



UNCNC

**The
Graduate Program
in Biology**

Department of Biology

Biology Graduate Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

We welcome you to the Department of Biology (BIO), and wish you the very best of success in your graduate career. The Biology Graduate Handbook has been prepared to provide information about the policies, procedures, and degree requirements of the Master of Science Program in Biology and the PhD Program in Environmental Health Science, both housed in the Department of Biology (BIO) at UNCG. The information provided here adds to that already covered in the Graduate School Bulletin. It is the responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology to keep the Biology Graduate Handbook current and to clarify issues related to the content of the Biology Graduate Handbook.

The Biology Graduate Handbook reviews some of the information that can be found in greater detail in the Graduate School Bulletin. The Graduate School Bulletin is the best source for information on Graduate Studies and most of the information contained in the Biology Graduate Handbook comes from the Bulletin. In order to benefit from the information in this Biology Graduate Handbook, you must be prepared to take responsibility for your progress in the program. Do not assume that your advisor or other faculty members will automatically remind you of every step that you need to take. We urge you to meet with your advisor regularly to review your progress.

It is the responsibility of graduate students to read the Biology Graduate Handbook in its entirety and to consult with their advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology if any of the requirements described in it seem unclear. It is also the responsibility of graduate students to be familiar with the academic regulations of the Graduate School (<http://uncg.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2015-2016/Graduate-Bulletin>) and the Graduate Program in Biology (<http://uncg.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2015-2016/Graduate-Bulletin/Departmental-and-Program-Listings/Biology-Department>).

NOTE ABOUT DISCREPANCIES

The Biology Graduate Handbook is a working document. Updates will be made regularly and there inadvertently may be some discrepancies among sources. If you find discrepancies in the Biology Graduate Handbook relative to the Graduate School Bulletin, please point these out to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology and follow the guidelines of the Graduate School Bulletin. If you find discrepancies between the information in the Appendix forms and the Biology Graduate Handbook, please point these out to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology and follow the guidelines in the main text of the Biology Graduate Handbook.

GRADUATE PROGRAM MISSION

The Department of Biology (BIO) offers graduate programs leading to the Master of Science (M S) in Biology and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Environmental Health Science degrees.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You

While the faculty in the Department of Biology is committed to providing a quality education for each of its students, it is the role of each student to take responsibility for his or her own education. This means that you should read and adhere to the policies, requirements, and timetables described within this manual. In addition, should any problems arise that might affect your education while at UNCG, you should inform your advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology so that you may receive proper guidance to help you through any difficulties.

Your Advisor

Each student should select an advisor as primary academic mentor as soon as possible. The advisor has to be able and willing to mentor the student. The primary role of the advisor is to guide the student through the degree process. An advisor will counsel a student on his or her Plan of Study (i.e. courses to be taken), research directions, and career goals. During the writing of the thesis proposal, thesis, dissertation proposal, or dissertation, the advisor is also responsible for reading each draft of these documents and for mentoring the student in written communication skills. Students should meet with their advisors as often as necessary, but no less than twice a semester (once at the beginning and once at the end of each semester). While many faculty members have an “open-door” policy with regards to graduate students, advisors are not obligated to see students without an appointment. Thus, students should respect the other obligations of the faculty and schedule meetings that fit their schedule. The relationship between an advisor and student should be collegial and not antagonistic.

The Advisory/Thesis/Dissertation Committee

The Advisory Committee is a group of faculty whose primary function is to initially assist a student in the development of his or her Plan of Study. MS and PhD students should meet with his or her advisor to identify faculty members who would be appropriate to serve on an Advisory Committee. This committee is chaired by the student’s primary advisor and approves the Plan of Study for students in each program. After a student has received approval for the Plan of Study, the committee’s focus is on the students’ research. The Advisory Committee becomes the Thesis Committee (for MS students) or Dissertation Committee (for PhD students) after the Plan of Study is approved. Like the advisor, members of the Thesis/Dissertation Committee will be available to advise the student on issues related to the research directions and career goals. Each member of the committee should be selected based upon the expertise he or she can bring to the student’s training. Members should be contacted to help refine ideas and plans developed by the student and his or her advisor, or for specific help with technical difficulties related to thesis or dissertation research.

PhD Advisory Committee: There are a minimum of four members on a PhD Advisory/Dissertation Committee. The chair of the PhD Dissertation Committee must be a member of the Graduate Faculty of the Environmental Health Science Program and the UNCG Graduate School, and must have an Endorsement to Chair Doctoral Committees (see Policy on Appointment to the Graduate Faculty; <http://provost.uncg.edu/documents/personnel/graduate.pdf>). One member on the committee must be from outside the BIO department. PhD students must meet with their Advisory committee no later than the end of their third academic semester or prior to completion of 18 credit hours to approve their Plan of Study. PhD students may meet with individual

members of their committee as often as they feel necessary. However, the full committee should be assembled to review the progress of the student no less than once per year. The date of these meetings will be recorded on the Plan of Study form. Two weeks prior to a committee meeting, students should provide a written progress report to the committee. The report should summarize the work conducted since the last meeting (including figures and tables of data), problems that are impeding progress, a plan for work to be conducted in the next year, and a timetable for completion of degree requirements. The results of this review should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology in writing within one month after the meeting.

The Director of Graduate Studies in Biology

The Director of Graduate Studies in Biology is the faculty member who oversees and organizes the departmental graduate programs (MS and PhD). The Head of the Biology Dept. appoints the Director for a period of three years, which may be renewed. His or her roles include student recruitment, admissions, review of program policies, orientation of new students, and counseling enrolled students on issues related to their research, courses, and career goals. If a student is having difficulties with his or her advisor or committee, he or she may discuss this matter in full confidentiality with the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology.

The Graduate Studies Committee

The Biology Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) consists of four graduate faculty members including the Director of Graduate Studies. The GSC is responsible for the formation and implementation of policies, procedures, and curriculum changes of the Biology graduate programs in accordance with the policies set by the UNCG Graduate School. The GSC reviews and decides student petitions for transfer credits and waiving course requirements. Finally, the GSC evaluates applications to the Biology graduate programs.

The Biology Graduate Student Association

This association is open to all graduate students in the Biology graduate programs. There are three elected officers: President, Vice President, and Treasurer. The purpose of the association is to provide a vehicle for graduate students (and faculty when appropriate) to discuss directly, and on a regular basis, issues that may enhance or inhibit the well-being and progress of graduate students in their programs of study. One or more officers attend the UNCG Graduate Association Meetings each semester. The President of the Biology Graduate Student Association calls and chairs at least one meeting per semester.

GRADUATE REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

A. The Graduate Curriculum

1. Master of Science Thesis (MS thesis) Course Work.

The Master of Science in Biology requires completion of at least 30 semester hours of graduate level course work and research hours. Generally, students take approximately 15 hours of formal courses and 15 hours of research and thesis credits. Some incoming students may have already

made arrangements to complete their thesis research with a particular faculty member prior to beginning the program. Remaining students rotate through three faculty labs during the first semester, and select a thesis advisor by the beginning of the second semester. Students complete a research project and write a thesis.

Students entering the MS program are not required to take particular courses, outside of BIO 699 (see below). Rather, course selection will initially be made in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies or thesis advisor and will depend on the student's interests and educational background. In some cases, students may have to take a lower-level course for non-graduate credit to complete a deficiency. The core courses for the PhD in Environmental Health Science are open to the MS students. The MS in Biology requires 30 semester hours. At least 15 hours must be in 600 level courses (including 6 hours of Bio 699). Students are required to take 6 hours of Bio 699 (Thesis). Students may also apply up to 9 credit hours of Bio 695 (Biological Research) to the MS degree.

2. Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Course Work

The PhD in Environmental Health Science (EHS) prepares students for senior-level positions in professions related to environmental health science in its broadest sense. The program trains students to become leaders in biological research relevant to environmental issues that directly and/or indirectly affect human health, and the program trains students to convey information effectively to the public. Students acquire an understanding of the multidisciplinary nature of environmental health issues from molecular to ecosystem levels. Students learn relevant research skills and conduct research under the guidance of one or more faculty members in the program. The PhD degree program requires a minimum of **55** hours beyond the Baccalaureate degree. Required and elective course work and research are listed below. *At least 75% of all coursework included on the Plan of Study, exclusive of dissertation hours, must be at the 600 or 700 level.*

Required Core Courses (17 hours minimum).

