



BIOLOGY

Graduate Programs **AT USU**

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Last updated: August 2015

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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OUTLINE OF GRADUATE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS - Department of Biology

- Meet with major professor each semester to determine coursework prior to registration (before Program of Study is submitted)
- Register by deadline each semester. Registration is not required in the summer. Balance for tuition and fees must be paid by registration deadline
- Go to <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms> for required forms
- Supervisory Committee Assignment (form) -
 - o Submit **by the end of your second semester. *Note that summer does count as a semester***
 - o Submit with a 1-2 page outline of your research proposal
 - o Submit to the Staff Assistant to the GPC for approval by the Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) and Department Head
- Program of Study (form)
 - o Submit **by the end of your second semester**
 - o Teaching Seminar does not count towards coursework and cannot be listed on the Program of Study
 - o Continued Graduate Advisement (6990/7990) does not count towards coursework and cannot be listed on the Program of Study
 - o Master's students must include a minimum of 30 coursework/research credits (6-15 thesis research credits, BIOL 6970, allowed)
 - o Doctoral students must include a minimum of 60 credits (a minimum of 12 dissertation research credits, BIOL 7970, allowed)
 - o Other restrictions and requirements are outlined in the Graduate Student Policy
 - o All committee members need to sign the form
 - o Submit form to the Staff Assistant to the GPC for approval by the GPC and Department Head
- Research Proposal
 - o MS- Submit **by the end of your second semester**
 - o PhD - Submit with your [Application for Candidacy](#) form - after completing your comprehensive exams and **at least three months before final defense**
 - o Must be signed by all committee members
 - o Submit to the Staff Assistant to the GPC for approval by the GPC
- Thesis/Dissertation Authorship and Copyright (forms)
 - o Obtain forms from the School of Graduate Studies website
 - o Complete and submit to Staff Assistant to the GPC for signatures
 - o MS - Submit **with research proposal**
 - o PhD - Submit **with Appointment for Candidacy** form
- Comprehensive Exams
 - o MS - **within your first 1 ½ years**
 - o PhD - **After 45 credits of graduate work, or 2 years**, whichever comes first
 - o All committee members sign departmental form after exam
 - o Submit [Record of Comprehensive Exam](#) (form) to the Staff Assistant to the GPC
 - o Doctoral candidates must also submit an [Application for Candidacy](#) form, no later than three months prior to the

final defense

- Thesis/Dissertation Review

- o Review “[Publication_Guide_for Graduate Students](#)” - available at the School of Graduate Studies’ website
- o Attend Thesis and Dissertation Workshop - offered by the School of Graduate Studies several times a year
- o Provide your committee with your thesis/dissertation at least four weeks prior to defense
- o Your major professor is your Thesis/Dissertation Reviewer and needs to sign off on all review forms after your defense

- Defense

- o Submit an [Appointment for Examination](#) form **at least 10 working days** prior to your scheduled defense to the School of Graduate Studies
- o A formal Department seminar is required immediately preceding the defense before the Supervisory Committee
- o Contact department main office to prepare and post announcements
- o Committee will be reminded of upcoming defense and where to obtain forms from the School of Graduate Studies website to be submitted after defense



Dear New Graduate Student:

Welcome to the Graduate Programs in the Department of Biology at Utah State University. I think you will find the faculty, students, and staff in the Department to be a collegial group that will welcome you and be ready to assist you in your pursuit of a graduate degree. The Department is proud of our superior graduate students and we will do all we can to assist you. Your main contact and source of advice will be your faculty major professor. You will also find valuable advice and assistance from the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee, Co-Directors of Graduate Programs and the members of the Graduate Programs Committee. Please know that you can contact me if you have questions or concerns that I can resolve for you.

As you navigate the intricacies of your program - with the forms, policies, and procedures - we hope this handbook will serve as a guide to make this process a little easier. I encourage you to read through this handbook and the Department Policy (available on the department website), and be aware of the deadlines for graduate programs. You will benefit from your experience here much more if you become involved in Department activities - attend coffee hours, seminars, and get involved with the Biology Graduate Student Association. I encourage you to look beyond your own lab and develop collaborations with faculty and students in other labs, departments, and colleges. Let us know how we can better serve you and improve your graduate programs. Again, welcome to Biology - we hope you enjoy your time here and enjoy strong ties with colleagues and friends here long after you graduate.

Sincerely,

Alan H. Savitzky
Professor and Head

FOLLOWING ACCEPTANCE TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN BIOLOGY

Congratulations! You have been accepted to Graduate Programs in the Department of Biology. Following are instructions on steps you need to take to accept this offer and begin your graduate program at USU:

Checklist

- ☞ Contact your assigned major professor (their email is provided in the offer of acceptance from the School of Graduate Studies or on the department website) to indicate that you are accepting the offer of admission
- ☞ Contact the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee in the Department of Biology (grad.info@biology.usu.edu) to indicate that you are accepting the offer of admission
- ☞ Reply to the School of Graduate Studies (per their instructions) to indicate that you are accepting the offer of admission
- ☞ Contact the Office of International Students and Scholars if you are an international student (see below for details)
- ☞ Review the USU catalog, Graduate Catalog, and course schedule bulletins on the USU website: www.usu.edu
- ☞ Check the Biology website, www.biology.usu.edu, often for information and updates on deadlines
- ☞ The Staff Assistant for Graduate Programs will assist you with completing a Tuition Waiver/Remission Request form.

Your Major Professor Assignment

You have been assigned a faculty member in the Department of Biology who has agreed to serve as your major professor. You should contact your advisor upon acceptance of the offer of admission. You will need to discuss the following with your major professor:

- Research Assistantship availability from your major professor, or offer of Teaching Assistantship or Fellowship from Department
- Coursework, to be decided on prior to your first semester. A Tuition Award Request form (which indicates coursework for the year) must be submitted by **1 June**. If you were admitted after 1 June, sufficient time will be given for you and your advisor to submit this form. Your advisor will help you choose the appropriate coursework for your first year. The coursework must meet the approval of the Graduate Programs Committee. When the coursework is approved by the GPC, a Tuition Award Request form will be processed and you may register for courses. See details in the next chapter
- Research projects in the lab
- Obtain contact information for other graduate students in the lab. They will be a valuable resource for you as you prepare to attend USU

Accepting an Offer of Admission

Upon receipt of acceptance, you will be given some time to make your decision. Once you decide to accept or decline the offer, it is important that you follow the instructions in the letter (or email) from the Department. Once you accept the offer, as indicated in the letter, you will be cleared for registration. If this is not done, the Department will not be able to process the tuition award request and you will not be able to register.

Accepting an Offer of a Fellowship or Assistantship

Fellowships. An offer of a fellowship may come from the Department, the College of Science, or the School of Graduate Studies, depending on the fellowship. It is important to follow the instructions in the award letter to accept the fellowship. Please be aware that it is not uncommon for the award letter to come only after an informal acceptance of the fellowship. If you wish to have the offer in writing prior to acceptance, please feel free to contact the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee (grad.info@biology.usu.edu) to request a letter. Fellowships may be paid out in different ways. For this reason, it is important that you contact the office that awarded the fellowship when you arrive on campus to make sure that you have all the required information and receive payment as indicated.

Research Assistantships. A Research Assistantship (RA) is offered by a faculty member. You will need to accept an offer of an RA directly to the faculty member who made the offer. He/she will then contact the Department with the required information (dates of service, rate of pay, and account number) so that you will receive a paycheck. You will be required to complete an **I-9** (Employment Verification) and **W-4** forms with the Department prior to your start date. Please plan on submitting the required information; you can receive a list of the needed documents from the Biology Business Assistant.

