University of Washington

DEPARTMENT OF ATMOSPHERIC AND CLIMATE SCIENCE

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

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ADVISING

Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) – Robert Wood (robwood2@uw.edu)

The Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC), a faculty member, arranges and oversees the academic advising of students, leads the admission process, and provides guidance on the successful completion of Departmental and Graduate School degree requirements, and on exceptions to established rules or procedures, as well as any matter concerning the Graduate School. The GPC advocates for graduate students at the Departmental and College levels and serves as a liaison between students and faculty as necessary.

Graduate Program Advisor (GPA) – Cathy Liao (atmosadv@uw.edu)

The Graduate Program Advisor (GPA), a staff member also known as the Academic Advisor, provides a number of services to graduate students in the Department. The GPA advises on course completion, monitors academic progress, introduces and connects students to relevant academic and professional resources, handles registration matters, conducts audits of students' coursework, and communicates Departmental and Graduate School policies. The GPA also conveys MS and Doctoral committee membership to the Graduate School and submits the Master's and Doctoral Degree Requests of graduating students.

Faculty Advisor (Advisor)

The faculty advisor is an assigned department faculty member whose advising focuses on the activities, requirements, and attainment of satisfactory progress through the steps needed to achieve a graduate degree. Faculty advisors are typically assigned to students upon admission into the degree program and may provide financial support via a Research Assistantship (RA) through their external research grants. Students are matched with a faculty advisor based on student preference, advisor availability and funding, and commonality of research interests.

Students are required to meet with their faculty advisor at least once per quarter, but are encouraged to meet more frequently throughout the program. The student's Individual Development Plan (IDP) should be reviewed between the faculty advisor and the student at least annually, and is required in the first year and the year after qualification for the PhD program. MS students are required to form their MS committees by the end of the winter quarter of their first year. Faculty advisors typically continue to serve as the Chair or committee member of the MS supervisory committee. However, students can, and occasionally do, switch advisors upon consultation with the GPC and GPA. Students should be aware that such a change may have consequences for their funding situation, as an RA is usually paid on their advisor's grant(s).

Seeking Advice

Students are welcome and encouraged to consult with the GPC, GPA, or their faculty advisor and committee members on a variety of issues. Meeting program requirements is the graduate student's responsibility, and the student should endeavor to be familiar with the timing and requirements of each milestone. Students should regularly seek input and advice

from their faculty advisor(s) or the GPC and GPA, as necessary, about any question or concern they may have. These issues can include academic requirements or performance, alternate course sequences, career goals, the mentor/mentee relationship, and more. Typically, the faculty adviser serves as the primary resource for research-related and satisfactory progress inquiries, and unresolved questions regarding program requirements and policies can be directed to the GPA and GPC. Students are encouraged to approach whomever they feel most comfortable with to discuss these issues as they arise, and to reach out to the GPA and/or GPC to help consider the best pathway if they are unsure how to proceed.

Mentor

The relationship between a student and their faculty advisor(s) is crucial for a successful student experience and the research enterprise of the department and university. This relationship, by its nature, involves the transfer of knowledge and skills from an established researcher to a student researcher, inherently creating imbalances in power dynamics, and thereby carrying additional demands for ethical behavior. It is vital for advisors to cultivate an intellectually stimulating environment that is free from harassment and to recognize and respect the diverse backgrounds of their students. Advisors should be equitable, encouraging, accessible, and respectful, providing regular opportunities for discussions about the student's research project, workplace issues, well-being, and future goals/aspirations.

The UW has established rules regarding student conduct:

UW Student Code of Conduct (see also section on Conduct on P13 of this document).

The University's Civil Rights Compliance Office (CRC) is responsible for compliance with civil rights laws and University policy. Resources regarding bias, non-discrimination, and sexual harassment can be found on the CRC website.

The UW Human Resources Department has policies related to workplace violence: UW HR Workplace Violence Page.

Students who are uncomfortable discussing their concerns with their faculty advisors are encouraged to first reach out to the GPA and/or GPC for available resources. If further assistance is needed, they may also reach out to the Department Chair to explore additional resources or strategize potential options.

