

Departmental expectations of students in the EEB MS program.

I. SKILLS

By the time they complete their degree, EEB MS students should be able to:

1. Successfully implement a research plan that addresses a research question, demonstrating mastery of experimental design, quality control, trouble shooting, data management and organizational skills.
2. Place the significance of their research in the context of the biological sciences.
3. Be familiar with the primary funding sources for research in EEB, understand how grants are managed, and be able to develop a research budget.
4. Present their research to peers via talks, posters, and in the form of scientific publications.
5. Understand the publication process, including journal selection, paper submission, and the role of peer review.
6. Communicate their research beyond their peers to a broader public.
7. Articulate the broader impacts of their research program.
8. Understand and abide by the legal and ethical expectations placed on scientists.
9. Teach undergraduate students within the field of EEB.

II. KNOWLEDGE

By the time they complete their degree, EEB MS students should:

1. Know the fundamentals of ecology and evolutionary biology.
2. Have an understanding of the general biology of a broad range of organisms.
3. Know the history of research within their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.
4. Have quantitative skills appropriate to their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.
5. Have depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate to their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.

III. TIME-LINE AND KEY MILESTONES

Students will complete the following benchmarks by the stated times. Exceptions will be allowed as detailed below; in addition, any leave of absence approved by the Graduate School stops the clock on all items for the duration of the absence. Students also are responsible for ensuring that all Graduate School requirements are met; should discrepancies arise between this document and the graduate catalog then the latter takes precedent. Any such discrepancies should be reported to the Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee (GAAC) so that this document can be updated.

Students should:

1. Form a provisional committee of at least 3 faculty members, including the major advisor, before the start of the second semester.

Each student is required to form an advisory committee that will guide them through their degree. Membership of the committee should be determined in consultation with your major advisor. Committee members must be members of the graduate faculty at UConn. If one of your proposed committee members is not at UConn, they can be added to the Graduate Faculty by submitting a form available on the Graduate School web site.

The role of this committee is solely to guide the student's initial course selection and to help them begin planning their research. Committee members may be changed at any time, and changes are especially encouraged when they accommodate changes in research direction. Provisional committee members do not need to be on the student's final thesis committee.

2. Finalize committee membership and submit a plan of study to the Graduate School before the end of the second semester.

After committee membership has been formalized, subsequent changes in membership remain possible and are encouraged when they will help the student meet their research goals. Similarly, changes to the plan of study are encouraged when they will improve the student's ability to conduct their planned research. Changes at this stage will require the approval of appropriate paperwork through the Graduate School.

Each student is required to submit a plan of study to the Graduate School. The plan of study should identify any courses that the department or the student's committee requires the student to take in order to complete their degree. The student should consult the graduate catalog to ensure that the plan is compliant with Graduate School requirements.

3. Meet with their committee at least annually.

The student should meet with their provisional committee before the start of their second semester to initiate discussions about their research directions and plan of study. Thereafter, they should meet annually to update their committee on their progress and to discuss future plans.

4. Distribute complete draft thesis chapters to committee at least two weeks prior to defense exam.

In order to receive helpful feedback from the advisory committee it is important for a student to consult with them throughout the writing period. Once the student has a final draft of the thesis, they should distribute it to all committee members so that they have ample time to review it prior to the defense.

5. Complete thesis (recommended: before the end of the fourth semester).

Departmental support for students is guaranteed for up to 2 years from the date of matriculation, subject to the continued availability of funds, satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant, and satisfactory progress towards degree completion. Students should, therefore, plan to complete their thesis, present their thesis research to the department, and take their final examination within this time frame. Requests for support beyond the 4th semester after matriculation should be submitted to the GAAC, along with a statement of the student's progress, details of work that remains, and a time-line for completion. The GAAC will consult with the student's committee in deciding whether to extend support. All extensions will be granted only after review and on a semester-by-semester basis.

The defense presentation should be scheduled for a 60 min period in which the student gives a talk and takes questions from a general audience. This presentation will be followed by a closed door session with the student's committee. The defense must take place at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the student plans to graduate.

Questions about this document should be directed to Chris Elphick.