Graduate Student Opportunities in Freshwater Science

MSc and PhD Positions

University of British Columbia
Fall 2027

Location: Department of Forest & Conservation Sciences, Faculty of Forestry & Environmental Stewardship, University of British Columbia, Vancouver (Grey Point campus)
Available positions: 6-8 graduate students
Start date: September 2027
Deadline: Considering applications on a rolling basis until Jan 15, 2027 (UBC deadlines: Feb 1, 2027)

Call for Applications

The Olden Lab at the University of British Columbia (UBC – Vancouver) invites applications for graduate student positions at the MSc and PhD levels. Successful applicants will be supervised by Dr. Julian Olden (Eddie Goldenberg Research Chair of Canada in Freshwater Ecosystem Sustainability) in the Department of Forest and Conservation Sciences at UBC – Vancouver (Grey Point campus).

At the Olden Lab, we advance creative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary science to address the intertwined challenges of securing water for people and nature. This is a unique opportunity to help shape the lab from the ground up — you'll be joining the inaugural cohort of students and post-docs as we build our research program and culture together at UBC. Visit here to learn.

Roles and Responsibilities

Successful candidates will work on research that advances freshwater science, conservation and policy in Canada and beyond. Topics include those listed below as well as co-developed research of mutual interest.

- Hydropower and ecologically sustainable water management
- Climate change impacts and adaptation strategies
- Nature-based solutions to restoration
- Protection and recovery of species at risk
- Ecology and management of invasive species
- Community ecology, food-web dynamics, macroecology
- Application of biotracers, eDNA biosurveillance, and other emerging approaches to conservation
- Water security in an era of expanding AI infrastructure
- iEcology, big data, conservation technology, and machine learning
- Knowledge co-production and collaborative, community research

Graduate students will have opportunities to undertake priority research activities that directly advance the Olden Lab's mission. Additionally, students may contribute to knowledge mobilization activities that engage directly with academic researchers, industry partners, policy practitioners, different levels of government, and Indigenous communities across British Columbia, Canada and beyond.

Essential Qualifications

We're seeking enthusiastic students with a background in ecology, freshwater science, or a related discipline who enjoy field research, thrive on data wrangling and crunching numbers, and/or engage in collaborative science. We welcome applicants with diverse experiences and perspectives. Strong communication and written skills are essential, and quantitative skills are preferred. Graduate students are expected to implement existing and/or co-develop new research projects in consultation with advisors, actively contribute to collaborative scholarship, and enjoy a dynamic environment that values working and playing hard.

Funding and Employment Environment

The guaranteed funding package for these positions is $40,000 CAD per year for PhD students (4 years, with an extension option) and $20,000 CAD per year for MSc students (2 years, with an extension option).

Graduate students will be funded by internal sources (e.g., research and teaching assistantships) and external sources (e.g., scholarships). I encourage eligible students to apply for an NSERC Canada Graduate Research Scholarship (CGRS M - deadline 12/1/26; CGRS D - deadline 10/17/26) and reach out to Dr. Olden for guidance.

Applications from Canadian and International students are welcome, but the appointment of non-Canadian applicants will be subject to approval by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to meet eligibility requirements to study in Canada. Visit the Graduate School for more details. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents of Canada may be given priority.

How to Apply

Interested candidates are welcome to apply by e-mail to julian.olden@ubc.ca with the subject line: "Graduate student position in Olden Lab" by no later than January 15, 2027.

The application should include the following:

- a few paragraphs outlining your past experiences, key skills, and research interests
- curriculum vitae
- plans, if any, to apply for an external scholarship (e.g., NSERC)
- names and contact information for two references (to be contacted for short-listed candidates only)
- unofficial transcripts

You must provide all required materials to be considered, and generative AI is not allowed. Be human!

Only after contacting Dr. Olden to determine whether they share research interests will prospective students apply to the UBC Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Stewardship graduate program by the February 1, 2027, deadline. Explore more information on graduate program requirements and financial support.

Contact

Julian D. Olden
Eddie Goldenberg Research Chair of Canada
Department of Forest and Conservation Sciences and Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada

The UBC Vancouver campus is situated within the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam).