DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

MS PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

This graduate manual is intended for the informational use of graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences. Its purpose is to bring together pertinent information essential for Biological Sciences graduate students and is meant to supplement and clarify guidelines for graduate study published by other FIU sources. 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, as a roadmap for the graduate program. Each student must read these policies and sign the statement below. This statement must be submitted to the Graduate Program for addition to the student's file.

Version 16
Fall 2026

I have received and read the Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual

_____

Name Signature Date

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ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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

- a bachelor's degree (B.A./B.S.) in a relevant discipline such as Biology, Botany, Zoology, Microbiology, Genetics or Chemistry; or a bachelor's degree in another field and upper division coursework in biology.

- a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during upper division coursework (the last 60 hours of the undergraduate degree) or a graduate degree from an accredited institution.

- a Statement of Purpose, which should address why the Student wants to pursue graduate studies, any previous research experience, the reason for choosing the FIU Biology Graduate Program, and interest in working with a particular Faculty member. The statement should not exceed 3 pages.

- the applicant's current Resume or Curriculum Vitae (CV). This document must be complete, accurate, and representative of the applicant's experience. Be advised that if an admissions recommendation is made, the content of the Resume/CV document must be consistent with information later be provided to, and verified by, the FIU Human Resources team.

- *official* transcripts from all institutions attended previously for Bachelor's and (where applicable) Master's degree education. To be considered "official", the transcripts must be sent *directly to FIU admissions from the Student's degree-granting institution(s), or from an authorized third party service* such as Parchment or the National Student Clearinghouse. International transcripts are further subject to the NACES requirement, described below. All official transcripts must be directed to *FIU Graduate Admission*s to ensure inclusion of this information in each applicant's admission file, per the instructions provided here: https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/submit-transcripts/

- A minimum of *two* recommendation letters of recommendation, which speak to the applicant's academic and professional credentials, are required for M.S. applicants. Professors and/or senior supervisors are preferred sources for these letters. Letters from postdocs, peers or relatives are not considered. Please note that these recommendation letters are separate from the Faculty sponsor letter discussed below.

- a Faculty sponsor, who must be a Faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences or have a courtesy appointment in the Department, authorized to serve as Major Professor. The Major Professor is a member of the University Graduate Faculty who will direct the Student's research in consultation with the Thesis Committee. Applicants are encouraged to contact Faculty directly, to find prospective Faculty sponsors.

  Faculty sponsors must submit a letter directly to the Graduate Program expressing their commitment to serving as the Major Professor for the applicant. The memo should include an explanation of why the sponsor is interested in that particular applicant, in what capacity they know the applicant, any form of contact the sponsor has had with the applicant and what form of financial support will be available to support the applicant, if accepted at FIU.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

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

- demonstrate proficiency in English by achieving a minimum score of 4.5 on the iBT/TOEFL if taken after Jan 1, 2026, otherwise an 80 on the iBT or equivalent, if taken before Jan 1, 2026. Other acceptable demonstrations of proficiency include a minimum score of 6.5 overall on the IELTS, a minimum score of 110 on the DuoLingo test or English Language Institute certification of satisfactory completion of all content areas with at least level six proficiency. Test scores must be sent *directly from the official agency to FIU Graduate Admissions* at: GradAdm@fiu.edu

  English Proficiency Exempt countries are listed here: https://admissions.fiu.edu/international/graduate-school/english-language-proficiency/

- have their transcripts translated and certified, prior to the Departmental application deadline. This service is provided by NACES-associated institutions, which forward the documents to FIU Graduate Admissions after authentication/scaling steps are complete. Processing time may vary, and applicants are recommended to initiate this process before applying to FIU.

  A summary of the translation/certification requirement, and FIU-associated NACES institutions, is included here: https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/submit-transcripts/

  Please note that if an FIU-associated NACES organization is used, transcript information will be readily accessible to FIU Graduate Admissions. If a non-associated NACES organization is used, the applicant must specifically notify Graduate Admissions when the transcript is ready, so it can be retrieved. The Grad Admissions team can be contacted at: GradAdm@fiu.edu

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

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Although Florida International University has a rolling admissions policy, the **Department of Biological Sciences has one application deadline per year, and that is for Fall admissions. Applications for Assistantships in Biological Sciences for the Fall term must be completed by December 1st.**

Prospective candidates must submit an on-line application for admission into the graduate program and must pay a $30.00 application fee. This fee cannot be waived by the Biological Sciences Graduate Program.

The application goes to the FIU Graduate Admissions office, and is found at: https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/graduate-applicant/applications/index.html

Further information on the Graduate Admissions process is here: https://admissions.fiu.edu/how-to-apply/graduate-applicant/steps-to-apply/index.html

When FIU Graduate Admissions has received a prospective Student's application, application fee, official transcripts and official test scores (when applicable), Statement of Purpose, CV or Resume, and all required recommendation letters, the application to be considered complete, and ready for review by prospective Faculty

sponsors. Applications that are complete, that also have the support of a Faculty sponsor letter are advanced to the Biological Sciences Graduate Committee for admissions consideration.

The Biological Sciences Graduate Committee (composed of six Biology Faculty members with Graduate Faculty Status) makes admissions decisions based on the applicant's qualifications, match to the program, and availability of funding. Admitted Students must have sponsorship by a Faculty member with Graduate Faculty Status in Biological Sciences, as well as a 2-year support plan, which may include Research Assistantship, Graduate Assistantship and/or fellowship support. Applicants sponsored by Faculty members from other Departments with a courtesy appointment in Biological Sciences must provide a guarantee of funding for at least two years.

Decisions on Fall Assistantships are made in February and March. Any applicant who fails to meet admissions criteria may appeal the admission decision to the Departmental Graduate Committee.

Overall, it's best practice is to make sure all application materials are submitted by the December 1st deadline. **Incomplete applications are not considered for admission to the Biological Sciences MS Program.**

THE MASTER'S (MS) PROGRAM

PROGRAM STANDARDS

Academic and Research Integrity Overview:

The Biological Sciences Graduate Program is proud to be part of a supportive academic environment at FIU. All Student participants in the MS Program are expected to pursue their degrees with Academic Integrity (in class-related activities) as well as Research Integrity (in research-related activities).

> Academic Integrity is discussed in detail, in the Student Conduct and Honor Code linked below: https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/
>
> Research Integrity policies are also presented here: https://research.fiu.edu/ored/ori/ Upcoming workshops and events are shown at the bottom of the page.
>
> *A shared requirement of Academic and Research Integrity practices is that Students must avoid Fabrication, Falsification and Plagiarism*. https://research.fiu.edu/research-misconduct/

Use of Large Language Models (AI) must be discussed with Instructors, the Major Professor and Thesis Committee, where applicable. Students are accountable for knowing and following all guidelines on AI use from FIU and the University Graduate School.

> FIU Acceptable Use Guidelines on AI: https://it.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/AI-Acceptable-Use-Guideline.pdf
>
> UGS Guidelines for the Use of AI in Graduate Research, Theses, and Dissertations: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Guidance-for-the-Effective-and-Responsible-use-of-AI-in-Dissertations.pdf

Integrity in Writing:
Development of writing skills is a core component of a Student's participation in the MS Program. Guidance specific to writing is provided below.

Originality and Sourcing:

- As a general rule, written work in courses taken by the Student, and in the Student's research activity, is expected to reflect *original writing by the Student*, with verified citations of academic sources also provided by the Student in their writing.
- Students are recommended to review Plagiarism avoidance information posted on the FIU Libraries website, to confirm awareness of the info: https://library.fiu.edu/education/plagiarism
  The links to "Test Your Plagiarism IQ" and "Learn about Plagiarism" are helpful.
- Students are encouraged to discuss originality and sourcing with course Instructors, the Major Professor and Thesis Committee. Best practice is to ask questions before writing begins, to ensure that writing is carried out in accord with originality and sourcing requirements.

Authorship:

- Authorship practices are to be discussed between the Student and Major Professor. It is the Student's responsibility to check with the Major Professor on any aspect of authorship that is unclear.
- As a general rule, work involving multiple authors is to be reviewed and approved by all authors prior to posting, presentation or publication of the findings.
- Public research disclosures are permitted only with consent and approval of the Major Professor.

Research Integrity Training:
Students are required to complete applicable trainings that support Responsible Conduct of Research and avoidance of Conflict of Interest in their research. It is best to complete these trainings as soon as possible upon starting in the MS program, with awareness that trainings must be renewed on an as-needed basis.

Responsible Conduct of Research:
All Students are required to complete RCR training. This is encouraged upon starting in the program, so that all Students have up-front awareness of this information.

- RCR trainings are completed at the CITI portal: https://research.fiu.edu/rcr/training/
- Student should select the type of RCR training most appropriate to the project:

  Biomedical RCR: for Students whose research requires molecular analyses.
  Physical Science RCR: for Students working on non-molecular projects.
  Social and Behavioral RCR: for Students doing Biology Education research work.

- Students must keep a copy of the RCR scoring sheet and completion certificate.
- Please note that the RCR completion information will be required as an attachment the Student's M-2 (project proposal) form while participating in the MS program.

Conflict of Interest:
All Students must complete the CITI Conflict of Interest training. The Graduate Program recommends doing this in the first year. Directions here on how to access the course: https://research.fiu.edu/coi/training/

Students will receive a separate, email-based request to complete Outside Activity/Conflict of Interest Reporting once a year (usually in Fall). This reporting is mandatory for all research-involved Graduate Students as well as Postdocs and Faculty.

Directions for OA/COI reporting: https://research.fiu.edu/coi/coi-process/

Step 1: Please fill out the OA/COI form as advised on the website.

Step 2: If the CITI Conflict of Interest online training has not yet been completed, the Student must complete the CITI COI course immediately.

Steps 3-5: Students must consider these and discuss with the Major Professor if applicable.

Research Safety Training:

To support a climate of wellness and security at FIU, Students are required to complete all applicable safety trainings below and put the information into practice on a daily basis.

Environmental Health and Safety:

Training must be completed before beginning research work.