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

The following policies for the Atmospheric and Climate Science Graduate Program supplement the Degree Policies maintained by the Graduate School of the University of Washington: UW Graduate Degree Requirements.

Registration

Registration is completed online via the UW registration site. Quarterly class schedules and schedule line numbers (SLNs) are available in the Time Schedule.

For autumn, winter, and spring quarters: First-year students should register for a total of 18 credits, with any shortfall from recommended courses covered by independent study (ATMOS 600). Second-year students should register for 10 Master's thesis credits (ATMOS 700) plus any additional required coursework. Post-PhD qualification students should register for 10 Dissertation credits (ATMOS 800) plus any additional required coursework.

For summer quarters, all students with a TA and/or RA appointment should register for 2 credits. If you are considering enrolling in additional courses or pursuing an external internship or other opportunities during the summer, please consult your faculty advisor well in advance.

Specific curriculum & registration information can be found on the Department's graduate program curriculum site.

Entry or Faculty Codes

To register for research credits such as Independent Study (ATMOS 600), Master's Thesis (ATMOS 700), or Doctoral Dissertation (ATMOS 800), you will need the five-digit faculty advisor code, available from your faculty advisor or the Graduate Program Advisor.

If you are registering for a course in another department or program that requires an add code, please contact the department offering the course to request it.

Tuition and Fees

The Office of Planning and Budgeting provides customizable tuition dashboards to calculate tuition and fees.

Quarterly tuition is due on the third Friday of the quarter. Please see the "tuition/fee assessment deadlines" on the UW academic calendar site for specific dates.

Course Credit and Grade Point Average Requirements

A minimum course grade of 2.7 is required for a course to count toward degree requirements and the Graduate School's graded and total credit counts.

The required credits for ATMOS and non-ATMOS coursework need to be graded. For requirements, see the Department's graduate program curriculum site.

Once a student has satisfied the Department's and Graduate School's minimum requirement for numerically graded credits, additional electives may be taken for a numerical grade, Credit/No Credit (Cr/NC), or Satisfactory/Not Satisfactory (S/NS).

A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher is required in all courses numbered 400 and above to maintain graduate standing and be eligible for a degree. A quarterly grade point average below 3.0 will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) and may result in a warning. If the quarterly grade point average remains below 3.0 in subsequent quarters, the student could be subject to an academic alert or other academic disciplinary actions. For detailed information, please refer to the Satisfactory Progress section. There may be additional grade point average requirements associated with specific funding sources (e.g., some fellowships) that students may receive.

Continuous Enrollment Requirements

To maintain graduate student status, a student must be enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis, or be in "On-Leave" status during the academic year (excluding summer), from the time of first enrollment in the Graduate School until completion of all graduate degree requirements. F-1 international students must meet full-time enrollment requirements to maintain a valid immigration status. International students should always consult the International Student Services Office (ISS) if they are unable to enroll full-time. Failure to maintain either continuous enrollment or On-Leave status constitutes evidence that the student has resigned from the Graduate School.

A full-time course load during the academic year is defined as at least 10 credits each quarter, and students should reference their curriculum requirements. RAs and TAs are required to take at least 10 credits in autumn, winter, and spring quarters, and 2 credits in summer during the quarters they hold their positions. A student must be registered for credit for the quarter in which any required exam occurs. A student must maintain registration as a full-time or part-time graduate student for the quarter in which a degree or certificate is conferred.

RAs/TAs who are planning an absence, including not being registered during the summer quarter, must seek approval from their faculty advisor and inform the GPC and GPA.

On-Leave Status

Graduate students are required to maintain graduate status during their program of study. Failure to maintain this status requires reinstatement to the University of Washington. Students who desire to take a quarter or quarters off without going through the reinstatement process must apply for on-leave status for each quarter they do not register. Students should always consult their faculty advisor first if they plan to request a leave of absence. Failure to maintain graduate status through registration or an approved request for on-leave status effectively ends a student's continuation in the Department. For on-leave

eligibility, please refer to the Graduate School's Guidance on Graduate On-Leave Status. For complete details regarding the on-leave policy, refer to Policy 3.5.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

A graduate student bears the responsibility for registering for appropriate courses and for their own academic performance. Students should regularly consult with their faculty advisor and committee members as they follow the procedures and evaluation criteria to progress toward their degree.

