. Shut down computers, especially after using email. Keep backup copies of all your important work. Keep graduate student office doors closed at all times.

Section Hours

Working hours for Section staff (offices and facilities) are: Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am-4:30 pm; and Friday, 8:00 am-3:30 pm. Some offices such as the greenhouses, farm, or orchards may vary. Laboratories and graduate student offices are usually accessible 24-hours a day.
Travel

Graduate students are encouraged to attend and participate in industry oriented conferences/meetings. Attendance is also encouraged at national and regional scientific meetings. In the course of a student’s research, the major advisor may agree to reimburse a portion of the expenses for attending a scientific meeting. It will be up to the advisor to decide if funds are available. Additional assistance may be obtained by applying in advance to the Graduate School for a special travel grant, which pays for transportation costs but only when presenting a paper/poster. You may also apply for a travel grant from the Section of Plant Breeding and Genetics for up to $400 per year with approval from your major professor.

Prior to your trip, give your advisor the following information: destination, departure and arrival time, date, purpose of trip. You must file a “Notice of Proposed Travel” for insurance purposes, and also if you need a travel advance. In order to get reimbursed, you must submit all original receipts and complete an expense report upon your return.

Students may request a travel grant from the Graduate School as well. Please see the Graduate School website for more information.

State Fleet vehicles

The Fleet Services, Fleet Policy Manual can be found here: https://fcs.cornell.edu/. Fleet cars are available for official use. Permission from the major advisors is required. Charges are made on a mileage or per day basis to Section accounts; an account number is required when reserving a fleet vehicle. Reserve a car or van as early as possible; and should the need arise, cancel immediately to avoid a charge (24-hours prior to departure). The actual driver must pick up the fleet car. Students must have a valid driver’s license, be registered at the Fleet Garage, and be pre-approved by the Risk Management Office. In order to do so, fill out a form available on-line at the Fleet Transportation Services website.

“Authorized Drivers: A member of the Cornell community who has been authorized by an operating unit to drive one of its vehicles for university-related business.” (Use of Cornell Vehicles, Policy 3.4). Fleet vehicles cannot be used for personal business nor may the vehicle be used in commuting to and from an individual’s place of residence. Members of an employee’s family, or other unauthorized passengers not associated with the University, may not ride in a fleet vehicle. For clarification and/or policy exceptions re: passengers contact the Contract College Fleet Supervisor (607-255-3247).

Note: If the vehicle is involved in an accident, please obtain complete information. Use the form enclosed in the book in the glove compartment for the preliminary report. Notify Fleet Services immediately in the event of any accident.

Farm Equipment

Farm equipment can be used upon approval of the farm/orchard manager after a short vehicle-safety-training course.
Keys

Keys are available for various Section facilities based on need. Key requests should be directed to our Administrative Manager, Leslie Larsen.

Purchasing

During the course of a student’s graduate study it will be necessary to obtain various items essential to your research. Be sure to check with your major advisor for availability of funds and an account number before placing an order. Items may be obtained in a number of ways. Check with your major advisor or one of the Section’s Finance Specialists for assistance. It is important to plan ahead for your needs. Someone within a program will likely have a purchasing credit card (pcard) for purchases up to $1,500 from local businesses etc. Most other purchases that are in excess of $1,500 or are available from a routine source are ordered through eSHOP. Some services like sequencing can be ordered directly on campus by a student but please be aware that all purchases not by pcard or through eSHOP must be placed by the university, usually with purchase order.

Copy Machine Privileges

Graduate students who have received approval from their advisor may use the copy machine for materials that are connected with their assistantship assignments and/or thesis research. If the student is a TA for a Section course, copies may be made for that purpose. **Copying of books is not permitted on the section copiers; these machines are not designed to do so and could cause the glass to break. Use one of the copiers in Mann Library. Please do not violate copyright laws.**

Mail

Mailboxes are in 240 Emerson Hall. Upon arrival you will have a box assigned to students. Mail is sorted daily. Please have only university-related business delivered here. UPS is preferred for package deliveries, not the United States Postal Service (USPS).

- Due to on-campus postal regulations, a *Postal Change of Address* notice cannot be used to forward your mail.
- Note: The Section cannot forward your mail. Please plan ahead and provide your contacts with your new address.

Postage

The Section does not provide postage for personal use, such as reprint requests, position inquiries, mailing of resumes to prospective employers, etc.

Room Scheduling

Room scheduling for meetings or exams (A or B) should be done via the [LibCal](#) program.
PLBRG 6220: Seminar in Plant Breeding and Genetics

Section seminars are held weekly (Tuesday's from 12:20-1:10pm in 135 Emerson Hall) for faculty, staff, and graduate students during the academic year. All graduate students are required to attend at least 7 each semester unless they have a course conflict. Registration for PLBRG 6220 should be done to receive credit.

Synapsis

Synapsis is the academic and social organization of the faculty, graduate students and alumni of the section of Plant Breeding and Genetics at Cornell University. All Plant Breeding graduate students are automatically members. The objective of Synapsis is to stimulate professional and social interaction among members of the Cornell community interested in plant breeding and to improve the quality of plant breeding education at Cornell.