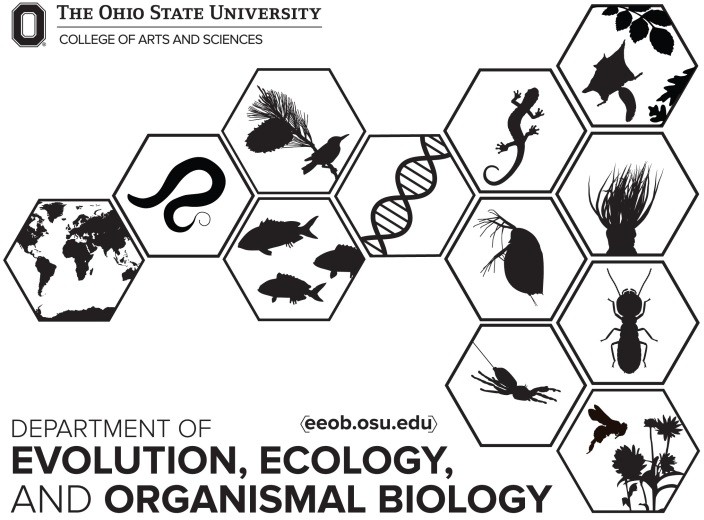
**EEOB GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK**



This version of the EEOB Graduate Program Handbook includes modifications proposed by the EEOB Graduate Studies Committee in August 2022 to the version that was approved by the EEOB Graduate Faculty in February 2016 (updated April 2017, May 2018, April 2019, August 2021 by the EEOB Graduate Studies Committee). Contact information and committee roster updated: September 2, 2025.

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**Rules, Policies, and Procedures Established by**:

The Evolution, Ecology, & Organismal Biology Graduate Studies Committee and The Faculty of the Graduate Program in Evolution, Ecology, & Organismal Biology

# INTRODUCTION

The Evolution, Ecology, & Organismal Biology (EEOB) Department’s Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) aims to maintain and improve the quality of the EEOB Graduate Program by application of policies and requirements described in this handbook. In addition, the University Graduate School Handbook (<http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/graduate-school-handbook1.html>) contains university-wide rules for admissions, composition of exam committees, examination procedures, academic probation, the appointment of graduate associates, and many other topics.

The Graduate School authorizes the GSC to establish and publish additional rules and policies that apply in the EEOB Graduate Program, subject to approval by the EEOB Graduate Faculty (defined below). Thus, this handbook serves as a supplement to the Graduate School Handbook. Every EEOB graduate student and graduate faculty member should be familiar with both of these resources and should consult them when questions arise about rules or policies pertaining to the EEOB Graduate Program. Revisions of both handbooks will appear periodically as needed. Prior versions of the Handbook are available from the GSC Chair.

# GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (GSC)

The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) is composed of four members of the EEOB faculty who are also members of the Graduate Faculty and two graduate students. The GSC Chair and faculty membership of the GSC are selected by the Chair of the Department in consultation with the EEOB Advisory Committee. The graduate student representatives are elected annually by the EEOB Graduate Student Organization (GEES). The term of the GSC Chair is three years, and that of the other members is one year. The description of the GSC and its duties should be updated to be consistent with updates to the EEOB Pattern of Administration document.

The duties of the GSC include:

* Enforcement of the rules and regulations set forth in the Graduate School Handbook;
* Development, periodic revision, and enforcement of the rules and regulations set forth in the Department’s Graduate Program Handbook;
* Monitoring progress of students in the EEOB graduate program, including annual review of progress and performance and annual planning for each graduate student;
* Assignment, in consultation with the Department Chair, of Graduate Teaching Associates to courses;
* Monitoring assessments of teaching performance of Graduate Teaching Associates each semester;
* Convening the EEOB Graduate Faculty for discussions and presentation of motions for approval. Typically, the Graduate Faculty meetings will be held in concert with the Department Faculty meetings; however, Graduate Faculty meetings may be called at any time;
* Coordinating the EEOB 8894 seminar annually (Autumn Semester and the first half of Spring Semester). The first semester provides the incoming cohort with guidance and support toward success in their degree program and beyond, including introducing them to the members of the EEOB graduate faculty. The second semester provides practice in reading and discussing papers covering core concepts in evolution, ecology, and organismal biology;
* Serving as a conduit of information from the Graduate School to EEOB graduate students and graduate faculty;
* Nomination of graduate students for University-sponsored fellowships;
* Requesting appointment of new tenure-track EEOB faculty to the OSU Graduate Faculty
* Coordinating appointments and periodic reviews of any non-EEOB faculty who wish to join the EEOB Graduate Faculty;
* Collection and administration of data, including but not limited to graduate student progress, GTA performance reviews, GTA course workloads, and graduate job placement;
* Monitoring and suggesting changes to the graduate curriculum.

# GRADUATE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE (GAC)

The GAC is composed of five members of the EEOB graduate faculty and one graduate student. The GAC Chair and faculty members are selected by the Chair of the Department in consultation with the EEOB Advisory Committee. The Chair of the GSC serves as one of the five regular members of the GAC, but not as Chair. The graduate student representative is elected annually by the Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology Graduate Student Organization (GEES). The term of the GAC Chair is three years, and that of the remaining faculty members is one year. The committee is assisted in its work by the Graduate Program Coordinator. The description of the GAC and its duties should be updated to be consistent with updates to the EEOB Pattern of Administration document.

The duties of the GAC include:

* Preparation and dissemination of materials to prospective students regarding the EEOB Graduate Program and admission to the Program, including maintaining an updated Graduate Admissions website and direct communication with prospective students. The Graduate Program Coordinator has a primary role in these activities;
* Leadership in recruitment of graduate students, including communication with the graduate faculty regarding their recruitment plans and organization of the Graduate Recruitment Event;
* Coordination of the admission process, including, but not limited to, screening applicants’ files, nomination of applicants for fellowships, and notification of admission;
* Working with the Diversity Committee to ensure effective recruitment practices for building and maintaining a diverse graduate program.

# EEOB GRADUATE FACULTY

Only Graduate Faculty in EEOB, including regional campus faculty and those with partial appointments in other departments, may serve as the primary advisor for EEOB graduate students.

All Regular tenure-track EEOB Faculty are eligible for membership on the EEOB Graduate Faculty, including those on regional campuses (Category M or P). These faculty have the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor, and are salaried in EEOB at 20% or greater. A list of current EEOB Graduate Faculty is maintained by the Graduate School and is available at <https://gradforms.osu.edu/grad-forms/facultySearch/index>. Newly hired faculty in EEOB obtain Category M or P status after the GSC requests this appointment from the Graduate School, usually within the first semester of residence.

Regular, tenure-track OSU Faculty from units other than EEOB may be appointed to the EEOB Graduate Faculty upon approval by the EEOB Graduate Studies Committee when their appointment will enhance the EEOB Graduate Program through their teaching and service on graduate student committees. To remain on the EEOB Graduate Faculty, faculty from other units are expected to have taught or co-taught a graduate student seminar or EEOB course within the last three years or to have actively participated in the EEOB graduate program in some other way (for example, by serving as the primary advisor for an M.S. or Ph.D. student). In cases in which these faculty will serve as a student’s primary advisor, an MOU signed by the faculty member, the department chair, and the GSC Chair will be negotiated to specify the ways in which the student will be supported by the external faculty member and by EEOB. Support to be addressed in the MOU includes funding for the duration of the student’s studies, space for both laboratory work and teaching duties, and financial support for fieldwork and for conference participation and related travel costs. Non-EEOB appointments to the EEOB Graduate Faculty will be subject to annual review for renewal. Non-EEOB Graduate Faculty are eligible to serve on students’ committees without joining the EEOB Graduate Faculty, but EEOB Graduate Faculty status is required to vote on matters relevant to the EEOB graduate program.

Individuals other than regular, tenure-track OSU faculty (e.g., Adjunct and other Auxiliary OSU Faculty and non-OSU scientists) may not be appointed as EEOB Graduate Faculty, nor do they substitute for the required number of Graduate Faculty on student committees. However, they may serve as voting members on graduate student committees upon approval of the GSC and the Graduate School. Graduate students who wish to have a committee member who is not a member of the OSU Graduate Faculty must initiate the petition in [Gradforms](https://gradforms.osu.edu/).

Graduate Faculty who retire or resign from the university may continue to serve on graduate committees with certain restrictions, depending on the type of status change and the desire of the faculty member. A Graduate Faculty member who retires from the university, receives Emeritus status, and remains active in research and scholarship, may request continuation of regular Graduate Faculty status. This request must be approved by the EEOB Graduate Studies Committee, the EEOB Chair, and the college dean. The request must specify a fixed term of continued service that cannot exceed five years, although further reappointment via subsequent request is possible. This continued service carries with it the expectation of all normal Graduate Faculty duties, including serving as an outside member on dissertation exams and, if asked, giving an annual presentation in the EEOB 8894 seminar for new students.

