

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

**DEPARTMENT
OF
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

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PREFACE

A. The Graduate School

The Graduate School of the University of Cincinnati is headed by the Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School. The Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School reports to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and is responsible for coordinating, implementing, and administering all policy, rules, and regulations pertaining to graduate degree programs, including those of the Department of Biological Sciences. It is the role of the All-University Graduate Faculty to determine educational policy of the Graduate School, regulate admission of students, candidacy, and awarding of graduate degrees. The All-University Graduate Faculty has sole power in establishing requirements, but leaves to each individual department the right to determine specific courses of study, precise manners of instruction, and individual methods for evaluating the results of examinations. The rules and regulations of the Graduate School are delineated in the *University of Cincinnati Graduate School Graduate Handbook*. This handbook is available on the Graduate School's website, www.grad.uc.edu. The *Department of Biological Sciences Graduate Handbook* contains all of the policies pertaining to our graduate programs and is in compliance with the rules and policies of the Graduate School. While enrolled in the Department of Biological Sciences, graduate students are expected to adhere to the *Student Code of Conduct* of the University of Cincinnati, which is available online at http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Code_of_Conduct.html.

B. The Department of Biological Sciences

The administrative organization of the graduate program in the Department of Biological Sciences consists of the following.

1. Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

The Director of Graduate Studies is appointed by the Department Head. The DGS oversees the smooth operation of the graduate program and serves as the liaison between the department and the Graduate School. The DGS will serve as chairperson of the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) and the DGS convenes meetings of the Graduate Affairs Committee. The Director of Graduate Studies is charged with keeping accurate and timely graduate records for the department, implementing graduate policy, serving as advisor to all first-year graduate students who have yet to choose an advisor, and certifying students for graduation.

2. Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC)

The Graduate Affairs Committee will consist of the DGS (as chairperson), five members from the biology faculty. Faculty members will be appointed to the GAC by the Department Head in consultation with the DGS. All members will have an equal vote on all issues coming before the GAC.

The DGS and graduate Program Manager will review graduate student progress at least once per semester. The DGS will call meetings of the GAC when needed to discuss any issues which may

be requested by any faculty member or graduate student. The GAC will deliberate on any issues concerning the graduate program, interpret graduate policy, and propose new policy from time to time. The GAC will serve as a departmental grievance committee for any and all issues pertaining to the graduate program.

A quorum for a GAC meeting will consist of at least one-half of the members. All issues will be decided by a simple majority vote of the members present. Any faculty member, graduate student, or staff member may request that an item be placed on the GAC agenda, or may submit a petition, by sending a written request to the DGS. When the issue comes before the GAC, whoever submitted the petition may be asked to appear at the meeting.

3. Graduate Admissions Committee

The admissions committee will consist of a minimum of three faculty members and may include the Director of Graduate Studies (*ex officio*). The chairperson will be appointed by the Department Head. While it has been the general policy to appoint members of the GAC to serve on the Graduate Admissions Committee, non-members may be recruited from time to time in order to achieve a balance of expertise from different disciplines.

The functions of the Graduate Admissions Committee will consist of: (1) evaluating applicants for admission to the graduate program for the coming year (see under Admissions Requirements); (2) awarding financial aid in the form of departmental Graduate Assistantships (GAs), Research Assistantships (RAs), and/or Graduate Incentive Awards (GIAs); and (3) serving as a recruitment committee to attract new, qualified students into the graduate program.

I. APPLICATION AND ADMISSION TO GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

A. Application

1. Process

Students are usually admitted for the beginning of the Fall Semester. A completed application consists of: 1) an official college transcript, 2) official GRE scores of the General Test, 3) official scores from the TOEFL and/or IELTS if English is not the applicant's native language, 4) a completed online graduate application, and 5) two letters of recommendation, also submitted online. Students interested in financial aid should apply prior to January 1. We will consider applications later for fall admission, but the chances of admission with financial support are less favorable. In exceptional circumstances, admission for Spring Semester will be considered.

2. Requirements

Admission to the graduate program will require a baccalaureate degree in some field of biology (normally biological sciences, botany, zoology, microbiology, or biochemistry). In some cases, applicants with a B.S. or B.A. degree in other fields (such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, computer science, or psychology) may be considered. Applicants are expected to have a minimum undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 and a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score above the 60th percentile. However, flexibility in the admissions criteria will be maintained, and students will be treated individually.

3. Types of Admissions

a. Full Graduate Standing

Students meeting the minimum criteria for admission are admitted with full graduate standing. These students are eligible for financial aid, if available, and are entitled to all rights and privileges (as well as subject to all regulations) as any other graduate student in good standing.

b. Conditional Graduate Standing

The Graduate Admissions Committee may admit, on a conditional basis, a student lacking the minimal requirements. Students may attain full graduate standing when the deficiencies responsible for the conditional status have been corrected, subject to approval of the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC). Students accepted conditionally must earn grades of B or better during the first two semesters in residence. Any grade of C or below during this period would be grounds for dismissal from the program.

c. Joint Advisors and Interdisciplinary Programs

If a graduate student enrolled in the department wishes (1) to have a joint advisor, or (2) to conduct his/her thesis research in a laboratory in another department or (3) to pursue an interdisciplinary graduate program involving the Department of Biological Sciences, such

arrangements will require advanced approval of the GAC. In all cases, active participation by one or more faculty of this department will be necessary.

d. Part-Time Study

Students may apply for admission for part-time study. Such students will be eligible to receive a degree from the department. The Non-Thesis Master Degree may be pursued totally on a part-time basis. Students in the Research Thesis Master Degree Program, however, would be expected to spend one or two summers as full-time students to conduct/complete their research project. Part-time students must take at least one graduate credit, and meet with their Research Advisory Committee once per year, to maintain good standing in the program. In addition, they must complete a minimum of four semesters of *Biology Seminar*. Students are required to register for the Spring Semester series *Research Progress in Biology* every year. A Ph.D. degree program may be initiated on a part-time basis to complete course work and qualifying examinations. However, the student must spend a minimum of one academic year and two summers in residence as a full-time student. All part-time doctoral programs will require the approval of the Graduate Affairs Committee. A part-time student in good academic standing will be granted full-time status upon written request to, and approval of, the Director of Graduate Studies.

e. Unclassified Graduate Status

Students may take courses as a non-matriculated student and, if later admitted to full graduate standing, may petition the Graduate Affairs Committee for acceptance of up to 12 credit hours of these courses towards satisfying graduate degree course requirements. Only courses in which a grade of B or better is obtained will be accepted, however.

f. Foreign Student Admission

Foreign students applying to the department for admission must demonstrate the ability to speak and write English. The University requires that students pass the Oral English Proficiency Test (OEPT) administered through the Center of English as a Second Language before they will be allowed to teach. However, students who score a 26 or above on the speaking section of the TOEFL iBT, students with a score of 50 or above on the Test of Spoken English (TSE), and students with a score of 7.5 for speaking on the IELTS, are exempt from taking the OEPT. A commitment from a faculty member to serve as the student's advisor may be necessary for the admission of a foreign student. Foreign students must fulfill U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service requirements and register with the International Student Services Office before their admission to the University is completed.

4. Admissions and Financial Aid Decisions

a. Admission

All admissions to the graduate program in Biological Sciences are competitive and subject to review by the Graduate Admissions Committee.

Each applicant will be judged on the basis of:

- (1) Overall grade point average (GPA); junior/senior GPA; major GPA. A value of 3.0 is expected in at least one of these.
- (2) Graduate Record Examination (General Test).
- (3) At least two letters of recommendation.
- (4) Departmental faculty interest and available laboratory space. Students admitted to the graduate program must be sponsored by a faculty member prior to admission.
- (5) Students admitted to the M.S. program and wishing to transfer to the Ph.D. may request admission to the Ph.D. program by petition to the GAC. The petition must be endorsed by the Advisor and the RAC. M.S. students wishing to transfer to the Ph.D. are encouraged to do so before the end of their first year of entering the graduate program, or early in their second year. Once in the Ph.D. program, the student must have an approved doctoral thesis proposal by the end of their second calendar year in the graduate program. The student may petition the GAC, with the backing of their RAC, to extend the deadline for having an approved proposal.
- (6) Foreign applicants must take the TOEFL or IELTS examination. A minimal score of 100 on the TOEFL iBT, or 7.0 on the IELTS, is required.

b. Financial Aid

The Department of Biological Sciences awards several assistantships and scholarships to deserving students. The awards are based solely on academic potential as indicated by the strength of the credentials of new students, or by the performance of continuing students.

Awards are normally given for the academic year and, providing that the student maintains good academic standing, the award can be renewed as outlined below:

- (1) A student entering the Department with a B.S. degree or equivalent will be eligible for a GA, or an RA, for two academic years to pursue the M.S. degree.
- (2) A student entering the Department with an M.S. degree or equivalent will be eligible for a GA, or an RA, for four academic years to pursue the Ph.D. degree.
- (3) A student entering the Department with a B.S. degree or equivalent and pursuing studies to the Ph.D. degree will be eligible for a GA, or an RA, for five academic years.

Students receiving a Graduate Assistantship (GA) are expected to participate in the teaching functions of the department, usually assisting in laboratory courses or discussion sections. Specific course assignments are made each semester by the faculty member in charge of teaching assignments, usually in consultation with course instructors and graduate students. The specific duties within the course assigned will be given by the instructor in charge of that course.

Teaching performance will be evaluated both by students (using the department's evaluation instrument) and by the professor in charge of the course. The professor will indicate at the end of the semester whether a TA's performance was outstanding, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. This evaluation will become part of the student's record. A student who receives an "unsatisfactory" report will receive a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies. A second "unsatisfactory" any time during the student's career would be grounds for removal of the Teaching Assistantship.

Students receiving Graduate Assistantships must carry a full-time course load (12 credits or more) each semester, exclusive of audit credits. Graduate students who have attempted 174 graduate semester credit hours at the University of Cincinnati are not eligible for a university award for enrollment beyond 174 hours. All graduate hours attempted at the University of Cincinnati, regardless of program, count toward the 174 total. Note that a student entering with an M.S. degree from another university is automatically credited with 34 graduate credits.

In the Spring Semester of each year, the chairperson of the Graduate Admissions Committee will send an announcement to all current graduate students asking if they wish to be considered for an assistantship for the following academic year. Continuing students in good standing and eligible for an assistantship will usually be awarded one.

Students in good standing and who do not currently hold a GA may request one. The Graduate Admissions Committee will consider each request in competition with other applicants for the coming year.

Students desiring to receive a Graduate Assistantship beyond the periods stated earlier must petition the GAC. The petition should include justification for why additional support is needed. The student's Research Advisor and/or Research Advisory Committee must also submit a letter supporting, or opposing, the request. Any pertinent information which bears on the student's request should be included.

The members of the GAC will meet to review the student's request and the recommendation of the Research Advisor and/or Research Advisory Committee. It will decide by a majority vote of the members present whether the student will be awarded a Graduate Assistantship for an additional year. Students who have held additional university employment, or other outside employment, concurrent with his/her Graduate Assistantship may not be considered for support beyond the periods stated earlier.

In the event that the decision of the GAC is negative, the student may appeal the decision within one week of notification. The appeal will be made to the GAC by sending a written request to the Director of Graduate Studies. The student, his/her Research Advisor, and/or members of the

Research Advisory Committee will be allowed to present information in person on behalf of the student. The GAC will decide by a majority vote of the members present whether to reaffirm or rescind the earlier decision. The results of this vote will be final.

Graduate Assistantship stipends are paid bi-weekly. The stipend for the next academic year will be announced in the award letter. It is the responsibility of the student receiving the stipend to determine the tax status of the award.

Part-time graduate students are ineligible to receive Graduate Assistantships.

In some cases, graduate Research Assistantships, which are supported by funds from research grants of individual faculty members, may be awarded. These awards are made by the individual faculty members.

A student not receiving a GA or an RA award may still be awarded a Graduate Incentive Award (GIA). These awards cover the costs of tuition (including out of state charges if applicable). Note that beginning in 1997, the university requires that all students receiving GIA type support are required to pay a fraction of the total of tuition plus fees (20%). This does not include the ITIE fee, which must be paid each semester. Students receiving a GIA must carry a full-time course load (12 credits or more) each semester, exclusive of audit credits. Tuition scholarships will not be awarded to students who have accumulated more than 162 graduate semester credit hours.

The University of Cincinnati has available a limited number of graduate scholarships awarded competitively to eligible groups. These include Distinguished Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships, awarded to doctoral candidates, various minority scholarships, the Neff Scholarship for women in Arts and Sciences, and others. Information regarding these sources of funds and application requirements will be announced to the graduate students each year by the Director of Graduate Studies when the information becomes available.

Several sources of financial aid are available on a competitive basis for the summer. Announcements for these will be made during Spring Semester. The University Research Council (URC) offers Summer Research Fellowships, with applications normally due by the middle of February. The Department of Biological Sciences offers a limited number of Wieman, Wendel, and Benedict Scholarships. The deadline for the latter is usually in mid April. Finally, there are some summer Research Assistantships available from individual professors from monies from their research grants or from the department. These are awarded by the individual professors, or by the GAC, depending upon the source of funds.

B. Pre-Registration Procedures and Requirements

1. Supplementary Information Form

The Supplementary Information form must be completed prior to registration by the following individuals:

- a. new student entering the University

- b. students not enrolled in the previous academic year
- c. students who transfer from another college/department within the University
- d. students who have earned a Master degree and are admitted to Ph.D. program
- e. students who switch programs in our department

As soon as the applicant accepts an offer of admission, the student should send the completed Supplementary Information form directly to the academic unit. Not until that form has been received and processed is the student officially admitted to graduate study and eligible to register for courses.

2. Physical Examination

A health screening is required of all international students. Health screenings are held on the West Campus (Lindner Clinic).

