



**PROGRAM FLOW CHART FOR:  
MS in Biological Sciences (Non-thesis-Option) – SBS<sup>1</sup>  
3-10 Semesters Plan to Graduation**

First Semester	Intermediate Semesters
Meet with your <b>Graduate Advisor</b> <sup>2</sup> Prepare your <b>Plan of Study</b> <sup>3</sup> Take courses based on Plan of Study Establish domicile in CO, if not already a resident <sup>4</sup>	Continue to take courses on your Plan of Study Complete the <b>Universal Scholarship Application</b> <sup>5</sup> Apply for resident status (if not CO resident upon acceptance) <sup>4</sup> During each semester meet with MSNT Graduate Advisor to discuss ongoing performance.
Penultimate Semester	Final (Graduating) Semester
Meet with your Advisor to prepare for <b>Comprehensive Exam</b> <sup>6</sup> Continue to take courses on your Plan of Study	Take final courses on your Plan of Study <b>Apply for Graduation</b> <sup>7</sup> (first week of graduating semester) Pass your Comprehensive Exam School of Biological Sciences Graduate <b>Exit Survey</b> <sup>8</sup>

\*Throughout the above plan, you should take courses identified in your Plan of Study<sup>3</sup>. Consult with your advisor about possible opportunities that may contribute to your future goals.

This worksheet is a recommended schedule to complete your Master’s degree in **3-10 semesters**. The minimum number of semesters allowed for the MSNT degree program is 3 (e.g. fall/spring/fall), yet you can spread your degree program over a maximum of 5 years (approximately 10 semesters). Students that are employed while taking courses are advised to spread the courses over more semesters to ensure success. Ultimately, your program is an agreement between you and your advisor to fit the needs of your program and career goals. Consult regularly with your advisor to establish and check in on your progress with the above schedule in mind.

**M.S. (Non-thesis Option) in Biological Sciences Notes**

<sup>1</sup>SBS = School of Biological Sciences (our main office is in Ross 2480), GS = Graduate School.  
<sup>2</sup>Graduate Advisor. The graduate advisor for the MS-NT program is Dr. Rob Reinsvold, Ross 1536, [robert.reinsvold@unco.edu](mailto:robert.reinsvold@unco.edu), 970-351-3076.  
<sup>3</sup>Plan of Study (i.e. the course plan to earn your degree) should be prepared with input with your advisor. Your plan should include a minimum of 30 graduate credits and use the SBS template available on SBS website (*not* the GS form).

- Follow the catalog requirements for the academic year when you began your program.
- You need to take 3 credits from the Research Core and 27 credits from the Content Electives List.
- Use the Biology Course Schedule to determine expected fall and spring offerings and infrequent course offerings to help prepare your Plan of Study.
- Communicate with the Instructors of Record for courses you are considering, to ensure they are offered in future semesters.
- You, your graduate advisor, the Chair of the SBS Graduate Committee, and the SBS Director should sign a final version.
- A copy of your Plan of Study should be filed with the School of Biological Sciences.
- You are required to take all courses on your approved Plan of Study to graduate. Minor changes can be made but require a signed, detailed memo from your advisor to the GS.

<sup>4</sup>Resident status is recommended if you want to pay in-state tuition for the on-campus program, but see exceptions below. Online students do not need resident status.

- You must be a CO resident for a year before applying for residency; if you would like to pay in-state tuition for the on-campus program, you should establish domicile immediately when you begin your program (see details and required evidence here: <https://www.unco.edu/registrar/residency/residency-requirements.aspx>).
- Students who live in a Western state in the US may also qualify for the Western Regional Graduate Program, which is a tuition-discounting program for those who are eligible, and may discount tuition such that it is closer to in-state costs. See here for more information: <https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/funding/western-regional-graduate-program.aspx>.
- If you were not a resident when accepted into your program, your application for CO resident status should be submitted the summer before your third semester of the Program.

<sup>5</sup>Universal Scholarship Application is available through your student (Bearmail) credentials into URSA. There are several scholarships available and you are encouraged to apply if you qualify.

<sup>6</sup>Comprehensive Exam is a requirement of the Graduate School. All graduate students shall show a comprehensive understanding of their field of study. In the MS-NT program, this will be a sampling from courses they have taken during their specific plan of study.

- For the detailed policies related to the comprehensive exam, see the SBS Graduate Committee Policies for MSNT Comprehensive Exams.
- By the end of the penultimate semester, the student must provide the MS-NT Graduate Advisor with a list of 5 BIO graduate courses and instructors that they have already completed at UNC as part of their MS-NT program.
- The MS-NT Graduate Advisor will select 3 of the listed 5 courses to solicit comprehensive exam questions. The respective instructors will be notified. At that time, the student is encouraged to consult with the instructors for guidance on how to study for their portion of the Comprehensive Exam.
- The questions are completely at the discretion of the examiner yet should relate to the overall conceptual knowledge gained from the specific course selected for examination. The complete comprehensive exam is designed to be able to be completed in 3 hours (with approximately 1 hour per selected course).
- The Comprehensive Exam will be administered to the MS-NT student generally within the first few weeks of their last semester (no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester).
- Exams will be graded by the selected instructors within 2 weeks after the exam and the Graduate School will be informed of the results by the deadline established by the Graduate School.
- Students not passing the comprehensive exam will have one additional opportunity for a retake. The re-examination cannot be in the same semester and must be arranged in the subsequent semester. If the student fails the comprehensive exam twice, the student's program will be terminated.
- As per university policy, these examinations are confidential and available only to the student who completed the exam and school faculty. Students may request to review their comprehensive exam, yet may not be allowed access to written responses of other students.

<sup>7</sup>Preparing for graduation is a multi-step process that should involve close communication with your advisor.

- The semester before you plan to graduate, discuss with your advisor about your comprehensive exam (see section above).
- Complete the GS "Application for Graduation in a Master's/Specialist Program" within the first

weeks of the semester of graduation. To be eligible to apply, ALL benchmarks noted in Degree Works (completed courses in your Program of Study) should be met, and you must be currently enrolled as a student (or continuous registration will be charged to your account).

<sup>8</sup>Graduate Student Exit Survey (available on the SBS website) should be completed prior to your graduation. To maintain confidentiality, seal your completed survey in an envelope and have a SBS staff member sign off that you have completed this survey.

### Other Notes

1. Graduate students must maintain a 3.00 grade point average in graduate level courses to graduate or be eligible for graduate or teaching assistantships (see the GS Graduate Student Handbook). Courses for which C-, D+, D, D-, F, U, W, NR or I grades are awarded will not count towards graduate degree program requirements.
2. Regularly check Degree Works to ensure your program benchmarks are properly documented when they have each been completed.
3. Maintain regular contact with your advisor.
4. Make two copies of all forms completed and keep one for your records.
5. The best points of contact for any questions about your program, in order, should be your advisor, the SBS Chair of the Graduate Committee, the SBS Associate Director, the SBS Director, and the GS staff and Dean.
6. All submitted forms noted here should be copied and retained for your own records, and a copy should be offered to your advisor for their records and to the SBS Office for your file.
  - a. GS forms are available here: <https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/graduate-school-forms.aspx>
  - b. SBS forms are available here: <https://www.unco.edu/nhs/biology/about-us/forms.aspx>