Alternatively, a Graduate Faculty member who retires or resigns from the university may remain as a regular member of a committee of a student who is in candidacy status or is a Master’s student at the time of the Graduate Faculty member’s retirement/departure and for a period up to the expiration of the student’s initial five-year candidacy status (if a Ph.D. student). This requires approval of the EEOB Graduate Studies Committee and the Graduate School, and only one such member of any dissertation/master’s committee can be identified as counting toward the required number of OSU Graduate Faculty members. Such an individual may continue as the student’s advisor, but a current OSU Graduate Faculty member with contractual obligation to the university must be named to serve as the student’s co-advisor. Such faculty may not become the advisor of new students. The request for such continuing service is initiated by the graduate student using the Committee and Examination Petition form on gradforms.osu.edu.

# ADMISSIONS

## Admissions Process and Criteria

Applicants are not admitted to the EEOB Graduate Program without prior designation of a faculty advisor who is a member of the EEOB Graduate Faculty. The number of students who can be admitted each year also reflects the availability of funding for GTA, GRA, and fellowship appointments. All admitted and current graduate students are offered GTA support for Autumn and Spring Semesters, as needed, pending satisfactory progress and maintenance of academic standards.

The deadline for receipt of applications to the EEOB Graduate Program is November of each year. International students must apply by November 1 if they wish to be considered for financial aid beginning in Autumn Semester of the following year. Only those applicants reviewed and ranked during Spring Semester of each year shall be offered admission for the following Autumn Semester. Graduate faculty may petition the GAC for waiver of this rule based on unexpected or unusual circumstances in which recruitment and admission of a graduate student is essential for meeting the objectives of a funded project in a timely manner.

In addition to the Graduate School requirements, applicants to EEOB must have 32 semester (40 quarter) hours of courses in the biological sciences, 8 semester (10 quarter) hours of mathematics, including at least one course in calculus, and 12 semester (15 quarter) hours of chemistry including organic or biochemistry. Eight semester hours of physics are recommended. Beyond these basic criteria, competitive applicants must have strong letters of recommendation, excellent communication skills, and, ideally, research experience resulting in a thesis, publication, or poster presentation.

Graduate Record Examination scores from the general tests (verbal, quantitative, and written) are not required, effective 2019-20. The Advanced Biology GRE test is not required for admission. However, both may be submitted if the applicant chooses. TEOFL scores are required, as prescribed by the Office of Graduate and Professional Admissions.

## Transfer from Master’s to Ph.D. Program

In some cases, students who enter the EEOB Master’s degree program become interested in switching directly to the Ph.D. program. This option can be considered, if 1) the student’s advisor approves and 2) evidence exists to suggest that the student has made sufficient progress in the Master’s program. Such evidence might include having a proposal approved by the student’s committee by the second semester of enrollment and by having started a research project. If the student has finished their second year of the EEOB Master’s program, some form of completed product based on the student’s research is required. Examples could include a master's thesis, a presentation of their research at a meeting, or a manuscript being prepared or submitted for publication.

**Requests will not be considered after December 1 of the third year.**

To remain eligible for GTA/GRA appointments, the time limit for completion of the Ph.D. cannot exceed six years including time as a Master’s student in EEOB. In addition, the student’s Candidacy Exam must be completed by Spring Semester of the third year, similar to other Ph.D. students.

Transfers to the Ph.D. program can be considered at any time of year by submitting the following items to the EEOB Graduate Admissions Committee (GAC) Chair:

* Letter from the student
* Letter from the advisor sent directly to the GAC Chair
* Master’s thesis proposal (approved by the student’s Thesis Committee)
* Evidence of research progress (depends on duration of enrollment)
* Current CV, Advising Report, and original application materials for the Master’s program in EEOB

The student’s letter to the Chair of the GAC should explain what the student has accomplished, how their research project has now expanded, and a timeline for completion of the Ph.D. dissertation. The student’s advisor must write a letter of support directly to the GAC Chair outlining their enthusiasm for the student’s transfer and expectations for how the student will be funded, starting with the first term for which the student is requesting admission to the Ph.D. program**.**

The Chair of the GAC will distribute the letter of request and all related documents to the GAC and the GSC Chair. The GAC and GSC Chair will meet, if the committee deems it necessary, and vote on the request; otherwise, the GAC Chair and GSC Chair will make a recommendation. If the decision is favorable, the GAC Chair will forward a recommendation to the Chair of EEOB, who makes the final decision based on available funding. The number of Ph.D. students admitted is based on funds available from fellowships, teaching associateships, and research grants. These funds are normally committed by mid-Spring Semester each year. Thus, if students apply for admission by transfer outside of the normal (spring-autumn) admission process, they might be approved for admission but not admitted until funds are available. After the transfer is approved, the student should request that the EEOB Graduate Administrator make the change with the Graduate School.

Occasionally, a student enrolled in another OSU Master’s Degree program will seek to transfer to the EEOB Ph.D. program. When this is the case, the student should apply to the EEOB Ph.D. program and be considered by the Admissions Committee like all other potential graduate students in EEOB. After a transfer has been approved by the Admissions Committee, the student must complete an electronic form entitled “Transfer of Graduate Program,” available on gradforms.osu.edu, hosted by the Graduate School.

## Admissions and GTA Support for Non-EEOB Graduate Students

Occasionally, EEOB provides GTA positions to graduate students who are admitted to other OSU graduate programs (e.g., the Environmental Sciences Graduate Program, Microbiology) if their primary advisor is an EEOB faculty member. In these situations, i.e., if the advisor is ever going to request GTA support for these students, then applicants to other programs also must be evaluated informally by the EEOB GAC at the time of the admissions process so they can be ranked along with other applicants to our graduate program. To initiate this process, the potential faculty advisor in EEOB will request application materials from the appropriate Graduate Coordinator and will send them to the EEOB GAC for evaluation. Applicants who are deemed to be competitive within the pool of accepted applicants in EEOB will be eligible for future GTA positions in the same manner as EEOB students, without having to enroll in the EEOB graduate program. These students from other programs also must have fulfilled all of EEOB’s GTA training requirements to be able to be appointed as GTAs in EEOB. The total numbers of EEOB and non-EEOB students who can be accepted each year is determined after consultation between the EEOB Department Chair and the Chair of the GAC.

# COMMON REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER’S AND PH.D. PROGRAMS

## Coursework Requirements in EEOB

Each EEOB graduate student is required to complete:

1. EEOB 8894, a 1.5-semester seminar taken in the first fall semester and first seven weeks of the following spring semester by all new students. The first semester provides the incoming cohort with guidance and support toward success in their degree program and beyond. The second seven weeks provides an overview of statistical thinking and tools.
2. Computational Bootcamp (EEOB 8896.19): Essential Tools for Computational Biology. This course is taken by all first-year students in the second half of their spring semester.
3. One full-semester course, or two half-semester courses, in scientific writing offered by EEOB faculty (EEOB 6620, EEOB 6630, EEOB 5798, or EEOB 8896, if specialized for writing).
4. At least one graduate-level course in evolution and one graduate-level course in ecology (minimum of 3 each). Students should consult with their advisor to determine which courses are most appropriate, including at least one course that extends beyond the student’s specialized area of research. Courses are listed in Appendix E.
5. Graduate Seminars. Seminars involving intensive small-group discussion of the recent primary literature, these courses are usually numbered 8896, but other courses with similar structure are acceptable, pending approval of the GSC Chair. Graduate students are required to complete a total of at least two (MA students) or three (PhD students) graduate seminar courses. There is no limit on the number of hours that may be earned from different EEOB 8896 seminars.

All graduate students also are expected to attend weekly department-sponsored seminars whenever possible.

Computational bootcamp and the statistics portion of 8894 (first half of spring semester) can be waived if a student has prior experience at the graduate level. Students wanting a waiver need to have their advisor email the GSC chair with an explanation of the prior experience before the start of Spring semester; all requests will be reviewed by the GSC.

## Hour Requirement Per Semester

Note: hour enrollment requirements are different for pre-candidacy Ph.D. students than for post-candidacy Ph.D. students.

M.S. students and Doctoral students who have not yet passed their Candidacy exam.

Graduate Teaching Associates (GTA) and Graduate Research Associates (GRA) holding a 50% or greater appointment must register in the Graduate School for at least 8 hours during autumn and spring semesters and 4 hours during summer term. Graduate Fellows register for 12 hours during autumn and spring semesters and 6 hours during summer term.

Graduate Associates (GAs, i.e. GTAs and GRAs) holding a 25% appointment must register in the Graduate School for at least 4 hours during each semester and 2 hours during summer.

Doctoral students who have passed the Candidacy Examination

Post-candidacy GTAs and GRAs holding a 50% or greater appointment and post-candidacy graduate fellows must register in the Graduate School **for only 3 hours** each semester unless there is a good pedagogical reason for registering for more than 3 . This will be decided by the student and their committee in consultation with the Chair of EEOB.

Students (including international students holding visas) who follow these guidelines are considered full-time students.

## Completing enrollment

Students must sign into their Buckeyelink account before each semester and complete the Financial Responsibility Statement, even if they are not purchasing insurance, in order to complete enrollment.

## Teaching and Teaching Orientation

Teaching is not a graduate degree requirement of EEOB; however, students are encouraged to teach in an introductory course for at least one semester, as well as an advanced course in their specialty for at least one semester, when possible. Such teaching experience is often helpful in finding an academic position after graduation. Extensive training in effective teaching is available through programs sponsored by the Center for Life Sciences Education (CLSE) and the Michael V. Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning (UITL).

