

# Graduate Handbook

Department of Integrative Biology

University of South Florida

*2024-2025*

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## Preface

- Welcome to the Integrative Biology (IB) Graduate Program of the Department of Integrative Biology of the University of South Florida. We wish you much success in your educational endeavor. To help you fulfill your goals as a student in the Department, we have compiled this handbook, in which you will find information regarding degree requirements as well as answers to some questions that are most frequently asked by graduate students during their studies.
- This handbook is intended to be a practical guide for a quick reference to the rules and regulations established by the College of Arts and Science. Additional information can be found in the University of South Florida Graduate Catalog.
- This handbook is located on the IB Grad Website under “Manuals and Forms”. Go to the Office of Graduate Studies section for your degree to find the link to the handbook.
- We will make every effort to keep you informed of graduate events and of any changes in the graduate program that may occur during your tenure in the Department of Integrative Biology. Your success is our goal; therefore, please contact the IB Graduate Office or Graduate Director for any questions that may arise. We also welcome your feedback and comments on this h

## **Graduate Degrees and Concentration**

### **Degrees**

- Ph.D. in Integrative Biology
- M.S. in Biology

### **Concentrations of Study**

- Ecology and Evolution, (EEV)
- Environmental and Ecological Microbiology, (EVM)
- Physiology and Morphology, (PMY)

## **Ph.D. Degree Requirements**

### **Doctoral Degree Requirements**

The doctoral degree requirements should be completed in five to seven years. The Department of Integrative Biology requires that all graduate work applied toward the completion of the Ph.D. degree requirements be completed within a seven-year period after matriculation. Dissertation research should be publishable, and students are encouraged to publish their findings. Doctoral students are encouraged to gain teaching experience in at least two undergraduate courses in the department. The University imposes limitations on the time period between admission to candidacy and successful completion of all degree requirements. Please refer to Ph.D. Course Work Degree Requirements [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/moderncampus/catalog/graduate/doctoral/)

### **University Residence Requirements**

A minimum of three years of graduate work beyond the Bachelor's degree is required. The student must earn at least 90 post-baccalaureate semester credits. At least one academic year of residence must be on campus at the University of South Florida. An academic year's residency is defined as a minimum of 9 hours of graduate work per term, 2 terms per calendar year.

# 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 approved by the USF Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to the qualifying examination.

## Formatting for dissertation proposals

General formatting: Proposals should be 15 single spaced pages in 12 font, with lines numbered to facilitate discussion; the page count does not include the references.

Suggested sections for the proposal (these parallel sections in an NSF proposal; page numbers are suggestions):

1. Summary (1 page)
2. Intro/Background that concludes with the 3-4 objectives (2-3 pages)
3. Significance (0.5-1 page)
4. Objective/Chapter 1 (3 pages)\*
  1. Methods
  2. Prelim Results
5. Objective/Chapter 2 (3 pages)\*
  1. Methods
  2. Prelim Results
6. Objective/Chapter 3 (3 pages)\*
  1. Methods
  2. Prelim Results
7. Timeline and Conclusion (1-2 pages)
8. References (not included in page count)

\*The format of objectives (4-6) can vary a bit, depending on where the student is on the work they are proposing. Since students differ on where they are at with respect to collecting data when they present their proposal to their committee, this part of the proposal can be flexible to accommodate this.

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 committee member is flexible.

- **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 plagiarism.
- Committee members evaluate all answers and, for questions where they feel they have some level of expertise, provide individual feedback to the student or follow up in writing, during the oral component, or in separate one-on-one meetings. Evaluations are also sent to the committee members.
- **Two weeks** prior to the oral component, committee members have evaluated answers.
- All committee members agree that the student passed written component before the student can proceed to the oral portion.
- Any committee member can request that their portion of the written component be retaken.
- The student is notified of committee's decision and evaluation via the Major Professor.
- If any part of the written component must be retaken, both the written and oral components will be rescheduled.

## **Part Two – Oral Exam**

- Oral defense of proposal and knowledge of the background subjects relevant to the student's research program.
- The Supervisory Committee, at their discretion, may request an oral presentation with visual aids from the student, allowing the student ample time to prepare the presentation prior to the examination.
- Immediately following each portion of the evaluation process the Supervisory Committee formulates one of three possible recommendations regarding the student: (1) proceed to the next portion of the Evaluation, (2) undertake remedial action and retake the unacceptable portion of the Evaluation at a later date (determined by the Supervisory Committee), or (3) be dismissed from the PhD Program.