All graduate students should strive to maintain satisfactory progress towards their degrees. This includes performance in coursework, timely and successful completion of departmental milestones, and adherence to professional behavior standards. The Graduate School's Policy 3.7 provides an overview of satisfactory progress for graduate students. In the Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science, the requirements for satisfactory progress include:

- Maintaining a quarterly and cumulative grade point average above 3.0
- Maintaining progress in research activities in accordance with expectations as established in consultation with the student's faculty advisor(s)
- Presenting preliminary research at the "first year talks" at the start of the student's second year.
- Forming an MS committee by the end of Winter Quarter of the student's first year
- Drafting and submitting an MS research proposal by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student's second year
- Successfully passing the Qualifying Exam to enter the PhD program by the end of Spring Quarter of the student's second year
- Successfully passing the General Exam to become a PhD candidate by the end of Spring Quarter of the student's third year
- Successfully passing the Final PhD Exam (PhD "defense")
- Adherence to standards in the Student Conduct Code
- Additional standards of conduct may be expected for students undertaking fieldwork activities as part of their research. Individual advisors may have their own guidelines or compacts for field activities.

In the Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science, the faculty advisor(s) and supervisory committee are responsible for regular reviews of student performance.

Should students fail to make satisfactory and timely progress toward their degrees or fail to achieve milestones (outlined below) in the degree process, they may be placed in an unsatisfactory performance status. In such cases, the GPC will provide written notification outlining the reason(s) the student was moved from a satisfactory status, the steps required to return to satisfactory progress, and the time allotted to complete those steps. In certain (severe) cases (outlined below), and in accordance with established program policy, an immediate recommendation to drop a student may be made without progressing through the stages outlined below.

Academic Notification: This is internal to the Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science and is used to help bring the student's academic plan back into satisfactory progress within a short period of time (typically one quarter). Academic Notifications most frequently take the form of communication from the student's faculty advisor and *may* be given for the following reasons:

- Falling below a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 in academic classes for the first time
- Failure to pass an academic course that is not part of the required coursework (failure to pass required courses warrants an Academic Alert; see below)
- Insufficient progress on research expectations as established in consultation with the student's faculty advisor(s)

Academic Alert: Academic alerts are for more serious issues and are issued by the department's GPC rather than the academic advisor. When a student is placed on Academic Alert, the Graduate School must be notified, and the alert should outline the remedial steps needed for the student to regain satisfactory progress. An Academic Alert may be issued for the following reasons:

- Failure to resolve the Academic Notification criteria within the allotted time
- Falling below a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 in academic courses for more than one quarter
- Failure to pass a *required* academic course
- Failure to set up and attend required exams (Qualifying, General) within the designated timeline without prior approval from the faculty advisor(s) and committee
- Ongoing failure to make progress on research expectations as established in consultation with the student's faculty advisor(s)

Final Academic Alert: Final academic alerts are for more serious issues and are issued by the GPC. When a student is placed on a Final Academic Alert, the Graduate School must be notified, and the final alert should outline the remedial steps needed for the student to regain satisfactory progress. A Final Academic Alert may be issued for the following reasons:

- Failure to resolve the Academic Alert criteria in the allotted time
- Failure to successfully pass one of the required exams (Qualifying Exam, General Exam, Final Exam) in cases where the committee has agreed that a retake is possible

Academic Drop: This action will terminate a student's enrollment from their program of study without receipt of a degree. If this occurs, the student is no longer eligible to complete that program (although they may enroll in other graduate programs within the UW). For certain criteria, students may receive an immediate Academic Drop without first receiving a Final Academic Alert, as specified below. An Academic Drop may occur for the following reasons:

- Failure to resolve the Final Academic Alert criteria within the allotted time
- Failure to successfully pass one of the required exams (Qualifying Exam, General Exam, Final Exam) in cases where the committee has agreed that a retake is not possible

If a graduate student who has not already received an MS within their academic unit is in danger of Academic Drop and/or is on Final Academic Alert, the student's committee, in coordination with the GPC and unit chair, may offer the student the option of a master's degree (either thesis-based or non-thesis-based). This is at the discretion of the faculty advisor(s) and graduate committee, and only when the agreed-upon work is accomplished within the timeframe set out by the committee.