Regardless of their source(s) of support, all incoming EEOB graduate students are required to enroll in the Center for Life Sciences Education (CLSE) teaching orientation. This class is offered prior to Autumn Semester and is coordinated with UITL. Students will be notified about this program prior to the start of classes and need only enroll once, in the first year.

## Animal Care and Laboratory Safety Training

During the first semester in residence, all graduate students are required to complete the required safety training specified by their advisor and research area. Compliance with all required OSU safety training for the research to be carried out is compulsory and is overseen by the student’s advisor.

## Advisor and Procedure for Change of Advisor

EEOB graduate students are admitted with a designated advisor, who must be a member of the EEOB Graduate Faculty. The advisor provides supervision and research support that are critical to the student’s success, and a mutual understanding of advisor-advisee responsibilities is essential. Best practices for maintaining a productive advisor-advisee relationship are described in the Graduate School Handbook, Appendix H.

If necessary, the student or the advisor may terminate the advisor-advisee relationship at any time by notifying the GSC Chair in writing (letter sent via e-mail). The student will then have two weeks in which to meet with the GSC Chair in order to devise a plan for finding a new permanent advisor. Either a temporary advisor will be appointed or the GSC Chair will become the student’s temporary advisor until the permanent advisor is found. Students who are not able to obtain a new permanent advisor during the following semester (or Summer Term) cannot continue in the EEOB graduate program.

# MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAM

## Thesis and Non-thesis Plans

All Master’s students are admitted under Plan A (thesis). Students wishing to change to Plan B (non-thesis) must inform the GSC Chair, as should the student’s advisor. Students who switch to Plan B are expected to complete all course requirements as promptly as possible, with minimal or no support as a graduate teaching associate.

**Time Limit**

The Master’s Program must be completed within three (3) years.

## Credit Hour and Residence Requirement

The Master of Science (MS or Master’s) Programs (Plans A and B) include at least 30 graduate hours, at least 24 of which must be taken at OSU over a period of at least two semesters. Please refer to the Graduate School Handbook, Section 4.0, for a description of which courses count toward graduation.

The Plan A (thesis) Master’s Program must include 18 hours of formal graduate course work, including EEOB 8896, but excluding EEOB 6193 and 6999.

The Plan B (non-thesis) Master’s Program must include 30 hours of formal graduate course work, including EEOB 8896 and no more than 7 hours of EEOB 6193 or 6999. At least 12 of these 30 graduate must come from formal graduate courses in EEOB (typically four courses; does not include EEOB 8896 seminars).

Note: except under unusual circumstances, students are not admitted to the program under the Plan B option. This option is for students who opt out of the Plan A Master’s or the PhD program. Students in the Plan B Master’s programs are also not guaranteed support as a GTA, although requests for support will be accommodated when possible.

## Master’s Thesis Committee

The Master’s Thesis Committee includes the advisor and two other Graduate Faculty (note that this is one more than the minimum set by the Graduate School). At least one of these three committee members must be a Graduate Faculty member in EEOB. Please consult the section on EEOB Graduate Faculty in this Handbook for detailed descriptions on who can be members of the Graduate Faculty. If a student wishes to have a committee member who is not a member of the OSU Graduate Faculty (who does not count toward required Graduate Faculty membership for a valid committee) or a former or retired member of the OSU Graduate Faculty (who does count toward the required Graduate Faculty membership) serve on their committee, they should submit a committee and examination petition through Gradforms (https://gradforms.osu.edu/)

This committee should be established by the end of the student’s second semester. The student is required to meet with their committee at least annually.

**Master’s Research Proposal**

Plan A Master’s students must submit a proposal outlining their thesis research to their Thesis Committee by the end of the second semester. The research proposal ensures that the student has given careful thought to the research project and helps involve the Thesis Committee with the student’s project. Approval of the proposal by the Thesis Committee indicates their belief that the project is likely to succeed. The length and content should be decided in discussion with the student’s advisor and Thesis Committee and would normally include an explanation of the problem being addressed, a literature review, a methods section, preliminary data if available, a discussion of appropriate data analyses, and a description of possible results and their interpretation. A timetable also should be included.

Following review of the proposal, the student’s Thesis Committee will either (a) approve the proposal as written, (b) approve the proposal with modifications, or (c) require the student to submit a revised proposal for further Committee review. Final approval of the submitted research proposal must be obtained no later than the end of the third semester (here, Summer Term is counted as a semester).

Upon approval of the research proposal, the student must submit an EEOB Department Research Proposal Approval Form to the GSC Chair. This form is available on the EEOB website. The GSC Chair will not approve the Application to Graduate Form until a Proposal Approval Form has been completed, even if all research has been completed and the student is otherwise ready for the Final Examination. As students proceed with their research, minor modifications of the research plan may be implemented without full Committee approval, but major changes require full Committee approval.

## Master’s Examination Committee– Plan A (Thesis)

The Examination Committee is usually the same as the Thesis Committee, but this is not a requirement. This committee includes the advisor and two other Graduate Faculty. At least one of these three committee members must be a faculty member in EEOB. Note that the requirement of three Examination Committee members in EEOB is one more than the minimum set by the Graduate School.

## Thesis Draft

All members of the Examination Committee must be given the thesis draft at least seven days before the Examination is held. The student should consult the Graduate School’s requirements for formatting the thesis.

## Thesis Abstract

An abstract of no fewer than 500 words and no more than three double-spaced pages is required for Master’s theses in EEOB. The abstract shall immediately follow the title page of the thesis. It shall include objectives, justification for the study; when, where, and how the study was done (methods); results, with key numerical values and measures of significance, and their interpretation; and implications of the findings. The student’s advisor shall not approve the Thesis until this requirement has been met.

**Master’s – Plan A (Thesis) Presentation Requirement**

Prior to the Plan A (thesis) Master’s Examination (see below), students are required to present a departmental research seminar lasting ~45 minutes. This presentation often occurs on the same day as the examination but may also occur earlier. The seminar should be scheduled and announced at least two weeks in advance. The seminar is not part of the Master’s Examination.

**Master’s Examination – Plan A (Thesis)**

As specified in the  [Graduate School Handbook](https://gradsch.osu.edu/graduate-school-handbook-gsh/gsh-section-6-masters-degree) Section 6, the Master’s Examination for a student pursuing the thesis option must include a written portion (thesis) and an oral portion. The oral portion of the exam must not exceed two hours in length.

It is recommended that an anonymous preliminary, non-binding vote on the outcome of the Examination be taken immediately after the student leaves the room and before any discussion of their performance. The student is considered to have completed the Master’s Examination successfully only when the final vote of the Master’s Examination Committee is unanimously affirmative.

## Master’s Examination – Plan B (Non-Thesis)

The master’s examination for a student pursuing the non-thesis option must include a written portion and may include an oral portion. The written portion may be a substantial paper, project, or examination. At or before the beginning of the student’s final semester, the student’s advisor or the GSC Chair will assemble an examination committee. The committee will often, but is not required to, consist of three faculty members who taught courses included in the Plan B program. The examination committee members will be included on the student’s application to graduate in Gradforms. Typically, in EEOB, when a student has switched from a Plan A to a Plan B master’s, the written portion consists of an examination, although the committee can agree to use other options instead, such as a substantial paper or project. In the typical case of an examination, the committee will decide on the exact format of the exam, including how much time the student is allowed for each member’s questions and what resources are available to the student while answering the questions. Each committee member will write questions for the exam and assess the answers. The committee will determine whether the answers are sufficient to pass the exam. If they are not, the student will have additional time (to be determined by the committee) to address deficiencies in their answers. The student is considered to have completed the Plan B Master’s Examination successfully only when the decision of the Master’s Examination Committee is unanimously affirmative.

## Final Submission of the Thesis

The final version of the thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School by the published deadline for the semester of graduation.

More information can be found: <https://gradsch.osu.edu/final-semester-procedures-and-timelines>

## TIMETABLE FOR MASTER’S PLAN A (Thesis)

***First Semester***

* + Enroll in EEOB 8894 (offered each Autumn Semester)
  + Begin course work to remove any conditions of acceptance
  + Begin graduate course work
  + Register for 8 hours (12 if a Graduate Fellow)
  + Select research topic and begin work on research proposal
  + At the end of the semester, complete the annual Graduate Student Activity Report and meet with your advisor to discuss it
  + Begin planning for salary support for the following summer (e.g., GRA or GTA request)

***Second Semester***

* Continue graduate course work
* Enroll in EEOB 8894 (offered first half of each Spring Semester)
* Enroll in 8896.19 (Computational Bootcamp, offered the second half of each Spring Semester)
* Continue courses to remove any conditions of acceptance
* Establish Thesis Committee and submit a Research Proposal to Thesis Committee
* Submit form documenting approval of the Research Proposal to Chair of GSC (form is available on the EEOB website)
* Conduct research
* Finalize plans for salary support for summer (e.g., GRA or GTA request)

***Summer Term***

* Revise Thesis Proposal if not previously approved, as requested by the Thesis Committee
* Register for 4 hours if a GTA or GRA, 6 hours if a Graduate Fellow
* Continue research

***Succeeding Semesters***

* Continue research
* Meet at least annually with Thesis Committee members
* 30 graduate hours are required for graduation, including specific requirements for EEOB.

