NEW GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDE TO ECO

A guide for incoming graduate students in
the Department of Environmental Conservation

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1. STUDENT ID CARD: YOU NEED THIS TO DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING!

What is a UCard?
- Official UMass Student identification card

How do I obtain a UCard?
- Go to the UCard office located at 168 Whitmore Administration Bldg.
- There is no additional charge for your UCard (it is included in your student fees)
- If you lose it you will have to pay a replacement fee

What do I use the UCard for?
- Library card for the 5-College Library System (library bar code is located on the front)
- You can set up a debit UCard account that can be used to make purchases on campus (copy machines, food, etc.). Information on how to set up and manage your UCard account can be found at https://www.umass.edu/ucard/
- Serves as a PVTA bus pass (more information about bus schedule and routes: http://www.umass.edu/transportation/route-schedules)
- Used to access recreational facilities (see below for information on rec facilities)
- Student discounts at many local businesses
2. PEOPLE YOU NEED TO KNOW

Who: LINDA FORTIN  
Where: Holdsworth 225  
What: Linda is the person to contact if you need academic programs help such as...
  • To have your name added to the ECo email list. Give Linda your name and UMass email address with the date of your request. The email list will tell you about department happenings and important administrative updates
  • A mail box in the Holdsworth mailroom
  • Keys to campus buildings e.g. Holdsworth front door and computer room, Draper (or wherever your new office is located). All students should receive multiple keys: one key to Holdsworth; if your office is in another building besides Holdsworth (e.g. Draper), you will need a key to the exterior door and a third key to your office. Make sure that all 2-3 keys are ordered when you place your request. The main office may have spare copies of some keys on hand.

Who: EMILY WEST  
Where: Holdsworth 224  
What: Emily is the person to contact if you have scheduling or general needs such as...
  • Reserve one of the department conference/meeting rooms (Holdsworth 312A or 306). Forms are on the file cabinet next to the front desk.

Who: LORI MINOR  
Where: Holdsworth 226  
What: Lori is the person to contact if you have Personnel or travel needs such as...
  • To submit forms and receipts for travel reimbursement
  • To submit a receipt for a (grant-related) purchase over $500

Who: ROXANN CORMIER  
Where: Holdsworth 226  
What: Roxann is the person to contact if you need help with Bookkeeping or Web editing
Who: CAROLYN SAFARIK  
Where: Holdsworth 227  
What: Carolyn is the person to contact if you need help with Business manager items such as...  
• To process Research Assistant appointment paperwork. Carolyn will process your appointment or contracts forms after your advisor has done the initial filing and you will find paper work in your Holdsworth mailbox to sign and return (to Carolyn)  
• Help with Research grant accounting  
• Questions about Grant and contract procedures and calculations

Who: JOANNE BUCHANAN  
Where: Holdsworth 226  
What: Joanne is the person to contact if you need help with the NREC extension program such as...  
 o Extension-related purchasing  
 o Extension-related Accounting and Bookkeeping

Who: DAN PEPIN  
Where: Holdsworth 103  
What: Dan is the person to contact if you need help with building manager issues such as...  
• To fix minor repairs around Holdsworth  
• To make or build project related materials  
• Move your office or equipment in your laboratory. Dan has a variety of dollies and tools that may be borrowed at his discretion for use in the building

More Information at: http://eco.umass.edu/people/administrative-staf
3. WHERE ARE ALL THE GRADUATE STUDENTS?

Office locations:

- Ag Engineering
- Holdsworth
- Conte Laboratory (Turners Falls, MA)
- And others

There is no central location for student offices. Many students are located in Ag Engineering and Holdsworth. To find where a student’s desk or office is, it is best to contact them directly by email (or their advisor). Linda Fortin also has a list of students and building maps if you run into trouble.
4. COMMUNICATIONS AND ACCOUNTS

What is OIT?
- OIT (Office of information technologies) provides computer and telephone services on campus (http://www.oit.umass.edu/index.html)

How do I obtain an OIT account?
- You should receive a NetID and password when you are officially accepted into the Graduate school. Use the NetID to activate your OIT account at the following link: https://spire.umass.edu. You can change your password after the initial setup.
- When you establish your OIT account you will receive a UMass e-mail account

What if I did not receive a NetID and password?
- Contact the OIT office in LGRC A109, (413) 545-9400. You will need to go down the office to set up an account.
- Your NetID and password are used to access several of the services provided by OIT