Course Requirements & Degree Progress Tracking

Department requirements may be tracked through the University's Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS). DARS, which can be accessed through the student's MyUW account, is a computerized degree audit that helps students monitor progress toward completing their degree. The Graduate Program Advisor may also run a DARS report, but students are ultimately responsible for checking on their own progress. Questions about the degree audit or requirements can be directed to atmosadv@uw.edu.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a tool to help graduate students assess their interests and skills and develop their research, academic, and career goals. The IDP is used to communicate on these topics with the faculty advisor(s) during mentorship conversations. All graduate students are encouraged to use the IDP at least annually during one of their regular meetings with their faculty advisor(s). Graduate students entering the program in Autumn 2020 or later are required to use the IDP at the end of their first quarter in the program and the quarter following qualification for the PhD program. More information can be found on the Department's Individual Development Plan site.

MS VS PHD IN ATMOSPHERIC AND CLIMATE SCIENCE

The Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science admits students directly into either the Master of Science (MS) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program, based on the program to which applicants apply. Students admitted to the PhD program follow the same core curriculum as MS students during their first two years.

PhD students must complete the required MS curriculum, formally request conferral of the MS degree, and advance to the doctoral stage of the program upon successful completion of the qualifying examination. Students who enter the PhD program with a prior MS degree from another accredited institution may request to transfer applicable overlapping coursework from their previous program and substitute additional courses, as needed, to fulfill degree requirements. Students in the PhD program also have the option to conclude their studies with the MS degree by completing the MS requirements without continuing to the doctoral stage.

MS to PHD petition

Students who are admitted to the MS program and wish to continue into the PhD program must submit a petition to the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) for permission to participate in the qualifying examination. This petition must be submitted no later than the end of the winter quarter of the student's second year. Approval to proceed is contingent upon the availability of an appropriate faculty advisor and adequate funding. Students are therefore strongly encouraged to consult with potential faculty advisors early regarding the possibility of continuing into the PhD program.

MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE INFORMATION

The following information is intended to be used along with advice from your faculty advisor(s), the GPC, and the GPA.

Graduate School

- Master's Degree Policies and Requirements: Policy 1.1.2.

Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science

- For a full list of Master of Science Degree Requirements and curriculum, please see the Department's Graduate Academic Program page.

MS Degree Requirements and MS/PhD Timeline

All graduate students complete a curriculum comprised of required courses and electives, give a presentation at the End of First Year Research Colloquium, and undertake a research project to fulfil the requirements for the MS degree. All requirements for an MS degree are normally completed by spring of the second year, and there is an upper limit to complete MS requirements within six years from the time of first enrollment (including quarters registered and on leave). Below is a typical timeline:

Year One	• Average schedule is three graded graduate classes (sometimes two) per quarter in autumn, winter, and spring. • IDP reviewed by student and faculty advisor in the autumn quarter (required). • Student forms a committee (by the end of winter quarter), consisting of three (or sometimes four) faculty members (including advisor). • Student meets with their committee in the spring quarter • Full-time research commences during the first summer quarter, with a focus on identifying a suitable research problem, understanding its relation to larger questions in atmospheric and climate science, and constructing a research plan. • End of first-year research presentations in September before year two starts.
Year Two	• Average schedule is one to two graduate courses per quarter. • Student drafts a two-page MS research proposal and meets with their committee to discuss the proposal. By the end of the first week of December, the student submits a PDF copy of the MS research proposal to the GPA, approved in writing by the MS Committee. • Student meets individually with each committee member in the Winter Quarter to solicit input for reading materials and in preparation for the MS culminating experience and/or qualifying exam. • Students in the PhD program take an oral Qualifying Exam in the spring quarter (at the latest) • Request the MS degree through MyGrad once passed the MS culminating experience.