- Lab Safety training modules are provided by FIU EHS, with overall instructions provided here: https://ehs.fiu.edu/training/online-training/
- EHS training requirements depend on what type of lab work will be done. See the "Laboratory Training Matrix" link on this page: https://ehs.fiu.edu/training/courses-available/index.html
- Note that all EHS training modules are available through https://develop.fiu.edu/
- Students should keep copies of all safety training certificates on file at the lab, for review at any time needed by the Major Professor as well as EHS personnel.
- Students must re-take the training modules at intervals required by the expiration date on each certificate.
- Students are required to follow the safety requirements outlined by these trainings at all times when working in the laboratory.

Human Subjects, Animal Subjects or Recombinant DNA work:

Additional training must be completed by all Students whose work will be carried out in association with a Major Professor's IRB, IACUC or IBC approved project.

- Students can navigate to Citi training requirements for IRB, IACUC and IBC by clicking on the corresponding link at this website: https://research.fiu.edu/ored/ori/
- Note: Students only need to complete the training that is specific to the Major Professor's project approvals: usually IRB *or* IACUC *or* IBC (not *all* of them).
- Students should keep copies of all CITI training certificates on file at the lab, for review at any time by the Major Professor as well other university staff.
- Students must re-take the training modules as required by the certificate expiration date.
- Students are required to follow the requirements outlined by these trainings at all times while the applicable research is being conducted.

IT Security:

Cybersecurity training is necessary to shield institutional as well as personal electronic devices from cyberattacks. This is important to protect sensitive data and information resources.

- Students will be notified by email (usually in Fall) to take the Cybersecurity training, which is available at: https://develop.fiu.edu
- Students should use their *employee credentials* to log in when taking this course.
- The first run through this course takes some time—Students should plan accordingly.
- In future years of the Cybersecurity training, Students will only have to re-take modules identified as needed by an assessment quiz at the beginning of the course.

Data security is also important to maintain research continuity and pre-publication confidentiality.

- Research data must be "backed up" so that copies are available even if the original becomes corrupted. Data backups can be stored on physical hard drives, approved electronic sources accessible through the University, such as OneDrive or the FIU Research Data Portal (https://rdm.fiu.edu/dataverse/) or any official storage resource appropriate to the Student's research area. Students should discuss data storage practices with the Major Professor.
- Students must carry out best practices from Cybersecurity training at all times, to ensure that logins and passwords remain secure and workstations protected from viruses, worms and ransomware.
- Students must ensure confidentiality of pre-publication findings. Research data cannot be publicly released or shared in any capacity unless the Major Professor has specifically authorized it.
- When traveling to conduct research or present at scientific meetings/conferences, Students must also follow all IT regulations associated with Import/Export Controls, to ensure security of proprietary files including research data.

General awareness:

Students are expected to comply with and support security standards at all times. Students should have their Panther ID cards available to access secure areas as needed. Doors to secured areas should not be propped open, especially when spaces are unattended, during late evening hours, or EHS, IACUC, IBC and/or IRB policies have specified otherwise.

If police assistance is required at any time, even to help a Student who is accidentally locked out or lost an important item, FIU PD can be contacted as below.

MMC station: Emergency: (305) 348-5911 Non-emergency: (305) 348-2626
BBC station: Emergency: (305) 919-5911 Non-emergency: (305) 348-2626
Email: fiupd@fiu.edu

MS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The M.S. degree is conferred on individuals in recognition of 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.

Progress toward the Student's degree involves completing coursework and studying materials required by their Thesis Committee, performing original research and proposing a project based on that, and lastly writing up the results of that research as a Thesis and presenting it in a public forum.

Student progress through the program is formally documented through forms (M-1, M-2, M-3 and ETD) that formally record the requirements being met. Students also have an annual evaluation by the Department's Graduate Committee. Further details on program progression, progress and annual review are shared below.

THESIS COMMITTEE

With guidance from the Major Professor, the Student forms a Thesis Committee to direct the Student's research. The Thesis Committee must be formed by the end of the second term for all full-time Students, or prior to the completion of 12 credits for part-time Students. The Thesis Committee must consist of *at least three FIU Faculty members*, with the Major Professor and FIU-based Committee members also holding Graduate Faculty Status. The CASE Graduate Faculty list is here: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/facultystaff/#toggle-id-11

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

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

1. the CV of the outside member
2. the Non-FIU Commitment Form, completed and signed by the outside committee member. This form is located under the header "Thesis Forms" at: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/

Thesis Committee member scenarios in accord with these guidelines are shown as examples below. Other combinations are also possible, as long as minimum Committee composition is met.

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

** includes major professor*

Under no circumstances may an external Committee member serve as the chair of the Student's Thesis Committee. External members also may not be relatives or paid supervisors of the Student.

The Thesis Committee functions to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students should play an active role in the selection of their Thesis Committee members and must arrange to meet formally with the Thesis Committee at least once a year to ensure that each Committee member is fully informed of the Student's progress. *The Student must also notify Thesis Committee members about forms that require their approval, and follow up as needed to ensure timely completion*.

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

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

An **M-1 form** should be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Office (Biograd@fiu.edu) upon formation of the Thesis Committee.

The M-1 form is under the header "Thesis Forms" here: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/
Please note that this form is to be filed *before the first committee meeting is held*.

Students must complete informational fields on the M-1 per the directions, and also organize Committee signatures via DocuSign. Proactive follow-up by the Student may be needed to ensure the form is signed. Administrative signatures on the form will be coordinated by the Graduate Program afterwards.

The Student must *also provide attachments specified by the checklist* on the form:

1. The first required item is proof of enrollment, which is met by providing a current copy of the Student's class schedule. Please navigate to *my.fiu.edu* and click on the "manage classes" icon, then go to the "print schedule" link at the top left of the page, and click "download" at the top right to get a .pdf of this.
2. If an individual joining the Committee is outside of FIU, the attachments below are also required:
   - the CV of the outside member, and
   - a *signed and completed* copy of the Non-FIU Commitment Form, which can be found under the header "Thesis Forms" at: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/

After approval of the M-1 form by the Graduate Program, the form sent forward to the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education, which, upon approval, sends it to the University Graduate School. A copy of the signed form is placed into the Student's file by the Graduate Program. No further action is required by the Student during these steps, unless specifically requested by the CASE or the University Graduate School.

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

- Walk the Committee through the project proposal outline and get Committee feedback on it.
- Discuss AI use that is planned in association with project development/execution.
- Have the Committee review courses taken thus far, by examination of prior transcripts.

- Ask the Committee for a recommended program of study, appropriate to the student's project. See the "Program of Study" section below (pg. 14) for further details.
- Formalize the topics to be covered by each Committee member on the student's qualifying exam. See the "Qualifying Examination" section below (pg. 22) for further details.
- Document possible transfer credits (if any) in a Memo signed by the Committee. See the "Transfer of Graduate Credits" section below (pg. 21) for more information on this process.

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

The First Committee Meeting memo is found on pg. 46 of this manual, and also under the Biological Sciences "Student Resources" header at: https://case.fiu.edu/biology/index.html
The memo must be approved by the whole Committee via DocuSign.

Plan for holding future Committee meetings: Each MS Student is required to meet annually with the Thesis Committee after the M-1 form has been filed. Other milestone events (such as the oral qualifying exam, Thesis proposal seminar and Thesis defense seminar) also satisfy this requirement in years when those events occurred. *Synchronous attendance by all members is required to have the event on record as a Thesis Committee meeting.* Separate meetings with individual Committee members do *not* count as a Committee meeting.

Changing Thesis Committee members: The composition of a Thesis Committee may need to be changed during a Student's progression through the graduate program. If this becomes necessary, the Student must submit a completed M-1r form to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, including a memo from the Major Professor explaining why the change is required.

If the Student requests a change of the Major Professor, the Student should submit a written request to the Graduate Program office for approval. If the Student already has an approved M-2 on file, and the research project has changed significantly in association with the Committee change, a five-page summary of the new Thesis project must be submitted along with the M-1r form.

Students must complete informational fields on the M-1r per the directions, and also organize Committee signatures via DocuSign. Proactive follow-up by the Student may be needed to ensure the form is signed. Administrative signatures on the form will be coordinated by the Graduate Program afterwards.

The Student must also provide *attachments specified by the checklist* on the form, listed here:

1.) The first required item is proof of enrollment, which can be met by providing a current copy of the Student's class schedule. To access the schedule, please navigate to *my.fiu.edu* and click on the "manage classes" icon, then go to the "print schedule" link at the top left of the page, and click "download" at the top right to get a .pdf copy of the document.

2.) If the individual added to the Committee is outside of FIU, the attachments below are also required:
   - the CV of the outside member, and
   - a signed, *completed* copy of the Non-FIU Commitment Form, under the header "Thesis Forms" at: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/

After approval of the M-1r form by the Graduate Program, the form sent forward to CASE which, upon approval, sends it to UGS. A copy of the signed form is placed into the Student's file with the Graduate Program Office. No further action is required by the Student during these steps, unless specifically requested by the CASE Graduate Dean or the University Graduate School.

COURSES – PROGRAM OF STUDY

A program of study is recommended for all MS Students, and should be discussed by the Thesis Committee at its first formal meeting. The recommended program of study should be attached to the First Committee Meeting memo filed with the Department. All courses must be passed with a C or better to count toward candidacy.

Any recommended program of study should include courses required by the Department, courses essential for the Student's particular research area, and courses that rectify weaknesses in the Student's background, if needed. Any remedial courses identified by the Thesis Committee as necessary must be taken during the first two terms of participation in the Master's program. A maximum of six credits may be taken at the 4000 level, at the discretion of the Student's Thesis Committee. Note that *students on a graduate assistantship (GAs and RAs) may not use their tuition waiver to register for undergraduate credits (4000 or lower).* Students may not audit courses using their tuition waivers either. Remedial and audited courses must be paid for by the Student.

Core courses required of all M.S. Students:
All required courses are specified in the Graduate Catalog: https://catalog.fiu.edu/programs/BIOL:MS
These are summarized below in terms of pre-candidacy and post-candidacy courses.
Please note that none of these courses can be waived.