Teaching Assistantships. An offer of a Teaching Assistantship (TA) is extended by the Department. You will be notified of a TA award in your acceptance letter, or email, from the Department. TA contracts will include the contract, a copy for your records, and an award letter. You must sign the original copy of the TA contract and return by the date indicated to accept the award. Please note the dates of service, workshops required, tuition payment information, and required deadlines. You will be required to complete an **I-9** (Employment Verification) and **W-4** forms with the Department prior to your start date as indicated on the contract. Please plan on submitting the required information; you can receive a list of the needed documents from the Biology Business Assistant, prior to your start date.

What You Should Know About Tuition Waivers and Awards Prior to Accepting Admission

A student awarded a fellowship, teaching assistantship, or research assistantship will qualify for tuition awards. You need to be aware of the restrictions of the award/grant given to you. See below for details on the awards(s) that apply to you:

Nonresident Tuition Waivers for MS and PhD Students: A nonresident tuition waiver will waive the nonresident portion of tuition for nonresidents. The award will not cover student

fees, international student fees, or course/lab fees. To qualify for a nonresident tuition waiver, the student must:

- a) Be a full-time* MS or PhD student in good standing; receive a graduate assistantship or fellowship from the University of at least \$800/month throughout the semester of the award
- b) Register for a minimum of 3 credits, and typically no more than 12 credits. The number of credits is determined by full-time status (see below) and the Program of Study
- c) Submit a **Program of Study** form by the deadline (by end of second semester)

U.S. citizens who are not Utah residents are encouraged to obtain residency by 12 months of their arrival. International students who qualify will receive a nonresident award for courses listed on their Program of Study. Nonresident tuition is not charged for BIOL 6990/7990 credits (Continued Graduate Advisement). Students should register for BIOL 6990/7990 after completion of coursework.

In-state Tuition Awards for MS and PhD Students: An in-state tuition award will cover the in-state portion of tuition (not including fees). To qualify for the in-state tuition award, the student must:

- a) Be a full-time matriculated student* in good standing
- b) Receive a graduate assistantship or fellowship from the University of at least \$800/month throughout the semester of the award
- c) Register for a minimum of 3 credits, and typically no more than 12 credits. The number of credits is determined by full-time status (see below) and the Program of Study
- d) Submit the **Program of Study** by end of second semester.

PhD students will receive awards for normally no more than 60 credits during their entire program (not counting BIOL 7990). Upon completion of 60 credits of required coursework and research (BIOL 7970), these students should register for BIOL 7990. Tuition awards cannot be applied to BIOL 6990/7990.

MS students will receive remissions for normally no more than 30 credits during their entire program (not counting BIOL 6990). Upon completion of 30 credits of required coursework and research (BIOL 6970), these students should register for BIOL 6990. Tuition awards cannot be applied to BIOL 6990/7990.

Tuition awards beyond 30 credits for MS or 60 credits for PhD are subject to approval by GPC and the Department Head and availability of funds.

*A full-time matriculated graduate student must be one of the following:

- o Registered for 9 or more graduate credits; or
- o Registered for 6 or more graduate credits if employed as a graduate assistant for 15 hours per week or more; or
- o Registered for 3 graduate credits with all required coursework completed and only the research component of the degree remaining (the student's Program of Study must have been submitted to the School of Graduate Studies); or

- Registered for at least 3 graduate credits during the semester of the final thesis/dissertation defense.

Coursework Restrictions for Awards. You need to be aware, prior to submission of your Tuition Award Request form and eventually your Program of Study that only courses listed on the Program of Study qualify for a tuition award or waiver. Therefore, you should only take courses listed on your Program of Study. You will need to work with your advisor to choose the appropriate coursework for your first year. This coursework must also be approved by the Graduate Programs Committee

Keep in mind the following restrictions apply to courses included in the Program of Study:

1. No more than 3 credits of 3000-4990 may be used (they cannot be Biology courses or courses required for Biology B.S. degrees).
2. No more than 15 semester credits of 3000-5990 level coursework may be used for a graduate degree. Up to 3 semester credits of coursework at the 3000-4990 level may be included within the 15 semester credit limit, upon recommendation by the student's supervisory committee and approval by the graduate dean. To be approved, such courses must typically be outside the student's graduate-degree field.
3. Amendments to the Program of Study can be made by completing the Program of Study Revision form on the School of Graduate Studies website (<http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>). Changes require approval of all supervisory committee members; submit the form to the Staff Assistant to the GPC for School of Graduate Studies approval. No changes can be made to the Program of Study form within two months prior to the defense.

Awards/Waivers Procedure. All students are required to submit a **Tuition Awards** form by **1 June** each year. See details in the next section for completion of this form. Approved requests are submitted on the Banner system. The award will be indicated on the student's account. Awards/Waivers cover tuition expenses for a designated number of credits. Students are responsible for all fees (student fees, international student fees, health insurance expenses, lab/course fees, or late registration fees). Students who receive an award and/or waiver must register by the course registration deadline for the respective semester. It is important that the student register for the correct number of credits and for the correct course(s). Any award not used by the registration deadline for the semester will be cancelled. **Courses added after the University's deadline to add classes are not eligible for an award or waiver.** Students are encouraged to register and pay their fees prior to the fee payment deadline to avoid losing their waiver/award. Students are responsible for any late fees incurred as a result of registering after the deadline. *A student who drops a course after the tuition has been paid by an award or waiver must pay any fees involved and must reimburse the University for the tuition.* If a student drops a course or courses so that his or her registration falls below the required level, he or she becomes ineligible for the award/waiver and will be billed for the full tuition for that semester. In both cases, a hold will be put on further registration until full payment is made to the University. A student may be held liable for the amount of the tuition awards if he/she obtains an award and does not meet the requirements.

The award or waiver must not conflict with the estimated income reported on a loan or grant application. Students with federal loans who receive more than the federally approved maximum in financial aid must, by law, repay the excess. Contact the Financial Aid Office, if you have any questions.

Additional details on registration are in the next chapter.

Restrictions. Nonresident tuition awards and the tuition waiver are not provided to students who are compensated for their work through organizations other than Utah State University (for example, internships for which pay is received directly from another institution or agency), and in some cases for fellowship awards.

The number of credits for which students may receive nonresident tuition awards and/or the in-state tuition waiver is limited. The nonresident tuition award (covers the nonresident portion of tuition) for a master's degree is limited to 30 credits, and 60 credits for a PhD.

The in-state tuition waiver (covers the in-state portion of tuition) is limited to 30 credits of coursework and thesis research for MS students, and to 60 credits of coursework and dissertation research for PhD students. Unlimited credits of Continued Graduate Advisement (BIOL 6990 and 7990) are allowed, but do not count towards the degree program and are not covered by tuition awards.

Additional Admissions Information for International Students

In addition to the other information presented here, international students will need to be aware of additional factors that impact international graduate student. When the Department accepts an international student, we also submit a financial statement to the School of Graduate Studies to indicate our financial commitment to the student. Your salary (or stipend for a fellowship) in addition to an award and/or waiver will meet the requirement for an application for an I-20. The School of Graduate Studies then requests an I-20 be processed by the Office of Global Engagement/International Students and Scholars, who will contact the student if they require additional information.

International students will need to contact their advisor, the Department, the School of Graduate Studies, and the Office of Global Engagement/International Students and Scholars upon acceptance of admission.

Please contact the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee (grad.info@biology.usu.edu) if you require the I-20 via express mail. We can make arrangements to have the Department express mail your I-20 when you have an urgent deadline for a visa interview.

