



MS in Biology Program Timeline

Below is a schedule of important milestones that you as a student in the MS Biology program will be striving to meet. Each of these components and required milestones is present to facilitate your growth as a biologist and to enable timely progression to completion with a body of work (your thesis and maybe even a published paper!) that you can be proud of. Your coursework is important for a broad knowledge of biology – important to function as a biologist. Your research and any publications that arise are what are likely to impress future employers and educational programs and demonstrate that you are able to use your broad knowledge to effectively address new questions – this is what biology is all about!

If you have questions on this schedule, please contact the Biology Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC).

Before Year 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Work with GPC, and potential faculty thesis advisor if known, to plan curriculum.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Ideally, 3 courses + BIOL681 in Semester 1 (11 credits)b. Ideally, 3 courses + BIOL682 in Semester 2 (11 credits)2. Complete <i>Application for Biology Graduate Assistantship</i><ol style="list-style-type: none">a. GPC, together with Biology faculty, assigns teaching assistantshipb. Up to \$500/month, paid hourly, typically 8-12 hours of work/week.3. Attend Biology Graduate Orientation on Friday before first day of Fall semester, 10AM-1PM<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Orientation to facilities, people, and teaching assistantship expectationsb. Lunch
Semester 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. BIOL681 provides an introduction to the program, research ethics, and research opportunities2. Thesis advisor chosen by end of semester and <i>Thesis Advisor Agreement</i> form completed and submitted to GPC

Semester 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BIOL682 provides for the development of experimental design and scientific presentation skills <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Thesis proposal written and polished, with help from Thesis advisor. b. Thesis proposal presented to department as final assignment for BIOL682 2. Thesis committee members chosen by student together with advisor. All members sign Thesis Committee Agreement form and return to GPC.
Summer 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Month of MAY <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Apply for Graduation b. Submit <i>Advancement to Candidacy</i> form c. Defend thesis proposal, within 1-2 weeks of thesis presentation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student arranges time/place for meeting, ensures the written thesis proposal is sent to the thesis committee and GPC at least 3 days before. ▪ Meeting is chaired by thesis advisor or other member of committee. ▪ Committee recommendations and discussion documented via <i>Thesis Committee Meeting</i> form ▪ Committee makes arrangements for comprehensive exam at end of meeting d. Comprehensive Exam, typically the week following above meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinated by GPC ▪ Following successful completion, GPC changes grade from DG to S. 2. Research!
Semester 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Register for 4 credits BIOL 699, Master's Thesis ○ Register for additional coursework, if necessary. 2. Months of NOVEMBER-DECEMBER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Required progress meeting with thesis committee. Chaired by advisor or other member of thesis committee. Includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 20-30-minute student presentation of results to date ▪ Committee recommendations and discussion of progress, documented via <i>Thesis Committee Meeting</i> form. Completion necessary for semester 4 registration.

Semester 4+	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research and writing! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Register for 4 credits BIOL 699, Master's Thesis ○ Writing and preparing figures that you can be proud of takes significant time. You should expect to require <i>at least</i> several weeks for this process. See <i>Thesis Template</i> available on the Department of Biology website. Also, see https://www.andrews.edu/grad/resources/dissertation/index.html ○ If in Semester 5+, register for 0 credits BIOL 660, Thesis Continuation (full-time status requiring at least 480 hours work per semester); Nov-Dec Committee meeting required in all years of the program except year 1.
Last two months before graduation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6 weeks before graduation (~ March 15, ~ June 15; ~ November 1; at least 10 days before defense), <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student schedules defense time/date/place with department administrative assistant and with committee members and GPC. ○ Student sends thesis to committee members and GPC. This 10-day period allows 5 days for recommendations to be made by the committee and another 5 days for the student to make recommended changes. Formatting is approved by GPC. If content approval (committee) or formatting approval (GPC) not received, thesis defense will be postponed. 2. At least 4 weeks before graduation (~ April 1, ~ July 1; ~ Nov 15): Thesis Defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public presentation (30-50 min), student introduced and meeting chaired by thesis advisor ○ Private committee meeting (typically about 2-hr) chaired by GPC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In attendance at committee meeting: all thesis committee members and GPC. ▪ General format: 1) introduction and prayer, 2) general questions (introduction/significance/general knowledge), 3) specific questions (methods, results, discussion), 4) excuse student for committee discussion, 5) student returns for decision and recommendations. ▪ Recommendations documented via <i>Thesis Committee Meeting form</i> 3. Following thesis defense until <u>10 days before graduation</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student makes thesis edits ○ Obtains committee signatures on thesis approval page ○ Student emails final thesis to dissertation office. This office arranges for printing and binding of thesis, completion of final

required paperwork, and submission of thesis completion form to registrar's office.

4. Printing of thesis may occur after graduation. If thesis is defended but not edited and submitted by 10-day-before-graduation deadline, thesis advisor may complete *Dissertation Report to Academic Records* stating that "*Thesis has been approved and only submission of final corrected version is lacking*". Student may then march without completion.
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