- 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.

## **Ph.D. Defense**

### **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.
- 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 approved by the USF Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to the defense of the dissertation research proposal.

### **Seminar**

- The student will present a Seminar to the Supervisory Committee and IB Department
- The Seminar, which is open to the public, is followed immediately by the Defense of Dissertation Proposal, an oral exam, administered by the Supervisory Committee.
- Upon successful Defense of the Proposal, the Supervisory Committee signs a form indicating the student is ready to advance to candidacy.
- The Seminar and Defense of Dissertation Research Proposal must be completed no later than the end of the fourth semester.
- Annual progress reports are mandatory and will aid the student and the committee to keep to department deadlines.
- For students retaking a portion of the Proposal Defense 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 defense 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 defense, then the student will be permitted to advance to the next step in the process.
- Students not passing a part of the defense 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 defense, he/she is eligible for continued support.

## 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 Defense

For more information regarding **Doctoral Dissertation Defense (Final Oral Examination)** please refer to this information in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

## Chair of the Examination Committee for Doctoral Seminar Presentation and Defense

For information regarding “**Doctoral Dissertation Defense Chair**” please refer to page 116 of the Graduate Catalog available [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

## Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Process

The Office of Graduate Studies has developed new resources to facilitate the preparation, review, submission and approval of theses and dissertations. The enhanced resources can be found on the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Resource Center available at <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/students/electronic-thesis-dissertation/index.aspx>

This new site includes the following resources:

- **Current ETD Deadlines** <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/students/electronic-thesis-dissertation/current-etd-deadlines.aspx>
- **ETD Workshops & Help Sessions** <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/students/electronic-thesis-dissertation/etd-workshops-and-help-sessions.aspx>
- **ETD Formatting Requirements** <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/students/electronic-thesis-dissertation/etd-formatting-requirements/index.aspx>
- **Writing and Additional Copyright Resources** <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/students/electronic-thesis-dissertation/additional-information/index.aspx>

## Ph.D. Dissertation Final Submission Requirements

For additional information regarding the **ETD Resource Center** please review the information available at [ETD Resource Center | Electronic Thesis & Dissertation | Students | Office of Graduate Studies | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

For additional information regarding the **ETD Process Requirements** please review the information available at [ProQuest Thesis/Dissertation Submission | ETD Process Requirements | Electronic Thesis & Dissertation | Students | Office of Graduate Studies | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

For information regarding the ETD Process Overview and **ETD Registration** please review the information available at [Registrations | ETD Process Requirements | Electronic Thesis & Dissertation | Students | Office of Graduate Studies | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

For information regarding the **ProQuest Thesis/Dissertation Submission** please review the information available [ProQuest Thesis/Dissertation Submission | ETD Process Requirements | Electronic Thesis & Dissertation | Students | Office of Graduate Studies | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

## **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.

### **Master's 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.

## **Guidelines for the M.S. Degree in Integrative Biology**

- Before the start of the first semester of residency, the Major Professor and student meet to review the student's academic record and background to identify deficiencies in course work. Accordingly, students are advised to enroll in courses.
- Students must have a draft thesis proposal no later than the middle of the second semester of residence. Most desirable is to have a draft proposal before the beginning of the second semester of residency so that members of the student's Supervisory Committee can participate in designing the research and provide advice for course selection during the second semester of residency.
- If the student's research involves a vertebrate species, then the student must have the research approved by the USF Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) prior to the defense of the thesis proposal.
- The thesis proposal draft must be completed before the Defense of Thesis proposal examination.
- A Defense of Thesis proposal will be administered by the Supervisory Committee no later than the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the third semester enrolled. The defense will entail questions from the committee that focus broadly on the area of research.
- Students will be placed on probation for lack of satisfactory progress if they have not successfully completed their Defense of Thesis proposal exam by the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the third semester. (No TA while on probation).
- Students are allowed to retake the Defense of Thesis proposal exam one time, with the permission of the Supervisory Committee. If a second Defense of Thesis proposal examination is administered, it must be completed by the end of the third semester of residency.
- During the last semester of residency students present a thesis seminar based upon their thesis research; the seminar is followed by a Defense of Thesis administered by the Supervisory Committee. The thesis seminar is open to the public and anyone may ask questions after the seminar.

## **Defense of Thesis Proposal Process and Oral Examination Process for M.S. Students**

**All students in the Integrative Biology M.S. Degree program must prepare a detailed thesis research proposal and complete an oral examination. The requirements for the proposal, the oral exam and the evaluation procedures are presented below.**

### **Format of the Examination (2 parts)**

#### ***Part One – Formal thesis research proposal***

- The proposal shall include a survey of existing literature, a clear concise statement of the research problem to be addressed, a detailed presentation of the methods used to collect and analyze the pertinent data and a discussion of the anticipated results.
- The thesis proposal shall be completed and defended no later than the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the third semester after enrollment.
- Project Summary or Abstract.
- Project Description.
- Bibliography.

#### ***Part Two – Oral Examination***

- Oral examination administered by the student's Supervisory Committee.
- The exam is administered no later than the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the third semester after enrollment.
- The exam will test the student's knowledge of general biology and the specific area of research.
- Exposed deficiencies will be countered by the recommendation of specific course work or independent reading in the area of weakness.
- 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.

## Master's Degree Final Submission

For additional information regarding the **ETD Resource Center** please review the information available at [ETD Resource Center | Electronic Thesis & Dissertation | Students | Office of Graduate Studies | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

For additional information regarding the **ETD Process Requirements** please review the information available at [ProQuest Thesis/Dissertation Submission | ETD Process Requirements | Electronic Thesis & Dissertation | Students | Office of Graduate Studies | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

For information regarding the ETD Process Overview and **ETD Registration** please review the information available at [Registrations | ETD Process Requirements | Electronic Thesis & Dissertation | Students | Office of Graduate Studies | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

For information regarding the **ProQuest Thesis/Dissertation Submission** please review the information available [ProQuest Thesis/Dissertation Submission | ETD Process Requirements | Electronic Thesis & Dissertation | Students | Office of Graduate Studies | University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)



# Supervisory Committee General Information

## Major Professor and Graduate Supervisory Committee

- For both M.S. and Ph.D. students, that decision must be made as early as possible during the first year in the program. All new students are assigned initially to a major professor, and for most, that relationship will be a permanent one. It is crucial that you and your major professor-to-be have compatible interests, such that he or she can direct your work appropriately. In addition, you will find that some faculty members are unable to take on new students at a particular time. If so, then you will need to explore alternatives.
- Information regarding Ph.D. **committees** is located in the Graduate Catalog available at [Degree Requirements - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/graduate/catalog/degree-requirements) and for MS Committees in the Graduate Catalog available at [Degree Requirements - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/graduate/catalog/degree-requirements)
- Many faculty members require a draft of a thesis/dissertation proposal prior to appointment of a committee. This takes time, so you will need to get started on it as soon as possible.
  - Information regarding **Role of a Major Professor for MS Committee** is located in the Graduate Catalog available at [Degree Requirements - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/graduate/catalog/degree-requirements) and for the **Role of a Major Professor for Ph.D. Committee** is located in the Graduate Catalog available at [Degree Requirements - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/graduate/catalog/degree-requirements)
- **New policy change:** A faculty member who retires from the State of Florida while serving on a student Thesis/Dissertation Committee must be removed from that Committee as of the date of retirement. They may not serve on a student's Committee for twelve months after the date of retirement. A request for approval as an Affiliate Member of Graduate Faculty would need to be submitted to return to Committee service after the 12 month leave has been completed.

## Graduate Course Enrollment Requirements

Information regarding **Minimum University Requirements** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Information regarding **USF Full-Time Student Definition** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Information regarding **Continuous Enrollment for All Graduate Student** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Information regarding **Readmission Following Non-enrollment** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Information regarding **Enrollment during Comprehensive Exams and Admission to Candidacy** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Information regarding **Dissertation Hours** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Information regarding **Enrollment during Semester of Thesis/Dissertation Submission** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Students receiving Veterans' Administration benefits should confirm their enrollment requirements with the Office of Veterans' Services or Veterans' Coordinator.