Your advisor, the Department, or the Office of Global Engagement/International Students and Scholars can help make arrangements to have someone meet you at the Salt Lake City Airport to provide transportation to campus. We can also provide information on housing and provide contacts with other graduate students here to help make your transition to USU as smooth as possible. Please feel free to contact us.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You have accepted the offer of admission from the Department and USU. We look forward to your arrival on campus and your participation in our graduate program. To make your first semester on campus more productive (and less stressful), you will need to be aware of the following requirements and instructions prior to your arrival:

Checklist

- ☞ Complete all requirements described in the previous chapter
- ☞ Submit your Tuition Awards Request form **by 1 June** (later dates can be accommodated in certain situations; the Staff Assistant for Biology Graduate Programs will assist you with completing this form)
- ☞ Register for courses (as indicated on your Tuition Awards Request Form) prior to the deadline
- ☞ See <http://www.usu.edu/housing/> if you need housing information
- ☞ All students are required to purchase student health insurance through USU - or provide proof of sufficient health insurance from a private company
- ☞ Teaching Assistants are required to register for the appropriate Teaching Assistantship Workshop
- ☞ Once you arrive, contact the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee to obtain mailbox and key request form
- ☞ Obtain an aggiemail account through <https://myid.usu.edu/login/auth>

Requirements

Tuition Awards Request. The **Tuition Awards Request** form is due **1 June** each year (admission acceptance dates after this deadline can usually be accommodated). A request form is available from the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee.

Confer with your advisor regarding your coursework for the first year. Complete the tuition award form and submit to your advisor for approval. Your advisor will sign the form and submit it to the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee for processing. The form must be signed by the student and major professor. After the form is approved, your award will be processed. TA workshop credit should not be listed on this form. BIOL 6750-001 (Topics in Biology - 1 credit) is a required course in your first fall semester, introducing you to graduate studies in Biology. BIOL 6750-001 must be listed on the form. The form must be submitted in a timely manner, as indicated, each year. If you neglect to submit this form in a timely manner, you will not receive a tuition award or waiver.

When you register, you will register for the courses on your approved Tuition Awards Request form. The Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee must be notified of any changes in registration due to cancelled classes or a conflict in schedule. If you are required to adjust the number of credits you register for, it is important that you notify the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee so that your waiver or award can be adjusted prior to your registration. Pay close attention to the registration requirements and restrictions outlined below as you complete this form with your advisor.

Registration

Requirements. You will need to register for the required coursework prior to the deadline. See the course schedule on the USU website for the deadline. You will be required to register for the number of credits on your **Tuition Award Request** form. As indicated above, any changes to your proposed registration must be approved by your major professor. The Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee must be notified of all changes.

You will be required to register for BIOL 6750-001 (1 credit) your first fall semester at USU. The "Introduction to Graduate Studies" course is a required course for all Biology graduates. Contact the Staff Assistant for Graduate Programs for more information on the course, including meeting times.

Course Requirements. With the exception of BIOL 6750-001, the Department does not have specific course requirements for graduate programs. A **Program of Study** will be designed in a meeting between you, your major professor, and your supervisory committee during your first year in the program. Until that time, coursework is selected by you in concurrence with your major professor.

In each of your first two semesters, you will normally register for 6 credits. Fellowship recipients or international students may be required to register for 9 credits. International students, who register for fewer than 6 credits, must complete a **Reduced Course Load** approval form with the Office of Global Engagement/International Students and Scholars.

Generally, only 3-6 credits will be from coursework each semester. Sufficient BIOL 6970 (Thesis Research - MS Students) or BIOL 7970 (Dissertation Research - PhD students) credits will be taken to bring the total to the required amount of credits.

Deadline. See the course schedule on the USU website for the registration deadline. You will need to register and pay tuition and/or fees prior to the fee payment deadline as published in the current course bulletin. Neglecting to register and pay your fees by this deadline may result in complications in applying your waiver or award. If fees and tuition are not paid by this deadline, the courses will be purged from the system and you will be required to re-register. If you are not responsible for paying tuition (if you are receiving a waiver/award), it is still your responsibility to make sure your award has been credited to your tuition and that the balance is paid in full, in a timely manner.

