**Dear Faculty members** – This template letter is for students switching into a GDPE degree from a degree plan external to GDPE. The graduate school requires a GS7 form, and GDPE requires a new letter of commitment, since it’s a new degree. As the letter notes below – much of the material will be review, but in case expectations or funding change with this switch, it’s useful to provide the full letter for transparency and clear communication.

Please fill sections that are highlighted in yellow or in some cases, delete them if not relevant. It would be great if you could also delete the brackets and remove the highlighting. Where there are domestic and international options, please delete the one that isn’t relevant to your student.

Occasionally your situation might not match that being described, and you may need to adjust it the wording or delete portions. Please do not to delete general sections about benefits, employment being at-will, payment of fees and other universally important information.

We encourage faculty members to be as transparent as possible in detailing the financial support provided to the incoming student over the course of their graduate degree (e.g. GTA/GRA/GSA amount and frequency, tuition, health insurance, taxes deductions, and fees). Please discuss the cost of attending graduate school at Colorado State University with your student prior to signing this document. Good practice in terms of financial support to incoming graduate students is provided [here](https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/financial/assistantships/stipend/).

if you have any questions, just ask!

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING:

Save the file with your student’s name

Upload the file as a word doc to the GDPE Website (<https://webcms.colostate.edu/eid/index.php?return=https://ecology.colostate.edu/letter-of-commitment/&sid=b7210dqlfqt8tl57bt1bg3ovvd>)

GDPE will finalize any other programmatic details and then send the letter in a formal email (please **do not** send this letter to your students directly!)

[DATE}

Dear [Insert Applicant’s Name]:

We are pleased to inform you that you that you have been approved to transfer from [program] into the Graduate Degree Program in Ecology (GDPE) [Ph.D./M.S.] program starting [*semester/year*

Dr. [*Insert prospective advisor’s name here*], a/an [*advisor’s title*] in [*advisor’s department*], will be your GDPE advisor and mentor. You will additionally have access to GDPE’s large faculty, graduate student body, and be exposed to a wide breadth of research areas represented across the program. There are many opportunities to learn and grow intellectually here, as well as to contribute to the community. We expect students to invest genuinely in the program, through participating in seminars, professional development and social events, the Front Range Student Ecology Symposium ([FRSES](https://frses.org/)), and more. Being engaged in the GDPE community will increase personal and intellectual growth, as well as help foster an enriching and collaborative environment that facilitates the training of outstanding ecologists. If you accept the below offer, we expect that you will make good progress towards your degree and individual scholarship following the time-frame laid out in the [GDPE handbook](https://ecology.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2020/09/Student-Handbook-Aug2020.pdf) and on the [website](https://ecology.colostate.edu/). In addition, students should participate fully as a community member in both GDPE and [*advisor’s department*], which is referred to as the Advising Department, as well as CSU more broadly, including following CSU’s [Principles of Community](https://diversity.colostate.edu/resources/principles-of-community/).

What follows are the details of your offer and other important information about graduate school at CSU. Some of this you will have seen when you started your initial program, and it is included here for completeness and transparency.

You will also receive confirmation from the CSU Graduate School that your GS7 has been approved. Please review the details of this offer below, then respond to the original email to confirm if you accept the offer and will be joining our GDPE community!

As part of Dr. [*Insert prospective advisor’s name here*]’s lab group, it is expected that you will participate in [*Add initial expectations, including, for example the frequency of meetings with advisor or lab group*].

With the recommendation for admission, your advisor is pleased to offer you the following:

* Office space in *[location*]. [*Add additional information as needed.*]
* A Graduate [*Teaching, Research, Support*] Assistantship (GTA/GRA/GSA), which consists of:
  + A $[*amount*] stipend/month prior to taxes starting [*semester/year*].
  + [*partial or full*]-tuition remission at the resident tuition rate.
    - *[Domestic student Non-Resident]* If you are a domestic student who is not a resident of Colorado, the difference between resident and non-resident tuition will be provided as an additional benefit for the first year only. Domestic students from outside Colorado are expected to start establishing residency as soon as they move to Colorado, to be able to petition for resident status at the beginning of their second year at CSU. Information on establishing Colorado residency can be found on the Office of Financial Aid [website.](https://financialaid.colostate.edu/residency/)]
    - [*International] Note:* CSU will extend the Tuition Premium Program to international students for the length of their tenure in their graduate degree program as long as they are enrolled in a minimum of five resident-instruction credits fall and spring semesters.
  + Access to [benefits](https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/financial/assistantships/) including family leave and mental health resources.
  + Graduate assistants with at least a 10-hour appointment on an assistantship (including NSF GRFPs) and registered for 5 credits or more also receive a [health insurance contribution](https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/financial/assistantships/assistantship-health-contribution/). Health insurance contributions are not provided for certain types of fellowships that do not confir assistantship status – please check with your advisor and Graduate School to determine your eligibility.
  + Look [here for Financial Aid Opportunities](https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/financial/financial-aid-opportunities/). Suggestions for managing your finances as a graduate assistant are available [here](https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/professional-development/road-map-graduate-assistant-finances/).

