

Application for Admission to the Ph.D. in Comparative Biology and Graduate Fellowship Programs

Please note: if you wish to apply to both the RGGGS Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology and to the Graduate Fellowship Program at Collaborating Institutions, you need only to complete a single application. *Clearly indicate* on the Application Cover Page the program(s) to which you wish to apply.

PURPOSE

Ph.D. in Comparative Biology at the Richard Gilder Graduate School (RGGGS)

The AMNH RGGGS Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology is training the next generation of biologists through an integrative approach that focuses on the history, evolutionary relationships, and interactions among species, utilizing the Museum's strengths and experience in research and training. The AMNH provides exceptional support facilities for student research, with collections of more than 34 million specimens and artifacts. Training and research opportunities exist across a wide array of disciplines in comparative biology, incorporating research in systematic and evolutionary biology, paleontology, conservation biology, comparative genomics, computational biology, Earth history, anthropology, and biological and cultural diversity. Global fieldwork, with AMNH faculty, student-led or in partnership with others, provides added exceptional research opportunities. RGGGS students may also take advantage of RGGGS course cross-enrollment agreements with partner universities Columbia and the City University of New York.

Armed with a Gilder School education, graduates will not only understand the history and diversity of life on Earth, but may contribute to advances in human health, biodiversity conservation, and other related biological research fields, as well.

This is an accelerated program, designed for students to complete their degrees in four years. Students earn a minimum of 62 credits through a combination of coursework, teaching experiences, and individual dissertation research.

AMNH Graduate Fellowships at Collaborating Institutions

The AMNH Graduate Student Fellowship Program is an educational partnership with select universities dedicated to the training of Ph.D. candidates in the scientific disciplines practiced at the Museum. The university exercises educational jurisdiction over the students, and awards the degree. A Museum curatorial faculty sponsor must serve as a graduate advisor and must hold an adjunct or affiliate faculty appointment, or other affiliation that permits them to serve officially as a graduate advisor, at the student's collaborating university. The student benefits by having access to the staff and facilities of both the enrolling university and the Museum to carry out their training and research program.

- The current joint graduate training programs include these five universities: **Columbia University**, in the departments of astronomy, earth and environmental sciences (including paleontology and planetary sciences), and ecology, evolutionary, and environmental biology; **Cornell University**, in entomology; **The Graduate Center of the City University of New York**, in the graduate programs in earth and environmental sciences and biology (ecology, evolutionary biology, and behavior subprogram) (including paleontology in either program); **New York University**, in molecular biology; and **Stony Brook University**, in astronomy and astrophysics.

FUNDING AND DURATION

Ph.D. in Comparative Biology at the Richard Gilder Graduate School (RGGS)

This is an accelerated program, designed for students to complete their degrees in four years. The Richard Gilder Graduate School will typically provide full financial support to students matriculating in the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program, through a combination of generous philanthropic support, as well as foundation and governmental training grants to the institution or individual students. Students admitted to the Program with extramural support (for example, foundation-based fellowships, U.S. federal or New York State grants, international governmental support, other private funding, or any other extramural grant or fellowships support to the student or the Museum) typically are required to begin and continue to use such funding support upon matriculation into the program, unless alternate plans are recommended by RGGS.

Graduate Fellowships at Collaborating Institutions

Funding of students will be shared between the AMNH and their home institution (and any pertinent extramural grants or fellowships), and may cover a combination of fellowship and scholarship. Typically, funding is awarded for up to five years, contingent upon satisfactory progress. Due to different costs and agreements with each university, specific details of the funding are made available at the time that a fellowship is awarded.

Additional RGGS Fellowship Co-Funding for Graduate Fellowships at Collaborating Institutions

There are two additional sources of funding that may be available to support students working with AMNH faculty and admitted to one of the Richard Gilder Graduate School's collaborating institutions. To be considered for one of these potential co-funding opportunities, you must add an additional short statement to your Statement of Academic Purpose (See Document 2, below).

- Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Fund: North American Terrestrial Fauna
- Lerner-Gray Fund for Marine Research: Marine Biology/Zoology

APPLICATION DEADLINE

January 8, 2021, 11:59pm, Eastern Standard Time

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please print, review and follow these instructions

There are five (5) parts to the application process, all of which must be completed by 11:59pm Eastern Time on the deadline listed above.

- Part 1: Online Application
- Part 2: Documents to Upload (2-3)
- Part 3: Documents to Mail (1-2)
- Part 4: Recommendation Letters (3)
- Part 5: Application Fee (\$50.00 USD, ONLY for applicants to the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program)

Part 1: ONLINE APPLICATION

- Create an account and fill out the basic information requested: https://myrggs.amnh.org/Applicant/ApplyOnline_Login.aspx. If this link does not open directly, copy and paste it to a new browser. This is the site where you will upload your documents. Note that this online application works best with the latest versions of Google Chrome and Firefox.
- **Proceed through the online application all the way through submission of Step 8 BEFORE you begin to upload any documents (be sure to click *submit application* at the bottom of the page).** You will not be able to proceed to Part 2 (view and upload documents) until you submit this part of the application at Step 8!