BIO 600 Introduction to Graduate Studies (1)
BIO 707 Seminar in Environmental Health Sciences (2)
BIO 731 Environmental Health Science I (3)
BIO 732 Environmental Health Science II (3)
BIO 734 Current Research in Environmental Health Science (1 credit; 3 total required)
BIO 749 Lab Rotation (1 credit; 2 total required)
STA 661 Advanced Statistics in the Behavioral and Biological Sciences (3)

Note: This list is not flexible. No deletions, only substitutions. All should be taken in first three semesters in order to advance to candidacy at the appropriate time.

Electives (9 hours minimum)

Students in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee, research advisor, and/or Advisory/Dissertation Committee will select additional courses that pertain to their area of research to fulfill their degree requirements.

Research and Dissertation

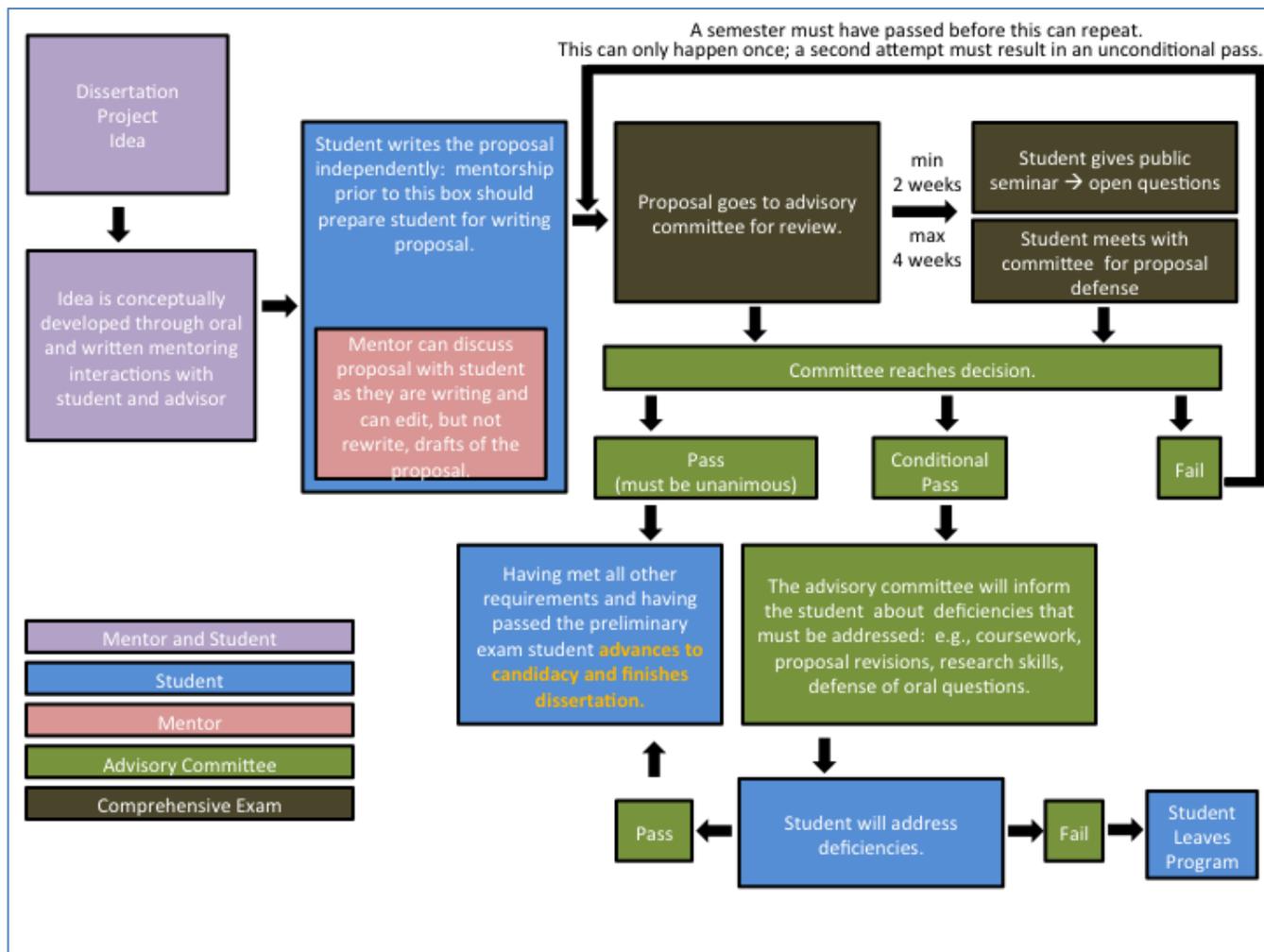
The remaining credit hours to equal a minimum of 55 hours (minimum of 29 hours) will be obtained by taking the following:

BIO 790 – Independent Doctoral Study (maximum of 12 credits)

BIO 791 – Independent Doctoral Research (maximum of 15 credits)
 BIO 799 – Dissertation (12 hours minimum required by Graduate School; maximum of 18 credits)
 BIO 791 and BIO 799 cannot be taken until the student has advanced to candidacy.

Comprehensive Examination

The student will consult with his/her Advisory/Dissertation Committee about the specific format of the written and oral sections of this examination. A general framework for the process and outcomes of the examination can be found below in Figure 1.



B. Information Relevant to Students in All Programs

Some of the information in this section is university-wide policy that was established by the UNCG Graduate School. If in doubt, students should refer to the Graduate School Bulletin to determine the details of these policies.

1. Transferring Prior Courses Toward Graduate Degree Requirements.

Only courses that were not used to fulfill the requirements for another graduate degree can be used to replace course requirements in the Graduate Program in Biology. If you have taken

graduate courses in another department or at another university that you wish to substitute for some of the department's MS or PhD requirements, and these course did not count toward a degree you received, you must first have these courses approved by your Advisory, Thesis, or Dissertation Committee. Following this approval, you should make a written request to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology. Your advisor must sign the request. Within this request you should include:

Copies of course syllabi of all courses that are to be substituted and that are used for substitution.

A list of required textbooks and readings.

Any other materials that describe the content of the courses.

The materials you provide will be examined by the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology to decide whether the courses are acceptable for substitution. If acceptable, the request needs to be submitted to the Graduate School to be entered on your transcript according to the university's policy for "transfer credit" and you will not have to take additional (elective) courses in their place. The Director of Graduate Studies in Biology will inform the Graduate School of the action taken. In rare cases, the Vice Provost for Graduate Education can overturn such decisions. If this occurs, the student must take the UNCG course for which a substitution was requested. In no case more than one third of non-dissertation (Bio 799) course credit hours beyond the master's degree will be transferred to doctoral program. **An important consideration in transferring prior course credit is that any TA/RA/GA still needs to be enrolled in at least 6 hours of credit.**

2. Waiving Course Requirements.

Occasionally a student may have a significant amount of practical experience that is directly relevant to courses that are a part of the Graduate Program in Biology's degree requirements. For example, a student may have acquired a significant number of technical skills in the workplace. Under these conditions a student may wish to request to have a specific course requirement waived (for example STA 661). *Waiving a course requirement does not reduce the total number of courses or credits that a student needs to graduate.* If you have technical experience that you feel eliminates the need to take some of the PhD requirements, you must first have the proposed waiver approved by your advisor and Advisory Committee. Following this approval, you should make a written request to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology. Your advisor must sign the request. The request should include a detailed description of the technical experience and should outline how this experience relates to the course to be waived. The Director of Graduate Studies in Biology will examine the materials you provide and decide whether the experience justifies a waiver. If acceptable, you will have to take additional (elective) courses or research credits in place of any waived course. The Director of Graduate Studies in Biology will inform the Graduate School of the action taken. In rare cases, the Graduate School can overturn such decisions. If this occurs, the student must take the UNCG course for which a waiver was requested.

