



Department of Integrative Biology  
University of South Florida  
*2024-2025*

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	2
Preface.....	3
Graduate Degrees and Concentrations .....	4
Ph.D. Degree Requirements .....	5
Evaluation Process for Ph.D. Students.....	6
Required Enrollment in Dissertation Research.....	11
Doctoral Presentation and Defense.....	11
Chair of the Examination Committee for Doctoral Seminar Presentation and Defense.....	







## **Evaluation Process for Ph.D. Students**

### **Dissertation Proposal**

The student will have a preliminary Dissertation Research Proposal reviewed, revised, and accepted by his/her Supervisory Committee.

The proposal must be approved by the committee no later than the fourth week of the fourth semester.

The proposal must be approved by the Supervisory Committee within 60 days of the start of the qualifying examination.

Committee members will sign a form indicating their acceptance of the Research Proposal. If the student's research involves a vertebrate species, then the student must have the research

The committee is responsible for reviewing one draft (though of course the student's major professor will likely have reviewed multiple drafts of the proposal prior to submission to the committee as a whole). This is to address the concern of the committee having to review multiple drafts, since the qualifying exams following the proposal are already a heavy investment of time for the faculty.

## **Qualifying Examination**

The qualifying examination must be completed satisfactorily before a student can advance to candidacy. The exam has two components, (1) a written component and (2) an oral component. The written component must be passed before the student can proceed to the oral component. Students are encouraged to form their supervisory committee early (their first semester in the program) and communicate with their committee members regarding what they should be studying for their qualifying examination.

The qualifying examination allows assessment to encompass a broad range of topics in addition to the focused topic of the dissertation research. The written component assesses a student's depth and breadth of understanding of biology beyond their immediate research topic (further assessed in the oral component). The written component assesses a student's ability to synthesize information independently from their advisor and separately from the research proposal, which might be written collaboratively. It also allows a student to communicate their ideas concisely in written form, which uses different skills than oral communication. Students are expected to reflect in writing on complex questions and provide thoughtful, creative responses. Preparation for the exam is intended to be part of the student's normal, scholarly activities in designing and conducting their research and becoming an expert in their chosen area.

The qualifying examination must commence within 60 days of approval of the dissertation proposal.

### **Part One Written Exam**

#### **Written component procedure**

Format and scope of the written component (e.g., number of questions, journal format) is agreed upon by the supervisory committee prior to the end of the student's third semester in the program.

Exam scope should allow student to answer in approximately 6 pages/1200-2000 words per committee member, or 5000-8000 words total for all questions. The number of questions per

**Six weeks prior to the oral component**, each committee member submits questions to the Major Professor, who assembles the exam.

**Five weeks** prior to the oral component, all questions are agreed upon by the whole committee and they are sent to the student.

**Four weeks** prior to the oral component, students submit answers.

Student may answer questions using existing resources (i.e., open book), but **must work independently on the writing and the writing must be original.**

Questions are broadly related to the research area of the student, but not directly to the proposed research, which is covered by the written research proposal.

Questions should test the student's thinking and knowledge of the broader field in which they are working and their ability to think critically and synthesize information and concepts in writing.

Each question should be answered concisely and must include literature cited. The committee may stipulate the desired format and citation style.

Answers are checked for



The Supervisory Committee decisions must be unanimous, and split votes must be reconciled until a unanimous position is achieved.

The recommendation of the Supervisory Committee is then communicated to the student and the IB Graduate Director in writing.

Students may appeal the final decisions, and this process is initiated via a letter to both the Graduate Director and all members of the student's Supervisory Committee. The student and his/her Supervisory Committee may be asked to meet with the Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee to explain the basis of the appeal. In general, only appeals based upon procedural issues will be considered by the Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee. The decision of the Graduate Admissions and Policy Committee is final.

For students retaking the exam at a later date, general procedures will be similar except that students who fail any portion of the process a second time will automatically be dismissed from the program. Any retake of the exam must be completed by the end of the semester immediately following the first attempt.

If a student receives a unanimous pass from the Supervisory Committee upon a second attempt of the exam, then the student will be permitted to advance to the next step in the process.

Students not passing any part of the exam will receive no more than one semester of additional funding, if supported by IB Department funds and funds are available. If a student passes the retaken part of the exam, he/she is eligible for continued support.

The oral exam is a closed exam for the graduate student and committee members only, but all exams are required to be announced to the Department.



## Required Enrollment in Dissertation Research

For information regarding **Enrollment during Comprehensive Exams and Admission to Candidacy** and “Dissertation Hours” please refer to the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic](#)

[Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

For information regarding **Continuing Registration and Grades (Z) and Dissertation Hours** please refer to this information in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

## Doctoral Presentation and



## **Master of Science Degree**

The Master's Degree should be completed in two to three years. The Department of Integrative Biology requires that all graduate work applied toward the completion of the MS degree requirements be completed within a five-year period after matriculation. Thesis research should be publishable, and students are encouraged to publish their findings.

### **University Residence Requirements**

A minimum of two semesters of the M.S. program must be completed on campus.

The student must be registered as a full-time graduate student for one semester or two summer "C" sessions.

### **Degree Course Requirements**

The M.S. degree may be obtained through a thesis or a non-thesis program.

Normally the M.S. course of study involves a thesis based on original research. In special cases (e.g., teachers, lawyers, or businessmen) a student may elect to substitute structured course work on an equal hour-to-hour basis for the thesis requirement.

Most faculty will not work with students seeking a non-thesis degree. It is offered for special cases only and is not an option for most students.













