

GRADUATE PROGRAM
ECOLOGY, EVOLUTION, AND BEHAVIOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN



2016-2017

Graduate Student Handbook

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This Handbook spells out policies that are effective as of the start of fall semester 2016. The policies in this guide apply to all current EEB graduate students regardless of year of enrollment, except where an exception is specifically stated (e.g., for preliminary exam formats).

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the graduate program in Ecology, Evolution and Behavior (EEB) at the University of Texas at Austin. This handbook will acquaint incoming and current graduate students in the program with the policies and procedures involved in obtaining an advanced degree.

Two degrees are offered through our graduate program: the Ph.D. in Biological Sciences (Ecology, Evolution and Behavior) and the M.A. in Biological Sciences (Ecology, Evolution and Behavior). The M.A. may be undertaken with a research thesis or with a report based on published literature. An M.A. without thesis or report is not offered. It is not necessary to obtain an M.A. before starting the Ph.D. Indeed, most graduate students go directly into the Ph.D. program. There is no difference in status among students who initially apply for admission to work on an M.A. or a Ph.D.

The graduate program is run by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) for Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior. The GSC comprises faculty members who are part of the EEB program. A list of these faculty is given later in the handbook. The graduate program is administered by three officers: the Graduate Advisor (Dr. Mathew Leibold), the GSC Chair (Dr. Dan Bolnick), and the

Admissions Chair (Dr. Misha Matz). Their duties are outlined below in the section on EEB Administrative Structure. EEB is administered by a staff member, the Graduate Coordinator (Tamra Rogers), whose job is to implement GSC policy and provide assistance to students and faculty. These people can give you further information about EEB policies. Please be aware that the University's Graduate School has additional regulations regarding graduate study.

We hope you have a most successful and enjoyable career in the EEB graduate program!

With best wishes,
Dan, Mathew, Misha and Tamra

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY: GOALS

The purpose of the Ph.D. program is to train people for a career in research and education. Demonstration that the purpose has been achieved is by submission of a dissertation, which should be a major novel contribution to knowledge, indicating not only that the individual has a mature knowledge of a particular field but also that the individual can design and execute original studies. Coursework is an important part of the Ph.D., both to prepare the student for research and to ensure broad knowledge of disciplines the graduate might teach.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You are responsible for understanding the rules and policies that govern your academic degree. Use all resources available to you and plan well in advance to meet necessary deadlines. The Graduate Advisor and Graduate Coordinator are available to answer questions.

The Graduate School requires all graduate students to maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.0. If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the Graduate School will place you on academic probation. You will have one semester to raise your cumulative GPA above 3.0 or be dismissed from the program.

The Graduate School website (<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/>) is an excellent resource for extensive information on the requirements of graduate degrees at the University. The policies and requirements governing your graduate career are dynamic. You are well advised to stay in frequent contact with the Graduate Coordinator and ask whenever you have questions.

Two University catalogs are essential references: the General Information Bulletin and the Graduate Catalog, which both can be accessed on the Graduate School website.

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

As a graduate student, you are admitted to both the EEB Graduate Program and the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin. All graduate degrees are the responsibility of the Graduate School.

The Graduate School includes the Vice President and Dean of the Graduate School and staff, plus about 100 Graduate Studies Committees.

Each department or field of study offering a graduate degree has a Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) composed of active assistant, associate, and full professors (tenure-track and tenured faculty). Each Graduate Studies Committee sets policy and supervises its graduate program.

Approximately 30 faculty members from various Graduate Studies Committees, plus six graduate students, serve as representatives in the Graduate Assembly, the legislative body of the Graduate School, which advises on policies affecting all graduate programs.

There is also a student organization concerned with issues related to graduate study called the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA). Each graduate program may elect one representative to the Graduate Assembly. The GSA provides a collective voice representing graduate students' concerns to the Graduate School's administration.

THE COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES

The College of Natural Sciences consists of over 34 Organized Research Units. The College also consists of nine departments and schools: Astronomy, School of Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Computer Sciences, Human Ecology, Marine Science, Mathematics, Physics, and Statistics and Scientific Computation.

GRADUATE PROGRAM: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

THE GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (GSC)

The Graduate Studies Committee consists of all faculty in the Department of Integrative Biology faculty. Faculty from other departments, whose interests overlap substantially

with EEB, may also be accepted as members of the EEB GSC. The Committee bears responsibility under its chairperson and the Dean of the Graduate School for graduate study in the Program. The GSC sets policy concerning program curriculum and academic requirements.

GSC CHAIR (DR. DAN BOLNICK, danbolnick@austin.utexas.edu)

The GSC Chair is a faculty member who oversees the EEB Graduate Studies Committee, and implements GSC policy regarding curriculum. The GSC chair serves as the liaison to the Graduate School. The chair is also responsible for fundraising, promoting the EEB Program's reputation, and outreach to graduates.

GRADUATE ADVISOR (DR. MATHEW LEIBOLD, mleibold@austin.utexas.edu)

The Graduate Advisor is a faculty member appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School to advise EEB students (generally in the sense of clarifying policy or granting exceptions to policy), to monitor their academic progress, and to represent the Graduate School in matters relating to graduate students. The Graduate Advisor is also the head of the EEB Fellowship Committee.

GRADUATE COORDINATOR (TAMRA ROGERS, tamra@austin.utexas.edu)

The Graduate Coordinator is the person who actually does most of the work involved in running the program. The coordinator keeps student records and ensures that forms and procedures are processed in a correct and timely manner. Questions concerning procedures should be addressed to the Graduate Coordinator, who will consult the Graduate Advisor as necessary. The Graduate Coordinator supervises Teaching Assistant assignments, salaries and tuition payments, and fellowship support. She/he is typically the primary administrative contact for graduate students.

ADMISSIONS CHAIR (DR. MISHA MATZ, matz@utexas.edu)

The Admissions Chair oversees the process of recruiting, evaluating, and admitting applicants to the EEB graduate program.

FACULTY MEMBERS

Faculty members in the EEB Graduate Studies Committee can mentor EEB graduate students, advise and vote on EEB GSC policies, and serve on EEB GSC sub-committees and EEB student exam or dissertation committees. All faculty in the Department of Integrative Biology are automatically members of the EEB GSC, but there are additional members from other departments and colleges whose research overlaps substantially with EEB interests. These outside members may accept students through EEB, and for

purposes of students' exam or dissertation committee membership they count as full EEB GSC members.

A full up-to-date list of EEB GSC faculty can be found on the EEB website:

<https://www.cns.utexas.edu/component/cobalt/items/1-directory?Itemid=1745>

STUDENT ADVISING

Each student in EEB receives a personalized education, under the supervision of a team of faculty. There are four major sources of individual guidance:

MAJOR PROFESSOR(S)

All students have a faculty member appointed as their preliminary Major Professor before they arrive at UT. The major professor is responsible for providing the student with academic guidance regarding coursework and research, and facilitating the student's access to facilities and resources to conduct research. The Professor is also responsible for identifying a First Year Guidance Committee (see below) to plan each first-year student's coursework needs.

The student is not obligated to subsequently work with this preliminary Major Professor. It is possible to change your Major Professor, if during your work you find that your interests fit more closely with another faculty member. You and the new Professor should notify the Graduate Advisor and Coordinator about the change.

Students may be co-advised by two or more additional faculty. It is the responsibility of the student and faculty in question to negotiate the terms of a co-advising relationship. A Co-Advising Professor may be added at any time during the student's progress. You should notify the Graduate Advisor and Coordinator about such arrangements.

