

Policy for Allocation of Space at the
Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory (NREL) and the
Department of Ecosystem Science and Sustainability (ESS)

July 2015

Background

With the joining of the two departments physically and conceptually in 2011, in an area previously occupied only by the NREL, space to work became an increasingly scarce resource, a resource that is of course vital to the successful operation of the departments. A fundamental crisis appeared to be looming in the near future.

Prior to January 2015, the last comprehensive review and update of the NREL space policy occurred in 1998-99, with a policy being created by a space committee appointed by the director and approved by the NREL Executive Committee effective July 1999.

Although somewhat formulaic, arcane, and difficult to enforce in practice, this previous policy set the space allocation terms that would be followed for years, and would have to be considered by any future policy review. These terms were summarized in a brief “Principles” section of the policy:

Three fundamental assumptions form the basis for this policy. The first assumption is that any resident member of the Senior Scientific Staff requires space for his or her work, as well as space for students, technicians or post-docs. Without such work area, it is not possible for a scientist to develop and run a research program. The second assumption is that the success of the Laboratory is attributable in large measure to our interdisciplinary emphasis. Providing workspace to scientists with diverse interests and skills fosters interactions among disciplines. This means that no single scientist should dominate the limited space within the lab. Finally, we recognize that a scientist is entitled to space in approximate proportion to his or her financial, scientific, and administrative contribution to the Laboratory.

Although these terms served their purpose at the time, by 2011 they proved somewhat limiting and unresponsive to the new space situation created by the joining of the departments, particularly with regard to the rise in importance of the teaching function.

Thus in the fall of 2014 the Director appointed a space committee consisting of one Faculty/Research Scientist, one Research Associate, two central staff members, and one Graduate Student, with a charge to review space demands and possible responses and recommend a new policy statement.

Principles

Allocation of space via desk units assigned to senior scientific staff has proven unproductive and impossible to manage in the real world, especially since 2011 and the joining of the two departments. Office space must be viewed and addressed more holistically, in terms of a hierarchical assignment of needs beginning with Faculty/Research Scientists and flowing down the list of job classifications.

Essentially, keeping in mind the interdisciplinary and collaborative goal, we should attempt to provide office space in the B wing of the second floor for currently active Faculty and RS IIs and above. Space for these categories will flow outward as the B wing is filled up.

Existing space for central staff should be sufficient for the foreseeable future. Space for Research Associates will be allocated in the A Wing first, and elsewhere as needed.

We need to acknowledge the increasing importance of Graduate Research and Teaching Assistants by maintaining currently available space for them, as well as utilizing new space to be made available by renovation of the computer space on the first floor. Some effort to provide space for undergraduates to meet and collaborate, possibly using the first floor space, must be made.

We can't forget the contribution of those NREL employees and affiliates who bring in external grant and contract funding with indirect cost recovery (thus contributing actively to NREL's operational budget). We may give special consideration to these people when deciding on space allocations.

Allocation

Principal Investigators (PIs) and Faculty have highest priority for receiving office space. If an individual's level of effort/commitment of time is less than 9 months, or if an individual is absent from their office for considerable periods of time, there may be a discussion about that person's sharing an office during periods of space shortages.

Research Associates will be placed up to 3 per office. Efforts will be made to group Research Associates in a manner that is beneficial to them and their work, and not to overcrowd RA offices.

Graduate students and will be placed up to 4 per office in standard offices, or at desks in larger shared spaces. Need for office space will be reviewed 1 year after GRA funding ends or course work is completed. Priority will be given to those students supported by NREL/ESS projects and active Teaching Assistants.

Post-docs funded by NREL/ESS projects will be placed up to 2 per office; in some situations it may be necessary to house 3 Post-docs in an office.

Administrative Staff will be placed in permanent offices. If Administrative Staff are engaged in work requiring confidentiality, they will be assigned private offices whenever possible. In times of space shortage, Administrative Staff with confidential responsibilities may be required to share offices, but a separate meeting room will be made available to meet with clients. Other Administrative Staff (those not requiring confidentiality) may be required to share office space.

Student and Non-student hourly workers will be placed as space is available.

Special Allocation Considerations

1. Visiting scientists will be placed as space is available, and for relatively brief periods. It is very important that pending arrivals of visiting scientists be communicated to the Space Committee Coordinator (currently, as of July 1, 2015, Nancy Gus) as early as possible. Late notification makes allocation of space very difficult.
2. To the extent possible, common spaces for graduate students and undergraduate students will be identified to foster a collegial approach.
3. To the extent possible flex space (such as alcoves) for computing purposes will be identified.