***Final Semester***

* At the beginning of the semester, review the Final Semester Procedures and Timeline, Master’s checklist from the Graduate School website <https://gradsch.osu.edu/final-semester-procedures-and-timelines>. Be sure to check graduation deadlines, as final thesis defense and final documents are due well before the end of the semester.
* Complete the **EEOB Graduation Requirement** form (found on the EEOB website) and submit it to Corey Ash.
* No later than the third Friday of the semester, complete the **Application to Graduate** on Gradforms.
* Schedule a date and time for a thesis defense exam with your committee. Your committee must have the complete thesis to review at least one week prior to the scheduled exam date.
* Schedule and present Departmental Seminar; announce at least two weeks in advance
* Submit final approved thesis to the Graduate School in accordance with the published deadline.

# DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM

## Time Limit

The Ph.D. Program must be completed within six years.

## Hour Requirements

A minimum of 80 graduate hours beyond the baccalaureate degree is required to earn a doctoral degree. Please refer to the Graduate School Handbook, Section 4.0, for a description of which courses count toward graduate . If the student has a Master’s degree, 30 hours of Master’s degree course work can be transferred into a student’s doctoral program, thereby reducing the number of graduate earned at OSU from 80 hours to 50 hours. See the Graduate School Handbook for additional details.

The required hours include a minimum of 18 hours of graduate coursework, excluding EEOB 6193, 8999, and courses taken during a Master’s Program. EEOB 8894, EEOB 8896, all of the courses required for the degree, and any other courses taken for graduate (with approval of the dissertation committee) count toward the 18 hours.

All students who successfully complete the doctoral candidacy examination will be required to be enrolled for at least three graduate hours (exactly three hours unless there is a good pedagogical reason for registering for more than three) every autumn and spring semester after attaining candidacy (summer term excluded) until graduation and must be enrolled in at least three graduate hours during the term in which they graduate (summer term included).

## Ph.D. Graduate Committees – Definitions and Relationships

Each Ph.D. student selects a faculty committee, which may evolve during the student’s degree program. For brevity, we often refer to the student’s “Committee,” although, technically, two formal committees are involved which need not be identical in membership (see below). The student’s Committee provides advice on initial coursework, research plans, future career opportunities, and other professional activities. The student is required to meet with their committee at least annually.

The Graduate School defines two faculty committees for Ph.D. programs, the **Candidacy Examination Committee** and the **Dissertation Committee**. These committees are often identical in membership, though they need not be. The only necessary common member of these committees is the student’s advisor, who serves as the Chair of each. Details about requirements for these committees are provided in the Graduate School Handbook and below. Individuals other than regular, tenure-track OSU Graduate Faculty (e.g., Adjunct and other Auxiliary OSU Faculty and non-OSU scientists) may serve as additional voting members on EEOB graduate student committees upon approval of the GSC and the Graduate School, but they do not substitute for the required number of Graduate Faculty. Please consult the section on EEOB Graduate Faculty in this Handbook for detailed descriptions on who can be members of the Graduate Faculty. If a student wishes to have a committee member who is not a member of the OSU Graduate Faculty (and, thus, does not count toward required Graduate Faculty membership for a valid committee) or a former or retired member of the OSU Graduate Faculty (who does count toward the required Graduate Faculty membership) serve on their committee, they should submit a committee and examination petition through Gradforms (https://gradforms.osu.edu/).

The primary responsibility of the Candidacy Examination Committee is administering the Candidacy Exam. This committee must comprise **at least 4 Graduate Faculty members**, including the advisor and at least one other EEOB faculty member.

The Dissertation Committee’s primary responsibility is overseeing and evaluating the actual research and research products after the Candidacy Exam has been completed. This committee must comprise **at least 3 Graduate Faculty members**, including the Advisor and at least one other EEOB faculty member.

## Approval of Dissertation Topic

Students are advised to convene their Committee as early in their program as feasible. Students must have their committee approve their dissertation topic, which is generally presented to the committee as an outline and brief description of their planned research. The advisor must attest to the committee’s unanimous approval of the dissertation proposal on the "Approval of Dissertation Topic" form (obtain form from EEOB website). This form must be submitted to the GSC Chair by the end of the student’s second semester.

## Candidacy Exam

***Definition***

The Candidacy Examination is a single examination consisting of two portions, written and oral, administered under the auspices of the Graduate Studies Committee in conjunction with the student’s Candidacy Examination Committee and the Graduate School.

***Purpose***

For Ph.D. students, the Candidacy Examination is not only a test of the student’s comprehension of the field, but also of allied areas of study, the capacity to undertake independent research, and the ability to think and express ideas clearly. Developing a research proposal that includes a critical review of the literature, a description of the research goals, hypotheses to be tested, methods to be used, a projected analysis of results, and a timetable for completion of the study is an important step in planning a successful research program as a graduate student.

***Timetable***

All students must have successfully completed the Candidacy Exam within three years (i.e., no later than the third Summer Term for those admitted in Autumn Semester), though a goal to complete the exam within two years is preferred. Failure to meet this deadline will represent a lack of satisfactory progress by a student and withdrawal of financial support by the department.

***Written Portion - Research Proposal***

Writing a research proposal is a scholarly, strategic, and creative process that is essential in our discipline. Therefore, the written portion of the Candidacy Exam is a research proposal describing the student’s proposed dissertation research. As expected of a Ph.D. project, the research outlined in the proposal should represent a significant and original contribution by the student in addressing an important research question or problem. In consultation with their advisor and Candidacy Examination Committee, students are encouraged to begin working on their research proposal as soon as possible, usually by the end of their first year in the program, to make good academic progress and meet required deadlines. The research proposal may describe the entire plan for the dissertation, or it may focus on a subset of questions in the dissertation if deemed appropriate by the advisor and Candidacy Examination Committee.

Because the dissertation project represents the most important part of the course of study in the Ph.D. program, students are encouraged to undertake whatever activities are necessary to make the proposal intellectually rigorous. These may include discussing their project in detail with their supervisor, committee members, their peers, and others, and receiving feedback on early drafts of the proposal. While the final product is the proposal, the goal is for students to learn how to recognize good research topics and how to turn them into convincing and defensible proposals; as such, we expect advisors to offer guidance and instruction as the student is preparing the proposal. It is important to emphasize, however, that the final version of a student’s proposal must represent the student’s own original writing. Questions during the oral portion of the Candidacy Exam may be used to establish that this is the case.

If the student’s Ph.D. research overlaps with a project that has been initiated or funded by others, such as the student’s advisor, and is already well justified and described, the research proposal for the Candidacy Exam must reflect a new scope of original study designed by the student. This may include research questions that differ from those in the student’s final dissertation. As above, the proposal may be discussed in consultation with the student’s advisor, committee, and others as needed prior to the exam, but the proposal must represent the student’s original work.

For the Candidacy Exam, the proposal should be written in a format similar to that of a research proposal to the National Science Foundation or National Institutes of Health. The core must be no more than 15 pages in length, single spaced (11- or 12-point font; 1-inch margins), including figures and tables. A one-page Project Summary as well as References and Acknowledgements section also must be included but these are in addition to the 15-page core limit. The Acknowledgements should list the names of those who provided feedback and suggestions on the proposal. Proposals that exceed the core page limit or have extra materials such as appendices are not permitted.

The format of the proposal should include:

* Project summary (one page)
* Background and Objectives – explanation of the objectives/problem being addressed, including literature review and significance
* Methods - description of methods, including data analysis
* Anticipated Results - description of possible results and their interpretation
* Preliminary data, if available
* Timetable for completing the project
* References
* Acknowledgements

Note that as students proceed with their research after the Candidacy Exam, minor modifications of the research plan may be implemented without full Committee approval, while major changes require full Committee approval. In some cases, the Dissertation Committee may request a revised proposal to facilitate the discussion of major proposed changes that are in alignment with the final dissertation. Ideally, the student’s proposal can be developed further for submission to other funding opportunities later.

***Procedures for Written Portion of the Examination***

In advance of completing the proposal, the student schedules with their committee a date and time for the oral exam. The student must complete the proposal and share it with the Candidacy Examination Committee at least three weeks, but preferably four weeks (as determined by the committee), before the oral exam date. The student’s advisor is responsible for coordinating the evaluation of the proposal by the Committee. Each member of the Committee evaluates the proposal and notifies the student’s advisor of their decision within the agreed upon time after receiving it. The time allotted for the committee to provide a decision must be at least one week, but with committee agreement may be longer than that. By consensus, the Committee will either a) approve the proposal as satisfactory for proceeding to the oral portion of the exam, or b) decide that the proposal is unsatisfactory. Once the proposal is sent to the committee for review, the candidacy exam has begun and the committee may not ask for additional work on the written portion of the exam.

**If the proposal is approved, the oral part of the examination must be held in no fewer than two weeks and no more than one month after approval**. The student submits an Application for Candidacy on Gradforms (<https://gradforms.osu.edu/>) with an oral date at least two weeks out.

