Getting Started as a Graduate Student
in the Department of Zoology
University of British Columbia

www.zoology.ubc.ca

Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia, 6270 University Blvd,
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4, FAX: (604) 822-2416

Welcome to the Zoology Department at the University of British Columbia. This
short guide will help find who to know, where to find them, and how to get some
basic things done before and after you arrive at UBC.

For a wide variety of other information, please see the departmental web page at
www.zoology.ubc.ca.
Who's who

Graduate Secretary: Alice Liou, Biosci 4200
Tel: (604) 822-5807 or email: gradsec@zoology.ubc.ca

The Graduate Secretary is your resource person for all inquiries about graduate school - registration, awards, pay, TA assignments, and so on.

Graduate Committee: Graduate Advisor: Doug Altshuler
Tel: 827-5361 or email doug@zoology.ubc.ca

Graduate Committee members: Doug Altshuler, Villy Christensen, Darren Irwin, Nelly Pante, Diane Srivastava, Rick Taylor, Amanda Vincent, and Mike Whitlock.

This committee deals with all aspects of the Zoology graduate program, especially admissions and awards. The sequence of enquiry for general information or problems is first the Grad Secretary, then the Grad Advisor.

Department Head: Robert Shadwick
Tel: 827-3149 or email shadwick@zoology.ubc.ca

If you have any questions or concerns that cannot be answered by Alice Liou or Doug Altshuler, do not hesitate to contact the Head.

Office Manager: Edythe Grant, Biosci 4200
Tel: 822-6973 or email: omgr@zoology.ubc.ca

Edythe deals with faculty appointments, and faculty teaching evaluations, etc.

Administrator: Margaret Harney, Biosci 4200
Tel: 822-3384 or email: harney@zoology.ubc.ca

Contact Margaret if there is some problem other than an academic one, e.g. office space, keys, the elevator not working, your lab has flooded, lights in the office are burned out, and so on.

Finance Office, Biosci 4200
Rosie Liu Tel: 822-4265 or email: finance@zoology.ubc.ca
Gerri Cheng Tel: 822-6895 or email: cheng@zoology.ubc.ca

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Rosie takes care of travel advances, reimbursements, and petty cash. Gerri takes care of key requisitions, staff and undergraduate appointments. Graduate student appointments are taken care of by Alice.

**Reception**, Biosci 4200

Janice Vas Tel: 822-2131 or email: info@zoology.ubc.ca

Janice takes care of the mail and reception area, room bookings, TA evaluations, and postdoctoral appointments, etc.

**Stores**: Scott Usher, Biosci 1056 (for shipping purposes: Room 1316)

**Workshops**:

Pak Chan (Electronic) 1365

Bruce Gillespie (Mechanical) 1363

**Biology Program Office**: Tammy Tromba, Biosci 2521 (undergraduate level)

**Zoology Graduate Student Association (ZGSA)** - The ZGSA organize social events throughout the year, as well as the Graduate Student Symposium in April.

**Zoology Computing Unit (ZCU)** – [www.zoology.ubc.ca/zcu](http://www.zoology.ubc.ca/zcu)

**Graduate Student Society (GSS)** - The GSS is an organization of graduate students dedicated to serving the academic, social and cultural interests of its over 10,000 members. Publishes the Graduate Student Handbook – an essential guide to all aspects of being a grad student at UBC. Together with FOGS coordinates orientation sessions for new students during late August/early September. [www.gss.ubc.ca](http://www.gss.ubc.ca)

**Faculty of Graduate Studies (FOGS)** – Coordinates and maintains the quality of all Master’s and Doctoral programs at the University. Administers awards and scholarships, as well as policies, procedures and guidelines for graduate students across the campus. If you have policy questions, always check with the graduate secretary first, before heading to FOGS. [www.grad.ubc.ca](http://www.grad.ubc.ca)

**Enrolment Services (Registrar’s Office)** – [www.students.ubc.ca](http://www.students.ubc.ca)

**Equity Office** – [http://equity.ubc.ca/](http://equity.ubc.ca/)

**Student Health Services** – [www.students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell/visit-a-doctor/](http://www.students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell/visit-a-doctor/)

**Disability Resource Centre**: [www.students.ubc.ca/access/disability-services/](http://www.students.ubc.ca/access/disability-services/)

**UBC Counselling Services** – [www.students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell/counselling-services/](http://www.students.ubc.ca/livewelllearnwell/counselling-services/)

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Before you arrive...