	• Continue diving deeper into research.
Year Three (for continuing PhD students)	• Average schedule is one graduate course per quarter. • Most students are expected to TA for an ATMOS class for one quarter. • Autumn (prior to week 5): Student forms PhD committee consisting of a minimum of 4 graduate faculty plus a GSR. • Winter (at the latest): Student presents required public seminar on work completed at UW. Most often, this will be research from the student's first project (usually the MS project), which in most cases will be submitted to a journal as a research manuscript in year 3. • Winter: Student meets individually with each committee member to discuss preparation for the General Exam. • Three weeks prior to the General Exam: Student submits a written thesis proposal including a review of the pertinent literature, preliminary results on the subject of the research, and proposed future research and methodology. • Spring (at latest): Student takes General Exam • Continue conducting research.

End of First Year Graduate Student Research Colloquium

Each September, the Department holds a full-day Graduate Student Research Colloquium. It is usually held prior to the first day of class in the autumn quarter. Presentations are made by all students who have completed their first year, and attendance by all first-year and incoming students is mandatory. Preliminary research results are welcomed, but not required, for this colloquium.

Forming the MS Supervisory Committee

In the winter quarter of their first year, students will meet with their primary faculty advisor(s) to discuss appropriate faculty to include on their MS supervisory committee. This committee serves an important evaluative and mentoring function for students as they work towards their degree. The committee should include a minimum of three members, such as:

- 1 faculty advisor/chair and 2 other Graduate faculty in the Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science
- 2 faculty advisor co-chairs and one other Graduate faculty member in the Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science
- Once the MS supervisory committee is formed, students submit the committee membership to the GPA, who will officially register the committee with the Graduate School. Students will then meet with their committee to discuss progress on their MS research no later than the end of the spring quarter.

By the end of the winter quarter of the second year, the student should meet individually with each committee member in preparation for the MS culminating experience and/or Qualifying Exam.

PhD Qualifying Exam Process

By the Spring Quarter of the second year, students who wish to continue into the PhD program are required to take an oral Qualifying Exam consisting of an approximately 1.5-hour closed-door oral exam with the MS committee. The Qualifying Exam satisfies the culminating experience requirement of the non-thesis MS degree.

- Approximately 4-6 weeks before a student wishes to take the qualifying exam, they should ask committee members for their availability and request that committee members share a short list of papers (no more than 3) of relevant background information that the student should be familiar with. Students are encouraged to solicit input for additional reading materials from their committee members at this time.
- The Qualifying Exam will be run by a faculty member who is not part of the student's MS committee (and typically outside the disciplinary area of the student/advisor), whose role is to ensure a consistent and fair process. This individual will be selected by the GPC or department chair.
- At least three weeks prior to the Qualifying Exam, students submit a written report to the MS committee. The report should include a title, abstract, introduction, methods, preliminary results, or plan for results, and should be approximately 10-15 pages in length (4,000-6,000 words). Depending upon the commitments required of the students in their first two years (e.g., fieldwork, availability of data, etc.), most student reports will contain original results, but some may be more heavily weighted towards a literature review should novel data not be available in a timely way.
- The aim of the Qualifying Exam is to assess student progress on and foundational knowledge of their research project. The student should prepare a 20-30 minute presentation on the written report described above, which will be presented to the committee. The remainder of the exam will consist of questions designed to test the student's background knowledge in their area of research.
- Prior to the exam, committee members will coordinate to develop a few questions (approximately 2 each), and these initial questions will be documented in the written summary (see below) and retained as part of the exam record.
- The outcome of the Qualifying Exam will be shared with the student at the close of the exam. Possible outcomes: pass, conditional pass with additional requirements, re-examination, or fail.
- The student's advisor(s) will be asked to leave the room for the final deliberations of the committee.
- The committee will produce a written summary (typically less than 1 page) of the exam outcome, including an evaluation of progress and feedback to the student on any areas for future focus or additional coursework to help increase research productivity. The written summary should be shared with the GPA and documented by the end of the quarter in which the student takes the exam.
- Students who entered the program with an existing MS degree may be able to complete the required coursework for the non-thesis MS more rapidly (e.g., by

transferring some credits from the prior institution) and may be able to take the Qualifying Exam in an earlier quarter.