If, based on evaluating the written portion, the advisor or another member of the candidacy examination committee sees no possibility for a satisfactory overall performance on the candidacy examination at that time, the student may be advised to waive the right to take the oral portion. The candidacy examination committee may not, however, deny a student the opportunity to take the oral portion.

If the student decides to waive the right to take the oral portion, a written statement requesting the waiver must be presented to the Candidacy Examination Committee. In such a case, the candidacy examination committee records an “unsatisfactory” on the Report on Candidacy Examination form and submits a copy of the student’s waiver request to the Graduate School. In other words, “unsatisfactory” must be recorded with the Graduate School when the written portion is not acceptable and the oral exam is cancelled (“waived”).

***Procedures for Oral Portion of the Examination***

The Candidacy Examination Committee conducts the Oral Portion of the Candidacy Examination, which the student must schedule with the Graduate School no later than two weeks prior to the exam, by filing the appropriate online form in Gradforms (<https://gradforms.osu.edu/>).

The Oral Examination begins with the student presenting the core ideas and approach of their research proposal to the Candidacy Examination Committee. This presentation should last no longer than ~10 minutes not including questions from the Committee. The entire Oral Examination must not last longer than two hours. The Committee questions the student on the content of the proposal and on any subject directly and indirectly related to it, including techniques and current literature. More general topics that committee members feel are relevant to evaluating a student’s background in evolution, ecology and organismal biology also can be discussed.

***Decision***

An anonymous vote on the outcome of the examination is taken immediately after the oral portion, after the student leaves the room, and before any discussion of the student’s performance. This vote is not binding. After discussion, a final, anonymous vote is taken.

**Satisfactory** - The student is considered to have completed the Candidacy Examination successfully only when the final vote of the Candidacy Examination Committee is unanimously affirmative. The oral portion and proposal are considered one exam.

**Unsatisfactory** - If the student fails the exam, the Committee must decide whether (a) the student will be permitted to take a second Candidacy Examination, or (b) the student is judged as not qualified and is required to leave the program. See section 7.6.4 of the Graduate School Handbook (https://gradsch.osu.edu/handbook/7-6-doctoral-result-candidacy-examination) for procedures and options for a second Candidacy Examination. If the student has already failed the written portion of the exam once, and then fails the oral portion following a satisfactory written portion, a second oral exam is not permitted.

At the end of the Candidacy Examination, the student will be informed of the results and each committee member will record their vote in Gradforms (<https://gradforms.osu.edu/>).

## Ph.D. Dissertation

University-wide requirements for the Dissertation and Final Exam are described in the Graduate School Handbook, which should be reviewed in detail to ensure that all requirements, procedures, and deadlines are met.

***Dissertation Expectations in EEOB***

A Ph.D. dissertation in EEOB consists of several chapters, generally at least three, each of which represents the equivalent of a peer-reviewed publication. Students are encouraged to publish papers based on their dissertation chapters as early as possible, in consultation with their advisor and committee. Multi-authored papers written by the student as the lead author may be used as dissertation chapters, with information about the relative contributions of coauthors as a footnote on the title page of the chapter. Additional chapters and appendices containing components of the research that are not likely to be submitted for publication also may be included.

In addition to an Abstract and research chapters, the Dissertation must include a short Synthesis chapter, either at the beginning or end, providing an overview of the research questions and a summary and synthesis of the results. The student’s advisor shall not approve the dissertation until this requirement is met.

The student should consult the Graduate School website at <https://gradsch.osu.edu/Document-Preparation> for information on format and style.

***Dissertation Draft Approval***

Before a defense can be held, the student must submit a complete dissertation to the Dissertation Committee for review and approval or disapproval. Each Dissertation Committee member indicates approval of the dissertation draft by signing the Draft Approval/Notification of Final Oral Examination Form that will be solicited by the Graduate School through Gradforms. A dissertation committee member’s approval of the dissertation draft means that the committee member judges it to be of sufficient merit to warrant holding the final oral examination.

Well in advance of submitting the dissertation, the student schedules with their committee a date and time for the Final Oral Examination. The student must share the complete dissertation with the Dissertation Committee at least three weeks, but preferably four weeks (as determined by the committee), before the Final Oral Examination date. The time allotted for the committee to provide a decision must be at least one week, but with committee agreement may be longer than that. Also at least two weeks before the final oral examination date, the student must submit to the Graduate School a draft copy of their dissertation for a format review based on the Graduate School’s formatting guidelines. When all committee members have indicated their approval through Gradforms and the Graduate School has completed the format review, the Graduate School will seek a Graduate Faculty Representative who is not a member of the EEOB graduate faculty to join the Dissertation Committee in the final exam. A complete dissertation must be shared with the Graduate Faculty Representative no later than one week before the scheduled exam.

## Seminar Requirement

Ph.D. candidates must present the results of their dissertation research in a formal departmental seminar. This seminar is excellent practice for job seminars, keeps the Department informed of what research its graduate students are doing, and keeps faculty informed as to which students are looking for jobs and their specific expertise. The Graduate Faculty representative on the Final Oral Examination Committee is welcome to attend the seminar but cannot be compelled to attend. The Chair of the GSC will not approve the Application to Graduate Form unless the student’s Dissertation Seminar has been given or at least scheduled. The seminar should be publicized within EEOB at least two weeks in advance.

## Publication Requirement Before Graduation

At the time of graduation and **prior to the student’s defense date**, at least one first-authored paper must have been submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication. The EEOB Graduate Studies Chair will not approve the student’s graduation if this requirement is not met. In most cases, it is expected that Ph.D. candidates will submit more than one paper for publication prior to graduation.

## Final Oral Examination

The final Oral Examination, which is a defense of the Dissertation, lasts no more than two hours, and does not include the departmental seminar. In consultation with the examination committee, the student may give a brief overview, lasting no more than 15 minutes, of the research. The advisor (Chair of the Final Oral Examination Committee) may allow graduate students and non- committee faculty members to attend the Examination. The advisor will make this decision after consulting with the candidates and the Committee. Guests may participate in the examination according to the guidelines set by the advisor. However, guests must not be present for discussion of the candidate’s performance, nor for any decision making on whether the student passed the examination.

***Final Oral Examination Committee***

The Final Oral Examination Committee comprises the student’s Dissertation Committee plus an outside Graduate Faculty Representative appointed by and representing the Graduate School.

***Decision on the Final Oral Examination***

It is recommended that an anonymous, non-binding vote on the outcome of the Examination be taken immediately after the student leaves the room and before any discussion of their performance. After discussion, a final, anonymous vote is taken.

**Satisfactory -** The student passes the Final Oral Examination only when the vote is unanimously affirmative.

**Unsatisfactory -** If the examination is judged unsatisfactory, the Committee must decide whether the student will be permitted to take a second Final Oral Examination. This must be recorded on the Final Oral Examination Report form.

## Presidential Fellowships

Ph.D. students approaching their final year ("dissertation year") are encouraged to apply for Presidential Fellowships. As described by the Graduate School “The Presidential Fellowship is the most prestigious award given by the Graduate School. Recipients of this award embody the highest standards of scholarship in the full range of Ohio State's graduate programs." These fellowships provide financial support so that the fellow may devote one year of full-time study to the completion of the dissertation, unimpeded by other duties.

Early in Autumn Semester, the GSC begins a pre-screening process with a call for nominations. The initial phase requires the student to submit to the GSC a research statement, list of letter writers, and CV. Using the same criteria employed by the Graduate School, the GSC will choose which students will be nominated, informing the selected students and their advisors of the deadline for the final application. Further details will be provided by the GSC in its call for nominations; descriptions of the nomination materials can be found on the Graduate School website <https://gradsch.osu.edu/presidential-fellowship>.

## TIMETABLE FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

**FIRST YEAR**

***First Semester***

* Enroll in EEOB 8894 (offered Autumn Semester only)
* Begin course work to remove any conditions of acceptance
* Begin graduate course work
* Register for 8 hours each semester (4 in summer); Graduate Fellows register for 12 per semester (6 in summer)
* Choose a research topic
* At the end of the semester, complete the annual Graduate Student Activity Report and meet with your advisor to discuss it
* Begin plans for salary support for the following summer (e.g., GRA or GTA request)

***Second Semester***

* Continue graduate course work
* Enroll in EEOB 8894 (offered first 7 weeks of Spring Semester)
* Enroll in 8896.19 (Computational Bootcamp, offered the second half of each Spring Semester)
* Continue research
* Choose and meet with Committee
* Have dissertation topic approved by Committee; submit form (available on the EEOB website) to GSC Chair
* Finalize plans for salary support in the following summer (e.g., GRA or GTA request)

***Summer Term***

* Continue research
* Register for 4 semester units if a GTA or GRA; 6 semester units if a Graduate Fellow

**SECOND YEAR**

* Continue research
* Work on research proposal
* Choose Candidacy Examination Committee if different from Dissertation Committee
* If possible, plan to take Candidacy Exam in Spring Semester
* Continue graduate course work
* Meet with your committee at least once
* Make plans for salary support in summer (e.g., GRA or GTA request)