3. Transfer of Credits

As a means of assuring that the character and standards embodied in graduate degrees awarded by the University of Cincinnati are preserved, limits are set on the amount of work completed at other institutions which can be included as fulfilling graduate degree requirements. Transfer of credits from other universities, summer programs, etc., are subject to the approval of the student's Research Advisory Committee and the Graduate Affairs Committee. However, all courses eligible for transfer credit should have been taken within five years prior to application. Other limits are as follows:

a. Master Degrees

The minimum requirement for these degrees is one year's full-time graduate study, or its equivalent. Eligibility for graduation requires a minimum of 30 graduate semester credits, at least half of which must be completed while matriculated at the University of Cincinnati. All transfer graduate students pursuing a degree in the department must take a minimum of three formal courses while in residence, two of which must be from the Department of Biological Sciences. Three formal courses must be taken within the first year a student is in residence unless there are extenuating circumstances that can be demonstrated to the GAC. A formal course is one in which letter grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, or F are given. Research credits, Biology Seminars, Research Progress in Biology, and teaching techniques do not count as formal courses. In no case can credit for the thesis requirement be satisfied by transfer from another institution.

b. Doctoral Degree

This degree is conferred on the basis of long study and high scholarly attainment in a special field of learning. In no case, however, will the degree be granted for less than three years of full-time graduate study or its equivalent, of which the last year must be while matriculated at the

University of Cincinnati. Eligibility for graduation requires a minimum of 90 graduate semester credits beyond the bachelor's degree or a minimum of 60 graduate semester credits beyond the master's degree. The last 30, exclusive of research credits, must be completed under the direction of University of Cincinnati faculty. Three formal courses must be taken within the first year a student is in residence unless there are extenuating circumstances that can be demonstrated to the GAC. In no case can credit for the dissertation requirement be satisfied by transfer from another institution.

II. REGISTRATION

A student must be accepted to, and enrolled in, a graduate program in the Department of Biological Sciences in order to earn graduate credit. However, non-matriculated students may be eligible to apply specific course credits towards their degree if later admitted into the graduate program (see section I.3.e above).

A. Procedures of Registration

Students register each semester online and promptly make full payment when billed. A student may not attend classes until registration is completed.

A student is expected to register for course work after counseling with his/her Research Advisor, and obtaining approval. Students who have not been accepted into a laboratory will be advised by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Although the university now processes registration on-line, you must check with an advisor before registration every semester.

Students should consult One Stop for current drop/add policies of the University.

B. Audit Regulations

The audit option is intended for cases in which course work is desired or advised by the Research Advisor and/or Research Advisory Committee, but in which a grade is deemed unnecessary. Admissions and conditions for participation in audit courses are at the discretion of the instructor, who is not obligated to accept a student for audit. Audited courses *cannot* be used to satisfy *any* graduate degree course requirements. An example of where an audited course may be appropriate would be for a student doing field work in a foreign country where a working knowledge of the language is needed.

Audit hours may not be charged to a GAS/GIA unless 12 graduate credits are taken that same semester (and if the total is less than 19 credits). Also, no more than one audit course per semester may be charged to a GAS/GIA.

C. Pass/Fail

A graduate student may *not* take courses for graduate credit on a pass/fail basis, except when approved by the Research Advisory Committee. The pass/fail option is limited to courses outside the requirements of the graduate program (e.g. deficiency credits, extra-departmental electives) and to seminars, research credits, and teaching techniques within the department. Under no circumstances may a course taken pass/fail be counted towards fulfilling a graduate degree course requirement.

D. Inappropriate Courses

Unless approved by his/her Research Advisory Committee, a student may not take courses unrelated to his/her graduate program from other departments (e.g. physical education,

economics, business, law, foreign language, education). Students doing so may be placed on probation.

E. Withdrawals

1. Leaves of Absence

A student may request a leave of absence from the program for a period of up to one year for medical, financial, or personal reasons. Such requests must be made in writing to the GAC, and must be endorsed by the student's Research Advisory Committee. The student's status, upon return to the program, will be the same as when he/she started the leave. If the student had a Graduate Assistantship and/or a GAS/GIA at the time of the leave, the department cannot guarantee that one will be available upon his/her return.

Unofficial leaves or vacations may not be taken during the academic year.

2. Non-Completion of Degree

Students who are not registered for a full credit load, or are not in residence in the department, must complete all requirements for their degree within 15 months of leaving unless a formal leave of absence has been granted. Students who fail to obtain a leave of absence will be dropped from our list of degree-seeking students. Should these students later wish to complete their degrees, they must formally apply to the Graduate Affairs Committee and the Graduate School for reinstatement. It should be noted that the department's time limit of candidacy is shorter than that of the Graduate School. The conditions for reinstatement could include the fulfillment of any new requirements instituted since the student's candidacy period expired, completion of additional course work, an examination, or additional laboratory work. Reinstatement is not automatic and could be denied.

III. GRADUATE CREDITS AND GRADING PRACTICES

A. Full-Time and Part-Time Course Load

Unless specifically admitted as a part-time student, all graduate students are expected to carry a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours (courses numbered 6000 and above) per semester for Fall and Spring Semesters. All first-year graduate students must register for three formal courses for letter grade credit, exclusive of seminars and research credits, in residence unless there are extenuating circumstances that can be demonstrated to the GAC. Students taking courses for audit, or taking undergraduate deficiencies, must still take 12 graduate credit hours. Part-time students must take a minimum of one graduate credit per academic year to maintain their status in the program.

B. Change From Full-Time To Part-Time Status

To change status from full to part-time at any stage in the student's program requires a petition to the Graduate Affairs and Curriculum Committee. The petition must include an endorsement from the student's Research Advisory Committee and a specific plan for completion of the degree in a timely manner. This is intended to include students who have passed their qualifying exams and are registering for one credit per academic year. A part-time student, to be considered in good standing in the graduate program, must meet with his/her committee at least one time per academic year. He/she is required to register for the Spring Semester *Research Progress in Biology* seminar annually. Note that this registration will fulfill the Graduate School requirement of one credit per academic year. Failure to fulfill these requirements will result in probation and may result in dismissal from the program. A return to the program will require formal application to the Admissions Committee, and the student will be in competition with incoming students.

C. Graduate Assistants and Graduate Assistant Scholarship/Graduate Incentive Award Recipients

Students receiving Graduate Assistantships must carry a full-time course load (12 graduate credits or more, exclusive of audit credits) each semester. Assistantships will not be awarded to students who have accumulated more than 160 semester credits. The workloads of students who hold assistantships are expected to be between 12-15 hours per week. When students holding Graduate Assistantships are employed over and above their assistantships, a number of legitimate academic concerns can be raised (including length of time to earn their degrees). Thus, the following policy will be followed:

- a. One course per semester (or 10% of the full-time equivalent for non-instructional assignments) is the maximum part-time workload allowable for students who hold a Graduate Assistantship.
- b. The grades of Graduate Assistants holding more than one University appointment, or outside employment, will be closely monitored.

- c. If academic progress slows, it will be recommended that the additional appointment be terminated, or that the student forfeit his/her Graduate Assistantship.

D. Grading Practices

The Department of Biological Sciences uses the grading practices specified in the *University of Cincinnati Graduate School Graduate Handbook*, except as discussed below. A student must maintain a grade point average of 3.0, exclusive of seminars and research credits. Students not maintaining this minimum will be placed on academic probation, unless extenuating circumstances can be demonstrated (see section on probation below).

E. "I," "SP," and "UP" Grades

All **I** (Incomplete) grades must be changed to a letter grade no later than the grading deadline for the same semester the academic year following original assignment of the **I** grade, or the **I** will automatically convert to an **I/F** and cannot be changed. A student cannot be certified for graduation with an **I** grade on their record. Students taking courses such as research which are continuing and which have been pre-approved may be given the grade of **SP** or **UP**.