3. Cross Registration.

In some cases, students may want to take advantage of relevant courses being offered at other University campuses in the Triad/Triangle area. UNCG has agreements with many of these campuses and has policies that regulate how a student can cross-register for classes in their degree program. These *Cross-Registration* policies are outlined in the Application, Admission and Registration section of the Graduate School Bulletin. Some important highlights of the policies from the Graduate School Bulletin include but are not limited to the following and should be used when considering cross-registration. In any given semester, a graduate student must be registered for 50% of their credit hours at UNCG. For example, if you cross register for a 4 credit course at

Duke, you must be enrolled in at least 4 UNCG credits. Because 6 credits are considered full time, you will at a minimum need to be enrolled in 3 UNCG credits during any semester in which you want to be considered as full time if cross registering. Cross registration is limited to traditional campus-based courses. Independent study cannot be taken through cross-registration. Cross-registration must be approved by the Department (either by the Director of Graduate Studies or the Advisory/Dissertation Committee) and the Graduate School before registration. Courses need to fall within one of the three inter-institutional agreements listed in the Graduate School Bulletin. You must earn a B or higher in any cross-registered course. Your work from a cross-registered course will be covered in your preliminary exam. Your cross-registered course details, including your grade, may not show up on your transcripts until the completion of all of your degree requirements (this depends on which inter-institutional agreement the course falls under). Up to 1/3 of your degree requirements (not including dissertation credits) can be from cross-registered courses.

In addition to the policies in the Graduate School Bulletin, there are the following Biology Department policies for Cross-Registration. The course must be listed as a graduate level course by the host institution. A written petition is required for approval of a cross-registered course. The written petition must include the course syllabus, information on course materials (i.e., textbook, articles, books), and the contact information for the course instructor. To insure sufficient time for processing the paperwork, the written petition should be received by the Director of Graduate Studies (if the Dissertation Committee has not been formed) or the Chair of the Dissertation Committee at least one month before the start of the course, if possible.

3. Core Courses.

The only required course for the MS in Biology degree is BIO 699. Students may enroll for more than 9 credits of BIO 695, but only 9 credits of this course may be used towards the MS in Biology. MS in Biology Degree requirements are clearly outlined in the Graduate School Bulletin in the Department of Biology Section. There are several core courses that all degree students in the PhD in Environmental Health Science must take: BIO 600, BIO 707, BIO 731, BIO 732, BIO 734, BIO 749, STA 661, and BIO 799. The PhD in Environmental Health Science Degree requirements are clearly outlined in the Graduate School Bulletin in the Department of Biology Section and in A2 of this Handbook. As a rule, students should work with their advisors to ensure that the core requirements are met as soon as is feasible.

4. Areas of Specialization.

There are no areas of specialization in the MS in Biology or PhD in Environmental Health Science degree options.

5. Continuous Enrollment Policy.

The Graduate School requires that you pursue your graduate degree continuously from the time of entry through the completion of all required course work including the thesis (699) or dissertation (799). This policy is clearly stated in the beginning of the Graduate School Bulletin. You should not miss more than two consecutive semesters (each with a minimum of 6 hours), not including summer. If you have already enrolled in the maximum number of 695 or 699 / 790 or 791 or 799 hours, but have not fully completed the requirements of the thesis or dissertation, **you are required to enroll in one to three hours of continuing completion of thesis (BIO 801), dissertation (BIO 802),**

or research extension (BIO 803) credits, without missing two consecutive semesters (not including summer), until you have graduated. All thesis and dissertation students must be enrolled in either 699/799 or 801/802 for credit during the semester in which they complete their graduate work and are scheduled to receive their degrees. (Note: This includes summer.) If you have been admitted with full graduate standing to a graduate degree program, but have not completed any 500-level or above courses at the University for two consecutive semesters, or a semester and a summer session, you will be considered to have withdrawn from the curriculum (see section on Leave of Absence below). At that point, you will be required to file an application for readmission to the Graduate School to resume the course of study. A student who withdraws will be required to comply with regulations and requirements in effect at the time of readmission to the Graduate School.

6. Leave of Absence.

Students who wish to be absent for more than one semester must apply for (and receive) a leave of absence in order to maintain continuing student status. If a student does not enroll for two or more continuous semesters and does not have an approved leave of absence, the student will be terminated from the program. Such a student may apply for readmission through the Graduate School, but must first receive the endorsement of the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology. An **Educational Leave of Absence** is appropriate for students who will be engaged for the majority of the leave time in an activity, other than attending an accredited college or university, that is directly related to their formal academic careers. Students must complete three steps for an educational leave of absence: (1) apply in advance for the educational leave of absence, (2) be recommended by the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology and (3) gain the approval of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education. Students can get application forms from the Graduate School. Refer to the Graduate School Bulletin for additional information about leaves of absence.

7. Grading Policy.

Most courses other than research, thesis, or dissertation credits that you will take are graded on a scale of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, F/WF. The grade of "A" is awarded for "superior" performance and the grade of "B" is awarded for "very good" or "good" performance. A grade of "C" indicates that one's performance has been weak and marginal relative to the expectations of graduate students. An overall minimum average of "B" is required (equivalent to a 3.0 grade point average) in order to hold a graduate assistantship and for completion of a graduate degree program at UNCG. All grades except S and U will be counted in all courses that are attempted and carry graduate degree credit. No more than 6 semester hours of credit evaluated as C+ (2.3) and/or C (2.0) may be applied toward the minimum hours required of the Master's degree. **Grades in all courses applied toward the doctorate must be B (3.0) or better, and additional hours must be taken for any hours earned with a grade of B- (2.7) or less.**

Because grades of "C" are discouraged, the Graduate Committee will review the progress of students in any of the degree programs who receive a "C" in two or more classes. Students who receive a "C" or below in three or more courses, or an "F" in two or more courses, will be automatically terminated from the program. Students should refer to the Graduate School Bulletin to learn about the University policy regarding withdrawing from courses and the grade of incomplete.

Students who are working on their thesis or dissertation research will receive "IP" (in progress) grades for their enrollment in 699/799 until they have completed the research. Upon completion, the "IP" will revert to an "S" (satisfactory) or a "U" (unsatisfactory). The grade of "I" may be given in content courses where the student is unable, for reasons beyond the student's control, to complete course requirements by the end of the term in which the course was offered. The "I" may be removed by completion of the deferred requirements within six months from the last day of examinations in the term, in which the course was taken. An "I" not removed within this time limit automatically becomes an "F".

8. Establishing In-State Residency for Tuition Purposes.

Residency for tuition purposes is defined by North Carolina state statute. In order to qualify as a resident of North Carolina for tuition purposes you must have established legal residence ("domicile") in North Carolina and maintained that legal residence for at least twelve months before you apply for classification as a North Carolina resident. In addition to this twelve month physical presence requirement, there are numerous other factors that must be considered in determining whether or not an individual is a resident for tuition purposes.

Domicile is a legal term defined as a place where a person intends to remain and live permanently, and the place a person intends to return to after any absence. Permanency is the key. Thus, a person who lives in a place for a temporary purpose, for a vacation or to attend college and who intends to live elsewhere when that purpose is accomplished, is not considered to be a legal resident for tuition purposes.

In order to obtain an in-state residency status for tuition purposes, University Administrators must be able to conclude from the information you provide them that your intent is to make North Carolina your permanent dwelling place. Rather than a single action, it is a cluster of events that must produce a preponderance of circumstantial evidence suggesting your intent to remain in North Carolina permanently. In other words, have you done the kinds of things that a permanent resident would do, or have you been acting like a temporary visitor? Each case has its own set of facts and there is no set checklist of items that will guarantee that you will be classified as a resident for tuition purposes. However, some important questions that are likely to be asked are:

Do you have a current North Carolina Driver's License?

Is your vehicle registered in North Carolina?

Are you registered to vote in North Carolina?

Where and when did you last vote?

Where do you keep your personal property?

Have you filed a North Carolina Income Tax return indicating that you were a resident during the last tax year?

Do you own real estate in North Carolina?

Do you participate in or volunteer for community activities away from the campus?

Where did you live before enrolling in an institution of higher learning?

Are you financially independent of your parents?

Have you been living in North Carolina but worked for a period in another state?

This is not a complete list, but it should give you an indication of the types of factors that will be looked at in deciding your residency status. Thus, to qualify for in-state tuition for a given term, you must prove the following:

a. That you established your *bona fide* domicile in North Carolina twelve months before the beginning of the term in which you are seeking in-state residency status by:

- 1.) Being physically present in the state
- 2.) Performing acts which support your intent to make North Carolina your permanent residence
- 3.) Performing acts which support the contention that you are not in North Carolina solely to attend a college or university program
- 4) That you have maintained your domicile in North Carolina for at least twelve continuous months.

The Graduate School makes initial residency determinations. To file for re-classification, you will need to obtain and complete the Residence-and-Tuition Status Application. If you feel your answers to the questions do not give an accurate picture of your situation, attach additional written explanations. If the classifier determines that you are not a resident for tuition purposes, you have the right to appeal that decision to the Campus Residence Appeals Committee. For more information, see <http://reg.uncg.edu/residency-reclassification/>

9. The Plan of Study.

The Plan of Study is a roadmap used by the student to guide his or her progress through the coursework necessary for the MS in Biology and the PhD in Environmental Health Science degrees. The Plan of Study must be outlined by the student and the Advisory/ Thesis/Dissertation at the earliest possible time following admission of the student to the program.

The plan must indicate:

The major field of study.

The area of specialization.

The specific courses that the student will take to complete the minimum degree requirements.

All specific core, seminar, and research requirements.

A timetable as to when these courses will be taken.

A record of all graduate work the student has taken must accompany the proposed Plan of Study. The Advisory (Thesis/Dissertation) committee must evaluate the student's Plan of Study to determine whether the proposed plan is appropriate and whether additional coursework is appropriate. If planned, any graduate level courses to be taken off-campus at another university (see section above on Cross Registration) must be included in the Plan of Study. Courses taken at other universities are generally applied as electives to a Plan of Study. **After approval of the Plan of Study, the student must submit it to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education for final approval. Copies of the final Plan of Study are submitted to the Director of the Graduate Program in Biology for inclusion in the departmental records.** Any changes in the Plan of Study after it has been approved must be reported to the Graduate School for review and approval.

MS Plan of Study: The MS Plan of Study form is located in the Appendix of this handbook. Students in the MS program should submit a Plan of Study no later than the second semester of the program. The student also should select their Advisory/Thesis committee by the end of the second semester. **The MS student in consultation with his or her advisor will complete the Plan of Study.** This should include all the courses he or she has taken and those he or she plans to take to meet the minimum requirements of the MS degree. The MS student will then organize a short meeting of their Advisory to discuss and get approval of their Plan of Study. Any changes in the

Plan of Study after it has been approved must be approved by this Advisory Committee and reported to the Graduate School for review and approval.

PhD Plan of Study: The Biology PhD Plan of Study form is located in the Appendix of this Handbook. This form and the official Graduate School Doctoral Advisory Committee and Plan of Study approval form must be completed prior to the completion of 18 credit hours. **The student and advisor should work together to complete the Plan of Study form.** The completed Plan of Study will be distributed to the Doctoral Advisory Committee. By the end of their third academic semester and no later than completion of 18 semester hours the PhD student should meet with their Doctoral Advisory Committee for discussion and approval of the Plan of Study. The signed Graduate School Doctoral Advisory Committee and Plan of Study approval form, along with **the completed Plan of Study should be submitted to the Graduate School.** The student must submit a copy of the form and Plan of Study to the Director of Graduate Studies, which will be placed in the student's departmental file. Any amendments to the Plan of Study must be approved by all committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies of the Biology Department. Any changes in the Plan of Study after it has been approved must be reported to the Graduate School for review and approval.

11. Changing Committee Members or Advisors.

Occasionally, a student may find it necessary to change advisors. Before this occurs, the student should first discuss the proposed change with the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology. Changing advisors is generally discouraged, but can be arranged through consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology and the student's current advisor.

Changes in composition of doctoral committees can be made by filling out the appropriate form located at the Graduate School website. Such changes may be necessary because faculty leave the University, because your research focus changes, or because scheduling conflicts make the original committee structure untenable. It is inadvisable to change a committee between the approval of a proposal (M.S. thesis or Ph.D.) and completion of the research, because the new member may wish to recommend changes that will delay completion of the degree.

12. Thesis or Dissertation Extension.

If a student has completed all of the course requirements for the degree, including all credit hours of MS thesis research (BIO 699) or doctoral dissertation research (BIO 799), but they have not completed their thesis or dissertation, they are required to enroll in extension credits until they have graduated. The proper course for this additional requirement is BIO 801 if they are completing a M.S. or BIO 802 if they are completing a Ph.D. BIO 801 and 802 are variable credit courses. Additionally students can enroll in research extension (BIO 803) if additional credits are required for any reason. Please see the UNCG Graduate Bulletin, Academic Regulations, for more details.

13. Responsibilities of Graduate Assistants (GA) and Research Assistants (RA).

All graduate students holding positions as a GA or RA are expected to maintain the highest professional behavior throughout their graduate career, and especially while carrying out their assigned duties. Any problems encountered by the GA or RA during the assignments should be reported to the Director of the Graduate Program in Biology as soon as possible.

GAs and RAs are expected to begin their work responsibilities approximately four working days before the classes officially begin and end their work responsibilities on the last day of final exams. Any exceptions to these start and stop dates must be requested to the Director of the Graduate Program in Biology three weeks prior to the beginning or end of each semester. GAs and RAs are not required to perform their duties on official university holidays, nor are they expected to make up these hours during the semester.

14. Policy on Length of Departmental Stipend and In-State/Out-Of-State Waiver Support.

MS students: Departmental support for graduate study toward the MS degree is provided if funds are available. Support can include an assistantship (TA, GA or RA) and/or tuition waiver. If a student is supported in the first year of an MS degree, support is not guaranteed beyond that year of support, but will depend on fund availability. Support is contingent on satisfactory progress being made towards their degree requirements.

PhD students: PhD students will be supported by the department for up to four years, if funds are available. Support may include an assistantship (TA, GA or RA) and a tuition waiver. Support is contingent on satisfactory progress being made towards their degree requirements and satisfactory performance in prior TA/GA/RA assignments.

15. Policy about Final Research Presentation for MS and PhD.

Within two weeks of their MS or PhD defense meeting with their committee members, all graduate students are required to present a publicly-announced seminar of their research. This seminar may coincide with the day of their defense meeting.

MS student presentation: The MS student is responsible for having a notice of the public seminar posted one week prior to the seminar. See the [Graduate School Bulletin](#) for the process of notification of public seminar and defense.

PhD student presentation: The PhD student is responsible for having a notice of the public seminar posted two weeks prior to the seminar. See the [Graduate School Bulletin](#) for the process of notification of public seminar and defense.

16. Policy on Dual Enrollment in M.S. and Ph.D. Degree.

A student may not be concurrently enrolled as a MS and PhD student.

17. Policy About Students Receiving Assistantships and Working Outside the Department.

A student who receives a full-time graduate assistantship (GA), research assistantship (RA) or teaching assistantship (TA) from the Department of Biology or from another Department cannot be employed by another employer. If a student is found to be employed outside of the RA, GA, or

TA and is receiving a full-time assistantship, they will lose their stipend and tuition waiver(s) if applicable.

18. Policy on Full Time Status in relation to Course Loads.

Graduate students enrolled in **nine or more credit** hours per semester are considered full time, however the following exceptions apply for students with approved Plans of Study:

After entering candidacy status, a doctoral student may be considered full-time while enrolled in a 3 credit hour dissertation course (799). Doctoral candidates may maintain full-time status in this way until completion of the number of dissertation credit hours specified by their Plan of Study.

Continued enrollment in thesis (699) or dissertation (799) credit hours beyond those that are required will not provide full-time status unless the student also enrolls in thesis extension (801), dissertation extension (802), and/or research extension (803) courses to fulfill the 9 credit hour requirement.

Permission to enroll in extension courses requires verification by the committee chair that the student is making satisfactory progress.

Even though nine credits are required for full time status, students can qualify for an assistantship (TA/RA/GA) and benefits (including health care, and perhaps a tuition waiver), with only 6 credits or if students qualify for an exception (as described at the beginning of this section), with only 3 credit hours.

To be considered a full-time student, you must be enrolled in 9 credit hours, unless you qualify for an exception listed above under course loads. If you qualify, you can be enrolled in 3 credit hours and still be considered full-time. **Full-time status vs qualifying for a TA/RA/GA are two independent issues. Don't confuse them.**

Exceptions listed above under course loads apply to both international and domestic students. It is highly recommended that international students check with IPC on additional visa requirements relevant to course load and full time status.

