

Orientation Meeting
for New and Continuing
Graduate Students

Graduate Operations Committee (GOC)

School of Life Sciences
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Fall 2008

Graduate Operations Committee (2005–present)

- Andrew J. Andres, Graduate Coordinator
- Michelle M. Elekonich
- Javier A. Rodríguez, Chair
- Helen J. Wing

Responsibilities of the Graduate Operations Committee

- Provide new or revised materials for the *Graduate College Catalog*.
- Revise the *Graduate Student Handbook* when necessary (instruct the students on policies of the graduate program).
- Periodically review existing graduate programs.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Operations Committee (cont.)

- Conduct an *Orientation Meeting* with all new students.
 - The purpose of this meeting is to welcome the students, talk to them about the general policies of the Graduate Program, and answer questions they may have.
- Review the composition of Advisory Committees.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Operations Committee (cont.)

- Monitor the progress of students toward their degrees by reviewing the annual evaluations submitted by the students and their advisors.
- Provide the Graduate Coordinator information on the standing and progress of students towards their degree.
 - This information may be used in deliberations concerning academic probation and the assignment of financial assistantships to graduate students.

Sections

School of Life Sciences

- Cellular and Molecular Biology (CMB)
 - Andrew J. Andres
 - J. Steven de Belle
 - Deborah K. Hoshizaki
 - Jeffery Q. Shen
 - Frank van Breukelen

Sections

School of Life Sciences

- Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB)
 - Dale A. Devitt
 - Allen G. Gibbs
 - Brett R. Riddle
 - Javier A. Rodríguez
 - Stanley D. Smith
 - Lloyd R. Stark
 - Peter L. Starkweather
 - Daniel B. Thompson
 - Lawrence R. Walker

Sections

School of Life Sciences

- Integrative Physiology (IP)

- Michelle M. Elekonich
- David V. Lee
- Iain J. McGaw
- Carl L. Reiber
- Stephen P. Roberts
- Paul J. Schulte

Sections

School of Life Sciences

- **Microbiology (Micro)**
 - Dennis A. Bazylinski
 - Eduardo A. Robleto
 - Brian P. Hedlund
 - Helen J. Wing

Graduate Program Policies

- Each M.S. and Ph.D. student must have a member of the graduate faculty of the School of Life Sciences serving as her/his Advisor or Co-Advisor at all times.
- Each new M.S. and Ph.D. student must form an Advisory Committee and meet with this Committee by April 15 (if the student joined the Program in the Spring semester) or October 31 (if the student joined the Program in the Fall semester).

Graduate Program Policies

- Composition of Master's Advisory Committees (at least 3 experts in the field):
 - Thesis Advisor (Committee Chair)
 - Two (2) SoLS Graduate Faculty
 - Graduate Faculty Representative (*i.e.*, a Faculty Member with Graduate Faculty Status at UNLV, but whose primary academic appointment IS NOT in SoLS)

Graduate Program Policies

- Composition of Doctoral Advisory Committees (at least 4 experts in the field):
 - Dissertation Advisor (Cmte. Chair)
 - Two (2) SoLS Graduate Faculty
 - Graduate Faculty Representative (UNLV, but not SoLS)
 - “Outside of SoLS” Committee member (optional, but strongly recommended)

Graduate Program Policies

- “Outside of SoLS” members of doctoral advisory committees **MUST** be awarded graduate faculty status by the School of Life Sciences and the Graduate College.
- This external committee member only has to be present for either the Comprehensive Examination or the dissertation defense, not necessarily for both. (Teleconferences can be arranged to allow the external committee member to participate in these events.)

Graduate Program Policies

- Each M.S. and Ph.D. student must meet with his/her Advisory Committee at least once during the “calendar year” (*i.e.*, January to October).
- Students are strongly advised to schedule these meetings early in the Spring semester.

Graduate Program Policies

- It is the responsibility of the students, not of the Major Professor, to schedule meetings of the Advisory Committee.
- One strategy to schedule these meetings is for the student to ask the members of her/his Committee when during the week they cannot meet.

Graduate Program Policies

- After gathering this information, the student finds a day and time that works for everybody, and notifies the members of the Committee of his/her intentions of scheduling a meeting for such date.
- A written report of this meeting (*i.e.*, the Graduate Advisory Committee Meeting form) must be submitted to the GOC by November 1.

