

PLAN B (NON-THESIS) MASTERS IN BIOLOGY

- A. Academic advisor: Each student will be assigned an academic advisor upon entering the program. The student must meet with their advisor prior to registration each semester. The advisor is responsible for guiding the student in the selection of courses and other activities, such as seminars and journal clubs, appropriate for their training and career goals. The student, however, is free to – and encouraged to – consult with other faculty members for aid in course selection or professional development.
- B. Coursework requirements: Students are required to complete a total of 30 credits hours at the 300-level or above. Of these 30 credits,
- at least 18 credits must be at the 400-level or above
 - at least 15 credits must be in BIOL courses
 - at least 1 course must be taken in each of the following breadth areas: (i) cell and molecular biology, (ii) organismal biology (including neurobiology), and (iii) population biology (including ecology and evolution)
 - no more than 3 credits of BIOL 601 may be counted
 - no more than 3 credits of BIOL 599 may be counted

Registration in BIOL 599 is by permission only and requires a course proposal form (available on the Biology Department website and the Graduate Programs canvas site) to be submitted and approved before the add/drop deadline.

A normal full-time course load is 9 credits per semester.

If a course is offered at both the 300- and 400-level, the 400-level version must be taken. Students are generally expected to fulfill the breadth requirement using graduate-level courses (400 or above).

- C. Academic standards: Any students whose course performance is not satisfactory may be terminated. A student's scholastic performance will be considered unsatisfactory if they do not maintain at least a B average (3.0 GPA or above on a 4.0 scale). In addition, any grade of F (or NP or U), or the receipt of 2 or more grades of C or below, is considered cause for separation from the graduate program.

A student may appeal decisions made on the basis of these regulations. Such appeals will be heard by the CGA and the student's advisor. Decisions are made by a majority vote of the CGA and advisor.

- D. Exit examination: Completion of the Plan B Masters degree is contingent on passing an exit exam. This exam is taken during the final semester of study.

The examination committee will consist of 3 faculty members, at least 2 of whom have appointments in the Department of Biology (including those at affiliate organizations; tenured, tenure-track, adjunct, or secondary appointments; or instructors). An additional non-voting faculty member, typically a member of the CGA, will chair the exam.

Each semester, the university publishes its deadlines for graduation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and to meet all deadlines. The exit exam must be scheduled early enough in the semester for all required paperwork to be submitted before the deadline.

The steps for completing the exit examination are:

- a. *Approval of committee composition:* By the end of the first month of student's final semester, the student should submit by email to the chair of the CGA the names of all three voting members of the examination committee (the CGA will assign the non-voting member). As soon as the examination committee is approved by the CGA, the student should schedule an informal meeting with the whole committee, including the non-voting CGA representative. At this meeting, the format of the exam will be reviewed and each committee member will define the focus area on which they will ask questions during the exam. If possible, the time and date for the exam should be scheduled at this meeting.
- b. *Comprehensive oral exam:* During the oral exam, the committee will ask the student questions to test their general knowledge of biology, based on the focus areas established during the planning meeting.

Examination results: The voting members of the examining committee will recommend one of the following courses of action:

- Pass: all 3 examiners agree that the student has passed the exit exam
- Re-examination of the oral exam: at least 1 examiner votes to fail the student; the student will have the opportunity to repeat the exam
- Failure: all 3 examiners vote to fail the student and do not recommend re-examination; or one or more examiners vote to fail the candidate upon re-examination. The student may appeal to the CGA for review. The CGA may then set another examination, or sustain the exit exam committee's decision.

A student who passes the exit exam must submit all required forms to SGS before the graduation deadline.