C. Master of Science (MS) Program

1. Selecting Your MS Thesis Advisor.

Students will select MS thesis advisors based upon shared research interests. This is done either during the application process or during the first semester of the program. In both cases, the selection involves a mutual agreement between the student and the advisor, which must be signed by both parties (see the Rotations in the MS in Biology form in the Appendix) and will be retained in the student's file. Advisor selection may occur during the application process through email exchanges or in-person meetings. In nearly all cases the student, based on an interest in the prospective advisor's research area, initiates these exchanges. Students admitted to the program who have not selected an advisor prior to arriving on campus are required to register for Research Lab Rotations (Bio 749, 1 cr) during their first semester. Students enrolled in Bio 749 rotate through the research labs of from one to three potential advisors. Review of the Graduate Faculty research interests on the Biology web page and discussions with the Director of Graduate Studies are helpful in selection of labs for rotation. By the end of the first semester, students should complete their selection of a thesis advisor.

2. Selecting Your MS Advisory/Thesis Committee.

The MS Advisory Committee serves to approve the Plan of Study, participate in planning of the thesis, evaluate the written thesis and evaluate the defense of the thesis. The committee consists of at least three faculty members, at least two of whom, including the Chair, must be non-adjunct faculty members from the Department of Biology. A third member could be an adjunct member of the Biology Department. All members must be Graduate Faculty of the UNCG Graduate School. Additional members from outside the Biology Department are also permitted (see Graduate School policy in the [Graduate School Bulletin](#)). Additional members from outside the Biology Department should be listed on the Plan of Study with the advisor's justification for their participation appended to the Plan of Study. The Chair of the committee is generally the Advisor, and the other committee members should be selected in consultation with the Advisor. The Thesis Committee must be formed during the first year in the program.

3. MS Plan of Study.

MS students must prepare a Plan of Study (see MS Plan of Study form in the Appendix) as soon as possible or by the end of the second semester. The Plan of Study lists the courses that the student will take, the topic of the thesis, and the members of the Advisory Committee, thereby serving as an outline of the student's MS program. See section above or the [Graduate School Bulletin](#) for course requirements for the MS degree in Biology. Note that, in consultation with the Advisor, the student may include courses from other institutions, in which case the policy articulated above and in [Graduate School Bulletin](#). The Plan of Study should be completed in consultation with the Advisor and the Advisory Committee. The Director of Graduate Studies must approve the plan of study before the scheduling of the proposal presentation to the Department (see 4 below). The Director of Graduate Studies needs at least 2 weeks to review a Plan of Study.

4. MS Thesis Proposal.

In close consultation with the Advisor, the student must select a Master's research project, prepare a thesis proposal, present the proposal to the department, and defend the proposal to the Thesis Committee. The Advisor, prior to submission to the Thesis Committee, must approve the

proposal. Typically, there are several drafts of a thesis proposal before approval by the Advisor, so students should plan their time accordingly. The proposal must be submitted to the committee members at least one week prior to the proposal review meeting. The thesis must be advertised at for at least one week before the proposal review meeting. In most cases, should be defended prior to completion of the first year of study, but no later than the third academic semester. Failure to meet this deadline may result in loss of assistantship support. At the defense, the thesis committee will discuss the merits of the proposal and suggest changes intended to improve the quality of the research. The proposal meeting is intended to be advisory, not evaluative, and frequently leads to important improvements in the research project. The thesis committee may approve the research as proposed or may ask for revisions. If major revisions are required, another proposal meeting may be required. If the proposal defense is the first meeting of the Thesis Committee, the committee may also wish to discuss the courses listed on the Plan of Study at the meeting.

5. MS Thesis Defense.

A thesis must be prepared based on data collected during the thesis research. Typically, the Advisor works closely with the student until he or she is satisfied that the document is of sufficient quality for defense. At that time, the thesis is submitted to the Thesis Committee and the defense is scheduled no less than one week after the Thesis Committee receives document. At such time, the student arranges a suitable time and place for the meeting, and works with the Biology office staff to ensure that the thesis defense is advertised to the department at least one week before the defense date. The thesis defense should not occur during the same semester as the thesis proposal review meeting.

In the majority of cases, the Master's defense meeting will result in a number of suggested or required revisions in the thesis. Accordingly, the student should allow sufficient time for revisions prior to the Graduate School deadline for receiving the thesis. Failure to meet the deadline will result in a student being required to register for thesis extension (Bio 801) the following semester. Students should follow the guidelines set forth by the Graduate School when preparing the thesis. All theses must be electronically submitted to the Graduate School for format approval and this deadline is usually early in the semester of the defense. All theses must be electronically submitted to the Graduate School after they approval by the Thesis Committee.

The thesis defense begins with a presentation of the thesis research. This portion of the process will be open to the university community and will be announced through the Biology Department office. After a period of open questioning by all that are in attendance, a closed session will follow where committee members will ask the student questions related to the thesis research and the intellectual foundations of the research. After the questioning, the committee will deliberate to assess the performance of the student. Three outcomes are possible: acceptance, provisional acceptance, and rejection. Acceptance of the thesis indicates that the student has met the standard set forth for theses by the department. Minor revisions may still be required of an acceptable thesis prior to submission. However, the Advisor can supervise these revisions. Provisional acceptance indicates that there are substantial format, content, or analysis problems with the thesis that make it unacceptable as written, but that upon revision, the document will likely be acceptable. The committee will outline the problems in writing and present them to the student. Prior to acceptance the student may be asked to convene an additional meeting to explain the revisions to the entire committee, or may be asked to resubmit the document to the committee. Provisional acceptance may also be granted if the student's thesis is fully acceptable, but his or her ability to defend the thesis is inadequate. In such cases, the committee will clearly define the

steps needed for the student to overcome the inadequacies. Inability of a student to rectify any inadequacies will result in a rejection of the thesis. A thesis is rejected if the student has not adequately conducted, analyzed, or interpreted the research that was proposed, and the committee judges that the problems cannot be amended. In such cases, the student will be either dismissed from the program, or will be required to satisfactorily complete additional data collection and/ or analyses and revisions to the thesis. Prior to acceptance the student may be asked to resubmit the document to the committee or may be asked to convene an additional meeting to explain the revisions to the entire committee. All committee members must approve of the revised thesis.

6. Filing the Thesis with the Graduate School.

The thesis must conform to rules established by the Graduate School. The process for submitting the thesis to The Graduate School has two components: submitting the copy for formatting approval and submitting the final copy. Be sure to note the specific instructions and deadline dates affiliated with each step. These dates are available in the University Academic Calendar of Events.

Students file the thesis electronically via the online submission system available on The Graduate School's website. The approved electronic submission must conform to the format requirements stated in the guide and must be uploaded by the deadline date as specified in the Calendar of Events. Publication of the thesis by UMI Dissertation Publishing/ProQuest Information and Learning is required by The Graduate School. The candidate must pay associated publishing fees. Your committee members may also request a paper copy of your thesis.

7. Applying for Graduation.

Students must make a formal application for graduation to The Graduate School by the end of the first week of classes of the term in which the degree will be granted (see the University Academic Calendar of Events). Degrees are granted at the end of each semester and the second summer session. A graduation fee must be paid to The Graduate School by the end of the first week of classes of the term in which the degree is earned. Students who do not graduate in the semester for which they originally applied will be charged an additional fee when they reapply for graduation.

8. Time-Line for the MS Thesis.

Action

Time

Completion of Rotation Form	End of second week in first academic semester
Selection of Advisor	Either during application process or by the end of the first semester
Selection of Advisory Committee	By the end of the second semester
Plan of Study approved by advisor and committee	By the end of the second semester
Defense of the thesis proposal and completion of Plan of Study submitted to The Graduate School	Preferably by the end of the second semester, but no later than the end of the third semester
Majority of course work completed	End of the third semester
Distribution of thesis to committee members	During the fourth semester (no later than 1 week prior to defense meeting)
Thesis defense meeting	During the fourth semester
Applying for graduation	By the end of the first week of the semester in which the degree is granted (e.g. the first week of the Spring semester for May graduation)

D. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program

The Ph.D. is a degree that trains students for careers in Environmental Health Science. Training is both in intellectual (e.g. integrative thinking, organization, logic, analytical approaches to problem solving, etc.) and communication (both written and oral) skills.

1. Changing from the MS Thesis Program into the PhD program.

If you were admitted as an MS thesis student into the Graduate Program in Biology and finished the degree requirements, you must file an application to the Graduate School to be considered for admission into the PhD program. If accepted, you must complete the MS degree prior to matriculation into the PhD program.

