



Department of Biological Sciences

MS Manual
for
Graduate Students

Updated 03/14/2022
unofficial draft

A GUIDE FOR MS
GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL
SCIENCES
PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Prepared by
Patricia Dimmitt and Gina Rupp
Current and former Senior Program Coordinators
Andrea Kasinski and Daniel Suter
Current and former Chairs of the Graduate Program

Department of Biological Sciences
Purdue University

Updated 03/14/2022

FOREWORD

The Department of Biological Sciences welcomes you! We hope that you will have a great educational and professional experience during your graduate studies here at Purdue. The Office of Graduate and Advanced Studies provides service to our graduate students from admission to graduation. The Graduate Office directed by the Senior Graduate Program Coordinator, Patricia Dimmitt, LILY 1-120, 765-494-8142, poliver@purdue.edu is your first point of contact when you have questions on policies and procedures regarding our Graduate Program. This manual outlines the normal sequence of events leading to your advanced degree and should serve as your program-specific guide in addition to the regulations provided by the Graduate School.

Each MS student is expected to satisfy the various program requirements outlined in this manual. Whereas the Graduate Office will provide timely reminders, it remains your responsibility to meet the requirements by the established deadlines. Failure to meet deadlines could prevent you from registering for the subsequent semester and result in late registration fees and delays with receiving financial support. The scheduling of annual Advisory Committee Conferences including Preliminary Exams and Thesis Defenses is your responsibility. We encourage students schedule these important meetings with their committee well in advance.

Exceptions to the normal sequence of events may be requested by writing to the Convener of the Graduate and Advanced Studies Committee. Any request should detail a justification for the exception and be approved, in advance, by the student's Advisory Committee.

We wish you great success with your thesis research and graduate studies in our program!

Andrea Kasinski
Chair of the Graduate Program

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
General Requirements	
Time limitation.....	6
Credit hours.....	6
Grades and index requirement	7
Residence requirement.....	7
Basic Steps	
Select major professor/research director.....	8
Select advisory committee	8
Thesis & Non-Thesis MS Electronic Plan of Study (EPOS).....	8
Grade Appeals.....	9
Individual Development Plan (IDP).....	9
Transfer credits	9
Transfer PhD Required Course credits taken as MS student.....	9
Annual Research Conferences	9
Identification as an advanced degree candidate.....	10
Thesis Preparation.....	10
Final Examination	10
Report of Final Examination.....	11
Thesis Deposit.....	11
Commencement Exercises	11
Degree Certification Statement.....	12
Supplements	
1 – Electronic Thesis Deposit (ETD).....	13
2 – Initiate Thesis Acceptance Form	15

MS Degree Objective

General Requirements

1. Time limitation

Under normal circumstances, registration for MS candidates will be terminated after six semesters of graduate studies in the Department of Biological Sciences (not including summer sessions). Failure to meet deadlines will result in non-approval of registration for subsequent sessions.

2. Credit hours

A total of 30 credit hours are required. The student's Advisory Committee arranges the specific courses taken on an individual basis for each student, using guidelines established for their specific area of biology, and approved by the Convener of the Graduate Studies Committee. A maximum of 6 course credit hours at the 40000-level may be included.

At least one-half of the total credit hours used to satisfy degree requirements must be earned in residence on the Purdue campus where the degree is to be granted.

Thesis MS	Total Course Work Credit hrs.	BIOL 698	Thesis Defense	Time Limit
Microbiology or Ecology	21 B or higher	9 Satisfactory	An acceptable thesis is required.	3 yrs from entry date
General Biology	21 at least 15 must be in Life Sciences B or higher	9 Satisfactory	Oral defense of the thesis is also required unless waived by the Convener of the Graduate Studies Committee upon recommendation of the Advisory Committee	
Obtaining two Unsatisfactory grades for thesis research is grounds for dismissal from the graduate program.				
Support Limit: Academic year – guaranteed two years. Additional year and summer sessions on a case-by-case basis. It is possible to take classes with tuition waived under certain conditions.				
BIOL 66200 & 66300: Are required the first year.				

Non-Thesis M.S.	30 B or higher *	Not Required	3 yrs
* BIOL 59500: Maximum number of 8 credits allowed per the guidelines of the area of your non-thesis M.S. Cluster-specific guidelines may supersede these general guidelines.			
Support Limit: Academic year – guaranteed two years. Additional sessions on a case-by-case basis.			
BIOL 66200 & 66300: Are required the first year.			

3. Grades and index requirements.

The Student is expected to maintain a cumulative index of B (3.0) or better. Indices below this level are marked “low” on grade reports. The Graduate School, the Convener of the Graduate and Advanced Studies Committee, and the Advisory Committee will review the student’s progress each semester. A student who fails to perform at a satisfactory level may be required to discontinue graduate study at Purdue. All courses approved on the plan of study for which grades are given will be used in computing indices.

Thesis Masters or Non-Thesis Masters must be completed in six (6) semesters, including summer semesters.