Information regarding **Enrollment during Semester of Graduation** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Information regarding **Enrollment for Graduate Teaching and Research Assistants** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

Information regarding **Leave of Absence (LOA)** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies/modern-campus-catalog)

## 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 \(usf.edu\)](http://usf.edu/class-registration)
- 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 \(usf.edu\)](http://usf.edu/manuals-and-forms)
- 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 credits are credits given for such things as research or thesis/dissertation preparation.
- Some general rules are as follows:
- **M.S. Students** – Prior to appointment of your Supervisory Committee, you should register for Directed Research (BSC 6910). Following committee appointment, you should enroll for Thesis credits in your major (BSC 6971).
- **Ph.D. Students** – Prior to admission to candidacy, you should enroll for Directed Research (BSC 7910). After attaining candidacy, you should register for Dissertation (BSC 7980) credits. You must take a total of at least 24 dissertation credits prior to graduation. Once you have advanced to candidacy, you must be registered for a minimum of 6 hours of BSC 7980 per calendar year (2 credit hours must be taken during the summer semesters until graduation). Refer to enrollment during comprehensive exams and admission to candidacy for more information available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](http://usf.edu/academic-policies)

# 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 - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](https://www.usf.edu/academic/policies)

## Departmental seminars - mandatory enrollment

- Registration for the Lectures in Contemporary Biology (BSC 6930) is mandatory. Students do not need to take Lectures in Contemporary Biology (BSC 6930) every semester.
- Ph.D. students are expected to earn four (4) graded credit hours while M.S. students earn a minimum of three (3) credit hours. This requirement must be fulfilled prior to applying for graduation.

## Registration over summer

- If you wish to use the lab, equipment, library or consult with your Professor over the Summer you are required to register for a minimum of 2 credit hours over the Summer C session.

## **Graduate Examination and Seminars**

- Graduate examinations and seminars are held only while classes are in session. Graduate students must be enrolled in at least 2 credit hours in the semester they plan to take M.S./Ph.D. exams. This includes Summer.
- Faculty usually are reluctant to participate in these activities during the first or last week of classes as well as Summer.
- Notify the IB Graduate Program Assistant at least two weeks in advance to schedule examinations and seminars and defenses. If your request is not received with at least two weeks advance notice you will need to reschedule your exam or seminar or defense.
- The committee must approve a draft of the thesis before the seminar is presented.
- Passing of graduate examinations requires the unanimous consent of the Supervisory Committee.
- The Major Professor must be physically present for all exams, seminars and/or defenses. All committee members are required to be present for all exams, seminars and/or defenses unless permission is granted exception which must be approved by the Graduate Director and/or the Graduate Studies Office.

## 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 reports include performance in examinations specified by the department.
- Student progress and completion of progress reports are facilitated by the committee members meeting with the student at least twice each year. This normally should be done as a collective activity of the committee; however, it may not always be possible. The student may have to meet with committee members on an individual basis. The purpose of this regulation is for the student and the committee to communicate concerning the activities and progress of the student. A written statement providing the time and content of these meetings will be given to the IB Graduate Office and placed in the student's file.

## **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 of 3 semesters of BSC 6393 Advances in Life Science. MS students do not need to take this course every semester.

## 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)

- Available to all qualified graduate students. They are renewable if the student shows satisfactory performance in his/her course work and makes satisfactory progress in dissertation/thesis research.
- Students must be enrolled for a minimum of nine (9) graduate credit hours each academic semester
- M.S. students are eligible for six semesters of teaching assistant support
- Ph.D. students are eligible for ten semesters of teaching assistant support
- Application deadlines: Fall Semester (November 30 through 15 February); Spring Semester (1 July).
- Teaching assistantships are awarded, on a competitive basis (GRE, GPA, and letters of recommendation), to help meet departmental teaching requirements.
- Awarding of Teaching Assistantships are based on departmental need and various criteria, which include but are not limited to GRE, GPA, and letters of recommendation. Ph.D. students are eligible for ten semesters of teaching assistantship support and MS students are eligible for six semesters of teaching assistantship support as long as student shows satisfactory performance in his/her course work and makes satisfactory progress in dissertation/thesis research.
- A student must be admitted to a degree-seeking program.
- TA's must be full time students registered for a minimum of nine graduate credit hours each term.
- Up to 6 semesters for Master's students
- Up to 10 semesters for Ph.D. students
- Full-time enrollment is required of all teaching and research assistants. A minimum of 9 graduate semester hours is defined as a full-time load (summer excluded). TAs must maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 or their TA position will be revoked.
- The employment period of teaching assistants (unless otherwise stated) begins one week before the start of fall semester, continues through the break between semesters, and extends one week past the end of the spring semester classes. Teaching assistants must be available during these periods for appropriate assignments.
- International students (for whom English is not the native language) must have a score of 50 or above on the TSE (Test of Spoken English) administered through INTO-USF or a minimum score of 26 on the spoken portion of the Internet –based TOEFL (iBT) test to be eligible for a teaching assistantship.
- Graduate students may request an extension of their eligibility for teaching assistantships by submitting (1) a memorandum justifying the extension and (2) a letter of support signed by all members of your committee. Extensions are granted, one semester at a time.