2. Selecting your PhD Dissertation Advisor.

Students will select PhD dissertation advisors based upon shared research interests. For some PhD students, this may be done well before they arrive on campus. For others, a selection will be made at the end of the rotation period (i.e., at the end of the Spring semester of the first year). Selection of an advisor is based on a mutual commitment from both the student and advisor (see Rotations for the PhD in EHS form of the Appendix).

3. Selecting your PhD Advisory/Dissertation Committee.

A student should establish an advisory committee and advisor by the end of the first year after admission. The advisor and advisory committee will council the student on coursework for the second year and outline a plan of study (see PhD EHS Plan of Study Form in the Appendix). The dissertation/advisory committee will administer and grade the qualifying exam, and judge the adequacy of the dissertation. The dissertation/advisory committee must consist of at least four members. One member of the doctoral committee must come from outside the Biology Department and three must be Biology faculty. If the selected advisor is a non-tenured Assistant Professor, an Associate or Full Professor co-advisor in the Biology Department also must be selected, and will serve as one of the committee members. Faculty from other departments or institutions with official adjunct appointments to the Biology department are considered Biology faculty.

Committee members should be chosen on the basis of their expertise relative to the student's area of specialization and dissertation research. A person with specific research expertise is in a better position to assist the student and to examine the student's competence and progress through the degree process. After prospective committee members have consented to serve on the committee, the student should file the "Recommendation for Doctoral Advisory/Dissertation Committee Appointment" form with the Graduate School. The student is responsible for obtaining all of the necessary signatures for approval. A copy should also be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology for the students file. If the Vice Provost for Graduate Education approves of the proposed committee, he or she sends a formal letter of appointment to each committee member.

4. Plan of Study.

A plan of study for the doctoral degree must be outlined by each student and her/his advisory/dissertation committee preferably in the first year and no later than the completion of 18 semester hours. The plan of study must be submitted to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education for approval. See form in Appendix.

5. Annual Report.

Each year every student will prepare a brief written report that details research progress made during the preceding year and that proposes a plan of action for the following year. The full advisory committee (or the Graduate Studies Committee if the advisory committee has not been selected) should be assembled to review the progress of the student no less than once per year. The date of these meetings will be recorded on the Plan of Study form. Two weeks prior to a committee meeting, students should provide a written progress report to the committee. The report should summarize the work conducted since the last meeting (including figures and tables of data), problems that are impeding progress, a plan for work to be conducted in the next year, and a timetable for completion of degree requirements. The results of this review should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology in writing within one month of the scheduled meeting.

6. Admission to PhD Candidacy and the Dissertation Proposal Defense.

Before a student can proceed to the dissertation, he or she must write and defend a proposal, which states the goals and aims of the dissertation research, justifies the research, and provides a detailed plan to carry out the objectives of the research. The general framework for the written proposal and the oral defense of the proposal can be seen in Figure 1. The purpose of the Dissertation Proposal and defense is for the student to demonstrate that he or she has mastered technical writing skills and is able to synthesize material from courses and self-study into a plausible, testable hypothesis. Students should follow the guidelines and timelines presented below. A student should submit and defend the proposal as soon as possible during the degree program. Once a student has passed the Proposal Defense and has completed all non-dissertation coursework (everything but BIO 791 and BIO 799 on the Plan of Study), the student makes a formal application to the Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. Students are encouraged to *submit* their application for admission to candidacy at the point when all elective and core course work is complete, they have passed the proposal defense, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of all Bio 790 credits are complete (admission will not be granted until all Bio 790 course credits are complete).

E. The Dissertation Proposal and Defense.

The general framework for the written proposal and the oral defense of the proposal can be seen in Figure 1. Students will develop a Dissertation Proposal in consultation with their primary research mentor and with the assistance of the Dissertation Committee **in an NIH or NSF format**. Briefly, the proposal is similar to a “seed” grant for an investigator who is initiating a new line of research. As such, the feasibility of the project will be evaluated based upon the student’s logical arguments that have been built upon the primary literature and previous data from the research mentor’s experiments. In addition the proposal should demonstrate the skills needed to complete the proposed project and that the student has acquired those skills or defined how he or she will acquire those skills. A high quality proposal will be hypothesis-driven, rather than methods-driven.

Students will submit the proposal to their Dissertation Committee as soon as possible after enrollment. In addition, as a courtesy, copies of manuscripts arising from the dissertation work should be provided to the dissertation committee for review prior to submission of the manuscript for review by the publisher. The student has the responsibility to schedule the Dissertation

Proposal defense. Students must submit the finished proposal two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date to give the committee ample opportunity to review and comment on the document. On the scheduled review day, the committee will assemble and provide written comments regarding the proposal to the committee chair. At this point, the proposal will be discussed in the presence of the student. The student must be prepared to defend the details of the proposal (e.g., logic, hypothesis, experimental design, etc.) and to discuss all issues regarding the scientific and intellectual foundations of the proposed research. This may include general background from EHS course degree program material.

The role of the research mentor during the Dissertation Proposal is clearly defined. During the development of the proposal, the mentor is active and is expected to guide the student towards a worthwhile project. The mentor assists the student by discussing issues related to the research including philosophy, aims, and methodology. It is expected that the student write the proposal, whereas the mentor's role in the proposal writing is limited to making minor editorial revisions and suggesting organizational changes. The mentor may not re-write major portions of the proposal for the student. It is realized, however, that the proposal serves multiple functions as an educational and training exercise in grant writing, as a roadmap for the completion of the student's dissertation research, and as an evaluation tool.

At the proposal defense, the mentor will introduce the student, set the agenda for the meeting, and make sure that the defense proceeds in a timely and orderly fashion. **Beyond that role, the mentor does not ask questions of the student related to the dissertation research and may not speak in an attempt to lead the student or clarify a student's answer.** After questioning has ended and the student leaves the room, the mentor will fully participate in the evaluation of the student's performance. The reason for this policy is that the faculty wishes to ensure that the student can independently explain and defend the proposal.

Several factors will be used to assess whether a student has successfully defended his or her proposal. First, the written proposal will be evaluated as a stand-alone document. In this case, the student's ability to effectively communicate his or her ideas and research plan will be evaluated based upon readability, clarity, logic, and completeness. Next, the student will be asked about the content of the proposal to determine whether he or she can clearly explain the details of the proposal. During this process the student will be expected to know the intellectual and scientific foundations that underlie the proposed research (e.g. ecosystem function, toxicological mechanisms, genomics). Finally, the student will be expected to defend the proposed work from criticism levied by the Dissertation Committee. The student's performance in these three areas is evaluated as an overall picture, not as three separate entities.

There are three possible outcomes to the proposal defense: acceptable, acceptable with the need for improvement, and unacceptable. An acceptable outcome indicates the student is prepared for PhD candidacy and that his or her proposal can be viewed as an approved roadmap for completion of the dissertation. Thus, any major changes in an approved proposal should be discussed with, and approved by, the Dissertation Committee. *The accepted proposal and any subsequent changes must be submitted to the Director of the Graduate Program in Biology.* When a proposal is deemed "acceptable with the need for some improvement", this is an indication that the idea and the experiments proposed are adequate, but that student performance in one of the three areas of evaluation was inadequate. The Dissertation Committee will provide a written evaluation that explains how the student is to "improve" and a time frame within which the student must meet the conditions set by the committee. Common outcomes may require a student to take another course

or revise the written proposal. Failure to meet the conditions of the Dissertation Committee within the time frame set by the committee may result in dismissal from the program. An unacceptable Dissertation Proposal is one that lacks clarity and focus and is poorly presented and/or poorly defended. Following this outcome, a student may resubmit a revised proposal and set a new review date no earlier than 3 months and no later than 6 months after the initial review. If the second dissertation review also leads to an unacceptable rating, the student will be terminated from the program. Because the purpose of the Dissertation Proposal and review are to aid the student in the planning of the dissertation research, a completed dissertation will not be accepted until one year after an acceptable proposal has been submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology.

1. Filing for Admission to PhD Candidacy.

When you have completed all required non-dissertation course work (everything but BIO 791 and BIO 799), and have passed the dissertation defense, you can apply to the Graduate School for admission to candidacy for the PhD degree. **It is the responsibility of the student to complete this essential step.** Students are encouraged to *submit* their application for admission to candidacy at the point when all elective and core course work is complete, they have passed the proposal defense, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of all Bio 790 credits are complete (admission will not be granted until all Bio 790 course credits are complete). The following two forms must be submitted along with the Application for Admission to Candidacy.

