

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

Applicants with questions are urged to contact Dr. Nicole Donofrio (ndonof@udel.edu 302-831-2531).

Degrees Offered

Our department offers the Master of Science and the Doctor of Philosophy degrees in the plant and soil sciences. Two graduate areas exist in the department, namely:

- **Plant Science** (M.S. thesis, Ph.D. dissertation) which involves course work in plant molecular biology, plant breeding, plant pathology, plant tissue culture, horticulture, crop science, plant anatomy and/or plant physiology with thesis research in one of those areas; and
- **Soil Science** (M.S. thesis, Ph.D. dissertation) with course work and thesis research in soil chemistry, soil fertility and management, soil physics, soil microbiology and biochemistry, environmental microbiology, soil and water quality and soil formation and biogeochemistry.

Additionally, in both of these areas a **non-thesis** M.S. degree is offered which allows students to pursue the M.S. degree on a part-time basis, the latter being particularly suited to individuals already in the workforce. Financial assistance is not offered by the Department for non-thesis degrees.

Admission Criteria

Admissions are decided based on a combination of criteria:

- Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score
- GPA for previous degree(s)
- Letters of recommendation
- Applicant's personal statement of career goals
- Previous experience in the chosen field

Minimum combined (quantitative and verbal) GRE score is 1050 using the pre-9-1-2011 GRE test (recommended combined score of at least 1150) or 300 using the new GRE test (recommended combined score of at least 305). GRE scores older than 5 years are not normally accepted. International students who have not previously received a degree from a college or university within the United States must take an English fluency test. For the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) minimum scores are 213 computer test or 79 IBT. Alternatively, the Department is provisionally accepting results from the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (minimum 6.5 overall with no individual sub-score below 6.0).

A minimum GPA of 2.5/4.0 cumulative and 3.0/4.0 within major is required. A GPA of 3.0/4.0 cumulative and 3.5/4.0 within major is recommended.

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Those who meet the stated requirements are not guaranteed admission, nor are those who fail to meet all of those requirements necessarily precluded from admission if they offer other appropriate strengths. Applicants are expected to have taken basic courses appropriate to either Plant Science or Soil Science. Students lacking fundamental courses will be required to take remedial courses, generally before being officially accepted.