

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY GRADUATE HANDBOOK

This handbook outlines the procedures and requirements of the M.S., M.S.T., and Ph.D. programs in Botany and Zoology affiliated with the Biology Department at the University of Florida. It is based on revisions to the 2003 graduate handbook that were accepted by the Zoology faculty at the October 2005 faculty retreat. The revision in 2009, accommodating merging of Botany with Zoology, applies to students entering the Botany and Zoology programs in Fall 2009 and later. Additional changes were made in 2016, 2019, and 2021.

I. General Requirements for All Entering Graduate Students

- A. All graduate students (M.S., M.S.T., Ph.D.) must be admitted by the Graduate Admissions Committee. All entering graduate students are expected to have training in biology, physical sciences, and mathematics sufficient to support graduate-level coursework and research. The minimum requirements that must be met before the end of any degree include courses in at least three of the following five areas: Genetics; Physiology; Ecology or Behavior; Evolution or Morphology; and Cell Biology or Development. Also, one year of physical sciences or mathematics is required. Each applicant's course work and research experience will be evaluated in light of the interests and plans described by the applicant in their Research Statement. This evaluation is a major part of the admissions decision process. The deadline for applying can be found on the Department's webpage (but is usually December 1, immediately preceding the Fall term for which admission is requested).
- B. The letter of offer will state the program to which the student has been admitted. The Department hosts the following degree programs:
 - Ph.D. degree in Zoology or Botany
 - M.S. degree in Zoology or Botany – Thesis option is the standard, non-thesis option available only for M.S. in Zoology.
 - M.S.T. (Masters of Science in Teaching) degrees in Zoology and Botany
- C. All entering students seeking a Ph.D. in Zoology or Botany are required (and all other graduate students are encouraged) to take Principles of Graduate Training (PGT) in the fall semester of their first year. Ph.D. track students with legitimate course conflicts may take it during the second year with approval by the Graduate Committee. In addition, each graduate student will follow an individual program of courses and requirements developed in consultation with their major professor and supervisory committee.

International students who are not native English speaking and do not have a valid score for the spoken section of the TOEFL iBT (minimum score of 28) are required to take the SPEAK test and score 55 or higher before they can TA. at www.ase.ufl.edu. This has a \$100 fee.

- D. All students within the biology program must take twelve graded credits within the department in order to graduate. It is required to get a passing grade for these credits to count towards your degree. Research classes and classes that are S/U do not count towards this requirement.
- E. Students must take Practical Pedagogy simultaneously with their first TA assignment. This class is designed to help you navigate your first TA experience, including review of relevant university resources, policies and procedures, discussion of good teaching practices, and individual teaching feedback and will help you gain practical teaching skills and build a supportive network among your fellow graduate students and faculty. The class is typically taught in the fall and students who first TA in the spring should plan on taking the course the previous fall or the following one. Exceptions can be requested if students have

previously received similar training elsewhere (for example, a TA training course taught at another university) and will be evaluated individually.

- F. All students in the program at the present time or entering the program will be expected to adhere to the deadlines stated below.
- G. Students who enter special graduate programs (e.g., School of Natural Resources and the Environment; Plant Cell Molecular Biology; or the Genetics Institute) who plan to be supervised by a Biology faculty member must be reviewed by the Graduate Admissions Committee prior to admission (or prior to formal sponsorship by the faculty member). If the application is supported by the Graduate Admissions Committee (and the sponsoring faculty member), the Department will provide the same support and obligations to these students (financial support offered at the time of admission, office space, travel awards, etc.) as they do to the other Biology graduate students. This is particularly important if financial support and/or space is not available through the primary sponsoring unit on campus. These students will be expected to adhere to other requirements and deadlines of the Biology Department as enumerated in this handbook, unless the Graduate Committee has been petitioned and approves a waiver, with the exception that Ph.D. students from other programs with integrative philosophies (e.g., SNRE, PMCB) are encouraged (but not required) to take PGT.
- H. Students in other graduate programs at UF, who desire admission to the Botany and Zoology programs must apply for admission to the Biology Department in accord with the usual deadlines and conditions. Under exceptional situations, sponsoring faculty member can petition the Graduate Admissions Committee on behalf of an applicant to be considered for admission at another time. Students admitted at other times are not guaranteed the same support but can be considered, along with the regular applicant pool, for such support in the next admissions cycle.
- I. If the requirements are modified during the tenure of a graduate student (i.e., time since their admission to their current degree program), the student will have the option of either 1) being grandfathered under the original guidelines or 2) adopting the new guidelines. The student must select the entire handbook (and not pick and choose among the requirements).