4. Residence requirement.

Two units of residence are required for the M.S.
(30 credit hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. At least ½ of the total credit hours used to satisfy degree requirements must be earned in residence on the Purdue campus where the degree is to be authorized)

MS Degree Objective

Basic Steps

1. Select Major Professor/Research Director.

The Major Professor/Research Director-student relationship must be a mutually acceptable one. The Major Professor/Research Director will act as chairperson of the student's Advisory Committee and will be in charge of the student's research. If the student cannot find a research director, the Convener of the Graduate Studies Committee should be consulted.

The Graduate Coordinator needs to be informed of any change with the Major Professor/Research Director.

2. Select Advisory Committee

The Thesis MS Advisory Committee must have three (3) members from the graduate faculty with at least two from within the Department of Biological Sciences. The committee membership must be reported on the departmental form.

Non-Thesis MS Advisory Committee will consist of only one member, the Major Professor.

3. Thesis and Non-Thesis MS Electronic Plan of Study (EPOS)

The plan of study is submitted electronically (EPOS) through *myPurdue*. The graduate coordinator and all members of the Advisory Committee will receive electronic notification of the plan of study for review and approval.

Only courses that receive a letter grade (A, B) may be included in the EPOS. Research credit hours are not allowed on the EPOS.

Due no later than the end of the graduate student's first semester.

EPOS Note:

Biology EPOS

Major Professor = Chair

Thesis-Master: Major Professor + 2 committee members
21 credit hours of coursework

Non-Thesis –Master: Major Professor
30 credit hours of coursework

To make minor changes in an EPOS, the student will submit a *Request for Change to the Plan of Study* electronically, through *myPurdue*.

If the composition of the Advisory/Examining Committee changes, the student must also submit a *Request for Change to the Plan of Study* electronically through *myPurdue*.

4. Grade Appeals

For grade appeals, please refer to University Regulations, The on-line reference manual for students, staff and faculty at

http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/pages/stu_conduct/stu_regulations.html

Part 5 Student Conduct, Section F

5. Individual Development Plan (IDP)

After joining a lab, the student will complete in discussion with their Major Professor, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) each year. These IDPs are training tools to help the student assess progress and succeed in the program. Forms can be found at

<https://www.science.purdue.edu/graduate/idp.html>

The last page of the IDP signed by both MS student and Major Professor needs to be submitted to the Graduate Office by the end of October. Lack of IDP submission will result in not being allowed to register for the following semester/term.

6. Transfer credits

At least one-half of the total credit hours used to satisfy degree requirements must be earned in residence on the Purdue campus where the degree is to be granted.

Only credit hours associated with graduate courses for which grades of B or better were obtained will be eligible for transfer.

Coursework used to satisfy the requirements on one master's degree may not be used on the plan of study (EPOS) for another master's degree.

The Advisory Committee must agree to the transfer of courses on the EPOS. The Graduate School has final approval.

7. Transfer PhD Required Course credits taken as MS student

A current Thesis MS student, who follows the PhD Required Course guidelines, can use the PhD Required Courses taken if transferred to PhD program.

8. Annual Research Conferences

The initial research conference (RC) should occur within one (1) month of the submission of the Final EPOS but no later than the end of the second semester and at least annually thereafter.

The research director will preside at the meetings and establish the guidelines for the meetings.

No less than one-week prior to the first conference, the student must submit a written report to each committee member that includes both a brief description of the proposed thesis research project and a literature review of relevant areas related to that project. In this report

the student must clearly outline the objectives of the proposed research and the plan to achieve them. The literature review need not be exhaustive, but must show that the student is aware of the most important papers in the field – especially current papers – and how they relate to the issues addressed.

The presentation should include a discussion of relevant publishable data, interpretation of the data, and research plans for the next year.

9. Identification as an advanced degree candidate.

Indicate on the course registration through MyPurdue with the appropriate CAND course. You can add this course only during the first week of each semester/term. Once you are registered, this will count toward the Graduate School count of consecutive candidacy registrations. Three (3) consecutive semesters will result in a \$200 fee on the 3rd semester.

If you need to register as candidate after the first week of each semester/term, you will need to contact the Graduate Office.

10. Thesis Preparation.

MS students must prepare their thesis prior to their final examination.

Students are encouraged to review the formatting guidelines and various submission deadlines here: <https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/research/thesis/index.html>

The Major Professor is responsible for scanning the dissertation in iThenticate. The Graduate Program Coordinator can assist with this.

11. Final Examination

Thesis MS students are required to have an oral defense of the thesis. A copy of Thesis must be submitted to Committee 2-3 weeks prior to Final Exam. Check with your Committee as to time frame expected.

Non-thesis M.S. students do not have an oral examination.

The following are procedures for preparation for the Final Examination. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/research/thesis/>

- a. Scheduling your exam: Arrange day, hour and room for the final exam at a time convenient for your committee and report this information to the Graduate Office. <https://www.bio.purdue.edu/Resources/rooms.html>
- b. Three (3) weeks prior to your exam submit a copy of the ThMS Bulletin and BIOL 04A, to the Graduate Office. The request to take the Final Examination the online GS Form 8 needs to be submitted.
- c. The Final Examination (thesis defense) will be publicly announced on the departmental bulletin boards.
- d. Online resources are located at: https://www.bio.purdue.edu/Academic/graduate/masters/current_masters.html

12. Report of Final Examination

The Major Professor and all Advisory Committee members must sign the online GS Form 11 *Report of the Final Examination*. The examination report must be filed for candidates to receive their degrees.