The assistantship is renewable each semester for [*X* *semesters or X years*]. This support [*does/does not*] include summer funding. The median duration of [MS/PhD] programs in GDPE is [2.6/5] years. If your program extends beyond the support listed above, [*insert anticipated action here; e.g. your advisor will work together with you to identify alternative support such as applying for grants, pursuing GTA positions, or \_\_\_”*].

Final [appointment](https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/faculty-and-staff/graduate-assistant-appointments-policies/) and [reappointment](https://graduateschool.colostate.edu/faculty-and-staff/graduate-assistant-appointments-policies/) of assistantships are contingent upon completion of all the necessary formal documents, certification by the Graduate School, and formal University approval. You must maintain a 3.000 graduate grade-point average and be enrolled in at least 1 credit hour to keep this appointment. Please note the [Terms and Conditions of Graduate Assistantship Appointments](https://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/graduate-bulletin/graduate-assistantships/). Assistantships also depend upon the availability of funds, satisfactory progress toward your degree, and your compliance with program and university guidelines including the [Student Conduct Code](https://resolutioncenter.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2018/08/Student-Conduct-Code-v2018.pdf). This letter represents our intended commitment, however, contractual obligation occurs at the time of appointment or reappointment. Graduate assistants must be reappointed each semester based on appropriate progress. This position is at will and depends upon successful completion of a background check.

International students who are Teaching Assistants must meet oral [English proficiency requirements](https://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/graduate-bulletin/graduate-assistantships/) as defined in the Graduate Bulletin. Some students may be required to demonstrate English proficiency for acceptance, and will also be evaluated for their ability to communicate orally in English by their department.

You will be expected to work **[*X* -** never to exceed 20**] hours per week** on your assistantship, as well as X hours on your degree program (research, courses, and other scholarly activities). The assistantship duties begin the first day of the semester and end on the last day of the semester.

You will be responsible for paying 50% of mandatory student fees while holding an assistantship appointment in Academic Year 23-24 and 25% in AY 24-25. Thereafter, fees will not be charged while on a graduate assistantship. Students not on assistantships will be responsible for paying 100% of the mandatory fees. These fees include:

* General fees
* University technology fee
* University facility fee
* University alternative transportation fee
* There may be additional CSU Health Network and University Counseling Center fees for partial fee-paying students (5 credits or less).
* Some programs charge differential tuition

The schedule of [graduate tuition and fees](https://financialaid.colostate.edu/base-tuition/) is available from the Office of Financial Aid.

You are likely to have additional expenses (for example, housing deposits, rent, books, transportation, parking, food, clothing, outerwear, and other living expenses) to pay before your first stipend payment, so arrive with sufficient funds for these additional costs.

We encourage you to join the GDPE orientation the week before the start of the semester. More information will be communicated through your @colostate.edu email.

[*International:* Since you are a Foreign National on a limited visa, it will be your responsibility to understand the immigration regulations governing your visa status in the United States and to work closely with your advisors at the Office of International Programs for assistance in maintaining status.]

To accept this offer, under the terms and conditions outlined above, simply respond to original email indicating if you accept or decline. If you have questions on the details above, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, or your prospective advisor. We look forward to seeing you here at CSU!

Sincerely,

Dr. Ruth Hufbauer, GDPE Director

Cc:

Dr. [ADVISOR]

Dr. [ADVISING DEPT HEAD]

Advising Department Coordinator

Mitsuki Kumagai, GDPE/CMB Support Specialist

Dr. Jennifer Neuwald, GDPE Assistant Director

*Pending Action Item: respond to original email indicating whether you will be accepting or declining this offer.*