II. Entrance

- A. All entering graduate students will meet with their major professor or the Graduate Coordinator (or designee) before their initial registration. At this time, an initial list of courses will be recommended to make up for deficiencies or to enhance the graduate training of the specific student. This list will be completed at the time of the first committee meeting and will be transmitted by letter to the graduate committee and placed in the student's file.

III. Minors

- B. A minor is an option for all degrees. The requirements for the minor are to be worked out with the minoring department. However, requirements related to Biology Degrees are described below in appropriate sections.

IV. Degree Requirements

- C. The requirements listed below are a combination of Graduate School requirements and Department of Biology policies. Consult the most recent Graduate Catalog for a more complete view of Graduate School

regulations. In all cases, timelines are given from the date on which the student first registered as a Biology graduate student (i.e., from the time of entry into the program).

A. M.S. Degrees – Thesis option

1. Residence requirements (M.S.)

none

2. Minimum Course Requirements (M.S.)

Total of 30 graduate credits (courses numbered 5000 and above, but see Minor below, and Section 21); 24 credits in regular course work (i.e., not research credits earned through BOT 6971 or ZOO 6971) of which 12 credits are from within the Department. No more than six credits of BOT/ZOO 6971 (Masters Research) may be counted toward the total 30 credits. Remedial English courses (ENS 4449, 4450, 5501, 5502, 5503) do not count toward graduation. Minor (M.S.) If a minor is chosen, at least six credits must be taken in the minor department, and approved courses numbered 3000 and above may be taken and counted toward the total graduate credits. A representative of the department in which a minor is taken must be a member of the Supervisory Committee.

3. Grades (M.S.)

Students must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0. Student's whose GPA are not eligible for continued support via Assistantship or Fellowship.

4. Annual Assessment

Graduate students are required to complete the Annual Assessment in CANVAS each year upon notification by the Graduate Advisor. The assessment encompasses activities for the past year, including research progress, publication information, presentations, grants and fellowships received, awards, and mentorship/service. This information helps the program document its general accomplishments and will also inform the student's advisors annual evaluation which is also initiated by the Graduate Advisor, typically in late summer..

5. Final Semester Registration (M.S.)

A student must register for a minimum of three credits in the semester in which they graduate (two credits if they graduate in the summer). Students must meet all deadlines set by the Graduate School for thesis submission and committee approvals. Under exceptional circumstances, a student can petition graduate school to "clear prior" (i.e., if a student has completed all the requirements for graduation by the first day of classes of the semester in which they will graduate they do not have to register in that semester). The student still must apply for a degree.

6. Supervisory Committee (M.S.)

The student must choose a Supervisory Committee, subject to approval by the Graduate Committee, by the end of the second semester of M.S. work. At least three members of the graduate faculty (two of whom have to be graduate faculty in Biology) make up an M.S. Supervisory Committee. One member must be from the department of the minor if a minor is chosen. Students will notify the Graduate Coordinator using forms found on the Department website.

7. Thesis (M.S.)

Prepare and present a thesis acceptable to the supervisory committee. A public presentation is encouraged but not required. The committee must sign the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Signature Page (ETD) that is part of the Final Forms Packet provided by the Graduate Advisor.

8. Foreign Language Requirement (M.S.)

None

9. Final Comprehensive Oral Examination (M.S.)

A degree application must be submitted by the Graduate School deadlines () through ONE.uf. A separate notice of final examination and defense of dissertation must be given to the Graduate Advisor and the department two weeks in advance of the final defense.

A final examination is required, which may be either oral or written or both as determined by the Supervisory Committee. The student may be examined on (a) the thesis, (b) major subjects, (c) minor(s), and (d) matters of a general nature pertaining to their degree title (MS in Botany or MS in Zoology). All members of the student's committee must be present at the final examination and sign the appropriate evaluation form.

10. Teaching Requirement (M.S.)

One semester as a formal TA appointment (this is a departmental requirement).

11. "I" Grades (M.S.)

The student must remove all grades of "I" before receiving their degree.

12. Time Limit (M.S.)

An M.S. student is expected to complete their degree within two years of being admitted to the program. An M.S. student can expect two years of support. Under exceptional circumstances a student and their major professor may petition the Graduate Committee for an extension of this deadline.

13. Transfer from Thesis to Non-thesis Option (M.S.)

A student who wishes to change from M.S. thesis to M.S.T. or non-thesis option for the master's degree must obtain permission from their Supervisory Committee and from the Graduate Committee. This permission must be forwarded to the Graduate School at least

one full semester prior to the intended date of graduation. The candidate must meet all requirements of the non-thesis option. A maximum of three credits earned in BOT 6971 or ZOO 6971 (Master's Research) can be counted toward the degree requirements only if converted to credit as Individual Work (BOT 6905 or ZOO 6905).

14. Transfer from M.S. to Ph.D. program (M.S.)

A M.S. student may move into the Ph.D. program through two methods:

- a. Formal application to the Ph.D. program; after successfully defending the M.S. thesis, a student may apply to be admitted to the Ph.D. program to be evaluated along with external applicants. This is the only method for a student admitted to the M.S. program who develops interests in obtaining Ph.D. under a different supervisor from the original advisor.
- b. Petition. If an M.S. student is making good progress in their research and plans to keep the same advisor and committee, they may request to be transferred to the Ph.D. program. The request must be submitted by March 1st of their second year in the program (or November 1st for a student who entered the program in January). Written approval or denial by the Graduate Admissions Committee will be provided by April 1st (or December 1st for a November request).

The request consists of four parts:

1. a letter of intent to the Graduate Committee including the proposed membership of the Ph.D. advisory committee and a timeline for milestones (e.g., qualifying exam, defense of dissertation);
2. a three-page research plan for the Ph.D., including progress to date (e.g., research accomplishments, data, manuscripts);
3. letters of evaluation from the supervisor, and two other faculty members who have served on the M.S. committee and know the student's work.
4. the student's CV and copies of any manuscripts related to the proposed Ph.D. research.

If the petition is approved, time limits for qualifying exam, time in program, and support will apply from the date the student entered the M.S. program (i.e., as if they were originally taken into the Ph.D. program); see Ph.D. program for details

B. M.S.T. Degree and non-thesis M.S. Degree

1. Residence requirements (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

none

2. Minimum Course Requirements (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

32 graduate credits (courses numbered 5000 and above, see Minor) in courses giving regular grades (not S/U graded courses); 16 in the Biology Department at the 5000 level or above. No credits in BOT/ZOO 6971 or BOT/ZOO 7980 are applicable. For M.S.T., 36 graduate credits

are required, 18 from courses offered by Biology, 5000 level or above. Remedial English courses (ENS 4449, 4450, 5501, 5502, 5503) do NOT count toward graduation.

3. Minor (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

If a minor is chosen, at least 6 credits must be taken in the minor department and approved courses numbered 3000 and above may be taken and counted toward the total graduate credits. A representative of the department in which the minor is taken must be a member of the Supervisory Committee.

4. Grades (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

Students must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0.

5. Annual Assessment

Graduate students are required to complete the Annual Assessment in CANVAS each year upon notification by the Graduate Advisor. The assessment encompasses activities for the past year, including research progress, publication information, presentations, grants and fellowships received, awards, and mentorship/service. This information helps the program document its general accomplishments and will also inform the student's advisors annual evaluation which is also initiated by the Graduate Advisor, typically in late summer.

6. Final Semester Registration (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

Students who are registered and who have completed all requirements for a graduate degree after the deadline, but before the beginning of classes of the next term, may receive the degree in the next term without registering. The student must apply for the degree by the specified deadline (see Graduate School Deadlines).

7. Supervisory Committee (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.) See

III, A, 6.

8. Foreign Language Requirement (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

None

9. Comprehensive Examination (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

Students must pass a final comprehensive oral examination, covering Botany or Zoology and the minor(s). All members of the student's committee must be present at the final oral exam and sign the Final Exam Form provided by the Graduate Advisor. The student's committee may choose to pose written questions in addition to oral questions.

10. Teaching Requirement (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

One semester for non-thesis M.S. For M.S.T., six credits in BOT/ZOO 6943 (Internship in College Teaching) are required. This can be either three two-hour labs, one in each of three semesters or two three-hour labs.

11. Other Courses Required for M.S.T. Only

One course is required from each of the following three areas: college curriculum, psychological foundations of education, and sociological foundations of education. See College of Education Graduate Advisor for list of acceptable courses.

12. "I" Grades (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

The student must remove all grades of "I" before receiving the degree.

13. Time Limit (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

All requirements must be completed within two years from entry into the program. M.S. and M.S.T. students can expect two years of support. Under exceptional circumstances a student and their major professor may petition the Graduate Committee for an extension of this deadline.

14. Switching to a M.S. with thesis option (M.S.T./non-thesis M.S.)

Students cannot switch from a M.S.T. program to an M.S. or Ph.D. program in Botany or Zoology. An M.S.T. student wishing to obtain an M.S. or Ph.D. in Botany or Zoology must apply to the graduate program following the typical procedures and deadlines.

A student who wishes to change from M.S. non-thesis to M.S. thesis option must obtain permission from their Supervisory Committee and from the Graduate Committee. The candidate must meet all requirements of the thesis option.