**Campus Housing**

There are four residences on campus designed to house grad students: Fairview Crescent, Thunderbird, Marine Drive Residence, and Acadia Park. Places are given out on a first-come, first served basis so apply early (before Feb 1). [www.housing.ubc.ca/vancouver](http://www.housing.ubc.ca/vancouver).

There are three residences run independently of UBC Housing.

- Green College – [www.greencollege.ubc.ca](http://www.greencollege.ubc.ca)
- St. John’s College – [www.stjohns.ubc.ca](http://www.stjohns.ubc.ca)
- St. Andrew’s Hall – [www.standrews.edu](http://www.standrews.edu)

**Off Campus Housing**

Several resources are available to help find housing:

- Ask the graduate secretary or your supervisor to send a notice out to the current grads asking if anyone has a room to rent.
- AMS Rentsline – [www.amsrentsline.com](http://www.amsrentsline.com)
- Housing boards and notices around campus – Grad Student Centre, SUB, at the bus loop, department notice boards, etc.
- Vancouver Sun and Courier classified ads.
- Please also visit: [www.housing.ubc.ca/off-campus-housing](http://www.housing.ubc.ca/off-campus-housing)

**Daycare and/or School for your child**

UBC has an excellent day care system, as well as after school care and summer care for school age children. Note that waitlists are up to 2 1/2 years, so plan to make other arrangements. The UBC Child care web page is: [www.childcare.ubc.ca](http://www.childcare.ubc.ca).

The Vancouver School Board Web page [www.vsb.bc.ca](http://www.vsb.bc.ca) provides enrollment details and deadlines.
How to register

Student service centre (SSC)

https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca/sscportal/servlets/SRVSSCFramework

This is where you register for courses, check fees, pay fees online, and keep your address and email information up to date. The address listed here is the one that the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Enrolment Services (Registrar's Office) will use, so it is essential that you keep it updated.

Accessing the Student Service Centre requires the creation of a campus-wide log-in user ID. Please visit the Student Service Centre website at https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca/sscportal/servlets/SRVSSCFramework and click ‘CWL Login’ located at top left-hand corner. Follow instructions on webpage.

UBC Payroll office does not have access to student information via the SSC, so it is important that you keep them updated of any address changes.

Registration

UBC has two academic sessions per year. Winter session runs from September 1-April 30, and the Spring/Summer session runs from May 1-August 31.

All students must register in their thesis courses two times per year — once in September for the Winter term and again in April for the Spring/Summer term. Please ensure that you are registered in the thesis course each term.

For the Winter Term:

➢ The 18-credit MSc thesis course is Zool 549, Section 001
➢ PhD students should register in Zool 649, Section 001

For the Summer Term:

➢ The 18-credit MSc thesis course is Zool 549, Section 941
➢ PhD students should register in Zool 649, Section 941

If you have any problems with registering for courses check with the graduate secretary.
Adding/dropping courses

You can add and/or drop courses via the SSC up until the second week of term. After that you must complete an add/drop form (with relevant signatures) and submit it to the graduate secretary.

Tuition Fees

Tuition Fees for graduate students are paid in three installments: due dates for 2013-14 are September 4, January 7 and May 14. If you do not pay the fees on time, your records will be placed on “financial hold”, all registration activities will be blocked, and you will be charged a penalty fee. Note that there are student fees in addition to tuition fees.

PhD students: Faculty of Science is currently covering tuition fees for students in their first four years of their PhD program. To be considered, tuition must not be funded from other sources.