What services are provided by OIT?
- Wireless web access on campus
- Moodle
  - Used by most professors for class updates and projects
  - Link to Moodle: https://moodle.umass.edu/
- UMail--UMass e-mail interface
• Send, receive, and manage your UMass e-mail account
• Storage limit 30 MB. You can request more space from OIT if necessary.
• UMail attachment size limit is 5 MB
• You can forward your e-mail to any e-mail account
• You can search for e-mail addresses of UMass students and faculty using the address book UMass directory search
• https://mail-
  www.oit.umass.edu/horde/imp/nss_login.php?reason=login

- UDrive
  • Web server used to store and share files, on and off-campus access
  • Access the UDrive (and other useful tools) through apps.umass.edu

- SPIRE--Personal student center
  • Search and register for classes
  • Access your academic record and course schedule
  • Check your finances (Bursar account, Financial Aid, etc.)
  • Change/edit your personal contact information
  • Access spire at
    https://www.spire.umass.edu/psp/heproda/?cmd=login&languageCd=ENG&
5. SEMINAR SERIES OFFERED IN ECO AND OTHER RELATED DEPARTMENTS

Environmental Conservation Seminars
  o http://eco.umass.edu/about-us/seminar-series/

Links to other related Departmental/Program Seminars
  o Food Science
    • http://www.umass.edu/foodsci/gradSeminar.html
  o Microbiology
    • http://www.micro.umass.edu/seminars/fall-2015
  o Plant Biology
    • http://www.bio.umass.edu/plantbio/seminars.htm
  o Veterinary and Animal Sciences
    • http://www.vasci.umass.edu/graduate/departmental-seminars
  o Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning
    • http://www.umass.edu/larp/lecture_series.html
  o Organismic and Evolutionary Biology Seminars
    • http://www.bio.umass.edu/oeb/seminars
6. GRADUATE COMPUTER RESOURCES IN HOLDSWORTH

ECo graduate students have their own computer room located in Room 331. The key to the exterior doors of Holdsworth open the door to the computer room. Keys can be obtained from Linda Fortin in the main office. There are 12 work stations, a free printer, and Ethernet hook ups for laptops. All computers have internet access and hard drive space available for students to save work on. Instructions for connecting your personal laptops to the printer can be found in the computer lab. The room also has dry erase and bulletin boards for group meetings and posting information.
7. LIBRARY INFORMATION

What libraries are in the 5-College library system?

- Amherst College
- Hampshire College
- Mount Holyoke
- Smith College
- UMass Amherst
  - Sciences and Engineering Library (UM Science)

What services are offered with my library account?

- General library account
  - Use your library barcode to access account online
  - Check on books that you have loaned
  - Renew items online
  - Check on status of requests from the 4 other college libraries in the system
    - You can specify which library on campus you would like your requests sent
  - Link: http://www.library.umass.edu/

- Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery (ILLiad)
  - When do I use ILL?
    - If you are unable to find an item in the 5-College library catalog use ILL to request the item
• Depending on the format of the material it will be sent to you electronically or delivered to your specified library location
• You can also use ILL to order a copy of journal articles from the other 4 college libraries
  o **When not to use ILL**
    • Do not use ILL to request items located in the other 4 college libraries. Instead you will click on “request item” in the library catalog. It will be delivered to your specified UMass library location

• **RefWorks citation manager**
  o Citation manager software that can be used on and off-campus
  o Refworks can be used to collect, store, and organize citations from books, articles from databases, web sites, and other sources
  o You will need to set up an account to use RefWorks
  o Link: http://guides.library.umass.edu/refworksatumas
8. GRADUATE EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION (GEO)

If you are a Teaching Assistant (TA), Teaching Associate (TO), Research Assistant (RA), Project Assistant (PA), Assistant Resident Director (ARD), Intern, Trainee, or Working Fellow you can become a member of GEO and be covered by GEO stipends and benefits. GEO is a unit of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2322, which is based in Holyoke. We are not the only graduate students affiliated with the UAW – Umass Boston, Umass Lowell, the University of Washington and the entire University of California system are too. Umass Amherst graduate students have been unionized since 1990.

What does GEO do?
The main task of GEO is to negotiate a contract with the University Administration that determines wages and benefits for graduate student employees. This is usually a major undertaking and requires many meetings, negotiations, and usually several rallies.