Please review the Qualifying Exam website and Procedures Checklist for more details.

Terminal non-thesis MS degree

Alternatively, if a student is in the MS program or chooses not to sit for the Qualifying Exam, a final committee meeting (culminating experience) is required for the student to be eligible to receive the MS degree. The culminating experience results from the student's independent study and consists of a short oral presentation (30 minutes) followed by 30 minutes of Q&A, plus a short summary (~10 pages) of the student's research in the form of a written report. The report must be approved by the student's MS committee. This option results in a terminal non-thesis MS degree.

Please review the Master's Degree website and Procedures Checklist for more details.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE INFORMATION

The following information is intended to be used along with advice from your faculty advisor(s), the GPC, and the GPA.

Graduate School

- Doctoral Degree Policies and Requirements: Policy 1.1.4.

Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science

- For a full list of Doctoral Degree Requirements and curriculum, please see the Department's Graduate Academic Program page.

ATMOS PhD Degree Requirements and Timeline

All PhD students complete several required milestones following qualification into the PhD program, including the TA experience, General Exam, dissertation, and Final Exam (dissertation defense). Students pursue coursework as appropriate upon advice from their committee, although pursuing research is the primary activity. The General Exam typically takes place during the third year, and the average time to complete the PhD, including the two years of MS experience, is five to six years. All work for the doctoral degree must be completed within ten years (including quarters registered and on leave).

TA requirement

TA assignments will typically take place in Year 3, unless the student has already volunteered to serve as a TA in a prior year (TA-ing before Year 3 will be encouraged but not required for the program).

Doctoral Supervisory Committee

The doctoral supervisory committee should be formed in the third year of study, during Autumn Quarter prior to Week 5. This committee serves an important evaluative and mentoring function and oversees a student's academic work throughout the program. The doctoral supervisory committee consists of a minimum of five members, including a Graduate School Representative (GSR). At least three of the members (including the Chair and GSR) must be members of the Graduate Faculty with an endorsement to chair doctoral committees. A majority of the members must be members of the Graduate Faculty.

For more information on the roles of doctoral committee chairs, members, and the GSR, please visit the Graduate School's policy on Supervisory Committee for Graduate Students.

Once approved, students submit their committee membership to the GPA to register the committee with the Graduate School for approval. The supervisory committee should convene at least once a year to review progress, discuss current issues, and determine plans and future activities.

General Exam

The General Examination should take place in the spring quarter of year 3 at the latest, unless an alternative timeline is established by the committee. The Request for General Examination must be completed online no later than three weeks in advance of the exam date. Prior to submitting the exam request online to the Graduate School, the student must obtain approval from all supervisory committee members, either in writing or via email. More information can be found in Policy 1.1.4.1.

The General Examination typically consists of an oral examination that tests the student's understanding of an area of specialization (e.g., synoptic or dynamic meteorology, cloud physics, energy transfer, etc.), with emphasis on the subject of the student's intended dissertation. The oral presentation of the proposal will last 20-30 minutes, assuming minimal interruption, followed by up to 60 minutes of questioning from the committee. At least four members of a supervisory committee (including the Chair, GSR, and one additional Graduate Faculty member) must be present at the examination. Students who pass the General Examination are advanced to candidate status for the PhD degree.

It is the student's responsibility to schedule the exam and submit the request in a timely manner. More information can be found at the Department's General Exam page.

Doctoral Reading Committee

The Doctoral Reading Committee is a subset of the Supervisory Committee. The Reading Committee is appointed to read and approve the dissertation, and it ensures that the dissertation is a significant contribution to knowledge and is an acceptable piece of scholarly writing. After the General Examination, the student must select at least three members of their Supervisory Committee to serve on the Reading Committee. More information can be found on the Graduate School's Policy 4.2: Supervisory Committee for Graduate Students.

Once approved, students submit the committee membership to the GPA, who will officially register the Reading Committee with the Graduate School.