Note: If you previously applied to any Richard Gilder Graduate School program, you will receive the following message:

“Our system recognized you as a duplicate entry. We will contact you by email shortly and send you a link to the documents that you will need to complete to apply for your specific program. If you need to contact us, call 1-212-769-5055.”
We will contact you within 1-2 business days after you complete Step 8.

Part 2: DOCUMENTS TO UPLOAD

Below are the required documents, which you must upload to our server by 11:59pm Eastern Time on January 8, 2021.

All documents must be in PDF format. No other format will be accepted. There are many free PDF file converters on the web such as [PrimoPDF](#). You should also have the latest Adobe Reader to complete the PDF forms in the application package. <http://www.adobe.com/>

Once you have completed **Step 8 - submit application** you will be able to upload your documents. To do so, click the **My Documents, Document Center** on the left side of the screen; select the document, and upload it on the dropdown menu.

Upload Document 1: APPLICATION COVER PAGE (Required of All Applicants)

Download the PDF file of the cover page to your computer and complete the form.

- Both **RGGGS Comparative Biology PhD and Graduate Fellowship applicants must identify three RGGGS/AMNH faculty members** who they might like to serve as their primary advisor and/or future members of the dissertation committee. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact any potential advisors in advance of submitting this application. Contact information for RGGGS faculty is available on the faculty listing page shown below. Applicants for the Graduate Fellowships at Collaborating Institutions are advised to also check those university academic department website(s) to identify which AMNH faculty members hold appointments in our partner institutions.

Criteria for selecting faculty members:

Potential *primary* advisors, co-advisors, and committee members must be members of the RGGGS curatorial faculty (professor, associate professor, or assistant professor).

Please be aware that:

- Faculty listed as “Affiliated Faculty” are eligible to serve as co-advisors or as dissertation committee members *only*.
- Faculty listed as “Adjunct Faculty” or as “Faculty Emeritus” are eligible to serve as dissertation committee members, but should not be listed as one of your three potential advisors.

Use our **faculty listing** at: <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/faculty>; contact the Director of Administration (directorofadministration-rggs@amnh.org) if you have any questions.

- On the second page of the Application Form, under “Other Information,” be sure to indicate if you have been awarded or have applied for external funding, such as the NSF-GRFP.

Upload Document 2: STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC PURPOSE - two essays (Required of All Applicants)

Create your own document in a word processing program that includes both essays (on separate pages), clearly labeled, and saved together as a single PDF Document to upload.

- **Formatting Specifications for Essays**
 - **Font:** A font size of 12 points is the expected standard. A font size of 10 points may be used for mathematical formulas or equations, figures, table or diagram captions and when using a Symbol font to insert Greek letters or special characters as long as the information is readable.

- **Margins:** Margins, in all directions, must be at least an inch.
 - **Columns:** Use only a standard, single-column format for the text.
 - **References:** When references are cited, reference information is required. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. If the document is available electronically, the website address should be included.
- **Academic Purpose Statement, Essay 1:** past research experience (length of up to 550 words, not including references or bibliography).
 - *In addition to other details in this statement, because scientific research increasingly relies on quantitative and computational analysis, please also explicitly describe your quantitative, statistical, and/or computational background and proficiency (e.g., coursework, workshops, coding/programming, use in projects or research, and/or other relevant exposure or experience).*

Be sure to label this statement ***Past Research Experience***.

- **Academic Purpose Statement, Essay 2:** on a separate page from Essay 1, describe your proposed Ph.D. research interests (length of up to 500 words, not including references or bibliography). Be sure to label this statement ***Proposed Research Interests***.
- **Co-funding short statement (for Graduate Fellowship applicants only):** If your proposed research is related to the mission of one of the following special funds, you are **required** to include a short statement (on a separate page), clearly labeled with the name of the fund for which your academic interests might be appropriate (up to 125 words). Include this short statement with your Essays 1 and 2, as part of the single PDF you create and upload.
 - **Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Fund:** For research related to any phase of wildlife conservation or related fields of North American fauna - terrestrial and freshwater (rivers, lakes, streams), extant or fossil. North America refers to the entire continental mainland and related islands, from the Arctic Ocean through the Isthmus of Panama, including the Caribbean Islands.
 - **Lerner-Gray Fund for Marine Research:** For research related to Marine Biology/Zoology, such as systematics, evolution, ecology and field-oriented behavioral studies of marine animals, extant or fossil.

Upload Document 3: CURRICULUM VITAE (Optional, but Strongly Encouraged)

Create your own document in a word processing program and save to as a single PDF file to upload.

Part 3: DOCUMENTS TO MAIL/SUBMIT

Mail in Document 1: TRANSCRIPTS (*Required of All Applicants*)

We must receive an official transcript directly from your school; either a paper or certified e-transcript sent directly from the school is acceptable. However, to expedite review of your file, applicants are strongly encouraged to upload a scan of their unofficial transcript(s) with their application (with all transcripts combined into a single PDF file).