What benefits and assistance does GEO provide me with?

- Tuition and curriculum fee waivers
- Free dental and vision plans
- Discounted Health Insurance
- Help resolving workplace conflicts
How do I become a member?

To be a voting member of GEO, you must check off the box for membership on your Dues Deduction Form. This form is sometimes attached to your assistantship contract, or you can sign it at the new employee orientation hosted by the Graduate School, or you can pick one up in the GEO office in room 201 of the Student Union. Dues are 2% of your salary. For employees with a 20 hour/week assistantship contract, this works out to about $6 a week. Graduate employees who choose not to join the union must pay an "Agency Fee," as established under state law. This amount is recalculated each year.

How many hours a week do I need to work in order to receive a tuition and fee waiver?

In general, if you work 20 hours per week in either semester you will receive a full year's tuition and fee waiver. If you work one 10-hour appointment in the fall and one 10-hour in the spring you receive a full year's tuition and fee waiver. If you work one 10-hour appointment per year then you will get a waiver for one semester.

How many hours a week do I need to work in order to receive health insurance?

Health insurance is provided by the University. Anyone eligible for a tuition waiver also gets Basic health care coverage. In general, working one 20 hour appointment per year will give you Basic and SHIP coverage at a reduced rate for the entire calendar year. Working one 10-hour appointment per year
will give you 95% waivers for Basic and SHIP fees for one 6-month coverage period. Working one 10-hour appointment in the fall and one 10-hour in the spring will earn you waivers for Basic and SHIP fees for the whole year. Check the website for information about Family and Domestic Partner Coverage.

How do I sign up for the Dental and Vision Plans?

These plans are administered through the Union. You must sign up for these plans every year generally by late September. Website

http://www.hwtrust.geouaw.org/

What if my funding comes from a non-University source?

As long as your paycheck comes from the University of Massachusetts, you are eligible to be a member of GEO.

If I elect to pay the Continuation Fee (formerly known as the Program Fee) am I still eligible for benefits?

Again, as long as your paycheck comes from the University of Massachusetts, you are eligible to be a member of GEO. You are still eligible for benefits, but you must go to University Health Services to sign up for health insurance in person before the add/drop period of each semester.

Do I have access to any discounts as a GEO member?

Yes. Check the Union Discounts page of the website for more details. You also get discounted parking. Remember to bring a copy of your contract with
you when you purchase your parking permit. Check the parking services website for current fees. [http://parking.umass.edu/index.php/home/](http://parking.umass.edu/index.php/home/)

**What should I do if I have a problem in my workplace or with my insurance provider?**

If you feel that any portion of the contract is being violated, you can contact the NRC steward or the GEO office and speak with a staff member about your options.

**How can I get involved in GEO?**

- Read over the current contract so you know what benefits you are entitled to.
- Check out the website [http://www.geouaw.org/](http://www.geouaw.org/)
- Go and find the GEO office in room 201 the Student Union. There are always friendly people there to answer your questions.
- You will get GEO emails. Read them to stay on top of what’s going on.
- Attend the membership meetings and social gatherings. They are a great way to meet people from other departments.
- Support the hard work that the GEO officers do by going to a rally, even if you don’t feel particularly educated about the issue. People will fill you in once you get there.
9. **ECO GRADUATE COUNCIL (AND OTHER ECO SOCIETIES)**

Now that you're a graduate student in ECo, get involved with the ECo grad council.

*More information about current events and ways to get involved can be found at: https://eco.umass.edu/for-current-students/eco-grad-council/*

*Other ECo societies can be found here: https://eco.umass.edu/for-current-students/societies/*
10. MEMOS MEMOS MEMOS....

Graduate student program forms can be found at:  
http://eco.umass.edu/for-current-students/forms/

When are they needed?  
Memos are needed for virtually everything that is submitted to the GPD and the Graduate School. Anything that is submitted to the GPD and Graduate School should be a memo written in a letter of correspondence format. The graduate program director will ultimately complete the memo to the Graduate School; however, what you submit to the GPD should be detailed, yet concise. This will make the GPD’s life a lot easier.

When in doubt check in the main office of Holdsworth Hall!

Master's Degree

Committee members chosen and letter sent to Graduate School via GPD

-This should be written as a letter of correspondence to the Graduate School. It should list the members of your committee and their respective
departments and should denote if they have attained a PhD. It would be encouraged to have each member of your committee sign the document.