Graduate Advisory Committee Annual Meeting Form

Students should complete **Section I – Progress Report** prior to the start of the meeting. Under *Research accomplishments*, please include fellowships, grants, and awards received, oral and written presentations given, articles published, and any other relevant information. If this is the first meeting of the student's Advisory Committee, please indicate so in the section *Address research objectives stipulated during the previous meeting*.

Section II – Plan of Action should be filled out by the student's advisor to reflect the content of the discussion that takes place during the meeting regarding suggested course work and objectives and directions for research during the coming year. **The graduate student and all members of his/her Advisory Committee must sign the form at the end of the meeting.**

THIS FORM MUST BE TYPED

Student's name: _____ Degree sought: _____

Meeting date: _____

I. Progress Report (to be filled by the student prior to the start of the meeting)

Course work completed (or in progress)

Course title

Grade earned

Research accomplishments

Address research objectives stipulated during the previous meeting

II. Plan of Action (to be filled out by the student's advisor to reflect the content of the discussion that takes place during the meeting)

Suggested course work

Research objectives

Signatures

Printed Name	Role	Signature	Date
_____	Student	_____	_____
_____	Committee Chair	_____	_____
_____	SoLS Cmte. Member	_____	_____
_____	SoLS Cmte. Member	_____	_____
_____	Graduate Faculty Repres.	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Graduate Program Policies

- The preferred rooms for holding meetings with the Advisory Committee are:
the Faculty Lounge and White Hall 111
- If these rooms are unavailable then rooms outside White Hall are considered.

Master's students

Graduate Program Policies

- Master's students are required to complete a minimum of 30 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.
- Eighteen (18) of the 30 credits must be completed by taking 700-level courses (other than BIO 797 – *Thesis*).
- Students should earn a grade of “B” or higher in those courses.

Graduate Program Policies

- Master's students must take Biology 701 – *Ethics in Scientific Research* (1 credit) during their first year in the Program.
- Master's students must take at least six (6) credits of Biology 796 – *Graduate Seminar* (1-2 credits).

Graduate Program Policies

- Master's students are required to take a minimum of six (6) credits of Biology 797 – *Thesis* (3-6 credits).
- Biology 797 may be repeated for credit as needed, but only six (6) credits may be counted towards the 30 credit hour minimum graduation requirement.

Graduate Program Policies

- With the Advisor's approval, a Master's student can enroll in Biology 790 – *Graduate Problems in Biology* (1-3 credits) to receive credit for participating in laboratory meetings.
- Biology 790 may be repeated to a maximum of 12 credits.

Graduate Program Policies

- In addition to the general requirements, the course work that a Master's student must complete is determined by the section (*i.e.*, CMB, EEB, IP, Micro) to which s/he belongs and by her/his Advisory Committee.

Graduate Program Policies

- Master's students must submit the proposed graduate degree program to the Graduate College prior to completing 16 credit hours of work toward the degree (*Graduate College* policy).
- Master's students must submit the *Prospectus* (*i.e.*, thesis proposal) *Approval* form to the Graduate College before registering for BIO 797 – *Thesis* credit hours (*Graduate College* policy).

Graduate Program Policies

- Following approval by the Thesis Advisor, the Master's student will submit the thesis draft to be defended to his/her Advisory Committee at least four (4) weeks—unless the Advisory Committee deems otherwise—prior to an oral defense of the thesis.
- Master's students must complete all Master's degree requirements within six (6) years.

Doctoral students

Graduate Program Policies

- Doctoral students are required to complete a minimum of 60 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree.
- Thirty-six (36) of the 60 credits must be completed by taking 700-level courses (other than BIO 799 – *Dissertation*).
- Students should earn a minimum grade of “B” in those courses.

Graduate Program Policies

- Doctoral students must take Biology 701 – *Ethics in Scientific Research* (1 credit) during their first year in the Program.
- Doctoral students must take at least six (6) credits of Biology 796 – *Graduate Seminar* (1-2 credits).
- Biology 796 may be repeated to a maximum of 12 credits.

Graduate Program Policies

- Doctoral students are required to take a minimum of six (6) credits of Biology 799 – *Dissertation* (3-6 credits).
- Biology 799 – *Dissertation* may be repeated for credit as needed, but only 18 credits may be counted towards the 60 credit hour minimum graduation requirement.

Graduate Program Policies

- With the Advisor's approval, a doctoral student can enroll in Biology 790 – *Graduate Problems in Biology* (1-3 credits) to receive credit for participating in laboratory meetings.

