

Flow chart for progress through the Master's degree in Biology (Thesis)

KEY to forms: SBS = School of Biological Sciences form (available in the Biology Office – Ross 2480 or online at the Biology website: www.unco.edu/nhs/biology)
GS = Graduate School form (available online at: www.unco.edu/grad).

ADVISOR, COMMITTEE, PLAN OF STUDY

1. In your *first semester*, select your major professor (advisor), fill out a “Graduate Advisor Assignment” form (SBS), have it signed by the school director, file a copy of the form with the Graduate School, file a copy with the biology office, and keep copies for yourself and your advisor. [You will also use this form if you have to change your advisor.]
2. *No later than the end of your second semester*, with your advisor's input, select your graduate committee (a minimum of 3 members including your advisor, all of which can, but do not have to be, biology faculty). Fill out a “Selection of Master's Graduate Committee” form (SBS), get all necessary signatures, file the form in the biology office, and keep copies for yourself and your advisor.
3. *No later than the end of your second semester*, with input from your advisor, prepare your plan of study (the courses you will take to earn your degree). Any deficiencies that were noted on your acceptance letter should be addressed in your plan of study. Course requirements for the degree are modified from time to time. Use the requirements listed in the catalog that was in effect when you began your degree.

Complete and sign a “Plan of Study—Master's Thesis” form (SBS). Do not complete the Plan of the Study form available of the Graduate School Website. Arrange a meeting with your committee members to discuss your plan of study. Make any changes recommended by your committee and obtain the necessary signatures on the final version. The Plan of Study will be reviewed by the Biology Graduate Committee and the form will be signed by the Chair of the Graduate Committee and the Director of the School.

File the form with the biology office and the Graduate School, and keep copies for yourself and your advisor. Please note: when you apply for graduation, the Graduate School will hold you to all curriculum listed on your approved and filed Plan of Study. If you have not filed a Plan of Study with the Graduate School you will not be eligible to apply for graduation.

Any changes to the Plan of Study will require documentation to be filed in the biology office and sent to the Graduate School with signatures from your Faculty Advisor, the Chair of Biology Graduate Committee and the Director of the School of Biology.

4. When you have completed the courses on your plan of study, fill in the semester/year and the grades received for each course on the form and your overall GPA. Distribute copies of your completed plan of study to your advisor and committee members and file a copy in the biology office.

THESIS

1. With your advisor's input, write your research proposal. Follow the proposal guidelines provided by SBS. After you have your advisor's permission, distribute your proposal to your committee. Arrange a committee meeting to discuss your proposal. Make the necessary changes recommended by your committee. Obtain all your committee members' signatures on the signature page of the proposal, file the approved proposal in the biology office, and keep copies of the signed proposal for yourself and your advisor.
2. Conduct your thesis research. There are several sources of funding (grants) inside and outside of UNC that you can and should apply for. Even if your project has funding, it is a good idea to get practice in obtaining research funds yourself. Consult your advisor for sources of funding appropriate to your field.
3. When you have completed your research, write your thesis with input from your advisor. The "Thesis and Dissertation Manual for the University of Northern Colorado" (GS) is available online (http://www.unco.edu/grad/new_current/resources/index.html). Follow their instructions carefully! When your advisor says the thesis is ready, distribute it to your committee. Your committee members should receive your entire thesis at least 2 weeks before your defense date so they have time to read it and make comments, and you have time to incorporate those comments into your thesis, (or provide justification for not doing so) before your defense.
4. Check the Graduate School website for deadlines associated with **applying for graduation**. (<http://www.unco.edu/grad/forms/deadlines.html>). There are a series of deadlines you will need to meet (Application for Graduation, Last Day for Filing Masters Thesis, Last Day for Filing results of Comprehensive Examination). No extension of any of the deadlines will be allowed, so do not miss them! NOTE: You must apply for graduation early during the term you intend to graduate. The Application for Graduation in a Master's Program form is available at the Graduate School website: (<http://www.unco.edu/grad/forms/pdfs/MastersAndSpecialistGraduationApplication.pdf>)
5. Schedule a date for your oral presentation and your thesis defense with the input of ALL your committee members. Generally committee members will provide comments on your thesis at the time of your defense, hence it is important that you schedule your defense early enough to have time to make corrections to your thesis. Fill out a "Request to Schedule Master's Defense" form (SBS), file it with the biology office and keep copies for yourself and your advisor. Most students, with the permission of their thesis committee, choose to give their oral presentation during the weekly seminar series held on Fridays at 3:35. If you would like to do this, contact the faculty member in charge of organizing the seminar series and reserve a date. Make sure the date is before the thesis defense deadline mentioned above in (4). Your oral presentation **MUST** be conducted **BEFORE** your thesis defense. Following your oral presentation, all audience members will have the opportunity to ask you questions, and once this question session has been completed, all audience members except biology faculty will be asked to leave. At this time, biology faculty will be allowed to ask you additional

questions. This will be immediately followed by your thesis defense with your thesis committee (2 hour time limit). Once you have passed your exam, have your committee members sign a “Defense of Thesis or Project in lieu of written comprehensive exam” form (SBS). File this form with the Graduate School, file a copy in the biology office, and keep copies for yourself and your advisor. NOTE: Your thesis defense is your Comprehensive Examination.