First year students may opt to intern in two or three labs during their first year. These internships are not required, but are available on an opt-in basis. Internships allow the student to learn a variety of research perspectives and methods, and to ensure that they settle in a lab that best suits their academic interests. Internships may be as simple as attending lab meetings, doing a directed reading project with a professor, or may entail field or lab work.

FIRST YEAR GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

At the start of each student's training in EEB, the student must meet with a First Year Guidance Committee (FYGC).

Membership of First Year Guidance Committee:

Each incoming EEB student will be assigned a FYGC, composed of three EEB faculty members who serve on a standing committee (the same for all incoming students), plus

the student's Major Professor. Faculty on the standing committee are typically appointed for three-year terms, such that a new member joins and senior member leaves each year. The three faculty on the standing committee are appointed by the Graduate Advisor and EEB Chairperson, with the goal of representing the breadth of expertise in EEB. All EEB GSC faculty will serve on FYGCs as needed. For large incoming classes, Graduate Advisor may appoint a second standing FYGC committee.

Purpose of First Year Guidance Committee:

The FYGC is charged with assessing the student's past training, and his/her career and research goals. The FYGC should meet with incoming EEB graduate students shortly before they register for classes their first Fall semester. The FYGC will contact each student and preliminary Major Professor prior to the start of the fall semester, to arrange a meeting. Before the meeting, the student should provide the FYGC with a summary of prior educational background and experience (including courses taken and grades, research experiences), a brief (1 paragraph) statement of academic goals. The student and advisor may also create an initial plan of coursework that meets the EEB curriculum requirements and best contributes to student goals. The FYGC then approves the coursework plan or makes a final recommendations for the student's training goals.

This recommendation may include:

- i) specifying coursework needed prior to the student's Qualifying Exam.
- ii) recommending additional coursework that should be taken at any time during the graduate training.
- iii) recommending non-course training such as workshops or seminars.
- iv) recommending goals for self-directed learning.

The committee is expected to ensure each student gains expertise in a diversity of disciplines, tailored to that student's career goals.

The student will submit the plan to the Graduate Coordinator before taking the Qualifying Exam. It must be approved by the EEB GSC, via a no-protest vote. The plan may be amended later by the student's FYGC or Prelim Committee.

QUALIFYING EXAM COMMITTEE

In consultation with the Major Professor and approval by the Graduate Advisor, the student will choose a committee that will administer the Qualifying Exam (see below for details of exam format). The committee must be chosen early in the third long (Fall or Spring) semester in residence, with the goal of taking the Qualifying Exam by the end of the third semester. The committee will consist of five faculty members, including the

student's Major Professor (and co-advisor, if any). The student and Major Professor(s) propose a list of names to serve on the committee, and this list is either approved by the Graduate Advisor, or the Advisor suggests modifications to ensure diverse membership. The student's Major Professor serves as an observer. In the spirit of the integrative nature of our graduate program, the remainder of the Qualifying Exam Committee should be chosen to represent diverse areas of research, but the GSC does not dictate what areas must be covered. At least four committee members should be EEB GSC faculty members. There is no requirement for an outside committee member, though this may be desirable for many students, depending on their research and educational goals. One Senior Lecturer can serve on the Qualifying committee with the approval of the Graduate Advisor. The Exam Committee is chaired by a faculty member other than the Major Professor, appointed by the Graduate Advisor from among the Committee members.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

In the long semester after the Qualifying Exam is passed, the student forms a Dissertation Committee in consultation with the Major Professor and with approval of the Graduate Advisor. This committee consists of at least four faculty members (including the major professor), and is chaired by the student's Major Professor. Additional members can be added to the Dissertation Committee at the request of the student and/or the Major Professor. At least one member of the Dissertation Committee must be from outside the EEB GSC. If the outside committee member is with UT Austin, then he/she cannot serve on the EEB GSC. If the outside committee member is from another university, he/she will be required to submit a CV and sign the UT No Expense Form.

The Dissertation Committee has three functions. First, it advises the student on their dissertation plans and must approve or reject the student's dissertation proposal. Second, the committee monitors the student's progress after admission to candidacy, and, ultimately, it certifies that an acceptable dissertation has been submitted and that all degree requirements are completed. Third, all members of the Dissertation Committee are available for consultation, and students should feel free to seek advice.

It is often necessary or desirable to change the membership of the Dissertation Committee prior to completion of the dissertation. There is a special Graduate School form for this purpose (available from the Graduate Coordinator). Any change in the Dissertation Committee made after a student has advanced to candidacy must be approved by the Graduate School. Students should consult with the Graduate Advisor

before taking this action. The Graduate Dean's office will not approve changes for the sole purpose of constituting a more agreeable committee. Changes in the committee should be completed at least three months before the final oral examination.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate School requires 30 credit-hours of graduate-level coursework to complete a Ph.D. This includes both classes, and research and dissertation hours. Students must receive a minimum grade of B- or higher to receive credit towards fulfilling degree requirements. EEB policy is that students are required to fulfill the following coursework and training requirements.

SUBJECTS & SKILLS IN BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES AND EEB II (BIO 389D & BIO 389E)

The purpose of this course is to give students experience with identifying important questions in EEB and developing skills to answer those questions, including scientific writing, critically reviewing the literature, writing proposals, and understanding the review process and understanding scientific ethics. The course may also include discussion of selected classic and cutting-edge topics and papers in EEB.

All first-year students are required to take two semesters of Subjects & Skills with Biological Sciences in the fall and EEB II in the spring. Completing this two-semester series with a B- or higher is a requirement to take the qualifying exam. Students receiving a lower grade must retake and get a B- or higher in the class during their second year, prior to taking the qualifying exam. A failing student may petition to take a substitute course, conditional on approval of the EEB Graduate Advisor, First Year Guidance Committee, and instructor(s) of the course that the student failed.

ADDITIONAL LECTURE CLASSES

In addition to the two-semester Subjects & Skills course (BIO 389D and 389E), each EEB student must take a minimum of **three additional graduate-level lecture courses**.

Lecture classes are defined by courses that meet a minimum of two hours per week, include some instructor-led content (e.g., not just student-led reading discussion), and involve both reading assignments and graded assignments leading to a letter grade.

At least two of these classes must be graduate EEB classes (taught by an EEB GSC member). At least one of these classes must meet the Quantitative requirement (see below).

Course offerings include:

Three 'Fundamentals' graduate lecture courses will be offered every year. These classes provide graduate-level coverage of current knowledge in Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior. Each class is lecture-based, and covers a diverse range of topics with heavy

reliance on reading the primary literature to give students grounding in both classic papers and current research areas.

Fundamentals of Evolution - BIO 390C (Kirkpatrick/Linder; or Juenger/Bolnick)

Topics may include population genetics, quantitative genetics, speciation, phylogenetics, molecular evolution, and macroevolution.

Fundamentals of Ecology – BIO 390E (Leibold)

Topics may include individual ecology, population dynamics, community ecology, and ecosystems.

Fundamentals of Integrative Animal Behavior – BIO 390D (Cummings/Ryan)

The course addresses the general question: Why do animals behave the way they do? Answering this question involves a consideration of both the proximate and ultimate issues of animal behavior, how behavior is acquired and regulated, and how behavior evolved. The emphasis is on integration of proximate and ultimate analyses.