<http://grs.uncg.edu/forms/DoctoralCompsResults.pdf>

<http://grs.uncg.edu/forms/DissertationTopic.pdf>

2. Defending the Dissertation.

It is the advisor's role to determine when the written dissertation is acceptable and defensible. A student cannot schedule a dissertation defense without the approval of the research advisor. As with the proposal, the final dissertation should not, in the advisor's view, need major foreseeable modifications. On the other hand, the student should understand that revisions would almost certainly be forthcoming. The student must give each committee member a copy of the dissertation no less than two weeks (ten business days) prior to the scheduled defense date. Students should follow the guidelines set forth by the UNCG Graduate School when preparing the dissertation.

The Graduate School requires that all PhD students submit the Final Oral Examination Schedule form at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense (<https://grs.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Final-Oral-Examination-Schedule.pdf>). The dissertation defense will begin with a presentation of the completed thesis research. This portion of the process will be open to the university community and will be announced through the BIO department office. After a period of open questioning by all that are in attendance, a closed session will commence where committee members will ask the student questions related to the dissertation research. After the questioning, the committee will deliberate to assess the performance of the student. Three outcomes are possible: acceptance, provisional acceptance, and rejection. Acceptance of the dissertation indicates that the student has met the standard set forth for dissertations by the department. Minor revisions may still be required of an acceptable dissertation prior to submission to the Graduate School. However, the major advisor can supervise these revisions. Provisional acceptance indicates that there are substantial format, content, or analysis problems

with the dissertation that make it unacceptable as written, but that upon revision, the document will likely be acceptable. The committee will outline the problems in writing and present them to the student. Prior to acceptance of a revised dissertation, the student must convene an additional meeting to explain the revisions to the entire committee. All committee members must approve of the revised dissertation. Inability of a student to rectify any inadequacies will result in a rejection of the dissertation. A dissertation is rejected if the student has not adequately conducted, analyzed, or interpreted the research that was proposed. In such cases, the student will be dismissed from the program or will be required to initiate a new thesis project. When the committee accepts the dissertation, a form is filed with the Graduate School.

3. *Filing the Dissertation with the Graduate School.*

The process for submitting the dissertation to The Graduate School has two components: submitting the copy for formatting approval and submitting the final copy. Be sure to note the specific instructions and deadline dates affiliated with each step. These dates are available in the University Academic Calendar of Events.

Students file the dissertation electronically via the online submission system available on The Graduate School's website. In final form, the dissertation must comply with the rules prescribed by the Graduate Studies Committee in the "Guide for the Preparation of Thesis and Dissertations" in addition to the requirements of the Department of Biology. The approved electronic submission must be uploaded by the deadline date as specified in the University Academic Calendar of Events. Publication of the dissertation by UMI Dissertation Publishing/ProQuest Information and Learning is required by The Graduate School. The candidate must pay associated publishing fees. Your committee members may also request a paper copy for their files.

4. *Applying for Graduation.*

Students must make a formal application for graduation to The Graduate School by the end of the first week of classes of the term in which the degree will be granted (see the University Academic Calendar of Events). Degrees are granted at the end of each semester and the second summer session. A graduation fee must be paid to The Graduate School by the end of the first week of classes of the term in which the degree is earned. Students who do not graduate in the semester for which they originally applied may be charged an additional fee when they reapply for graduation.

5. Time-Line for the Ph.D.

Action

Time

Selection of major advisor	Prior to the first semester (during application process), or at the end of the first academic year.
Selection of Advisory Committee	By the end of the first year
Plan of study approved by advisor and committee	Before completion of eighteen semester hours
Annual Committee Meeting and Report	Annually after the committee has been formed.
Dissertation Proposal Defense	By the end of the fourth or fifth semester
Student Applies for Candidacy	After successful completion of written and oral exams and acceptance of dissertation proposal and plan of study approved by Graduate school
Distribution of Dissertation	No sooner than one year after approval to committee members of the proposal
Final oral Presentation Schedule Form (Graduate School)	Complete and file two weeks prior to the scheduled dissertation defense
Dissertation Defense Meeting	Two weeks after distribution to committee members
Apply for graduation	By the end of the first week of the semester in which the degree is to be granted

F. Use of teaching space and equipment for research.

Research activities associated with the MS and PhD degrees need to be contained within research labs. The BIO Department will do everything within reason to accommodate the odd/limited request for use of teaching space and equipment for use in research but the granting of these requests will be limited.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Biology Graduate Handbook has been modeled after the The Graduate Manual: A Guide for Success from the Department of Nutrition (NTR) at UNCG. The Graduate Studies Committee in Biology is grateful for the template and advice provided by the Graduate Studies Committee in

Nutrition, especially the efforts of Drs. Keith Erikson and Deborah Kipp. The Graduate Studies Committee in Biology is also grateful for comments from Biology faculty that improved previous versions of this document.

APPENDIX

Rotations for the PhD in EHS Degree Program

Rotations are blocks of time that incoming students spend working with potential faculty mentors on research projects. The purpose of a rotation is to let both the student and potential mentors get to know one another's interests to determine if working together on a research project in a student-mentor relationship will be a good fit.

Rotations are mandatory for incoming students to our PhD program.

If students enter the degree program with an advisor in mind who has agreed to mentor the student, then the student will rotate with that mentor. A signature from both the student and faculty mentor is required if this is the case (see below) and should be submitted at the start of the first semester. If students enter the degree program without an advisor in mind or if the advisor who the student would like to work with believes the student would benefit from a rotation experience, the student should rotate with 1-3 potential mentors.

Students should sign up for the Research Lab Rotation course (Bio 749; 1 credit) in both the Fall and Spring Semesters. A signature from both the student and 1-3 potential graduate advisors who are willing to have the student rotate through her/his lab is required if this is the case (see below) and should be submitted at the end of the first year.

The expectation for the rotation is that the student will spend approximately 8 weeks working with the faculty member for the rotation.

Students who are going to rotate should discuss the rotation options with the Director of Graduate Studies when being advised what courses to enroll in during their first semester.

Incoming student has already established their faculty mentor.

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Mentor

Date

Incoming student has not already established their faculty mentor.

Student Signature

Date

Rotation Faculty

Date

Rotations for the MS in Biology Degree Program

Rotations are blocks of time that incoming students spend working with potential faculty mentors on research projects. The purpose of a rotation is to let both the student and potential mentors get to know one another's interests to determine if working together on a research project in a student-mentor relationship will be a good fit.

Rotations are not mandatory for incoming students to our MS programs if students enter the degree program with an advisor in mind who has agreed to mentor the student. A signature from both the student and faculty mentor is required if this is the case (see below).

Rotations are mandatory if the student enters the MS degree program without an advisor in mind or if the advisor who the student would like to work with believes the student would benefit from a rotation experience. If a student is going to rotate, she/he is required to sign up for the Research Lab Rotation course (Bio 749; 1 credit). The student is required to rotate with 1-3 faculty members. A signature from both the student and 1-3 potential graduate advisors who are willing to have the student rotate through her/his lab is required if this is the case (see below). The expectation for the rotation for MS students is that the student will spend approximately 4 weeks working with the faculty member for the rotation.

MS students who are going to rotate are required to sign up for this course in the semester that they enter the program (either Fall or Spring).

Students who are going to rotate should discuss the rotation options with the Director of Graduate Studies when being advised what courses to enroll in during their first semester.

Incoming student has already established their faculty mentor.

Student Signature

Date

Faculty Mentor

Date

Incoming student has not already established their faculty mentor.