Final Exam

The Final Examination is devoted to the subject of a student's dissertation. The dissertation represents an original research study contributing to the understanding towards a problem of substantial scientific importance. The dissertation must be prepared in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Graduate School in Policy 1.1.4.3 and Policy 4.2.3. The student's dissertation must be defended orally. It is traditional and encouraged in the Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science for the defense to be an open presentation given in a department colloquium or seminar. However, a student may elect not to do an open defense.

After a student defends the findings in their dissertation, the Supervisory Committee and any others present will question the presenter about their research. The Supervisory Committee may also request a non-public period of questioning. An outline of the Final Exam procedures can be found on our Department Graduate Program page.

Preparing to Graduate

The Graduate School provides a comprehensive checklist for preparing to graduate on its Graduation Requirements page.

It is recommended that students speak with GPA at the beginning of the quarter in which they plan to graduate.

RESEARCH & TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS (RA & TA)

The following information is intended for general guidance only. Students must reference their individual RA and/or TA contract for specific details. An RA and/or TA appointment classifies a student as an Academic Student Employee (ASE), and compensation rates are governed by the collective bargaining agreement between the University of Washington and UAW Local 4121. More details can be found in the UAW ASEs contract.

Out-of-state tuition is waived, and in-state tuition is covered for RAs and TAs, and pay rates are specified in a student's individual RA and/or TA contract. The level of financial support increases as students advance through the graduate program, with the UW's centralized HR system initiating promotional pay increases for ASEs at the following milestone:

- Upon conferral of PhD Candidacy after the quarter in which a student has passed the PhD General Examination

More information about RA/TA salaries can be found on the TA/RA Salaries page.

Health insurance (medical/dental/vision) is available to eligible ASEs at no cost, and to their families at a modest cost. Details on the Graduate Appointee Insurance Plan and contact information are available via the UW Human Resources website.

More information about departmental support can be found on the department fellowship and support page.

Research Assistantship (RA)

Students who maintain satisfactory academic progress in the program are typically supported financially through a Research Assistantship (RA), which is one type of the Academic Student Employee (ASE) position. RAs are generally provided by the student's faculty advisor for performing research on an existing project funded by external grants. Students work closely with their faculty advisors on research throughout their enrollment in the degree program. A typical ASE contract includes approximately 20 hours per week dedicated to employment-related responsibilities, such as research funded by their advisor's grant. Beyond these duties, students are also expected to make steady progress toward their academic milestones—this includes attending classes, preparing for exams, engaging with scholarly literature, and developing their thesis or dissertation.

Teaching Assistantship (TA)

The Department intends for graduate students to serve as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for one quarter, usually during their third year or later. Assignments are based on student availability, preference, and other factors.

The Department appoints a Lead TA, a current upper-level graduate student with teaching experience, who is responsible for organizing and leading the departmental TA orientation, workshops, and class visits. The Lead TA can be contacted at atmosta@uw.edu.

TA Training: The University of Washington Center for Teaching and Learning provides an annual TA training in September prior to the start of the quarter. All new TAs are required to attend the TA training, and all students are welcome to attend.

Graduate students who are not native speakers of English, as indicated in the applicant profile, must meet the requirements of the Graduate School's Policy 5.2 in order to be appointed as a TA.

Fellowships

The Department encourages students to seek out various fellowships. These opportunities not only foster skill development and professional growth but also serve as platforms for showcasing their work, collaborating with experts, and gaining recognition in their respective fields. Participants can also gain valuable experience, enhance their research abilities, and establish their reputation within academia. Students can independently apply for external fellowships, which may fund part or all of their salary, benefits, and tuition, and which are not directly tied to a faculty advisor's existing research project. Students must notify the Grants Administration team at atmgrant@uw.edu and the GPA at atmosadv@uw.edu if they are awarded a fellowship. More information can be found on the department fellowship and support page.

RESOURCES

Computing

The Department makes every effort to provide computing equipment for graduate students with RA appointments, as arranged with their faculty advisor. For departmental computing inquiries, please contact support@atmos.washington.edu. Other resources are available on the Grads web.

A computer lab is available for ATMOS students, located in ATG 623.

For the most current information on available UW computing services, including public printing sites at the UW, please check the UW Computing and Communications website. For specific inquiries, call 206-221-5000 or send an e-mail to help@uw.edu.

