

# Timeline for Satisfactory Progress: Integrative Biology M.S. and Ph.D.

## Department of Integrative Biology

### First Year:

#### *M.S. and Ph.D. Certification*

Certification for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees gives the student and their advisory committee (AC) a formal venue to discuss broad expectations for the student's graduate career. During certification, the AC will review the student's background and point out areas of deficiencies that should be improved during the course of the degree program. In general, graduate students are expected to have backgrounds in their area of study equivalent to or exceeding departmental expectations for zoology undergraduate students. The certification form is to be completed and turned in to the Graduate Student Coordinator by the end of the 2nd semester.

#### *Committees*

In consultation with their advisor/major professor, students should begin selecting members of their Committee during their first year. Ph.D. students must have 5 committee members, at least 1 must be from outside the Department of Integrative Biology and 3 must be UW-Madison Graduate Faculty. It is acceptable to have a 4-member AC for the certification meeting and qualifying exam, but the full 5-member AC must be present for the preliminary exam and the final exam/defense. M.S. students must have 3 AC members and at least 2 must be UW-Madison Graduate Faculty.

### Second Year:

#### *Qualifying Examination*

The Qualifying Exam (QE) is typically completed and turned in by the end of the 4th semester of the Ph.D. The QE is a test of a student's general knowledge in the life sciences and is used by the student's committee to recommend or require courses and additional activities to prepare a student for Ph.D. research. It is the student's responsibility to talk with their advisor to gain a complete understanding of the nature of these exams and the way they are administered, as exams will vary by advisor and committee. Upon completion, bring the signed QE form to the Graduate Student Coordinator.

Outcomes of the QE are: (1) pass, (2) pass with the requirement to take specified courses and/or perform additional activities, (3) fail with the option of retaking the QE within two semesters, and (4) fail for the second time, at which point the student will not be given the option of taking the QE for a third time. Because the QE is primarily a diagnostic exam, outcomes (3) and (4) are rare. Performance on the QE does not influence a student's progress towards a M.S. degree.

### Third Year:

#### *Preliminary Examination*

The Ph.D. dissertation proposal defense (Prelim Exam, or PE) typically occurs by the end of the 6th semester. The dissertation proposal is defended in front of the dissertation committee. Students should contact the Graduate Student Coordinator 3-4 weeks before the PE to request a prelim warrant. Students should also arrange to reserve a room to hold their examination.

The PE is centered around the research proposed for a student's Ph.D. dissertation, and is designed to determine whether a student may proceed towards candidacy for the Ph.D. The PE must include a written research proposal. In the PE, the student must defend the research proposal and satisfy the AC that they have sufficient background to see the work to completion. A successful research proposal will normally include preliminary data/results to show that the proposed work is feasible. However, the PE should be completed before the bulk of research is performed. The PE gives the AC the opportunity to make extensive suggestions on the proposed research and set out expectations for a successful Ph.D. research project. Outcomes of the PE are: (1) pass, (2) fail with the option of retaking the PE within 2

semesters, and (3) fail without the option of retaking the PE. Note that in addition to passing the PE, the Graduate School will only grant dissertator status once you have met the additional requirements listed below:

#### *Dissertator Status*

Dissertator Status is achieved in the semester following the PE. Remember that once you have achieved dissertator status, you must enroll continuously (every Fall and Spring semester) for exactly 3 credits (no more, no less). Dissertator is a unique fee status for students who have completed all requirements for a doctoral degree except for the dissertation. To be eligible for dissertator fee status, a student must:

- Pass the PE;
- Satisfy the 32 credit minimum doctoral graduate residence requirement
- Complete Ph.D. minor requirement;
- Complete all program requirements except the dissertation;
- Clear all Incomplete grades or Progress grades in non-research courses (progress grades in 990 research may remain);
- Earn at least a 3.0 cumulative graduate GPA;
- Return the signed and dated prelim warrant to the Graduate School.