Pre-candidacy courses:

- **Introduction to Biological Research** (BSC 6457; 3 credits, taken during the first term in the program)
- **Quantitative Skills** (a minimum of 6 credits in 2 or more separate courses)
- **Workshops/ laboratories** (a minimum of 4 credits over 2 or more separate courses)
- **Electives** from courses offered by the Department of Biological Sciences (16 credits)

Quantitative Skills requirement:

To ensure that Biology Graduate Students have quantitative skills, the Department requires Students to take two or more courses, totaling to a minimum of *six credits*, of graduate level computer programming, statistics or mathematics. This is often achieved through enrollment in two different (3-credit) statistics courses. Courses

that students commonly take to satisfy the quantitative skills requirement, and have been approved by the Faculty to do so, are listed here:

Topics in Biology BSC 5935 can count toward the Quantitative Skills Requirement in certain instances, for sections taught with a heavy programming or quantitative emphasis. It is also possible for certain workshop courses to count toward the quantitative skills requirement, if the workshops category has already been met by other workshop courses. Please note that a quant-eligible workshop cannot count toward both the quants *and* the workshops requirement. A course can only count toward one category.

course code	course title	credits	notes
STA 6244	Data Analysis I	3	
STA 5126	Fund. Design Of Exp.	3	
STA 5206	Design Of Exper I	3	
STA 5236	Regression Analysis	3	
STA 5507	Nonparametric Meth	3	
STA 6166	Stat Meth Res I	3	
STA 6167	Stat Meth Res II	3	
STA 6176	Biostatistics	3	
PHZ 6255	Molecular Biophysics	3	
PHC 6052	Biostatistics I	3	
PHC 7083	Advanced Bayesian Inference	3	
PCB 5328	Spatial Ecology	3	
PCB5405	Biochemical Ecology	3	
PCB 6468	Design and Analysis	3	
OCB 6716	Fish population dynamics	3	
GLY 5758	GIS and Spatial Analysis for Earth Scientists	3	
The Bayesian statistics course offered thru the FIU/UM exchange program also counts.		3	Program description here: https://www.grad.miami.edu/graduate-education/um-fiu-exchange-program/index.html

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

<u>Workshop Requirement:</u>

To ensure opportunities have been provided for hands-on experience in use of practical methods, the Department requires Students to take *two or more workshop courses*, totaling to a minimum of *four credits*. Workshops have traditionally been hands-on courses, where students learn how to sequence DNA, analyze sequence data, measure respiration in a plant, learn how to use a confocal microscope, learn how to program in R, learn how to do CRISPR, or learn how to use GIS to analyze data, for example.

Courses that students commonly take to satisfy the workshop requirement include those listed to the right:

course code	course title	credits	notes
BCH 6133C	Ws:Dna Sequencing	1	
BOT 5648	Ws: Aquatic Plants	1	
BOT 5924	Wkshp In Trop Fam	3	
BOT 6926C	Ws: Plt Nutr Anal	1	
BSC 6314	WS DNA Instrument	1	
BSC 6920	Workshop: Vessel Ops	1	
BSC 6925C	WS Non-Human DNA	1	
GLY 5266	Stable Isotope Bgch	3	
OCB 6927C	Workshop in Scientific Diving	2	
BSC 6926	Workshop Biology	1 or 2	* (depending on what was covered in the course)
PCB 6417	WS Model Behav Ecol	1	*
BSC 5893C	Workshop: Intermediate R for Biologists	1	*
BSC 5927	Workshop: Introductory R for Biologists	1	*

* Starred courses can count toward the quantitative skills requirement, if the workshop requirement has already been satisfied by other courses

Workshops in Biology BSC 6926 can similarly count toward the quantitative skills in certain instances, for sections taught with a heavy programming or quantitative emphasis.

It should be noted that *credits associated with workshops may vary*. A 1-credit workshop involves a 13-hour time commitment within the term of enrollment. A 2-credit workshop represents a 26-hour time commitment within the term of enrollment, per university policy.

Detail on selection of Electives:
Any non-required, 5000+ level course listed in the Graduate Catalog counts as an elective. This includes the Ecology series (PCB 5423 and PCB 5443), the Molecular/Cell series (PCB 6025 and PCB 6027), and Student Research Lab BSC 6913. Descriptions of courses available thru Biological Sciences are listed in the online course catalog below. Note that all course numbers at 5000 and above are graduate-level:
https://catalog.fiu.edu/departments/BIOLSCI-2/courses

Frequency of course offerings:
Not all courses are taught in all terms. Course lists for each semester, described in the FIU Schedule of Classes, are made available to Students directly by the Graduate Program before each new semester begins. Because Students sometimes need to enroll in electives offered by more than one Department, the Schedule of Classes will be sent out for several departments: 1.) Department of Biological Sciences as well as 2.) Earth & Environment, 3.) Math & Stats, 4.) Biostatistics and the 5.) Department of Teaching and Learning.

Post-candidacy courses:

- **Thesis Proposal Seminar (BSC 5931; 1 credit).**
  Students should enroll in this course only once, in the term AFTER the project proposal seminar is given.
- **Master's Thesis (BSC 6971; minimum 6 credits).**
  Taking more than 6 credits of BSC 6971 is acceptable if the project requires it.

Important notes about post-candidacy coursework:

1. *After a student advances to candidacy, UGS-issued tuition waivers no longer cover elective enrollment in courses other than BSC 5931, BSC 6971 or BSC 5975*. Though Students are still allowed to take other courses after advancing to candidacy, it's *expensive* to do so, because tuition for elective credits is charged directly to the Student in such case. The Biology Graduate Program recommends against taking any more pre-candidacy courses after having advanced to candidacy.
2. *Faculty will assign "IP" (In Progress) grades for Master's Thesis (BSC 6971) credits until the final term.* All grades for this course will be automatically changed to "P" after the Student successfully defends the Thesis, with the Major Professor filing a grade of "P" for the last term of Master's Thesis.
3. For the MS program*, it is optional (not required) for Students to enroll in the Thesis Defense Seminar* course (BSC 5975) during their final term.

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

OVERALL ENROLLMENT PLAN

Please be advised that *the number of credits each student should enroll in is not a single, standard number throughout program participation.* The number of credits may change in response to the Student's funding sources, whether the Student is domestic or international, whether the Student is pre-candidacy or post-candidacy, and which term is being considered (Fall/Spring vs. Summer).

The chart on the next page was generated in discussion with the University Graduate School that shows enrollment requirements for Students in a range of scenarios. This chart is based upon:

Policy #380.0441, #380.008: https://policies.fiu.edu/files/759.pdf https://policies.fiu.edu/files/783.pdf

The Graduate Assistant Handbook: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/assistantships/

And ISSS regulations: https://isss.fiu.edu/international-students/f-1-international-students/f-1-enrollment/index.html

Please be advised that the chart below may not apply if:

- The Student has *certain types of financial aid that require higher than minimum enrollment.*
- The Student is *supported specifically by an FIU staff tuition waiver*. HR Policy #1710.325 explains the requirements specific to staff tuition waivers: https://policies.fiu.edu/files/64.pdf

Biol:MS 2025 summary	Master's student enrollment minimum 36 credits required, as per grad catalog requirements. Standard plan: 2 year time to degree.			
Assistantship Scenarios (TA, RA, GA) This information is for both domestic AND international students	**status in program**	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Summer**
	Early-stage student, with pre-candidacy classes ongoing, and no M-2 form on file yet.	9 credits total per semester	9 credits total per semester	6 credits total per semester
	Student who has finished pre-candidacy classes AND has an approved M-2 form on file.	minimum 1 credit per semester	minimum 1 credit per semester	minimum 1 credit per semester
International students who are on self-support	**status in program**	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Summer**
	Early-stage student, with pre-candidacy classes ongoing, and no M-2 form on file yet.	9 credits total per semester	9 credits total per semester	enrollment optional for summer
	Student who has finished pre-candidacy classes AND has an approved M-2 form on file.	minimum 1 credit per semester	minimum 1 credit per semester	minimum 1 credit per semester
Domestic students who are on self-support	**status in program**	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Summer**
	Early-stage student, with pre-candidacy classes ongoing, and no M-2 form on file yet.	minimum 1 credit per semester	minimum 1 credit per semester	enrollment optional for summer
	Student who has finished pre-candidacy classes AND has an approved M-2 form on file.	minimum 1 credit per semester	minimum 1 credit per semester	minimum 1 credit per semester
Domestic students who are on fellowships	**status in program**	**Fall**	**Spring**	**Summer**
	Early-stage student, with pre-candidacy classes ongoing, and no M-2 form on file yet.	Plan to enroll within the limits of what the fellowship says. The minimum institutional requirement that must be met is 1 credit per semester.		
	Student who has finished pre-candidacy classes AND has an approved M-2 form on file.	Plan to enroll within the limits of what the fellowship says. . The minimum institutional requirement that must be met is 1 credit per semester.		
	Please note: International students who are on fellowships may have different requirements and must remain in compliance with ISSS.			

Important enrollment logistics:

Permissions for enrollment: Many graduate-level courses in Biological Sciences require permission by the Instructor of Record to enroll in the course. After such permission has been approved, either the Instructor of Record, or the Graduate Program Office can activate enrollment permissions in Panthersoft to enable Student enrollment in the course.

Please note that there are limitations on enrollment assistance by the Graduate Program Office.

- The Graduate Program is generally not able to input permissions on behalf of another Instructor of Record without visible confirmation of approval by that Instructor.
- The Graduate Program can only provide enrollment assistance on FIU Biological Sciences courses. Students wishing to enroll in courses provided by other programs must contact the corresponding Department, or the Graduate Program Director in that Department, to request assistance. A list of current Graduate Program Directors is provided here, to consult as needed. https://gradschool.fiu.edu/graduate-program-directors/
- Students wishing to enroll through the FIU/UM Exchange program must do so as per their posted instructions. Instructions for the FIU/UM Exchange Program are found on this page, under the header "Current Student Forms": https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/

  Please note that deadlines for the program above are about 6 weeks prior to the start of each term.

How to enroll:
Enrollment directions are here: https://onestop.fiu.edu/registration/class-registration/register-for-classes/
At this site, open the "Adding and Swapping Classes" menu, and then view "How to Add Classes".

Timing of Enrollment:
Students should plan to enroll well before add/drop week begins each term, so there is enough time to request assistance if needed. The deadline to enroll is *11:59pm on Sunday night before classes start* each term. Official FIU academic calendars can be found here: https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/

At the bottom of the page, select the appropriate year from the "Enrollment Calendars" option.