The following graduate lecture courses will be offered at least every few years, as faculty are available. Asterisks indicate courses that may satisfy the quantitative course requirement. Courses with a listed faculty member's name are likely to be taught every 1-3 years. Courses without a listed faculty member are not scheduled for the foreseeable future, but are on the Registrar's catalogue.

Ecology courses

<i>Advanced Conservation Biology</i>	<i>(BIO380C) Dr. Norma Fowler</i>
<i>Advanced Microbial Ecology</i>	<i>(BIO 380E)</i>
<i>Biology of Birds</i>	<i>(BIO380F) Dr. Tim Keitt</i>
<i>Recent Advances in Population Ecology</i>	<i>(BIO384K-29)</i>
<i>Recent Advances in Community Ecology</i>	<i>(BIO384K-30)</i>
<i>Recent Advances in Ecosystem Ecology</i>	<i>(BIO384K-31) Dr. Christine Hawkes</i>
<i>Recent Advances in MacroEcology</i>	<i>(BIO384K-32)</i>
<i>Recent Advances in Conservation Biology</i>	<i>(BIO384K-33)</i>
<i>Recent Advances in Microbial Ecology</i>	<i>(BIO384K-34) Dr. Christine Hawkes</i>
<i>Global Change and Challenges</i>	<i>(BIO384K-35) Dr. Caroline Farrior</i>
<i>Ecological Theory and Modeling</i>	<i>(BIO382K-7)*</i>

Evolution courses

<i>Population Genetics</i>	<i>(BIO380P)* Dr. Mark Kirkpatrick</i>
<i>Methods in Ecological Genomics</i>	<i>(BIO380G)* Dr. Misha Matz</i>
<i>Advanced Systematics</i>	<i>(BIO380L)* Dr. Dave Cannatella</i>
<i>Recent Advances in Evolution</i>	<i>(BIO384K-36)</i>

<i>Recent Advances in Coevolution</i>	(BIO384K-37) Dr. Dan Bolnick
<i>Recent Advances in Ecol. and Evol. Genetics</i>	(BIO384K-38) Dr. Mark Kirkpatrick
<i>Phylogenetic Perspectives in EEB</i>	(BIO384K-39) Dr. David Hillis
<i>Recent Advances in Biogeogr. and Phylogeog.</i>	(BIO384K-40) Dr. David Cannatella
<i>Recent Advances in Molecular & Genomic Evol.</i>	(BIO384K-41) Dr. Nancy Moran
<i>Human/Primate Evolutionary Genetics</i>	(BIO384K-42 / ANT388) Dr. Deborah Bolnick
<i>Ancient and Environmental DNA</i>	(BIO384K-43 / ANT388) Dr. Deborah Bolnick

Behavior courses

<i>Animal Sexuality</i>	(BIO380S) Dr. David Crews
<i>Recent Advances in Behavior</i>	(BIO384K-44) Dr. Steve Phelps
<i>Seminar in Brain Behavior & Evolution</i>	(BIO384K-45) Dr. David Crews
<i>Brain, Behavior, and Evolution</i>	(BIO 380U)
<i>Biological Foundations of Decision Making</i>	(BIO380V) Dr. Hans Hofmann

Computational / statistical courses

<i>Advanced Computational Biology</i>	(BIO382K-1)*
<i>Network Modeling in the Biological Sciences</i>	(BIO382K-2)* Dr. Lauren Meyers
<i>Infectious Disease Modeling</i>	(BIO382K-3)* Dr. Lauren Meyers
<i>Advances in Biological Statistics</i>	(BIO382K-4)* Dr. Dan Bolnick
<i>Informatics and Data Analysis in Life Sciences</i>	(BIO382K-5)* Dr. Tim Keitt
<i>Python Programming for Biology</i>	(BIO382K-6)* Dr. Randall Linder

QUANTITATIVE SKILLS COURSE

Each EEB student must take one course that is primarily devoted to quantitative skills. Courses that satisfy this requirement may include non-EEB courses in areas such as mathematics, statistics, computer programming, bioinformatics, GIS, or EEB courses with heavy computational or mathematical training (marked by asterisks in the list above). The operational definition of a quantitative course, for the purpose of this requirement, is that the course should include multiple graded assignments in which students must apply learned quantitative skills to a task, including but not limited to mathematical operations and/or programming. Also, a majority (>50%) of class time should be devoted to teaching or exercising the quantitative skills.

SEMINAR COURSES

To graduate, students are required to participate in Seminar classes. The requirement is that the student register at least once for BIO 384L (see below) and take three additional seminar classes, for a total of 4 seminars. This requirement can be fulfilled by registering for and regularly attending departmental Lecture Seminar Series, or by registering for and participating in a Reading Seminar. Students may also count lecture

classes towards this requirement (beyond the Subjects & Skills series and three additional lecture classes).

EEB expects that graduate students will habitually attend lectures given at departmental seminar series. EEB students (and faculty) should, at a minimum, regularly attend the:

Population Biology Seminar Series. Mondays 12-1 PM.

Lectures given by local faculty, students, postdocs, and visitors. First year students are asked to register for the Issues in Population Biology for at least one semester (BIO 384L).

Evolution Ecology and Behavior Seminar Series. Thursdays 2-3 PM

Lectures given by visiting researchers.

Additional lecture seminar series that may be of interest to EEB students include:

Physiology & Behavior. Fridays 12-1

Lectures mostly given by local researchers, focusing on animal behavior, neurobiology, physiology, and related topics.

Molecular & Cellular Biology. Wednesdays 4-5

The seminar series for the MCB Department.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Each EEB graduate student is required to present a public oral lecture on their research each year, beginning in a student's second year. Qualifying events include lectures in public venues such as the Population Biology Seminar Series, the Physiology & Behavior series, the annual student Symposium, seminar series at other universities or departments, or lectures at conferences. Lab meeting presentations do not satisfy this requirement because they are not public. Lectures should be a minimum of 15 minutes to qualify. Consequently, students may split a one-hour seminar time-slot into two or three presentations by several EEB students.

RESEARCH COURSE CREDIT

Students who have not yet advanced to candidacy should take BIO 182, 282, 382, 682 or 982 (Advanced Study and Research) as part of their course load. This provides credit in recognition of ongoing preparation to do research, and does not fulfill the lecture or seminar course requirements listed above. After admission to candidacy, students should register for one semester only of BIO 399R, 699R, or 999R (Dissertation--Reading). After this course is completed, students will register for BIO 399W, 699W, or 999W (Writing) until they graduate. In all cases, the first digit 3, 6, or 9 is the number of hours the course is worth, so use the one that brings your registration up to 9 hours.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Students are required to hold a Teaching Assistant position for a minimum of two semesters (fall or spring). Prior to holding a Teaching Assistant position, the student must take a short training workshop offered prior to the start of the fall semester.

SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS*

REQUIRED COURSE	NUMBER OF SEMESTERS	WHEN TAKEN
Subjects & Skills in EEB	2	Fall & Spring of first year
Graduate lecture courses	3	Within first 6 semesters
Of these, at least 2 must be EEB courses		
At least 1 must fulfill the quantitative requirement		
Research credit (BIO 382)	>1	Each semester until admission to candidacy
Research credit (BIO 399R/699R/999R)	1	First semester after admission to candidacy
Research credit (BIO 399W/699W/999W)	>1	Each semester after completing 399R/699R/999R
Seminar courses (or additional lecture classes)	At least 3	Any semester
Issues in Population Biology Seminar	1	Register for BIO 384L once in first year

* Students and Major Professors may appeal to the Graduate Advisor for waivers of particular requirements. Approval of waiver requests is not guaranteed.