The following types of situations will trigger a discussion about the status of applicable office space:

1. Employees with offices in multiple campus locations, regardless of their position. This will apply particularly to those who spend a majority of their time in non-NREL or non-ESS space.
2. Retirees. Retirees will normally be allocated space according to their level of activity. Retirees maintaining a full program and continuing to secure funding and staff will be allowed to remain in their pre-retirement offices whenever feasible. For retirees who are less active, a discussion about the status of the relevant office space may take place. Placement of new faculty and research scientists will be given priority over placement of retirees. This policy is in place to make new faculty feel welcome and valued as they begin their career at NREL/ESS.
3. Graduate Students with offices in multiple locations.
4. Faculty on sabbatical status, or faculty and staff on extended leave status.

When an internal rearrangement of offices becomes necessary, every effort will be made to inform those affected in a timely manner so as to minimize disruption to the extent possible.

Process

Each scientist will request space as needed and the Committee will assign desks and offices for fixed time-intervals, using the above guidelines. The space request form, and the Grad Space info form, available online ([https://www.nrel.colostate.edu/ then resources/internal resources](https://www.nrel.colostate.edu/thenresources/internalresources)), are shown in Attachments 1 and 2 below. Forms are to be turned in to Nancy Gus. The duration of a commitment of space will be the decision of the committee. After that commitment expires, the space becomes available for reallocation. The Director of the Laboratory must approve assignments by the committee and can override committee decisions.

The Director has the authority to make special decisions that are in the overall interest of the lab but that do not necessarily adhere to the space committee's guidelines.

Attachment 1

SPACE REQUEST

Requested by: _____ **Date:** _____

For: _____
(Name)

Dept: NREL_____ ESS_____

Type: FT Employee_____ Visitor _____ PD_____ GRA_____

Other: _____
(Please specify)

Date From: _____

Date To: _____

Type of Space Requested: _____
(Visitor, GRA, Office, etc.)

Project: _____

PI: _____

If student, please circle one of the following: MS PhD

Give form to Nancy, A202 NESB or email to: nancy.gus@colostate.edu

For Internal Use Only

Reviewed: _____ **Date:** _____

Approved: yes no **Space available:** yes waitlist

Room #: _____

Notes: _____

Attachment 2

NREL/ESS GRADUATE STUDENT SPACE INFORMATION FORM

Graduate education is an important part of NREL and ESS' mission. NREL/ESS provides office space for approximately 35-40 graduate students. Space is limited, so the information on this sheet will be used to help prioritize office space.

Student Name _____ Date of Request _____

Sponsoring Scientist or Advisor _____ Current office _____

Academic Department _____ MS or PhD? _____

All Graduate space will be evaluated at least yearly for the following criteria including how the space was utilized up until that time for those students already housed in NREL/ESS space.

Please check the following that apply:

___ Funded and doing graduate research on NREL/ESS project. On a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) or Fellowship/Trainee appointment with NREL/ESS paying stipend and/or tuition.

___ Funded and doing graduate research on NREL/ESS project. On a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) appointment with _____ paying stipend and/or tuition.
(other dept name)

___ Graduate Teaching Assistant for _____ (professor) _____ (semester)

___ Not funded through CSU but doing graduate research on NREL/ESS project.

___ Unfunded graduate student from another department but intellectual interactions with NREL/ESS scientist.

___ Graduate student whose major advisor is a member of NREL/ESS housed at NESB.

___ Graduate student whose major advisor is a member of NREL/ESS who is not house at NESB.

___ Graduate student who has a member of his/her committee as a member of NREL/ESS at NESB.

___ Visiting graduate student from another institution. Enrolled for classes? Yes or No

___ Other – please explain _____

Other items to take into consideration:

How long is the space needed? (# years, # months, estimated end date) _____

Why is office space at NREL particularly important for this student? _____

Will this student be using the laboratories at NESB? _____

How many credits does this student expect to take next academic year? Fall ____ Spring ____

FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS THAT ARE FINISHING UP AND NOT ENROLLED FOR CREDITS:

How long is the space needed? _____

Is the space needed for: (Please check each reason that applies and explain.)

___ Daily interactions with NREL/ESS scientist(s) _____

___ Use of NREL computer facilities _____

___ A place to write _____

Please return completed form to Nancy Gus, A202 NESB

Form updated 2/26/15 nmg