IV. PROBATION AND DISMISSAL POLICIES

A. Minimum Academic Performance

The *University of Cincinnati Graduate School Graduate Handbook* states that a student must accumulate a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 to obtain a master's degree at the University of Cincinnati. At least two-thirds of the minimum graduate credits for the M.S. degree must be at a level of *B* or higher. A doctoral student must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00 in all doctoral course work. However, the Department of Biological Sciences has a higher expectation for its graduate students. To insure the high quality of our program, the following procedures are utilized in the evaluation of the performance of the Department of Biological Sciences graduate students.

At the beginning of each academic semester, the Director of Graduate Studies and graduate Program Manager will evaluate each student's progress. The following guidelines will be used:

1. A student must maintain a grade point average of 3.00, *exclusive* of seminars and research credits. Students not maintaining this minimum will be placed on probation at the beginning of the semester after the grades are earned (except for Spring Semester, which will result in probationary status at the beginning of the following Fall Semester), unless extenuating circumstances can be demonstrated. Note that a grade of B- earns 2.67 quality points.
2. A failing grade in any course, including seminars and research courses, constitutes a serious matter and will be grounds for dismissal without a probationary period, after consideration by the GAC.
3. Students who, in the opinion of their Research Advisor and/or Research Advisory Committee, are not making adequate progress in their research will be placed on probation at the beginning of the following semester if the DGS concurs with the decision.
4. Failure to have a meeting with the Research Advisory Committee (before the beginning of the second year and every year thereafter) will result in the student being placed on probation at the beginning of the semester following the missed deadline.
5. A student not registering and participating in the Biology Seminar (BIOL 9003) and/or Research Progress in Biology (BIOL 9004) without a formal exemption (for course conflicts, teaching duties, or other professional responsibilities) from the DGS will be placed on probation retroactively to the beginning of the semester during which the lapse occurred.
6. Unless approved by his/her RAC, a student may not take courses unrelated to his/her graduate program from other departments (e.g. physical education, economics, business, law, foreign language, education). Students doing so

will be placed on probation at the beginning of the semester during which the event occurred.

At least once each academic year, the Director of Graduate Studies shall inform the student in writing of his/her status in the program. This will consist of a copy of the student's Annual Progress Report, or in the case of administrative action, a letter will be sent to the student.

B. Probation

When a student is placed on probation, he or she will receive a letter from the DGS indicating when the probationary period begins and ends, and the conditions and deadlines that must be met to return to good academic standing.

Students on probation for an unsatisfactory GPA will return to good academic standing by earning a grade during the probationary semester sufficient to return the GPA to a minimum of 3.00.

A student who is placed on probation as a result of a recommendation by his or her Research Advisor and/or RAC will be placed on probation immediately and must meet with the Research Advisor and/or RAC before the end of the probationary period. If the RAC concludes that there has been sufficient progress, the student will return to good academic standing prior to the end of the probationary period.

A student will be placed on probation for failure to hold an annual meeting by the end of Summer Semester. A student will return to good academic standing by holding such a meeting before the end of the probationary period, provided the committee indicates that sufficient progress is being made toward the degree.

C. Dismissal

Failure to return to good academic standing by the beginning of the semester immediately following one full semester of probation will result in dismissal from the program. By the end of the probationary semester (or as soon as grades are available in the case of a low GPA) the student will be required to provide evidence to the GAC of improved performance (e.g. grades raising the GPA to 3.00 or a letter from the RAC). In addition, failure to maintain good academic standing at any point after two prior instances of probation will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

If the student wishes to appeal the dismissal, he or she may do so by writing to the DGS within one week of the end of the semester in which the dismissal occurs. A meeting of the GAC will be called immediately, at which time the student will be asked to make a statement. The student has the option to have his or her advisor present. After presentation of the appeal, the GAC will vote on whether to readmit the student, or not. If the GAC chooses to readmit the student under specific conditions, they may do so. The decision of the GAC is final.

The guidelines outlined above do not preclude the termination of a Graduate Assistantship for non-fulfillment of assigned duties, or the dismissal of a student from the program for non-academic reasons.

V. MASTER DEGREE PROGRAMS

Two Master degree programs are offered in the Department of Biological Sciences: the Research Thesis Master Program, and the Non-Thesis Master Program. The primary program within the department is the Research Thesis M.S. The Non-Thesis option is available on a limited basis to students whose application dictates a specific need.

A. Course of Study

Research Thesis Master Program

Most M.S. degrees offered in the department are research-intensive degrees. Course requirements include a core set of Foundation Courses and additional graduate courses offered to meet the educational needs of students and to expose them to the latest developments in their fields and related disciplines. The curriculum also is designed to be flexible to effectively meet the needs of students on different career paths.

The course of study for a student in the Research Thesis Master Program is as follows:

1. The minimum for this degree is one year of full-time graduate study, or its equivalent. Eligibility for graduation requires a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours, at least half of which must be completed while in residence at the University of Cincinnati. A minimum of three courses must be taken within the Department of Biological Sciences. M.S. students are required to take at least two of the Foundation Courses offered by the department (See the outline of the curriculum and the list of Foundation Courses in Appendix I). Additional courses may be selected from other departmental courses offered for graduate credit or other courses from the University. A minimum of four additional credits of formal courses is required, at least two credits of which must be in graduate-only courses. Research credits, Biology Seminar, Research Progress in Biology, and teaching techniques do not count as formal courses. This is a minimum requirement, and individual RACs will determine the appropriate course work for the individual student and their specific research project.

All first-year students must complete three formal courses for letter grade credit, exclusive of seminars, research credits, teaching techniques, and graduate topics, unless there are extenuating circumstances that can be demonstrated to the GAC.

All transfer graduate students pursuing a Master Degree in the department must also complete a *minimum* of thirty (30) graduate credits. Transfer

students are required to take a *minimum* of three formal graduate courses while in residence, two of which must be taken within the department. The student must take two Foundation Courses or demonstrate to their RAC that he/she has taken the equivalent at another institution. Twenty (20) of the 30 graduate credits applied towards a Master degree must be derived from courses in which the student receives a letter grade of A, A-, B+, B, C, or F. In no case can credit for the thesis requirement be satisfied by transfer from another institution.

2. Students must be enrolled in *Research Progress in Biology* (BIOL 9004) during Spring Semester each year.
3. Registration and attendance in the department's *Biology Seminar* (BIOL 9003) is required each semester that the student is enrolled in the program.
4. The student's Research Advisory Committee may require any additional course requirements beyond the minimum established by the Department.
5. Any formal course taken pass/fail will not be accepted as fulfilling the formal course or minimum graduate credit hour requirements.
6. A written thesis based on laboratory or field research, which has been approved by the student's RAC, is required for completion of the degree. The thesis will be defended before the RAC and will be open to the public.

Students in the Research Thesis Program must have a Graduate Research Advisor and a Research Advisory Committee. The Director of Graduate Studies will serve as the student's interim advisor until the student has selected a Research Advisor.

A student must have a Research Advisor by January 15 of his/her first academic year in order to be eligible for future financial support.

