



DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

GRADUATE POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

This graduate manual is intended for the informational use of graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences only. Its purpose is to bring together pertinent information essential for Biological Sciences graduate students, and is meant to supplement and to clarify guidelines for graduate study published in other FIU publications. This manual is not intended to be a substitute for any of those documents.

Each graduate student has a responsibility to familiarize themselves with these policies, that are a roadmap for your graduate program. Each student must read these policies and sign the statement below. This statement must be submitted to the Graduate Program Office Specialist for inclusion in the student's file.

Version 14
Fall 2023

I have received and read the Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual

Name

Signature

Date

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ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To be considered, the applicant must meet the entrance requirements set by the University Graduate School, as well as the Department. These include:

- a bachelor's degree (B.A./B.S.) in a relevant discipline such as Biology, Botany, Zoology, Microbiology, Genetics or Chemistry; or a bachelor's degree in another field and upper division coursework in biology
- a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during upper division coursework (the last 60 hours of the undergraduate degree) or a graduate degree from an accredited institution
- a personal statement, which should address why the Student wants to pursue graduate studies, any previous research experience, the reason for choosing the FIU Biology Graduate Program, and interest in working with a particular faculty member
- the applicant's current Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- *two* letters of recommendation are required for M.S. applicants and *three* letters are required for Ph.D. applicants.
- *official* transcripts from all institutions attended previously for Bachelors and (where applicable) Master's degree education. To be considered "official", the transcripts must be sent directly to FIU admissions in a sealed envelope from the Student's degree-granting institution(s), or from any third party service that is compatible with the Student's previous institution (examples include Parchment or the National Student Clearinghouse.)
- a faculty sponsor, who must be a faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences or have a courtesy appointment in the Department, authorized to serve as Major Professor. The Major Professor is a member of the University Graduate Faculty who will direct the Student's research in consultation with the Thesis or Dissertation Committee. Applicants are encouraged to contact faculty directly, to find prospective faculty sponsors. Faculty sponsors must submit a memo to the Graduate Committee expressing their willingness to serve as the Major Professor for the Student. The memo should include an explanation of why the sponsor is interested in that particular Student, any form of contact the sponsor has had with the Student and what form of financial support will be available to support the Student.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

International applicants must meet standard departmental admission requirements, as well as:

- demonstrate proficiency in English by achieving a minimum score of 80 on the TOEFL iBT, or a minimum score of 6.5 overall on the IELTS, or a minimum score of 105 on the DuoLingo test.
- have their transcripts translated and certified, prior to the departmental application deadline. This service is provided by NACES-associated institutions, which will forward the documents to FIU Graduate

Admissions after processing. Processing time may vary, so applicants are recommended to start translation and certification of their transcripts well before applying to FIU.

A summary of the translation/certification requirement is included here:

<https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/submit-transcripts/>

NACES-associated institutions, that provide translation/certification services are listed here:

<https://www.naces.org/member>

- complete a declaration and certification of financial ability for self-support while a Student (contact the FIU International Students Office for further information): <https://internationalprograms.fiu.edu/iss/>

The Graduate Committee (composed of six Biology faculty members with Graduate Status) makes admissions decisions based on the Student's qualifications, match to the program, and availability of funding. All admitted Students sponsored by faculty members of the Biological Sciences Department are provided with 2 years (MS) and 4 years (PhD) of guaranteed funding in the form of a Teaching Assistantship, Research Assistantship or Graduate Assistantship. Applicants sponsored by faculty members from other Departments with courtesy appointments in Biological Sciences must provide a guarantee of funding for at least three years.

Any applicant who fails to meet admissions criteria may appeal the admission decision to the Departmental Graduate Committee.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Although Florida International University has a rolling admissions policy, Biological Sciences, and other grad programs at FIU, have one application deadline per year, **and that is for Fall admissions. Applications for assistantships in Biological Sciences for the Fall term must be completed by December 1st.** Decisions on assistantships for the Fall term will normally be made within twelve weeks of this deadline.

Prospective candidates must submit an on-line application for admission into the graduate program and must pay a \$30.00 application fee. The application goes to the FIU Graduate Admissions office, and is found at: <https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/graduate-applicant/applications/index.html>

Applicants must arrange to have **official** transcripts from all colleges and/or universities attended and **official** test scores (GRE, TOEFL if a foreign Student, and the TOFEL iBT if a foreign Student applying for financial support) sent by the corresponding official agencies directly to FIU Graduate Admissions: gradadm@fiu.edu

When the Admissions Office receives a Student's application, application fee, transcripts and GRE and TOEFL scores, the applicant's file is forwarded to the Biological Sciences Department for evaluation. In addition to the information sent to Admissions, the Student must have their statement of purpose, CV or Resume, all letters of reference and a letter from their faculty sponsor submitted for the application to be considered complete.

Best practice is to make sure all application materials are submitted to FIU before the December 1st departmental application deadline, to ensure that a complete application will be received by the Department. **Incomplete applications are not considered for admission to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program.**

THE MASTER'S (M.S.) PROGRAM

The M.S. degree is conferred on individuals in recognition of their demonstrated ability to master a specific field of knowledge and to complete a significant and original research project that is documented in a written Thesis.

A "Term" is defined as spring, fall, or summer C terms, with 3 terms offered during the academic year, which begins in the fall.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Progress toward your degree involves completing coursework required by your Committee, performing original research, writing up the results of that research as a Thesis and defending the research in a public forum. Your progress through the program is defined by a series of forms (M-1, M-2, and M-3) that acknowledge that you have met these requirements. Students also have an annual evaluation by the Department's Graduate Committee. More information about the annual review can be found on pg. 16 and pg. 47 of this manual.

These forms typically get approved by the Department, then the College, and then the University Graduate School, and the forms typically have deadlines within a semester. Be aware of the deadlines and submit your forms on time. Submit everything to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program first, typically by e-mail or hardcopy to the Graduate Program Secretary (Biograd@fiu.edu). Once you have submitted something to Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office, it is the Department's responsibility to submit it to CASE, who will then submit it to UGS. It is good practice to keep copies of your paperwork for yourself.

Important Notes:

- All forms are submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate Office. You do not submit them to CASE or to UGS. Each level must approve and is responsible for passing documents on to the next higher level. When submitting forms, please read and follow the instructions carefully.
- All the M forms have instructions at the top—make sure that you follow those. If you don't understand, ask someone for help, and give yourself time to correct errors in case a form is returned.
- For most of the forms in your program, each of the lower levels in the University hierarchy needs a week (5 working days) to process the form. So, if you read a university deadline for submission of your Thesis to UGS as 3 weeks before your defense date, you have to add on one week (5 working days) for CASE and one week (5 working days) for the Biological Sciences Graduate Office.

THESIS COMMITTEE

With guidance from the Major Professor, the Student forms a Thesis Committee to direct the Student's research. The Thesis Committee must be formed by the end of the first term for all full-time Students, or prior to the completion of 12 credits for part-time Students. The Thesis Committee must consist of *at least three FIU faculty members*, with the Major Professor and all other FIU-based Committee members also holding University Graduate Faculty Status.

The CASE graduate faculty list is found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#toggle-id-11>

- The chair of the Thesis Committee will be the Major Professor, who holds a faculty appointment, or courtesy faculty appointment, in the Department of Biological Sciences at FIU.
- The second member of the Thesis Committee must be a faculty member with at least a 50% appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences.
- The third Thesis Committee member must be a member of the FIU Graduate Faculty, but outside of the Department of Biological Sciences.
- Students are allowed to add additional members if their projects require that type of support.

NOTE: If the Student would like a Scientist outside of FIU to serve on their Thesis Committee, that person can serve in addition to, but not as a substitution for, the 3 FIU-based Committee members. To serve as an outside Committee member, that person must submit:

1. a memo from the Major Professor describing the expertise brought by the non-FIU scientist.
2. the CV of the outside member
3. the Non-FIU commitment form, completed and signed by the outside committee member. The Non-FIU Commitment Form is found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/NonFIUcommitmentMemo2022.pdf>

Under no circumstances may an external research supervisor be the chair of the Student's Thesis Committee. Potential external research supervisors may not be relatives or on-site paid supervisors of a Student.

The Thesis Committee functions to:

- advise the Student in all academic and research matters
- formulate a program of study (not required but recommended for M.S. Students)
- follow up with the Student on a yearly basis to monitor progress and goals
- approve the Thesis proposal
- review progress of the Thesis research
- prepare and conduct the qualifying examination
- administer the defense of Thesis
- render final approval of the Thesis

To serve as Major Professor of a Thesis Committee, a faculty member must:

- be a faculty member, or have a courtesy faculty appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences.
- be a member of the University Graduate Faculty.
- have specialized academic competence in the Student's major field.
- have taught a graduate course in the last three years or had a graduate Student who graduated in the last five years.
- have published an article in a peer reviewed journal in the last three years or had research funding during the last three years or applied for at least one grant in the last three years.

To serve as a Thesis Committee member, the faculty member, or external research scientist, must:

- be a member of the University Graduate Faculty, or be approved by the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director and/or Graduate Committee if the person is an external research scientist.
- have specialized academic competence relevant to a major emphasis of the Student's project.
- have taught a graduate course or published an article in a peer reviewed journal in the last three years.

These guidelines may not adequately cover all situations. When appropriate, faculty members may make a written appeal to the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee. If necessary, an appeal of the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee's decision can be made to the entire faculty.

Students should play an active role in the selection of their Thesis Committee members and must arrange to meet formally with their supervisory Committee at least once a year to ensure that each Thesis Committee member is fully informed of the Student's progress.

APPOINTMENT OF THESIS COMMITTEE (Forms M-1 and M-1r)

Interaction with potential Committee members: To prepare for speaking with potential Committee members, Students should write a preliminary project proposal during their first term in the program. The preliminary proposal should be developed in consultation with the Major Professor. Full-time Students should submit the preliminary proposal to potential Thesis Committee members no later than the beginning of their second term; part-time Students should submit their preliminary proposal upon completion of 12 credits. Review of the preliminary proposal by potential Committee members helps them decide if they can serve on the Thesis Committee as requested. If the faculty member accepts the invitation to join the Thesis Committee, seeing the Student's preliminary proposal also assists the faculty member in determining what program of study to recommend for the Student, and what topics are to be covered on the Student's qualifying exam.

An M-1 form should be completed and submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office upon formation of the Thesis Committee. The M-1 form is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/M-1-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

If any member of the Committee is outside the University, the following documents should be attached:

- a memo from the Major Professor, and the CV of the outside member
- a signed copy of the Non-FIU commitment form, which is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/NonFIUcommitmentMemo2022.pdf>

Holding the first Committee meeting: The purpose of the first Committee meeting is to:

- Walk the Committee through the project proposal outline together, and get Committee feedback on it.
- Have the Committee review courses taken thus far, by examination of prior transcripts.
- Determine what program of study the Committee recommends as appropriate to the student's project. See the "Program of Study" section below (pg. 10) for further details.
- Formalize the topics to be covered by each Committee member on the student's qualifying exam. See the "Qualifying Examination" section below (pg. 12) for further details.
- Document possible transfer credits (if any) in a Memo signed by the Committee. See the "Transfer of Graduate Credits" section below (pg. 12) for more information on this process.

After the first Committee meeting has been held: the Student must submit a First Committee Memo form to the Graduate Program, which describes the program of study (optional) and qualifying exam topics (required).

The First Committee Meeting memo is found on pg. 66 of this manual, and also at:

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/memo_first_committee_meeting20161228.pdf

Plan for holding future Committee meetings: Each M.S. student is required to meet annually with their Thesis Committee after the M-1 form has been filed. Other milestone events (the qualifying exam and the Thesis project proposal) also satisfy the annual Committee meeting requirement for the years in which those events occurred.

Changing Thesis Committee members: The composition of a Thesis Committee may need to be changed at some point during a Student's progression through the graduate program. If this should become necessary, the Student must submit a completed M-1r form to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, including a memo from the Major Professor explaining why the change is required. If the Student requests a change of the Major Professor, the Student should submit a written request to the Graduate Program office for approval. If the student has already advanced to candidacy, and the thesis research has changed significantly in association with the Committee change, a five-page summary of the new Thesis project should also be submitted with the M-1r form.

The M-1r form is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/M-1r-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

COURSES – PROGRAM OF STUDY

A program of study is recommended for all Master's Students, and should be discussed by the Thesis Committee at its first formal meeting. The recommended program of study should be attached to the First Committee Meeting memo filed with the Department. All courses must be passed satisfactorily for the student to advance to candidacy.

Any recommended program of study should include all courses required by the Department, courses that rectify weaknesses in the Student's background and those considered essential for the Student's particular research area. Formal course requirements should be met as early as possible, and any remedial courses identified by the committee as necessary must be taken during the first two terms of participation in the Master's program. A maximum of six credits may be taken at the 4000 level, at the discretion of the Student's supervisory Committee. Note however, that students who are supported by a graduate assistantship (GAs, TAs and RAs) may not use their tuition waiver to register for undergraduate credits (4000 or lower). Students may not audit courses using their tuition waivers either. Remedial and audited courses must be paid for by the Student.

Core courses required of all M.S. Students include:

Pre-candidacy courses:

- Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457; 3 credits);
- Quantitative Skills (a minimum of 6 credits in 2 separate courses).
- Workshops/ laboratories (BSC 6926; a minimum of 4 credits over 2 separate courses).
- Electives from courses offered by the Department of Biological Sciences (16 credits)

Please see the link below for a current, updated version of the Biological Sciences Graduate Catalog:

https://catalog.fiu.edu/2023_2024/graduate/College_of_Arts_Sciences_and_Education/GD_Biological_Sciences.pdf

Note: Any non-required, 5000+ level courses listed in the grad catalog, including the Ecology and Organismal series (PCB 5423 and PCB 5443), the Molecular and Cell Biology series (PCB 6025 and PCB 6027), and/or Student Research Lab BSC 6913, count as electives.

Post-candidacy courses:

- Thesis Proposal Seminar (BSC 5931; 1 credit) *Note: Students should be enrolled in this course during the term AFTER the Thesis proposal seminar is given.*
- Master's Thesis (BSC 6971; 6 credits)

Note: Taking more than 6 credits of BSC 6971 is acceptable if the project requires it.

Total credit requirement to graduate: a minimum of 36 credits.

The required courses total to 36 credits. This means that Students do not need any additional credits to achieve the minimum required credit hours to graduate. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and must earn a grade of "C" or higher in all courses.

QUANTITATIVE SKILLS REQUIREMENT

To ensure that our graduates have quantitative skills, the Department requires Students to take two or more courses, totaling to a minimum of *six credits*, of graduate level computer programming, statistics, or mathematics. This is often achieved through enrollment in two different (3-credit) statistics courses. Courses that students commonly take to satisfy this requirement include: STA 5126, STA 5206, STA 5507, STA 6166, STA 6167, STA 6176 or BSC 5459.

The courses to fulfill the quantitative skills requirement will be recommended to the student by their Thesis Committee, consistent with Departmental policy, and should be documented in the program of study, attached to the First Committee Meeting memo. If courses outside of the standard statistics, programming, or math are required by the Thesis Committee to meet this requirement, a memo documenting recommendation of the courses should be submitted to the Graduate Program Office. Upon satisfactory review, the memo will be placed in the Student's file by the Biological Sciences Graduate Office.

WORKSHOP REQUIREMENT

To ensure opportunities have been provided for hands-on experience in use of practical methods, the Department requires Students to take two or more workshops (BSC 6926), totaling to a minimum of *four credits*. Workshops have traditionally been hands-on courses, where students learn how to sequence DNA, analyze sequence data, measure respiration in a plant, learn how to use a confocal microscope, learn how to program in R, learn how to do CRISPR, or learn how to use GIS to analyze data, for example. A 1-credit workshop involves a 13-hour time commitment within the semester of enrollment. A 2-credit workshop represents a 26-hour time commitment within the semester of enrollment, per university policy.

TRANSFER OF GRADUATE CREDITS

What types of credit transfer are possible: Graduate credit transfers are subject to FIU policy 380.085 (<https://policies.fiu.edu/files/128.pdf>). A maximum of twelve term hours of graduate credit earned at FIU in a non-degree seeking status may be transferred if approved by the Thesis Committee. If approved by the Thesis Committee, the Master's program may also accept up to seven term hours of graduate course credit earned from another institution beyond the bachelor's degree, excluding graduate research and master's Thesis course credits.

What types of credits are NOT transferred: It is not possible to transfer in undergraduate level course credits, credits from non-accredited academic programs, or any course with a grade lower than a C. The Graduate Program also does not transfer in credits for courses that are unrelated to requirements of the Thesis project, nor courses for which an FIU equivalency has not been identified, because Thesis Committee members would not have suggested the Student enroll in such courses for their program of study.

Guidelines for requesting credit transfer: If any graduate credit is to be transferred into the Student's program, this request should be discussed during the first Committee meeting. A memo documenting which courses are recommended for credit transfer, and the Committee's approval of the request, should be attached to the First Committee Meeting memo, for review by the Graduate Program Director. The Student must provide the syllabi or course catalogs for courses they wish to transfer, for the Graduate Program Director to confirm FIU course equivalences. The procurement of syllabi and course catalogs that describe prior courses is the responsibility of the Student. Suggestions of what the possible FIU course equivalencies might be, by the Student and/or their Thesis Committee, are also welcome at the time when the credit transfer request is being filed.

Approval of transfer credits from prior courses is ultimately decided by the Graduate Program Director and the Office of the Registrar, based on FIU course equivalences and relevance to each Student's program of study. Credit transfer requests must be placed, and completed, prior to the Student filing for advancement to candidacy.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

A qualifying examination is required of all Students working toward the M.S. The goal of the qualifying examination is to broaden and deepen the Student's knowledge and scientific thinking in fields relevant to their research topic, and, more generally, in the biological (and in some cases, related) sciences, thus ensuring the proper preparation of M.S. candidates. Thus, the examination should be both rigorous and constructive with the intent of strengthening the Student's scientific background and critical thinking skills.

Exam timing and scope: Master's Students must take and pass an *oral qualifying examination* to demonstrate adequate progress toward the degree. Full-time Students should complete the examination by the end of their first year in the program (first three terms, including summer term); part-time Students must complete the examination before 18 credits have been completed.

The qualifying exam is to be held on campus at FIU. In person attendance is required for the Student and Major Professor with as many Thesis Committee members present as reasonably possible. Committee members can

use teleconferencing software to attend the qualifying exam as needed. If circumstances unavoidably compel a remote modality for the Student and/or the Major Professor, they must ask the Graduate Program for permission to hold the meeting remotely, *at least 2 weeks before* the meeting will take place.

Exam content and preparation: The exam will cover at least three subject areas, with the form and content of the qualifying examination determined by the Student's Thesis Committee. The Student must be informed of the subject areas at least one month prior to the date of the examination. Students should plan to meet with all Committee members at least once before the exam. During the first meeting, the topics and readings should be assigned. Questions regarding the assigned materials can be covered during a second meeting, held on an as-needed basis.

Exam norms: All Committee members must actively participate in the examination (either in person or remotely, e.g. via phone or videoconferencing). The exam usually allows for up to 2-2.5 hours of question and answer, which is carried out as a discussion between the various Committee members and the Student. The Student exits the room to allow for discussion within the Committee. When the Student is summoned back to the room, the Committee tells the Student the outcome from the qualifying examination.

Outcomes from the qualifying exam: A unanimous decision by the Thesis Committee in all subject areas examined is required to successfully pass the qualifying examination. Failure in any examination area constitutes a failure of the qualifying exam. Passing the qualifying examination cannot be conditional, i.e., the Student either passes or fails the exam, and cannot be passed contingent on the satisfactory completion of courses, submission of research papers or other non-exam criteria.

If a Student fails the qualifying examination, the Student can petition the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee for the opportunity to hold a second qualifying examination. If the petition is granted, the second examination must be taken no earlier than one month and no later than four months after the first examination. The second examination can be either oral or written; the form is at the discretion of the Student's Thesis Committee. Students who fail the second examination are dismissed from the program.

Exemption from the qualifying exam: Master's Students earning a **grade of A** (not A-) in Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457) and a two-term core area course sequence (below) may waive the qualifying exam requirement and proceed to defend their project proposal. The core courses include:

Ecology and Organismal Biology series: PCB 5423, PCB 5443

Molecular and Cell Biology series: PCB 6025, PCB 6027

To request this exemption, a memo reporting that the Student earned the appropriate grades should be sent by the Major Professor to the Graduate Program Office. Upon satisfactory review, the memo will be placed in the Student's file by the Biological Sciences Graduate Office. Note: Only the courses listed above can be used to waive the qualifying exam requirement. No other course sequences are accepted in lieu of those.

After the qualifying exam:

Within one week of completing the qualifying exam, the Student must submit a signed Candidacy Memo to the Graduate Program office, to indicate the results (Pass or Fail), with a written summary of the exam.

The Qualifying Exam/Candidacy memo is on page 67 of this manual, and also found here:
https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy-exam-form.pdf

THESIS PROPOSAL (form M-2)

Timeline of proposal development: To facilitate project planning and identification of potential Committee members, Students should write a preliminary project proposal during their first term in the program. The preliminary proposal should be developed in consultation with the Major Professor. Full-time Students should submit the preliminary proposal to potential Thesis Committee members no later than the beginning of their second term; part-time Students should submit their preliminary proposal upon completion of 12 credits. Review of the preliminary proposal by potential Committee members helps them decide if they can serve on the Thesis Committee as requested. If the faculty member accepts the invitation to join the Thesis Committee, seeing the Student's preliminary proposal will also assist the faculty member in determining what program of study to recommend to the Student, and what topics to cover on the Student's qualifying exam.

Students must prepare a formal version of their research proposal and distribute it to each member of the Thesis Committee prior to the end of their third term in the program, or upon completion of 24 credits. It is up to the Student, in consultation with their Major Professor, to decide if they will submit the formal version of the written project proposal to the committee before or after the qualifying examination. In the past, the project proposal was due to the committee before the qualifying exam, so that the project proposal can be defended as soon as possible after the qualifying exam has concluded. However, if the Student and Major Professor agree to proceed forward with the project proposal after the qualifying exam has been concluded, that is also fine to do.

Proposal format: The formal proposal should follow the general guidelines outlined in the Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual (http://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/Proposal_Guidelines.pdf) and should contain the following sections:

- Introduction - statement of the problem/purpose and a review of prior relevant work
- Materials & Methods - a technical discussion of the methods and approaches to be used in the research
- Preliminary Results/Feasibility
- Program Schedule
- References

The project proposal that will be sent to the Student's Committee cannot exceed 20 pages in length, including any figures, tables or preliminary data. The text content of the proposal should be displayed in a *12-point font to ensure readability*. A five-page summary of the preliminary proposal must be ultimately be submitted with M-2 form for the University record after the Thesis proposal seminar has been presented. The 5-page UGS version can have a single-spaced format, and is often generated by removal of figures, tables and preliminary data sections from the proposal document.

Proposal evaluation: Thesis Committee members *must receive the project proposal document from the Student at least two weeks before the proposal defense seminar/meeting*, so that the Committee has enough time to request revisions by the Student, if the Committee identifies that is required. After revisions, the Student should resubmit the proposal to all Thesis Committee members for final approval. If deemed unacceptable to one or more Thesis Committee members, the Student and/or Major Professor should contact the pertinent Thesis Committee member(s) to determine the points necessary for approval. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the Student and Major Professor should take the issue to the Graduate Committee for mediation.

Proposal defense:

Scheduling: The Student is responsible for scheduling the presentation of the proposal at a time convenient for the Thesis Committee members and the faculty of the Biological Sciences Department (during regular business hours, and not during standard departmental faculty meeting times, weekends, or over a holiday closure period). The proposal defense is to be held on campus. In person attendance is required for the Student and Major Professor with as many Thesis Committee members present as reasonably possible. Committee members can use teleconferencing software to attend the proposal defense as needed. If circumstances unavoidably compel a remote modality for the Student and/or the Major Professor, they must ask the Graduate Program for permission to hold the meeting remotely, *at least 2 weeks before* the meeting will take place.

Advertising: The Student must also adequately *advertise the project proposal seminar 10-14 days before the presentation*, by posting notices around the department, and by sending an electronic version of the project proposal announcement to the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Office Specialist (Biograd@fiu.edu). Note that the Graduate Program Office must verify with the Major Professor that the Thesis Committee received the proposal for review on time, to be able to approve and send out the proposal defense announcement to the department. It is the student's responsibility to follow up in a timely manner if the announcement is not posted by the Graduate Program Office by 7 days before the seminar will be held.

The project proposal announcement must include the date, time and location for the proposal seminar as well as the abstract, formatted as per the UGS template (below). If the Student also wishes to provide a Zoom link to enable remote attendance by some of the audience, the announcement sent to the Graduate Program Office must include the Zoom meeting ID and password, and/or a clickable zoom link that already includes the password. Students are recommended to enable a "waiting room" in the Zoom settings, so that meeting information will be visible to prospective attendees before the seminar is held. Note that seminar announcements are sent out to the department after the associated Zoom link has been verified as functional by the Graduate Program Office.

The UGS template for defense announcements is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/SampleDefenseAnnouncement.pdf>

Meeting norms: Standard procedure is for the Student to present their proposal seminar in about 50 minutes, allowing about 10 minutes afterward for a public question/answer period. The public audience will then be asked to leave and the Committee and Major Professor will remain for further discussion of the proposed research plan with the Student, with the student answering questions about the project. This discussion can take anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours. After that discussion has concluded, the Student exits the room to allow for discussion within the Committee. When the Student is summoned back to the room, the Committee tells the Student the outcome from the project proposal defense.

After the proposal defense: The Student should submit the items below to the Graduate Program Office:

- a completed M-2 form
- the 5-page version of the project proposal, to be forwarded to UGS.
- certificate of completion for the Citi Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course.
- copies of the related IBC, IRB and/or IACUC approval memos that show the Student's name on the "approved personnel" list, if the planned research involves recombinant DNA, vertebrate animals or human subjects.

Note: these memos are copies of 1-page documents issued by FIU Compliance & Integrity to the Major Professor overseeing the Student's project. In some cases, the Major Professor may need to contact

Compliance & Integrity to set up/secure an updated form of the memo that includes the Student's name, confirming that the Student's project described in the M-2 has been FIU-reviewed and approved.

The M-2 form is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/M-2-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

After the Graduate Program Office has received a copy of a Student's M-2 form and accompanying attachments, approval of the form is enabled by:

- review of the M-2 materials received
- confirmation that all pre-candidacy coursework required by the Graduate Program was successfully completed by the Student
- confirmation that the Student's (signed) First Committee Memo was received
- confirmation that any other pre-candidacy coursework specified by the Thesis Committee as a required part of the Student's Program of Study (in the First Committee Memo), was also completed.
- confirmation that the Student's (signed) Qualifying/Candidacy Exam Memo was received by the Graduate Program office, showing that the exam was successfully passed.

After approval of the M-2 form by the Graduate Program Director, the Graduate Program Office Specialist makes a copy for the Student's file and sends the completed form to the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education, who, upon approval, send it to the University Graduate School.

Enrollment changes:

The term after the Student has passed (or waived) the qualifying exam, presented the public Thesis proposal seminar, and submitted all paperwork to the Graduate Program Secretary, for approval by the University Graduate School, the Student must enroll in:

- Thesis Proposal Seminar (BSC 5931)
- Master's Thesis credit (BSC 6971)
A total of 6 credits of BSC 6971 must be completed prior to graduation. Note that all M.S. candidates must remain **continuously** enrolled in BSC 6971 (**for 1 credit or more each term**) until graduation.

ANNUAL REVIEW

Review by the Department: The Department of Biological Sciences conducts an in-department Annual Graduate Student Evaluation to ensure Students are making progress toward completing their Thesis. In the spring term, each student is assigned a Biological Sciences Graduate Committee member who serves as the reviewer. The Student must arrange to meet with the assigned reviewer for the evaluation to take place.

During this meeting, the Graduate Committee member will check in with the Student on annual progress, as recorded on the Annual Graduate Student Evaluation form that is emailed out to the Students every spring. Students with unsatisfactory evaluations are given direction and deadlines for becoming satisfactory. Note that failure of a student to set up this evaluation meeting automatically triggers the status of "unsatisfactory." Failure to meet criteria for becoming satisfactory may lead to dismissal from the program. This Departmental review process and criteria are described more fully below in the "Graduate Review" section.

THESIS

A Thesis must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the guidelines and deadlines established by the University Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences and Education. These guidelines are set forth in the Thesis Preparation Manual available from University Graduate School.

The Thesis Preparation Manual is found at:

https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Graduate_Packet_For_Theses2022.pdf

Formatting guidelines for the Thesis are explained below:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-2022-ETD-Student-Manual-optimized.pdf>

University deadlines are here:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

After preliminary approval of the Thesis and completion of all other prescribed work for the M.S. degree, the candidate will give a public presentation and be given a final oral examination by the Thesis Committee.

REQUEST FOR THESIS DEFENSE (Form M-3)

Holding a Thesis Defense is a University requirement. Thus, the Defense must be scheduled and held to comply with University deadlines, found at: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

After confirming agreement by the Major Professor, the Student should reach out to their Thesis Committee to request they meet for the Thesis Defense. (*Note that registering for the Thesis Defense class BSC 5975 is NOT required to hold the Thesis defense.*) Best practice is to share the near-final thesis draft with the Committee while initiating this conversation with them. The Student's Thesis Defense should be scheduled for **7 weeks or more** after the Thesis file has been sent out to the Thesis Committee.

Thesis Defenses are held in person, with remote attendance by Committee members on an as-needed basis only. In person presence on campus by both the Student and Major Professor is required. Under extraordinary circumstances only, a petition can be filed with the University to request an exception be made, to allow for a fully remote Thesis Defense. If a situation arises that requires this, the Student and/or their Major Professor must contact the Graduate Program Office as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances and coordinate submission of a petition, which is reviewed by the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, CASE and UGS.

After an appropriate date and time for the Thesis Defense has been identified, the Student can file a Request for Thesis Defense form (M-3). To do this, the Student must provide to the Graduate Program Office:

- A completed M-3 form
- A copy of the near-final Thesis document, formatted as per University guidelines
- A Thesis defense announcement, which includes the date, time and location for the Defense as well as the abstract, formatted as per the UGS template.

The M-3 form is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/M-3-Instructions-and-Form-08152022.pdf>

The UGS template for the Thesis defense announcement is found at:
<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/ThesisDefenseAnnouncementSample.pdf>

Defense timeline:

Starting the process: Students should plan on reviewing the near-final Thesis document with the Major Professor before engaging the Thesis Committee. As the director supervisor of the Student's work, the Major Professor needs to have an opportunity to provide feedback and work with the Student on formatting and/or corrections of the Thesis. A minimum of 2 weeks should be allowed for this, which means getting the Thesis to the Major Professor at least **9 weeks** or more before the Thesis Defense is to be held.

M.S. Students must plan to get their Thesis draft to the Committee at least **7 weeks** before the Thesis Defense is to be held. The reason for this is, when the Committee signs the M-3 form, they are agreeing to the following: "My signature below attests that I have read the attached Thesis and find it provisionally acceptable and ready to defend." To be able to sign this, the Student must have provided their Thesis to the Committee with sufficient time for the Committee to read and comment on the Thesis before the M-3 submission deadline. Sufficient time in this case means at least two weeks.

Follow-up to identify/prevent delays: The Student must plan to follow up with the Committee, to confirm whether the M-3 form can be signed by all members *within 2 weeks of having received the document*. Justified reasons for a Committee member to not approve the Thesis include having insufficient time to read it, having being sent the document late, and/or having identified that the Thesis is not provisionally defensible in its current form. Those scenarios may require rescheduling of the Thesis Defense, after the issue is addressed.

Delays at this stage of processing can be addressed by the Student if identified in time. Technical errors can occur, such as a Committee member not seeing that they received a copy the Thesis, or encountering a glitch in opening/reading/printing the Thesis file. Technical difficulty in clicking "Approve" by Committee members can also occur, but can be addressed with the assistance of the Graduate Program Office, if reported in a timely manner. Students must follow up on progression of their paperwork. For example, if Committee members are approving the M3 form via via DocuSign, this would mean regularly checking on the status of the document in DocuSign, and follow up in a timely manner on missing signatures.

What happens after the Committee has signed off on the Thesis: A near-final draft of the Thesis, a copy of the Thesis Defense Announcement, and a completed M-3 Form, already signed *by all Committee members*, must be submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program at least **5 weeks** before the defense date. This gives a week for the Graduate Program to approve, and a week for CASE to approve, before the University Graduate School deadline, which is always 3 weeks before the defense. The Dean of our College and the Dean of the Graduate School adhere strictly to posted deadlines, and any Student who does not comply with the deadlines will be forced to reschedule the defense on a new date, which may require enrollment in another term.

University Graduate School deadlines for submission of Form M-3 (and other milestones) are found here:
<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

Advertising: The Student must also adequately *advertise the defense seminar 10-14 days before the presentation*, by posting notices around the department, and by sending an electronic version of the project proposal announcement to the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Office Specialist

(Biograd@fiu.edu). It is the student's responsibility to follow up in a timely manner if the announcement is not posted by the Graduate Program Office by 7 days before the seminar will be held.

The Thesis defense announcement must include the date, time and location of the defense seminar as well as the abstract, formatted as per the UGS template (below). If the Student also wishes to provide a Zoom link to enable remote attendance by some of the audience, the announcement sent to the Graduate Program Office must include the Zoom meeting ID and password, and/or a clickable zoom link that already includes the password. Students are recommended to enable a "waiting room" in the Zoom settings, so that meeting information will be visible to prospective attendees before the seminar is held. Note that seminar announcements are sent out to the department after the associated Zoom link has been verified as functional by the Graduate Program Office.

The UGS template for defense announcements is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/SampleDefenseAnnouncement.pdf>

Meeting norms: Standard procedure is for the Student to present the defense seminar within about 50 minutes, allowing about 10-20 minutes afterward for a public question/answer period. The public audience will then be asked to leave and the Committee and Major Professor will remain for further discussion and question/answer with the Student about the Thesis seminar and/or written Thesis document. This discussion can take anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours. After that discussion has concluded, the Student exits the room to allow for discussion within the Committee. When the Student is summoned back to the room, the Committee tells the Student the outcome from the Thesis defense.

RESULTS OF THE THESIS DEFENSE (Rubrics)

Three rubrics evaluating the contents, written and oral presentation of the Thesis must be completed by all members of the Committee and submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office after the Thesis defense. The rubric forms are sent out to all Students who have applied for graduation each semester, and are also available at all times upon request from Biograd@fiu.edu.

Scores filled in by the Dissertation Committee on these rubrics serve as a memo to the Graduate Program from the Thesis Committee, reporting the outcome as scored for written communication (from the Thesis document), oral communication (from the Thesis seminar) and critical thinking (as shown in both written and oral formats). It is important for these rubrics to be completed by the Student's Committee and submitted by the Student's Major Professor to the Graduate Program Office in order to finalize approval of the Student's file for Graduation.

Any Student who fails the Thesis Defense may be allowed a second Defense, on recommendation of the Thesis Committee. If re-examination is necessary, the second Defense cannot be held earlier than six months or more than one year from the date of the first Defense.

FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS (Final ETD approval form)

Upon reaching the stage of a Thesis defense, it is common the Major Professor and members of the Thesis Committee to suggest some extent of corrections/edits in content of the Thesis document. This feedback can be

provided to the Student anytime between the faculty having received a copy of the Thesis file, up to the day of the defense itself. After holding a successful Thesis defense, the Student finalizes any last changes to the Thesis document. The revised Thesis document is then emailed to the Committee once more as confirmation of finalized Thesis content.

Then, the Student files an “Electronic Thesis and Dissertation” (ETD) form, with a pdf copy of the Thesis attached to the form. It is notable that ETD related activities generally occur toward the end of the semester, when timelines and turnaround time for correcting any errors, are running short. These materials must be submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, **by two weeks before** they are due at UGS. This is important for the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office to have sufficient time for approval the Student’s ETD before the CASE deadline, which is a week before the UGS deadline.

UGS deadlines for receipt of the ETD are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

The ETD directions are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/the-final-etd-process/>

The ETD approval form can be found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Final-Electronic-Thesis-Approval-Form06202023-1.pdf>

After UGS has received the Student’s ETD form, the Student will receive an email from UGS that instructs the student on how to upload a copy of the Thesis file to the FIU Libraries website. The deadline for completing this is specified in the UGS-issued email. Students are advised to keep an eye out for this notification.

APPLYING FOR GRADUATION

The final step after a successful defense is to apply for graduation. To apply for graduation, Students can log into <https://my.fiu.edu/>, select ‘Academic Records’, then select ‘Apply for Graduation’.

More information on filing for graduation is found at:

<https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/>

NOTE: applying for graduation does not automatically register a Student to participate in commencement ceremonies. In order to walk across the stage, Students need to attend the Commencement Fair, held in the Barnes and Noble Bookstore in the Graham Center (MMC), and the Wolfe Center (BBC). There, Students receive commencement passes, regalia and instructions to purchase tickets for family and any other attendees.

Commencement fair dates are found at:

<https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-fair/index.html>

Additional, helpful information related to commencement is found at:

<https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-checklist/index.html>

If a Student misses the deadline to apply for graduation, a “Late Graduation Application” form can be used. The Late Graduation form is found at the link below, under the tab “Graduation Forms”

<https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/all-forms/>

If for any reason, a Student is unable to graduate after applying for graduation, the Student must submit a “Graduation Cancellation form”. Students should email Biograd@fiu.edu to request a copy of the Graduation Cancellation form.

CHANGE OF DEGREE TRACK

Students may apply to switch from the M.S. to the Ph.D. track during or after their second term of enrollment. Application is made to the Graduate Program Office by submission of

- a memo from the Student justifying the request
- a separate, brief statement of the Student’s proposed research plan
- a memo of support, provided by the Major Professor
- proof must be supplied that a Dissertation Committee (5 members) can be formed
- a UGS “Change of Graduate Degree” form

The Change of Graduate Degree form is found here:

<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Oct2019Change-of-Graduate-Degree.pdf>

The Graduate Committee will consider these materials, along with the Student’s performance in courses taken up to that time in the grad program, then issue a recommendation on whether to approve the request. If the Graduate Committee does vote to approve, a change in the Student’s degree level will be recommended accordingly to UGS by the Biological Sciences Graduate Program. Pending final checks by UGS, *change-of-degree requests are approved by UGS at the end of the term when the change-of-degree application was made.*

ACTIVE STATUS AND TIME LIMITATIONS

To maintain active status in the M.S. program, Students must register for a minimum of one credit per term (summer term included) after advancing to candidacy. Students must be continually enrolled until they defend. Lapsed enrollment for two consecutive terms automatically drops the Student from the program.

All requirements for the M.S. degree, including a successful Thesis defense, must be completed within **six years** of starting the M.S. program, including any leaves or other interruptions of active Student status. Students must be enrolled in the term when they graduate and have an overall GPA greater than 3.0. Students who do not complete their Thesis within this time may submit a Petition for Exception to Graduate Requirements.

MASTER'S DEGREE CHECKLIST (complete while moving thru program)

Submitting forms for signatures

Please use DocuSign (<https://docusign.fiu.edu>) for signatures as needed.

Send M forms and supplemental documents as PDF files to Biograd@fiu.edu for the remaining signatures (GPD, Dean). The Dean will sign the form and send it off to UGS via email, with a copy sent to everyone.

1. Formation of Committee and holding the first Committee meeting:

The thesis committee (3 members) should be formed before: end of the first term for full-time students, or completing 12 credits for part-time students.

After the committee has been formed, these forms must be submitted to the Graduate Program.

Appointment of Thesis Committee Form (M-1)

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/M-1-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

Non-FIU Commitment Form (if needed): <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/NonFIUcommitmentMemo2022.pdf>

Plan to turn in your documents to the Department **at least 2 weeks BEFORE the UGS deadline**, to allow for processing by Biology and CASE. UGS deadlines: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

After the first committee meeting has been held, form is due into the Biological Sciences Graduate Program.

First Committee Meeting memo

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/memo_first_committee_meeting20161228.pdf

If the composition of a Thesis Committee changes, students must submit a memo from the major professor explaining why the change was made, and a completed M-1r form, to Biological Sciences graduate program.

Appointment of Revised Thesis Committee Form (M-1r)

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/M-1r-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

Annual Graduate Review for M.S. students –

Departmental: During the spring term, the student must schedule a meeting with their graduate reviewer (a member of the graduate committee). Guidelines can be found on pg. 16 and pg. 47 of this manual.

2. Course work required of all M.S. students:

- Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457: 3 credits) _____
- Quantitative Skills (a minimum of 6 credits in 2 separate courses)[†] _____
- Workshops/laboratories (BSC 6926; a minimum of 4 credits from at least 2 courses) _____
- Electives from courses offered by the Department of Biological Sciences (16 credits) _____
- Thesis Proposal Seminar (BSC 5931: 1 credit)* _____
- Master's Thesis (BSC 6971: 6 credits)[§] _____
- Thesis Defense Seminar (*optional* BSC 5975:1 credit)[‡] _____

[†]Students should ideally complete their quantitative skills requirement by the end of the first year, but must at least have a reasonable plan to complete the requirement by the end of the second year.

*The thesis proposal seminar (BSC 5931) is taken the term AFTER the thesis proposal presentation.

[§] BSC 6971 may be taken AFTER the student passes the qualifying exam, and does the public thesis proposal seminar.

[‡]The optional thesis defense seminar (BSC 5975) is taken the term of the thesis defense.

_____3. Qualifying Examination:

Full-time M.S. students should complete the examination by the end of their first year in the program.

Qual memo form: https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy-exam-form.pdf

The qualifying exam can be waived when Master's students earn a grade of A in Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457) *and* both courses of two-term, core area course sequence (PCB 5423 and PCB 5443, or PCB 6025 and PCB 6027). In such case, a memo must be filed by the major professor, indicating that the student earned the appropriate grades.

_____4. Project Proposal Defense:

After the project proposal is approved by the committee, it is the student's responsibility to schedule the proposal seminar. Students must post notices of the presentation around the Department at least one week in advance of the presentation. An electronic version of the project proposal announcement must also be sent to the Biology graduate program office (Biograd@fiu.edu) in Word format, 10-14 days before the seminar date. The Qualifying/Candidacy exam form should be submitted to the Biological Sciences graduate office within one week of the project proposal seminar.

Note: The term after the thesis proposal defense, students should register for BSC 5931 (Thesis proposal seminar).

_____5. Advancing to Candidacy:

After the presentation, students must plan to submit to the Graduate Program: the M-2 form, the certificate from the Citi Responsible Conduct of Research, and any IBC/IRB/IACUC approval forms. If the latter is applicable, the major professor's lab approval for hosting the work should list the student's name among the approved individuals.

Master's Thesis Proposal Form (M-2)

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/M-2-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

Responsible Conduct of Research <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/rcr/>

As before, turn in your documents to the Department **at least 2 weeks BEFORE the UGS deadline**, to allow processing by the Department and CASE. UGS deadlines are here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

Note: After advancing to the candidacy, full-time status requires enrollment in a minimum of 1 credit per semester.

Thesis Preparation Manual can be found at:

https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Graduate_Packet_For_Theses2022.pdf

_____6. Master's Thesis Defense:

The thesis defense is a University requirement. A complete and near-final draft of the thesis, the Thesis Defense Announcement, and a completed M-3 form must be submitted to the Graduate Program **5 weeks** before the defense. The student and major professor must be on-campus for the defense, though committee members can be remote. *If circumstances require the student to defend remotely*, contact the Biology Graduate office ahead of time. You will need a petition, and CASE/UGS approval, to do so.

UGS deadlines: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

Request for Thesis Defense form (M-3):

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/M-3-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

Rubric for Thesis Defense Assessment: available by email from Biograd@fiu.edu

Note1: The student and major professor must be on-campus for the defense, though committee members can be remote. *If circumstances require the student to defend remotely*, contact the Biology Graduate office ahead of time. You will need a petition, and CASE/UGS approval, to do so.

Note2: The student must be enrolled (for at least one credit) during the final semester when the defense is held.

7. Apply for graduation.

To check deadlines and apply for graduation, go here

<https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/>

To get tickets and regalia, go to the commencement fair:

<https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-fair/index.html>

For any/all other commencement information, go to

<https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-checklist/index.html>

8. Final submission of the thesis:

After a student successfully defends the thesis, a pdf copy of the final version of the thesis, and the “Electronic Thesis and Dissertation” form, must be sent to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, **by two weeks before** it is due at UGS. The UGS deadline for the ETD form is here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

ETD Approval form:

https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Final_ETD_Approval_Form08152022.pdf

A final reminder: the Master’s Checklist provided here is intended only as a brief overview/summary.

This checklist serves as a tool that students can use to keep track of their progress through the program. Details of the MS program are explained above, in the Biological Sciences Graduate Policies and Procedures manual sections (pg. 7 to pg. 21) that precede the Master’s program checklist.

Helpful links:

Graduate Policies & Procedures Manual:

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/graduate_policies_procedures_manual.pdf

***University forms:** <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>

***UGS Deadlines:** <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>

***CASE Deadlines:** <https://case.fiu.edu/academics/graduate/index.html>

***First Committee meeting memo:**

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/memo_first_committee_meeting20161228.pdf

***Graduate Qualifying/Candidacy Exam form:**

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy-exam-form.pdf

***Add/Drop (Enrollment Adjustment, under the “Registration and Student Records Forms” tab):**

<https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/all-forms/>

***FIU/UM Exchange program application form:**

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FIU-UM-Exchange-Application-2023.pdf>

THE DOCTORAL (Ph.D.) PROGRAM

The Ph.D. degree is conferred on individuals in recognition of their demonstrated ability to master a specific field of knowledge and to complete a significant and original research project that is documented in a Dissertation. The program of study leading to the Ph.D. must include a comprehensive plan to provide a strong background in a specific discipline in the Biological Sciences.

A “Term” is defined as spring, fall, or summer C terms, with 3 terms offered per calendar year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Progress toward your degree involves completing coursework required by your Committee, performing original research, writing up the results of that research as a Dissertation and defending the research in a public forum. Your progress through the program is defined by a series of “milestone” forms (formerly called D-1, D-2, D-3, and D-5) that acknowledge that you have met these requirements. Students also have an annual evaluation by the Department’s Graduate Committee and, separately, by the University. More information about the annual review can be found on pg.37 and pg. 47 of this manual.

The **milestone forms** are accessible through <https://my.fiu.edu/> under your Student environment, in the Tasks tile. After these are submitted, they get approved first by the Department, then the College, and then the University Graduate School. Be aware that the forms typically have deadlines within a semester. Be aware of the deadlines and submit your forms on time. Once you have submitted something to Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office, it is the Department’s responsibility to submit it to CASE, who will then submit it to UGS. It is good practice to keep copies of your paperwork for yourself.

Important Notes:

- All forms are submitted through the “tasks” tile in <https://my.fiu.edu/>. These are not submitted directly to CASE or to UGS. Each level must approve and is responsible for passing documents on to the next higher level. When submitting forms, read and follow the instructions carefully.
- Make sure all instructions are followed for the milestone forms; if instructions are unclear, ask someone for help, and allow for time to correct errors, in case a form is returned.
- For most of the forms in the program, each levels in the University hierarchy needs a week (5 working days) to process the form. So, if a university deadline for submission of your Dissertation to UGS is 3 weeks before your defense date, that means adding on one week (5 working days) for CASE and one week (5 working days) for the Biological Sciences Graduate Office.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

With guidance from the Major Professor, the Student forms a Dissertation Committee to direct the Student's research. The Dissertation Committee must be formed by the end of the second term, or no later than the end of the first year of study (third term, counting the summer term). *As per Biological Sciences departmental policy, the Dissertation Committee must consist of at least five faculty members, with the Major Professor and all FIU-based Committee members also holding University Graduate Faculty Status.*

The CASE graduate faculty list is found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#toggle-id-11>

- The chair of the Dissertation Committee will be the Major Professor, who hold a faculty appointment, or courtesy faculty appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences at FIU.

- A minimum of two additional members of the Dissertation Committee must be faculty members with at least a 50% appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences.
- The fourth Dissertation Committee member must be a member of the FIU Graduate Faculty, but outside of the Department of Biological Sciences.
- The fifth Dissertation Committee member can be selected from other Biology faculty, University faculty or professionals with appropriate credentials.
- Students are allowed to add additional members if their projects require that type of support.

NOTE: If the Student would like a Scientist outside of FIU to serve as the fifth committee member, the student will need:

1. a memo from the Major Professor that describes the expertise brought by the non-FIU scientist.
 2. the CV of the outside member
 3. the Non-FIU commitment form, completed and signed by the outside committee member
- Non-FIU Commitment form is here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/NonFIUcommitmentMemo2022.pdf>

Dissertation Committee member scenarios in accord with guidelines outlined above are shown below:

member type	committees that meet program requirements			committees that exceed program requirements	
	scenario 1	scenario 2	scenario 3	scenario 4	scenario 5
FIU Biology	4	3	3	3	3
FIU non-Biology	1	2	1	2	1
External member	0	0	1	1	2
total members	5	5	5	6	6

Under no circumstances may an external research supervisor be the chair of the Student's Dissertation Committee. Potential external research supervisors may not be relatives or on-site paid supervisors of a student.

The Dissertation Committee functions to:

- advise the Student in all academic and research matters
- formulate a program of study
- follow up with the Student on a yearly basis to monitor progress and goals
- prepare and conduct the candidacy examination
- approve the Dissertation proposal
- review progress of the Dissertation research
- administer the defense of Dissertation
- render final approval of the Dissertation

To serve as Major Professor of a Dissertation Committee, a faculty member must:

- be a faculty member, or have a courtesy faculty appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences.
- be a member of the University Graduate Faculty.
- have specialized academic competence in the Student's major field.
- have taught a graduate course in the last three years or had a graduate Student who graduated in the last five years.

- have published an article in a peer-reviewed journal in the last three years or had research funding during the last three years or applied for at least one grant in the last three years.

To serve as a Dissertation Committee member, the faculty member, or external research scientist, must:

- be a member of the University Graduate Faculty, or be approved by the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director and/or Graduate Committee if the person is an external research scientist.
- have specialized academic competence relevant to a major emphasis of the Student's project.
- have taught a graduate course in the last three years or published an article in a peer-reviewed journal in the last three years.

These guidelines may not adequately cover all situations. When appropriate, faculty members may make a written appeal to the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee. If necessary, an appeal of the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee's decision can be made to the entire faculty.

Students should play an active role in the selection of their Dissertation Committee members and must arrange to meet formally with their supervisory Committee at least once a year to ensure that each Dissertation Committee member is fully informed of the Student's progress.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT (first milestone form)

Interaction with potential Committee members: To prepare for speaking with potential Committee members, Students should write a preliminary project proposal during their first term in the program. The preliminary proposal should be developed in consultation with the Major Professor. Full-time Students should submit the preliminary proposal to potential Dissertation Committee members no later than the beginning of their second term; part-time Students should submit their preliminary proposal upon completion of 12 credits. Review of the preliminary proposal by potential Committee members helps them decide if they can serve on the Dissertation Committee as requested. If the faculty member accepts the invitation to join the Dissertation Committee, seeing the Student's preliminary proposal also assists the faculty member in determining what program of study to recommend to the Student, and what topics to covered on the Student's candidacy exam.

An "**Appointment of Dissertation Committee**" milestone form (formerly known as the D-1 form) should be completed and submitted online through the student's panther portal upon formation of the Dissertation Committee. Directions are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>

If any member of the Committee is outside the University, the Appointment of Dissertation Committee milestone form must include the following attachments:

- a memo from the Major Professor that describes the expertise brought by the non-FIU scientist.
- the CV of the outside member
- a signed copy of the Non-FIU commitment form, which is found at: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/NonFIUcommitmentMemo2022.pdf>

The Graduate Program Office recommends including a detailed description for each Committee Member's research expertise when explaining their contributions to the Student's project on this milestone form, providing on the order of about 4-5 sentences for each individual. Submission of bullet points, or short phrases to describe

Committee Member contributions in the corresponding descriptor fields are not sufficient to communicate across academic departments within the university, and can result in this milestone form being turned back to the Student for revision by the Graduate Program, CASE and/or UGS.

Students are generally recommended to follow up on this milestone form in their panther portal after submission, to confirm that all Committee Members were able to approve the form in a timely manner. The Graduate Program cannot see the milestone form at all until all Committee Members have approved the form online.

Holding the first Committee meeting: The purpose of the first Committee meeting is to:

- Walk the Committee through the project proposal outline together, and get Committee feedback on it.
- Have the Committee review courses taken thus far, by examination of prior transcripts.
 - Determine what program of study the Committee recommends as appropriate to the student's project. See the "Program of Study" section below (pg. 28) for further details.
 - Formalize the topics to be covered by each Committee member on the student's candidacy exam. See the "Candidacy Examination" section below (pg. 32) for further details.
 - Document possible transfer credits (if any) in a Memo signed by the Committee. See the "Transfer of Graduate Credits" section below (pg. 31) for more information on this process.

After the first Committee meeting has been held: the Student must submit a First Committee Memo form to the Graduate Program, which describes the program of study (required) and candidacy exam topics (required).

The First Committee Meeting memo is found at pg. 66 of this manual, and also at:

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/memo_first_committee_meeting20161228.pdf

Plan for holding future Committee meetings: Each Ph.D. student is required to meet annually with their Dissertation Committee after the Appointment of Dissertation Committee" milestone form has been filed. Other milestone events (the oral candidacy exam and the dissertation project proposal) also satisfy the annual Committee meeting requirement for the years in which those events occurred.

Changing Dissertation Committee members: The composition of a Dissertation Committee may need to be changed during a Student's progression to their degree. In such case, the Student must submit a completed D-1r form to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, including a memo from the Major Professor explaining the change. If the Student wishes to change the Major Professor, the Student should submit a written request to the Graduate Program office for approval. If the Dissertation research has changed significantly in association with the Committee change, a new five-page summary of the project should also be submitted with the D-1r form.

The D-1r form is found at: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Revised-Dissertation-Committee-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

COURSES – PROGRAM OF STUDY

Doctoral Students must complete a program of study, in cooperation with the Dissertation Committee at the first Committee meeting, to support the Dissertation research and to provide a strong and comprehensive background in the Biological Sciences. The program of study for all Ph.D. Students should include all courses required by the Department, any courses that rectify weaknesses in the Student's background and any courses deemed

essential for the Student's research. The program of study should be appended to the First Committee Meeting memo filed with the Department, and all courses passed satisfactorily for the Student to advance to candidacy.

Core courses required of all Ph.D. Students include:

Pre-candidacy courses:

- Supervised Teaching in Biology (BSC 5945; 2 credits)
- Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457; 3 credits) *Note: For PhD Students who already have an M.S. degree, BSC 6457 is recommended, but is not required.*
- Quantitative Skills (a minimum of 6 credits in 2 separate courses).
- Workshops/laboratories (BSC 6926; a minimum of 4 credits from at least 2 separate courses).
- Electives from courses offered by the Department of Biological Sciences (8 credits)
Note: Taking more than 8 elective credits is acceptable if the project requires it.

Post-candidacy courses:

- Dissertation Proposal Seminar (BSC 7961, 1 credit) *Note: Students should be enrolled in this course during the term AFTER the Dissertation proposal seminar is given.*
- Ph.D. Dissertation (BSC 7980; 15 credits) *Note: Taking more than 15 credits of BSC 7980 is acceptable if the project requires it.*
- Dissertation Defense Seminar (BSC 7982, 1 credit). *Note: Students should be enrolled in this course during the same term as the Dissertation defense.*

Which courses are required to advance to candidacy: a minimum of 30 credits.

All courses in the program of study, except for BSC 7961, BSC 7980 and BSC 7982, must be completed prior to advancing to candidacy. Formal course requirements should be met as early as realistically possible. Suitable electives can be added as needed, in accord with the Program of Study and advancement to candidacy. Candidacy is possible at any point after the Student has completed the Program of Study has been completed, accrued 30 or more credits, and passed the candidacy exam.

Please see the link below for a current, updated version of the Biological Sciences Graduate Catalog:
https://catalog.fiu.edu/2023_2024/graduate/College_of_Arts_Sciences_and_Education/GD_Biological_Sciences.pdf

Note: Any non-required, 5000+ level courses listed in the Biological Sciences Graduate catalog, including the Ecology and Organismal series (PCB 5423 and PCB 5443), the Molecular and Cell Biology series (PCB 6025 and PCB 6027), and/or Student Research Lab BSC 6913, count as electives.

Total credit requirement to graduate: a minimum of 75 credits.

The total credits represented by pre-candidacy and post-candidacy core coursework listed above totals up to 40 credits. This means that Students need an additional 35 (elective) credits to achieve the minimum required 75 credit hours to graduate with the degree of PhD. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and must earn a grade of “C” or higher in all courses.

Overall enrollment plan:

Before candidacy, full-time (assistantship-supported) Students are required to take 9 credits per semester during fall and spring, and 6 credits during the summer semester. While prioritizing the program of study, Student enrollment in elective courses, such as the Ecology and Organismal series (PCB 5423 and PCB 5443), the Molecular and Cell Biology series (PCB 6025 and PCB 6027), and/or Student Research Lab BSC 6913, satisfies the enrollment requirement. All of such courses do count toward satisfaction of elective credits required to graduate, and are important to take care of before advancing to candidacy. *After achievement of candidacy, UGS-issued tuition waivers are capped at 3 credits per semester, and no longer cover elective enrollment in any courses other than BSC 7962, BSC 7980 and BSC 7982.*

Post-candidacy, full-time Students must be continuously enrolled in at least three credits each term including summer term until graduation. This shift from enrollment in 9 credit hours per term to 3 credit hours per term post-candidacy represents a substantial reduction in fees for the Student.

Students will receive IP (In Progress) grades for Doctoral Dissertation (BSC 7980) credits until the final term. Students must also plan to enroll in the Dissertation Defense Seminar course (BSC 7982) during their final semester. Grades will be automatically changed from IP to P after the candidate successfully defends the Dissertation, when the Major Professor files a grade of P for Doctoral Dissertation (BSC 7980), and the Graduate Program Director files a grade of P for Dissertation Defense Seminar (BSC 7982).

NOTE: The implication of a “3-credits per term” paradigm for post-candidacy Students is that accrual of at least 15 Dissertation research credits, plus taking the Proposal Defense seminar and Dissertation Defense seminar courses would need six terms to complete, in satisfaction of the Ph.D. degree. For this reason, it’s in the interest of Ph.D. students to advance to candidacy at least 2 years before planning to defend their Dissertation and graduate. Students are welcome to refer to the UGS calendar while reflecting upon their timelines to graduation in greater detail: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>

QUANTITATIVE SKILLS REQUIREMENT

To ensure that our graduates have quantitative skills, the Department requires Students to take two or more courses, totaling to a minimum of *six credits*, of graduate level computer programming, statistics, or mathematics. This is often achieved through enrollment in two different (3-credit) statistics courses. Courses that students commonly take to satisfy this requirement include: STA 5126, STA 5206, STA 5507, STA 6166, STA 6167, STA 6176 or BSC 5459.

The courses to fulfill the quantitative skills requirement will be recommended to the student by their Dissertation Committee, consistent with Departmental policy, and should be documented by a memo from the Committee. If courses outside of the standard statistics, programming, or math are required by the Dissertation Committee to meet this requirement, a memo documenting recommendation of the courses should be submitted to the Graduate Program Office. Upon satisfactory review, the memo will be placed in the Student’s file by the Biological Sciences Graduate Office.

WORKSHOP REQUIREMENT

To ensure opportunities have been provided for hands-on experience in use of practical methods, the Department requires Students to take two or more workshops (BSC 6926), totaling to a minimum of *four credits*. Workshops have traditionally been hands-on courses, where students learn how to sequence DNA, analyze sequence data, measure respiration in a plant, learn how to use a confocal microscope, learn how to program in R, learn how to do CRISPR, or learn how to use GIS to analyze data, for example. A 1-credit workshop involves a 13-hour time commitment within the semester of enrollment. A 2-credit workshop represents a 26-hour time commitment within the semester of enrollment, as per university policy.

TRANSFER OF GRADUATE CREDITS

What types of credit transfer are possible: Graduate credit transfers are subject to FIU policy 380.085 (<https://policies.fiu.edu/files/128.pdf>). If approved by the Dissertation Committee, a maximum of 36 credit earned elsewhere within a **completed graduate degree program** may be accepted toward the Ph.D. degree. Up to six Dissertation credit hours may be transferred to a Ph.D. program only if they were part of an earned degree and are approved first by the Dissertation Committee. If approved by the Dissertation Committee, up to 15 credit hours may be considered for transfer from incomplete MS or PhD degrees carried out at other departments/institutions. A maximum of twelve term hours of graduate credit earned at FIU in a non-degree seeking status may be transferred if approved by the Dissertation Committee.

What types of credits are not transferred: It is not possible to transfer in undergraduate level course credits, credits from non-accredited academic programs, or any course with a grade lower than a C. The Graduate Program also does not transfer in credits for courses that are unrelated to requirements of the Dissertation project, nor courses for which an FIU equivalency has not been identified, because the Student's Committee would not have suggested the Student enroll in such courses for their program of study.

Guidelines for requesting credit transfer: If any graduate credit is to be transferred into the Student's program, this request should be discussed during the first Committee meeting. A memo documenting which courses are recommended for credit transfer, and the Committee's approval of the request, should be attached to the First Committee Meeting memo, for review by the Graduate Program Director. The Student must provide the syllabi or course catalogs for courses they wish to transfer, for the Graduate Program Director to confirm FIU course equivalences. The procurement of syllabi and course catalogs that describe prior courses is the responsibility of the Student. Suggestions of what the possible FIU course equivalencies might be, by the Student and/or their Thesis Committee, are welcomed at the time when the credit transfer request is being filed with the Graduate Program Office.

Approval of transfer credits from prior courses is ultimately decided by the Graduate Program Director and the Office of the Registrar, based on FIU course equivalences and relevance to each Student's program of study. Credit transfer requests must be placed, and completed, prior to the Student filing for advancement to candidacy.

SUPERVISED TEACHING REQUIREMENT

The ability to teach at the University level is an important skill for all doctoral Students to master as participants in the Biological Sciences Graduate Program. For this reason, all Students are required to take the Supervised Teaching in Biology course (BSC 5945) and perform two semesters of supervised teaching, with fulfillment of Teaching Assistantship (TA) instructional role satisfying this requirement.

Students are encouraged to meet the supervised teaching requirement as soon as reasonably possible. Enrollment in, and completion of, the Teaching in Biology course (BSC 5945) is required for all Ph.D. students to advance to candidacy, as well as to graduate from the PhD program. Completion of this course cannot be waived under any circumstances.

The TA component of the supervised teaching requirement does not need to be met before advancing to candidacy, but is required to graduate from the Biological Sciences Graduate Program with the degree of Ph.D. This requirement cannot be waived by statements of preference, planning errors, matters of convenience or by Dissertation Committee recommendation. The TA component of the supervised teaching requirement can only be waived for Students who have an extensive professional background in teaching, such as a prior career that was committed to teaching at the high school or college level.

CANDIDACY EXAMINATION

A candidacy examination is required of all Students working toward the Ph.D. The goal of the candidacy examination is to broaden and deepen the Student's knowledge and scientific thinking in fields relevant to their research topic, and, more generally, in the biological (and in some cases, related) sciences, thus ensuring the proper preparation of Ph.D. candidates. Thus, the examination should be both rigorous and constructive with the intent of strengthening the Student's scientific background and critical thinking skills.

Exam timing and scope: Doctoral Students must take and pass a *written and oral candidacy examination* to demonstrate adequate progress toward the degree. The examination should be completed after a minimum of 18 credits in residence and no later than the sixth term of study (including the summer term). The written portion of the exam is often held on campus, but can be done remotely by permission of the Student's Committee.

The oral component of the candidacy exam is to be held on campus at FIU. In person attendance is required for the Student and Major Professor with as many Dissertation Committee members present as reasonably possible. Committee members can use teleconferencing software to attend the qualifying exam as needed. If circumstances unavoidably compel a remote modality for the Student and/or the Major Professor, they must ask the Graduate Program for permission to hold the meeting remotely, *at least 2 weeks before* the meeting will take place.

Exam content and preparation: The exam will cover at least five subject areas, with the form and content of the candidacy examination determined by the Student's Dissertation Committee. The Student must be informed of the subject areas at least six weeks prior to the date of the examination. Students should plan to meet with all Committee members at least once before the exam. During the first meeting, the topics and readings should be assigned. Questions regarding the assigned materials can be covered during a second meeting, held on an as-needed basis.

Coordination and format of the exam: The Student's Major Professor acts as the chair of the Committee and is responsible for scheduling written and oral examination sections, distributing exam questions and instructions to the student, collecting completed exam answers from the student, returning those answers to the Committee members, scheduling the day/time of the oral examination, and instructing outside Committee members as to their responsibilities. The date for the start of the written candidacy exam must be the same as the candidacy exam date that was communicated by the First Committee Meeting Memo.

Written portion: *All Committee members without exception are required to provide questions for the written portion, to be shared with the student's Major Professor a week before the exam is to be held. The Major Professor administers the written exam over the period of one week, with questions from a different Committee member provided to the Student each day. Answers from one set of questions are collected before a new set of questions are issued to the Student each day. The format and type of questions is specified on an individual basis by each Committee member, and must be communicated to the Student prior to the examination. The exam format specified by each Committee member may range in terms of the number of questions provided, expected length of answers, allowance of printed or electronic references during the exam or not, and length of time available to the Student for answering the questions.*

After the Student completes the written portion, the Major Professor returns the answers to all Committee members and requests feedback. Each Committee member is expected to respond to the Major Professor with feedback, informing the Student's performance on the written exam. *The oral section can only be scheduled if all Committee members agree that the Student has passed the written portion of the exam.* Failure to pass one or more subject areas of the written examination constitutes a failure. Passing the examination cannot be conditional. The Student either passes or fails the exam and cannot be passed contingent on satisfactory completion of courses or submission of research papers.

Oral portion: If the Student passes the written portion of the candidacy exam, the oral portion needs to be scheduled between one week to four weeks after the completion of the written portion. The Student is recommended to check in with the Committee members individually, prior to the oral exam, to get any additional feedback on areas that may remain to be strengthened in preparation for the oral exam, among other content that may be discussed in the oral examination meeting.

Exam norms: All Committee members must actively participate in the examination (either in person or remotely, e.g. via phone or videoconferencing). The exam usually allows for up to 2-2.5 hours of question and answer, which is carried out as a discussion between the various Committee members and the Student. The Student exits the room to allow for discussion within the Committee. When the Student is summoned back to the room, the Committee tells the Student the outcome from the oral candidacy examination.

Outcomes from the candidacy exam: A unanimous decision by the Dissertation Committee in all subject areas examined is required to successfully pass the candidacy examination. Failure in any examination area constitutes a failure of the candidacy exam. Passing the candidacy examination cannot be conditional, i.e., the Student either passes or fails the exam, and cannot be passed contingent on the satisfactory completion of courses, submission of research papers or other non-exam criteria.

Students who fail the examination are entitled to a re-examination. Reexamination may be scheduled after a minimum of one and a maximum of two terms have passed. Failure of the re-examination results in dismissal

from the Graduate program. The Dissertation Committee may also recommend that the Student transfer to the M.S. program. A request to transfer must be submitted by the Student and the Major Professor to the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee.

After the candidacy exam: *Within one week* of completing the candidacy exam, the Student must submit a signed Candidacy Memo to the Graduate Program office, to indicate the results (Pass or Fail), with a written summary of the exam.

The Qualifying Exam/Candidacy memo is on page 67 of this manual, and also found here:
https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy-exam-form.pdf

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY (second milestone form)

A graduate Student is not a candidate for the Ph.D. degree until granted formal admission to candidacy. This is achieved by completion and submission of the “**Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy**” milestone form (formerly known as the D-2 form) through the student’s panther portal.

Directions for submitting the form are found here:
<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>

Students are generally recommended to follow up on this milestone form in their panther portal after submission, to confirm that all Committee Members were able to approve the form in a timely manner. The Graduate Program cannot see the milestone form at all until all Committee Members have approved the form online.

After this milestone form has been filed, and approved by the Dissertation Committee, it reaches the queue of the Graduate Program Office. Approval of this form by the Graduate Program Office is then enabled by:

- confirmation that all pre-candidacy coursework required by the Graduate Program was successfully completed by the Student
- confirmation that the Student’s (signed) First Committee Memo was received
- confirmation that any other pre-candidacy coursework specified by the Dissertation Committee as a required part of the Student’s Program of Study (in the First Committee Memo), was also completed.
- confirmation that the Student’s (signed) Qualifying/Candidacy Exam Memo was received by the Graduate Program office, showing that the exam was successfully passed.

After advancing to candidacy: After successful filing of the Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy” milestone form, the Student can begin to register for Dissertation credits (BSC 7980). A full-time Student also changes over from enrollment in 9 credit hours per term to 3 credit hours per term, representing a substantial reduction in fees for the Student. All Ph.D. candidates must be continuously enrolled for 3 credits per term until graduation.

NOTE: After achievement of candidacy, UGS-issued tuition waivers are capped at 3 credits per semester, and are set to specifically cover enrollment in the courses BSC 7962, BSC 7980 and BSC 7982. This support

structure is generally compatible with, and appropriate for Ph.D. Student progression through our Graduate Program. It is worth being aware: *After advancing to candidacy, UGS-issued tuition waivers DO NOT cover enrollment in any other elective courses, nor course credits in excess of 3 credits per semester.* Any full-time Ph.D. student in the Biological Sciences Graduate Program who wishes to enroll in courses other than BSC 7962, BSC 7980 and BSC 7982 after candidacy, or wishes to enroll in more than 3 credit hours for any given term after candidacy, is not prevented from doing so after advancement to candidacy. However, any Student pursuing such scenarios is also financially responsible for tuition costs associated with such elective courses and/or extra research credits per term.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL (third milestone form)

Timeline of proposal development: To facilitate project planning and identification of potential Committee members, Students should write a preliminary project proposal during their first term in the program. The preliminary proposal should be developed in consultation with the Major Professor. Full-time Students should submit this preliminary proposal to their Dissertation Committee no later than the beginning of their second term; part-time Students should submit their preliminary proposals upon completion of nine credits. Students must prepare a formal version of their research proposal and distribute it to each member of the Dissertation Committee prior to the end of their sixth term in the program, or upon completion of 48 credits. After approval by the Student's Dissertation Committee, Students must prepare a condensed, five-page summary of the proposal to be submitted to UGS after the proposal defense seminar.

Proposal format: The formal proposal should follow the general guidelines outlined in the Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual (http://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/Proposal_Guidelines.pdf) and should contain the following sections:

- Introduction - statement of the problem/purpose and a review of prior relevant work
- Materials & Methods - a technical discussion of the methods and approaches to be used in the research
- Preliminary Results/Feasibility
- Program Schedule
- References

The project proposal that will be sent to the Student's Committee cannot exceed 20 pages in length, including any figures, tables or preliminary data. The text content of the proposal should be displayed in a *12-point font to ensure readability*. All Ph.D. candidates are encouraged to submit this proposal to an appropriate funding agency, as determined by the Student's Major Professor and Committee. A five-page summary of the preliminary proposal must be ultimately be submitted with Doctoral Dissertation Proposal milestone form for the University record after the Dissertation proposal seminar has been presented. The 5-page UGS version can have a single-spaced format, and is usually generated by removal of figures, tables and preliminary data from the original project proposal.

Proposal evaluation: Dissertation Committee members *must receive the project proposal document from the Student at least two weeks before the proposal defense seminar/meeting*, so that the Committee has enough time to request revisions by the Student, if the Committee identifies that is required. After revisions, the Student should resubmit the proposal to all Dissertation Committee members for final approval. If deemed unacceptable to one or more of the Dissertation Committee members, the Student and/or Major Professor should contact the

pertinent Dissertation Committee member(s) to determine the points necessary for approval. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the Student and Major Professor should take the issue to the Graduate Committee for mediation.

Proposal defense:

Scheduling: The Student is responsible for scheduling the presentation of the proposal at a time convenient to the Dissertation Committee members and the faculty of the Biological Sciences Department (during regular business hours, and not during standard departmental faculty meeting times, weekends, or over a holiday closure period). The proposal defense is to be held on campus. In person attendance is required for the Student and Major Professor with as many Thesis Committee members present as reasonably possible. Committee members can use teleconferencing software to attend the proposal defense as needed. If circumstances unavoidably compel a remote modality for the Student and/or the Major Professor, they must ask the Graduate Program for permission to hold the meeting remotely, *at least 2 weeks before* the meeting will take place.

Advertising: The Student must also adequately *advertise the project proposal seminar 10-14 days before the presentation*, by posting notices around the department, and by sending an electronic version of the proposal announcement to the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Office Specialist (Biograd@fiu.edu). Note that the Graduate Program Office must verify with the Major Professor that the Dissertation Committee received the proposal for review on time, to be able to approve and send out the proposal defense announcement to the department. It is the student's responsibility to follow up in a timely manner if the announcement is not posted by the Graduate Program Office by 7 days before the seminar will be held.

The project proposal announcement must include the date, time and location for the proposal seminar as well as the abstract, formatted as per the UGS template (below). If the Student also wishes to provide a Zoom link to enable remote attendance by some of the audience, the announcement sent to the Graduate Program Office must include the Zoom meeting ID and password, and/or a clickable zoom link that already includes the password. Students are recommended to enable a "waiting room" in the Zoom settings, so that meeting information will be visible to prospective attendees before the seminar is held. Note that seminar announcements are sent out to the department after the associated Zoom link has been verified as functional by the Graduate Program Office.

The UGS template for defense announcements is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/SampleDefenseAnnouncement.pdf>

Meeting norms: Standard procedure is for the Student to present their proposal seminar in about 50 minutes, allowing about 10 minutes afterward for a public question/answer period. The public audience will then be asked to leave and the Committee and Major Professor will remain for further discussion of the proposed research plan with the Student, with the student answering questions about the project. This discussion can take anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours. After that discussion has concluded, the Student exits the room to allow for discussion within the Committee. When the Student is summoned back to the room, the Committee tells the Student the outcome from the project proposal defense.

After the proposal defense: After successful completion of the proposal seminar, the Student can also proceed to file the **"Doctoral Dissertation Proposal"** milestone form (formerly known as the D-3 form) through their panther portal online.

Directions for this milestone form are found here:
<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>

The attachments required for approval of this form are:

- the 5-page version of the project proposal, to be forwarded to UGS.
- certificate of completion for the Citi Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course.
- copies of the related IBC, IRB and/or IACUC approval memos that show the Student's name on the "approved personnel" list, if the planned research involves recombinant DNA, vertebrate animals or human subjects.

Note: these memos are copies of 1-page documents issued by FIU Compliance & Integrity to the Major Professor overseeing the Student's project.

The Graduate Program strongly recommends that Students talk with the Major Professor about whether any IRB, IBC or IACUC memos are applicable to their projects (and if so, which ones), prior to submission of this milestone form. In some cases, the Major Professor may need to contact Compliance & Integrity to set up/secure an updated form of the memo that includes the Student's name, confirming that the Student's project described in the M-2 has been FIU-reviewed and approved.

Students are generally recommended to follow up on this milestone form in their panther portal after submission, to confirm that all Committee Members were able to approve the form in a timely manner. The Graduate Program cannot see the milestone form at all until all Committee Members have approved the form online.

Enrollment changes

For the *term after the proposal is successfully presented*, Students must register for BSC 7961, the "Dissertation Proposal Seminar" course. Students must also enroll in BSC 7980 Dissertation credits. After the student has advanced to the candidacy, Students must enroll in 3 credits per semester, every semester (including summer).

Minimum timeline requirement

Note that at least three terms must elapse between submission of the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal milestone form and awarding of the PhD degree.

ANNUAL REVIEW

Review by the Department: The Department of Biological Sciences conducts an in-department Annual Graduate Student Evaluation to ensure Students are making progress toward completing their Dissertation. In the spring term, each student is assigned a Biological Sciences Graduate Committee member who serves as the reviewer. The Student must arrange to meet with the assigned reviewer for the evaluation to take place.

During this meeting, the Graduate Committee member will check in with the Student on annual progress, as recorded on the Annual Graduate Student Evaluation form that is emailed out to the Students every spring. Students with unsatisfactory evaluations are given direction and deadlines for becoming satisfactory. Note that failure of a student to set up this evaluation meeting automatically triggers the status of "unsatisfactory."

Failure to meet criteria for becoming satisfactory may lead to dismissal from the program. This Departmental review process and criteria are described more fully below in the “Graduate Review” section.

Review by the University Graduate School: Each Student and Major Professor must also submit an online annual Student evaluation and mentoring plan to the University Graduate School, which includes certification that the annual meeting of the Student with their Dissertation Committee took place. (Note: Meeting for the oral portion of the candidacy exam and for the Dissertation proposal defense also qualify as annual Committee meetings.) This form is made available to Students through <https://my.fiu.edu/> every spring, under your Student environment, in the Tasks tile.

After the Student initiates the form, the performance summary and future goals sections must be completed by the Major Professor with input from the Committee members. The Student, Major Professor, and Committee members sign off electronically on this evaluation, which then goes to the Graduate Program, Director, the Dean’s Office, and then the UGS. More information regarding the UGS review can be obtained here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/doctoral-annual-student-evaluation/>

DISSERTATION

The primary requirement for the Ph.D. degree is the submission and defense of a Dissertation, which is based on original research in the student’s area of specialization. A Dissertation must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the guidelines and deadlines established by the University Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences and Education.

Formatting guidelines are explained by the manual linked below:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-2022-ETD-Student-Manual-optimized.pdf>

University deadlines are here:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>

After preliminary approval of the Dissertation and completion of all other prescribed work for the Ph.D. degree, the candidate will give a public presentation and be given a final oral examination by the Dissertation Committee.

PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION & REQUEST FOR ORAL DEFENSE (fourth milestone form)

The Dissertation defense is a university requirement and, thus, the defense must be scheduled and held to comply with University deadlines, found at: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>
After confirming agreement by the Major Professor, the Student should reach out to their Dissertation Committee to request they meet for the Dissertation Defense. Best practice is to share the near-final Dissertation draft with the Committee while initiating this conversation with them. The Student’s Dissertation Defense should be scheduled for **8 weeks or more** after the Dissertation has been sent out to the Dissertation Committee.

Dissertation Defenses are held in person, with remote attendance by Committee members on an as-needed basis only. In person presence on campus by both the Student and Major Professor is required. Under extraordinary circumstances, a petition can be filed with the University to request an exception be made, to allow for a fully remote Dissertation Defense. If a situation arises that requires this, the Student and/or their Major Professor must contact the Graduate Program Office as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances and coordinate submission of a petition, which is reviewed by the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, CASE and UGS.

After an appropriate date and time for the Dissertation Defense has been identified, the Student can file a “**Preliminary Approval of Dissertation & Request for Oral Defense**” milestone form (formerly known as the D-5 form) through their panther portal. Directions for this milestone form are found here:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>

The attachments required for approval of this form are:

- A Dissertation Defense announcement, which includes the date, time and location for the Defense as well as the abstract, formatted as per the UGS template. This template is found at:
<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/SampleDefenseAnnouncement.pdf>
- A copy of the Student’s near-final Dissertation document, formatted as per University guidelines:
<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-2022-ETD-Student-Manual-optimized.pdf>

The Graduate Program office strongly recommends that the draft Dissertation file be uploaded to this milestone form in PDF format, to maximize consistency of formatting integrity and readability of the Dissertation file across diverse platforms (pc, mac, mobile, etc.)

Defense timeline:

Starting the process: Students should plan on reviewing the near-final Dissertation document with the Major Professor before engaging the Dissertation Committee. As the director supervisor of the Student’s work, the Major Professor needs to have an opportunity to provide feedback and work with the Student on formatting and/or corrections of the Dissertation. A minimum of 2 weeks should be allowed for this, which means getting the Dissertation to the Major Professor at least **10 weeks** or more before the Dissertation Defense is to be held.

Doctoral Students must plan to get their Dissertation Draft to the Committee **8 weeks** or more before the Dissertation Defense is to be held. The reason for this is, when the Committee signs the “Preliminary Approval of Dissertation & Request for Oral Defense” milestone form, they are agreeing that they “have read the attached Dissertation and find it provisionally acceptable and ready to defend.” To be able to sign this, the Student must have provided their Dissertation to the Committee with sufficient time for the Committee to read and comment on the Dissertation before the milestone form submission deadline. Sufficient time in this case means at least three weeks.

Follow-up to identify/prevent delays: The Student must plan to follow up with the Committee, to confirm whether the “Preliminary Approval of Dissertation & Request for Oral Defense” milestone form can be signed by all members *within 3 weeks of having received the document*. Justified reasons for a Committee member to not approve the Dissertation include having insufficient time to read it, having being sent the document late, and/or having identified that the Dissertation is not provisionally defensible in its current form. Those scenarios may require rescheduling of the Dissertation Defense, after delay-associated issues have been addressed.

Many situations that can cause delay at this stage of processing are straightforward for the Student to address if identified in time, especially in the case of technical errors, such as any one Committee member not having seen that they received a copy the Dissertation, or experiencing a glitch in opening/reading/printing the Dissertation file. Technical difficulty in clicking “approve” by Committee members may be addressed with the assistance of the Graduate Program Office if reported in a timely manner. For this reason, the Student must follow up on the approval status of the milestone form by checking its progress regularly in their panther portal, to see which Committee members have signed or not, and follow up in a timely manner on missing approvals.

What happens after the Committee has signed off on the Dissertation: A near-final draft of the Dissertation, a copy of the Dissertation Defense Announcement, attached to the “Preliminary Approval of Dissertation & Request for Oral Defense” milestone form, already approved by *all Committee members*, must reach the Biological Sciences Graduate Program at least **5 weeks** before the defense date. This gives a week for the Graduate Program to approve, and a week for CASE to approve, before the University Graduate School deadline, which is always 3 weeks before the defense. The Dean of our College and the Dean of the Graduate School adhere strictly to posted deadlines, and any Student who does not comply with the deadlines will be forced to reschedule the defense on a new date, which may require enrollment in another term.

University Graduate School deadlines for “Preliminary Approval of Dissertation & Request for Oral Defense” milestone form (and others) are found here: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/> - [doctoral](#)

Advertising: The Student must also adequately *advertise the defense seminar 10-14 days before the presentation*, by posting notices around the department, and by sending an electronic version of the proposal announcement to the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Office Specialist (Biograd@fiu.edu). It is the student’s responsibility to follow up in a timely manner if the announcement is not posted by the Graduate Program Office by 7 days before the seminar will be held.

The Dissertation defense announcement must include the date, time and location of the defense seminar as well as the abstract, formatted as per the UGS template (below). If the Student also wishes to provide a Zoom link to enable remote attendance by some of the audience, the announcement sent to the Graduate Program Office must include the Zoom meeting ID and password, and/or a clickable zoom link that already includes the password. Students are recommended to enable a “waiting room” in the Zoom settings, so that meeting information will be visible to prospective attendees before the seminar is held. Note that seminar announcements are sent out to the department after the associated Zoom link has been verified as functional by the Graduate Program Office.

The UGS template for defense announcements is found at:
<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/SampleDefenseAnnouncement.pdf>

Meeting norms: Standard procedure is for the Student to present the defense seminar within about 50 minutes, allowing about 10-20 minutes afterward for a public question/answer period. The public audience will then be asked to leave and the Committee and Major Professor will remain for further discussion and question/answer with the Student about the Dissertation seminar and/or written Dissertation document. This discussion can take anywhere from 20 minutes to 2 hours. After that discussion has concluded, the Student exits the room to allow for discussion within the Committee. When the Student is summoned back to the room, the Committee tells the Student the outcome from the Dissertation defense.

RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE (Rubrics)

Three rubrics evaluating the contents, written and oral presentation of the Dissertation must be completed by all members of the Committee and submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office after the Dissertation defense. The rubric forms are sent out to all Students who have applied for graduation each semester, and are also available at all times upon request from Biograd@fiu.edu.

Scores filled in by the Dissertation Committee on these rubrics serve as a memo to the Graduate Program from the Dissertation Committee, reporting the outcome as scored for written communication (from the Dissertation document), oral communication (from the Dissertation seminar) and critical thinking (as shown in both written and oral formats). It is important for these rubrics to be completed by the Student's Committee and submitted by the Student's Major Professor to the Graduate Program Office in order to finalize approval of the Student's file for Graduation, as well as to enable the Graduate Program Director to assign a final grade to the Student for the Dissertation Defense Seminar course BSC 7982.

Any Student who fails the Dissertation Defense may be allowed a second Defense, on recommendation of the Dissertation Committee. If re-examination is necessary, the second Defense cannot be held earlier than six months or more than one year from the date of the first Defense.

FINAL ELECTRONIC DISSERTATION APPROVAL (fifth milestone form)

Upon reaching the stage of a Dissertation defense, it is common the Major Professor and members of the Dissertation Committee to suggest some extent of corrections/edits in content of the Thesis document. This feedback can be provided to the Student anytime between the faculty having received a copy of the Dissertation file, up to the day of the defense itself. After holding a successful Dissertation defense, the Student finalizes any last changes to the Dissertation document. The revised Dissertation document is then emailed to the Committee once more as confirmation of finalized Dissertation content.

Then, the Student files an "Electronic Thesis and Dissertation" (ETD) form. The attachments necessary for approval of this form are:

- a copy of the Student's final Dissertation file (PDF format strongly recommended for this)
- a completion certificate from the Survey of Earned Doctorates

It is notable that ETD related activities generally occur toward the end of the semester, when timelines and turnaround time for correcting any errors, are running short. This milestone form must reach the Graduate Program Office **by two weeks before** it is due at UGS. Students must follow up on the ETD milestone form in their panther portal after submission, to confirm that all Committee Members were able to approve the form in a timely manner. The Graduate Program cannot see the milestone form at all until all Committee Members have approved the form online. It is important for the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office to have sufficient time for approval the Student's ETD before the CASE deadline, which is a week before the UGS deadline.

UGS deadlines for receipt of the ETD are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>
The ETD directions are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/the-final-etd-process/>

After UGS has received the Student's ETD form, the Student will receive an email from UGS that instructs the student on how to upload a copy of the Thesis file to the FIU Libraries website. The deadline for completing this is specified in the UGS-issued email. Students are advised to keep an eye out for this notification.

APPLYING FOR GRADUATION

The final step after a successful defense is to apply for graduation. To apply for graduation, Students can log into <https://my.fiu.edu/>, select ‘Academic Records’, then select ‘Apply for Graduation’.

More information on filing for graduation is found at:

<https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/>

NOTE: applying for graduation does not automatically register a Student to participate in commencement ceremonies. In order to walk across the stage, Students need to attend the Commencement Fair, held in the Barnes and Noble Bookstore in the Graham Center (MMC), and the Wolfe Center (BBC). There, Students receive commencement passes, regalia and instructions to purchase tickets for family and any other attendees.

Commencement fair dates are found at:

<https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-fair/index.html>

Additional, helpful information related to commencement is found at:

<https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-checklist/index.html>

If a Student misses the deadline to apply for graduation, a “Late Graduation Application” form can be used. The Late Graduation form is found at the link below, under the tab “Graduation Forms”

<https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/all-forms/>

If for any reason, a Student is unable to graduate after applying for graduation, the Student must submit a “Graduation Cancellation form”. Students should email Biograd@fiu.edu to request a copy of the Graduation Cancellation form.

ACTIVE STATUS AND TIME LIMITATIONS

To maintain active status in the Ph.D. program, full-time Students supported with a Graduate Teaching Assistantship or Graduate Assistantship must register for at least nine credits per term during the regular academic year, and six credits during the summer term, prior to advancement to candidacy. Once Students have advanced to candidacy, a minimum of three credits per term is required to maintain active status in the program. Students must be continually enrolled until they defend. Lapsed enrollment for two consecutive terms automatically drops the Student from the program.

All requirements for the Ph.D. degree, including the successful defense of a Dissertation must be completed within **nine years** of first enrollment in the Ph.D. program, inclusive of any leaves of absence or other interruptions of active Student status. Students must be enrolled in the term in which they graduate and have an overall GPA greater than 3.0. Students who do not complete their Dissertation within this time may apply for an exception to this rule by filing a Request for Exception form to the Dean of the University Graduate School.

Note: If the student was originally enrolled in the Biological Sciences MS program, and transferred into the Biological Sciences PhD Program afterwards, the *start date for the 9-year PhD timespan is considered to be the start date of the MS* (not the date of transfer into the PhD program.)

Ph.D. CHECKLIST (complete while moving through the program)

Submitting forms for signatures:

Please use DocuSign (<https://docusign.fiu.edu>) for signatures as needed.

Milestone forms (formerly called “D” forms), will be found under the “Tasks” tile in <https://my.fiu.edu/>

1. Formation of Committee and holding the first Committee meeting:

The dissertation committee (5 members) is to be formed in the second term, no later than the end of the third term.

After the committee has been formed, the online milestone form below must be submitted.

Formation of a Dissertation Committee (first milestone form)

Directions are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>

Non-FIU Commitment Form (if needed): <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/NonFIUcommitmentMemo2022.pdf>

Plan to turn your documents into the Department **at least 2 weeks BEFORE the UGS deadline**, to allow for processing by Biology and CASE. UGS deadlines are here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>

After the first committee meeting has been held, form is due into the Biological Sciences Graduate Program.

First Committee Meeting memo

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/memo_first_committee_meeting20161228.pdf

If the composition of a Dissertation Committee changes, students must submit a memo from the major professor explaining why the change was made, and completed D-1r form, to the Biological Sciences graduate program.

Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee (D-1r): <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Revised-Dissertation-Committee-Instructions-and-Form-06152023.pdf>

Annual Graduate Review for Ph.D. students–

Departmental: During the spring term, the student must schedule a meeting with their graduate reviewer (a member of the Graduate Committee). Guidelines can be found on pg. 37 and pg. 47 of this manual.

Institutional: Students are also required to meet annually with their dissertation committee after the “Dissertation Committee Appointment” milestone form has been filed. Afterwards, the Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring form can be filed here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/doctoral-annual-student-evaluation/> Due date: May 30th.

2. Course work required of all PhD students:

- Supervised Teaching in Biology (BSC 5945: 2 credits) _____
- Introduction to Biological Research* (BSC 6457: 3 credits) _____
- Quantitative skills (2 courses, 6 credits) † _____
- Workshops/laboratories (BSC 6926; a minimum of 4 credits from at least 2 separate courses) _____
- Electives from courses offered by the Department of Biological Sciences (8 credits) _____
- Dissertation Proposal Seminar (BSC 7961: 1 credit)[§] _____
- PhD Dissertation (BSC 7980: 15 credits)[∇] _____
- Dissertation Defense Seminar (BSC 7982: 1 credit)[∫] _____

Notes corresponding to the symbols above are found on the next page.

† Students should ideally complete their quantitative skills requirement by the end of the first year, but must at least have a reasonable plan to complete the requirement by the end of the second year.

* For PhD students that already have a MS degree, BSC 6457 is recommended, but is not required.

§ Dissertation proposal seminar (BSC 7961) is taken the term AFTER the dissertation proposal presentation.

∇ Students can enroll in dissertation credits starting in the term AFTER admission to candidacy.

‡ The dissertation defense seminar (BSC 7982) is taken during the term of the dissertation defense.

3. Candidacy Examination

The examination should be completed after having taken 18 credits or more in residence, and no later than the sixth term of study, including the summer term. All committee members are required to provide questions for the written portion. The written portion should precede the oral portion. The oral portion needs to be scheduled from one week to four weeks after the completion of the written portion. The Qualifying/Candidacy exam form should be submitted to the Biological Sciences graduate office within one week, indicating the result.

Candidacy memo: https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy-exam-form.pdf

4. Advancing to Candidacy:

After successful completing the Candidacy Examination, and also having completed all required pre-candidacy coursework, students must plan to submit the Candidacy milestone form through the Tasks tile in my.fiu.edu.

Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy (second milestone form)

Directions are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>

As before, documents must be turned in to the Department **at least 2 weeks BEFORE the UGS deadline**, to allow for processing by Biology and CASE. UGS deadline are here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>

Note 1: After the student advances to the candidacy, full-time status requires enrollment in 3 credits per semester.

Note 2: At least three terms must elapse between admission to candidacy and submission of the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal milestone form and awarding of the PhD degree.

5. Project Proposal Defense:

Students must prepare a formal version of their research proposal prior to the end of their sixth term in the program, or upon completion of 48 credits. After the formal proposal is approved by committee members, it is the student's responsibility to schedule the presentation of the proposal. Students must post notices of the presentation around the Department at least one week in advance of the presentation. An electronic version of the project proposal announcement must also be sent to the Biology graduate office (Biograd@fiu.edu) in Word format, 10-14 days before the presentation date.

Note: The term after the proposal defense, students should register for BSC 7961 (Dissertation Proposal Seminar).

6. Dissertation Project Approval:

After successful defending their Project Proposal, students must prepare a five-page summary of the proposal to be submitted with the Doctoral Dissertation Proposal milestone form. Required attachments also include the student's certificate from the online Citi Responsible Conduct of Research course as well as any required IBC/IRB/IACUC approval forms. If the latter are applicable, the major professor's lab approval for hosting the work should list the student's name among the approved individuals.

Doctoral Dissertation Proposal (third milestone form)

Directions are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>

Responsible Conduct of Research <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/rcr/>

As before, documents must be turned in to the Department **at least 2 weeks BEFORE the UGS due date** to allow for processing by Biology and CASE. UGS deadline are here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>

Dissertation preparation guidelines can be found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-2022-ETD-Student-Manual-optimized.pdf>

_____ 7. Dissertation Defense:

A complete and near-final draft of the dissertation, and the Dissertation Defense Announcement, must be filed as attachments to the Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense milestone form. This form must be submitted and signed by the entire Dissertation Committee to ensure that the form reaches the Graduate Program by **5 weeks** before the dissertation defense. Students that do not comply with these deadlines will be forced to reschedule the defense on a new date, which may require enrollment in another term.

Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense (fourth milestone form)

Directions are found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/online-dissertation-milestones/>

Note1: The student and major professor must be on-campus for the defense, though committee members can be remote. If circumstances require the student to defend remotely, contact the Biology Graduate office ahead of time. You will need a petition, and CASE/UGS approval, to do so.

Note2: The student must be enrolled in BSC 7982 (Dissertation Defense seminar) in the final semester.

_____ 8. Apply for graduation:

To check deadlines and apply for graduation, go here

<https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-recordsmyfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/>

To get tickets and regalia, go to the commencement fair:

<https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-fair/index.html>

For any/all other commencement information, go to <https://commencement.fiu.edu/>

_____ 9. Final submission of the dissertation (ETD)

After a student successfully defends the thesis, the “Electronic Thesis and Dissertation” form must be filed, with a pdf copy of the Dissertation document, and a Survey of Earned Doctorates completion certificate attached to the form. This form must be submitted and signed by the entire Dissertation Committee to ensure that the form reaches the Graduate Program **by two weeks before the UGS due date.** (<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>)

ETD Approval (fifth milestone form):

https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Final_ETD_Approval_Form08152022.pdf

A final reminder: the Ph.D. Checklist provided here is intended only as a brief overview/summary.

This checklist serves as a tool that students can use to keep track of their progress through the program. Details of the Ph.D. program are explained above, in the Biological Sciences Graduate Policies and Procedures manual sections (pg. 25 to pg. 42) that precede the Ph.D. program checklist.

Helpful links:

Graduate Policies & Procedures Manual:

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/_assets/graduate_policies_procedures_manual.pdf

***University forms:** <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>

***UGS Deadlines:** <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#doctoral>

***CASE Deadlines:** <https://case.fiu.edu/academics/graduate/index.html>

***First Committee meeting memo:**

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/_assets/memo_first_committee_meeting20161228.pdf

***Graduate Qualifying/Candidacy Exam form:**

https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/_assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy-exam-form.pdf

***Add/Drop (Enrollment Adjustment, under the “Registration and Student Records Forms” tab):**

<https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/all-forms/>

***FIU/UM Exchange program application form:**

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FIU-UM-Exchange-Application-2023.pdf>

GRADUATE REVIEW (M.S. AND Ph.D. STUDENTS)

Each student will participate in an annual Departmental Graduate Review during their tenure as a graduate student in the Department of Biological Sciences. This review is not that same as the annual committee meeting conducted between the student and their advisory committee, nor the on-line UGS review (<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/doctoral-annual-student-evaluation/>). The purpose of this review is to be sure that the student is on track with regards to the process of the graduate program (committee formation, committee meetings, memos in file, etc.) to ensure smooth and timely progress for the student. This is also an opportunity for the students to provide feedback to the Department on how the program is serving their needs. Finally, these reviews allow the Graduate Program Office to keep track of when students are likely to finish, information essential for recruitment planning.

During the spring term, it is the student's responsibility to schedule a meeting with their graduate reviewer, who is a member of the Graduate Committee, but not their major professor, nor anyone serving on their thesis/dissertation committee. Students who are supported by a graduate assistantship or research assistantship must obtain a satisfactory review to maintain their support for the next academic year. Students who receive unsatisfactory reviews and do not correct deficiencies by the end of the summer term will be recommended for dismissal from the program. Students who have been dismissed must apply for readmission if they wish to complete their degree.

The guidelines used by the graduate reviewers are below. These guidelines are being provided for transparency, so that students can prepare themselves and their major professor adequately for the graduate review. Timelines below are those applicable to all full-time students in the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, including those supported by an assistantship (TA, RA, GA) and various other fellowship(s) that cover student stipends. Self-supported students are acknowledged as potentially facing external duties that may require flexibility in the timetable to degree. Such cases are managed on a case-by-case basis, and are best coordinated by discussion with the student's graduate reviewer and an open dialog with the graduate program office as needed.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AND GRADUATE COMMITTEE REVIEWERS

For all students:

All students must reach out to their assigned graduate reviewer to schedule their annual review meeting.

Each student must submit a CV each year, to be added to their file. This CV will be updated yearly by the time of Departmental graduate review and will be used to document students' participation in scientific conferences publication of peer-reviewed articles, and receipt of grants, fellowships and any other special awards.

All students should have also performed 2 hours of departmental service during the academic year. This includes all students, regardless of their degree track (M.S. and Ph.D.) or form of support (assistantship, fellowship or self-support). The service requirement can be fulfilled in many ways such as, assisting with the annual Biology Graduate symposium, holding an officer position in Biology Graduate Student Organization (BGSA), and proctoring exams. Proctoring two exams can fulfill the requirement, and graduate students are regularly notified of proctoring opportunities by the Graduate Program Office, in the form of emails from Biograd@fiu.edu. If the student is already a TA, the proctoring done as part of the standard TA assignment

does not count towards the departmental service requirement. Completion of annual service is indicated via submission of a signed departmental service memo to the Graduate Program Office.

A copy of the Departmental Service Memo is included below, on pg. 68 of this manual.

For first year M.S. students (started in Fall term):

A student would be considered to have made excellent progress if the student has:

- distributed a draft proposal, formed a committee, and filed the M-1 form
- met with the committee, set the program of study, and filed their first committee meeting memo
- scheduled the qualifying examination and thesis proposal seminar
- completed the quantitative skills requirement

Students who have not formed a committee, or who have formed a committee but not met with the committee, should be given an unsatisfactory. To make up the unsatisfactory, they should form a committee, file form M-1, have the committee meet and schedule a qualifying examination and thesis proposal seminar.

Students should complete their quantitative skills requirement by the end of the first year. If fulfilling this requirement by statistics or computer classes, the Student must have made a reasonable plan to complete the requirement by the end of the second year.

The qualifying examination and thesis proposal seminar do not have to be completed before the end of the spring term for a satisfactory rating.

For first year Ph.D. students (started in Fall term):

In an ideal case, that would be considered excellent progress, the student should have:

- distributed a draft proposal, formed a committee, and filed the Formation of a Dissertation Committee milestone form
- met with the committee, set the program of study, and filed their first committee meeting memo
- completed or scheduled the teaching training (coursework) requirement
- completed the quantitative skills requirement
- discussed with the committee the candidacy examination and dissertation proposal seminar

Students who have not formed a committee, or who have formed a committee but not met with the committee, should be given an unsatisfactory. To make up the unsatisfactory, the student should form a committee, file the Formation of a Dissertation Committee milestone form, have the committee meet and discuss the candidacy examination and dissertation proposal seminar.

Students should complete their quantitative skills requirement by the end of the first year. If fulfilling this requirement by statistics or computer classes, the Student must have made a reasonable plan to complete the requirement by the end of the second year.

Second year and beyond M.S. students:

Students who started the spring prior to the annual review should formed a committee, met with the committee, distributed a draft proposal, completed their quantitative skills requirement, taken their qualifying examination and presented their thesis proposal seminar. Students who have not met these requirements should be given an unsatisfactory and have until the end of the spring term to complete them.

Students who began the program in the prior fall term and who have met all the above requirements should be asked when they are planning to graduate. Ideally, M.S. students should be planning to graduate by the end of their second year in the program. If they are not planning to graduate, they should have a committee meeting so their committee can evaluate the student's progress. The student will receive an unsatisfactory rating, which can be made up by having a committee meeting and presenting a memo from their committee that evaluates the student's cumulative progress and estimates the date of graduation.

Students who are planning to graduate must apply for graduation by the deadline announced in the University Academic Calendar. Forms M-3 and the ETD have specific deadlines set by the UGS and effectively mean that a defensible document should be completed within 2 weeks of the start of the semester. A graduate student must be enrolled in the term in which she/he graduates.

Basically, any student who is not planning on graduating and has not had a committee meeting since the last graduate review should be scored as unsatisfactory until they have met with their research committee.

Second year and beyond Ph.D. students:

Students who began the program before the fall of the current academic year should already have formed a committee, met with the committee, completed their quantitative skills requirement, completed their teaching training requirement, taken their qualifying examination, completed all the required courses for the program as described in the program of studies and presented their dissertation proposal seminar. Basically, Ph.D. students who have advanced to candidacy (and completed their second UGS milestone) by the end of their second year are making excellent progress. Students who have not met these requirements should be scored as unsatisfactory. Students have until the end of the summer term to complete the requirements and thus remove the unsatisfactory rating.

Students who have advanced to candidacy should have met with the dissertation committee and received an evaluation of their progress toward degree in the form of the UGS Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan Form. Any student who is not planning on graduating and has not had a committee meeting since the last graduate review should be scored as unsatisfactory until the student has met with the committee. Students have until the end of the summer term to carry out the meeting and thus remove the unsatisfactory rating.

Students who have already completed over 2 full years in the program should have defended their project proposal (and completed their third UGS milestone) by the time their third annual evaluation is held. If this has not yet occurred, the student should be prepared to discuss the basis for any delays with the graduate reviewer, and request immediate assistance from the major professor, dissertation committee, the graduate reviewer and/or the graduate program office if the basis for delays has already not been fully resolved. Graduate reviewers have some discretion on how to score student progress in such situations, with awareness of particulars of the situation. The default outcome would be to issue a score of unsatisfactory, which can be removed after the project proposal has been completed.

Students who are planning to graduate must apply for graduation by the deadline announced in the University Academic Calendar. The Dissertation Defense form (fourth UGS milestone) and the ETD form (fifth UGS milestone) have specific deadlines set by the UGS and effectively mean that a defensible document should be completed within 2 weeks of the start of the semester. A graduate student must be enrolled in the term in which they graduate.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Various forms of financial assistance are available to graduate students at FIU. Note that the summary below is not exhaustive and may change as funding streams change. The University Graduate School serves as a core resource for graduate funding information (<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/>) with additional guidance by CASE (<https://case.fiu.edu/about/resources/current-students/graduate-students/>). New funding opportunities are also announced to students via the Gradbiostudents listserv. Regular updates to the Graduate Program Policies and Procedures manual are expected to assist navigation of funding opportunities.

OVERVIEW OF AID AVAILABLE

Graduate Assistantship lines: Assistantship lines are issued to full-time students by the Department of Biological Sciences. The Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office manages awards of Research Assistantship (RA) and Teaching Assistantship (TA) lines. RA lines are supported on an individual basis by grant monies that major professors have secured for their labs, per the discretion and authorization of the major professor. TA lines are issued to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program by CASE on an annual basis. Both Master's and Doctoral students are eligible for RA lines, whereas only Doctoral students are eligible for TA lines. Acceptance of an RA or TA line is ultimately formalized by signing a contract with the university that requires that students decline any/all outside employment. "Extra hours" petitions may be submitted in association with RA support contracts on an as-needed, individual basis. GA lines are rarely issued. A good resource for assistantship information is found here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/assistantships/> Summary here: <https://case.fiu.edu/about/resources/current-students/graduate-students/graduate-assistantships/>

Graduate assistantships are renewed each term. While we expect that an assistantship will be renewed for up to two years for M.S. students or four years for Ph.D. students, satisfactory progress toward the degree and a 3.0 GPA is required for renewal. CASE has capped TA lines at a maximum of 5 years (15 semesters) duration per person, extended only in extraordinary circumstances, and only with detailed documentation of the basis for the requested extension of support. Students will be notified before August 1 of each year regarding renewal of an assistantship, amount of stipend/tuition waiver and duties for the following term. Assistantship opportunities and responsibilities are covered in more detail below, starting on pg. 57.

Fellowship awards: Fellowships are awarded to graduate students by various entities outside the Department. Institutional fellowships are awarded by CASE as well as UGS. External fellowships are issued by sources outside of the university. These awards are for MS and/or PhD students, as specified by the fellowship announcement. PhD students who were admitted on a full-time TA line, and have not yet reached a maximum of 15 semesters TA support, are allowed to defer use of the TA line for the duration of fellowship support, and later return to the TA line if that basis for support is still needed. Acceptance of a fellowship is formalized by signing a contract with the university that requires students to decline any/all outside employment. The Graduate Program Office also advises students to request "POI access" from HR if switching over from an assistantship to a fellowship line, to ensure continuity of access to institutional resources that require an employee-based Login and Password. Fellowship opportunities are overviewed below (pg. 51 to pg. 57).

Self-support: Any student who is holding employment outside the graduate program is considered to be a self-supported student. Self-support also includes cases where students have accepted loans, and/or need-based grants as a support basis for participating in the graduate program. (Note that a FAFSA form must be submitted

to be considered for loans and/or need-based grants.). Master's students are eligible to join the graduate program on a self-supported basis. Doctoral students can be admitted as self-supporting, though this is rare. See the following links for more information about self-support in the form of loans and need-based grants.

Office of Financial Aid: <https://onestop.fiu.edu/finances/>

Graduate need grant: <https://onestop.fiu.edu/finances/types-of-aid/grants/institutional-grants/>

FAFSA submission: <https://onestop.fiu.edu/finances/applying-for-aid/submit-the-fafsa/>

FELLOWSHIPS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS:

CASE funds for prospective students:

Dean's Distinguished Doctoral Fellowship in STEM.

Must apply prior to admission to the PhD program.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in January. Search

<https://fiu.academicworks.com/> for related keywords to find a live/current announcement, when available.

UGS funds for prospective students:

Summarized here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#prospectivestudents>

Listings explained in abbreviated form below.

Undergraduate to Graduate Program (UtGP)

Open to FIU juniors and seniors, graduating at least 5 months post-award

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in October.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/utgp/>

Transdisciplinary Biomolecular and Biomedical Sciences (TBBS) Training Program

Open to prospective Doctoral students who are interested in an interdisciplinary research project.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in March.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/tbbs-training-program/>

NSF Bridge to the Doctorate Fellowship

Open to underrepresented minority Master's and Doctoral students in STEM fields (including Biology)

Deadline: Rolling and remains open until all support lines are filled.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/bdfellowship/>

Presidential Fellowship—supports students with potential to become outstanding PhD scholars at FIU

UGS Veterans Fellowship—provides support to veterans who want to pursue their PhD at FIU

FIU Inclusion Fellowship—provides support to underrepresented minorities pursuing their PhD at FIU

All of these are open to prospective students *who are nominated by the Department*, mid-January.

External funds for prospective students (managed by UGS):

McKnight Doctoral Fellowship: supports underrepresented minorities in science.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in January.

<https://www.fefonline.org/mdfapply/>

External funds for prospective students (not managed by UGS):

Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellowship

Open to Undergraduate seniors and Master's students who plan to pursue a Doctoral degree.

Also open to first year Doctoral students who recently did their Master's at a different dept/institution.

Focal areas are computer, mathematical, and life sciences.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in January.

<https://www.krellinst.org/csgf/about-doe-csgf/eligibility-program-requirements>

Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs (Predoctoral and early Doctoral)

Open to Doctoral students with research/teaching/diversity emphasis in career goals.

Predoctoral fellowship is for early-stage students, with at least 3 years until awarding of the degree.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in December.

https://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_171962

Hertz Fellowship

Open to prospective and current Doctoral students in whose work addresses real-world challenges.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in October.

<https://www.hertzfoundation.org/the-fellowship/eligibility-benefits/#section-eligibility>

FELLOWSHIPS FOR CURRENT STUDENTS

DEI funds for current students:

Delores Auzenne Fellowship: supports underrepresented minorities in science (\$5000)

Open to MS and PhD students

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in July.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#additionalopportunities>

UGS funds for current students:

Summarized here: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#currentstudents>

Relevant listings identified at the time of this writing (2022) are explained in abbreviated form below.

Doctoral Evidence Acquisition Fellowship (DEA)

Open to Doctoral students who lack financial support for evidence acquisition, or whose current means of financial support would otherwise disrupt the student's ability to collect evidence for their research work.

Application deadline: announced by UGS during fall, spring and summer, by email and at the site below.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#currentstudents>

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Fellowship-Summary-Chart-2022-23.pdf>

Dissertation Year Fellowship (DYF)

Open to PhD students who have finished collecting data, and just need to write/defend their dissertations

Application deadline: announced by UGS during fall, spring and summer, by email and at the site below.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#currentstudents>

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Fellowship-Summary-Chart-2022-23.pdf>

Provost Degree Completion Fellowship (This is for a tuition waiver specifically)
Open to PhD students who are nearly finished with their degrees, have run out of assistantship/fellowship funding, and are facing financial circumstances that stand to otherwise disrupt continuous enrollment.
Note this award cannot be used as an extension of a DYF.

Application deadline: announced by CASE during fall, spring and summer, by email.

Note that applications could be due into CASE (via submission to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office) on the order of 6 weeks before any posted UGS deadline.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#currentstudents>

Provost Employer Supported Tuition Fellowship (This is for a tuition waiver specifically)

Open to PhD students whose employers are paying their assistantship, or are allocating time to the degree
Application deadline: announced by CASE during fall, spring and summer, by email.

Note that applications could be due into CASE (via submission to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office) on the order of 6 weeks before any posted UGS deadline.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#currentstudents>

External funds for current students (managed by UGS):

Graduate Fellowships in Engineering and Science (GEM Fellowship)

Supports preparation of underrepresented minority students to work in industry

Open to current Master's and Doctoral students aiming to pursue a future career in industry.

Note that award requires 1-2 summers of internship with a prospective GEM employer.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been early October.

<https://www.gemfellowship.org/gem-fellowship-program/#a>

External fellowships for current students (not managed by UGS):

The list of possibilities is extensive, and students are advised to screen for appropriate opportunities.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/external-funding/#toggle-id-1>

Samplings identified as relevant at the time of this writing are listed below.

American Association of University Women (AAUW) Dissertation Fellowship

Open to late-stage female Doctoral students.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been early November.

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/fellowships-grants/current-opportunities/american/>

American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship

Open to Doctoral students.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in September.

<https://professional.heart.org/en/research-programs/application-information/predoctoral-fellowship>

Department of Defense Scholarship-for-Service Program

Open to Master's and Doctoral students planning for a DOD career.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been early August.

<https://www.smartscholarship.org/smart>

Department of Energy Computational Science Graduate Fellowship

Open to Undergraduate seniors and Master's students who plan to pursue a Doctoral degree.

Also open to first year Doctoral students who recently did their Master's at a different dept/institution. Focal areas are computer, mathematical, and life sciences.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in January.

<https://www.krellinst.org/csgf/about-doe-csgf/eligibility-program-requirements>

FIU for the Everglades Research Scholarship (supported by the Everglades Foundation)

Open to Master's and Doctoral students in the Institute of the Environment.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in July.

<https://environment.fiu.edu/get-involved/foreverglades-scholarship/>

Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs (Predoctoral and early Doctoral)

Open to Doctoral students with research/teaching/diversity emphasis in career goals.

Predoctoral fellowship is for early-stage students, with at least 3 years until awarding of the degree.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in December.

https://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_171962

Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs (Dissertation)

Open to Doctoral students with research/teaching/diversity emphasis in career goals.

Dissertation fellowship is for students with everything done except writing/defense of the dissertation.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in December.

https://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fordfellowships/pga_171939

Fulbright US Student Program

Open to Master's and Doctoral students who will be doing research outside the country for 1 year

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in October.

<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/fulbright-us-student-program>

Hertz Fellowship

Open to prospective and current Doctoral students in whose work addresses real-world challenges

Applications historically open in August, check the site below for more details on deadlines.

<https://www.hertzfoundation.org/the-fellowship/eligibility-benefits/#section-eligibility>

Hispanic Scholarship Fund

Open to Hispanic graduate students (preferentially in STEM fields), pursuing their first graduate degree

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in February.

<https://www.hsf.net/scholarship>

Howard Hughes Medical Center Gilliam Fellowships for Advanced Study

Open to underrepresented minorities in their second/third year of graduate school, *nominated by FIU*.

This award is for advisor-student pairs who are "studying scientific problems in life science disciplines including plant biology, evolutionary biology, biophysics, chemical biology, biomedical engineering, and computational biology."

The nomination deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in September.

<https://www.hhmi.org/science-education/programs/gilliam-fellowships-advanced-study>

National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate Fellowship Program

Open to graduate students with at least 3 years remaining to complete the degree (presumed Doctoral). Project focal area must align with topics discussed in the DoD's broad agency announcements (BAAs). The nomination deadline may vary from year to year, has ranged from August to December.

<https://ndseg.sysplus.com/NDSEG/About/>

National Institute of Health Ruth L Kirschstein Predoctoral Fellowship (F31)

Open to Doctoral students working on health-related research relevant to one of the participating funding centers such as NCI, NHGRI, NHLBI, NIA and NIAID.

Applications due on "standard dates": April 8, August 8, December 8 at the time of this writing.

Plan to contact ORED to coordinate submission at least a month before the deadline.

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-21-051.html>

National Institute of Justice Graduate Research Fellowship Program (NIJ GRF-STEM)

Open to STEM Doctoral students whose research is relevant to criminal or juvenile justice.

The nomination deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in April.

Subscribe here for NIJ funding-related emails, which will include the NIJ GRF-STEM announcement.

<https://nij.ojp.gov/subscribe>

Plan to contact ORED to coordinate submission at least a month before the application deadline.

<https://nij.ojp.gov/funding/fellowships/graduate-research-fellowship-program>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Margaret A Davidson Graduate Fellowship

Open to Master's and Doctoral students with at least 2 years left until completion of the degree.

Applications have previously been accepted in odd-numbered years, due in December.

<https://coast.noaa.gov/nerrs/research/davidson-fellowship.html>

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GFRP):

Open to MS and PhD students in the first year, or beginning the second year of graduate training.

Application deadlines vary, but historically are set for October, and very somewhat by area/discipline.

Plan to contact ORED to coordinate submission at least a month before the deadline.

<https://www.nsfgrfp.org/>

Smithsonian Institution Fellowship Program (SIFP)

Open to Doctoral students doing research related to Smithsonian collections/facilities/research interests

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in early November.

<https://fellowships.si.edu/opportunity/smithsonian-institution-fellowship-program-sifp>

Smithsonian Biodiversity Genomics Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (BioG)

Open to Doctoral students who are near completion of their degrees, and are also interested in conducting research on site at one of the Smithsonian's molecular research facilities for 1-2 years after graduation.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in early November.

<https://fellowships.si.edu/opportunity/smithsonian-biodiversity-genomics-postdoctoral-fellowship-program-biog>

ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

Departmental funds for current students:

Kelly Foundation Tropical Botany Scholarship (capped at \$500/applicant)

Open to MS and PhD students, as funds allow. Application deadline has historically been in mid-March.

Search <https://fiu.academicworks.com/> for related keywords to find a live announcement, when available.

UGS funds for current students:

Provost Degree Completion Fellowship (This is for a tuition waiver specifically)

Open to PhD students who are nearly finished with their degrees, have run out of assistantship/fellowship funding, and are facing financial circumstances that stand to otherwise disrupt continuous enrollment.

Note this award cannot be used as an extension of a DYF.

Application deadline: announced by CASE during fall, spring and summer, by email.

Note that applications could be due into the GPD/CASE 6 weeks before any posted UGS deadline.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#currentstudents>

Provost Employer Supported Tuition Fellowship (This is for a tuition waiver specifically)

Open to PhD students whose employers are paying their assistantship, or are allocating time to the degree

Application deadline: announced by CASE during fall, spring and summer, by email.

Note that applications could be due into the GPD/CASE 6 weeks before any posted UGS deadline.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#currentstudents>

UGS Writing Fellows Program (\$2400, disbursed over 2 semesters)

Open to PhD students who commit 2 semesters of service as writing facilitators for the grad program.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in October.

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/fellowships/#currentstudents>

External funds for current students:

Thermo Fisher Scientific Antibody Scholarship Program (\$5,000-\$10,000)

Open to graduate students who have above 3.0 GPA (and also had above 3.0 GPA as undergraduates)

Applications are accepted from January until May.

<https://www.thermofisher.com/us/en/home/life-science/antibodies/thermo-fisher-scientific-antibody-scholarship-program.html>

Travel funds:

From the Graduate and Professional Student Committee (capped at \$250/applicant)

<https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/student-government-association/committees/graduate-professional-student-committee/>

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/GPSC-FAQs.pdf>

From the College of Arts, Sciences and Education (capped at \$200/applicant per year)

https://case.fiu.edu/about/resources/current-students/graduate-students/assets/travel_policy.jan.2022.docx.pdf

From the Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center (capped at \$2500/applicant). Supports early-stage Doctoral students who need to conduct research in Spanish or Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The application deadline may vary from year to year, but historically has been in February
<https://lacc.fiu.edu/research/tinker-field-research-collaborative-grant/index.html>

Frequently asked questions about fellowships

Details may vary somewhat across fellowship mechanisms.

UGS-issued summary information about fellowships and their management is provided here:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Fellows-FAQs-Sheet-2021-Update.pdf>

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Research assistantships are intended to:

- provide financial support for graduate students working toward their M.S. or Ph.D. degrees.
- give graduate students the opportunity to obtain university research experience under the guidance of departmental faculty; specific duties are assigned by the researcher providing the assistantship.

Teaching assistantships are intended to:

- provide financial support for graduate students working toward their M.S. or Ph.D. degrees.
- give graduate students the opportunity to obtain university teaching experience under the guidance of Departmental faculty. The Teaching Assistant Coordinator in consultation with faculty determine specific course assignments.
- enable the Department to meet teaching demands of multiple-section high-enrollment laboratory courses.

Tuition waivers:

- can cover the matriculation part of any course, but do not pay any additional fees above matriculation.
- cover the UM-FIU exchange courses, and can be used for some FIU online courses.
- do not support off-campus, or study abroad courses, special language courses undergraduate courses, or audited courses.

The FIU Graduate Assistant Handbook can be found here:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GA-Handbook-2022-2023.pdf>

UGS guidance on how to initiate a new Assistantship contract is found here:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/ga-ra-ta-instructions/>

Assistantship contract deadlines are provided here:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/assistantships/#deadlines>

DUTIES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS (TAs)

Teaching Assistants are expected to allocate up to 20 hours per week to responsibilities associated with teaching 2 sections of a laboratory class during the academic term. Students may be responsible for 1-2 laboratory sections in the summer. Students are paid in bi-weekly paychecks.