- The applicant must request an official transcript from the registrar at *every* undergraduate and graduate institution attended.
- Transcript request forms can be obtained from each institution's registrar.
- Official transcripts should be submitted directly by the school to the Richard Gilder Graduate School, at the address or email provided below.
- International applicants must request that registrars send original documents for all postsecondary studies.
- International documents that are not in English must be accompanied by certified English translations.

Send paper transcripts to:

Office of Admissions - Transcripts
The Richard Gilder Graduate School
American Museum of Natural History
Central Park West @ 79th Street
New York, NY 10024

Certified e-transcripts may be emailed to: administrativeassistant-rggs@amnh.org

Mail in Document 2: TOEFL or IELTS (*Required of Non-native English Speakers only, taken within the past 2 years*)

TOEFL or IELTS (Academic Exam) scores are required for non-native English speakers (who have not earned a college-level degree in a program documented as taught in English), taken within the past 2 years.

We must receive the official scoring report directly from ETS or IELTS, however, applicants are strongly encouraged to upload a scan of their unofficial report with their application.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

- Minimum Scores for Admissions:
 - PBT: 600 or higher, typically with 60 or greater on each subsection
 - iBT: 100 or higher, typically with 25 or greater on each subsection
- Taken within the past 2 years
- Computer-based scores are no longer valid.
- For additional information, call 1-800-GO-TOEFL or visit the ETS website at <http://www.toefl.org> or www.ets.org.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

- Minimum Score for Admissions: 7.0
- Taken within the past 2 years
- IELTS exam administered by <http://www.ielts.org/>

For the Comparative Biology PhD program, RGGGS will only consider applicants who achieve the minimum stated required score on the IELTS or TOEFL exams. However, students applying for partner institution Graduate Fellowships should comply with the score minimums set by the partner institution where they hope to enroll. Test score minimums may differ at each institution. You can retake the exam and submit a new score if it will be received by us by January 15, 2021.

Notice regarding the GRE examination and scores

RGGGS has *eliminated* the GRE test requirement for Comparative Biology PhD admissions and partner university Graduate Fellowships. GRE test scores will not be accepted or considered in the RGGGS application review processes.

[Partner university Graduate Fellowship applicants: each partner university PhD program will have its own testing requirements and may or may not require GRE scores for their applications. Be sure to check and comply with their admissions requirements in your application(s) to the partner universities.]

Part 4: LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION (3) *(Required of All Applicants)*

- Three (3) letters of recommendation are required from three professors or other qualified evaluators (not including American Museum of Natural History faculty members) who can appraise your academic achievement and promise*
- You must enter the names of your three recommenders on the Application Cover Page. Please choose recommenders who can meet the deadline; if you need to make a substitution later, return to the Application Cover Page, update the information, and send an email alerting us to the change at admissions-rggs@amnh.org.
- Instructions for letters of recommendations can be found in My Documents, Document Center AFTER you complete Step 8 of the online application. If you need to make a substitution later, send an email alerting us to the change at admissions-rggs@amnh.org.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to follow up with their recommenders and ensure that they submit the letters by the deadline.

** If it is impossible for a third recommender from outside the Museum Curatorial Faculty submit a letter of recommendation on your behalf, you may have an AMNH Curatorial Faculty Member do so.*

Part 5: APPLICATION FEE FOR THE RGGGS COMPARATIVE BIOLOGY PROGRAM ONLY

- There is a non-refundable application fee of \$50 if you are applying to the RGGGS Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program. You must pay this fee before your application will be processed. Specific directions are available when you get to the document phase of the application. *Note: Our application fee should not discourage any student from applying to RGGGS. If you feel the application fee will represent a substantial financial burden, please request a waiver by email to: directorofadministration-rggs@amnh.org as soon as possible.*

Please Note: ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) ABOUT APPLYING TO THE RGGGS COMPARATIVE BIOLOGY PROGRAM AND TO THE RGGGS GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP CAN BE FOUND ON THE RGGGS WEBSITE. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, CHECK THERE FIRST *BEFORE* CALLING OR EMAILING RGGGS. <https://www.amnh.org/research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/school-overview/frequently-asked-questions>

Application Check List Provided for Student Use

Applicant Check List	Required/Optional	Completed?
Online Application	Required	
Application Cover Page	Required	
AMNH/RGGGS Faculty Sponsors (3)	Required. Applications are strongly encouraged to contact faculty members prior to submission of their application	
Statement of Academic Purpose	Required (two essays)	
Additional Statement on co-Funding	Required if applicable	
CV	Optional, but Strongly Encouraged	
Transcripts	Required	
Letters of Recommendation (3)	Required (Update recommender information on Application Cover Page if you make a substitution)	
TOEFL or IELTS	Required, taken within the last 2 years—Non-native English Speakers only.	
Comparative Biology Application Fee	Required—RGGGS Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Only	

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