A faculty member will inform the graduate Program Manager in writing that he/she has agreed to serve as a student's Research Advisor by submitting an "Acceptance into Research Laboratory" form. This document will be placed on record in the student's file.

The student, together with his/her Research Advisor, will select a thesis research project. A Research Advisory Committee will be formed based upon the nature of the research topic. The RAC should serve as a resource for the graduate student to aid in the development and execution of his/her research program. The members of this committee are normally chosen by the Research Advisor in consultation with the student. The RAC will consist of a minimum of three members—the student's Research Advisor and two faculty members, one of whom must be a member of the Department of Biological Sciences.

The student must meet with his/her Research Advisory Committee before the end of the first academic year of study and determine the courses (within the guidelines listed above) which will

be required of that student for his/her degree. The “Course Certification Form,” will be completed, submitted to the graduate Program Manager, and forwarded for approval to the Director of Graduate Studies. The “Course Certification Form” is only completed once, at the student's first RAC meeting.

Each student is required to meet with his/her RAC at least once each *academic year* to discuss the student's progress. The “Graduate Student Progress Report” must be completed prior to each RAC meeting. The completed form will be discussed with the student at the meeting, and signed by the student, their Research Advisor, and their Research Advisory Committee. The original copy must be placed in the student's file. The student and the Research Advisor will be given a copy of the report. Students who do not meet with their RAC by the end of the academic year will be placed on probation (see above).

A meeting of a student's RAC may be called at any time by the student, the Research Advisor, or any member of the RAC. This meeting should be held as soon as it is possible to convene all of the members.

The Research Advisory Committee will be responsible for conducting the thesis defense in accord with Graduate School regulations.

The composition of the RAC may be changed only if approved by the Graduate Affairs Committee. If such a change is desired, the Research Advisor shall initiate such action by sending a written request to the GAC explaining the reasons for such a change. A substitute member may be appointed with the approval of the GAC when a committee member resigns, or is unavailable due to a leave of absence or sabbatical leave.

Exceptions to the above requirements can be made by the Research Advisory Committee upon approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Non-Thesis Master Program

The course of study for a student in the Non-Thesis Master Program is as follows:

1. The minimum for this degree is one year of full-time graduate study, or its equivalent. Eligibility for graduation requires a minimum overall GPA of 3.00, and a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours, at least half of which must be completed while in residence at the University of Cincinnati.
2. Once admitted to the M.S. program, students must complete at least two formal graduate courses for letter grade in their first semester. These courses must be exclusive of seminars, research credits, thesis credits, research progress, teaching techniques, and professional development.
3. A minimum of eighteen (18) of the 30 graduate credits applied toward their M.S. degree must be derived from courses in which the student receives a letter grade.

These courses must be exclusive of seminars, research credits, library research credits, research progress, and teaching techniques.

4. The student may apply up to 3 credits of *Graduate Research* (BIOL 9001) each semester toward the 30-credit requirement.
5. Registration and attendance in the department's *Biology Seminar* (BIOL 9003) is required each semester that the student is enrolled in the program.
6. Registration and attendance in *Research Progress in Biology* (BIOL 9004) is required each year the student is enrolled in the program.
7. Each student in the program must have an Advisor and an Advisory Committee (AC) approved by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The AC shall consist of a minimum of two faculty members, including the Advisor. The Advisor must be a member of the Department of Biological Sciences. When the AC is constituted, the appropriate form listing the composition of the AC and signed by the Advisor and DGS must be placed in the student's file with the graduate Program Manager. The AC must be in place by the end of the first semester the student is admitted to the program. The student will be expected to select an AC that is appropriate for his/her course of study. The AC will be responsible for working with the student to design his/her course of study and for approving the student's list of courses.
8. A written paper based on library research, on a subject approved by the student's AC, is required for completion of the M.S. program. The Advisor will be responsible for directing the student's library research, and the student should seek input from members of their AC at appropriate intervals throughout the course of their library research and writing of the paper. Up to 10 credits in *Library Research* (BIOL 9002) may be applied toward the 30-credit requirement. A copy of the completed paper, signed by all members of the AC affirming its acceptability, must be placed in the student's file with the graduate Program Manager. The paper will be presented and defended before the AC, and the defense will be open to the public.
Note: Because this is a Non-Thesis MS program, the student does not submit a thesis to the Graduate School.
9. Each student is required to meet with their AC at least once each academic year. A written report of these meetings, signed by the student and members of the AC, must be placed in the student's file with the graduate Program Manager.

B. Candidacy

Students are not required to submit formal applications for Master candidacy. To maintain status as a graduate student, and thus be eligible for a graduate degree, students must register at UC for at least one graduate credit that contributes to degree requirements each academic year. (See

section II.F on withdrawals and leaves.) A student becomes a candidate for the Master degree upon matriculation to the program in which he/she has been admitted.

C. Time Limitations

The minimum requirement for the Master degree is the equivalent of one academic year of full-time graduate study, consisting of at least 30 graduate credits. The Graduate School requires that a student fulfill all requirements for the M.S. degree no later than five years from the date of matriculation into the degree program.

D. Research Projects, Theses, and Examinations

1. Research Projects

Students electing a Research Thesis Master Degree will select a research project in consultation with their Research Advisor and with approval of his/her Research Advisory Committee. The RAC has sole responsibility to see that the project is carried out under currently accepted scientific standards. Upon completion of the research, a thesis will be prepared and defended orally in public.

2. Thesis Preparation

The format of the thesis (e.g., whether it follows a traditional thesis format or consists of a general introduction and a manuscript ready for submission to a refereed journal) must be approved by the Research Advisor and/or RAC.

Once a thesis has been defended and approved by the student's RAC, the student must submit an electronic thesis by following the most current detailed instructions online at <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.htm>.

3. Thesis Defense

The following policies regarding examinations for the Master Programs will be in effect:

- A. The thesis must be submitted to the student's Research Advisory Committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled thesis defense.
- B. The following information must be supplied to the graduate Program Manager at least two weeks prior to the defense: The student's full name, prior degrees, institutions from which he/she received the degree/s, thesis title, names of the RAC members, time, place, and date of the examination. The graduate Program Manager will see that appropriate public announcements are distributed. Students are also expected to enter details of their defense, such as time, date, and location, online at www.grad.uc.edu/graduation.aspx.

- C. No thesis defense may be held without at least a minimum of three members of the student's Research Advisory Committee present. If a member of the student's RAC cannot be present for a defense, an *ad hoc* substitute may be appointed with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Note: A Research Advisory Committee may have *more* than the minimum of three (3) members if it is in the best interests of the student to do so. Under these circumstances, only the minimum number of three need be present for the defense.

- D. The vote to pass must be equal to, or greater than, the minimum specified by the Graduate School (i.e., 3/3, 3/4, 4/5, 5/6, 6/8, 7/9). If the student fails the defense, the student and/or Research Advisor may file an appeal with the Graduate Affairs Committee. Such action must be initiated by a formal, written request to the Director of Graduate Studies within a week of the original examination, in which the student must explain the reasons why he/she should be granted a pass. A meeting of the Graduate Affairs Committee will be called for a decision.

A student receiving a fail grade for the examination is dismissed from the graduate program.