C. Ph.D. Degree

1. Residence (Ph.D.)

The Graduate School Graduate Catalog states: "Beyond the first 30 hours counted toward the doctoral degree, students must complete 30 hours in residence at the University of Florida campus or at an approved branch station of the University of Florida Agricultural Experiment Stations or the Graduate Engineering and Research Center".

2. Course Requirements (Ph.D.)

Minimum requirement is 90 semester hours (5000 level or above in Biology, 3000 level or above outside the department, see 21 below). Those holding an M.S. in Botany or Zoology can receive up to 30-semester hours credit towards the 90-hour total with a credit transfer. The actual number of credits transferred will be decided by the graduate school on a case-by-case basis. If more than 30 credit hours are earned while obtaining an M.S. in Botany or Zoology at the University of Florida, all will count toward the 90 credit hours required for the Ph.D. Remedial English courses (ENS 4449, 4450, 5501, 5502, 5503) do not count toward graduation.

3. Minor (Ph.D.)

If a minor is chosen, 12-24 credits should be taken in the minor department; if two minors are chosen then at least 12 credits should be taken in each. At least 12 credits for each minor must be in courses numbered 5000 or above.

4. Grades (Ph.D.)

Students must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0. Student's whose GPA are not eligible for continued support via Assistantship or Fellowship.

5. Annual Assessment

Graduate students are required to complete the Annual Assessment in CANVAS each year upon notification by the Graduate Advisor. The assessment encompasses activities for the past year, including research progress, publication information, presentations, grants and fellowships received, awards, and mentorship/service. This information helps the program document its general accomplishments and will also inform the student's advisors annual evaluation, which is also initiated by the Graduate Advisor, typically in late summer.

6. Final Semester Registration (Ph.D.)

A student must register for a minimum of three credits in the semester in which they graduate (two credits if they graduate in the summer). Students must meet all deadlines set by the Graduate School for thesis submission and committee approvals. Under exceptional circumstances, a student can petition graduate school to "clear prior" (i.e., if a student has completed all the requirements for graduation by the first day of classes of the semester in which they will graduate they do not have to register in that semester). The student still must apply for a degree.

7. Supervisory Committee (Ph.D.)

The student must choose a Supervisory Committee, subject to approval by the Graduate Committee, by the end of the second semester in the Ph.D. program. See below for details about the committee membership and policies regarding changes.

8. Foreign Language Requirement (Ph.D.)

None

9. Admission to Candidacy (Ph.D.)

a. A graduate student does not become an actual candidate for the Ph.D. until granted formal admission to candidacy. Admission to candidacy requires the following: (a) the student has successfully completed all courses required upon entry into the program; (b) there are no "I" grades; (c) the student has formed a Supervisory Committee; (d) the student successfully completed the oral and written exams; and (e) the student's research proposal was approved.

b. Admission to candidacy requires approval by the student's major professor, the

Supervisory Committee, the departmental Chairperson, the Graduate Committee, the Dean of CLAS, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Application for admission to candidacy (handled by the Departmental Graduate Program Assistant) should be made as soon as the oral and written exams are passed, and the Supervisory Committee has approved the dissertation proposal.

- c. Qualifying Exam. The qualifying exam has three components: oral exam, written exam, and a research proposal defense.

- (1) Research Proposal Defense:

The student's major professor and full supervisory committee must approve a detailed proposal of the student's research either prior to or within the same term in which the written and oral exams are completed. This must be done as an oral defense with the Supervisory Committee separate from the oral examination. The proposal should be modeled on an NSF or NIH grant and should include a synthesis of the field, background data and analyses, proposed research, and information on projected expenses and a strategy to obtain these funds. The proposal must be given to the Supervisory Committee at least one week prior to the proposal defense. (We encourage the student to have an ongoing dialogue with the committee to hone the proposal prior to the defense.) The outcome of the defense is either "approved" or "not approved". The Written Exam:

- (2) Written Exam:

A written examination conducted by the student's Supervisory Committee. The exam will cover the major and minor subjects as well as more general questions related to biology, although the exact composition will be up to the discretion of the Supervisory Committee. The written exams will be given prior to the oral exam and answers provided to the Supervisory Committee at least one week prior to the oral examination. The outcome is either "pass" or "fail".

- (3) The Oral Exam:

An oral examination will be conducted by the Supervisory Committee and will cover the major and minor subjects as well as more general questions related to biology, although the exact composition will be up to the discretion of the supervisory committee. Any member of the faculty may attend these exams, but only the advisory committee may ask questions of the student. The outcome is either "pass" or "fail".