Your thesis will be published by ProQuest Open Access Publishing. While it is important for your work to be disseminated, the publishing of your thesis in its entirety may preclude your ability to publish your research in the journal(s) of your choice. We suggest that you apply *a two year embargo* by completing page three of the ProQuest Master’s Thesis Publishing Agreement which must be completed prior to graduation.

(http://www.unco.edu/grad/new_current/resources/final_forms.html)

6. Before you graduate, one original research manuscript must be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal appropriate for your field of study. You must be an author on this manuscript, but not necessarily the first author. This manuscript does not have to be accepted or in press, but it must have been submitted to the editor for review.
7. You must complete a Graduate Student Exit Survey before you graduate. To maintain the confidentiality of the survey, place the completed survey in a sealed envelope and turn it in to a biology office administrative staff member. Have this staff member sign a “Completion of Graduate Student Exit Survey” form (SBS) to verify completion of the survey.
8. The signature page on all copies of your thesis that are turned into the Graduate School must have original signatures from your committee members. You must also turn in a signed copy of the “Non-Plagiarism Affirmation” form (http://www.unco.edu/grad/new_current/resources/final_forms.html) with your thesis.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

1. In September of each academic year you must complete the Annual Progress Report (SBS) by the date listed on the form and turn the completed APR into your advisor for their input. Email a copy of the APR once approved by your advisor to the chair of the graduate committee.
2. Fill out the UNC Universal Scholarship Application (go to the Financial Aid link under the Student Tab in URSA) by **MARCH 1**. The School of Biological Sciences, the College of Natural and Health Sciences, the Graduate School, and the UNC Foundation have several graduate scholarships available each year that students can compete for. If you have not filled out the Universal Scholarship Application by the deadline you will NOT be considered for any of them. Do not throw away your chance for free money!!!
3. Meet with your committee at least once a year to update them on your progress and to troubleshoot any problems you may have run into (this must be documented in your APR).

4. Each spring, typically during the first week of April, all graduate students will give a brief oral presentation during Academic Excellence Week. Your presentation should encompass a relevant literature review and ideas you have for your thesis if you are just getting started, or updates on your accomplishments for the year if you are currently conducting your research. This presentation will be open to the public and all biology faculty will be in attendance.
5. Fill out the Free Application Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form by March 1 at the latest. You must fill out this form to be eligible to receive some fellowships, scholarships, work study, loans, grants, etc. Instructions and a link to the FAFSA website are available on the UNC Financial Aid Office website (www.unco.edu/ofa).
6. Fill out a Summer Financial Aid Application form if you wish to receive aid for the summer (i.e. loans). This form is posted to the financial aid website in early March of each year but there is no strict deadline (www.unco.edu/ofa). To receive summer assistance you will need to have the FAFSA from the previous year (e.g. for summer 2007 you need a FAFSA from 2006/2007) on file.
7. Fill out a separate Summer Work Study Application form if you wish to receive work study in the summer. Work study during the summer is full-time (36-40 hrs/week). This form is posted on the financial aid office's website in early February and is due by March 1. Note: you cannot apply for both a summer application for aid and summer work study, just one or the other. To receive summer assistance you will need to have the FAFSA for the following year (e.g. for summer 2007 you need a FAFSA from 2007/2008) on file (see # 5 above). Note that both these forms have a March 1 deadline.

OTHER IMPORTANT POINTS

Make 2 extra copies of all the forms you fill out. One should be given to your advisor and you should keep one in your permanent records.

The UNC Graduate School no longer publishes a Graduate Student Handbook. All information that was contained in the handbook is either in the UNC catalog or available in the student handbook published by the Dean of Students (www.unco.edu/dos).

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR YOUR OWN RECORDKEEPING

ONE TIME DEADLINES

| <u>DATE COMPLETED</u> | <u>ITEM</u> |
|-----------------------|--|
| _____ | Fill out/file Graduate Advisor Assignment Form |
| _____ | Fill out/file Selection of Master’s Graduate Committee form |
| _____ | Fill out/file Master’s Plan of Study form |
| _____ | Research proposal written, reviewed, signature page on file |
| _____ | Thesis written according to Graduate School Manual |
| _____ | Applied for graduation with Graduate School |
| _____ | Schedule date for oral presentation/thesis defense |
| _____ | Give complete thesis to graduate committee for review |
| _____ | Complete oral presentation/thesis defense |
| _____ | One peer-review paper SUBMITTED before graduation |
| _____ | Graduate Student Exit Survey completed |
| _____ | Copies of thesis with original signature pages and Non-Plagiarism Affirmation form to Graduate School |

EVERY YEAR DEADLINES

| <u>DATES COMPLETED</u> | <u>ITEM</u> |
|------------------------|---|
| _____ | Annual Progress Report (APR) completed |
| _____ | Universal Scholarship Application completed (Mar. 1) |
| _____ | Committee meeting |
| _____ | Oral presentation given during Academic Excellence Week |
| _____ | FASFA form completed (Mar. 1) |
| _____ | Summer funding application (aid/work study) completed |