

## CASNR Graduate Programs

CASNR offers the following graduate degrees:

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Agricultural Education • Animal Science  
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering  
Entomology • Horticulture  
Natural Resource Ecology & Management  
International Agriculture • Plant and Soil Sciences  
Plant Pathology

online at <http://www.app.it.okstate.edu/gradcollege>. In addition, each academic department has required materials that need to be submitted.

For example, the biosystems and agricultural engineering department requires official transcripts, a résumé, a one-page statement of academic objectives and three letters of reference.

For international students, the Test of English as a Foreign Language also is required. Some departments require applicants to take the Graduate Record Examination.

You can register to take the GRE online at <http://www.TakeTheGRE.com>. The cost of taking the GRE is \$140 in the United States.

## Paying for more education

Finding funding for any college degree can be an obstacle, but graduate students have multiple funding options.

Elliott said most students in the BAE department pay for school through assistantships.

“The assistantship is important for them to work and be a part of the faculty and work environment,” Key said.

Although it is up to the student whether to apply for one, Elliott said assistantships provide financial support and are “pretty standard” for students.

According to OSU’s financial aid Web site, eligible students can obtain subsidized direct loans, unsubsidized direct loans, federal Perkins loans and federal work-study.

Some students fund their education through fellowships. These are more like scholarships than jobs. Rowland received the National Science Fellowship, which will pay for three years of her graduate studies. Although she does not have an assistantship, she advised looking for both programs to help with the financial burden.

The tuition burden for an Oklahoma resident for fall 2008/spring 2009 per credit hour is \$154.85, while a non-resident tuition is \$602 per credit hour.

Whatever your reason for going to graduate school, most experts will tell you two things: Do not procrastinate, and be prepared.

“Figure out the right fit for you, get admitted, find an assistantship, enroll and get to work,” Cartmell said. • *By Chelsea Kenney, Flagstaff, Ariz.*



## YBS Program

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# Turning the tassel

## *A guide for graduate school preparation*

During the last few semesters of a student's undergraduate education, "What are you going to do with your degree?" becomes the topic of conversation. After weighing options, students may decide furthering their education in graduate school is their best choice.

### **Making the decision**

While a number of students would not begin to consider more school, the idea of gaining more knowledge or specializing in a field might sound appealing. Dwayne Cartmell, Oklahoma State University agricultural communications associate professor, said students should obtain their graduate degrees to acquire an advanced skill set.

"Graduate school should be something to help students take the next step in their careers," Cartmell said.

Some students, however, like Sarah Rowland, a biosystems and agricultural engineering master's student, have said they enjoy school and research, and therefore, decided to continue their education.

"Students can get a greater depth or breadth of learning," said Ron Elliott, OSU biosystems and agricultural engineering department head. "They can focus on a subject or discipline."

Sometimes students know they want to go beyond the undergraduate level.

"I knew my senior year of high school I would stay in school until I completed my doctoral degree," Rowland said. "I figured out most professions and people who do research pursued some sort of graduate degree."

Some students find the thought of harder classes and research daunting.

"Students find the unknown intimidating," said Jim Key, OSU agricultural education professor emeritus.

Whatever the reasons for pursuing more time in the classroom, graduate school seems to be a popular option. In fact, the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources has 406 students enrolled in its 12 graduate programs.

### **Weighing your options**

As you prepare for your transition to graduate school, explore your options. Elliott said students

should investigate schools, faculty and departments before making a final decision.

"I didn't think picking my adviser was as critical as it was," Elliott said. "You don't want it to be haphazard."

Cartmell said students must look for an institution with a strong academic program in their area of interest as well as a school that has solid mentoring and staff members with whom you want to work.

### **Applying**

Completing the admissions application might sound intimidating, but Key recommended starting the application process approximately a year before the first semester of graduate school.

"The further ahead you can plan, the better," Key said.

You can apply to OSU