QUALIFYING EXAM

The Qualifying Exam Committee described above (section on Student Advising) will administer the exam with the Major Professor acting as an observer but not actively participating. The Graduate Advisor will choose the chairman of the Qualifying Exam Committee from one of the four members who is not the student's Major Professor.

Purpose: The purpose of Qualifying Exam is to assess whether students have the intellectual capacity, maturity, and background knowledge to conduct research. Specifically, the exam is supposed to:

- (i) evaluate student ability to identify and justify interesting research questions, including formulating appropriate hypotheses,
- (ii) assess student ability to place research questions into context of current literature,
- (iii) assess student ability to plan strategies to answer research questions,
- (iv) evaluate the student's ability to communicate their questions and knowledge in written and oral form,
- (v) identify gaps in student knowledge and to recommend rectification, and
- (vi) provide an incentive for student to hone skills and knowledge necessary to proceed with research in their discipline. Assessment of more general subject-matter knowledge is achieved by grades from courses.

Prerequisites: Prior to taking the Qualifying Exam, students should have completed the 2-semester Subjects & Skills classes, and any courses that the First Year Guidance Committee requires the student to take before the exam. The Guidance Committee may also require that the student to take a course but not stipulate that completion of the course precede the Exam (for instance, when the course is offered irregularly).

Scheduling: The Qualifying Exam should take place by the end of the third long semester (typically the fall semester) of the student's residence in the EEB program. All students are required to complete the Qualifying Exam before the end of their fourth semester.

Format and Protocol: The Qualifying Exam consists of two parts, in the following order:

- a) **The student will submit a written research synopsis** on a topic that falls within the student's general area of study. The synopsis should be 4 pages single-spaced in the format of an NSF pre-proposal; the literature cited section does not count toward this page limit and there may be one additional page of figures or tables. This

synopsis is due a minimum of one week prior to the oral exam (see below). The topic addressed in the synopsis does not have to be directly related to the student's eventual dissertation research, though such overlap is possible. The synopsis should not be specific on methodological detail, but should emphasize concepts, research objectives, hypothesis testing, rationale for experiments or observations, and implication of possible results. Students will not typically include preliminary data. Rather, the goal of the written synopsis is to demonstrate the student's ability to:

- i) identify an important open question suitable for research,
- ii) formulate clear hypotheses regarding this question,
- iii) clearly describe the conceptual foundations and motivation for the work, placed into the context of the existing literature,
- iv) conceive of a general plan for how to approach answering the research question; typically a student might propose two to four research objectives that address the question,
- v) evaluate potential outcomes and their implications.

The document will be evaluated primarily for its clarity in describing the context and rationale for the work in light of relevant literature, and thus the student's ability to identify a significant research question. The focus, at this stage, is not on the specific research methods, which are the emphasis of the dissertation proposal defense.-The emphasis should be on the questions addressed and their rationale, not on the detailed methods. Preliminary results are not required, and students are not committed to carrying out the proposed work.

Students are encouraged to describe research they actually intend to pursue. However, students are in no way required to continue with this proposed work in their subsequent thesis work. Moreover, students are not expected to have any preliminary results pertaining to the work they propose, but they are allowed to present any preliminary results they may have. Finally, the proposed experiments or analyses need to be feasible with current technology, but they do not have to be limited to methods or resources the student currently has access to. However, the student needs to show an understanding of the resources required to complete the work.

The synopsis should come from the student, not the Major Professors, but a student may consult other faculty and other students for advice. **The Major Professor(s) should not edit the document.**

- b) The student will take an oral exam**, starting with a 20-minute presentation concerning the subject of the research synopsis. The exam is expected to take 2-3

hours. During the oral part of the qualifying exam, the student first presents the research plan outlined in the synopsis, including relevant background information. Subsequently, the committee will ask the student questions on the research plan, on related research topics, and on any other background material from the areas of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior, as the committee members see fit. In the exam, faculty will evaluate:

- i) student knowledge in areas potentially relevant to the proposed work
 - ii) the ability of the student to think through the implications of the research and possible results and their implications
 - iii) less emphasis is given to the students' technical skills needed to conduct the research, although the committee may ask some questions in this area in order to make recommendations about technical training needed to proceed with such a research topic.
- c) If faculty identify areas of weakness or concern during parts (a) and (b), the committee may choose to assign written essays answering questions provided by committee members following the oral exam. The goal is to provide a means to evaluate a student's knowledge in more depth and encourage the student to master specific areas. The length of the essays and allotted time may be set by the committee, but typically students would have one week per question to research and write, and the typical essay will be up to 4 pages not including citations. This requirement is not intended to indicate that the student failed the exam generally, merely that there are particular subject areas that the committee is concerned about and wishes to evaluate more fully, or as a written rather than oral format. This may be a commonly applied request.

Outcomes: At the end of the oral exam, the Qualifying Exam Committee discusses both the written synopsis and oral exam, and reach a recommendation. Depending on student performance, the Committee may recommend:

- i) Pass the student unconditionally.
- ii) Pass the student with requirements that must be fulfilled either before or after advancement to candidacy. Requirements may include, but are not limited to, taking additional lecture courses or seminars, or writing the short essays described in part (c) above. If written answers are required, then the faculty will subsequently read the essays, provide written feedback, and then communicate in person or by email to change the grade either to a pass (i) or not pass (iii-v). A decision to not pass at this stage would require an in-person committee meeting with the student.

- iii) Fail the student and require that the student retake one or both parts of the exam.
- iv) Fail the student and terminate their pre-doctoral program, with approval to pursue a master's degree.
- v) Fail the student with dismissal from the graduate program.

Immediately following the exam, the Qualifying Exam Committee will put its recommendation in writing, have it signed by the student, and file it with the Graduate Coordinator. If the full GSC concurs with either recommendations (i) or ii), the student is authorized to make formal application to the Office of Graduate Studies for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. after the proposal defense has taken place.

A student who wishes to schedule a Qualifying Exam must prepare a *Proposed Program of Work for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. This is a list of the courses completed, ongoing, or proposed that are to be counted toward the Ph.D. A sample is shown in the Appendix, and a blank form is available from Tamra Rogers. The Plan of Work includes an approximate thesis title (in order to give the GSC an indication of the student's interests), but a research abstract is not required at this time. A draft of the program of work should be approved by the Graduate Advisor at least two weeks before the Qualifying Exam is scheduled to occur. The draft will then be distributed by the Graduate Coordinator to the entire GSC for comments and recommendations.

In its deliberations, following the oral portion of the exam, the Qualifying Exam Committee may consider not only responses to questions during the exam, but also the successful completion of formal coursework, prior research experience, and other evidence of academic achievement. Any comments received from other members of the GSC on the proposed plan of study will also be considered. When the committee has completed its deliberations on the student's performance and has decided on a recommendation, the student will be invited back before the committee to discuss the results of the examination.

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

In contrast to the Qualifying Exam synopsis, the goal of the dissertation proposal is for the student to prepare a detailed research plan that maps out the student's particular research methods. This document cannot be the same as the research proposal in part (a) of the Prelim Exam, though they may concern the same overall question(s). The former proposal is intended to assess the student's ability to identify an interesting question and place it in a broader context, but not to evaluate the particulars of the

research methods. In contrast the dissertation proposal is specifically intended to present a detailed research agenda and methodology.