**SUCCESSIVE YEARS**

* If not completed, take Candidacy Exam no later than Summer Term of your third year
* Register for 3 hours each spring and fall semesters post-candidacy; this includes Graduate Fellows
* Continue taking required EEOB 8896 seminars (see Coursework Requirements in EEOB)
* Present results at appropriate professional meetings and submit completed work for publication in peer-reviewed journals.
* Meet with your committee at least once each year
* Make plans for salary support each summer (e.g., GRA or GTA request)

**FINAL SEMESTER**

* Review [Final Semester Procedures and Timeline, Doctoral](https://gradsch.osu.edu/final-semester-procedures-and-timelines) on the Graduate School website. Be sure to check graduation deadlines, as final dissertation defense and final documents are due well before the end of the semester.
* Register for 3 hours
* Complete the **EEOB Graduation Requirements** form (found on the EEOB website) and submit it to Corey Ash.
* No later than the third Friday of the semester, complete the **Application to Graduate** on Gradforms.
* Schedule a date and time for an oral dissertation defense exam with your committee. See the section on *Dissertation Draft Approval* in this handbook for guidance on scheduling the exam and circulating your dissertation for committee approval.
* Submit the **Application for Final Examination** form on Gradforms. When each committee member approves this form after reading your dissertation, the Graduate School will assign a Graduate Faculty Representative for the defense examination.
* Schedule and present Departmental Seminar; announce at least two weeks in advance
* At least two weeks before defense and four weeks before commencement, circulate final thesis draft to Dissertation Committee members who approve Doctoral Draft Approval Form, which must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than two weeks prior to the oral exam
* No less than two weeks before the final oral examination, submit a complete dissertation to the Graduate School to undergo a format check.
* Submit final approved dissertation to the Graduate Faculty Representative no less than one week before the dissertation defense.
* Submit final approved dissertation to the Graduate School in accordance with the published deadline.

# REASONABLE PROGRESS AND KEY DEADLINES

This section explains the criteria for achieving satisfactory progress, also referred to as “reasonable progress” here and in the University Graduate School Handbook. Other program requirements, such as required courses, are listed elsewhere in this handbook.

Conditions for reasonable academic progress:

* + Students must maintain a graduate cumulative point-hour ratio (CPHR) of at least a 3.0. Courses for which students do not earn graduate are not used in calculating in the graduate CPHR.
  + Students must have established a Master’s Committee or Ph.D. Committee by the end of the second semester.
  + Master’s students must submit a Master’s research proposal, approved by their committee, by the end of the second semester (approval form available on the EEOB website).
  + Doctoral students must submit a dissertation topic form, approved by their committee, by the end of the second semester (form available on the EEOB website).
  + Doctoral students must pass the Candidacy Exam no later than Summer Term of Year 3, though completion of the exam during the second year is preferred.
  + Time limits for support as a GTA or GRA are 3 years for a Master’s student and 6 years for a Ph.D. student. Completion of the master's degree within 2 years and the Ph.D. degree within 5 years generally is preferred.
  + Participation in professional activities (publishing papers, presenting at professional meetings, applying for grant support, etc.) also is expected, as appropriate.

The GSC will contact any student who is placed on academic probation (i.e., whose graduate CPHR falls below a 3.0) or who fails to meet the deadlines listed above. Failure to meet any of these requirements will represent a lack of satisfactory progress. Failure to graduate within the designated time limits or to pass the Ph.D. Candidacy Exam when required will result in withdrawal of GTA of GRA financial support. In extreme cases of lack of progress, the GSC may initiate proceedings that will result in the student being denied further registration (see Section 5.4, Graduate School Handbook). Procedures for requesting an exception to the time limits for completing the graduate degree are listed below.

Each student’s progress will be documented at the end of each calendar year by means of the Graduate Student Annual Report (GSAR), which includes an updated curriculum vitae (CV) and OSU Advising Report. The purpose of the GSAR is to allow the student, their advisor, and the GSC to review the progress of individual students in the EEOB Graduate Program. This report provides information on the student’s academic and professional activities relative to program deadlines (e.g., proposal submission), academic performance, teaching, grant applications, publications, presentations, and service, as well as projections of future sources of support. To aid the student in organizing this information, the GSC provides a GSAR form via email for the previous calendar year. Students should submit their completed form to their advisor for review and have a meeting with their advisor to discuss the GSAR prior to the announced due date. The GSAR, signed by both student and advisor, will be submitted to the GSC.

Each student’s progress over the past year is reviewed, with emphasis on how the GSC can help students attain their professional goals. Students not making reasonable progress, as defined above, will be notified and an appropriate remedial plan will be developed, in consultation with their advisor. Through this process of annual review, the GSC works with students and advisors to ensure the prompt and efficient completion of graduate degree programs.

## Grievance Procedure

Graduate students with a grievance should first attempt to resolve the problem with their advisor. Frequently, the advice of the student’s Thesis or Dissertation Committee can be helpful in resolving disagreements. If the student feels that the advisor is not able to deal with the grievance, then the Graduate Studies Committee Chair should be consulted.

If the student, or the student and advisor, after consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee Chair, is still not satisfied, then the student, the advisor, and the Graduate Studies Committee Chair should meet with the EEOB Department Chair. The EEOB Department Chair, upon discussing the grievance with the parties involved, will attempt to resolve the grievance. If a satisfactory resolution of the grievance cannot be achieved, the parties involved should consult with the College of Arts and Sciences Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies; if the issue remains unresolved the student may invoke the formal Graduate School Grievance Procedure. Details of this Procedure can be obtained from the Chair of the GSC, or from the Graduate School.

Students or faculty who need confidential, impartial guidance about issues related to graduate students should consult with the Graduate School Ombudsperson. This option should be invoked after departmental and college resources have proven unsatisfactory or in instances where the parties involved are part of the normal departmental pathways for support.

# GRADUATE ASSOCIATES (GAs)

## Appointments and Reappointments

The principal aim of paid apprenticeships for graduate students is to support the earning of a graduate degree. Graduate students in EEOB may be supported by Graduate Teaching Associateships (GTA), Graduate Research Associateships (GRA), or Fellowships. Departmental support refers to GTA appointments as well as GRA appointments on grants or other funds held by members of EEOB’s Graduate Faculty. A student who is on academic probation may not be appointed as a GTA, GRA, or Graduate Fellow.

Note that the OSU Graduate Handbook (Section 9.2) states that a GTA/GRA may not hold any additional staff position at the university, nor may a GTA/GRA concurrently hold an hourly student assistant position. The Graduate School also stipulates that domestic students may not hold any appointment over 75% and international students may not hold any appointment over 50%, averaged over the academic year.

All incoming graduate students and current graduate students in EEOB in academic good standing will be offered financial support (GTA, GRA, or Fellowship) during Autumn and Spring Semesters.

Support will consist of a 50% appointment during each semester. Students also may request a GTA appointment during Summer Term, when fewer positions are available, and will be notified about this option by the GSC. Ideally, every graduate student in EEOB will receive some type of support during Summer Term, depending on annual budgets. For students who are completing the Plan B Masters, summer GTA support and a full three years of GTA support cannot be guaranteed.

Because GTAs are employed by the Department and College in furtherance of the teaching program, these appointments carry additional responsibilities that go beyond pursuit of a graduate degree (similarly, a GRA need not be restricted to research that a student will use for their thesis or dissertation). In a formal sense, GTAs and GRAs are employees with responsibilities and expectations beyond those who are supported by fellowships.

GTA performance is assessed each semester by the course instructor(s) and is communicated to the student, the student’s advisor, and the Chair of the GSC (see Appendix C for a sample evaluation form). Students who receive a poor evaluation from the course instructor(s) should meet with the GSC Chair to discuss whether they can be reappointed as GTAs in courses offered by the Center for Life Science Education or EEOB. If the student’s GTA performance is deemed unsatisfactory, the student may be eligible for subsequent GTA appointments on a probationary basis if a plan for improvement is implemented and if satisfactory performance is documented in the next semester and beyond.

Continuation of Graduate Associate appointments is recommended by the GSC to the Chair of EEOB prior to each semester. Graduate students who satisfactorily fulfill the responsibilities of their appointment as a GTA or GRA and who are making “reasonable progress” toward an advanced degree are eligible for departmental support for the maximum number of years listed below:

* Master’s Student (Plan A, thesis): 3 years
* Ph.D. Student: 6 years

Non-EEOB graduate students whose primary advisor is an EEOB faculty member also are eligible for GTA appointments from EEOB if they:

1. Are approved by the EEOB GAC at the time of admission (see section on Admissions and GTA Support for Non-EEOB Graduate Students, above) and, thus, complete teaching orientation before their first semester as required for all EEOB graduate students.
2. Enroll in EEOB 8894 During fall and the first half of spring semester.
3. Meet all EEOB deadlines that are required for “reasonable progress” as defined in this handbook.
4. Complete the annual Graduate Student Activity Report in EEOB.
5. Meet all other requirements of their graduate program and the Graduate School.