Master’s students:

Tuition fees for Canadian Master’s students for 2013-14 are $4,436.13

➢ payable in three installments of $1,478.71.

Tuition fees for International Master’s students for 2013-14 are $7,792.52*

➢ payable in three installments of $2,597.51.

*Note: An international tuition award of up to $3,200 is awarded to all International students who do not have an external scholarship that pays tuition. See letter of admission for details.

In addition there are student fees, which cover AMS and GSS fees, Medical and Dental Extended Health Plans, Sports and Athletics, U-Pass, etc. Information can be found at

www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students/tuition-fees-cost-living/graduate-student-fees

All fees for the year are subject to adjustment and UBC reserves the right at any time to change any fees without notice. This includes tuition and student fees.
Funding options

Funding policy

The Department of Zoology has a minimum funding policy for all Graduate students.

Support will be in the form of a combination of teaching assistantships (TA), awards/scholarships (excludes any tuition waiver), or research assistantships (GRA) paid from the supervisor’s research grants.

For students starting their graduate program in 2010-11, the minimum level of support is $21,000 (MSc and PhD students). *

- Support will be provided for at least 2 years for MSc students.
- Support will be provided for 4 years for PhD students. For those PhD students who started their graduate program from September 2011 onwards, there will be a possibility of an additional 5th year of funding providing that satisfactory progress in the program has been made.
- For students who transfer from a MSc to a PhD support will be 5 years in total.
- All financial support is contingent on satisfactory performance and subject to yearly review.
- To achieve the minimum level of support a student may be required to TA.

*For students who started their graduate program before May 2010, the minimum level of support for MSc students is $19,010, for PhD students $19,702.

Teaching Assistantships

Prospective TA’s will be assigned to an appropriate course in late summer for one or both terms. Offers are sent out by email and must be accepted or declined within 10 days. Students should contact the instructor directly regarding duties and scheduling issues and contact the graduate secretary as soon as possible about any scheduling conflicts between assigned positions and courses. There is a preference system for assigning TA’s based on length of time in program, so not everyone gets their first choice.

There are a few summer TA positions available, but due to the intensive nature of summer courses priority goes to students who have previously taught the course. Summer courses are condensed and run 3 or 6 weeks, daytime or evenings.

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Awards

All students are strongly encouraged to apply for all financial awards for which they are eligible. These include NSERC Postgraduate Student Awards (for Canadians and permanent residents), and Affiliated Fellowships, both of which are administered through the same application process with a deadline in mid-September.

Where is...?

Student card/Library card

Your UBC-card is also your library card. The UBC Carding Office is located in the Bookstore. You must be registered to get your library card (register in the thesis course), and need to show a government-issued picture ID.

U-Pass

The U-Pass is an unlimited all-zone bus pass. Fees are $140/term, assessed with your student fees. The U-Pass is issued at the UBC Carding Office in the Bookstore. In order to pick up your U-Pass, you must bring your UBC-Card. The UBC Carding Office will have vending machines ready to issue passes. From the 16th onwards, you may pick up the U-Pass for the following month (ie, October 2013 U-Pass is available for pick up starting from September 16th onwards).

U-Pass: www.upass.ubc.ca

Keys

To obtain keys, please check with your supervisor. Note that there is a $25 key deposit required and you will need to show picture ID when picking up your keys. The deposit will be refunded when the key is returned to Parking and Access Control Services.

Mail

Student mailboxes are located in Biosc 4213.

Outgoing mail goes in the appropriate boxes – your supervisor’s 4-letter speedchart code and name must be written on the top left corner. Stamped mail can go in the white box below the trays.

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Pay

Pick up your first paycheque at the Payroll Office on the third floor of the General Services Administration Building on or after the 15th. You must arrange for direct-deposit by filling out a form at the Payroll Office. Download the form from www.finance.ubc.ca/sites/finance.ubc.ca/files/uploads/payroll/documents/dirdeposit.pdf. Pay dates are the 15th and last day of the month. Let the graduate secretary know if you have any problems with your pay. You can access your appointment information on www.auth.cwl.ubc.ca/auth/login?serviceName=psslogin.