The benefits of enrollment *before the deadline*:

- Ability to update/change the schedule, cost-free.
- Better chance to get a seat in any limited-enrollment courses they may be interested in, such as specific workshop courses that are infrequently offered.
- Avoidance of the $100 late fee, for late enrollment.
- Enrolling early also gives Students a chance to find out early if there are any holds, such as an "insurance hold" that must be addressed for enrollment to proceed. Some holds are easy to resolve, whereas others require extended coordination with multiple Departments to resolve. Students can reach out to Biograd@fiu.edu to request assistance to discuss further if needed.

Accuracy of Enrollment:
Students are responsible for confirming that their enrollment is in accord with their Program of Study, FIU enrollment requirements and the Biological Sciences Graduate Program requirements. The *best strategy is error prevention, by confirmation of the enrollment plan prior to enrollment via direct consultation with the Major Professor*. If an enrollment issue has occurred despite advance consultation, the Student should next review the information below and then contact the Graduate Program Office if additional assistance is needed.

Specific enrollment issues, and their solutions include:

- *Enrollment swap needed (during add/drop week).* Students who are already enrolled may switch from one course section to another, *cost-free*, as long as the switch is completed during add/drop week. This type of course adjustment is do-able by the Student directly in panthersoft. Directions provided here: https://onestop.fiu.edu/registration/class-registration/register-for-classes/

At this site, open the "Adding and Swapping Classes" menu, and then view "How to Swap Classes".

If tech issues arise while swapping, it is important that the Student secure OneStop assistance before Add/Drop ends. OneStop contact information is provided below.

In-person location: SASC 116 (MMC campus) and AC1-100 (BBC campus)
Phone: 305-348-7000
Web chat: https://panther360.my.site.com/Chat/?alias=OneStopChat

These contact options above (*not email*) are recommended for the most timely response.

- *Late add or course swap (after add/drop week).* If enrollment must be carried out after add/drop week has ended, the Student must request special permissions through OneStop to enroll.

  Materials for a "late add" or "late swap" are found at the link below, under the header "Registration and Student Records", in the "DocuSign forms" section (scroll down a little to see the options):
  https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/

  Please navigate to the link that says "Important: Read This First" for directions on next steps.

  If a Student is registering late due to circumstances truly beyond their control, the Student may file a OneStop request to waive the late registration fee at below, under the header "Registration and Student Records", by clicking "Late Registration Fee Waiver" at: https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/

- *Late drop or reduction of credits (after add/drop week).* The approach for schedule reduction depends upon the Student's situation. It's important to be aware that the Student remains financially liable for enrollment changes made after add/drop week has concluded, and those costs can be significant. OneStop recommends that the Student check in before any schedule adjustment is made, to learn the extent of associated financial liability. (See above for OneStop contact information.)

  If a late schedule change is compelled by circumstances beyond the Student's control (such as mis-advisement, or a class being cancelled by the Department after the Add/Drop deadline has closed), the Student should contact the Graduate Program Director to request a memo of support, to be used in either of the follow up steps described below.

  For late reduction of credits associated with a single course, such as a decrease from 6 credits to 3 credits for the same course number, the Graduate Program Director must follow up with CASE and the Office of the Registrar to seek resolution.

  For a late drop of one or more courses, the Student can file a OneStop petition to request a "release from financial liability" for the necessary enrollment changes. The form can be found at the link below, under the header "Registration and Student Records", by clicking "Student Petition" at:
  https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/

  If late fees are being charged in association with the same late drop, the student can also file a "late payment fee appeal form: https://onestop.fiu.edu/finances/pay-for-tuition/late-payment-fee/

Billing questions: Student billing is managed by FIU Student Financials. To this end, the primary point of contact for questions regarding billing should be the Student Financials team.

Information on Student Financials and their services is here:

https://onestop.fiu.edu/finances/pay-for-tuition/contact-student-financials/index.html#csf

Student Financials contact information is provided here:
In-person location: SASC 101 (MMC campus) and AC1 140 (BBC campus)
Phone: 305-348-2126
Web chat: https://panther360.my.salesforce-sites.com/onestop

Students are welcome to confirm the basis for any charges they see billed to their accounts. The amounts charged for fees may change, so Students should refer to the current UGS posting of fees for the year and compare that information to the amount billed to their accounts. Please note that the per-credit fees are currently being posted under the "Tuition" header on Student billing statements.

The current Fees chart can be found at https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/assistantships/

After reaching this page, scroll down to where it says "Graduate Assistantship Program Summary Chart", and then click that title to pull up the sheet that shows current fees.

Because this fee chart is updated regularly, best practice is to navigate to the currently posted one.

If billing questions remain after the Student has reviewed expected fees and communicated with Student Financials, *especially if the Student believes that a tuition waiver has not posted correctly*, the Student should contact the Graduate Program Office for further assistance: Biograd@fiu.edu

TRANSFER OF GRADUATE CREDITS

What types of credit transfer are possible: Graduate credit transfers are subject to FIU policy 380.085. Please refer to this site for more details: https://policies.fiu.edu/files/128.pdf.

- If approved by the Thesis Committee, the MS program may accept up to 12 term hours of graduate course credit earned from a completed Graduate Certificate Program at another institution.
- A maximum of twelve term hours of graduate credit earned at FIU in a non-degree seeking status may be transferred directly to the MS degree if approved by the Thesis Committee.
- Students should also be advised that any 4-credit courses from previous institutions will transfer into the Biology Graduate Program as 3 credit courses, per instructions from the Office of the Registrar.

What types of credits are NOT transferred: It is not possible to transfer in undergraduate level course credits, credits from non-accredited academic programs, or any course with a B- or lower. The Graduate Program Office does not transfer in credits for courses that are unrelated to requirements of the Thesis project, nor credits for courses with no syllabus or course catalog description available. It is also not possible to re-transfer a course into FIU that has already been transferred to a different program previously.

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

Student and/or their Thesis Committee, are optional, but also generally helpful at the time the credit transfer request is being submitted.

Approval of transfer credits from prior courses is ultimately decided by the Graduate Program Director and the Office of the Registrar, based on FIU course equivalences and relevance to each Student's program of study. Credit transfer requests must be placed and completed, prior to the Student filing for advancement to candidacy. It is best to submit transfer requests to the Graduate Program during Summer term, or during Fall term at the latest, each year. Credits are generally not transferred during the Spring term due to the emphasis on admissions processing during that part of the year.

QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

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

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

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

Exam content and preparation: The form and content of the candidacy examination ultimately determined by the Student's Thesis Committee. The exam will cover at least three subject areas, with each Committee member responsible for a different topic area. Exam topics should be assigned during the first Committee meeting, with the Student informed of the subject areas at least one month prior to the date of the examination. Resources for exam preparation should be recommended to the Student by the Committee as soon as possible, to ensure time for Student preparation. Student questions about the assigned materials can be covered during a second meeting with individual Committee members, on an as-needed basis.

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

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

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

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

Ecology and Organismal Biology series: PCB 5423, PCB 5443

Molecular and Cell Biology series: PCB 6025, PCB 6027

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

After the qualifying exam:
Within one week of completing the qualifying exam, the Student must submit a signed Qualifying/Candidacy Exam Memo to the Graduate Program Office (Biograd@fiu.edu), to indicate the results (Pass or Fail), along with a written summary of the exam.

This memo must be approved by the whole Committee via DocuSign.

The Qualifying Exam/Candidacy memo is on pg. 47 of this manual, and also found here: https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/_assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy-exam-form.pdf

THESIS PROPOSAL (form M-2)

Timeline of proposal development: To facilitate project planning and identification of potential Committee members, Students should write a preliminary project proposal during their first term in the program. The preliminary proposal should be developed in consultation with the Major Professor. Full-time Students should submit the preliminary proposal to potential Thesis Committee members no later than the beginning of their second term; part-time Students should submit their preliminary proposal upon completion of 12 credits.

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

soon as possible after the qualifying exam has concluded. However, if the Student and Major Professor agree to proceed forward on the project proposal after the qualifying exam has been concluded, that is also fine to do.

Proposal format: The proposal can be modified in the format of any major funding agency, such as NSF or NIH, however advised by the Major Professor. In general, the proposal should address the following areas:

- Introduction and Aims - 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
- Experimental Plan
- Preliminary Results/Feasibility
- Timeline
- References

The Thesis project proposal that will be sent to the Student's Committee should be displayed in a readable font (11 or 12 point). The proposal content *should not exceed 20 pages* in length, including figures, tables and preliminary data. Please note that a title page and reference citation list do not count toward the page limit. As for all written work in the MS program, a *Student's Thesis proposal is expected to represent original academic writing generated by the Student*, to communicate the Student's proposed research project, with discussion and citation of peer-reviewed literature from the Student's field included where appropriate. Any AI use that is planned in association with project development/execution must be presented within the project proposal, for consideration by the Thesis Committee.

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

Proposal defense:
Scheduling: The Student is responsible for scheduling the presentation of the Thesis proposal at a time convenient for the Committee members and the Department of Biological Sciences: during regular business hours, and not during standard Departmental Faculty meeting times, weekends or over a holiday closure period. Please check the academic calendar to ensure that the seminar will take place during an allowable time.

> Official FIU academic calendars can be found here: https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/
> At the bottom of the page, select the appropriate year from "Faculty Senate" or "EMS" calendar options.

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

Advertising: The Student must also adequately *advertise the Thesis proposal seminar 7-10 days before the presentation*, by posting notices around the Department, and by sending an electronic version of the project

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

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

> The UGS template for defense announcements is found at:
> https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/ThesisDefenseAnnouncementSample.pdf
> *Note: be sure to indicate this is a "Thesis Proposal Defense" on your flyer.*

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

After the proposal defense:

After successful completion of the proposal seminar, the next step is to file the M-2 form. This is the mechanism by which the Student's proposed research is formally shared with the Graduate Program Office, the College of Arts, Sciences & Education, and the University Graduate School.