The student must present a dissertation research proposal to the Dissertation Committee (see above) for approval. The dissertation proposal must be defended no later than the end of the fifth long semester in residence. The student will notify the Graduate Coordinator of the composition of his/her Thesis Committee at least three weeks prior to the date of the proposal review. At least two weeks prior to meeting with the committee, the student should distribute to the committee a detailed proposal for the dissertation research. The proposal should include a short review of the literature, a description of the goals, hypotheses to be tested, procedures, and methods to be used to analyze the results, and expected outcomes. Typically, the proposal is no longer than ten single-spaced pages. The student should consult with their committee members to agree upon a format. Students may, in particular, wish to format their proposals following a NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (DDIG) format, to receive comments on the proposal style for later submission to NSF. A copy will also be provided to the Graduate Coordinator for the student's file.

In the dissertation proposal defense, the student will present a brief oral summary of the research goals and methods, and answer Dissertation Committee members about the significance of the work, intellectual context, methods, and expected outcomes. Questions can touch on any area of science relevant to the proposed work, but should have the primary purpose to uncover any weaknesses or gaps in the research plan. The proposal defense typically takes approximately two hours, but may be longer or shorter as the committee requires. If a student chooses, they may present their opening oral summary of their proposal in a public venue (e.g., at a seminar or at an ad-hoc time), followed by private discussion with their committee.

At the end of the defense, the committee may then choose one of the following recommendations:

- i) Pass the student unconditionally.
- ii) Pass the student with requirements that must be fulfilled before defending the dissertation. Requirements may include, but are not limited to, taking additional lecture courses or seminars, or writing the short essays described in part (c) above.
- iii) Termination from the pre-doctoral program, with approval to pursue a master's degree.
- iv) Dismissal from the graduate program.

When the dissertation proposal has been accepted by the committee, the Graduate Coordinator will send the student the online form to apply for candidacy. Approval of the dissertation proposal should occur no later than the end of fifth long semester in residence, with admission to Candidacy no later than the sixth long semester.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

As soon as the dissertation proposal has been approved, the student may advance to Candidacy. The Graduate Coordinator will forward the online form to the student, once he/she has received the signed form from the committee. The online form must be filed with the Graduate School no later than August 31st to receive the pay raise associated with Candidacy, otherwise you will have to wait another year to receive the pay raise, as raises are only given in September of each year.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF GRADUATE STUDENT PROGRESS

All students are expected to make reasonable progress toward the degree. Once a student has been admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D., the Dissertation Committee will meet with the student annually to review progress. It is the student's responsibility to set up these annual meetings. Following this meeting, the student will prepare a written summary of recommendations that emerged from the meeting, each member of the committee will indicate approval by signing the summary, and the final document will be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator to become part of the student's file. These reports must be submitted by November 1 of each year. The reports are used by the EEB Graduate Student Evaluation Committee in its annual review of graduate student progress and are important evidence when the Committee awards merit fellowships and research and travel funds. Flagrant or repeated violation of this expectation may affect students' eligibility for TA/RA appointments or fellowships. A formal meeting of the Dissertation Committee can be requested at any time by the student, or any member of the Dissertation Committee.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The student will meet with his/her Thesis Committee within one year prior to the Dissertation Defense to review progress towards completion and get approval of an approximate date for the exam. This requirement will normally be met automatically by the requirement that students meet annually with their Thesis Committee.

When the dissertation is essentially in its final form, it is circulated to the Dissertation Committee. When all members of the committee agree, the final oral exam (defense of dissertation) should be scheduled by the student on the *Request for Final Oral* form (included in the graduation packet mentioned above). Check with the Graduate Coordinator about an appropriate time and place. Students should also check with the Graduate Coordinator in the semester before they plan to finish their degree that all the requirements of their Program of Work have been met.

The student should give copies of the thesis to committee members at least four weeks prior to the defense. The *Request for Final Oral Examination* must be signed by all members of the Dissertation Committee and the Graduate Advisor then submitted to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the exam, following procedures specified by the Graduate School. No committee member is expected to sign the *Request for Final Oral Examination* until he or she has had sufficient time to examine the dissertation.

The oral defense consists of two parts. The first is a public seminar that is open to members of the University and the public at large. Notices of the seminar will be posted in advance by the Graduate Coordinator. Immediately following the seminar, the student meets privately with the Thesis Committee to answer any questions that the committee members may have. If at least four members of the committee approve, the committee chairman notifies the Graduate Dean of successful completion of the exam and that all degree requirements have been met.

OVERVIEW OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENTS

Learning objectives	Instruction	Assessment method
Research planning skills	EEB Subjects & Skills class (2 semesters)	Qualifying exam , Dissertation proposal defense; Dissertation defense Grades from EEB Subjects & Skills
Biology knowledge	Minimum of 2 EEB classes (see below) Minimum of 4 seminars	In-class exams and assignments. Grades from classes must meet minimum GPA Qualifying Exam
Quantitative skills	Minimum of 1 Quantitative class	In-class exams and assignments. Grades must meet minimum GPA
Public speaking skills		Annual public speaking (departmental seminar, or conference); Dissertation defense
Cohort experience	EEB Subjects & Skills class (see above)	

MILESTONES – DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The following table summarizes a typical timeline for EEB PhD students. The Graduate Advisor monitors student progress and may (in consultation with the Major Professor and Graduate Chair) impose penalties for overly slow progress, including setting limits on funding or removal from the program. Students who do not meet the timeline below may be asked by the Graduate Advisor to provide a satisfactory written justification for the delay to avoid penalties.

EEB PhD Program Milestones	Expected Time of Achievement
Review degree requirements and milestones agreement from with advisor and the First Year Guidance Committee	Start of first semester
Pass Subjects & Skills in EEB with a B- or higher	First and second semester
Take additional lecture classes to meet Guidance Committee requirements	First through sixth semester (must be completed before dissertation proposal defense)
Complete Qualifying Exam	End of third or start of fourth semester
Complete Dissertation Proposal defense	Fourth to fifth semester
Advancement to candidacy	Fifth semester
Laboratory Safety training (if needed)	Anytime when needed, before TAing or working in a laboratory setting
IRB (human testing) training and approvals (if needed)	Anytime when needed, before conducting research with human subjects
Wilderness First Aid training, or equivalent (if needed)	Anytime when needed, before leading a field research trip to a remote location (>1 hour from a medical center)
IACUC (animal testing) training and approvals (if needed)	Anytime when needed, before working with live vertebrate animals
Dissertation/treatise (or equivalent) completed, successfully defended, and approved by committee	Sixth year
Student completes and files all paperwork required for graduation	Sixth year
Dissertation/treatise (or equivalent) accepted by Graduate School	Sixth year

MASTER OF ARTS

SUPERVISING PROFESSOR

Your Supervising Professor is the faculty member with whom the student works with for his/her degree. The Supervising Professor does most of the specific advising about coursework, research, etc.

It is possible to change your Supervising Professor, if during your work you find that your interests fit more closely with another faculty member. You and the new Professor should notify the Graduate Adviser and Graduate Coordinator about the change.

PROGRAM OF WORK

Submit a copy to the Graduate Advisor (via the Graduate Coordinator). The proposed program lists all courses to be counted toward the MA, all other graduate work, and all undergraduate courses in science and mathematics. The approximate title of the Thesis or Report and the Major Professor are also listed. This should be done during your first semester in consultation with your supervising professor and committee.