A student receiving a conditional pass must fulfill the requirements of the committee member(s) within one semester. The RAC may then change the results of the examination to a pass, and the student will be eligible to receive a degree.

E. Graduation

One semester prior to the semester in which a student anticipates graduating, they should check with the graduate Program Manager to insure all departmental program requirements have been met and to find out what must be submitted to the department relative to their graduation. In addition, they should consult the Graduate School's website <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html> for deadlines and the most current detailed instructions on submitting his/her thesis.

Each student who has successfully completed all requirements for either of the Master Degree Programs in Biological Sciences must apply for graduation by completing an online graduation application with the Graduate School by the deadline posted on the Graduate School's website. It is the responsibility of the student to insure that all procedures and regulations required for graduation by the department and Graduate School be fulfilled.

The student must submit a copy of their signed "Committee Approval Form" to the graduate Program Manager by the given deadline for that semester. Upon successful completion of the thesis defense, the Research Advisor will forward an email to the graduate Program Manager certifying that the student has completed all requirements for graduation with the M.S. degree.

VI. DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM

The Ph.D. degree offered in the department is a research-intensive degree. As a result, there are only a few course requirements, including a core set of Foundation Courses and a series of literature-based, seminar-style courses offered to meet the educational needs of students and to expose them to the latest developments in their fields and related disciplines. The curriculum also is designed to be flexible to effectively meet the needs of students on different career paths.

A. Course of Study

The course of study for a student in the Doctoral Degree Program is as follows:

1. A Ph.D. will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three years of full-time graduate study, i.e., a minimum of 90 graduate credits. The last 30 credits must be completed under the direction of University of Cincinnati graduate faculty.

A Ph.D. student entering with a Bachelor's degree must take all three of the Foundation Courses. (See appendix I for descriptions of Foundation Courses). A minimum of six additional credits of formal courses is required, at least four credits of which must be in graduate-only courses. Research credits, Biology Seminar, Research Progress in Biology, and teaching techniques do not count as formal courses. A minimum of three courses must be taken within the Department of Biological Sciences. Additional courses may be selected from other departmental courses offered for graduate credit or other courses from the University. This is a minimum requirement and individual RACs will determine the appropriate course work for the individual student and their specific research project.

A Ph.D. student entering with a Master's degree must take all three of the Foundation Courses (See appendix I for descriptions of Foundation Courses). Ph.D. students coming in with an M.S. degree in a biological science discipline, and having an equivalent graduate level Foundation Course during their M.S. program, may petition the GAC, with the backing of their RAC, to remove the requirement for that specific course and its accompanying credits. A minimum of six additional credits of formal courses is required, at least four credits of which must be in graduate-only courses. A minimum of three courses must be taken within the Department of Biological Sciences. Additional courses may be selected from other departmental courses offered for graduate credit or other courses from the University. This is a minimum requirement and individual RACs will determine the appropriate course work for the individual student and their specific research project. In no case can credit for the dissertation requirement be satisfied by transfer from another institution.

2. Students must be enrolled in *Research Progress in Biology* during Spring Semester each year.
3. Registration and attendance in the department's *Biology Seminar* is required each semester that the student is enrolled in the program.
4. The student's Research Advisory Committee may require any additional course requirements beyond the minimum established by the Department.
5. A dissertation, based upon original research, which is to be evaluated by a Research Advisory Committee, shall be prepared and defended publicly.
6. Presentation of the doctoral research in the Biology Seminar prior to graduation is required. This may be combined with the oral defense.

B. Dissertation Advisor and Committee

Students in the Doctoral Program must have a Research Advisor and a Research Advisory Committee. Until a student has selected a Research Advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or a temporary advisory committee appointed by the Director, will serve as the student's interim advisor.

A student must have a Research Advisor by January 15 of his/her first academic year in order to be eligible for future financial support.

A faculty member will inform the graduate Program Manager in writing that he/she has agreed to serve as a student's Research Advisor by submitting an "Acceptance into Research Laboratory" form. This document will be placed on record in the student's file.

Upon being accepted into a laboratory the student, together with his/her Graduate Research Advisor, will select a thesis research project. Based upon the nature of the research topic, a Research Advisory Committee (RAC) will be formed. The RAC should serve as a resource for the graduate student to aid in the development and execution of his/her research program. The members of this committee are normally chosen by the Research Advisor in consultation with the student. The RAC will consist of a minimum of five members, three of which must be tenure-track faculty from the Department of Biological Sciences. At least one member must be from another academic department, or institution. The Research Advisor shall serve as chairperson of the committee.

The student must meet with his/her Research Advisory Committee by the end of the first academic year of study and determine the courses (within the guidelines listed above) which will be required of that student for his/her degree. The "Course Certification Form," will be completed and forwarded for approval to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Each student is required to meet with his/her RAC at least once each *academic year* to discuss the student's progress. The "Graduate Student Progress Report" must be completed prior to each

RAC meeting. The completed form will be discussed with the student at the meeting, and signed by the student, their Research Advisor, and their Research Advisory Committee. The original copy of such reports will be placed in the student's file, and both the student and his/her advisor will be given a copy of the report.

The Research Advisory Committee will be responsible for administering the candidacy exams and conducting the dissertation defense in accord with the Graduate School's regulations (as outlined below).

It is the responsibility of the Research Advisor, in consultation with the student, to constitute the student's RAC. Once constituted, however, the composition of the committee may be changed only upon approval of the Graduate Affairs Committee. If such a change is desired, the Research Advisor shall initiate such action by sending a written request to the Director of Graduate Studies explaining the reasons for such a change.

Exceptions to the above requirements may be made by the Research Advisory Committee upon approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

C. Credit Hours

The Doctoral Degree will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three years of full-time graduate study, i.e. a minimum of 60 graduate credit hours beyond the Master Degree, or 90 graduate credit hours beyond the B.S.. The last 30 credits must be completed under the direction of University of Cincinnati graduate faculty. Only courses approved by the student's RAC will be accepted towards the credit hour requirements. Any formal course taken pass/fail will not be accepted as fulfilling the formal course or minimum graduate credit hour requirements.

D. Time-to-Degree Requirements of the Graduate School

1. Graduate Students who have attempted 174 graduate credit hours at the University of Cincinnati are not eligible for a tuition scholarship for enrollment beyond the 174 hours. Note: Students entering with an M.S. degree from another institution will automatically be credited with 34 credit hours toward the 174 credit hour limit. Thus, they will be ineligible for support beyond 128 credit hours at this institution. Also note that students who complete an M.S. degree at the University of Cincinnati retain **all** earned graduate credits on their record. Thus, completion of an M.S. degree with 67 credits, for example, allows the student only 95 additional credits before he/she will no longer be eligible for a tuition scholarship.
2. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within nine consecutive academic years of the date of matriculation into the program. Doctoral students in the Department of Biological Sciences are expected to

complete candidacy requirements by the end of the second year in the program.

3. The Graduate School will conduct a required exit survey on the doctoral experience of all graduating doctoral students. The results will be shared with the doctoral programs.

E. Residency

The handbook of the Graduate School stipulates (University Rule 3361:50-77-23) that prior to doctoral candidacy, all doctoral students must meet a residency requirement. A minimum enrollment of ten graduate credit hours per semester for two out of three consecutive semesters of study including summer is required to satisfy the residency requirement.