Compliance pre-check for the M-2 form:

If the proposed research involves human subjects, animal subjects or recombinant DNA, the Student must check in with the Major Professor to see if any IACUC, IBC or IRB Approval or Exemption forms are on file (if required) for the Major Professor's research. If the answer is "yes", the Major Professor must file an Amendment to the Approval memo or Exemption memo on file with FIU Compliance and Integrity. If the Major Professor has questions about this requirement, the following sources can address those:

> Office of Compliance and Integrity: https://research.fiu.edu/toolbox/
> Contacts List, within the Office of Research Integrity: https://research.fiu.edu/ored/ori/

If an Amendment if needed, the Student must assist the Major Professor by providing a final copy of the Committee-approved Thesis proposal. The Major Professor will upload the proposal as an attachment when filing the amendment to their Approval or Exemption memo in the Topaz system. Pending successful review by Compliance and Integrity, the Major Professor will be issued a new Amendment memo that shows the Student's name in the Cc field. The Major Professor must then provide the Student with 1.) the new Amendment memo and 2.) a copy of the original Approval (or Exemption) memo, showing the expiration date. *Note that the memos will look something like the example shown below.*

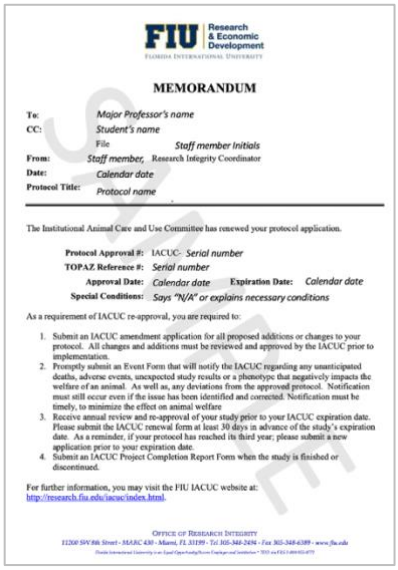
Filing the M-2 form:

The M-2 form is found under the header "Thesis Forms" located at: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/

This form does not need a copy of the Student's Thesis Proposal. However, all fields on the M-2 form must be completed, and questions answered as specified by the directions. A lot of the information can be sourced from the Committee-approved proposal. Committee signatures will need to be organized through DocuSign. Proactive follow-up by the Student may be needed to ensure the form is signed. Administrative signatures on the form will be coordinated by the Graduate Program afterwards.

The M-2 form requires some attachments, which include:

1. certificate of completion for the Citi Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) course. This must usually be from the Citi Physical Science RCR or Biomedical RCR course to be accepted by CASE/UGS. The Behavioral Sciences RCR course is accepted only for Bio-Ed track Students.
2. A copy of the Student's current class schedule. To access this, please navigate to *my.fiu.edu* and click on the "manage classes" icon, then go to the "print schedule" link at the top left of the page, and click "download" at the top right to get a .pdf copy of the document.
3. Copies of the related IBC, IRB and/or IACUC memos, *if needed*. This means providing 1.) a copy of the original Approval or Exemption memo, and 2.) the Amendment memo that shows the Student's name in the Cc field. Note: these memos are usually *1-page* documents issued by FIU Compliance & Integrity to the Major Professor overseeing the Student's project, resembling the example shown to the right. *Note: Printouts of the protocol details on file from TOPAZ are not equivalent to Approval, Exemption or Amendment memos.*



FIU Research & Economic Development
Florida International University

MEMORANDUM

To: *Major Professor's name*
CC: *Student's name*
File *Staff member Initials*
From: *Staff member,* Research Integrity Coordinator
Date: *Calendar date*
Protocol Title: *Protocol name*

The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has renewed your protocol application.

Protocol Approval #: IACUC- *Serial number*
TOPAZ Reference #: *Serial number*
Approval Date: *Calendar date* **Expiration Date:** *Calendar date*
Special Conditions: *Says "N/A" or explains necessary conditions*

As a requirement of IACUC re-approval, you are required to:

1. Submit an IACUC amendment application for all proposed additions or changes to your protocol. All changes and additions must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC prior to implementation.
2. Promptly submit an Event Form that will notify the IACUC regarding any unanticipated deaths, adverse events, unexpected study results or a phenotype that negatively impacts the welfare of an animal. As well as, any deviations from the approved protocol. Notification must still occur even if the issue has been identified and corrected. Notification must be timely, to minimize the effect on animal welfare
3. Receive annual review and re-approval of your study prior to your IACUC expiration date. Please submit the IACUC renewal form at least 30 days in advance of the study's expiration date. As a reminder, if your protocol has reached its third year; please submit a new application prior to your expiration date.
4. Submit an IACUC Project Completion Report Form when the study is finished or discontinued.

For further information, you may visit the FIU IACUC website at: http://research.fiu.edu/iacuc/index.html.

Office of Research Integrity
11200 SW 8th Street - MARC 430 - Miami, FL 33199 - Tel 305-348-2494 - Fax 305-348-6389 - www.fiu.edu

4. When Students are done assembling these materials, these should all be sent as attachments on a single email to the Graduate Program Office (Biograd@fiu.edu). Upon receipt, approval of the M-2 form is enabled by confirmation that:
   - all M-2 materials were received
   - all pre-candidacy program requirements were met by the Student
   - the Student's (signed) First Committee Memo was received
   - any other pre-candidacy coursework specified by the First Committee Memo was also completed
   - the Student's (signed) Qualifying/Candidacy Exam Memo was received by the Graduate Program

After initial approval of the M-2 form:

Upon approval by the Graduate Program, the Student's M-2 is advanced to the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education, who, upon approval, sends it to the University Graduate School. A copy of the signed form is placed into the Student's file with the Graduate Program Office.

Please note that M-2 approval will trigger enrollment changes in the following terms for the Student, as well as require an ISSS update by if an International Student. Please see below for further details.

Post-M-2 Enrollment changes:

After the Student has passed (or waived) the qualifying exam, presented the public Thesis proposal seminar, and submitted all M-2 paperwork to the Graduate Program Office, for approval by CASE and UGS, the Student must enroll in:

- Thesis Proposal Seminar BSC 5931, as one-time enrollment, in the term after the Thesis proposal seminar was given.
- Master's Thesis credit BSC 6971, as a minimum of 1 credit per term, for every term remaining in the program, including Summer, and including the term of the Student's graduation.
- Note that a minimum of 6 credits of BSC 6971 must be completed prior to graduation.
- Students may refer back to the MS post-Candidacy requirements (pg. 16) and the Overall Enrollment Plan (pg. 17) if desired, for confirmation of this information.

Post-M-2 International Student requirements:

- International Students are required to complete an "Advancement to Thesis or Dissertation Segment" form after the M-2 form is approved by the University Graduate School.
- The form is located under "ISSS F-1 Students Forms" at this page: https://isss.fiu.edu/resources/forms-and-information-sheets/adv-to-thesis-diss.pdf
- The Student should complete this with the Major Professor or the Graduate Program Director.
- The Student should email the form to: ugs@fiu.edu to request the UGS Dean's signature.
- When done, the form can be uploaded to the Student's FIU ISSS portal, as directed by the form.

THESIS

The primary requirement for the M.S. degree is the submission and defense of a Thesis, which is based on original research in the student's area of specialization. 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.

Thesis preparation instructions are found at: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/
University deadlines are here: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters

Originality of Thesis content: *A Student's Thesis is expected to represent original academic writing* by the Student, to communicate the findings of the Student's Thesis research, with citation of peer-reviewed literature from the Student's field used as supporting information. https://gradschool.fiu.edu/rcr/
Any AI use in the Student's Thesis research, data analysis and writing/assembly of the Thesis must be authorized and reviewed by the Student's Major Professor and Thesis Committee.

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

STEPS LEADING UP TO THE THESIS DEFENSE

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

Note: Students are *not required to enroll in Thesis Defense BSC 5975* to be allowed to hold a Thesis defense.

Students should plan to e*nroll in at least 1 credit of Master's Thesis BSC 6971*, however, during the semester of the Thesis defense, to meet the continuous enrollment requirement. https://policies.fiu.edu/policy/783
Please see the Overall Enrollment Plan section above on (pg. 17) for further details.

Petition pre-check: please read this section first, to confirm if any additional assistance will be needed to start the defense/graduation process.

- Students who want to defend and graduate in a specific term, should navigate to the Master's Students section of the UGS deadlines page: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters
- Upon selecting the term of intended graduation, a drop down menu will open, showing what the dates need to have been for receipt of the Student's M-1 and M-2 by UGS. Dates will also be shown for when the M-3 and ETD need to be received, for the Student to graduate within that term.
- Please note that if the Student's M-1 or M-2 was received *after* the deadline required to graduate in the intended term, the Student will need to petition to request UGS permission to graduate within the intended term.
- If a petition-related scenario applies to the Student's defense/graduation goal, the Graduate Program Office must be contacted ahead of time (ideally, during the term before), so that the Student's petition can be supported in accord with the intended degree completion plan

Applying for Graduation:
The Student must be sure to apply for graduation, in the term when graduation is planned. Students do not need to wait for completion of the Thesis Defense seminar to apply for Graduation.

Standard deadlines for graduation applications are posted in the FIU academic calendar.
Official FIU academic calendars can be found here: https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/
At the bottom of the page, select the appropriate year from the "Enrollment Calendars" option.

Additional information about graduation can be found at:
https://onestop.fiu.edu/student-records-myfiu/graduation-diplomas/apply-for-graduation/

If a Student misses the deadline to apply for graduation, a "Late Graduation Application" form can be used.
The Late Graduation form is found at the link below, under the "Graduation" drop-down menu.
https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/all-forms/

If for any reason, a Student is unable to graduate after applying for graduation, the Student must submit a "Graduation Cancellation form". Students should request a copy of this form from OneStop, and submit to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program after filling it out: Biograd@fiu.edu

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

Commencement fair dates are posted at:
https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-fair/index.html
Additional, helpful information related to commencement is found at:
https://commencement.fiu.edu/getting-ready/commencement-checklist/index.html

REQUEST FOR THESIS DEFENSE (Form M-3)

Closeout Timeline:
The Student must proactively communicate with the Major Professor and Thesis Committee to ensure that the schedule below will unfold on time. Technical errors can occur, such as a Committee member not seeing that they received a copy the Thesis, or encountering a glitch in opening/reading/approving the Thesis file. Students must follow up regularly on the status of their paperwork to ensure approvals reach the finish line.