Not more than one dissenting vote is acceptable in certifying the candidate to receive the degree.

If the Examining Committee decides that the examination is unsatisfactory, a second examination is required. A new request form, GS Form 8, must be submitted to the Graduate School.

13. Thesis Deposit

To initiate the thesis deposit, access your myPurdue page, select the Academics tab. Find the Graduate Student section and click the Graduate School Plan of Study link. Then select Form 9 (Thesis/Dissertation Acceptance)
Click Initiate Thesis/Dissertation Acceptance Form

Note: Select the Form 8 for the degree you will receive.

Update as needed on title – Save and Continue

No change to committee – Save and Continue

The remaining questions are those that were on the Form 32.

Deposit Appointment with Graduate School: An appointment is required – but you do not need to be in attendance.

The thesis must be deposited no later than the date set by the Graduate School. This is usually the Friday of the last week of classes, but may vary. Check with the Graduate Office for specific dates each semester.

See Supplement 1 regarding electronic thesis deposit. See Supplement 2 for detailed procedures regarding Form 9.

14. Commencement Exercises

Commencement information can be found at:

<http://www.purdue.edu/registrar/Commencement/index.html>

15. Degree Certification Statement

Individuals who have satisfied all of the requirements for their degree and need documentation of that fact (as is the case for some post-doctoral appointments) prior to when the degree will be awarded, may obtain such a statement from the Office of the Graduate School (YOUNG 170).

Students failing to meet any of the academic graduation requirements by the last day of the session will not graduate and must register in a later session.

Failure to meet deadlines will result in non-approval of registration for subsequent sessions. All University fees are subject to change without notice.

Supplement 1

Electronic Thesis Deposit (ETD)

Prior to submitting, you are encouraged to review the Thesis Templates & Guidance website:

<https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/research/thesis/index.html>

Once you've been approved to submit your ETD, the following procedures apply:

1. Access the Purdue ETD site and establish a personal account:
<http://dissertations.umi.com/purdue/>
2. Choose "Submit Your Dissertation/Thesis" at the bottom of the page.
3. Read submission guidelines. Be especially careful when inputting all data since you may not be able to go back and revise it afterwards. Post-facto data changes require action by the Thesis and Dissertation Office!
4. Read ProQuest Information & Learning (PQIL) release.
5. Enter personal contact information.
6. Enter requested thesis and academic information (e.g., title, advisor, abstract, etc.).
7. Upload full text.

NOTE: Candidates must ensure they receive, complete, and attach the special Graduate School Form 30, "Thesis Acceptance," as the front (i.e., first) page of their thesis prior to submission to the Graduate School Thesis/Dissertation Office. The GS Form 30 must be properly re-saved as a PDF document so it cannot be edited afterwards! You must perform this task on a computer loaded with Acrobat Professional since computers loaded only with "Reader" will not be sufficient. Acrobat Professional should be available on most, if not all, Purdue computer lab machines.

8. Select whether or not ProQuest/University Microfilms International will file optional "copyright registration" and enter additional data (if applicable).
9. Choose whether to order additional copies of their thesis (this is optional).
10. Review your order and enter credit card information as requested. This will show any copyright or publication fees charged.
11. If applicable, fill out any feedback surveys required by ProQuest.
12. Review uploaded data and revise submission as needed.
13. The ETD will be sent to the Administrator (Thesis/Dissertation Office) who will review it. Candidates will be notified by e-mail if they have either been approved or if they need to make revisions and resubmit.

The following items still need turned in at their deposit appointment, which must be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance of their requested day and time:

1. Original, signed G. S. Form 9 "Thesis Acceptance." G. S. Form 9's are still needed to confirm that theses have been accepted by departments and will be permanently filed at the Graduate School.
2. Completed and signed G. S. Form 32 "Thesis/Dissertation Agreement, Publication Delay, and Research Integrity & Copyright Disclaimer Form" This will be forwarded to

ProQuest Information & Learning, along with electronic submissions, by the Graduate School.

3. If applicable, copyright permissions (e.g., in “hard” form—letter, e-mail, or fax). These will be forwarded to ProQuest Information & Learning by the Graduate School.

NOTE: Candidates who include copyrighted material in their thesis/dissertation not qualifying for an exemption under the copyright law must submit written permission from the copyright holders to the Thesis/Dissertation Office. The T/D Office forwards the permissions to ProQuest Information & Learning to ensure theses are published in their original and complete forms. Failure to provide required permissions will result in identified material being expunged prior to publication by ProQuest.

4. NOTE: Candidates submitting confidential theses must also submit their “hard,” departmental copies at their final deposit appointment!
5. Survey of Earned Doctorate and Grad School exit survey. Please complete and turn them in to the Graduate School prior to commencement.

Questions? Please contact the Thesis/Dissertation Office: markj@purdue.edu, 63157, or www.gradschool.purdue.edu/thesis.cfm