MASTER DEGREE OPTIONS

The Graduate School has two programs leading to a Master's Degree that are applicable to Ecology, Evolution and Behavior.

Master's with Thesis. This is the usual degree taken in this program. Six hours of "Thesis" are taken as part of the 30 hours of coursework. A written thesis (in English) is presented and read by two members of the faculty, your adviser and one other member.

Master's with Report. Three hours of "Report" are taken as part of the 30 hours of coursework. A report instead of a thesis is written. This report is based on work done in one of the courses. The report is read and signed by two members of the faculty, your adviser and one other member.

You must be registered for 698B or 398R and apply for graduation the semester you intend to graduate. Application forms may be obtained from the Graduate School website at <http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/>. The forms should be obtained and filed at the beginning of the semester in which you plan to graduate.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A Master's degree program should be completed within 2 - 3 years.

For the Thesis option, 24 hours of coursework, plus BUI 698A and 698B Thesis (taken sequentially) which counts for 6 hours for a total of 30 hours. For a Master's with Report option, BIO 398R must be taken and counts for 3 hours, in addition to 27 hours of coursework, for a total of 30 hours.

A minimum of 15 hours of coursework in EEB is required. Research courses (BIO 182, 282, 382, etc.) cannot be used to fill this requirement. The student can use no more than one conference course to fulfill the 15-hour requirement. Included in the 15 hours you must take the two-semester core course—Subjects and Skills in EEB I and II (Biology 384C). A grade of B must be made in both classes.

A minor is required consisting of 6 hours in a supporting subject or subjects outside the major area of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior.

For the Thesis option, an additional 3 hours must be taken either in or outside of EEB. For the Report option, an additional 6 hours will need to be taken.

A maximum of 9 hours of upper division undergraduate courses may be counted, of which no more than 6 can be in either the major or minor.

No more than 6 hours of Credit/No Credit courses can be counted. Approval of the Graduate Advisor is required prior to registration for a Credit/No Credit course.

To be eligible for TA/RA support you must be enrolled full-time. Students must take 9 hours each long semester and 3 hours during the summer semester to be considered full-time.

The Graduate School requires a "B" average in both major and minor areas. The Program does not count "C" grades toward fulfilling the requirements, but such grades will appear on the student's record and must be balanced with an "A" grade in order to achieve the proper average. Should a student receive a second "C" grade, his performance will be considered by the faculty and recommendations made as to whether he should continue in the graduate program.

All graduate students who are working toward a M.A. are required to work as a TA one long semester.

Annual review reports for your thesis should be submitted by the first of November each year.

REGISTRATION

In general, students must be enrolled for classes whenever they are receiving services from The University, such as course instruction, faculty interaction, employment, and fellowship or training grant stipends. Please read the following section carefully and check with the graduate coordinator if you have any questions regarding course load requirements.

FALL AND SPRING REGISTRATION

Graduate students may register between a minimum of 3 hours and a maximum of 15 hours per semester. The Graduate School considers 9 hours is to be full-time, therefore the University will only pay for up to 9 hours of course work, if your appointment allows tuition to be covered. For students who are employed by the University as teaching assistant, graduate research assistant, or grader, or receive a stipend from a scholarship or training grant, you must be registered as a full-time student. Immigration requires international students to be registered on a full-time basis regardless of their appointment status, unless they are in candidacy and finishing their degree.

SUMMER REGISTRATION

The Graduate School does not require graduate students to register during the summer unless they hold academic appointments, are planning to graduate, or hold some fellowships. Full-time registration in the summer is 3 hours. Students wishing to receive student loans must be registered for 6 hours in order to be eligible to receive them. Immigration does not require international students to register during the summer unless it's their initial semester of graduate school.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE AND REQUIREMENTS

The Graduate School requires all graduate students to maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.0. If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the Graduate School will place you on probation. You will have one semester to raise your cumulative GPA above 3.0 or be dismissed from the program.

All courses that count toward the degree must be B- or higher. If a student receives a grade below B-, the course must be retaken with a grade of B- or above if it is to be counted toward the degree.

CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

The Graduate School requires that all graduate students be continuously registered for all long semesters (Spring and Fall) until completion of the degree. Students not yet advanced to candidacy must obtain authorization from the Graduate Advisor for a leave of absence. Those admitted to candidacy must receive approval from the Graduate Dean and the Graduate Advisor for a leave of absence.

All students register for classes online. Instructions for registration are in the Course Schedule published each semester.

Registration for continuing students for fall and summer semesters begins in April. Spring semester registration begins in October. New graduate students will have registration days in June, August and January. If students delay and register at the last minute, they are charged a “late” registration fee. Be aware that a student appointed to an academic title must be registered before the appointment can be processed. Late registration may delay the initial paycheck.

ADD/DROP COURSES

You may add and drop courses during the add/drop period without penalty. After that date you cannot add a class without petitioning the Graduate School. Petitions of this nature are rarely approved, so be certain your registration is the way you want it to be before the add/drop period ends. If you need to drop a course after the deadline and the petition letter is approved, you will not be reimbursed for the course. If you have to add course to keep full time status due to TA/RA obligations, you will have to pay for the additional course.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

You will begin your first registration at UT Austin in the International Office. Your current command of English will be evaluated and you may be required to take a class in spoken or written English during your first and /or second semesters of study. These classes count as three hours of your nine-hour full-time registration requirement, however, it does not count towards your degree.

TUITION WAIVERS

Employment as a TA or RA qualifies non-Texas residents for resident tuition. The waiver is requested on line and is applied directly to your fee bill, if processed before you register. If you process the waiver after you register, you will need to recalculate your fee bill. You will need to do this each semester that you are appointed as a TA or RA.

For those who are on fellowship, please **DO NOT** fill out the online tuition waiver. The Graduate Coordinator will take care of submitting the forms for your waiver, as those are processed differently.

TUITION BILL

For students in their first 5 years we cover your tuition and required fees for 9 hours of coursework. The payments usually happen in stages, as different accounts cover different parts. You will need to confirm your tuition bill once it is paid (see below). If you owe additional fees that are not covered under tuition and required fees, then you will need to pay the remaining balance once the University has applied all other payments. These fees include the General Deposit for first year students (since students can request reimbursed for this fee after graduation), sports packages, etc.

CONFIRMING REGISTRATION

If you have a zero-fee bill (a third party is paying your tuition and fees) you must still confirm your registration, or it will be cancelled. To confirm your registration, go to the tuition payment website and click the “CONFIRM” button. The Graduate Coordinator will send you a notice when it is time to confirm, but if you happen to log on and notice, please go ahead and confirm.

REGISTRATION FOR GRADUATION

Graduate students must be registered for the appropriate class the semester they graduate (Report or Thesis for the Master’s degree and the Dissertation W for the Doctoral degree). Further information about this, and the graduation process, is available on the Graduate School Website.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CONSIDERATIONS

The primary means of support through the University is through receipt of a University Fellowship or appointment as a teaching assistant (TA), graduate research assistant (GRA). A student appointed as a TA or GRA qualifies for resident tuition rates. Additionally, any student holding a fellowship paying \$1000 or more per year qualifies for resident tuition rates. Grader positions are also available for additional income. In addition, there are a few fellowships and some research and travel funds administered within the EEB Program itself.