Computer accounts

All grad students will get an email account - usually in the format lastname@zoology.ubc.ca. To get an account, or for anything to do with ethernet and email services, contact the ZCU - Alistair Blachford (BDC 122, 822-2645), Richard Sullivan (BDC 121, 822-3882), or Andy LeBlanc (BDC 123, 822-6527). The ZCU handles computer, projector and other equipment loans – book ahead for important events (thesis defenses, etc.). Make sure you are added to the grads-list and the grads-admin lists when you sign up for an email account.

Photocopying and audio-visual equipment

Scott Usher (Stores and Science-Equipment Manager) will assign you a photocopying account number and help with related matters. Copier is located in the mailroom. You’ll need a four-letter speedchart code from your supervisor to set up an account.

How to get supplies and equipment

Stores is located in Biosci 1056. Scott Usher will assist you in purchasing supplies using an internal account. You will need a speedchart code from your supervisor in order to obtain supplies from Stores.

Placing orders for lab supplies and equipment

Please consult with your supervisor when ordering supplies.

Seminars

Notices are distributed by email and posted on the zoology website each week advertising upcoming seminars and lectures. Most research groups have their own seminar series on a regular date and time throughout the year.

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Info for international students

Information for International (non-Canadian) Students

A good source of information is International Student Development at International House (1783 West Mall or www.international.ubc.ca). If you have any questions regarding visas, health care, etc., you can contact them. Check out their International Student Handbook, available at the orientation held during late August/early September.

Also, please check out the UBC Pre-arrival checklist for International Students: www.students.ubc.ca/international/international-students/before-you-arrive

Social Insurance Number

You must apply immediately for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) - UBC cannot pay you until you have one. Go www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/sin/index.shtml. This website will explain the application procedures. The closest Service Canada Centre is located at 1263 West Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia (Broadway and Birch Street).

Once you arrive to Vancouver, make sure to forward to the graduate secretary a copy of your study permit. She will require it to draft up a contract of employment. You have to take with you the contract of employment, your passport and study permit to Service Canada Centre. They will require these documents in order to issue you a SIN card. SIN’s have expiry dates that correspond to the study permit expiry date – you must keep both up to date.

Please provide a copy of your SIN confirmation receipt to the graduate secretary as soon as it is available – you cannot be paid without it.

Study Permit or Visa

You must provide a copy of your study permit to the graduate secretary as soon as possible – you cannot receive any form of payment from UBC until a copy of the study permit has been submitted. Study permit extensions take some time to process, so plan ahead. Citizen and Immigration Canada website: www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/study.asp.

Health Insurance

You must apply for coverage for the Medical Services Plan as soon as you arrive in BC – there is a waiting period of 3 months from the date of entry to BC, before you are eligible for coverage. Check online for more information at www.health.gov.bc.ca/msp/.

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All international students are enrolled in a mandatory medical coverage (iMed) for the first 3 months in the program – the $150 fee is assessed as part of the student fees.

Note: MSP covers visits to doctors, hospitals and many medical specialists are free. Extended Health covers prescription drugs, dental visits, vision care, health practitioners, travel health coverage and more.

www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=14,298,0,0

**AMS/GSS Extended Health and Dental Plan**

Graduate students are automatically enrolled in the AMS/GSS Extended Medical Plan – if you have other coverage you can opt out, but you must do it by the deadline - details from the Graduate Student Society at gss.ubc.ca/main/health-dental-plan-information/. Fees are assessed with your student fees.

**Policies**

Several documents are available online to help understand departmental and university policies. Graduate students and supervisors of graduate students should make sure they read and have a copy of the *Graduate Student Policy Handbook* for Zoology and the *Handbook of Graduate Supervision* from the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Most University policies are listed in the *Calendar* (www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver).