



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 Secretary for inclusion in the student's file.

Version 13
Fall 2021

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
- Graduate Record Examination (GRE): quantitative, verbal, analytical writing sections
- *Two* letters of recommendation are required for M.S. applicants and *three* letters are required for Ph.D. applicants
- a personal statement that includes a justification of why the student wants to pursue graduate studies, any previous research experience, the reason for choosing the FIU Biology Graduate Program, interest in working with a particular faculty member
- a faculty sponsor who must be a tenured or tenure-earning member of the Department of Biological Sciences or have a courtesy appointment in the Department to serve as major professor; *the major professor*, a member of the University Graduate Faculty, will direct the student's research in consultation with the thesis or dissertation committee; applicants are encouraged to contact faculty to find prospective faculty sponsors. Faculty sponsors must submit a memo to the Graduate Committee expressing their willingness to serve as the major advisor 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 if financial support will be available in the form of a RA or GA.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

- must demonstrate proficiency in English by achieving a minimum score of 80 on the TOEFL iBT, or 6.5 overall on the IELTS.
- must complete a declaration and certification of financial ability to support themselves while a student (contact the FIU International Students Office for further information):
<https://internationalprograms.fiu.edu/iss/>
- must have their transcripts translated and certified; information on translation service companies is available on the University Graduate School website at the bottom of the Admissions page:
<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/admissions/>

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

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 the Department of Biological Sciences must provide a guarantee of funding for at least three years.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Prospective candidates must submit an on-line application for admission into the graduate program and must pay the \$30.00 application fee. The application is to the Admissions office.

<https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/graduate-applicant/index.html>

Applicants must also 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 to the Admissions Office directly from the entity providing the transcript or scores**. Transcripts in a language other than English must be translated and certified. To reiterate, an official transcript is a transcript sent directly to FIU admissions in a sealed envelope from your degree-granting institutions. An official GRE score is score sent directly to FIU admissions in a sealed envelope from ETS.

Florida International University has a rolling admissions policy. When the Admissions Office receives the student's application, application fee, transcripts and GRE, TOEFL, and TSE scores, they forward the completed file to the Biological Sciences Department for evaluation. In addition to the information sent to Admissions, the student must have all letters of reference and a letter from their faculty sponsor submitted for the application to be considered complete.

The Department of Biological Sciences has one application deadline per year, and that is for Fall admissions. Applications for assistantships for the Fall term must be completed by January 5th. Decisions on assistantships for the Fall term will normally be made within twelve weeks of this deadline.

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. In addition, you will have annual in-person evaluations by the Department's Graduate Committee and, separately, by the University, which is done online. 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 Secretary (Biograd@fiu.edu). For almost everything (M forms, petitions, evaluations), there is a hierarchy for who gets your graduate forms and documents. The hierarchy is Biological Sciences Graduate Program FIRST, then the College of Arts, Sciences and Education (CASE), then the University Graduate School (UGS). 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.

NOTE that you submit your documents to the Biological Sciences Graduate Office. You do not submit them to CASE or to UGS. Each level has to approve and is responsible for passing documents on to the next higher level.

Whenever submitting forms, read and follow the instructions carefully. All the M forms have instructions at the top—make sure that you follow them; if you don't understand them, ask someone for help or give yourself time to turn in the form and have it turned back to correct something. 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 should 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. A student's thesis committee will be composed of no less than three members - two of which must be full-time tenured or tenure-earning graduate faculty members from the Department of Biological Sciences. The major professor will chair the thesis committee. A third member must be a member of the University community, but outside of the Department of Biological Sciences. Scientists that are not FIU faculty members must submit a curriculum vitae for review by the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee. The CV must be accompanied by memos from the student and major professor that describe the expertise brought by the non-FIU scientist. The curriculum vitae will be attached to Form M-1

(formation of a thesis committee) upon Graduate Committee approval. Off campus committee members also must sign the commitment for Non-FIU committee members from the University Graduate School forms list. 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)
- approve the thesis proposal
- review progress on the thesis research
- prepare and conduct the qualifying examination
- administer the defense of thesis
- render final approval of the thesis

To serve as chair of a thesis committee, a faculty member must:

- be a tenured or tenure-earning faculty member, or have a courtesy faculty appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences. All Committee members must be members of the University Graduate Faculty (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#facultylist>).
- 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 Committee if the person is an external research scientist
- have specialized academic competence relevant to one of the major emphases of the student's thesis 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. Therefore, faculty members may make a written appeal for an exception to the Graduate Committee. If necessary, an appeal of the 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.

THESIS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT (FORMS M-1 and M-1r)

Form M-1 should be completed and submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office immediately upon formation of a thesis committee. If any member is outside the University, attach a CV and

memo from the major professor and a signed copy of the non-FIU commitment form. The M-1 form is found at: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/M-1-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf>
Form for Outside the University (Non-FIU Commitment form is found at: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NonFIUcommitmentMemo_02032021Writable.pdf

The composition of a thesis committee may need to be changed at some point during a student's program of study. If this should become necessary, the student must submit to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office a completed M-1r form. The major advisor should submit a memo explaining why the change is necessary. Should the student request changing of the major professor, the student should submit a written request to the Graduate Committee for approval. Approved requests will require students to file a M-1r form. If the thesis research has changed significantly, a new five-page summary of the thesis research should be submitted with the revised Form M-1r. The M-1r form is found at: <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/M-1r-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf>

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

During their first term, students should write a brief outline of their proposed research project. Full-time students should submit this preliminary proposal to their thesis committee no later than the beginning of their second term; part-time students should submit their proposals upon completion of 12 credits. 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. The student should submit the formal version of the proposal prior to the qualifying examination.

A five-page summary of the preliminary proposal must be submitted with Form M-2 after the thesis proposal seminar is presented.

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**
- **Budget** - a description of any special budgetary requirements necessary to carry out the proposed research.

Thesis committee members should review the formal proposal and return it to the student along with their comments no later than two weeks from the date of receipt. After revisions, the student should resubmit the proposal to all thesis committee members for final approval. If necessary, the major professor should poll the thesis committee regarding the acceptability of the revised proposal. If deemed unacceptable to one or more of the thesis committee members, the student or the student's 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.

The student is responsible for scheduling the presentation of the proposal at a time convenient to the thesis committee members and the faculty of the Biological Sciences Department (during regular business hours). The student must also adequately advertise the proposal seminar at least one week in advance of the

presentation. The student must send an electronic version of the proposal announcement to the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Secretary (Biograd@fiu.edu). Each student registers for BSC 5931 (Thesis Proposal Seminar) **the term after the proposal is successfully presented**. After successful completion of the proposal seminar, the major professor should send a memo to the Graduate Program Director (see memo forms at end of document). A completed form M-2 and the 5-page proposal for the research must be submitted to the Graduate Program Office in Biology following the proposal seminar. If the planned research involves recombinant DNA research, vertebrate animals or human subjects, attach copies of approvals and completion of required training certificates. All students must submit certificates of completion for the Conduct of Research. The Graduate Program Secretary will make a copy for the file and send the completed form to the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education, who, upon approval, send it to the University Graduate School.

Immediately following presentation of the proposal seminar and a public question period, the public audience shall be asked to leave and the committee and major professor will remain for a defense of the proposal and research plan. Students must submit a full proposal to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office after it has been approved by the Committee.

COURSES

A plan of study should be determined for each student by the thesis committee as part of its first formal meeting. This plan of study should be appended to the First Committee Meeting memo filed with the Department. The plan 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 program of study. Formal course requirements should be met as early as possible and all remedial courses needed to bring the student up to the level of graduating senior undergraduates should be taken during the first two terms the student is in the program. Graduate assistants (GAs, TAs and RAs) may not register for undergraduate credits (4000 or lower) using their tuition waiver. Such remedial courses must be paid for by the student. Students may not audit courses using waivers provided by the College.

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

- Thesis Proposal Seminar (BSC 5931; 1 credit);
- Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457; 3 credits);
- Master's Thesis (BSC 6971; 6 credits)
- Workshops/ laboratories (a minimum of 4 credits over 2 separate courses).
- Quantitative Skills (a minimum of 6 credits in 2 separate courses).

Students must first present their graduate proposal seminar and then sign up for BSC 5931 **the term after the presentation**. The student must take a total of 36 credits; at least 16 credits of electives must be courses offered by the Department of Biological Sciences.

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and must earn a grade of "C" or higher in all courses. A maximum of six credits may be taken at the 4000 level (at the discretion of the student's supervisory committee), but graduate assistants may not register for undergraduate courses using their tuition waiver.

QUANTITATIVE SKILLS REQUIREMENT

To ensure that our graduates have quantitative skills, the Department requires students to take two courses (at least six credits) of graduate level computer programming, statistics, or mathematics. The courses to fulfill this

requirement will be decided by the advisory committee, consistent with Departmental policy. If courses outside of the standard statistics, programming, or math are required by the committee to meet this requirement, a memo documenting approval of the courses should be placed in the student's file.

TRANSFER OF GRADUATE CREDIT

If approved by the thesis committee, the Master's program will accept six term hours of graduate course credit earned from another institution beyond the bachelor's degree, excluding graduate research and master's thesis course credits. A memo documenting the committee's approval should be placed in the student's file: this can be attached to the First Committee Meeting memo.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

Master's candidates 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 exam shall cover at least three subject areas specified by the student's advisory committee. The student must be informed of the subject areas at least one month prior to the date of the examination. The form and content of the qualifying examination are determined by the student's advisory committee. Students should meet with all committee members twice before the exam. During the first meeting, the topics and readings should be assigned. Questions regarding the assigned materials can be covered during the second meeting.

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 or submission of research papers.

After completion of the candidacy examination, the student must submit the signed Student Progress Memo – Qualifying/Candidacy Exam to the Graduate office within one week indicating the results (Pass or Fail) with a written summary of the exam.

Students who fail their first qualifying examination can petition the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee for a second 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.

Master's students earning a grade of A (not A-) in a two-term core area course sequence and Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457) may waive the qualifying exam requirement and proceed to the proposal seminar. The core courses include:

**Ecology and Organismal Biology group: PCB 5423, PCB 5443.
Molecular and Cell Biology group: PCB 6025, PCB 6026.**

A memo indicating that the student earned the appropriate grades must be placed in the student's file in the Biological Sciences Graduate office by the major professor.

The term after the student passes the qualifying exam, presents the public thesis proposal seminar, and submits all paperwork through the Departmental Graduate Secretary to the University Graduate School is the first term the student enrolls in Master's Thesis credit (BSC 6971). A total of 6 credits of BSC 6971 must be completed prior to graduation. The M.S. candidate must be *continuously* enrolled in BSC 6971 (for 1 credit minimally) until graduation. Students will receive IP grades (in progress) until the thesis is defended. Once the thesis is defended, the major professor will issue a final grade of P for all M.S. thesis credits and this will trigger all IP grades to change (i.e., change IP to P).

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 (http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Graduate_Packet_For_Theses2020.pdf)

REQUEST FOR THESIS DEFENSE (FORM M-3)

The thesis defense is a University requirement and, thus, the defense must be scheduled and held to comply with University deadlines. However, students are not required to register for Thesis defense (BSC 5975). The University Graduate School publishes their deadlines for the last date of submission of Form M-3 on their website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters>) The College of Arts, Sciences and Education publishes both the University Graduate School and the College deadlines on their website (<https://case.fiu.edu/academics/graduate/important-deadlines/index.html>) A near-final draft of the thesis, a copy of the Thesis Defense Announcement, and a completed M-3 Form must be submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director **5 weeks** before the date of the defense. The College deadline is 4 weeks before the defense and the University deadline is 3 weeks before the defense. The Dean of our College and the Dean of the Graduate School adhere strictly to the last date of defense deadlines and the 4 and 3 weeks of receipt of document rules, respectively, before them. Thus, the student who does not comply with these deadlines will be forced to reschedule the defense on a new date, which may require enrollment in another term. The M-3 form is found at:

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/M-3-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf>

Form M-3 states "My signature below attests that I have read the attached thesis and find it provisionally acceptable and ready to defend. The attached defense announcement is an accurate abstract of the thesis." Thus, the student must provide their thesis to the thesis committee with sufficient time to read and comment on the thesis before the Form M-3 submission deadline. Sufficient time is usually two weeks.

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 Graduate Program Office after the thesis defense. The rubric forms can be downloaded from the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education Graduate Program website: (<https://case.fiu.edu/academics/graduate/index.html>)

FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS (FINAL ETD APPROVAL FORM)

When a student successfully defends the thesis, committee members and the committee chair can suggest changes in the content of the final document. When those changes have been completed to the satisfaction of the Committee, one paper copy of the final version of the thesis (for College of Arts, Sciences, and Education) must be presented to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director with the accompanying Electronic Thesis and Dissertation form at least two days before it is due at CASE. The Graduate Program Office will make a copy of the form and submit the thesis to the College who will submit it to the Graduate School.

Applying For Graduation

The final step after a successful defense is to apply for graduation. To apply for graduation, log into your MyFIU account and select 'Academic Records', then 'Apply for Graduation'. Please don't forget to check the deadline at the UGS website. For more information, please go to: <https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/>

If you missed the deadline to apply, please submit a 'Late Graduation Application' form.

(<https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/all-forms/>) If, for any reason, a student is unable to graduate after applying for graduation, you must submit a 'Graduation Cancellation form'. Please email biograd@fiu.edu for the form.

ACTIVE STATUS AND TIME LIMITATIONS

Active status entitles students to utilize the University's resources. To maintain active status in the M.S. program, students must register for a minimum of one credit per term (summer term included) once form M-2 is submitted and the student has advanced to candidacy. Lapses in enrollment for three consecutive terms will result in the student being dropped from the program. All requirements for the M.S. degree, including the successful defense of a thesis, must be completed within **six years** of first enrollment in the Program, inclusive of any leaves of absence or other interruptions of active student status. Students who do not complete their thesis within this time period may apply for an exception to this rule by filing a Petition for Exception to Graduate Requirements with the University Graduate School. Students must be enrolled in the term in which they graduate and have an overall GPA greater than 3.0.

CHANGE OF DEGREE TRACK

Once admitted to the M.S. program, students may apply to switch to the Ph.D. track during or after their second term of enrollment. Application is made to the Graduate Committee by submission of a memo from the student justifying the request, along with a memo of support by the major professor. Justification shall include a brief statement of the student's proposed research plan. Also at that time, documentation must be supplied that a dissertation committee (5 members) can be formed. This is accomplished by providing a completed Form D-1 with all signatures as required for a dissertation committee. The University Graduate School's Change of Graduate Degree form also needs to be completed (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Oct2019Change-of-Graduate-Degree.pdf>). The Biological Sciences Graduate Committee will consider the justification provided by the student and major

professor, along with the student's performance in courses taken up to that time in the graduate program. Note that a change in degree level takes place only at the end of the term in which the application is made.

SEE THIS PAGE FOR ALL UGS STUDENT FORMS:

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

MASTER'S DEGREE CHECKLIST

A checklist of steps in your progress through the Master's Degree is appended below. Fill this out as you move through your degree program.

FIU BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE PROGRAM – M.S. PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Submitting forms for signatures

1. Please use DocuSign (<https://docusign.fiu.edu>) for signatures.
2. Send M forms with supplement 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, copying everyone.

Checklist

_____ 1. First Committee meeting memo

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

Appointment of Thesis committee (M-1)

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/M-1-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf>

Non-FIU Commitment form.

https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NonFIUcommitmentMemo_02032021Writable.pdf

The Thesis committee should 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. A student's thesis committee will be composed of no less than three members. The M-1 and First Committee meeting memo should be completed and submitted to Biology graduate office immediately upon formation of the thesis committee. Deadlines are listed at the UGS website (www.gradschool.fiu.edu).

An Important note about Deadlines: UGS lists their deadlines on the UGS webpage, but most of your documents must go through the College (CASE), and they have a deadline of a week before the UGS deadline. Finally, your documents must go through the Department of Biological Sciences Graduate Program, which requires another week. **So, plan to turn your documents into the Department 2 weeks before the UGS deadline.**

Appointment of Revised Thesis Committee (M-1r) <https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/M-1r-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf> :If the composition of a thesis committee is changed, students must submit a completed M-1r form to Biological Sciences graduate program. You must also Include a memo from your Major Professor explaining why the committee membership is being changed.

Annual Graduate Review for Thesis students – During the spring term, the student must schedule a meeting with their graduate reviewer (a member of the Graduate Committee). Guidelines can be found in Graduate Policies & Procedures Manual (<https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/index.html>) page 26.

_____ 2. Course work.

Core courses required of all M.S. Students:

- Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457: 3 credits) _____
- Workshops/laboratories (a minimum of 4 credits from at least 2 courses) _____
- Thesis Proposal Seminar (BSC 5931: 1 credit)* _____
- Quantitative Skills (a minimum of 6 credits in 2 separate courses)† _____
- Master's Thesis (BSC 6971: 6 credits)§ _____
- Thesis Defense Seminar (BSC 5975:1 credit)¶ _____

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

†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.

§ BSC 6971 may be taken AFTER the student passes the qualifying exam, presents the public thesis proposal seminar.

†The thesis defense seminar (BSC 5975) is taken the term of the thesis defense.

_____ **3. Qualifying Examination :** https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy_exam-form.pdf

Master's candidates 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.

Master's students earning a grade of A in a two-term core area course sequence and Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457) may waive the qualifying exam requirement and proceed to the proposal seminar. A memo indicating that the student earned the appropriate grades must be placed in the student's file by the major professor.

The core courses include:

- **Ecology and Organismal Biology group: PCB 5423, PCB 5443**
- **Molecular and Cell Biology group: PCB 6025, PCB 6026**

_____ **4. Proposal Announcements.** After the formal proposal is reviewed and approved by committee members, the student should schedule the presentation of the proposal and must send an electronic version of the proposal announcement to the Biology graduate office (biograd@fiu.edu) in Word format. Student also need to post notices of the presentation around the Department at least one week in advance of the presentation. **The term after the presentation, student should register for BSC 5931 (Thesis proposal seminar).**

_____ **5. Master's Thesis Proposal (M-2):**

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/M-2-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf> .

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

After the presentation, M-2 form should be submitted to the Biological Sciences graduate office. Responsible Conduct of Research is required along with M-2 form. If you are working with Vertebrates, include your IACUC approval letter to the M-2. If you are working with Human Subjects, include your IRB approval letter to the M-2. If you are working with chimeric organisms or are cloning organisms for your research, include your IBC approval letter with the M-2. As with other deadlines, the CASE deadline is one week prior to UGS deadlines, and the Biological Sciences deadline is two weeks before the UGS deadline. Due dates for forms are available at the UGS website. (www.gradschool.fiu.edu)

_____ **6. Request for Thesis Defense (M-3):**

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/M-3-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf>

The thesis defense is a University requirement. However, students are not required to register for Thesis defense (BSC 5975). A near-final draft of the thesis, a copy of the Thesis Defense Announcement, and a completed M-3 form must be submitted to the Biological Sciences graduate office **5 weeks** before the date of the defense. The CASE deadline is 4 weeks before the defense and UGS deadline is 3 weeks before the defense. Deadline for the form is available at UGS website. (www.gradschool.fiu.edu)

*If one of your committee members will attend your defense remotely, please contact Biology graduate office. You will need a petition.

_____ **7. Apply for graduation.** To check for deadlines and apply, <https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/>

For commencement, <https://commencement.fiu.edu/>

_____ **8. Final ETD Approval Form:**

http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Final_ETD_Approval_Form02192020.pdf

After a student successfully defends the thesis, one paper copy of the final version of the thesis must be presented to the Biology graduate office with the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) form. The deadline can be found at UGS website (www.gradschool.fiu.edu) and CASE website(<https://case.fiu.edu/index.htm>). Please drop the form off at the Biological Sciences graduate office at least two days prior to the CASE deadline.

***Graduate Policies & Procedures Manual:**

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

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

***FIU/UM Exchange program application form:** <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WritableFIU-UM-Exchange-Application2020current.pdf>

THE DOCTORAL (Ph.D.) PROGRAM

The Ph.D. is conferred on individuals in recognition of their demonstrated ability to master a specific field of knowledge and to conduct significant, independent, original research 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.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

At the end of the second term or no later than the end of the first year of study (third term, counting the summer term), the student should consult with his major professor on the selection of a dissertation committee to consist of at least five faculty members. Dissertation Committee members from FIU must be members of the Graduate Faculty (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/faculty-staff-grad-das-faculty.shtml>).

- The major professor must be tenured, hold a tenure-earning or courtesy faculty appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences at FIU and have University Dissertation Advisor Status (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#toggle-id-11>); the major professor will chair the dissertation committee.
- A minimum of three members of the dissertation committee must be faculty members with at least a 50% appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences.
- At least one dissertation committee member must hold a regular faculty appointment in another department at FIU and must be a member of the University Graduate Faculty.
- The remaining dissertation committee member can be selected from among other members of the Biology or University faculty or professionals with appropriate credentials. Scientists who are not faculty members of FIU must submit a curriculum vitae for review by the Departmental Graduate Committee. The major advisor must submit a memo to the Graduate Committee describing the role the outside scientist will play on the dissertation committee. The curriculum vitae will be attached to Form D-1 (formation of a dissertation committee) upon Graduate Committee approval. A signed copy of the Non FIU commitment form from the University Graduate School is also required with the memo and CV. 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
- approve the dissertation proposal
- review program progress on the dissertation research
- prepare and conduct the candidacy examination
- administer the defense of dissertation
- render final approval of the dissertation

All dissertation committee members must meet the following requirements:

To serve as major professor of a dissertation committee, a faculty member must:

- be a tenured, tenure-earning, or have a courtesy faculty appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences, be a member of the University Graduate Faculty, and have Dissertation Advisor Status (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/> - toggle-id-2).
- 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 FIU Graduate Faculty or, if an external research scientist, be approved by the Departmental Graduate Committee, if an external research scientist:
- have specialized academic competence relevant to one of the major emphases of the student's dissertation 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. Therefore, 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.

The dissertation committee functions to:

- advise the student in all academic and research matters
- formulate a program of study
- approve the dissertation proposal
- review program progress on the dissertation research
- prepare and conduct the candidacy examination
- administer the defense of dissertation
- render final approval of the dissertation

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT (FORM D-1)

No later than the end of the first year of study, the student should consult with his or her major professor on the selection of a dissertation committee to consist of at least five faculty members. Form D-1 should be completed by the student and submitted to the Graduate Studies Office immediately upon formation of a dissertation committee. All signatures on the D-1 form must be original signatures; subsequent forms can be signed by proxy, if necessary. The D-1 is typically signed during the first dissertation committee meeting, along with the BSc graduate program First Committee Meeting memo (see Biological Sciences -Departmental memos at the end of this handbook)

The composition of a dissertation committee may need to be changed at some point during a student's program of study. If this should become necessary, the student must submit the D-1r form to the Graduate Committee. Should the student request changing of the major professor, the student should submit a written request to the Graduate Committee for approval.

FIRST COMMITTEE MEETING (BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES FIRST COMMITTEE MEETING FORM)

Once a student has decided who will be on their dissertation committee, the student should arrange to have a first committee meeting. During their first term, the student should write a brief outline of their proposed research project. 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 proposals upon completion of nine credits. This proposal helps potential committee members to know whether they feel that they can serve on the committee. At the first committee meeting, the student should present an abstract of their research topic and provide committee members with titles or summaries of courses that they have taken, so that the committee members can determine what graduate courses, in addition to required courses, the student should take (i.e., design a program of study) and what topics will be covered on the student's candidacy exam. If any graduate credit is to be transferred into the student's program, this should also be approved during the first committee meeting. This information is recorded on or appended to the Biological Sciences First Committee Meeting Form at the end of this handbook. The courses required become part of the Program of Study and must have been passed satisfactorily before the student can file the D-2 form (see below).

Form D-2

In order to file the D-2 form, the student must complete their coursework and pass the candidacy examination (a.k.a., the qualifying exam). Upon successful filing of the D-2 form, the student advances to candidacy and can begin to register for Dissertation credits (BSC 7980). A full-time student also goes from taking 9 credit hours per term to 3 credit hours per term.

COURSES – PROGRAM OF STUDY (FORM D-2)

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. The dissertation and defense must be approved by the Ph.D. student's dissertation committee.

Students must complete a Program of Study designed by 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 and must include 30 graduate credits. The courses required by the committee must be listed on form D-2 and must be taken before or during the term the student plans to take the candidacy exams and present the proposal seminar. A minimum of 75 credits of graduate course work beyond the baccalaureate is required to complete the Ph.D. program, including a minimum of 15 credits in Doctoral Dissertation (BSC 7980). In consultation with the committee, students should only list the courses required by the committee on the D-2, exclusive of Doctoral Dissertation credits (BSC 7980).

Required courses for all Ph.D. students include:

- Introduction to Biological Research (BSC 6457; 3 credits) (For those doctoral students that already have a M.S. degree, BSC 6457 is recommended, but is not required).
- Quantitative skills (2 courses, 6 credits)
- Dissertation Proposal Seminar (BSC 7961, 1 credit)
- Supervised Teaching in Biology (BSC 5945; 2 credits)
- Ph.D. Dissertation (BSC 7980; 15 credits)
- Dissertation Defense Seminar (BSC 7982, 1 credit)
- Workshops/laboratories (a minimum of 4 credits from at least 2 separate courses).
- Electives from courses offered by the Department of Biological Sciences (8 credits)

The required courses total to 40 credits; students need an additional 35 credits to achieve the minimum 75 required credit hours. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and must earn a grade of “C” or higher in all courses.

TRANSFER OF GRADUATE CREDITS

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 thesis credit hours may be transferred to a Ph.D. program only if they were part of an earned degree and are approved by the dissertation committee. A maximum of six term hours of graduate credit earned from another institution or 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. The courses and number of credits transferred in are agreed-upon at the first committee meeting and are reflected in the First Committee Meeting form; they are then listed on the D-2 form. Additional credits that may have been taken at another university as part of the Ph.D. program and that have been approved by the dissertation committee will also be listed on the D-2.

QUANTITATIVE SKILLS REQUIREMENT (FORM D-2)

To ensure that our graduates have quantitative skills, the Department requires students to take two courses (at least six credits) of graduate level computer programming, statistics, or mathematics. The courses to fulfill this requirement will be decided by the 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 approval of the courses should be placed in the student’s file.

SUPERVISED TEACHING

The ability to teach at the University level is an important skill that should be encouraged in all graduate students. For this reason, all Ph.D. students are required to perform two terms of supervised teaching or document an equivalent amount of teaching experience.

CANDIDACY EXAMINATION (FORM D-2)

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.

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). Written and then oral sections of the examination will be conducted in that order and evaluated by the dissertation committee. These exams will test the student's competence and mastery of their field of specialization.

The student’s major professor acts as the chair of the committee and is responsible for scheduling written and oral examination sections, collecting exam questions, returning answers to the committee members and instructing outside committee members as to their responsibilities. The major professor must also communicate

to the Biological Sciences Graduate Office the exact date when the examination sections will be held. The student should meet with each committee member prior to the examination and request reading materials. All committee members without exception are required to provide questions for the written portion. The format and type of questions should be determined by the entire committee and communicated to the student at least two months prior to the examination. The written portion should precede the oral portion.

After the student completes the written portion, the major professor returns the answers to all committee members and requests feedback. Each committee member should provide feedback to the student about their performance on the written section and indicate which areas of concern will be included, among others, as topics of oral exam questions. The oral section should be scheduled only if all committee members *agree that the student can take the oral portion of the exam*. Failure to pass one or more subject areas of the 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.

If the student passes the written portion, the oral portion needs to be scheduled between one week to four weeks after the completion of the written portion. The oral portion must be held on the FIU campus. All committee members must actively participate in the examination (either in person or remotely, e.g. via phone or videoconferencing).

After completion of the candidacy examination, the student must submit form D-2 along with the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Qualifying/Candidacy Exam form to the Graduate office within one week, indicating the results (Pass or Fail). Students who fail the examination are entitled to a re-examination. Re-examination 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.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

A graduate student is not a candidate for the Ph.D. degree until granted formal admission to candidacy by completion of Form D-2 (Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy). This form requires signatures from the student's major professor, the Graduate Program Director, and the Dean of the University Graduate School. Approval is based on:

- completion of coursework specified in the Program of Study, including the Quantitative Skills Requirement
- successful completion of the Candidacy Examination

A student may not enroll for dissertation credits until the term after they are admitted to candidacy. At least three terms must elapse between admission to candidacy and submission of the D-3 and awarding of the Ph.D. degree.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL (FORM D-3)

During their first term, students should write a brief outline of their proposed research project. 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 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. Students must also prepare a five-page summary of the proposal to be submitted with form D-3 after the proposal defense seminar.

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

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

Sections 1-3 of the formal proposal shall be a minimum of 20 pages double-spaced with 12 pt. font (approximately 11 pages, single spaced). All Ph.D. candidates are encouraged to submit this proposal to an appropriate funding agency, as determined by the faculty supervisory committee.

Dissertation committee members should review the formal proposal and return it to the student along with their comments no later than two weeks from the date of receipt of the formal research proposal. After revisions, the student should resubmit the proposal to all dissertation committee members for final approval. If necessary, the major professor should poll the dissertation committee regarding the acceptability of the revised proposal. If deemed unacceptable to one or more of the dissertation committee members, the student or the student's 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 Biological Sciences Graduate Committee for mediation.

The student is responsible for scheduling the presentation of the proposal at a time convenient to the supervisory committee members and the faculty of the Biological Sciences Department during regular business hours. The student must also adequately advertise the proposal seminar at least one week in advance of the presentation with appropriate signage, and via email by sending the Graduate Director a copy of the announcement. **The term after the proposal is successfully presented**, the student should register for BSC 7961 Dissertation Proposal Seminar.

Immediately following presentation of the proposal seminar and a public question period, the public audience shall be asked to leave and the committee and major professor will remain for a defense of the proposal and research plan.

After successful completion of the proposal seminar, the major professor should send a memo (with the proposal seminar announcement attached) to be put in the student's file (see student progress memos) as well as the D-3.

ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETING (ANNUAL STUDENT EVALUATION AND MENTORING PLAN FORM)

Each doctoral student is required to meet annually with their dissertation committee after the D-1 has been filed. The Department of Biological Sciences does an in-department Annual Graduate Student Evaluation to ensure students are making progress to completion of their dissertation. This is performed by meeting with a member of the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee and going through annual progress and issues, as recorded on the Annual Graduate Student Evaluation form (see form at end of handbook). In the spring term, each student is assigned a BSc Graduate Committee member; the student arranges to meet with the assigned member, who conducts the evaluation. Students with unsatisfactory evaluations are given direction and deadlines for becoming satisfactory. Failure to become satisfactory may lead to dismissal from the program. This Departmental review is described more fully below (GRADUATE REVIEW)

In addition, each student and major professor must submit an on-line annual student evaluation and mentoring plan to the University Graduate School, which includes certification of the annual meeting of the dissertation committee. Meeting for the oral portion of the candidacy exam and for the dissertation proposal defense qualify as annual committee meetings. The performance summary and future goals sections must be completed by the major professor with input from the committee members. The student, the major professor, and the committee members sign off electronically on this evaluation, which then goes to the Graduate Program, Director, the Dean's Office, and then the UGS.

DISSERTATION

A dissertation is required of all candidates for the Ph.D. degree and must conform to the format outlined in the Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Manual available to students online from the Graduate School (http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Graduate_Packet_For_Dissertations2020.pdf) Once a student advances to candidacy, the student must be continuously enrolled in at least three credits each term including summer term until she/he graduates. Students will receive IP (In Progress) grades for Doctoral Dissertation (BSC 7980) credits until the final term. Grades will be changed from IP to P as soon as the candidate successfully defends the dissertation and the major professor files a grade of P for Doctoral Dissertation (BSC 7980).

PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION & REQUEST FOR ORAL DEFENSE (FORM D-5)

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. The examination will be based primarily on the dissertation research and related topics. The dissertation defense is a university requirement and, thus, the defense must be scheduled and held to comply with University deadlines. The University Graduate School publishes their deadlines for the last date of submission of Form D-5 on their website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/-doctoral>). The College of Arts, Sciences and Education publishes both the University Graduate School and the College deadlines on their website (<https://case.fiu.edu/academics/graduate/important-deadlines/index.html>) which can be accessed from the Biological Sciences Graduate Program website. A copy of the near-final draft of the dissertation, formatted in accordance with University guidelines, a copy of the defense seminar announcement, and a completed D-5 form must be filed with the Graduate Program Director **5 weeks** before the defense date

(the College deadline is 4 weeks before the defense and the University Graduate School deadline is 3 weeks before the defense). The Dean of our College and the Dean of the Graduate School adhere strictly to the deadlines for the last date of defense and to the rules about the 4 and 3 weeks, respectively, for receipt of documents. Thus, the student who does not comply with these deadlines will be forced to reschedule the defense on a new date, which may require enrollment in another term.

The entire dissertation committee must sign the D-5 form. When they sign, they are agreeing with the following: “My signature below affirms that I have read the dissertation and find it provisionally acceptable. In addition, I attest that the defense announcement is an accurate abstract of the dissertation.” In order for them to be able to sign this, they must have seen the entire dissertation and have had the opportunity to read and comment on it beforehand. It is advisable to give them the draft dissertation at least two weeks in advance of asking them to sign the D-5. Thus, the dissertation really needs to be done 7 weeks prior to the final UGS deadline, in order to the committee members time to evaluate the final dissertation and the student time to respond to criticisms and suggestions prior to the 5-week deadline for filing of the D-5 with the BSc Graduate program.

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 rubrics forms can be downloaded from the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education Graduate Program website: <https://case.fiu.edu/academics/graduate/index.html>. A student who fails the dissertation defense may be allowed a second defense, on recommendation of the dissertation committee. If re-examination is necessary, the examination cannot be held earlier than six months or more than one year from the date of the first examination.

THE FINAL DOCUMENT (FINAL ETD APPROVAL FORM)

When a student successfully defends the dissertation, committee members and the major professor may suggest changes in the content of the final document. When those changes have been completed to the satisfaction of the dissertation committee, one paper copy of the final version of the dissertation (for College of Arts & Sciences & Education) must be presented to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Director with the accompanying Electronic Thesis and Dissertation form two days before it is due at CASE. The Graduate Program Office will make a copy of the form and submit the dissertation to the College who will submit it to the Graduate School.

Applying For Graduation

The final step after a successful defense is to apply for graduation. To apply for graduation, log into your MyFIU account and select ‘Academic Records’, then ‘Apply for Graduation’. Please don’t forget to check the deadline at the UGS website. For more information, please go to: <https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/>

If you missed the deadline to apply, please submit a ‘Late Graduation Application’ form.

(<https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/all-forms/>) If, for any reason, a student is unable to graduate after applying for graduation you must submit a ‘Graduation Cancellation form’. Please email biograd@fiu.edu for the form.

SEE THIS PAGE FOR ALL UGS STUDENT FORMS:

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

Ph.D. CHECKLIST

A checklist of steps in your progress through the Ph.D. program is appended below. Fill this out as you move through your degree program.

FIU BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE PROGRAM – PhD PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Submitting forms for signatures

1. Please use DocuSign (<https://docusign.fiu.edu>) for signatures.
2. Send M forms with supplement documents as PDF files to Biograd@fiu.edu for the remaining signatures. (GPD, Dean) Dean will sign the form and send it off to UGS via email, copying everyone.

Checklist

_____ **1. First Committee meeting memo:**

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

_____ **Dissertation Committee Appointment (D-1):**

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/D-1-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf>

_____ **Non-FIU Commitment Form:**

https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NonFIUcommitmentMemo_02032021Writable.pdf

At the end of the second term or no later than the end of the first year of study, the student should form a dissertation committee of at least five faculty members. A minimum of 3 members must be faculty members with at least a 50% appointment in the Department of Biological Sciences, at least one must be faculty member **outside the department but within FIU**. Once the committee is formed, D-1 should be completed by the student and submitted to the Biological Sciences Graduate office. Deadlines for the forms are on the UGS website. (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>).

An Important note about Deadlines: UGS deadlines are found on the UGS webpage, but most of your documents must go through the College (CASE), and they have a deadline of a week before the UGS deadline. Finally, your documents must go through the Department of Biological Sciences Graduate Program, which requires another week. **So, plan to turn your documents into the Department 2 weeks before the UGS deadline.**

_____ **Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee (D-1r):**

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/D-1r05082021.pdf>

If the composition of your dissertation committee is changed, students must submit a completed D-1r form to Biological Sciences graduate program. You must also include a memo from your Major Professor explaining why the change in committee membership is being made.

Annual Graduate Review (Department) – During the spring term, the student must schedule a meeting with their graduate reviewer (a member of the Graduate Committee). Guidelines can be found in the Graduate Policies & Procedures Manual (https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/assets/graduate_policies_procedures_manual.pdf), page 26.

Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring form (<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/doctoral-annual-student-evaluation/>) – Each PhD student is required to meet annually with their dissertation committee after the D-1 has been filed. The form is available on your my.fiu.edu Student portal under student's To Do List. The Due date is May 30th.

_____ **2. Course work.**

Core courses required of all PhD students include:

- Introduction to Biological Research* (BSC 6457:3credits) _____
- Quantitative skills (2 courses, 6 credits) † _____
- Dissertation Proposal Seminar (BSC 7961: 1 credit)[§] _____

- Supervised Teaching in Biology (BSC 5945: 2 credits) _____
- PhD Dissertation (BSC 7980: 15 credits) _____
- Dissertation Defense Seminar (BSC 7982: 1 credit)^f _____
- Workshops/laboratories (a minimum of 4 credits from at least 2 separate courses) _____
- Electives from courses offered by the Department of Biological Sciences (8 credits) _____

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

†Most common courses to fulfill the quantitative skills requirement are: STA 5126, STA 5206, STA 5507, STA 6166, STA 6167, STA 6176, BSC 5459

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

^fThe dissertation defense seminar (BSC 7982) is taken the term of the dissertation defense.

_____ 3. Qualifying/Candidacy Examination

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

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). 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.

_____ 4. Candidacy Exam Results (D-2)*

<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/D-2-Form01082018.pdf>

After the completion of the Qualifying/Candidacy Examination, the student must submit form D-2. The deadline for the form is available at UGS website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>, see note about deadlines above). Biological Sciences doesn't require the D-2 and D-3 to be submitted at the same time. A student may not enroll for dissertation credits until the term after the student is admitted to candidacy. At least three terms must elapse between admission to candidacy and submission of the D-3 and awarding of the PhD degree.

- **Section 1:** Needs to be approved by the dissertation committee to transfer credits. A maximum 36 credits can be transferred. **30 graduate credits must be included here.**
- **Section 2:** Comprehensive Examinations section is where you indicate you have passed the candidacy exam. (Field: *Written, Oral*, Grade: *Pass*, Date: *dd/mm/yyyy*.)
- **Section 3:** Quantitative skills requirement can be listed here. UGS requires the exact date for those classes.

*When the D-2 is approved by UGS, the student is advanced to the candidacy and 3 credits is considered full-time status.

_____ **5. Research 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. The student is responsible for scheduling the presentation of the proposal during regular business hours and must send an electronic version of the proposal announcement (Word format) to the Biological Sciences graduate office (biograd@fiu.edu) at least 1 week before the presentation date. **The term after the proposal is successfully defended, students should register for BSC 7961 (Dissertation Proposal Seminar).**

_____ 6. Doctoral Dissertation Proposal (D-3):

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/D-3-Instructions-and-Form-05142021.pdf>

After the Proposal defense seminar, student must prepare a five-page summary of the proposal to be submitted with form D-3. Student also need to submit a copy of Responsible Conduct of Research completion report. RCR instructions available here: <http://research.fiu.edu/rcr/>. If you are working with Human Subjects, include your IRB approval letter to the D-3. If you are working with chimeric organisms or are cloning organisms for your research, include your IBC approval letter with the D-3. The CASE deadline is one week prior to UGS deadlines. Deadlines for the forms are on the UGS website. (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>).

Dissertation Preparation Manual can be found at:

http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Graduate_Packet_For_Dissertations2020.pdf

7. Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense. (D-5):

<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/D-5-Instructions-and-Form-05082021.pdf>

How to submit your D5 form:

<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/d5m3submission/>

A hard copy of the near-final draft of the dissertation, a copy of the defense seminar announcement, and a completed D-5 form must be filed to Biology Graduate office **5 weeks** before the defense date. CASE deadline is 4 weeks before the defense (CASE Deadline: <https://case.fiu.edu/academics/graduate/index.html>) and UGS deadline is 3 weeks before the defense (UGS Deadline: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>)*. Students need to be enrolled in **BSC 7982** (Dissertation Defense seminar, 1 credit) in their final semester.

*Student 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.

*If one of your committee members will attend your defense remotely, please contact Biology graduate office. You will need a petition.

8. Apply for graduation. To check for deadlines and apply, [https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-](https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/)

[myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/](https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/)

For commencement, <https://commencement.fiu.edu/>

9. Final ETD Approval Form:

https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Final_ETD_Approval_Form05082021.pdf

After the student successfully defends, a hard copy of final version of the dissertation must be presented with the final ETD approval form to the Biology graduate office. Deadlines for the forms are on the UGS website.

(<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/>).

A final reminder: this is a quick overview. Details can be found in the Biological Sciences Graduate Policies and Procedures manual (Link below).

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

* **Biological Sciences Graduate Policies & Procedures Manual:**

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

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

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

***First Committee meeting form:**

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:** <https://onestop.fiu.edu/assets/forms/enrollment-adjustment-form.pdf>

Add/Drop after the deadline (Petition: <https://onestop.fiu.edu/assets/forms/student-petition-form.pdf>)

An Important note about Deadlines: UGS lists their deadlines on the UGS webpage, but most of your documents must go through the College (CASE), and they have a deadline of a week before the UGS deadline. Finally, your documents must go through the Department of Biological Sciences Graduate Program, which requires another week. **So, plan to turn your documents into the Department 2 weeks before the UGS deadline.**

ACTIVE STATUS AND TIME LIMITATIONS

Continuous registration will be required for all students accepted into 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. Students will be dismissed for non-enrollment if there is a lapse in enrollment for three consecutive terms.

At the Ph.D. level, all requirements, 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 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.

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 or 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 they feel 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, the student must schedule a meeting with their graduate reviewer, who is a member of the Graduate Committee, but not their major professor, or anyone serving on their graduate committee. 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. 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.

The guidelines used by the graduate reviewers are below. These guidelines have been provided so students can prepare themselves and their major professors adequately for the graduate review.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AND GRADUATE COMMITTEE REVIEWERS

For all students:

All students must submit a CV each year for their files. This CV will be updated yearly at each Departmental graduate review and will be used to document students' participation in scientific congresses, publications, and any special awards.

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

A student would be considered to have made excellent progress if she/he:

- formed a committee, met with the committee, distributed a draft proposal to the thesis committee, filed form M-1, and filed the departmental first committee meeting form
- scheduled the qualifying examination and thesis proposal seminar
- completed the quantitative skills requirement

Students who have not formed a 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. The qualifying examination and thesis proposal seminar do not have to be completed before the end of the spring term.

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

This is the ideal case that would be considered excellent progress. The student should have:

- formed a committee, met with the committee, distributed a draft proposal, and filed form D-1
- developed a program of studies
- completed the quantitative skills requirement
- completed or scheduled the teaching requirement
- discussed with the committee the qualifying examination and dissertation proposal seminar

Students who have not formed a committee should be given an unsatisfactory. To make up the unsatisfactory, the student should form a committee, file form D-1, have the committee meet and discuss the qualifying examination and dissertation proposal seminar. The qualifying examination and dissertation proposal seminar do not have to be scheduled to receive a satisfactory.

For all first-year students:

All students should complete their quantitative skills requirement by the end of the first year. If they are fulfilling it by statistics or computer classes, they must have made a reasonable plan to complete the requirement by the end of the second year.

Students who have formed a committee but not met with the committee should be given an unsatisfactory.

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 his or her progress. The student will receive an unsatisfactory, which can be made up by having a committee meeting and presenting a memo from their committee that evaluates their 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 6 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 given an 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 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 by the spring term of their second year are making excellent progress. Students who have not met these requirements should be given an unsatisfactory and have until the end of the summer term to complete them.

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 given an unsatisfactory until they have met with their dissertation committee. Students will have until the end of the summer term to make up the unsatisfactory.

Students who are planning to graduate must apply for graduation by the deadline announced in the University Academic Calendar. Forms D-5 and the ETD have specific deadlines set by the UGS and effectively mean that a defensible document should be completed within 6 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.

Recommendations for aid as well as admission into the program are based on the initial ranking of new students by their GRE and GPA scores. In addition, graduate students are encouraged to apply for external support for their graduate work (e.g., Sigma Xi, NSF, etc.). Proposals to funding agencies must have the approval of the Department of Biological Sciences and, in some cases, the Office of Sponsored Research Administration.

Information regarding financial assistance can be obtained from the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office or from the University Graduate School website (<http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/>). Graduate stipends for TA's and RA's and some tuition fee waivers (partial) are available to eligible students.

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 are conditions for renewal. The University Graduate School will not process your paperwork if you fall out of GPA compliance. Students will be notified before August 1 of each academic year regarding renewal of an assistantship, amount of stipend/tuition waiver and responsibilities for the following term.

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 research 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 the teaching demand of multiple-section high-enrollment laboratory courses.

Tuition Waivers:

- can cover the matriculation part of any course, but they 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.

See <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Graduate-Assistant-Handbook-Spring-2020.pdf> for the FIU Graduate Assistant Handbook).

DUTIES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS (TAs)

Teaching Assistants are expected to allocate 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 they must fill out the Advancement to Thesis or Dissertation Segment form**, which is found on the International Students and Scholar Service (ISSS) website at: https://iss.fiu.edu/_assets/docs/advancement-thesis-dissertation-2018.pdf. The student will need to check the 3-credit option when they are admitted to candidacy.

Assigned 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. 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.

SERVICE REQUIREMENT

All Graduate students, M.S. and Ph.D., regardless of form of support, are required to do 2 hrs./year of Departmental service. The 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. If you are a TA, the proctoring you do as part of your normal assignment does not count towards the service requirement. If you do not fulfill it, you will get an unsatisfactory in your annual review in which can affect your assistantship. For further information and questions, contact the Biological Sciences Graduate Program Office.

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 well in advance of the laboratory
- 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. 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

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 three 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 GPD 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 supervisory committee and the student.

A leave of absence 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 reported in detail in the University publication Rights and Responsibilities of Students. 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 (<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.

Sexual Harassment

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:

Elizabeth Canning

Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility

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>

FORMS AND MEMOS

University Graduate School Forms

(available as PDF files at <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms>)

M.S. FORMS

- Form M-1 Appointment of Thesis Committee
- Form M-1r Appointment of Revised Thesis Committee
- Form M-2 Master's Thesis Proposal
- Form CASE Annual Review Form (available from Biology Grad Office)
- Form M-3 Preliminary Approval of Thesis and Request for Oral Defense
- ETD Form Approval of Defense, Thesis, and Electronic Submission of Thesis.

Ph.D. FORMS

- Form D-1 Appointment of Dissertation Committee
- Form D-1r Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee
- Form D-2 Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy
- Form D-3 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal
- Form Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan Form
- Form D-5 Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense
- ETD Form Approval of Defense and Electronic Submission of Dissertation.

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 as PDF files 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 - 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: _____

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION – M.S. CANDIDATES

Master's candidates must take and pass an oral qualifying examination in order to demonstrate adequate progress toward 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 exam shall cover at least three subject areas specified by the student's supervisory committee. The student must be informed of the subject areas at least one month prior to the date of the examination. The form and content of the qualifying examination are determined by the student's supervisory committee. Students should meet with all committee members twice before the exam. During the first meeting, the topics and readings should be assigned. Questions regarding the assigned materials can be covered during the second meeting.

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 may not be conditional; i.e., the student either passes or fails the exam and cannot be passed contingent on the satisfactory completion of courses or submission of research papers. On successful completion of the qualifying examination, a written summary signed by the major professor should be placed into the student's graduate file (available on the website).

Students who fail their first qualifying examination can petition the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee for a second 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 may be either oral or written; this is at the discretion of the student's thesis committee. Students who fail the second examination are dismissed from the program.

CANDIDACY EXAMINATION – Ph.D. CANDIDATES

A candidacy examination is required of all students working toward the Ph.D. The candidacy examination has the goal to broaden and deepen the students' 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.

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). Written and then oral sections of the examination will be conducted in that order and evaluated by the dissertation committee. These exams will test the student's competence and mastery of his or her field of specialization.

The student's major professor acts as the chair of the committee and is responsible for scheduling written and oral examination sections, collecting exam questions, returning answers to the committee members and instructing outside committee members as to their responsibilities. The major professor must also communicate to the Graduate Office the exact date when the examination sections will be held. The student should meet with each committee member prior to the examination and request reading materials. All committee members without exception are required to provide questions for the written portion. The format and type of questions should be determined by the entire committee and communicated to the student at least two months prior to the examination. The written portion should precede the oral portion.

After the student completes the written portion, the major professor returns the answers to all committee members and requests feedback. Each committee member should provide feedback to the student about their performance in the written section and indicate which areas of concern will be included, among others, as topics of oral exam questions. The oral section should be scheduled only if all committee members *agree that the student can take the oral portion of the exam*. Failure to pass one or more subject areas of the examination constitutes a failure. Passing the examination cannot be conditional. The student either passes or fails on the performance on the exam and cannot be passed contingent on satisfactory completion of courses or submission of research papers.

If the student passes the written portion, the oral portion needs to be scheduled between one week to four weeks after the completion of the written portion. The oral portion must be held on the FIU campus. All committee members must actively participate in the examination (either in person or via *phone or videoconferencing*).

After completion of the candidacy examination, the student must submit form D2 to the Graduate office within one week indicating the results (Pass or Fail). Students who fail the examination are entitled to re-examination. Re-examination 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 Graduate Committee.

**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.