To create a *calendar timeline*, the info below must be customized for each Student, counting back from the anticipated defense date in each case. Planning must also be done with awareness of the last possible defense date for the intended term of graduation: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters

9 weeks or more before the Defense date:
Best practice for Students is to share a draft of the near-final Thesis document with the Major Professor as the first step. This should take place by *at least* 9 weeks before the anticipated defense date, because a minimum of 2 weeks should be allowed for the Major Professor to provide feedback/corrections on the Thesis document. By the end of the feedback period, the Student will have a near-final Thesis draft in hand.

7 weeks before the Defense date:
After confirming agreement on Thesis content by the Major Professor, the Student should next share the near-final Thesis draft with Thesis Committee by email. This should take place by 7 weeks before the anticipated defense date, because a minimum of 2 weeks should be allowed for the Thesis Committee to provide feedback/corrections on the Thesis document. Students are encouraged to use the "read receipt" function in Outlook to confirm that the file was received by the Committee.

Upon sending out the near-final Thesis to their Committee, the Student should also initiate a discussion with the Committee about identifying a date and time with consensus availability for all Committee members to attend a Thesis Defense. The Student is responsible for scheduling the presentation of the Defense seminar at a time convenient to the Thesis Committee members and the Department of Biological Sciences: during regular business hours, and not during standard Departmental Faculty meeting times, weekends, over a holiday closure period, nor *between academic terms*. The Student must also contact Biological Sciences Main Office (Biology@fiu.edu) to confirm if it will be possible to reserve a room for the defense seminar date/time that is agreed upon by the whole Thesis Committee.

Students should be aware when planning the Defense seminar that the event must be held on campus, with synchronous attendance required by the Student and all Thesis Committee members. *The Student and Major*

Professor must be present on campus and in-person, with many Thesis Committee members present as possible. Committee members can use teleconferencing software to attend the Defense as needed. If circumstances unavoidably compel a remote modality for the Student and/or the Major Professor, a petition must be filed with the University Graduate School to request an exception be made, to allow for either their remote attendance, or a fully remote Thesis Defense. If that situation arises, the Graduate Program Office (Biograd@fiu.edu) must be contacted as soon as possible to coordinate submission of a petition, which is reviewed by the Graduate Program, CASE and UGS.

After the Committee has approved the near-final Thesis Draft, agreed upon a consensus date and time for the Thesis Defense, and the Biology Main Office has confirmed a corresponding room reservation, the Student can proceed to file a Request for Thesis Defense form (M-3). This form is found under the header "Thesis Forms" at this site: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/

Students must complete the M-3 per the directions and ensure the whole Committee can DocuSign the form. It is important to check the status of the form in DocuSign, and follow up proactively on missing approvals.

The Student must also provide *attachments specified by the checklist* on the form, which are:

1. a Thesis defense announcement, formatted per the UGS template:
   https://gradschool.fiu.edu/documents/ThesisDefenseAnnouncementSample.pdf
   Note: be sure to customize this for a "Master's Thesis Defense"

   The announcement must include the Defense date, time and location, and Thesis abstract. If the Student also wishes to provide a Zoom link to enable remote attendance by some of the audience, the announcement sent to the Graduate Program Office must include the Zoom meeting ID and password, and/or a clickable zoom link that already includes the password. Students are recommended to enable a "waiting room" in the Zoom settings, so that meeting information will be visible to prospective attendees before the seminar is held.

2. a copy of the near-final Thesis document, formatted as per University guidelines, found here:
   https://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/#formatting

   An "AI Disclosure" must be included in the front matter of the Thesis. It's easiest to put this information either in the Acknowledgements section, or immediately after that.

   It's also important for a *.PDF version of the file* to be uploaded to panthersoft, after confirmation that the .pdf version still has page numbers lining up as stated in the Table of Contents.

3. a plagiarism report, run through iThenticate by the Major Professor. Note that this file must include the colorful markup of the whole Thesis document, plus the report at the end that shows what percent similarity matches to each source.

   Directions for the Major Professor to generate the iThenticate report are found at the "Quick Instructions" tab located here: https://research.fiu.edu/cyberinfrastructure/applications/ithenticate/

   - The iThenticate filters must be set as specified in the UGS instructions.
   - The iThenticate report must be compressed, if the file exceeds 12-15 MB.
   - *If one or more chapters have been published*, a signed Major Professor memo confirming the citation information must be attached as the new first page of the iThenticate report.

4. proof of enrollment, which can be met by providing a current copy of the Student's class schedule. To access the schedule, please navigate to *my.fiu.edu* and click on the "manage classes" icon, then

go to the "print schedule" link at the top left of the page, and click "download" at the top right to get a .pdf copy of the document.

5 weeks before the Defense date:
The Student's completed/signed M-3, and all required attachments, must reach the Biograd@fiu.edu Inbox by *5 weeks before the Student's defense date.*

The Graduate Program Director is responsible for vetting the M-3 content and realistically needs 1 week to review the file and follow up on any formatting errors or missing information. After approval of the M-3 by the Graduate Program Office, no further action is required by the Student, unless requested by the CASE Graduate Dean or the University Graduate School. After Graduate Program approval, the M-3 is advanced to CASE, where the Graduate Dean also gets 1 week to review the file. If CASE-approved, the file will be advanced to the UGS queue for final review, by 3 weeks or more before the Student's defense date.

The CASE Graduate Dean and the University Graduate School adhere strictly to posted deadlines, and any Student who does not comply with the deadlines faces the risk that the defense may need to be rescheduled, and possibly even require enrollment in another term.

7-10 days before the Defense date:
The Student must adequately advertise the Defense seminar 7-10 days before the presentation, by posting notices around the Department, and by sending an electronic version of the project proposal announcement to the Graduate Program Office (Biograd@fiu.edu) for dissemination. It is the Student's responsibility to follow up in a timely manner if the announcement is not posted to the Bioannounce listeserv by the Graduate Program Office by 7 days before the defense seminar will be held.

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

RESULTS OF THE THESIS DEFENSE (Rubrics)

Three rubrics evaluating the contents, written and oral presentation of the Thesis must be completed by all members of the Student's Thesis Committee after the Thesis defense. The rubrics are sent electronically to the Major Professor from the Biology Graduate Program, to be shared directly with the Committee members.

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

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

APPROVAL OF THE FINALIZED THESIS (ETD form)

It is common for the Major Professor and members of the Thesis Committee to suggest some extent of corrections/edits in content of a Student's Thesis document. This feedback can be provided to the Student anytime between the Faculty receiving a copy of the Thesis file, up to the day of the Thesis Defense.

After holding a successful Thesis Defense, the Student may proceed to finalize Committee-recommended changes to the Thesis document. Revisions may also include formatting corrections specified by the University Graduate School. The final version of the Thesis is to be submitted as an attachment to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) form as described below.

After the Thesis Defense:

The ETD and attachments should be received by Biograd@fiu.edu 2 weeks before the posted UGS due date. See UGS deadlines here: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters

To proceed, the Student must complete the ETD form located at https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/

ETD directions are found at the clickable link: "Learn about the Final ETD Process"
The ETD form itself is found at the clickable link: "Final ETD Approval Form"

Students must complete informational fields on the ETD per the directions, and also organize Committee signatures via DocuSign. Proactive follow-up by the Student may be needed to ensure the form is signed. Administrative signatures on the form will be coordinated by the Graduate Program afterwards.

The Student must also include attachments that present:

1. proof of enrollment, which can be met by providing a current copy of the Student's class schedule. To access the schedule, please navigate to *my.fiu.edu* and click on the "manage classes" icon, then go to the "print schedule" link at the top left of the page, and click "download" at the top right to get a .pdf copy of the document.
2. the finalized version of the Thesis file.
   Important: *please be sure to send a .PDF version of the file*, and confirm ahead of time that the .PDF version still shows page numbers lining up correctly with the Table of Contents.

After approval of the ETD by the Graduate Program Office, no further action is required by the Student, unless requested by the CASE Graduate Dean or the University Graduate School. The approved ETD is advanced to CASE, which also gets 1 week to review the file. If CASE-approved, the file will advance to the UGS queue for final review, by the posted deadline for ETD receipt.

THESIS SUBMISSION TO THE FIU LIBRARY

After the University Graduate School has received the Student's ETD form, the last step is for the Student to upload the final Thesis to the Library website.

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

CHANGE OF DEGREE TRACK

Students may apply to switch from the MS to the PhD track, or vice versa, during or after their second term of enrollment. Application is made to the Graduate Program Office by submission of:

- a memo from the Student justifying the request
- a separate, brief statement of the Student's proposed research plan
- a memo of support, provided by the Major Professor
- proof must be supplied that a new Committee can be formed, in accord with requirements
- a UGS "Change of Graduate Degree" form

The Change of Graduate Degree form is found at the "Change of Degree Form and Procedures" link under "Current Student Forms" on this site: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/

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

In the event of Graduate Committee approval for an MS to the PhD program switch, please note that authorization does not automatically come with TA support. TA-ships are in high demand, and these are assigned once a year, by the Graduate Committee, during February.
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ACTIVE STATUS AND TIME LIMITATIONS

To maintain active status in the MS program, Students must maintain enrollment as specified in the MS Enrollment table on pg 18. Enrollment information is based on the policies below:

University policy #380.0441: https://policies.fiu.edu/files/759.pdf

University policy # 380.008: https://policies.fiu.edu/files/783.pdf

The Graduate Assistant Handbook: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/assistantships/

And ISSS regulations: https://isss.fiu.edu/international-students/f-1-international-students/f-1-enrollment/index.html

Students must be continually enrolled until they defend. Lapsed enrollment for more than two terms automatically drops the Student from the program. Students would need to apply for re-admission, and be approved by the Graduate Committee and the University Graduate School, to resume pursuit of the degree.

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

Source: Policy# 380.080, posted at: https://policies.fiu.edu/files/111.pdf

Note: If the student was originally enrolled in the Biological Sciences PhD program, and transferred into the Biological Sciences MS Program afterwards, the *start date for the 6-year MS timespan is considered to be the start date of the PhD* (not the date of transfer into the MS program.)