- d. Successful outcome of the qualifying exam is valid for five years. There must be at least two semesters between the completion of the qualifying exam and the final defense.
 - e. Failure of Qualifying Exam. If the student fails any part of the qualifying exam or fails to have their research proposal approved, they must leave the program unless their Supervisory Committee recommends a re-examination (and defines the nature of the exam in writing) and this suggestion is approved by the Graduate Committee

and the Graduate School. The re-examination must be taken and passed within one calendar year of the initiation of the original examination. The reexamination cannot be taken in the same semester as the first exam. If the student fails the exam a second time, they must leave the program at the end of that semester.

- f. Substitutions. If one supervisory committee member (who is not the chair or external member) cannot be present (virtual attendance is permitted) at any portion of the student's qualifying exam, a faculty member with appropriate graduate faculty status in the same academic area may substitute for the absent committee member. The substitute should sign the qualifying examination form. In addition, the student's major chairperson must indicate on the form (or by an accompanying memorandum) the reason for the missing member's absence and that the missing committee member has agreed to the substitution at the qualifying examination. The original committee member should sign. No substitutions may be made for the committee chair or the external member of a student's committee.
- g. The student may not take BOT/ZOO 7980 (doctoral research) until the semester in which the qualifying exam and research proposal defense are scheduled. BOT/ZOO 7979 is the proper research course to take prior to candidacy.

10. Teaching Requirement (Ph.D.)

Two semesters (this is a departmental requirement).

11. Final Examination Notification (Ph.D.)

A degree application must be submitted by the Graduate School deadlines () through ONE.uf. A separate notice of final examination and defense of dissertation must be given to the Graduate Advisor and the department two weeks in advance of the final defense.

15. Dissertation (Ph.D.)

Prepare and present a thesis acceptable to the supervisory committee. A copy of the dissertation must be provided to the Supervisory Committee at least one week prior to the Ph.D. seminar and two weeks prior to the oral examination.

12. Presentation of a Departmental Seminar (Ph.D.)

Ph.D. candidates are required to present a seminar to the department on their research one day to two weeks before defending their dissertation and within the semester in which they complete their degree. If the candidate cannot meet this time frame, they can petition the Graduate Committee. This time-slot is intended to 1) ensure that the seminar and defense are held in a narrow timeframe, and 2) that there is sufficient time allowed for other members of the department to provide input to the Supervisory Committee after the seminar but prior to the final oral examination.

13. "I" Grades (Ph.D.)

The student must remove all grades of "I" before receiving the degree.

14. Final Oral Examination (Ph.D.)

After completion of the dissertation and all other prescribed work for the degree, the candidate is given a final examination, which includes the defense of the dissertation. The student will be examined on the defense by all members of the student's committee. When necessary, one faculty substitute may stand in for a member who is not the committee chair or the external member.

15. Substitutions at the Final Examination (Ph.D.).

If one supervisory committee member (who is not the chair or external member) cannot be present (virtual attendance is permitted) at the final exam, a faculty member with appropriate graduate faculty status in the same academic area may substitute for the absent committee member. The student's major chairperson must indicate on the form (or by an accompanying memorandum) the reason for the missing member's absence and that the missing committee member has agreed to the substitution at the final examination. The substitute should sign the final examination form. The substitute committee member should not sign the signature page of the thesis or dissertation. The original committee member should sign. No substitutions may be made for the committee chair or the outside member of a student's committee.

16. Other Time Limits (Ph.D.)

- a. Ph.D. student without prior M.S. degree. The student should advance to candidacy within three years of entering the Ph.D. program (i.e., before the start of the first semester of their fourth year), and should complete all requirements for the Ph.D. within six years after entry into the program. Under exceptional circumstances a student and their major professor may petition the Graduate Committee for an extension of this deadline.
- b. Ph.D. student with an M.S. degree. The student should advance to candidacy within two years of entering the Ph.D. program. All requirements for the Ph.D. should be completed within five years after entry into the program. Under exceptional circumstances a student and their major professor may petition the Graduate Committee for an extension of this deadline.

17. Supervisory Committee

- a. Selection of the Supervisory Committee:

The Supervisory Committee consists of four or more members of the Graduate Faculty - at least two of whom have graduate faculty status in Biology, one from another department (someone from UF without grad faculty status in Biology) to serve as the external member, and a fourth with grad faculty status at UF. The chair of the committee must be a member of the Graduate Faculty in the Biology Department. One member must be from each department the student has designated as a minor. The Graduate Committee must approve of the Supervisory Committee. (Please note: The designated external member must be a Graduate Faculty member within the University of Florida but outside the Department of Biology). A member outside of UF may be added to the Supervisory Committee,

based on a petition to the Graduate School, but they cannot count as the external member.