F. Foreign Language Requirement

Proficiency in one or more foreign languages may be required by a particular Research Advisory Committee. The manner in which proficiency is determined and certified is also at the discretion of the committee.

G. Research Projects

Doctoral students will select a research project in consultation with the Research Advisor and with approval of his/her Research Advisory Committee. The RAC has sole responsibility to see that the project is carried out under currently accepted scientific standards. Upon completion of the research, a dissertation will be prepared and defended orally in public.

H. Candidacy Examinations

Upon completion of all required Foundation Courses, and with a GPA of at least 3.00 in doctoral course work, a candidacy examination will be administered by the student's Research Advisory Committee. The examination will test both the student's breadth of knowledge as well as his/her expertise in at least one area. The Ph.D. candidacy requirements are two-fold: a) a written doctoral research proposal and b) a comprehensive oral exam.

As part of the advancement to candidacy, all students must first submit a written doctoral research proposal for approval by their RAC. The student is encouraged to take a seminar or workshop on proposal writing and meet with their committee to discuss the outline and format of their doctoral proposal. The proposal should be written in the form of a grant proposal, but the specific format, page limits, and required elements are to be determined by the RAC and communicated in writing to the student. It is expected that the proposal will represent a plan for an original research project developed by the student in consultation with their Research Advisor, the RAC, and other relevant resources. The student will take responsibility for the writing of the proposal. The student may seek advice concerning any aspect of the proposal, and the Research Advisor and RAC will provide feedback during its development. The RAC members will review the student's written proposal and recommend either a) approval of the proposal or b) rejection of the proposal. If an RAC member does not respond within one month of the submission of a thesis proposal, this will be considered a vote for approval from that RAC member. If more than 20% of the members of the student's committee fail to pass the proposal, the student must rewrite the proposal. The student must have an approved doctoral thesis proposal in their permanent file with the graduate Program Manager by the end of their second calendar year in the graduate program. Failure to meet this deadline will result in the student being placed on probation at the beginning of the following semester. The student will be removed from probation by approval of a written doctoral thesis proposal prior to the end of the probationary period. The student must have an approved doctoral thesis proposal in their permanent file with the Program Manager before scheduling the oral exam.

The oral exam must be taken within three months of passing the written exam; failure to meet this deadline will result in the student being placed on probation. The student will be removed from probation upon taking the oral exam.

The oral exam shall consist of the following two components: 1) defense of the proposed research and demonstration of knowledge relevant to the proposed project; and 2) demonstration of knowledge of relevant broad areas of biology as determined by the committee and communicated to the student prior to the exam. Students should be proactive in seeking input from members of their committee about how best to prepare for the oral exam. The committee is free to assign the student readings that may be appropriate for background for the proposal itself or recommend in-depth study of particular topics in biology. The student must receive a pass from at least 80% of the advisory committee on both the proposed research and breadth of knowledge components listed above.

Should the student fail either one or both components of the oral exam, he/she must be re-examined within three months and receive a pass from at least 80% of the RAC on the

component(s) that was (were) failed. The oral exam can be retaken only once. No second oral examination for candidacy shall be held until at least eight weeks has elapsed, unless an earlier date is requested by the student. The second oral exam must be taken within three months of the date on which the fail was received; failure to pass the oral exam the second time will result in automatic dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

Written notification of the approval of a doctoral thesis proposal, and of performance on the oral exam, shall be submitted to the graduate Program Manager to be placed in the student's permanent file. A copy of the approved written proposal must also be submitted for inclusion in the student's permanent file. The student is encouraged to submit the final proposal to an appropriate funding agency (NSF, Sigma Xi etc). Should the student fail the oral candidacy exam a second (and final) time, written notification of this outcome signed by the RAC shall be submitted to the graduate Program Manager to be placed in the student's permanent file.

I. Non-Thesis Master Degree

Upon unanimous recommendation of the Research Advisory Committee, doctoral students who successfully pass their qualifying examination will be awarded a Non-Thesis Master Degree. It should be stressed that the awarding of a Non-Thesis Master Degree is not automatic.

J. Candidacy

A doctoral student shall be admitted into candidacy when he/she has:

1. Achieved and maintained a grade point average of at least 3.0, *exclusive* of seminars, research, or research courses.
2. Satisfactorily completed all required pre-candidacy course work and qualifying exams.

The student who has completed all of the above requirements will be officially admitted into candidacy when the graduate Program Manager submits the proper candidacy form to the Graduate School. A copy will be placed in the student's official record.

1. Time Limitations

The doctoral degree will be granted for no less than the equivalent of three (3) years of full-time graduate study. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within nine consecutive academic years of the date of matriculation into the program.

Normally, the period of time from first enrollment into the doctoral program to candidacy will not exceed two years.

A student who leaves the department without a formal leave of absence must complete all requirements for his/her degree within 15 months of leaving. If he/she fails to do so, he/she will

be dropped from the department's list of degree-seeking students. Should the student, at a later date, wish to complete his/her degree, he/she must formally apply to the GAC for reinstatement. The conditions for reinstatement may include the completion of additional course work, an examination, or additional laboratory work. Reinstatement may also be denied. (See section II.E.1 on leaves.)

2. Final Defense of Dissertation

The following policies regarding examinations for the Doctoral Dissertation Defense will be in effect:

- A. The dissertation must be submitted to the student's Research Advisory Committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled thesis defense.
- B. The Research Advisor and student, in consultation with the Research Advisory Committee, will determine the format of the dissertation. The dissertation must conform to all formatting rules as specified by the requirements of the Graduate School.
- C. The following information must be supplied to the graduate Program Manager at least two weeks prior to the defense: the student's full name, prior degrees, institutions from which he/she received the degree/s, dissertation title, names of the RAC members, time, place, and date of the examination. The graduate Program Manager will see that appropriate public announcements are distributed.

The Graduate School requires doctoral students to enter the details of their dissertation defense, such as time, date, and location, online at <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html>.

- D. No dissertation defense may be held without at least a minimum of five (5) members of the student's Research Advisory Committee present. If a member of the student's RAC cannot be present for a defense, an *ad hoc* substitute may be appointed with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Note: A Research Advisory Committee may have *more* than the minimum of five (5) members if it is in the best interests of the student to do so. Under these circumstances, only the minimum number need be present for the defense.

- E. The student's final defense of his/her dissertation will be open to the public.

Following the presentation, the general audience (including members of the RAC if they wish) may ask questions of the candidate. After the general question and answer period is over, the audience will be dismissed, and the RAC will continue, in closed session with the candidate, with any further questions of the candidate concerning the thesis and dissertation work. At the

conclusion of the defense, the committee will deliberate without the candidate being present, make a decision with regard to the acceptability of the dissertation and its defense, and report its decision to the candidate. To pass, at least 3/4 of the voting members (i.e., 4/5, 5/6...) must approve the dissertation and the defense. The "Committee Approval Form" must be signed by the committee members and transmitted to the graduate Program Manager.

A student failing to pass the dissertation or examination is dismissed from the Graduate Program.

A student receiving a conditional pass must fulfill the requirements of the committee member(s) within one semester. The RAC may then change the results of the examination to a pass, and the student will be eligible to receive a degree.