INTEGRATIVE BIOLOGY SALARY SUPPLEMENT

Integrative Biology provides a salary supplement (the Integrative Biology Graduate Excellence [IBGE] funds) in addition to the base TA salary set by the University as long as

funds are available. The University pays \$2000 per month for long-semester TA positions. The EEB program intends to pay all graduate students a base rate of \$25,000 per year, or \$26,000 post-candidacy. This amounts to a rate of \$2083.33 per month pre-candidacy and \$2166.67 post-candidacy. The difference between TA pay and our salary rate (\$83.33 pre-candidacy; \$166.67 post-candidacy) Integrative Biology or the faculty mentor will provide funds to supplement the base TA salary. GRAs and fellowship students should also be paid this same 12-month salary rate, regardless of their type of support. If a student already has other support (e.g., an external fellowships, or additional internal funding such as a grader position) that exceeds the monthly rate, no supplement will be provided. These funds are only available in the long semesters (fall and spring). Supplements are not provided to students in their 6th and 7th years of study (unless voluntarily by the students' Major Professor), both to encourage timely graduation and because there are insufficient departmental funds. In order to receive these supplements, a student's supervising professor must be affiliated with the Department of Integrative Biology. The supplement is not a salary increase for the TA, but a supplement to guarantee the above-specified monthly salary, as long as the funds are available.

After the 12th class day of each long semester, and once all salary supplements are processed, Integrative Biology will use the remaining funds to assist with covering any remaining UT tuition that is not reimbursed by other sources. The extent to which this will fully cover the tuition will depend on availability of funds in the Integrative Biology Graduate Excellence fund, but every effort will be made to cover all tuition, minus the taxes. IB does not have funds to subsidize health insurance for students with external fellowships, or seeking additional coverage beyond the very good base insurance provided by UT Austin.

The Integrative Biology Graduate Excellence (IBGE) funds are intended to help supplement all graduate students under IB faculty to bring them up to the monthly stipend stated above, regardless of the type of support.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Students are considered for these positions by request. Persons who hold a TA must reapply to continue the appointment beyond the award period. Once you have requested a TA position, and the count has been turned into The Biology Instructional Office, you are responsible for that position. This means you are not allowed to pull out

of the TA without having someone else within EEB replace you. Most semesters we do not have a waitlist.

GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

Many faculty members have research grants that allow them to appoint students as graduate research assistants. Students should check with their supervising professors concerning the availability of such appointments.

PAY PERIOD FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

TA and RA appointments for fall is September 1 – January 15 and for spring January 16 – May 31. Since your appointment is for only half a month in January, your pay will be split into two payments. You will receive your Jan 1 – Jan 15 check around January 20, then you will receive your Jan 16 – Jan 31 check on Feb 1 as usual. The best thing to do is act like you don't see the half check come through on the 20th and hold it till Feb. 1 and treat the two checks as one payment for January, just as all other months are paid.

Fellowships paid for by the department we pay the same as TAs and RAs, so you don't have a month without pay. January's check will pay the full amount on Feb 1, we do not split the month for full fellowships.

GRADERS

Ten-hour appointments as graders by the School of Biological Sciences are occasionally available to a few students each semester. Notice of these appointments are made at the beginning of each semester, and all students have an opportunity to request a grader appointment in addition to other appointments, such as TA or GRA, as long as the student does not exceed the appointment limit (see below). The grader positions typically pay \$11.27/hour for a ten-hour a week appointment. If your TA and grader appointment is equal to, or more than what we supplement, you will not receive the IB supplement for that semester. Fellowship recipients are also eligible for grader appointments.

TRAINEESHIPS

Positions are sometimes available on faculty training grants, usually in the field of cell and developmental biology. Students with the appropriate research interests are notified of the competition for positions. Selection is made by the administrator of the grant.

Reappointment as a TA or RA is contingent on satisfactory progress toward the degree. This includes compliance with the schedule set by the graduate program and demonstrated effectiveness as a TA or RA.

LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF HOURS OF AN APPOINTMENT PER SEMESTER

Graduate students may not be appointed as TA, GRA, or Grader, alone or in combination, for more than 20 hours during the first two long-session semesters of graduate study. In the third semester of graduate study or beyond, a graduate student may not be appointed to these titles, alone or in combination, for more than 30 hours. International students on F-1 or J-1 visas may not be appointed for more than 20 hours during any fall or spring semester.

14 SEMESTER HOUR RULE

The Graduate School does not allow student academic appointments after 14 long semesters of TA/RA support. Summers are not included.

If you are considering a partial appointment, meaning an appointment for less than 20 hours per week, please see the graduate coordinator before accepting such an appointment. This appointment will count towards your 14 semesters and you will be benefits ineligible.

APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

A student must meet a number of eligibility requirements to hold an academic appointment (TA, GRA, or Grader). The Graduate School audits each academic appointment to determine if these requirements have been met. If *any* of these requirements is not met, the appointment will not be processed until the problem is resolved or a petition has been approved requesting an exception to the requirement. Failure to comply with eligibility requirements when appointments are processed may delay the initial paycheck of the appointment.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

To be eligible for an academic appointment, a student must:

- be admitted to Graduate School without condition,
- have a GPA of 3.0 or better,
- be making satisfactory progress toward an advanced degree,
- be registered for at least nine hours in the long session and three hours during the term of employment in the summer,

- have no more than one incomplete grade from the previous semester or summer term of registration,
- not exceed the limit on the number of hours of an appointment per
- not exceed the limit on the number of semesters of support (see above),

Additional requirements for international students

- have English language certification,
- have attended the International TA orientation
-

UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS

UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS

Each year the Graduate School accepts nominations from each graduate program for University Fellowships. These provide year-long stipends. The EEB Graduate Student Evaluation and Fellowship Committee determines whose name(s) will be sent forward to the Graduate School. Nominees for these awards are selected by the Committee based on the strength of their applications and on their records of performance.

All first-year students with strong GRE scores and grade point averages should apply for federally funded fellowships, such as the NSF Pre-doctoral Fellowship, NRSA fellowships from NIH, Fulbright Fellowships (for foreign students coming to the US, or US students working abroad), or the Howard Hughes Medical Institute International Student Pre-doctoral Fellowship. See the Graduate Coordinator for further information.

PAY PERIOD FOR FELLOWSHIPS

Fellowships paid by the College of Natural Sciences or the Graduate School are paid in advance, meaning you are paid September 1 for the month of September. These fellowships include some Recruitment Fellowships, Continuing Fellowships, NSF and any other type fellowship paid from CNS or Grad School sources. Be sure to budget for the last month you are on fellowship if you are switching to a TA or RA. If your fellowship ends in August, you will receive your August check August 1, but you will not receive your TA check for September till October 1, so please budget for this extra month accordingly.

EEB FELLOWSHIPS

The graduate program in EEB has funds that are allocated competitively to graduate students to help them achieve their career goals. Three kinds of grants are awarded, each with its own objectives and limitations. The EEB program holds fellowship competitions twice a year. The Fall competition is for late fall and spring fellowships. The Spring competition is for summer and early Fall awards. Some fellowships are also awarded to incoming graduate students as a recruitment incentive for outstanding applicants.

STARTUP GRANTS

These grants are given to students prior to their acceptance into candidacy, usually in their first two years in residence. The objective is to help them collect sufficient data to construct an outstanding thesis proposal. Students are allowed a second submission if they are not successful the first time. Related to that, a second objective of these grants is to train students to compete successfully for grant money. The committee reading the proposals will provide a written critique for students who are not successful so they can enter the next round of competition with a better proposal. Proposals will be accepted once in each long semester. The form for submitting a proposal for a startup grant can be downloaded from the web. Startup grants are capped at \$2,000 and a student may receive only one of them in his/her graduate career.