Teaching assistants receive an annual waiver for 24 credits of matriculation annually prior to advancement to candidacy and 9 credits annually after advancement to candidacy. TAs must be enrolled as full-time students. Full-time enrollment is designated as 9 credits in the fall and spring terms and 6 in the summer, *or* as 3 credits per term after a student advances to candidacy. **This is also true for International students, but please note that filling out the Advancement to Thesis or Dissertation Segment form is also required.**

This form is found on the International Students and Scholar Service (ISSS) website at:
<https://iss.s.fiu.edu/assets/docs/advancement-thesis-dissertation-2018.pdf>

Note: The student will need to check the 3-credit option after being admitted to candidacy.

Assigned TA duties may include:

- supervision and instruction of 2 laboratory sections per week. Since some laboratory courses meet for differing lengths of time, alternate duties may be added or subtracted to ensure that TA effort in all courses is equivalent
- grading of lecture- or laboratory-related quizzes, exams, reports, and other materials
- attendance at weekly laboratory meetings and/or course-related lectures
- preparation of laboratories
- consultation and office hours with students
- proctoring of lecture exams
- attending workshops and meetings held by the Dept. in order to train in areas appropriate for TAs.

New Teaching Assistants are required to enroll in BSC 5945 - Teaching Biology (1-2 credits). This clinic meets the week before the beginning of the Fall term each year. Depending on the type of research you plan to do, additional occupational health and safety courses will be completed as needed. Students should attend departmental seminars to observe a variety of presentations and presentation skills.

RESPONSIBILITY OF SUPERVISING FACULTY

The faculty members supervising courses requiring TAs should serve as mentors for the graduate student teaching assistants. Faculty should strive to make the laboratory portion of their courses run smoothly by ensuring that:

- the material to be presented by the TAs is clearly defined and available to the TA well enough in advance to enable sufficient preparation by the TA.
- Teaching Assistants are properly briefed on the lab techniques and expected results for each laboratory
- all reagents and supplies have been adequately prepared and are available for the TAs before a laboratory begins.

In the case of General Biology (BSC 1010 & 1011) and Human Biology (BSC 2023), faculty and TAs are expected to work closely with the Laboratory Coordinator.

EVALUATION OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Teaching assistants receive an evaluation from students in every laboratory that they teach. Graduate students who have also enrolled in BSC 5945 (Teaching Biology) will also receive a Pass/Fail grade based on their teaching performance. The TA Coordinator and faculty members are also encouraged to submit written evaluations of the TAs involved with their courses to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director. These evaluations are added to the student's file.

TEACHING ASSISTANT/FACULTY GRIEVANCES

On rare occasions, disputes between TAs and faculty members will arise. Changes in TA assignments or suggestions to resolve conflicts should be made to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director or a member of the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee. Failure of the Graduate Committee to resolve a conflict to the satisfaction of all parties will necessitate the formation of a temporary "Biological Sciences Graduate Assistant Committee". This temporary committee will be composed of: two representatives from the Biological Sciences faculty elected by the faculty, one of whom will be elected chair; the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director as *ex-officio* member; two graduate student representatives elected by fellow graduate students; one faculty member from outside of the Department selected by the temporary committee chairperson.

A majority vote by this committee will resolve complaints. This committee may also make recommendations to the Graduate Committee and the Department concerning issues of TA welfare.

STUDENT DISMISSAL POLICY

Certain circumstances may lead to a graduate student being dismissed from the program. Summarized briefly, those circumstances may include:

- 1) Falling out of GPA compliance two consecutive semesters
- 2) Failing qualifying exams twice
- 3) Failure to maintain continuous enrollment
- 4) Failure to meet conditional admission requirements
- 5) Student no longer has a sponsoring major professor
- 6) Student is not making satisfactory progress as reflected by unresolved unsatisfactory status on the Biological Sciences Departmental Annual Review
- 7) Student Academic or Research Misconduct/Illegal, Fraudulent, or Unethical Behavior
- 8) Other serious issues as determined by the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee

Details pertaining to the basis of dismissal:

- 1) To remain in good academic standing, graduate students must maintain a graduate GPA of 3.0. Failure to maintain good academic standing will result in placement on academic warning, probation or dismissal. A graduate student whose cumulative graduate GPA falls below a 3.0 will be placed on warning, indicating academic difficulty. A graduate student on warning whose cumulative graduate GPA remains below 3.0 in

the following semester will be dismissed. A graduate student will not be dismissed prior to attempting a minimum of 12 hours of coursework as a graduate student. The student has ten working days to appeal the dismissal decision.

- 2) Failure of a second attempt in the qualifying exams will result in the student dismissal. No appeal of dismissal will be considered under these circumstances.
- 3) Lapses in enrollment for two consecutive terms prior to advancement to candidacy for Ph.D. or approval of the proposal for M.S. students will result in the student being dropped from the program. After a doctoral student is advanced to candidacy, continuous registration for at least 3 dissertation credit hours each term (including the summer term) is required until the dissertation requirement is fulfilled. For Master's degree students with an approved proposal, continuous registration for at least 1 thesis credit hour each term (including the summer term) is required until the thesis requirement is fulfilled. A student who finds it necessary to be excused from registration must formally request a leave of absence from the graduate program.
- 4) 10% of MS students admitted may be below the 3.0 UG60 requirement under a conditional admit. The student must earn a 3.00 GPA upon completion of their first 9 graduate credits within one year of being admitted, i.e., within 3 consecutive semesters. **Please note that these 9 credits are for classes assigned a letter grade.** In the case of International F-1 students, however, they only have one semester to meet their condition since they must register for 9 graduate credits to meet the full-time requirement. Students failing to meet the above conditions will be dismissed from the University and will not be able to petition for reinstatement. Ph.D. students who do not meet the UG60 requirement of 3.0 may be admitted if a petition to exception of graduate requirements is approved by the Dean of the College and UGS, but no conditions are attached to the admission. Under some circumstances students are admitted conditionally with unofficial documents, pending receipt of the final official documents. If the official documents are not received by the middle of the first semester of attendance, the student will be dropped from the Program.
- 5) Faculty sponsors may decide that they are incompatible with a student or the student may wish to separate from the lab. If a faculty sponsor has decided that they are no longer willing to advise a student, they must immediately send a memo to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director, copied to the student, stating they will no longer continue to be the student's advisor. If a student wishes to separate from a lab, they should immediately consult with the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director who will help them find a different sponsor, if possible. Students whose advisor has terminated their sponsorship or students who have left a lab have until the end of the semester to find an alternate sponsor before they will be dropped from the Program. Students who were admitted to the program on a research assistantship without promise of Departmental support will require a vote of the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee to determine if TA support will be provided (if available) to allow the student to remain in the program under sponsorship of a new advisor without available grant support. The duration of such TA support would be determined at the discretion of the Graduate Committee on a case-by-case basis.
- 6) During the spring term, the student must schedule a meeting with their graduate reviewer, who is a member of the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the student is on track with regards to the process of the graduate program (meeting program milestones, i.e., committee formation, committee meetings, memos in file, etc.) to ensure smooth and timely progress for the student as documented in the Biology Graduate Policy and Procedures Manual. Students who fail to meet Departmental milestones may receive an unsatisfactory review. Students who are supported by a teaching assistantship or

research assistantship must obtain a satisfactory review to maintain their support for the next academic year. Students who receive unsatisfactory reviews and do not correct deficiencies by the end of the summer term will be recommended for dismissal from the Program. Students who have been dismissed must apply for readmission if they wish to complete their degree.

- 7) Students are bound by the codes of student and academic conduct as described in the FIU Student Handbook. University policies outline acts of student misconduct, which are expressly prohibited and violate University rules and regulations. These include such actions as disruptive conduct, theft or unauthorized possession, vandalism, hazing, falsification of records, harassment, and assault. A student has three options once they have been charged with a code violation: 1) administrative disposition, whereby the student can accept responsibility and a sanction is imposed by the judicial administrator; 2) a formal administrative hearing; 3) a formal hearing before the University Judicial Committee. The format for the formal hearings, the appeals procedures, and possible disciplinary sanctions are all outlined in the FIU Student Handbook and may include dismissal. Separate policies and procedures govern academic misconduct. Academic misconduct (i.e., academic dishonesty) includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, falsification of academic records, bribery to gain academic advantage, and misuse of computer services, including the unauthorized appropriation of another's program(s). Disciplinary penalties for academic misconduct range from counseling to expulsion from the University. Allegations of academic misconduct are handled through Academic Affairs Office as outlined in the Student Handbook.
- 8) Other serious issues as determined by the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee

Appeal:

Students dismissed from the Program have 10 business days to appeal to the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee for reinstatement. If one of the Committee members or the Grad Program Director has a conflict of interest with the student, the member in conflict will be replaced by the Associate Chair. The Committee will evaluate the appeal and render a decision within two weeks. Note that for reinstatement after dismissal for items 1 and 3, a petition to UGS will also be required. Appeals from students failing their qualifying exams twice (item 2) and petitions from students not meeting conditional admit requirements (item 4) will not be considered.

Re-admission:

A period of at least one academic year must elapse after the date of dismissal before an application for admission will be accepted for consideration. In applications for re-admission, to the same program or for admission to another program, admission criteria shall include consideration of previous performance at the graduate level in addition to the normal admission requirements. A student who has been dismissed for failure to make sufficient progress toward degree completion or for non-compliance with the continuous enrollment policy may apply for re-admission at any time prior to their time limit for degree completion. Re-admission of all doctoral students will require approval by the Dean of the University Graduate School.

GENERAL INFORMATION

OBTAINING FLORIDA RESIDENCY

To be considered for Florida residency, the student must be a U.S. citizen or legal resident, and independent (i.e., your parents do NOT claim you on their taxes and you file your own taxes). To apply for residency, the following information and any other documentation proving your ties to the state of Florida must be taken to the FIU Registrar's Office to be reviewed. You will have to submit documentation that you (or your parent, step-parent, or legal guardians if you are a dependent) have been a Florida resident for at least 12 months prior to the first day of classes of the regular term for which you are enrolling (the "12-month qualifying period"). At least two of the following documents must be submitted with dates that evidence the 12-month qualifying period. Additionally, there must be no information contradicting your residency claim. Residency may only be established prior to the beginning of your first enrollment term – after that point, you cannot alter residency status. Therefore, it is extremely important to get the following items **BEFORE YOUR FIRST TERM BEGINS**.

Proof of Residency:

- Florida Driver's License
- Voter Registration Card
- Florida Vehicle Registration
- Declaration of Domicile (from a Dade County Court and signed by a Notary Public of Florida)
- Proof of Independence (e.g., tax return)
- Permanent Employment (e.g., a copy of your agreement with the University)
- Residence during periods of non-enrollment
- Lease/Own Home/Own Property
- Checking Account with a Florida Bank

WITHDRAWAL/LEAVE OF ABSENCE/READMITTANCE

Admitted graduate students who have not been registered for two consecutive terms, including the summer session, will be dropped from the graduate program and must apply for re-admission through the Graduate Admissions Office. Graduate students who withdraw voluntarily from their graduate studies are required to apply for readmission under the admission regulations in force at the time of reapplication.

If a student finds it necessary to be excused from registration in a graduate degree program for *two* or more consecutive terms he/she must formally request a leave of absence from the Graduate Program. Leave will be granted only under exceptional circumstances. When the student returns from a leave of absence, decisions concerning previous or current programs of study will be mutually agreed upon by the student's advisory committee and the student.

A lapse in program enrollment does not extend the amount of time allotted for degree completion. The six years for the M.S. and nine years for the Ph.D. are calculated from the entry date in the program and do not take absence from the Program into account.

RESEARCH AND PATENTS

The results of a graduate student's research could lead to a patent and the payment of royalties. The University claims no rights to patent royalties if the research is performed in a laboratory outside of the University under close cooperation with an outside advisor. The University insists, however, that the student receive a fair share of any financial benefits from such a patent. If the patented work was done in a University laboratory, the University will own the patent and royalties will be distributed in accordance with the University Patent Policy.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The University has developed policies and procedures on the rights and responsibilities of students and a code of conduct assuring that these rights can be freely exercised without interference or infringement by others. The code of conduct, academic misconduct policies, student grievance procedures and policies on student records are summarized in the University publication Rights and Responsibilities of Students (available at: <https://cat.fiu.edu/programming/ta-development/orientation/studentrightsandconduct.pdf>).

The FIU student handbook can be found at: <https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/student-handbook/assets/docs/fiu-student-handbook-2023-2024-0623.pdf>

The student code of conduct is specifically addressed at: <https://regulations.fiu.edu/docs=257>

Also, all administrative procedures and time deadlines must be met, whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this document. Students must operate within the rules and guidelines of the Biological Sciences Graduate Policy and Procedures Manual, the FIU Graduate Catalog and the FIU Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual. Accordingly, graduate students should obtain copies of these publications from the Graduate Studies Office or visit the University Graduate School website (available at: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/>) and be familiar with their contents. Particular attention should be paid to the deadlines posted annually in the University Academic Calendar.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

FIU has a non-discrimination policy in place, and is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity.

More information on these policies, and related links, are found at: <https://dei.fiu.edu/index.html>

If you feel you have been, or are being, sexually harassed by someone at the university, you may contact the University's Title IX Coordinator in the FIU Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility:

Ryan Kelley, J.D. Office Number: (305) 348-2785 Email: ocrca@fiu.edu

Address: 11200 S.W. 8th Street, Primera Casa 220, Miami, FL 33199

The online form for reporting sexual harassment is at: <https://forms.fiu.edu/view.php?id=531706>

Discrimination and misconduct at the university can also be reported at <https://report.fiu.edu/>

The Ethical Panther Hotline is available 24 hours a day by phone at: 1-888-520-0570

Reporting to the Ethical Panther Hotline is also possible via the web, at <https://fiu.i-sight.com/portal>

FORMS AND MEMOS

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL FORMS

available at: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>

M.S. Program forms

form M-1 Appointment of Thesis Committee

form Non-FIU Commitment Form

form M-1r Appointment of Revised Thesis Committee

form Responsible Conduct of Research

form M-2 Master's Thesis Proposal

form M-3 Preliminary Approval of Thesis and Request for Oral Defense

ETD form Final ETD Approval Form

Ph.D. Program forms

milestone Appointment of a Dissertation Committee

form Non-FIU Commitment Form

form D-1r Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee

form Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring form

form Responsible Conduct of Research

milestone Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy

milestone Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

milestone Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense

form Survey of Earned Doctorates

milestone Final Electronic Dissertation Approval

Forms for all Students

Change of Degree form

FIU/UM Exchange Program

Office of International Student & Scholar Services Forms

available at <https://globalaffairs.fiu.edu/iss/forms/>

Advancement to Thesis or Dissertation Segment Form

<https://iss.fiu.edu/assets/docs/advancement-thesis-dissertation-2018.pdf>

Academic Certification form for International Students

<https://iss.fiu.edu/assets/docs/academiccertification.pdf>

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENTAL FORMS

available at: <https://biology.fiu.edu/academics/resources/index.html>

Biological Sciences Graduate Program First Committee Meeting Memo

Biological Sciences Graduate Program Qualifying/Candidacy Exam Form

*Biological Sciences Service Memo is not online, but is included on the last page of this document.

Biological Sciences - First Committee Meeting

To: Biological Sciences Graduate Committee From:

Re: First Committee Meeting Date:

Student Name: _____ **Panther ID:** _____

Date of 1st Meeting: _____

Degree Earning: *M.S.* *Ph.D.*

Committee Members are as follows:

Please print names in this column .

Please put signatures below

<i>Major Professor</i>	

Form M-1/D-1 was completed and presented to the committee for signatures at meeting.

Quantitative skills requirement will be fulfilled by: _____

The qualifying exam is scheduled for: _____

The Qualifying Exam guidelines (attached) were reviewed with committee at meeting.

Topics to be examined by individual examiners are:

The proposal seminar is scheduled for: _____

Specific classes or any other conditions required by the committee are: _____

**Department of Biological Sciences
Graduate Program - Qualifying/Candidacy Exam**

To: Graduate Committee, Biological Sciences

From:

CC:

Date:

Re: Qualifying/Candidacy Exam

_____ took the qualifying exam on _____
(Student Name) (Date)

Degree Earning: M.S. Ph.D.

Student was examined on the following topics by:

TOPIC	EXAMINER'S SIGNATURE
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The committee was (unanimous / not unanimous) in assigning a passing grade for the examination.

(If the committee was not unanimous, it is the student's responsibility to request re-examination from the departmental graduate committee. The student's committee should indicate if they are in favor of re-examining the student.)

Comments:

Biological Sciences Service Requirement Confirmation Memo

All Graduate students, MS and PhD, regardless of their form of support, are required to do 2hrs/year of Departmental service. The requirement can be fulfilled in many ways such as, assisting with the annual Biology symposium (held in early February), holding an officer position in BGSA, and proctoring exams.

Proctoring two exams can fulfill the requirement. If a student is a Teaching Assistant, the proctoring completed as part of their normal assignment does *not* count towards the service requirement. If the service requirement is not fulfilled, students will receive an unsatisfactory in their annual review in which can affect their assistantship. For further information and questions about other ways of completing the requirement, contact the Graduate Program office at Biograd@fiu.edu.

This memo is to confirm that _____, provided _____ hours of departmental service work on
Student name

_____, by _____
Date Description of service

If Additional information is needed, you may contact me at _____

Signed,

Name and Title Date

In order to receive credit for completion of the service requirement, this memo needs to be submitted to the Graduate Secretary prior to the Departmental Annual review.