## National Research Grants

Information regarding National Research Grants is on the Fellowship and Scholarships website available at [Overview](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)

NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP)  
[http://www.nsf.gov/funding/education.jsp?fund\\_type=2](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/education.jsp?fund_type=2)

EPA Science to Achieve Results (STAR) <https://www.epa.gov/research-fellowships/fellowship-areas>

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA)  
<http://grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm>

## Grants from Student Government and Alumni

Student Government Grants <https://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-government/>

Applications for **Travel Grants** are available through your BullSync account  
<https://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-government/usf-sg/sg-funding-resources.aspx>

## 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 Award** [Chih Foundation Research and Publication Award](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)
- **Delores Auzenne Fellowship** [Delores Auzenne Fellowship](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)
- **Dissertation Completion Fellowship** [Dissertation Completion Fellowship](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)
- **Genshaft Family Doctoral Fellowship** [Genshaft Family Doctoral Fellowship](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)
- **Graduate Student Success Diversity Fellowship** [Graduate Student Success Fellowship](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)
- **Kreplick Graduate Fellowship** [Kreplick Graduate Fellowship](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)
- **McKnight Doctoral Fellowship** <http://www.fefonline.org/mdf.html>
- **Presidential Doctoral Fellowship** [Presidential Doctoral Fellowship](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida \(usf.edu\)](#)
- **USF Signature Research Doctoral Fellowship** [USF Signature Research Doctoral Fellowship](#) | [Fellowships and Scholarships](#) | [Funding](#) | [Office of Graduate Studies](#) | [University of South Florida](#)
- **Kosove Graduate Fellowship** <https://www.usfkosovesociety.org/scholarship>
- National Scholarships, Fellowships and Grants and College, Department or Program Scholarships and Fellowships are also available at <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/funding/fellowships-scholarships/index.aspx>

## Conditional Admission

- Students who are admitted to the IB Graduate Program on a conditional basis must get approval of course registration from their major professor.
- Students are assigned major professors when they are admitted to the program.
- Students on conditional or provisional admittance are not eligible for teaching assistantships until the conditional aspects are satisfied. Some criteria for conditional or provisional admission are non-competitive GPA, GRE non receipt of recommendation letters.
- Check with the IB Graduate Office if you have need of additional information. Please make an appointment to see the IB Graduate Director.
- Appointments may be scheduled by calling the IB Graduate Office at (813) 974-4747 or e-mail [brubaker@usf.edu](mailto:brubaker@usf.edu)

## Petitions and Time Extensions

- The Graduate Admissions Committee determines the validity of student petitions and decides whether true extenuating circumstances really exist.
- We encourage you to carefully consider the need for petitioning prior to submission.
- The Committee is fully aware that each student must be evaluated on an individual basis, and we will continue to do so.
- We believe that completion of degree requirements is solely the student's responsibility, and we encourage you to plan accordingly.
- We are aware that some research problems take longer than others, but one of the lessons to be learned from research is to design and execute a project permitting completion within the time limits.
- In addition, the student must be aware that faculty members can be away from the University during the summer and that others may be absent on sabbatical leave during the academic year.
- This means that the students must stay in contact with the research committee and make plans to fulfill all requirements at such times when the research committee is available.

## Nepotism (Employment of Relatives)

For information regarding the USF Nepotism Policy is available at <https://www.usf.edu/audit-compliance/documents/nutshell-nepotism-20140320.pdf>

## Academic Warning and Probation Status

Information regarding **Academic Standing and Probation** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

Information regarding **Grade Computing** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

Information regarding **Academic Warning and Dismissal** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

Information regarding **“1” Grade** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

A graduate student who received a **“D” or “F”** in any work will be given academic warning [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

Information regarding **Transfer of Credit** is in the Graduate Catalog available at [Academic Policies - University of South Florida - Modern Campus Catalog™ \(usf.edu\)](#)

## 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.