

UW Dairy Innovation Hub
Request for Proposals for Graduate Student Assistantships
UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

The UW Dairy Innovation Hub is a \$7.8 million per year investment by the State of Wisconsin to build a world-class talent pool and enable bold discoveries to ensure that Wisconsin's dairy farmers, processors, and related agribusinesses will be at the global forefront in producing nutritious dairy products in an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable manner. The Hub will enhance scholarship and advance innovation in four priority areas needed to ensure the future success and resiliency of the dairy industry in the state of Wisconsin. One of the goals within the DIH is to bring or retain top prospective graduate students and increase graduate training capacity at UW-Madison.

This RFP seeks proposals that will fund graduate student assistantships for graduate students to work on innovative and impactful dairy-related research that will fit within one of the four priority areas of the Hub:

1. Steward Land and Water Resources
2. Enrich Human Health and Nutrition
3. Ensure Animal health and Welfare
4. Grow Farm Businesses and Communities

Graduate Student Assistantship Overview, Deadline and Funding:

These proposals should detail the proposed research and if funded, a prospective student can be recruited. The goal is to both attract top prospective graduate students to UW-Madison and fund novel research projects that will benefit Wisconsin's dairy industry. If a prospective student has already been identified, that student can be listed within to strengthen the application, although this is not required. Faculty advisor, or co-advisor, must be a tenure track faculty in CALS. A co-advisor from outside of CALS can be included in the proposal.

Proposals are due by Friday June 12, 2020 and award decisions will be made by August 3, 2020. Funding will be available for summer or fall 2021 graduate student start dates.

Grants will include graduate student assistantship salary (\$24,816; standard rate) and fringe (set at 16% for DIH funded personnel), tuition (\$12,000/year), and \$7,500 annual supply budget for 2 years. The proposal is not limited to funding 2-year masters students; however, if the proposal specifies a PhD student, leveraged or supplemental funding that will be used to support additional years to degree completion must be indicated in the budget justification. Proposals MUST bring a new graduate student into the lab (NOT just replacing current funding on a current student). See FAQ for more information.

Submission Deadline and Proposal Submission

Proposals must be submitted via WISPER by 4:30pm (CDT) on Friday, June 12, 2020. Requests for time extensions will not be granted, and proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. Proposals must be submitted via WISPER. To be accepted, proposals must have all approvals (Chair/Administrator/Co-PIs) and include the full proposal with budget justification. The Short Title (WISPER) must be "UW Dairy Innovation Hub: Graduate Student Assistantship" and be routed to Maria Woldt. Please include a descriptive title on the proposal.

For more information

Questions on scope of research, acceptability, or proposal process, contact Faculty Director Heather White, heather.white@wisc.edu.

Questions on process, forms, etc. should be directed to Program Manager Maria Woldt, maria.woldt@wisc.edu.

Eligibility Information

Dairy Innovation Hub funding is available to CALS faculty and staff with PI status. An individual can be lead PI on only one DIH graduate student project at a time through this mechanism. Faculty members outside of CALS may serve as collaborators on Dairy Innovation Hub projects. A Curriculum Vitae should be included for the faculty mentor and co-advisors if applicable. Graduate students are not required to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

Proposal Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by a reviewer group comprised of DIH steering committee members and ad-hoc reviewers.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Quality of proposed research and potential for positive impact on the Wisconsin's Dairy Industry (50%)
2. Novelty and innovation of research aims (20%)
3. Fit of the research project in one or more of the Dairy Innovation Hub priority areas (15%)
4. Plan for productive and interactive mentoring and career development and training (15%)

Additionally, external stakeholder members of the DIH advisory council will review the 250-word summary to provide input on potential research impact in the dairy industry.

Scores will not be provided back to PIs; however, feedback on proposal review can be obtained by contacting the faculty director.