## Registering for Courses

Prior to registration, you should consult with your major professor, regarding selection of courses.

Students must register by web during periods specified by the Registrar. Instructions are given in the University schedule of classes available at [Class Registration \(usf.edu\)](#)

Please register as soon as possible during web registration! All course registration must be done on-line only. Courses can only be offered if sufficient numbers of students register for them.

By not registering until the last minute, you run the risk of having a course you must take being cancelled. There is no cost for early registration - tuition and fees are not due until the fifth day of classes.

You can request permits for Integrative Biology courses on-line at [Manuals and Forms | Department of Integrative Biology | College of Arts and Sciences | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

Courses Requiring Consent of Instructor. To register for classes that require the consent of the instructor, an IB Grad student must request a permit through the IB Grad permit system. The Instructor of the course must approve the request. Once the request is approved, the IB Undergraduate Office will issue a permit and graduate student can register for the course.

## Enrollment in Unstructured Course

There are a number of unstructured courses for which you can register.

Unstructured

## **Graduate Course Enrollment**

### **Registration for research activity**

4-5 hours of research activity per week is equivalent to 1 semester hour of credit. Graduate students should register for the number of credits appropriate for the amount of research they perform.

### **Registration for completion of thesis or dissertation**

A student must be registered for at least 2 hours of thesis or dissertation research during the semester the thesis or dissertation is submitted.

If the Office of Graduate Studies does not receive the approved thesis or dissertation by the deadline, the student will not graduate during that semester. The student must again register for 2 hours of thesis or dissertation research for the semester that they wish to graduate.

Refer to Graduate Course Enrollment available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida](#) -



## Annual Progress Reports

Progress Reports are mandatory and are due at the end of each year of residency.

By the beginning of December of each academic year, each graduate student must have a meeting of his/her full Supervisory Committee to review progress made during the past academic year and set goals for the next year. A statement of progress signed by the entire Supervisory Committee shall be placed in the folder of the student as evidence that the Supervisory Committee has met and evaluated the stated progress.

*Annual Progress Report* are filled out and approved online via MS Forms.

If you are a new incoming grad, you are required to meet with your Major Professor to discuss your progress. Please have your Major Professor sign off on your Progress report and return to IB Grad Office.

Progress

## **Unstructured Graduate Program (Students starting 2004-2009)**

All graduate students who entered between Fall 2004 and Fall 2009 entered under the unstructured graduate program.

The handbook from Fall 2009 to Summer 2017 lists in detail the requirements under those guidelines.

All grad students entering after the Fall 2018 must follow the guidelines in this Handbook

## **BSC 6930 Lectures in Contemporary Biology**

Graduate students are required to register for Lectures in Contemporary Biology, BSC 6930 and attend the accompanying Integrative Biology lecture series. Enroll for the course on OASIS. A permit is not required if you are an Integrative Biology graduate student.

M.S. students must register for a minimum of 3 semesters.

Ph.D. students must register for a minimum of 4 semesters.

Students do not need to take Lectures in Contemporary Biology (BSC 6930) course every semester.

The IB Graduate Director is the person in charge of BSC 6930 (i.e., the instructor of record), however different IB faculty members may be organizing the course from semester to semester.



## **BSC 6393 Advances in Life Science**

Master's Graduate students who are admitted after Fall 2019 are required to register for Advances in Life Science, BSC 6393 three (3) times while in the program. Enroll for the course on OASIS. A permit is required.

M.S. students must register for a minimum

## Residency Policy from Graduate Catalog

Information regarding **Residency** is available on the Registrar's website available at <https://www.usf.edu/registrar/services/residency/>

Information regarding **Residency** is available on the Registrar's website available at [https://www.usf.edu/registrar/services/residency/independent\\_dependent.aspx](https://www.usf.edu/registrar/services/residency/independent_dependent.aspx)

Information regarding **Residency or Residency Reclassification** is on the Registrar's website available at [https://www.usf.edu/registrar/services/residency/residency\\_classifications.aspx](https://www.usf.edu/registrar/services/residency/residency_classifications.aspx)

## **Graduate Teaching Assistantships (TAs)**



## **Graduate Fellowships and Awards from USF**

**University Graduate Fellowships** provide stipends for two consecutive academic semesters. A partial tuition waiver for each semester is also provided. Applicants must have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0, and a graduate level GPA of at least 3.5. A minimum total score of 1250 on the verbal and quantitative portions of the GRE or equivalent to new GRE scale is required. Applicants who meet these requirements are automatically recommended by the IB Graduate Director and must submit an application for admission before December 1.

**Outstanding Thesis and Dissertation (OTD) Awards** [Overview](#) | [Scholars of Excellence](#) | [Research](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

**Ann Winch Fellowship** [Ann Winch Fellowship](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

**Chih Foundation Research and Publication**





## Graduate Office When you need help

The IB Graduate Office, located in SCA 112 exists largely to help students successfully complete their graduate studies.

To help you complete your studies in a timely fashion, we will send you reminders of deadlines you need to meet and signatures you need to obtain. These are all necessary steps in the follow-up of your progress.

Either the IB Graduate Academic Services Administrator, Christine Brubaker, or the IB Graduate Director Dr. Kathleen Scott, will be happy to assist you with any problems that may arise.

Ms. Brubaker can be reached at 974-4747 or [brubaker@usf.edu](mailto:brubaker@usf.edu) and via Microsoft Teams if you wish to set up an appointment to meet with the IB Graduate Director.