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

When submitting forms for signatures: Please use DocuSign (https://DocuSign.fiu.edu) for signatures as needed. Send M forms and supplemental documents as PDF files to Biograd@fiu.edu when complete, after all student, major professor and committee signatures are done. The Grad Program Office will take care of the remaining signatures.

_____1. Review and completion of all Integrity and Safety trainings. (*Link*)
Plagiarism review, RCR, COI, EHS courses (multiple), IRB/IACUC/IBC, Cybersecurity

_____2. Formation of Committee and holding the first Committee meeting: (*Link*)
The thesis committee (3 members) should be formed before: end of the first term for full-time students, or completing 12 credits for part-time students.

After the committee has been formed, these forms must be submitted to the Graduate program office. (*Link*)
- _____ **Appointment of Thesis Committee Form (M-1)**
- _____ **Class schedule**
- _____ **Non-FIU Commitment Form and external member's CV** (if needed)

If the composition of a Thesis Committee changes, students must submit a memo from the major professor explaining why the change was made, and a completed M-1r form, to Biological Sciences graduate program. (*Link*)
- _____ **Appointment of Revised Thesis Committee Form (M-1r)**
- _____ **Class schedule**
- _____ **Non-FIU Commitment Form and external member's CV** (if needed)

After the first committee meeting has been held, form is due into the Graduate Program Office. (*Link*)
First Committee Meeting memo

_____3. Course work required of all M.S. students: (*Link*)

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

*The thesis proposal seminar (BSC 5931) is taken the term AFTER the thesis proposal presentation.
§ BSC 6971 may be taken AFTER the student passes the qualifying exam, and does the public thesis proposal seminar.
∫If the optional thesis defense seminar (BSC 5975) is taken, this is done during the same term as the thesis defense.
Note that ALL Students must take courses in accord with an Overall Enrollment Plan. (*Link*)

_____4. Qualifying Examination:
Full-time M.S. students should complete the examination by the end of their first year in the program. (*Link*)

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

_____5. Project Proposal Defense:

At this stage, the student writes and defends the project proposal. (*Link*)

Note that after the project proposal is approved by the committee, it is the student's responsibility to schedule the proposal seminar. Students must post notices of the presentation around the Department at least one week in advance of the presentation. An electronic version of the **project proposal announcement** must also be sent to the Biology graduate program office (Biograd@fiu.edu) in Word format, 7-10 days before the seminar date.

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

_____6. Advancing to Candidacy:

After the presentation, students must plan to submit to the Graduate Program: the M-2 and attachments. (*Link*)

Note that students with projects requiring IBC/IRB/IACUC review, the major professor's protocol on file has to be updated include the student's project proposal.

- **_____ Master's Thesis Proposal Form (M-2)**
- **_____ Class schedule**
- **_____ Responsible Conduct of Research**
- **_____ IRB/IACUC/IBC amendment plus original approval memo**

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

_____7. Work on the Thesis: (*Link*)

Thesis Preparation Manual can be found at: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/thesis-dissertation/

_____8. Steps Leading up to Thesis Defense: (*Link*)

- **_____ Petition pre-check**
- **_____ Application for graduation**
- **_____ Commencement fair information**

_____9. Master's Thesis Defense:

The Thesis defense is a University requirement. (*Link*). A complete and near-final draft of the Thesis, the Thesis Defense Announcement, and a completed M-3 form must be submitted to the Graduate Program **5 weeks** before the defense.

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

- **_____ Request for Thesis Defense form (M-3)**:
- **_____ Class schedule**
- **_____ Near-final thesis draft (PDF)**
- **_____ iThenticate report**

Note 1: After the thesis defense request is UGS-approved , students must post notices of the presentation around the Department at least one week in advance of the presentation. An electronic version of the **project proposal announcement** must also be sent to Biograd@fiu.edu (in Word format), 7-10 days before the seminar date.

Note2: The student and major professor must be on-campus for the defense, though committee members can be remote. *If this is not possible,* you will need to file a petition, requesting CASE/UGS approval, to do so.

Note3: The student must be enrolled (for at least one credit) during the final term when the defense is held.

- **_____ Rubric for Thesis Defense assessment**: (*Link*)

_____10. Approval of the final Thesis: (*Link*)

After a student successfully defends the thesis, a pdf copy of the final version of the thesis is submitted.

To do this, the "Electronic Thesis and Dissertation" form, and all accompanying attachments, must be sent to the Biological Sciences Graduate Program, **by two weeks before** it is due at UGS.

- **_____ Check UGS deadlines:** https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters
- **_____ ETD form**
- **_____ Class schedule**
- **_____ Final thesis draft (PDF)**

_____11. Upload the finalized Thesis file to the FIU Library website

This is requested by an email from UGS, with instructions provided in the email. (*Link*)
Students need to look out for this message to follow up in a timely manner.

- **_____ Library upload**

Annual: Departmental Graduate Review. Year 1 completion _____. Year2 completion _____. (*Link*)

- **_____ Contacting reviewer to schedule the meeting**
- **_____ Providing an updated copy of CV**
- **_____ Proof of 2 hrs Annual Service** (*Link*)
- **_____ Preparation to discuss progress**

A final reminder: the Master's Program Checklist above is intended as a brief overview/summary.

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

HELPFUL LINKS:

***FIU Biological Sciences website:** https://case.fiu.edu/biology/

***UGS forms:** http://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/#studentforms

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

***CASE Deadlines:** https://case.fiu.edu/about/resources/current-students/graduate-students/

***DocuSign:** https://docusign.fiu.edu/

***First Committee meeting memo:**
https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/_assets/memo_first_committee_meeting20161228.pdf

***Graduate Qualifying/Candidacy Exam form:**
https://case.fiu.edu/biology/resources/_assets/graduate-qualifying_candidacy-exam-form.pdf

***Add/Drop (Enrollment Adjustment, under the "Registration and Student Records Forms" tab):**
https://onestop.fiu.edu/forms-and-policies/all-forms/

***FIU/UM Exchange program application form:**
https://gradschool.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FIU-UM-Exchange-Application-2023.pdf

***ISSS information for international students:** https://isss.fiu.edu/international-students/index.html

DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE REVIEW

Each Student will participate in an annual Departmental Graduate Review while participating in the Biological Sciences Graduate Program. The purpose of this review is to be sure that the Student is on track in their research as well as the process of moving through the graduate program (committee formation, committee meetings, memos in file, etc.) to ensure smooth and timely progress for the student. This is also an opportunity for the Students to provide feedback to the Department on how the program is serving their needs. Finally, these reviews allow the Graduate Program Office to keep track of when Students are likely to finish, which is information essential for recruitment planning.

This review will be conducted during the Fall term, in which the Student's progress will be reviewed from Fall, Spring and Summer of the prior year. Students who have completed 12 credits or more by Fall are required to participate in the Departmental Graduate Review. New students who are starting during the Fall are exempt from the Departmental review process, as they have not yet accrued 12 credits.

During the Fall term, it is the Student's responsibility to schedule a meeting with their graduate reviewer, who is a member of the Graduate Committee. Note that the graduate reviewer cannot be the Student's Major Professor, nor anyone serving on their Thesis Committee. Students who receive repeated Unsatisfactory reviews and do not correct deficiencies by the end of the following spring term will be recommended for dismissal from the program. Students who have been dismissed must apply for readmission if they wish to complete their degree.

The guidelines used by graduate reviewers are disclosed below for transparency, so that Students can prepare adequately for Departmental review of graduate Students. Timelines below are those applicable to full-time students in the MS Program, including those supported by an Assistantship (RA or GA) and various other fellowship(s) that cover student stipends. Students whose progress meets graduate reviewer criteria will be automatically scored as Satisfactory. As a general rule, if the Student does not submit information for the Annual Review, attend a meeting with their graduate reviewer, or meet the review criteria, the default outcome would be a score of Unsatisfactory. This rating can be updated to Satisfactory if the deficiency is reconciled by the semester after the Departmental Annual Review.

Self-supported Students, and those facing extended health challenges are acknowledged as potentially requiring more flexibility on the timetable to degree. Such cases are managed on a case-by-case basis and are best coordinated by discussion with the Student's graduate reviewer and an open dialog with the Graduate Program on an as-needed basis.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE REVIEW

For all MS Students:

1.) Students will be notified by the Graduate Program about who their annual reviewer is, and also to receive a link to the Annual Review Survey.

2.) Each Student should upload a current copy of their **CV** to the Annual Review Survey. This CV will be used to document each Student's participation in scientific conferences, publication of peer-reviewed articles, and receipt of grants, fellowships and other awards.

3.) Students should also each plan to upload a copy of a signed service memo to the Annual Review Survey, confirming that the Student has performed **2 hours of Departmental service** during the academic year. This includes all students, regardless of the form of support (assistantship, fellowship or self-support). The service requirement can be fulfilled in many ways, including but not limited to assisting with the annual Biology Graduate symposium and proctoring exams. Graduate Students are regularly notified of proctoring opportunities by the Graduate Program Office, in the form of emails from Biograd@fiu.edu.

A copy of the Annual Service Memo is included below, on pg. 48 of this manual.

What the Student reviewers are looking for:

MS Students who have completed 1 year in the program:

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

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

Students should complete their quantitative skills requirement by the end of the first year. If not possible, the Student must have a reasonable plan to complete the requirement as early as possible in the second yr.

MS Students who have completed year 2 in the program:

A student would be considered satisfactory having:

- Formed a Thesis Committee, met with the committee and filed the M-1 form
- Completed all pre-candidacy coursework
- Taken their qualifying examination
- Presented their thesis proposal seminar

Students who have not met the above requirements should be given an unsatisfactory rating. The Student has until the end of the Spring term to meet these requirements.

Students who have completed 2 years and have met all the above requirements should be asked when they are planning to graduate. Ideally, M.S. Students should be graduating by the end of their second year in the program, or as soon as possible thereafter.

MS Students who have completed year 3 in the program:

By reaching this stage, the timetable is running long. The Graduate Committee will request:

- Calendar date for when the defense seminar is scheduled with the Committee.
- Confirmation of the date when the Student's M-3 was (or will be) submitted.