Proposal format

1. **Cover page** and 250-word non-technical summary ([Excel tab “cover page”](#))
The proposal cover page must provide the following information: informative title, UW Dairy Innovation Hub Priority area, names of participating faculty, name of prospective graduate student (if known), and a 250-word summary of the proposed research. The non-technical summary should address the importance of the project, major objectives, the basic methods used to collect and produce data, and the ultimate goals and impacts the project endeavors to achieve. PIs should take care to ensure that the summary communicates the above-mentioned points in a way that is understandable to both a stakeholders and faculty with a broad range of expertise.
2. **Budget justification.** This RFP includes a fixed salary rate for graduate students (\$24,816 + 16% set fringe rate + tuition) and a \$7,500 per year supply and expense budget. In lieu of a budget worksheet, provide a budget justification that includes a description of anticipated research supplies and travel expenses. If the total project costs exceed \$7,500/year, an explanation regarding the source of complementary funding must be included. If funds will be used for a PhD student, also indicate leveraged or complementary funds used to fund additional years.
3. **Research timeline** including anticipated progress milestones for the major activities of the project.
4. **Future Research Goals** (one page, single spaced, size 12-point font):
The PI should clearly describe the future goals of the proposal. This may include expected publications and related products, planned or submitted extramural proposals, and benefits to the graduate student. If supplemental or matching funds are available to support the proposal, this should also be noted. A description of how this project will positively impact the Wisconsin Dairy Industry must also be provided. The burden of convincing the reviewers that the proposed project fits the priority area(s) is on the PI.
5. **Mentoring and management plan** (one page, single spaced, size 12-point font):
The mentoring plan for the graduate student should include, but not be limited to: plan for productive and interactive mentoring and appropriate and impactful training and career development activities.
6. **Project narrative** Note: Project narratives should be prepared in a 12-point font, single-spaced, with standard 1-inch margins, and not exceed 5 pages, exclusive of references.
 - a. **Background and justification:** Provide sufficient literature review to explain the proposed research (what is known; what is not known), describe why it is relevant, and specify the fit of the proposed work to one of the UW Dairy Innovation Hub priority areas. The PIs bear the responsibility for convincing reviewers that their project should be funded. Explain how the research will advance scientific knowledge and public welfare, as well as how the goals will produce an outcome, defined as a measurable change of state in knowledge, action or condition.
 - b. **Objectives/hypotheses:** Provide clear, complete, and logically organized statements of the specific objectives to be pursued, or hypotheses to be tested.

- c. **Experimental/Methodological approach:** Describe the working plans and methods to be used in pursuing each of the stated objectives. Methods should correspond to specific objectives and follow the same order. As appropriate to the discipline, provide clear methodological approaches, experimental designs and appropriate statistical analyses for the data to be collected. This section should be written in language clear to a scientifically literate reviewer whose expertise is other than the proposed work. Location of the work and the facilities and equipment required should be indicated. Methods to avoid obvious pitfalls should also be noted. An explanation should be provided detailing how the appropriate audience will be informed of results, and, whether that audience is other scholars, extension agents, farmers, etc.
7. **References.** Provide a complete citation for each of the references cited in the proposal. Not included in the 5-page limit.
8. **Curriculum Vitae.** A two-page CV for each investigator, and the prospective graduate student (if known), focusing on employment history, professional training, honors, awards, and key publications, should be provided.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What expenses are allowable in the \$7,500 annual budget?

A: The annual budget can be used for research (lab, field, farm) supplies or consumables, undergraduate hourly expenses, travel to farm or research station, travel to conferences where research will be presented, publication fees, or technology or computing (hardware or software) needs that are specific to the project. Expenses should be justified within the budget justification.

Q: How will the funds be dispersed?

A: An account will be setup for use by the PI. Funds will be allocated on an annual fiscal year basis and should be spent within the fiscal year allocated.

Q: Can I use this graduate fellowship to fund a student already in the laboratory?

A: No, this aspect of the DIH mission is to train new students. Students can be undergraduates finishing at UW or elsewhere who will be funded for graduate school on this fellowship, but this funding cannot be used for an individual who is already a graduate student in your laboratory.

Q: Do I have to have the prospective graduate student identified within the proposal?

A: No, you do not. After proposals are selected for funding you will be able to recruit a student. You will have to provide a student name and CV prior to fund disbursement.

Q: This funding is for 2 years, does that mean it can only be used for a master's student?

A: No. The proposal can be written for a PhD student if you have complimentary funds to leverage for a longer degree program. If this is the case, please indicate that funds for additional years of graduate study are available in the budget justification.

Q: If other funds are leveraged to fund a student for longer than 2 years, can I extend the funding period for this proposal? In other words, can I pay half of the student each year off of each grant?

A: No. The total timeline will be 2 years from September 2021 to July 2023 and cannot be extended.

Q: Can I submit the same proposal to both this call and to the Hatch call?

A: We intentionally plan to make funding announcements by August 1st so that proposals not funded by DIH can be submitted to the Hatch call.

Q: Are there expectations that come with this funding?

A: As with all funding, there are reporting expectations. The DIH has to report financial and research outcomes on a fiscal year basis. Researchers will be asked to complete an online submission for twice a year. The form is brief and very similar to Hatch reporting so to minimize administrative burden on the PI. You and/or the graduate student will also be asked to participate in the Dairy Summit which is anticipated to be an annual event (in Wisconsin) which will include opportunities to present research (travel to this can be included in the budget).

If you have remaining questions, please contact Maria Woldt or Heather White.