Student Signature

Date

Rotation Faculty

Date

PhD EHS Doctoral Plan Of Study Form

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Department of Biology
PhD Program in Environmental Health Science (EHS)
Plan of Study and Approval Forms

Current Date:

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Student's Name:
Student ID#:
Advisor's Name:

Contact Information

Local Address:
Email:
Home or Cell Phone Number:

II. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

A. Undergraduate degree

Name of Degree:
Major:
Date Obtained:
Institution:

B. Graduate Degree (S) earned (if applicable)

Name of Degree:
Major:
Date Obtained:
Institution:

III. EHS PHD PROGRAM

A. General Information

Month and Year of Enrollment:
Date Admitted to the Graduate Program:
(Attach copy of pages of BIO requirement from the Graduate School Bulletin in use on the date admitted)
Month and Year of Expected graduation:

B. Coursework Summary for EHS

Required Core Courses (17 hours)
Electives (9 hours minimum)
Research and Dissertation (29 hours minimum)
Total- 55 hours minimum

C. Plan of Study (Year XXXX-XX)

i. Required Core Course (seventeen hours minimum)

Course Name	Course	Credits	Semester	Grade
Introduction to Graduate Studies	BIO 600	1		
Seminar in EHS	BIO 707	2		
EHS I	BIO 731	3		
EHS II	BIO 732	3		
Rotations	BIO 749	1x2		
Biostatistics	BIO 661	3		
Current Topic in EHS	BIO 734	1x3		
TOTAL				

ii Electives (nine hours minimum)

Course Name	Number	Credit Hours	Semester /Year	Grade

iii Research and Dissertation

Course Name	Course	Hours	Semester	Grade
Directed Study in EHS	BIO 790			
Independent Doctoral Research	BIO 791			
Dissertation	BIO 799			

D. Schedule for Plan of Study

YEAR	Fall			Spring		
	Course#	Hour	Grade	Course #	Hour	Grade
xxxx-xx	BIOxxx			BIOxxx		
	Total hours			Total hours		

YEAR	Fall			Spring		
	Course#	Hour	Grade	Course #	Hour	Grade
xxxx-xx	BIOxxx			BIOxxx		
	Total hours			Total hours		

YEAR	Fall			Spring		
	Course#	Hour	Grade	Course #	Hour	Grade
xxxx-xx	BIOxxx			BIOxxx		
	Total hours			Total hours		

E. Other Requirements

Completed/Accepted	Proposed Date	Date Completed
i. Formation of Dissertation Committee		
ii. Submission of Plan of Study to Graduate School		
iii. Dissertation Proposal		
Accepted Title:		
iv. Dissertation Proposal Oral presentation and Defense		
v. Admission of Candidacy		
vi. Oral Defense of Dissertation		
vii. Dissertation Completed		

f. Yearly committee meeting dates and summary

Student Name _____

Committee Members

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Meeting Date	Meeting Summary

MS in Biology Plan of Study Form

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Department of Biology
Master's in Biology
Plan of Study and Approval Forms

Current Date:

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Student's Name:

Student ID#:

Advisor's Name:

Contact Information

Local Address:

Email:

Home or Cell Phone Number:

II. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

A. Undergraduate degree

Name of Degree:

Major:

Date Obtained:

Institution:

B. Graduate Degree (S) earned (if applicable)

Name of Degree:

Major:

Date Obtained:

Institution:

III. MS PROGRAM

A. General Information

Month and Year of Enrollment:

Date Admitted to the Graduate Program:

Month and Year of Expected graduation:

C. Other information

Completed/Accepted	Date Completed
i. Selection of Thesis Advisor Name:	
ii. Formation of Thesis Committee Names of Members:	
iii. Thesis Proposal Title	
iv. Thesis Proposal Oral presentation and Defense	
v. Submission of Plan of Study to Graduate School	
vi. Oral Defense of Thesis	
vii. Thesis accepted by committee	

Graduate Director Signature _____ Date _____

Department of Biology
MS in Biology

Thesis Proposal Presentation and Meeting
Approval Page

This form should be signed at the time the proposal presentation and meeting have been completed.

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

Date of Proposal Presentation and Meeting _____

Title of Thesis Proposal _____

Committee Members and Signatures:

Advisor _____
Signature _____

Member _____
Signature _____

Member _____
Signature _____

Member _____
Signature _____

Graduate Director Signature _____ Date _____

Department of Biology
MS in Biology

Final Thesis Acceptance
Approval Page

This form should be signed after the thesis has been accepted by the committee members.

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

Date of Thesis Presentation and Defense _____

Date of Final Acceptance by Committee _____

Title of Thesis: _____

Committee Members and Signatures:

Advisor _____
Signature _____

Member _____
Signature _____

Member _____
Signature _____

Member _____
Signature _____

Graduate Director Signature _____ Date _____

Application for Graduate Student Research Support

Biology graduate students can apply for departmental funds to support their MS or PhD research (not rotation research) each semester. Students must submit the application form and research proposal by the indicated date. Proposals will be evaluated and ranked by members of the departmental Graduate Studies Committee and awards based on rank and available funds.

General Information:

Due date (for Fall 2017 and Spring 2018): Fri, Sept. 22, 2017 and Fri, Jan. 26, 2018

Submit to: Director of Graduate Studies (There is mailbox labeled Graduate Studies in the Biology Office)

Award Announcements: Within seven days

APPLICATION FORM COVER PAGE

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Faculty Advisor Signature _____ Date _____

Semester and Academic Year _____

List Prior Departmental Support, indicating amount and semester/year.

Indicate other sources of research support such as advisor grant:

Amount Requested _____ (\$500 maximum; if over 500 make sure to address this in your justification)

Title of Proposal

Attach to this COVER PAGE

1) A one page proposal (12point font 1 inch margins) using the following outline:

Your name, your advisor's name and Proposal Title

Background and Significance

Hypothesis and Experimental Question

Experimental Approach and Data Analysis (with details about what will be done in the semester in which you are applying for funds)

Expected Results

2) A one-page Itemized Budget for only the current semester with a Justification

Travel Request Form for Graduate Students

The Biology department has limited funds to support graduate attendance to a professional meeting. If you know of your meeting plans in advance (summer or fall prior to the meeting), it is expected that you apply for travel funds from the UNCG Graduate School (<http://www.uncg.edu/student.groups/gsa/funding/>). Any funds you receive will be matched by the Department, budget permitting. There is a maximum award of \$250. If you are travelling in the summer it is best to apply for reimbursement the following fall semester.

Please fill out this form and support it **at least a month in advance of your planned meeting.**

1. Name _____

2. Advisor _____ Signature _____

Date _____

3. Meeting Information:

Name of meeting _____

Location and Dates _____

Title of presentation _____

Poster _____ or Talk _____ Check One

4. Other sources of funding, including mentor.

5. Budget

Registration _____

Travel _____

Housing _____

Total:

6. Amount requested from Department _____

Biology MS Plan of Study Checklist

Complete before submitting Plan of Study to Director of Graduate Studies

Name: _____ Student Number _____ Date _____

1. Do you have an advisor and thesis committee? Yes or No (circle)
2. Have you submitted your rotation form to the Director of Graduate Studies? Yes or No (circle)
3. Are 15 of your credits above the 600 level? Yes or No (circle one).
Show me the numbers by listing your 500 and 600 level credit in each category.
Classes= ___ /min 15 ___/___
Bio 695 = ___ /max 9 ___/___
Bio 699 = ___ /max and min 6 ___/___
4. How many hours of Bio 695 will you have? _____ (maximum of 9 credits toward your degree)
5. How many hours of Bio 699 will you have? _____ (minimum and maximum of 6 credits)
6. How many TOTAL credits will you have at the end of your program? _____ (minimum of 30 and justification needed for going over 30)
7. Are you planning on taking 699 before the semester after you have proposed? Yes or No (circle one).
(you cant take 699 until after you have proposed).
8. Are any of the classes on your Plan of Study from the Visions program? Yes or No (circle). If yes, how many credits are you using? _____ (maximum of 9) If you have more than 9, how many more?

9. Have you taken any of the classes on your Plan of Study off campus? Yes or No (circle one).
If yes, how many credits are you using? _____
Describe the details of the agreement for use of those credits (ie, part of a consortium agreement) and confirm that at least ½ of your credit hours in semesters when you were off campus were UNCG credit.
Circle yes or no. _____
10. Are you using any transfer credit towards your degree? Yes or No (circle one) If yes, how many credits? _____ (number can be no higher than ¼ of all core, elective, Bio 690 credits combined) and do have you submitted the required documentation to the Graduate School Yes or No (circle one)

Some important points to remember:

-only 15 independent research credits can be applied to your degree (bio 695 and bio 699) – the other 15 have to be non-independent research credit courses.

-once you have completed your 6 699 credits and have reached 30 credits, you need to start enrolling in Bio 801 (thesis extension) or Bio 803 (research extension)