Committee membership, including the chairperson, can be changed with approval of the Graduate Committee but this must be done before the midpoint of the final semester of the residence of the student in the program.

b. Responsibilities:

The Graduate Coordinator will approve graduate student programs until the Supervisory Committee has been appointed. After that time the Supervisory Committee will:

- (1) Approve the degree route to be taken by the student,
- (2) Inform students of regulations governing the degree sought,
- (3) Approve the program of the Graduate Student, which includes assigning courses and readings to ensure the satisfactory preparation of the student in biology, and related areas, and making any other assignments the committee deems necessary,
- (4) Monitor the performance of the graduate student in the course work and recommend to the Graduate Committee appropriate actions if the student's grade point average falls below a 3.0, resulting in academic probation,
- (5) Meet to discuss and approve the proposed thesis or dissertation project and the plans for carrying out this project,
- (6) Monitor research progress and meet when appropriate to review procedures, progress, and unexpected results, and to make suggestions for completion. The committee will meet annually to evaluate the student's progress. Following the meeting, a memo outlining progress and recommendations should be signed by the committee and submitted to the Graduate Advisor and placed in the student's file.
- (7) Participate in appropriate examinations (qualifying and final),
- (8) Read and approve the thesis or dissertation,
- (9) Many of the above may be done during each student's Annual Review.

18. Graduate Assistantships

a. Stipends and timeframes

1. Assistantships are offered to graduate students in the research degree programs for the expected tenure of the degree. Assuming availability of funds, the Department will provide at least .50 FTE (20 hrs/wk), nine-month assistantships to students lacking other sources of support. Limited support

might be available in the summer, but this should not be expected. This support is contingent upon continued satisfactory performance in teaching and research. The M.S. degree should be completed within two years of admission and the Ph.D. degree within five (or six if no previous M.S. in related discipline) years of admission. In addition, Ph.D. students should have advanced to candidacy by the end of their second year (for students with an M.S.) or their third year (for students lacking an M.S.).

2. Students not finishing within these time limits will be considered for further departmental funding only after submitting to the Graduate Committee a written appeal that explains in detail the reasons for non-completion. Such requests will be granted on a semester-to-semester basis. Students (with a written supporting letter from their advisor) may petition the Graduate Committee for stipend support beyond these deadlines, but submitting requests prior to the semester in question (i.e., by March 1st for the Fall Semester and November 1st for the Spring Semester). The Graduate Committee will respond to requests within one month. The requests should include explanations for the cause for the delay, steps taken to remedy those issues, a revised time frame, a CV, and any other relevant information.

b. In state status

Stipends and assistantships are affected by their Florida residency status. It is helpful if students have in-state status. A form is available on the department's website.

c. Teaching Assistantships

1. Teaching Assistantships are awarded to students who are making satisfactory academic progress and whose previous teaching assistantships have led to at least satisfactory evaluations. Satisfactory academic progress includes timely progression toward the relevant degree (as defined above), and a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (research, or thesis courses will not be counted in computing this average).
2. Assignment to courses and descriptions of duties will be made by the Associate Chair, with inputs from the Graduate Coordinator and the lead instructors of the courses, taking consideration of preferences, progress, and experience of the students seeking Teaching Assistantships.
3. TAs are expected to be ready to start at the beginning of the stated appointment and are responsible for communicating with the instructor/supervisor if they have conflicting schedules.
4. The instructor will evaluate the quality of teaching by TA's each term in writing. The evaluation will be shown to the student, who has the option of answering any criticisms in writing to the Graduate Committee.

5. Each student's academic progress and work as a teaching assistant will be evaluated during the Annual Review (see 20 below).

d. Research Assistantships and Fellowships

The above guidelines (V.B.1-3) shall apply to applicants for research assistantships and fellowships.

e. Registration

1. Students holding assistantships must register for a minimum number of credits. Students must register for nine credits during the fall and spring terms. Summer terms vary depending on the TA-ship. Students that teach for either summer A or summer B terms must register for three credits. Students that teach summer C term of both summer A and summer B terms must register for six credits. Students on fellowships must register for a minimum of 12 credits (max. 18) during fall and spring terms and eight credits during summer term or the required amount stipulated by the granting agency.

f. In-State and Out-of-State Tuition Waivers and GatorGradCare.

All Teaching and Research Assistants with 0.25-0.50 FTE receive tuition waivers. Graduate assistants receive an extended deadline to pay the nonwaivable fees announced by the Graduate School. For information concerning tuition waivers, see the Graduate Program Assistant. All graduate students with a minimum of 0.25 FTE appointment are eligible for health insurance called "Gator GradCare" with a nominal biweekly fee (see www.gatorgradcare.com). Students wishing to enroll must register each academic year during the enrollment periods. In addition, registered students must pay a 'Miscellaneous Fee' to the University.