Any student running past 3 years in the Biological Sciences MS Program without a completion plan will be automatically scored as Unsatisfactory until the M-3 form has been successfully filed.

If the Student *is not* planning to graduate, the Student should request a Committee meeting so their Committee can evaluate the Student's progress. The Student will receive an Unsatisfactory rating in the meanwhile, which can be made up by having a Committee meeting and presenting a memo from their Committee that evaluates the Student's cumulative progress and estimates the date of graduation.

Students who *are* planning to graduate must apply for graduation (pg. 28) by the deadline announced in the University Academic Calendar. The M-3 and the ETD forms have specific deadlines set by the UGS and effectively mean that a defensible document should be completed within 2 weeks of the start of the term (outlined in the Graduation Calendars that are emailed by the Graduate Program Office each term). The Student must remain enrolled leading up to, and during the term of the Student's graduation.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Various forms of financial assistance are available to graduate students at FIU. Note that the summary below is not exhaustive and may change as funding streams change. The University Graduate School serves as a core resource for graduate funding information with additional support by CASE. Regular updates to the Graduate Program Policies and Procedures manual are expected to assist navigation of funding opportunities.

ASSISTANTSHIP SUPPORT

Assistantship lines are issued to full-time students by the Department of Biological Sciences. MS program participants may be eligible for Research assistantships (RA) and/or Graduate Assistantships (GA). RA and GA lines are supported on an individual basis by grant monies that the major professors have secured for their labs, and are issued specifically per the discretion and authorization of the major professor.

Overall, Assistantships provide financial support for graduate Students working toward their degrees, and give Students the opportunity to obtain experience under the guidance of Departmental Faculty, per specific duties are assigned by the researcher providing the Assistantship.

Graduate Assistantships are renewed each term, pending satisfactory progress toward the degree and at least a 3.0 GPA. *Please note that acceptance of an assistantship is formalized by signing a contract with the university that requires students to decline and/all outside employment*.

Further details on Assistantship support here:

CASE info: https://case.fiu.edu/about/resources/current-students/graduate-students/graduate-assistantships/

UGS info: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/assistantships/
The Graduate Assistant Handbook" is accessible on this page, along with other info.

OTHER SUPPORT

Fellowship Awards: Fellowships are awarded to graduate students by various entities outside the Department. Institutional fellowships are awarded by CASE as well as UGS. External fellowships are issued by sources outside of the university. These awards are for MS and/or PhD students, as specified by the fellowship announcement.

A list of fellowships and other awards available to Biology MS Students are in the Funding Guide linked here: https://case.fiu.edu/biology/students/graduate-programs/ms-in-biology/index.html

Self-support: Any student who is holding employment outside the graduate program is considered to be a self-supported student. Self-support also includes cases where students have accepted loans and/or need-

based grants as a support basis for participating in the graduate program. Note that a FAFSA form must be submitted to be considered for loans and need-based grants. See the following links for more information about self-support in the form of loans and need-based grants.

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

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

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

STUDENT DISMISSAL POLICY

Certain circumstances may lead to a graduate student being dismissed from the Biological Sciences Graduate Program. Summarized briefly, those circumstances include:

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

Details pertaining to the basis of dismissal:

1) To remain in good academic standing, graduate Students must maintain a graduate GPA of 3.0. Failure to maintain good academic standing will result in placement on academic warning, probation or dismissal. A 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 term will be dismissed. A graduate Student will not be dismissed prior to attempting a minimum of 12 hours of graduate coursework. The Student has ten working days to appeal the dismissal decision.

2) Failure of a second attempt in the qualifying exam will result in the Student dismissal. No appeal of dismissal will be considered under these circumstances.

3) Lapses in enrollment for two consecutive terms prior to advancement to candidacy for Ph.D. or approval of the proposal for M.S. Students will result in the Student being dropped from the program. For Master's students with an approved M-2, continuous registration for at least 1 Thesis credit hour each term (including the Summer term) is required until the Thesis is completed. A Student who finds it necessary to be excused from continuous enrollment must formally request a leave of absence from the University Graduate School, by a petition that is submitted in coordination with the Graduate Program Office.

4) MS Students admitted may be below the 3.0 UG60 requirement, and subject to the terms of a "conditional admit".

- If Domestic, the MS Student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 in the first 9 graduate credits within the first three consecutive semesters (Note: If more than 9 credits are completed in the term when the 9-credit threshold is reached, all credits taken will be calculated into the cumulative GPA to determine if the condition has been met). *Please note that these 9 credits are for classes assigned a letter grade.* The Student must also sign a letter, issued by Graduate Admissions, agreeing to these terms.

- International MS 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 CASE Graduate Dean and the University Graduate School. 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 term of attendance, the Student will be dropped from the Program.

5) Faculty sponsors may decide that their research program is 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 Major Professor. 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 term 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 Fall 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 satisfactory reviews to maintain their support for the next academic year. Students who receive repeated unsatisfactory reviews and do not correct deficiencies by the end of the Spring term will be recommended for dismissal from the Biological Sciences Graduate 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 conduct, academic conduct and research conduct, per University policy. These 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 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, whereas research misconduct is handled through ORED.

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 Graduate Committee members or the Graduate Program Director has a conflict of interest with the Student, the member in conflict will be replaced by the Associate Chair. The Graduate Committee will evaluate the appeal and render a decision within two weeks. Note that reinstatement after dismissal for items 1 and 3, will also require a UGS petition. Appeals from Students failing the qualifying exam 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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

FLORIDA RESIDENCY

Initial classification of Residency
All applicants are required to submit residency information when applying to FIU. Additional documentation may be requested. It is important to provide the required information in a timely manner to avoid an enrollment hold.

To be considered a Florida resident, the Student will have to submit documentation that the Student (or their parent, step-parent, or legal guardians if a dependent) have been a Florida resident for at least 12 months prior to the first day of classes of the regular term, as the "12-month qualifying period". Documents that serve as proof of Florida residency are listed under the header "Acceptable Residency Documents" at the following web link: https://onestop.fiu.edu/registration/declare-residency/

For any student who does not have Florida residency on file, the Student will be automatically classified as out-of-state. For Assistantship-supported Students, there is no difference in tuition coverage or fees due, on the basis of out-of-state status. If an out-of-state Student discontinues the Assistantship to become self-supported, however, tuition charges will switch to the out-of-state rate. Current tuition rates are always posted under "GA Summary Chart" at the UGS Assistantships page: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/assistantships/

Re-classification of Residency
Students are allowed to file for residency re-classification after the first term of enrollment. For this to be successful, the Student will need to provide "clear and convincing documentation demonstrating that they have established and maintained permanent legal residency in Florida for at least 12 consecutive months" according to the Office of Registrar. Students must to review the requirements in detail before filing, because Students can only appeal their residency classification once. Further information is provided at the site below:

https://onestop.fiu.edu/registration/declare-residency/index.html

WITHDRAWAL/ LEAVE OF ABSENCE/ READMITTANCE

If a student finds it necessary to be excused from registration in a graduate degree program for *1-2* consecutive terms, the student must formally request a leave of absence from the Graduate Program. Leave will be granted only under exceptional circumstances. When the student returns from a leave of absence, decisions concerning previous or current programs of study will be mutually agreed upon by the student's advisory committee and the student.

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.

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

RESEARCH AND PATENTS

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

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The University has developed policies and procedures on the rights and responsibilities of students and a code of conduct assuring that these rights can be freely exercised without interference or infringement by others.

The code of conduct, academic misconduct policies, student grievance procedures and policies on student records are summarized in the University publication Rights and Responsibilities of Students: https://cat.fiu.edu/programming/ta-development/orientation/studentrightsandconduct.pdf

The FIU student handbook can be found at: https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/student-handbook/

The student code of conduct is specifically addressed at:
https://dasa.fiu.edu/all-departments/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/

Also, all administrative procedures and time deadlines must be met, whether or not they are specifically mentioned in the documents above. Students must operate within the rules and guidelines of the Biological Sciences Graduate Policy and Procedures Manual, the FIU Graduate Catalog, OneStop, the College of Arts Sciences & Education and the University Graduate School. Particular attention should be paid to the deadlines posted annually in the University Academic Calendar and UGS Deadlines page:

UGS Deadlines are posted here: https://gradschool.fiu.edu/calendar-deadlines/#masters

Official FIU academic calendars can be found here: https://onestop.fiu.edu/academic-calendar/
At the bottom of the page, select the appropriate year from the "Enrollment Calendars" option.

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

FIU has a non-discrimination policy in place and is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity.
More information on these policies, and related links, are found at:
https://ace.fiu.edu/civil-rights/harassment-and-discrimination/

If you feel you have been, or are being, sexually harassed by someone at the university, you may contact the University's Title IX Coordinator in the FIU Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility.
Contact information for the Title IX Coordinator is here: https://ace.fiu.edu/title-ix/title-ix-coordinator/

Further information about FIU Title IX policy is available here: https://ace.fiu.edu/title-ix/
Note that tabs across the top of this page will open different sets of information.
The online form for reporting sexual harassment is located at the "Reporting" tab.

Discrimination and misconduct at the university can also be reported at https://report.fiu.edu/
The Ethical Panther Hotline is available 24 hours a day by phone at: 1-888-520-0570
Reporting to the Ethical Panther Hotline is also possible via the web, at https://compliance.fiu.edu/hotline/

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*

_____*Major Professor* _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

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

Quantitative skills requirement will be fulfilled by: _____

The qualifying exam is scheduled for: _____

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

Topics to be examined by individual examiners are:

_____

_____

_____

The proposal seminar is scheduled for:_____

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

_____

_____

Department of Biological Sciences
Graduate Program - Qualifying/Candidacy Exam

To: Graduate Committee, Biological Sciences

From:

CC:

Date:

Re: Qualifying/Candidacy Exam

_____took the qualifying exam on_____
(Student Name) *(Date)*

Degree Earning: ☐ *M.S.* ☐ *Ph.D.*

Student was examined on the following topics by:

TOPIC	EXAMINER'S SIGNATURE

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

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

Comments:

Biological Sciences Service Requirement Confirmation Memo

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

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

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

on _____, 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 Program Office prior to the Departmental Annual review.