

Checklist for PhD

(v2 updated 09/2025)

*This is a general checklist and may vary slightly from student to student. It is based on students starting their PhD program in the Fall semester on TAs and doing rotations to find their host laboratory. This checklist should only be used as a general guide and does not replace other requirements in the program.

1st year students:

- ☐ Schedule your Fall rotations. Fall #1 is optional, however, it is strongly recommended to still schedule this rotation to maximize your chances of finding a host faculty laboratory.
- ☐ Complete and submit your signed Individual Development Plan (IDP) to Graduate Office.
- ☐ Schedule your Spring rotations. Both Spring #1 and Spring #2 are required.
- ☐ Finalize negotiations for joining your Major Professor laboratory (by end of Spring semester).

2nd year students:

- ☐ Select your Dissertation Advisory Committee (by the end of the Summer semester).
- ☐ Hold your first meeting with your Dissertation Advisory Committee (by the end of the Fall semester).
- ☐ The area convener will assign the Principal Examiner/Chair for your preliminary examination (Jan/Feb). This person will replace your Major Professor.
- ☐ Submit the Faculty Replacement and Chair selection to the Graduate School using Form 8 (February).
- ☐ Schedule your preliminary exam (February/March).
- ☐ Schedule a meeting with the Principal Examiner of your preliminary exam (March).
- ☐ Submit the final version of your EPOS (March).
- ☐ Submit your written proposal to your Examination Committee for initial feedback (4 weeks before the scheduled exam).
- ☐ Revise your written proposal based on feedback (3 weeks before the scheduled exam).
- ☐ Submit the final version your written proposal to your Examination Committee. No further significant changes may be made to the proposal (written or oral) unless approved in advance by the Principal Examiner (2 weeks before the scheduled exam).
- ☐ Reserve a room to hold your preliminary exam (> 3 weeks before exam).
- ☐ Inform the Graduate Office of your exam date, time, and location (> 3 weeks before exam).
- ☐ Hold a mock oral exam with junior and senior students, postdocs, and even faculty if possible (~2 weeks before your exam).
- ☐ Successfully pass your preliminary exam (by the last day of classes of the Spring semester).

3rd year students and beyond:

- ☐ Hold an annual committee meeting with your Dissertation Advisory Committee (Fall semester).

Graduation:

Verifying Required Coursework (all with a letter grade of B or better):

- ☐ BIOL 66200 (Ethics).
- ☐ BIOL 66300 (Oral presentation).
- ☐ BIOL 69500PD (TA course).
- ☐ One area-approved seminar course completed.
- ☐ Area-approved quantitative assessment course (i.e. Statistics) completed.
- ☐ Area-approved scientific writing course completed.
- ☐ Verify other area-specific courses are completed, which varies for each research area.

Candidacy (see Department website for more details):

- ☐ Register for candidacy.
- ☐ Register for commencement (must be completed mid-semester of the last semester).

- ☐ File Graduate School Form 8: Request for Appointment of Examining Committee. The Final Examination Committee is typically the same as the Dissertation Advisory Committee.
- ☐ Schedule the dissertation seminar and defense. Typically, the seminar is 1 hour and open to the public. However, the defense is 1-2 hours and is with just the Final Examination Committee.
- ☐ Verify the formatting of the dissertation and schedule an appointment with the graduate school, if needed.
- ☐ Deposit the final written dissertation.
- ☐ Commencement.

Program Completion:

- ☐ Complete Biological Sciences Graduate Program Exit Questionnaire.
- ☐ Schedule Biological Sciences Graduate Program Exit Interview (*under development, not currently required*).