EEB DDIG GRANTS

These grants are for students who have been accepted into candidacy and competition for them is expected to be keen. They are capped at \$8,000 and a student can get only one of these grants in his/her graduate career. The graduate program's DDIG grants are only given to EEB students, with preference given to students whose Major Professor cannot (for any of a variety of reasons) fund the students' research expenses. Students are allowed three submissions if unsuccessful. If successful, the money may be used for any purpose that promotes the student's research. Like the start up grants, the committee will provide a written critique for those proposals that are unsuccessful. And, like the startup grants, submissions will be accepted once in each long semester. The forms to be used when submitting an EEB DDIG proposal are those used by NSF for DDIG grants and it is reasonable for students to go ahead and submit their proposals to NSF after submitting them to the evaluating committee. Students must log on to NSF's fastlane website http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_list.jsp?org=BIO&ord=date http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5234&org=BIO&sel_org=BIO&from=fund), and complete all necessary forms (proposal, summary, budget, budget justification, cover page, CV,

facilities and resources), and then print out a pdf copy to submit to the graduate committee. There is a “grandfather” policy in effect for students in candidacy as of Fall 2009. There will be a \$10,000 cap on their funding prospects, corresponding to the future funding potential for incoming students (\$2,000 startup + \$8,000 EEB DDIGG).

GRANTS FOR TRAVEL TO PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

These grants are used to defray expenses of students attending professional meetings, usually national or international. The funds are normally reserved for students who (a) will present a paper and (b) are approaching the end of their graduate career and thus need the opportunity to line up postdoctoral fellowships or other job opportunities. Cost matching by the Major Professor is encouraged, and may affect funding decisions, at the judgment of the committee.

FELLOWSHIP PAYMENTS ARE TAXED

UT Policy prohibits us from establishing a UT account with endowment fellowship funds, so they are paid as a check to the student and are therefore considered part of the taxable income.

FINANCIAL AID

The **Office of Student Financial Services** provides information about scholarships, loans, and related matters. Assistance with part-time or full-time job placement is also offered for students.

Information about institutional tuition/emergency loans and tuition and fee rates is provided by **Student Accounts Receivable**, in addition to related information regarding fee payment and deadlines, loans, tax credits, etc.

OUTSIDE FELLOWSHIPS

NSF FELLOWSHIPS

During the time in which you hold an NSF fellowship, you are also eligible for the Graduate Research Internship Program (GRIP) and Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide (GROW). For more information visit their website at https://www.nsfgrfp.org/fellows/fellow_opportunities

FELLOWSHIPS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

For those with fellowships from other countries, which do not pay as much as our stipend, such as CAPES and NSERC, will need to TA. Depending on the stipend your

fellowship pays you can choose to TA only one long semester or both, as we do not supplement students during the time they have these additional fellowships. This is usually best determined on individual needs and can be discussed with your supervising professor to determine which is the best option for you. Once your outside fellowship ends, you will be supplemented any additional years through your fifth year of study.

HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Graduate students receive free (or nearly free) health insurance, if employed by the University as a TA or RA. The University provides employees with a salary supplement called "premium sharing" to cover the costs of health insurance. This premium is automatically added and then subtracted from the employee's paycheck each month. To qualify for benefits, an employee must be appointed at least half time (20 hours per week) for at least four and one-half months. In addition to medical coverage, you are eligible for dental coverage and optional vision, life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance for minimal cost to your. New employees have 60 days to make their insurance choices offered by the University. You should contact Human Resource Services for information and enrollment forms.

HEALTH INSURANCE FOR FELLOWSHIP AND TRAINING GRANT RECIPIENTS

Students who are on full fellowship or training grant recipients will be given enough funds with their fellowship to pay for student health insurance. In most cases this will be paid out on September 1 for the full year. Students can choose to use the funds to pay for student health insurance, insurance from an outside source or use it towards the purchase of UT faculty/staff insurance. If you choose any insurance except the student health insurance you will be responsible for the difference in cost, which can be quite a huge difference in cost. The student health insurance is considered a gold plan.

SUMMER HEALTH INSURANCE FOR SPRING TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Only spring TA's will automatically have health insurance coverage through the summer. The extra premiums that you may pay for such as dental, or medical insurance for a dependent are deducted for all three months of summer from your last paycheck of the spring semester, which is paid out on June 1.

SUMMER HEALTH INSURANCE FOR SPRING RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

If you are a Research Assistants during the spring semester, you will not have automatic health insurance coverage in the summer. If you will have a fellowship for summer, you will not be eligible for free faculty/staff health insurance coverage you have during the spring. You may

take out the student health insurance for the summer at minimal cost, you can COBRA your faculty/staff health insurance, which is quite costly, or you can look for insurance outside the University.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE WAIVERS

If you are an international student and will be appointed as a TA or RA, you must request a waiver of the student health insurance that is automatically added to your fee bill. You can get this charge removed from your bill by requesting a waiver. You will need to do this each semester that you are appointed as an RA or TA. This request must be done by the 12th class day of the semester in question.

REQUIRED STUDENT TRAINING

The School of Biological Sciences requires all TA's to take the following lab safety courses. These courses should be taken in the student's first semester, or if a TA during the first semester, as soon as possible after arrival at UT. Students can sign up at their web site (<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/ehs/train/requirements.html>).

- OH 101 Hazard Communication - general (on-line)
- OH 201 Laboratory Safety (on-line)
- OH 202 Hazardous Waste Management (on-line)
- OH 207 Biological Safety (2-hour class)
- FF 205 Fire Extinguisher Use

Some of these may need to be renewed periodically. More information about lab safety training can be found at the UT EH&S Training website:

<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/ehs/train/requirements.html>

GRIEVANCE & CRISIS PROCEDURES

EEB strives to provide a highly supportive environment to aid students through difficulties in the event of crises such as health problems (including mental health problems), assault, or professional conflict (e.g., with the Major Professor, or other students or postdocs). Students in need of advice or help may contact any member of the faculty whom they feel comfortable talking to, but are encouraged to contact the Graduate Advisor or Graduate Chairperson or Major Professor. Such discussions will be held in complete confidence and nothing will be disclosed unless the student specifically requests disclosure.

In the event of mental illness, students in need of assistance (especially those at risk to themselves) can:

Call 9-1-1 if you are hurt or in danger

Visit the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center at SSB 5th floor, 8 AM – 5 PM Mon-Fri

Call the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center at 512-471-3515

Visit: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/index.html> for more information

In a recent study, over 25% of women doing field work reported experiencing sexual harassment or assault. EEB is committed to providing a safe environment. All individuals conducting field work should be briefed on acceptable behavior and reporting options.

In the event of sexual harassment or assault, students can:

Call 9-1-1 if you are hurt or in danger

Call 512-267-SAFE for Safe Place (<http://safeplace.org/help/>)

Contact a Voices Against Violence (VAV) advocate at the UT Austin Counseling and Mental Health Center (8 AM – 5 PM M-F, 5th floor of SSB. Phone number: (512) 471-3515.

If the incident occurred on the UT campus, a report may be filed with the UT Police Department by calling 512.471.4441 or visiting UTPD headquarters at 2201 Robert Dedman Drive

Reporting options for UT Austin are described here:

http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/vav/vav_reportingoptions.html