Libraries

The **Atmospheric and Climate Science Library** is located in 623A ATG. It is available during regular building hours (8:30 AM– 4:30 PM). A small collection of books and other resources are kept there. There are computers available for student use, as well as a printer, conference table, and whiteboard.

The UW Libraries System includes Suzzallo and Allen Libraries and many others. A full description of the library system, services, and resources is available on the UW libraries website.

Writing Center

The UW Odegaard Writing and Research Center can assist students with research and writing-related questions.

Counseling and Wellbeing

The University of Washington offers counseling services to students who might be dealing with challenging academic or personal situations while exercising full confidence. Students should not hesitate to reach out to the UW Health and Well-being services' professionals who are ready to help them through short or long-term difficult situations.

Safety Concerns

SafeCampus is a UW resource available 24 hours a day to support those with concerns for their safety or the safety of someone else.

Disability Resources

The Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science and the University of Washington are committed to ensuring learning opportunities for students with temporary (e.g., a broken limb, etc.) or permanent disabilities. If a student has a disability, they should contact the Office of Disability Resources for Students (DRS). DRS will request the appropriate

documentation from the student and contact all of the students' instructors, informing them of the accommodation required, without notifying them of the type of disability.

Conduct

It is important for all members of the Department to be respectful of the opinions of students, faculty, staff, and others in the UW community and beyond. The University of Washington values and honors diverse experiences and perspectives and strives to create welcoming and respectful learning environments, and promotes access and opportunity.

Please refer to this page for the UW student conduct code.

If a student experiences an academic grievance, bias, or harassment, they may report it to the GPC/GPA or the Department chair, and may seek redress through the following avenues:

- UW Graduate School Academic Grievance Procedure
- UW College of the Environment student academic grievance procedures
- UW Office of Ombud
- UW Civil Rights & Title IX Report Site
- UAW 4121 for Academic Student Employees(ASEs)

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science

Our department is dedicated to advancing academic excellence by preparing future leaders in atmospheric and climate science. Through ATMOS 4 ALL (atmos-a4a@u.washington.edu)—a collaborative group of students, faculty, and staff—we work together to ensure that every graduate has the opportunity to develop the expertise, integrity, and resilience needed to excel in this vital discipline.

College of the Environment: Inclusive-Excellence Office

Inclusive Excellence Office

UW Graduate School

The Graduate Student Equity & Excellence (GSEE) is committed to enhancing equity and social progression to promote the success of all graduate students. They offer programming, resources, community building, and more.

Religious Holiday Accommodations

A Washington state law requires that teaching faculty across the UW make reasonable accommodations for students observing religious holidays or traditions. Every course syllabus must include information informing students of this option. Students do not need to share their religious faith or affiliation when making the request, and privacy laws prohibit others from asking students about or requesting proof of their religious affiliations.

Any student seeking reasonable accommodations must provide written notice through the Office of the University Registrar's Religious Accommodations request process within the first two weeks of the beginning of the course, of the specific dates of absence due to religious accommodation.

To learn more and access the form, see the religious accommodations policy website.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Department of Atmospheric and Climate Science Office

The ATMOS Office is located in room 408 of the Atmospheric and Geophysics Building (ATG) and is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday except UW holidays.

Student Representatives

- UW Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) - Two students each year serve as our representatives on the GPSS. The GPSS represents UW graduate student concerns such as tuition, TA and RA salaries, and insurance coverage.

- ATMOS Graduate Student Representative (GSR) - Within the Department, two Graduate Student Representatives serve as a liaison between the students, faculty, and staff to ensure awareness of student concerns and ideas in planning and activities, and participation in department faculty meetings. GSRs are elected by student vote in the autumn quarter.

- College of the Environment Student Advisory Council (SAC): The SAC includes a graduate student member from the Department who can serve as a representative to raise ideas or concerns with the Dean's office.

Generative Artificial Intelligence General Use Guidelines

- Research: Review the Effective and Responsible Use of AI in Research page.
- Teaching: Refer to guidance on integrating GenAI while maintaining academic standards.