Submission of Thesis Outline

-This submission should contain two documents: 1) A copy of the actual proposal and 2) a signed letter of correspondence to the Graduate School stating your intent to submit your thesis outline. You and your committee both should sign this document. See below for an example.

Dissertation Defense Form

-This is one of the few forms provided by the department that you will need to fill out and submit to the Graduate School and the GPD. This form must be filled out before the oral exam/defense can be scheduled. The thesis and professional master's degree have different forms.

Scheduling of Thesis Defense

-Once the dissertation defense form has been submitted and confirmed by the Graduate School you may schedule your oral exam/defense. This would be submitted as a letter of correspondence: stating the date, location, and members of your committee to be present. It is common for this to be sent out to the department as well via email. This will be submitted to the GPD and Graduate School. It is always a good idea for you to have your committee sign the document as well.
Passing of Thesis Defense.

Once you have passed your oral exam / defense you may submit this letter of correspondence to the GPD and Graduate School stating your passing. It is recommended that the members of your committee sign the document before submission.

Submission of Thesis to Graduate School

This is culmination of your graduate studies. The Graduate school has a great website dedicated to this step. You can submit it electronically and or by dropping it off to the Graduate School itself. Don't forget to go through the GPD before submitting it to the Graduate School. The department also provides a check list of what you should have completed before submitting your thesis (This can be found in the NRC Graduate Handbook).

Degree Eligibility Form

- This is a (yellow) form submitted to the Graduate School via the GPD and Department Head. You should also show documentation of all action above.
Doctorial Degree

You will see a lot of overlap in the forms that need to be submitted. You will find a list of the ones needed for the PhD program below. Any new forms not previously described will be elaborated. For additional information contact your GPD.

Passing of Prelim / Comprehensive Exam

- Form D.2 in Graduate School Handbook

Dissertation Committee members chosen

- Form D.3 in Graduate School Handbook

- This should be forwarded to the Graduate School via the GPD

Dissertation outline approved

- Form D.4 in Graduate School Handbook

- This should be approved by your committee and forwarded to the Graduate School via the GPD

Scheduling of Dissertation Defense
- This is also known as the Ph. D Dissertation Defense Form. This can be found in the NRC Graduate Student Handbook.

**Passing of Dissertation Defense**

- "Final Doctoral Oral Results:

- D.6 in Graduate Student Handbook

**Dissertation revised and submitted to Graduate School**

- Form D.7 in Graduate School Handbook

**Degree Eligibility Form**

- This is a (green) form submitted to the Graduate School via the GPD and Department Head. You should also show documentation of all action above.
Example of a form that you will have to make:

I love Animals and Trees

A Thesis Outline Proposal Presented
By
Gregor Mendel

Approved as to style and content by:

______________________________
Rachel Carlson, Chair

______________________________
Charles Darwin, Member

______________________________
Chuck Norris, Member

______________________________
Jane Goodall Member

______________________________
Francis Crick, Graduate Program Director
Department of Natural Resources Conservation

______________________________
Jack Hannah, Department Head
Department of Natural Resources Conservation
11. TRAVEL GRANTS

If you travel to a conference and present either a poster or oral paper, you are eligible for assistantship.

- You need to coordinate your travel grant application with the GPD (Timothy Randhir) and your advisor.

- Grant funds may be applied to registration, transportation, and lodging expenses documented by receipts for up to $200 for regional, $300 for domestic, and $400 for international travel. Meals, copying, and other incidentals are not reimbursable.
12. CAMPUS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
(http://www.umass.edu/campusrec/facilities/indoorfacilities/recreationcenter/)

Do I need a membership to use the recreational facilities?

- YES. Graduate students need a membership to access the sports and recreation facilities, participate in Fitness and Wellness programs, and intramurals

- Your UCard is used as a membership ID

- Information about fees for Graduate Students can be found here: http://www.umass.edu/campusrec/facilities/memberservices/eligibilityfees/index.html. Most of the cost of a year membership can be reimbursed through GEO wellness reimbursement.

Where do I purchase a membership?

- Campus Recreation front desk in the Recreation Center
13. OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Graduate School handbook:
http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/policies-forms/graduate-student-handbook

The Eco Graduate Program Handbook:
http://eco.umass.edu/for-current-students/graduate-program-handbook-and-course-schedule/

GEO Handbooks:
http://www.geouaw.org/?page_id=2886

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