



**Ecology Center**  
**UtahStateUniversity®**

## **ECOLOGY CENTER GRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS for MS and PhD STUDENTS (2026-2027)**

The Ecology Center invites proposals from MS and PhD students pursuing Ecology degrees to support thesis/dissertation research at up to \$2,000 for MS research and \$5,000 for PhD research. These awards are intended for Ecology graduate students who do not have other forms of support for the research they propose. Awards are offered for the 2026-2027 fiscal year (July – June). These awards are competitive, and selection is based on scientific merit, quality of the proposal, and relevance to the field of ecology.

### **Eligibility:**

Students must be in residence at USU (apart from conducting research elsewhere). Students who have already received one year of support may request support for a second year. Requests for a third year of support will be considered only if more funds are available than are exhausted by competitive proposals from other students who have not yet received two years of support. Students requesting a second or third research award must also submit a progress report of no more than 4 pages as part of their current year's proposal. The progress report should be substantive, containing data/results and inferences, and should describe how past Ecology Center funds have been used to advance the student's graduate degree program and career goals.

### **Proposal Format:**

- The proposal should focus specifically on the research that will be completed with the requested funding and should make clear how this work fits into the overall thesis or dissertation.
- It should be no longer than 4 pages (including figures and tables, but excluding literature cited, budget and justification, and the 2-page resume).
- The proposal should be signed by the major professor certifying that it is the student's work.

Please include the following sections:

- **Applicant Info:** Name, Degree sought, Major department, Major Professor
- **Degree Information:** Start date and anticipated completion date of degree program
- **Proposal Title**
- **Introduction:** Sketch the background and rationale for the research, citing appropriate literature. Describe the significance of the research.
- **Research Objectives/Hypotheses:** Describe what specific hypothesis/hypotheses are to be tested or what specific scientific questions are to be addressed. These should be motivated by the information in the Introduction.
- **Research Methods:** Describe how the research hypotheses will be tested and evaluated or how research questions will be explored and answered (e.g., sampling or experimental designs, statistical and sampling methods, how the analyses will be used to draw conclusions about the hypotheses or questions, timeline for data collection and project completion).

- **Literature Cited**

- **Itemized Budget** (template below): Describe how the research funds will be used and provide an itemized categorical budget, using the template below. Include only what is to be funded by the total award sum. The budget needs to be sufficiently detailed for a reviewer to understand how funds will be used to achieve the specific goals described in the proposal.

Ecology Center Graduate Research Awards cannot be used for the graduate students' salary or stipend or to purchase computers (desktop, laptop, tablet, etc.) or software. Awards can be used to hire field assistants, to purchase research supplies, and for travel to field research sites. The Ecology Center has a separate program that provides funds for travel to professional meetings to present results, and travel for this purpose cannot be included in Graduate Research Awards.

- **Budget Justification:** In addition to the table, you must also explain/justify the requested expenses in text format, explaining how they will contribute to the specific goals of your proposal.

- **Two-page Resume:** Include educational training and background, emphasizing research, engagement, and outreach activities and products.

Please submit **one printed copy** of your complete application to the Ecology Center Office (NR 208) and **one electronic copy** to [ecology.center@usu.edu](mailto:ecology.center@usu.edu).

## **Deadlines:**

**Friday, February 27, 2026 @ noon** – Proposals due to Ecology Center office (printed & electronic)

**Friday, March 27, 2026** – Awards announced

**July 1, 2026** – Funding commences. *If your research would require some or all funds available to spend before July 1, you should note that in your proposal.* Funds may not be available before July 1, but often we are able to provide some funding earlier to meet project timeline needs.

**June 30, 2027** – End of funding period; unspent funds will be returned to the Ecology Center. *Awards should be fully expended by June 15, 2026.*

**September 30, 2027** – Submit a final report of no more than 4 pages to the Ecology Center detailing results, products, and outcomes of the funded research.

# Ecology Center Award Basic Budget Template

**Applicant:**  
Proposal Title


<b>Labor Dollars</b>	<b>RATES</b>		
	<a href="#">Current Benefits</a>	Hourly Wage (Payroll)	
<u>Employee:</u>	<u>Labor Dollars:</u>	<u>Benefits:</u>	<u>Labor and Benefits</u>
<b>Labor &amp; Fringe Dollars</b>			

## TRAVEL

Domestic Travel	
Foreign Travel	
<b>Total Travel</b>	\$ -

## OTHER DIRECT COSTS

<b>Other Direct Costs</b>	\$ -

<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	\$ -
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