Graduate Program Policies

- In addition to the general requirements, the course work that a doctoral student must complete is determined by the section (*i.e.*, CMB, EEB, IP. Micro) to which s/he belongs and by her/his Advisory Committee.

“Filler” Courses

- Biology 730 (A,B,C) – *Advanced Research in the Biological Sciences* (1-6 credits).
May be repeated to a maximum of 12 credits.
- Biology 790 – *Graduate Problems in Biology (Laboratory Meeting)* (1-3 credits).
May be repeated to a maximum of 12 credits.

“Filler” Courses

- Biology 791 – *Special Topics in Biology* (2 credits). May be repeated once for credit.
- Biology 792 – *Advanced Topics in Cell and Molecular Biology* (1-3 credits). May be repeated to a maximum of 12 credits.

General course work
strategy for a
doctoral student

Year 1 and Year 2

- Take nine (9) credits per semester, totaling 36 credits.
- Try to fulfill all “didactic” course work requirements.

Year 3

- Take the Comprehensive Examination.
- Advance to Candidacy.
- Take nine (9) credits per semester, totaling (36 + 18) 54 credits.
- Finish 700-level course work requirements (perhaps by taking BIO 730, 790, 791).

Year 4 (and beyond)

- Take six (6) credits of Biology 799 – *Dissertation* per semester until graduation.

Graduate Program Policies

- Doctoral students must submit the proposed graduate degree program to the Graduate College by the end of their third semester in the Program (*Graduate College* policy).

Graduate Program Policies

- Any graduate student who does not maintain a 3.00 grade point average in all work taken in the degree program will be placed on academic probation.
- A grade of “C+” or less in one graduate-level course will cause a Master’s or doctoral student to receive a letter warning him/her of the possibility of being separated from the Program. If the student receives a second grade below “B-,” s/he will be separated from the Program.

Comprehensive Examination

(Doctoral students only)

Graduate Program Policies

- Doctoral students must take the Comprehensive Examination by the end of their fifth semester after matriculation into the program. (This usually means by the end of the Fall semester of their third year.)
- The Comprehensive Examination must be held at least three (3) weeks before the last day of instruction of any given term (*Graduate College* policy).

Graduate Program Policies

- The format and administration policy of the Comprehensive Examination is determined by the section (*i.e.*, CMB, EEB, IP, Micro) to which the student belongs.
- However, all formats include both written and oral components and assess whether the student has reached the appropriate level of knowledge and analytical skills necessary for his/her field of study.

Possible Outcomes of the Comprehensive Examination

- Unconditional Pass
- Conditional Pass
 - with an explicit stipulation of the academic requirements and time frame that must be satisfied in order for the student to pass the exam
- Failure

Graduate Program Policies

- If a student fails the Comprehensive Examination, s/he, at the discretion of the Advisory Committee, may be allowed to retake the exam once.

Graduate Program Policies

- The student must retake and pass the Comprehensive Examination within twelve (12) calendar months of the date when it was first taken.
- If a student does not comply with this timeline, fails to remediate any deficiencies in a satisfactory manner, or fails the exam for the second time, s/he may be placed on academic probation or removed from the program (see *Graduate Student Handbook* for further details).

Graduate Program Policies

- Doctoral students must submit the *Prospectus* (*i.e.*, dissertation proposal) *Approval* form to the Graduate College before registering for BIO 799 – *Dissertation* credit hours (*Graduate College* policy).

Graduate Program Policies

- Candidacy
 - The 2007-2009 *Graduate Catalog* (page 40) states: “Doctoral students are advanced to candidacy upon successful completion of all course work, passing the Comprehensive Examination, and completing the dissertation prospectus.”

Graduate Program Policies

- Candidacy (continued)
 - We will try to change this policy, so that a student can advance to candidacy after passing the Comprehensive Examination, regardless of whether s/he has completed her/his course work or filed the dissertation prospectus.

Graduate Program Policies

- Following approval by the Dissertation Advisor, the Ph.D. candidate will submit the dissertation draft to be defended to his/her Advisory Committee at least four (4) weeks —unless the Advisory Committee deems otherwise— prior to an oral defense of the dissertation.

Graduate Program Policies

- A student beginning the doctoral program without a Master's degree must complete all requirements for the degree within eight (8) years (*Graduate College* policy).
- A student beginning the doctoral program and holding a Master's degree must complete all requirements for the degree within six (6) years (*Graduate College* policy).

The End