2. Publication Requirement

At least one manuscript from the student's dissertation research must be submitted, accepted for publication, or published in a refereed journal before the final defense.

K. Graduation

One semester prior to the semester in which a student anticipates graduating, they should check with the graduate Program Manager to insure all departmental program requirements have been met and to find out what must be submitted to the department relative to their graduation. In addition, they should consult the Graduate School's website <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/graduation.html> for deadlines and instructions on submitting his/her dissertation.

Each student who has successfully completed all requirements for the Ph.D. in Biological Sciences must apply for graduation by completing an online graduation application with the Graduate School by the deadline posted on the Graduate School's website. It is the responsibility of the student to insure that all procedures and regulations required for graduation by the department and Graduate School be fulfilled.

The student must submit a copy of their signed "Committee Approval Form," as well as a copy of their final dissertation, in pdf format on a compact disk, to the graduate Program Manager by the given deadline for that semester. Upon successful completion of the dissertation defense, the Research Advisor will forward an email to the graduate Program Manager certifying that the student has completed all requirements for graduation with the Ph.D. degree.

VII. SPECIAL RULES AND PROVISIONS

A. Nondiscriminatory Policy

The Department of Biological Sciences reaffirms the University of Cincinnati policy that discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, or age will not be practiced, or tolerated, in any of its activities. Complaints involving discrimination should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Head of the Department.

B. Right to Review Records

Students, once enrolled, have the right to review their educational records, except for those excluded by law, such as those maintained by a physician or psychiatrist, or parent's financial statement. Educational records are maintained in such offices as Student Records, the Arts and Sciences Dean's Office, the Graduate School, Student Financial Aid, Career Development and Placement, Educational Advising, as well as in our Biology Department Office.

In order to gain a review of such records, along with any appropriate explanation or interpretation, the student should first address the proper university or collegiate office. In the Department of Biological Sciences, a file is maintained which includes the: (a) original application form for admission; (b) university personnel payroll forms; (c) university grade forms; (d) Research Advisor and Research Advisory Committee progress reports and letters; (e) copies of all correspondence from the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Head; (f) candidacy examinations; (g) certification of candidacy and graduation forms; (h) a copy of the front page of the thesis signed by the student's RAC. Students wishing to review their file must submit a request with the Director of Graduate Studies. If the student feels there are any inaccuracies, he/she may place a letter of explanation in the file.

C. Grievance Procedures

The *University of Cincinnati Graduate School Graduate Handbook* states, "The University of Cincinnati provides an opportunity for the resolution of disputes involving graduate students in a fair and collegial manner. The [Graduate Student Grievance Procedures](#) establish a formal process for graduate students to request review and redress of certain grievances arising out of their academic relationships with their programs, their colleges, or the university." The Department of Biological Sciences reaffirms its adherence to these procedures. The grievance procedures are online at <http://grad.uc.edu/student-life/policies/grievances.html>.

At any time, a graduate student may petition the Graduate Affairs Committee to hear a grievance on any matter concerning the Graduate Program (grades, probation, teaching duties, examinations, use of departmental equipment, etc.) and the GAC will attempt to resolve the issue. However, the student has the right to pursue any and all procedures outside of the department.

D. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense and cannot be tolerated in an academic community. Dishonesty in any form, including cheating, plagiarism, deception of effort, unauthorized assistance, or manufacturing of data may result in a failing grade in a course or graduate research credits, and/or immediate suspension or dismissal.

E. Implementation of Provisions of this Handbook

The provisions of this handbook have been previously adopted by the Department of Biological Sciences and were contained in preceding departmental documents and minutes of the GAC or the Biology Faculty meetings. Provisions not specifically addressed in earlier documents followed those of the *University Graduate Handbook*. The *Graduate Handbook of the Department of Biological Sciences* was adopted as the official graduate procedures as of 1/6/87.

Revised June, 2014

Appendix I Graduate Curriculum

Ph.D. Students

Ph.D. students are required to take all three of the Foundation Courses. A minimum of six additional credits of formal courses is required, at least four credits of which must be in graduate-only courses. Additional courses may be selected from other graduate courses offered in the Biology Department or throughout the University. Ph.D. students coming in with an M.S. degree in a biological science discipline, and having an equivalent graduate-level Foundation Course during their MS program, may petition the GAC, with the backing of their RAC, to remove the requirement for that specific course and its accompanying credits. A minimum of three courses must be taken within the Department of Biological Sciences. These are minimum requirements, and individual Research Advisory Committees will determine the appropriate course work for the individual student and their specific research project. Additional requirements include enrollment in *Biology Seminar* (BIOL 9003) both Fall and Spring Semesters, and enrollment in *Research Progress in Biology* (BIOL 9004) each Spring Semester.

M.S. Students

M.S. students are required to take a minimum of two Foundation Courses. A minimum of four additional credits of formal courses is required, at least two credits of which must be in graduate-only courses. Additional courses may be selected from other graduate courses offered in the Biology Department or throughout the University. These are minimum requirements, and individual Research Advisory Committees will determine the appropriate course work for the individual student and their specific research project. Additional requirements include enrollment in the *Biology Seminar* (BIOL 9003) in Fall and Spring Semesters, and enrollment in *Research Progress in Biology* (BIOL 9004) each Spring Semester.

Foundation Courses: *Data Analysis* (BIOL 8001C)
Evolution (BIOL 8002)
Molecular Biology (BIOL 8003)

Appendix II

Optional curriculum for students in program before Summer 2008

Currently-enrolled students who entered the Department of Biological Sciences graduate program prior to Summer 2008 have the option, with the approval of their RAC, of using the following graduate curriculum, which was in place during the 07-08 academic year. When necessary, and with the approval of their RAC, students may substitute the same number of credits from graduate-only courses for the current topics credit requirements.

PhD Students

For students entering the program with a BS degree, the curriculum includes a minimum of *eight* courses. Tier I courses listed above are courses taught for graduate students only. To complete the program, a student must take all three of the Tier I courses. Additional courses may be selected from other graduate courses offered in the Biology Department or throughout the University. The list of courses will be designed to meet the needs of the student's individual program and must be approved by the student's Research Advisory Committee.

For students entering the program with an MS degree, a minimum of five courses is required. Transcripts from the student's MS program will be examined by the RAC to determine the program of courses. By completion of the PhD courses, the student must have all Tier I courses or their equivalent. Additional courses will be determined from other University courses. A minimum of three courses must be taken in the Department of Biological Sciences.

Additional Requirements:

1. In addition to the above, the department offers three separate seminars during the fall and winter quarters, under the title "Current Topics in Biology." PhD students will be required to take three of these seminars during their course of study in the program.
2. Students will be required to enroll in "Seminars in Integrative Biology" each quarter they are in residence.
3. Each Spring Quarter, students will be required to present their research in one of the three sections of "Research Progress in Biology."

MS students

MS students will be required to take two of the Tier I courses and three additional courses selected from other graduate courses offered in the Biology Department or throughout the University, for a minimum of five courses. The list of courses will be designed to meet the needs of the student's individual program and must be approved by the student's Research Advisory Committee. Additional requirements will be two seminars in the Current Topics in Biology series, regular enrollment in the Seminar in Integrative Biology, and registration in Research Progress in Biology each Spring Quarter.