## Outside Employment

Graduate associateships and fellowships provide a stipend that allows students to focus on their degrees (graduate research and coursework) without having an outside job. For students receiving a stipend from a university graduate associateship or fellowship at a 50% or greater appointment, the expectation is that students will not undertake additional regular employment. Exceptions may arise due to unusual circumstances, for example, if the work experience aligns well with the student’s professional goals.

Any students considering outside employment must consult their graduate Advisor and the GSC Chair early in the process to allow a careful evaluation of the impact of additional commitments on the student’s academic progress. If students are not receiving stipends from fellowships or graduate associateships, or are appointed at less than 50%, outside employment may be encouraged (such as in Summer Term when fewer GTA positions are offered). Any proposed changes regarding GTA/GRA support should be discussed with the EEOB Graduate Program Coordinator at least one month in advance, when possible, to allow time for permissions and processing.

## Support Beyond Stated Limits

Support as a GTA or GRA beyond the stated limits may be granted in exceptional cases provided there is tangible evidence of progress on the research intended as the basis for the student’s thesis or dissertation. Tangible evidence will consist of edited chapters of the thesis or dissertation and/or edited (and/or published) manuscripts that are identified as chapters in the thesis or dissertation.

Exceptions to this criterion may be granted for the following reasons:

1. Failure of an initial project.
2. Loss or change of advisor.
3. Medical or personal circumstances that interfere with progress.
4. Experimental or logistical problems beyond the student’s control.

Slow progress for reasons other than those listed above is not reasonable progress.

Support beyond the stated limits will require a documented petition from the student’s advisor. This petition must be presented to the GSC during the Autumn Semester of the student’s last year of support. The GSC will review the petition and inform the student whether it recommends to the Department Chair additional semesters of support by the end of the Spring Semester.

Under no circumstances will continued support be granted for more than one year at a time.

## Workload Expectations for GTAs and GRAs

In EEOB, the majority of GTAs and GRAs are appointed at 50 percent time. This equates, by Graduate School policy, to an average workload of 20 hours per week over the duration of the appointment period (Section 9.2 of the Graduate School Handbook). Appointment periods are normally for 16 weeks. Graduate School policy allows the appointing unit to determine rules regarding time off during semester breaks but also stipulates that GAs are not required to work during legal holidays noted in the university calendar (Section 11.2 of the Graduate School Handbook). For appointments at rates different than 50 percent time (e.g., a 75% appointment), workload expectations are adjusted in direct proportion to that appointment.

For GTA appointments, we recognize that different courses may entail differing amounts of preparation time (usually beginning before the start of the semester), student contact hours, and time spent outside of class. The effective workload may fall below 20 hours per week but in no case should the workload averaged across a 16-week course responsibility period during fall and spring semesters or a 12-week course responsibility period during summer term exceed 20 hours per week. Some courses in some terms may require GTAs to be on duty over a period that exceeds 16 (fall and spring semesters) or 12 (summer term) weeks, but in no case should the total workload for a spring or fall semester exceed 320 hours or a summer term exceed 240 hours. In GTA assignments for courses that occur over a shorter period than an entire semester, e.g., a 4-week course during summer term, the total work hours will be concentrated during the period of the course offering, with fewer or no work hours during other parts of the term. EEOB policy is that GTAs receive time off during semester breaks, or the equivalent of one week of vacation per semester, either before or after the period of course responsibilities.

For GRA appointments, we recognize the differing expectations among project administrators in the case of grant- or department-supported GRAs, as well as the different nature of teaching versus research work in comparing GTA and GRA workloads. It is the culture in EEOB to have duties on grant-supported GRAs align closely with the student's graduate research, though that may not always be the case. **For any GRA, the required workload across one semester should not exceed 320 hours total, or an average of 20 hours per week for 16 weeks**. All GRAs should receive the equivalent of one week of vacation per semester. Supervisors of GRAs are free to substitute a specific work goal for the time requirement (recognizing the maximum of 320 hours in either case) but should establish with the student clearly which it will be at the beginning of the semester. Note that in any GTA or GRA appointment, the hours worked refer to the appointment itself, not a student's work toward their degree, which may or may not align with the duties of the appointment.

Both GRAs and GTAs should work with their supervisors to arrive at a mutually agreeable work schedule. Of paramount importance is that a graduate student receives financial support while also being able to maintain satisfactory progress toward their degree. Concerns about workload or scheduling should be directed to the GSC Chair.

## GTA Evaluations

GTAs are expected to meet their assigned teaching responsibilities and to conduct themselves in a professional and appropriate manner. GTAs will be notified about opportunities to receive outstanding teaching awards from EEOB (via the EEOB Awards Committee), CLSE, and other university offices.

GTAs will be evaluated each semester or session. Each faculty member will provide each GTA with a copy of the teaching responsibilities and duties for their course before the start of the course. The faculty member(s) in charge of the course to which the GTA has been assigned will determine the format of the evaluation (e.g., student evaluations, faculty evaluations, or a combination of the two, whichever the responsible faculty member deems appropriate). A default evaluation form is provided in Appendix C of this document. GTA evaluations from EEOB courses, as well as the evaluations from CLSE, will be shared with the GSC Chair each semester.

Each GTA will receive a copy of their evaluations for their permanent records. If the evaluation is unsatisfactory, the Department Chair will be notified, and they may contact the student. The GTA may then prepare a response to their evaluation, which will be submitted to the Chair (whether or not the evaluation is satisfactory, the GTA may provide the Chair with a response to their evaluation). After review of stated duties and responsibilities of GTAs in the course in question, the faculty member’s evaluation, and the GTA’s response, the Department Chair will inform the GTA and the faculty member of their conclusions regarding the GTA’s performance.

Many factors may contribute to a GTA receiving a poor evaluation in a given semester, and a single semester of negative evaluations will not be the basis for non-reappointment unless the nature of the behaviors exhibited by the GTA are judged to be very serious breaches of professional ethics or responsibilities. In cases where a GTA’s teaching performance or completion of assigned duties is judged not to be satisfactory for a second semester, the GTA and Department Chair will work together to develop a one semester program of activities designed to improve the areas of the GTA’s teaching that have been judged unsatisfactory. The GTA will continue to be assigned teaching duties during that semester.

Should the GTA’s teaching performance again be judged to be unsatisfactory the semester after completing the program or should the GTA decide not to complete the program, they will be subject to non-reappointment. The responsibility for this decision resides with the Department Chair and appeals to this decision should be taken to the Graduate School.

## Termination of GA Appointments

Termination procedures are stated in the Graduate School Handbook. If the GTA wishes to terminate an appointment, a letter should be sent to the Chair of the GSC with a copy to the Department Chair. GA appointments may be terminated prior to the end of the appointment period only with the written approval of the Graduate School. If a GA appointment is terminated prior to the end of the appointment period for any of the following reasons, the GA will no longer be enrolled in the Graduate School and this has significant consequences for the student including a transfer of the cost of the tuition and fees for the semester to the student:

* the GA is no longer enrolled in the Graduate School
* the GA is registered for fewer than the number of hours required for a GA appointment or fewer than three hours for a doctoral student who has passed the candidacy examination
* performance as a GA is determined to be unsatisfactory by the employing unit
* the GA graduates
* The GA has unsatisfactory academic performance

## Short-term Absences and Leaves of Absence

The following sections are excerpts from the Graduate School Handbook (Appendix F), which explains procedures for parental leaves, medical leaves, and related topics in further detail. In general, the local department is expected to work out solutions to assist students with short-term leaves that fall within eligible categories for continued stipends and other benefits. The goal is to allow the student to retain their salary and health care benefits during the specified leave.

Students requiring an absence or leave of absence should also consult the Graduate School policies: https://gradsch.osu.edu/handbook/all#F-2

Coverage of Responsibilities - Funded graduate students who are requesting short-term absences or leaves of absence must follow the procedures established by their appointing units to cover responsibilities in cases of absence. Within EEOB, these situations are handled on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Graduate Studies Chair and the Department Chair. When managing coverage of duties for an absent funded graduate student, appointing units must be sensitive to the load of other graduate students.

Appointing units currently use a variety of practices to manage leaves of absences (i.e. those that extend beyond two weeks). Approaches include temporary assignment of responsibilities to another funded graduate student, accompanied by a temporary increase in that graduate student’s appointment percentage (e.g., from 50% to 75%) or a special payment to that graduate student to compensate for additional effort over a period of time.

In some situations, it is not necessary to cover the duties, and the assignments can be held until the student returns from a leave of absence. In some cases, a graduate student who is not funded is placed on a new appointment to cover the duties. Graduate students may not serve as “volunteer GAs” for the duration of a leave of absence; that is, graduate students may not serve without a stipend, at a stipend not commensurate with the expected load, or without appropriate payment of tuition and fees. Circumstances that may warrant an exception must be approved in advance by the Graduate School.

Approval Process - Requests for short-term absences and leaves of absence are handled at the local level. When in need of a short-term absence or a leave of absence, the funded graduate student must make a request as promptly as possible to their immediate academic or administrative supervisor (in EEOB, the supervisor is the student’s primary advisor and the faculty GTA supervisor, if relevant). In the case of short-term absences, the supervisor will make the decision. In the case of leaves of absence, the supervisor must consult with the student’s advisor and chair of the Graduate Studies Committee in the student’s program of study. In some cases, it may be necessary for the supervisor and/or student to consult with other entities (such as a funding agency, the Office of International Education, etc.). For students on a Graduate School fellowship appointment, the student’s program of study must notify the Office of Fellowship Services of the student’s leave of absence.