19. Office Space

The Department will make every effort to provide each active graduate student with office space, including desk, chair, and bookshelf space. Providing additional space for research is normally the responsibility of the major advisor. When demand for office space exceeds its supply, a priority system will be used for allocation. If a student intends to be in the field for more than one semester, please notify the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Program Assistant. The student may temporarily lose their office space while gone. The student should make arrangements to clear their personal items from the office. When returning, students should notify the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Program Assistant so that office space may be reallocated. Office space will be allocated according to the following priorities: Highest priority – on-campus M.S. and Ph.D. students with teaching or research assistantships or fellowships, who are in good standing. Second priority: students in good standing and off campus for one semester only (this does not include the summer); Third priority: Students who have exceeded the time limits for funding; Fourth priority: students off campus for one full academic year or more, and Lowest

priority: students with full-time local or regional jobs (outside of the Biology Department) lasting one semester or more and who are no longer registered.

The Department will also make every effort to provide an alternative space in which Teaching Assistants can schedule time to conduct office hours so as not to disturb other members of their shared office space.

20. Annual Progress Report

Each year, the major professor will provide a written evaluation using the Annual Progress Report Form describing the student's progress. These reports will be examined by the Graduate Committee and used (along with other data as appropriate, and in consultation with the student and their supervisory committee) in making decisions on the allocation of teaching/research assistantships and space, and on the student's continuation in the graduate program. Annual Reports should be submitted by December 31 to the Graduate Advisor and are used to determine if students are in good standing.

21. Registration for 5000 Level Courses

Graduate credit is awarded for courses numbered 5000 and above. The work in the major field must be in courses numbered 5000 or above. For work outside the major, courses numbered 3000 or above, not to exceed six credits, may be taken provided they are part of an approved plan of study.

22. Registration for 6900 Courses (research units)

- a. BOT/ZOO 6905 is to be used when a graduate student has a particular problem that they want to work on under a particular professor and only after they have sufficient background to carry on the work effectively. The maximum registration in 6900 courses for degree credit from any department are as follows; 6910 Supervised Research: five credits, 6940 Supervised Teaching: five credits, and 6943 Internship in College Teaching: six credits. Different maxima are allowed for the following courses in each department (i.e., you may register for nine credits of BOT/ZOO 6905, and another nine credits in Wildlife, Forestry etc.); 12 credits of 6905 Individual Studies, 15 credits in 6927 Special Topics, and nine credits in 6939 Seminar in. The maximum for these three courses applies to credits to be counted toward your degree. You can register for excess credits of 6905, 6927, and 6939 to meet minimum registration requirements for retaining financial aid or an assistantship, but they will not count toward your degree.
- b. Totals for all six of these courses are for your entire stay at the University of Florida; thus if you use up 12 credits for BOT/ZOO 6905 in your Masters program, additional hours of BOT/ZOO 6905 will not count for course credit for your Ph.D.

23. S/U Grades

Graduate students may not register for any course to be graded S/U, with the following exceptions: 1) Courses specifically designated in the Graduate Catalog as S/U courses (e.g., research, supervised teaching), 2) All 1000 and 2000 level courses, since these will not count toward degree requirements, and 3) Foreign language courses provided permission is obtained beforehand from your major advisor and from the course instructor. This does not apply to language courses that are part of a declared minor; those must still be graded A, B, C, D, E.

24. Transfer of Credits from Previous Graduate Work

a. M.S. Program:

A student who has taken previous graduate work may petition the Graduate School, with the approval of their Supervisory Committee and the Graduate Coordinator, to transfer up to six semester hours of work in which a grade of B or better has been achieved. This request must be made during the student's first semester in Graduate School.

b. Ph.D. Program:

A student who has taken previous graduate work short of obtaining an M.S. degree may petition during their first semester in the Biology graduate program to have credit transferred. The actual number of credits transferred will be decided by the graduate school on a case-by-case basis. If more than 30 credit hours are earned while obtaining an M.S. in Botany or Zoology at the University of Florida, all will count toward the 90 credit hours required for the Ph.D. Remedial English courses (ENS 4449, 4450, 5501, 5502, 5503) do not count toward graduation. Post-M.S. graduate work may be transferred by petition to the Graduate School, with the approval of the Supervisory Committee and Graduate Coordinator, during the student's first semester in our graduate program. If more than 30 semester hours are earned while obtaining an M.S. in Zoology at the University of Florida, all will be counted against the 90 hours required for the Ph.D.