For more information on dissertator status visit: <https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/dissertator-status/>

#### **Fifth Year:**

##### *Final Defense*

The dissertation defense is the final step in the Ph.D. process. At least 3-4 weeks before the defense, you must request a final defense warrant from the Graduate Student Coordinator. Also be sure to schedule a room and send out an email to the department publicly advertising your final defense date. 3 months before graduation, get in touch with the Graduate Student Coordinator to go over all deadlines and requirements for finishing your degree.

##### *Credit Requirements for Completing a Degree*

For **M.S. students** entering the Department of Integrative Biology **before the Fall 2014 semester**, a minimum of 18 graduate credits is required: 6 must be earned in formal courses (other than research/seminars/conference). Of the 18 credits, 14 (research and seminars included) must be taken in the department.

For **M.S. students** entering the Department of Integrative Biology **during or after the Fall 2014 semester**, a minimum of 30 graduate credits is required. Of the 30 credits, 16 credits must come from the department specific courses listed below.

For **Ph.D. students** entering Department of Integrative Biology **before the Fall 2014 semester**, there are no minimum degree requirements for a Ph.D., but dissertator status will not be granted until after 32 credits have been completed. See the dissertator status section above for more information.

For **Ph.D. students** entering the Department of Integrative Biology **during or after the Fall 2014 semester**, 51 credits must be completed to earn a Ph.D. Of those 51 credits, at least 26 credits must come from the department specific courses listed below.

Other Requirements: All Ph.D. students must serve as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for one semester and hold at least a 33.3% TA appointment.

##### *Time to Ph.D. and M.S. Degree*

It is expected that a Ph.D. student will defend the dissertation by the end of the 5th academic year. If this is not accomplished by the end of the summer following the 6th academic year, the advisor/major professor and one member

of the AC must meet with the Chair to present a written statement that explains why the dissertation has not been completed and describes plans that the student and the committee have agreed upon to ensure completion. The student may attend this meeting. Continuation in the program beyond 8 years will be at the discretion of the Chair and AC. 10 years is the outside limit by which a student must complete the Ph.D. degree.

M.S. students are expected to complete their degree by the end of the 3rd year. If this is not accomplished by the end of the summer following the 3rd academic year, the advisor/major professor and one member of the AC must meet with the Chair to present a written statement that explains why the M.S. requirements have not been completed and describes plans that the student and the committee have agreed upon to ensure completion.

#### *Statement of Rights and Responsibilities*

It is the responsibility of the graduate student to make sure that all requirements, time targets, and time limits are met. Students can expect their advisor/major professor and AC to be available for necessary and required meetings and exams. If the student encounters difficulty in assembling all designates for certification or examinations, other graduate faculty can readily be substituted by the student and their advisor/major professor. Students who experience problems in setting up meetings should seek assistance from the departmental Graduate Student Coordinator.

#### *Graduate level Course Requirements*

For those students entering the Department of Integrative Biology during or after Fall 2014, more than 50% of credits (26 for a Ph.D. and 16 for a M.S.) applied towards the graduate degree credit requirement must be with courses designed for graduate work. Graduate work in the department may include any courses numbered 700 and above including the following:

**Zoology 725** Ecosystem Concepts  
**Zoology 750** Problems in Oceanography  
**Zoology 765** Developmental Neuroscience  
**Zoology 799** Independent Study  
**Zoology 800** Advanced Topics in Biological Sciences  
**Zoology 820** Foundations of Evolution  
**Zoology 879** Advanced Landscape Ecology  
**Zoology 911** Limnology and Marine Science Seminar  
**Zoology 953** Introduction to Ecology Research at UW-Madison  
**Zoology 954** Seminar in Endocrinology-Reproductive Physiology  
**Zoology 955** Seminar-Limnology  
**Zoology 956** Seminar-Ecology  
**Zoology 957** Seminar-Evolution  
**Zoology 958** Seminar-Biophysical and Physiological Ecology  
**Zoology 960** Seminar in Cellular Biology  
**Zoology 962** Seminar-Ethology  
**Zoology 980** Earth System Science Seminar  
**Zoology 990** Research

Students may additionally take any courses outside of the department that have been identified as graduate-level by the course's subject owner to meet this requirement.