# APPENDIX A - Help with Non-academic or Sensitive Issues

**EEOB Graduate Student Resources for help with non-academic issues**

Are you looking for help with a sensitive or non-academic issue, such as a mental health issue or a problem that has arisen in your degree program, your lab, or the department? Here are several possible avenues for finding help or support.

First, **if you are having a mental health crisis and need urgent support**, please call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. **At the end of this document, there is a more comprehensive list of options for urgent mental health crises**.

1. **Talk to your advisor[[1]](#footnote-1)**. This is often a good first step for some types of issues. If you are uncomfortable doing that or have already tried that, choose another option.

2. **Contact the Graduate Studies Chair** (James Pease, [pease.25@osu.edu](mailto:pease.25@osu.edu)). If you are uncomfortable talking about your issue with the GSC Chair, consider consulting one of the other faculty members on the GSC (Lindsey Bruckerhoff, Jim Hood, Mandy Slate). No matter which GSC faculty member you contact, please feel free to request that one of the graduate student members of the GSC (Isabel Pen, Demetra Williams) or the Graduate Program Administrator (Corey Ash) is also involved in the conversation, if you would find that helpful. These conversations will remain completely confidential (with the exception of Title IX reporting responsibilities1).

3. **Talk with the Graduate Ombudsperson**. This is a great resource for graduate students. The Graduate and Professional Student (GPS) Ombudsperson is an independent, confidential1, neutral, and informal resource for all graduate and professional students at Ohio State to support them in addressing issues and challenges they encounter within programs or the university at large. Dr. Rebeka Campos-Astorkiza is the current GPS ombudsperson. Visit her website <https://ombuds.osu.edu/grad-ombuds> to understand what services she offers and how to contact her. She also has a short introductory video that may be helpful: <https://tinyurl.com/bn3udtrd>

4. **Are you having a** **mental health issue** and looking for knowledgeable help and support?

* The Office of Student Life’s **Counseling and Consultation Service** (CCS) ([https://ccs.osu.edu/](https://ccs.osu.edu/%20)) provides individual and group mental health services, psychoeducational workshops and outreach programming to currently enrolled students, as well as spouses/partners of students who are covered by the Student Health Insurance Plan. CCS offers a wide variety of services to meet the individual needs of each student. Services are FREE.
* The **Psychological Services Center** (PSC; <https://psychology.osu.edu/psc>) in OSU’s Department of Psychology provides psychological treatments for a range of issues and services are FREE for adults in Central Ohio. Therapists are advanced students in OSU’s Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program. Supervision and training is provided by licensed psychologists in the Department of Psychology. For more information about any of these services or to schedule an appointment, please call 614-292-2345 or email [psc@psy.ohio-state.edu](mailto:psc@psy.ohio-state.edu).

**In the event of a mental health crisis**

Go to the nearest Emergency Room or **call 911**.

If you are experiencing a crisis or have an urgent need, please call the OSU Office of Counseling and Consultation Services at **614-292-5766** to speak with a therapist. In the event of an emergency or need to speak with a clinician immediately, please visit your nearest emergency department or [Netcare Access](http://www.netcareaccess.org/).

If you are calling the Office of Counseling and Consultation Service after hours, choose option 2 which includes weekends and holidays. You also have the option to [schedule an appointment to speak with a therapist](https://ccs.osu.edu/services/schedule-an-appointment).

**Hotline Information**

* [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/) at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
* National 24/7 Suicide Hotline: 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)
* Columbus, Ohio Suicide Hotline: 614-221-5445
* [OSU Reach Campaign](http://reach.osu.edu/)
* [Save-Suicide Awareness](http://www.save.org/)
* Military Veterans Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (Press 1)
* Suicide Hotline in Spanish: 1-800-273-TALK (Press 2)
* LGBT Youth Suicide Hotline: 1-866-4-U-TREVOR

[**Crisis Text Line**](http://www.crisistextline.org/)

Text “**4HOPE**” to **741-741**  
Free, 24/7, Confidential

Crisis Text Line serves anyone in any type of crisis, providing them access to free, 24/7 emotional support and information they need via the medium they already use and trust: text. Here’s how it works:

* Someone texts into Crisis Text Line anywhere, anytime, about any type of crisis.
* A live, trained specialist receives the text and responds quickly.
* The specialist helps the person stay safe and healthy with effective, secure counseling and referrals through text message using Crisis Text Line’s platform.

**Other Local Emergency Psychiatric Resources**

* **Netcare Access Crisis Hotline**at 614-276-CARE (2273) - Netcare provides twenty-four hour mental health and substance abuse crisis intervention, stabilization and assessment for Franklin County, Ohio residents
* **Riverside Methodist Hospital** is located at 3535 Olentangy River Road, 614-566-5321
* **Mount Carmel West Hospital** is located at 793 West State Street, 614-234-5000

# APPENDIX B – Example of The GTA Performance Evaluation Form in EEOB

**EEOB TA EVALUATION**

To EEOB Instructors: Please provide the following information for each of your GTAs. This information will be shared with the GTA, with non-student members of the EEOB Graduate Studies Committee, and with the EEOB Chair. At the end of the form, please add any confidential comments that you would prefer not to share with the student. Thank you for this important feedback.

TA:

INSTRUCTOR(S):

COURSE:

SEMESTER and YEAR:

Did you attend any of the TA’s lab or recitation sessions for observations?

(If not, please consider doing this in the future)

How would you rate the TA’s performance overall?

\_\_\_\_ Exceptional

\_\_\_\_ Satisfactory

\_\_\_\_ Unsatisfactory—Did you advise TA in writing or a meeting of issues as they arose during the semester? Did you contact GSC Chair or Graduate Program Coordinator of issues?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Excellent* | *Good* | *Moderate* | *Poor* | *Unacceptable* | *N/A* |
| Attendance and contributions at TA meetings |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Timely responses to emails and assignments |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Absences/notice provided |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lecture attendance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Interactions with students at lectures, including active learning |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other interactions with students |  |  |  |  |  |  |

(continued on next page)

1. If you marked *Unsatisfactory* above, please provide an explanation of the problem(s), in language intended for the student to read. You are also welcome to comment more broadly on satisfactory or exceptional performance:
2. Provide any additional suggestions/comments for improvement here:
3. Would this student be a good nominee for GTA Award? Please explain why.
4. Provide any additional confidential comments for the faculty members of the EEOB Graduate Studies Committee and the EEOB Chair here:

# APPENDIX C - Advanced Evolution, Ecology, and Writing Courses

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Number** | **Course** | **Credit Hours** | **Evolution** | **Ecology** | **Writing** |
| EEOB 5310 | Advanced Principles of Evolution | 3 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 5320 | Society and Evolution: Differing Worldviews | 3 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 5330 | Population Genetics & Phylogeography | 3 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 5340 | Evolution & Taxonomy of Vascular Plants | 4 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 5350 | Evolutionary Ecology | 3 | X | X |  |
| EEOB 5410 | Ocean Ecology | 1.5 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 5420 | Ecology of Inland Waters | 4 |  | X |  |
| EEOB 5430 | Fish Ecology | 3 |  | X |  |
| EEOB 5440 | Plankton Ecology |  |  | X |  |
| EEOB 5450 | Population Ecology | 3 |  | X |  |
| EEOB 5460 | Physiological Ecology | 3 |  | X |  |
| EEOB 5470 | Community and Ecosystem Ecology | 3 |  | X |  |
| EEOB 5480 | Advanced Plant Ecology |  |  | X |  |
| EEOB 5490 | Insect Behavior: Mechanisms & Function |  | X |  |  |
| EEOB 5610/5610S | Translating Evolution (COSI) | 3 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 5798 | Tropical Behavioral Ecology and Evolution in Panama |  | X | X |  |
| EEOB 5910 | Evolution & Ecology of Reptiles & Amphibians |  | X |  |  |
| EEOB 6210 | Ecotoxicology | 3 |  | X |  |
| EEOB 6320 | Principles of Systematics | 3 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 6310 | Molecular Evolution | 3 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 6330 | Phylogenetic Theory & Methods | 3 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 6620 | Principles of Scientific Writing--manuscript | 1.5 |  |  | X |
| EEOB 6630 | Principles of Scientific Writing--proposal | 1.5 |  |  | X |
| EEOB 6340 | Biodiversity Informatics |  |  |  |  |
| EEOB 5798 | Tropical Behavioral Ecology and Evolution | 3 | X | X |  |
| EEOB 7210 | Molecular Methods in Evolution & Ecology | 3 |  |  |  |
| EEOB 7220 | Modeling in Evolutionary Ecology | 3 | X | X |  |
| EEOB 7310 | Studies in Taxonomy | 3 | X |  |  |
| EEOB 8896.04 | TBEE Smithsonian Writing |  |  |  | X |

1. Please be aware that, as employees of the Ohio State University, if we become aware of any incident that could potentially be classified as sexual misconduct, we are required to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Equity. <https://titleix.osu.edu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)