V. Exceptions to the Rules, Regulations, and Requirements

All exceptions to departmental requirements require the approval of the Graduate Committee. All exceptions to the regulations of the Graduate School require the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. Petitions in writing must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator who will forward to the appropriate body with the approval of the student's major professor and Supervisory Committee.

VI. Notification and Appeal Process

Each year all students will receive a notification of their current standing in the department and a statement of deadlines that they are expected to meet, as outlined in this handbook. Any requests for extensions of

deadlines should be presented in writing to the Graduate Committee before the next term (November 1st for the fall or March 1st for the spring and summer).

Students can appeal any ruling made by the Graduate Committee of the Department of Biology. Appeal processes involve two stages. First, after providing additional information to support their case, students will appeal to the Graduate Committee for reconsideration. Second, if a consensus between the Graduate Committee and the student is not reached at this stage, the student can appeal to the Chair of the Department.

Forms:

The department has a webpage with access to forms that might be needed at <https://biology.ufl.edu/administration/forms/>. This includes forms for:

- committee meeting summary
- supervisory committee formation/change
- annual assessment for advisors
- M.S./Ph.D. defense form

Additional resources:

I. University Resources:

Additional resources:

II. University Resources:

- A. ONE.UF: <https://one.ufl.edu/>
- B. my.ufl: <https://my.ufl.edu/ps/signon.html>
- C. George A. Smathers Libraries: <https://uflib.ufl.edu/>
- D. eLearning: <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>
- E. U Matter We Care: <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>
- F. UF Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
- G. UF Police Department: <https://police.ufl.edu/>
- H. COVID-19 Information: <https://coronavirus.ufl.edu/>

III. Department Resources:

- A. Department Homepage: <https://biology.ufl.edu/>
- B. Application Instructions: <https://biology.ufl.edu/graduate-programs/application/>
- C. Application FAQs: <https://biology.ufl.edu/graduate-programs/faqs/>
- D. Animal Care: <https://biology.ufl.edu/administration/animalcare/>
- E. Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA): <https://bgsa.biology.ufl.edu/>
- F. Department Faculty: <https://biology.ufl.edu/people/faculty/>
- G. Department Staff: <https://biology.ufl.edu/people/staff/>
- H. Department Seminars: <https://biology.ufl.edu/events/category/seminars/list/>
- I. Fiscal Office: <https://biology.ufl.edu/administration/fiscal/>

- J. Graduate Courses: <https://biology.ufl.edu/graduateprograms/gradcourses/>
- K. Grants and Awards: <https://biology.ufl.edu/graduate-programs/awards/>
- L. IT Support: <https://biology.ufl.edu/administration/it/>
- M. Stockroom: <https://biology.ufl.edu/administration/stockroom/> III.

Graduate School Resources:

- B. Graduate School Homepage: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/>
- C. Graduate School Handbook:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduateschool/pdffiles/handbook.pdf>
- D. Academic Calendar: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/graduate/calendar/>
- E. Graduate Catalog: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/academics/graduate-catalog/>
- F. Thesis and Dissertation:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/aboutus/offices/editorial/thesisanddissertation/>
- G. Graduation: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/graduation/>
 - a. Graduation Checklists:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduatelife/graduation/graduation-checklist/> H.
- Graduate Student Forms: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/academics/graduate-student-forms/>
 - I. Division of Graduate Student Affairs:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/aboutus/offices/division-of-graduate-student-affairs-dgsa/> J.
- Graduate Student Council (GSC):
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduatelife/studentorganizations/gsc/>
- K. Funding: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospective-students/funding/>
 - a. University of Florida Graduate School-Based Funding for Entering Ph.D. Students:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospectivestudents/funding/enteringphdfunding/>
 - b. Graduate School Funding Awards:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospectivestudents/funding/graduateschoolfunding-awards/>
 - c. Graduate Assistantships:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospectivestudents/funding/graduate-assistantships/>
 - d. Fellowships:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospectivestudents/funding/fellowships/> e.
- Diversity Fellowships:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospectivestudents/funding/diversity-fellowships/>
- f. Supplemental Retention Scholarship:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospectivestudents/funding/dissertation/supplemental-retention-scholarship/>
- g. Additional International Student Funding Information:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospective-students/funding/international/>
- h. NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/prospective-students/funding/nsf-grfp/>
- L. Health Insurance: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/student-life/healthinsurance/>
- M. Health and Safety: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/student-life/healthandsafety/>
- N. Housing: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/student-life/housing/>
- O. Spouse and Family Resources:
<http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduatelife/studentlife/spouseand-family-resources/>
- P. Planning Resources: <https://gradadvance.graduateschool.ufl.edu/planning-resources/>