Registration for Students with a Waiver or Award. For students who have received a waiver or award, the amount(s) of the award(s) will show up on your financial statement. Your account will not be credited the day you register, but should within a day or two. It is best to pay your student fees and any course fees at the time you register. Check back to make sure your award was correctly applied to your account. If the award has not been applied, or there is any other problem with registration, contact the Staff Assistant for the GPC. When a student delays registration to the last minute - or even after the deadline - it is more difficult to fix any problems that arise. Delaying registration may cause payment of the waiver or award to be delayed or withdrawn. Registration is not completed until fees and tuition are paid in full.

Banner Registration. Upon applying to USU, you were assigned an "A" number. This will be your student identification number throughout your graduate program at USU. Once you accept admission, it will be activated to allow you to register for graduate courses. Go to the USU website (www.usu.edu) and click on "My USU." You can login directly to Access (Banner) with your A# - or look up your A# (Access ID Lookup). When you first log on, your password will be your birth date (MMDDYY) as indicated on the site. You can review the class schedules,

register, review financial awards, and pay directly on site (see payment options at <http://www.usu.edu/registrar/htm/tuition/payment>).

Prerequisites. If you are registering for a course with a prerequisite that you have already met, your advisor will need to clear any holds so you may register. If you have not met the prerequisite, you will need to contact the instructor for clearance. The instructor will need to sign the required form.

Student ID Card

After you have completed registration, you must apply for a student ID card in the Student Center. This card will allow you access to the libraries, computer rooms, health facilities, and most sporting events on campus. You can set up an account to use your ID card as a debit card for purchases at the bookstore and restaurants on campus. Your ID card may also provide you with student discounts at restaurants and merchants in the local community.

Housing

Logan and the surrounding communities (Cache Valley) offer moderately priced housing opportunities. On-campus housing is available. You can visit the USU Housing website (www.housing.usu.edu) for additional information. If you choose on-campus housing and are required to be on campus before your dorm/apartment is available, you can contact the University Inn (www.usu.edu/univinn/) for a discounted student rate. There are numerous options for apartments or renting/buying homes in the valley. Many apartments and houses where rent is shared are available in close proximity to campus.

You can also consult the local newspaper, the Herald Journal (www.hjnews.com). If you wish to explore options of shared housing with other Biology graduate students, send an email to the Staff Assistant for the GPC (grad.info@biology.usu.edu) with your request and contact information. The Staff Assistant will forward this information to our current students to connect you with housing prospects. Feel free to contact your advisor, our graduate students, or the Staff Assistant for any advice or information on local housing.

Campus Parking and Local Public Transportation

Parking is limited on and around campus. Reasonably priced parking passes can be purchased for student and economy lots. Visit the Parking website (parking.usu.edu/) for details on parking terraces and lots around campus and parking permit fees. The University does offer a free shuttle service to/from parking lots and satellite campus buildings in the area. See parking.usu.edu/htm/aggie-shuttle for information on the Aggie Shuttle Service.

The Cache Valley Transit District offers fare-free bus transportation throughout the valley and provides service to the USU campus. See www.cvtdbus.org/ for route information.

The campus and community is amenable to bike and pedestrian traffic. Many faculty, staff, and students choose one of these options over driving to campus.

Health Insurance

Health insurance coverage is **required** for all international students and those on an assistantship. USU offers a subsidized health insurance plan. Full-time graduate students working 20 or more hours per week for one or more months per year as a Graduate Instructor, Graduate Teaching Assistant, or Graduate Research Assistant, OR graduate students receiving

a fellowship/scholarship/stipend of \$10,000 or more for the academic year (excludes private scholarships and tuition awards) are eligible for the university subsidized student health insurance coverage. USU pays 80% of the premium costs, and the student pays 20% (see Graduate Student/Research Assistant Insurance webpage on the Sponsored Programs website for current premium rates and more details at <http://rgs.usu.edu/spo/htm/proposal-prep-resources/graduate-student-insurance>). If a student already has other comparable coverage, they can provide proof of insurance each semester to waive the student plan. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies webpage on the Graduate Student Insurance Plan (<http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/finances/insurance>).

International Students

New international graduate students should plan on arriving in Logan at least two weeks before the start of the semester. If you receive an assistantship, you will need to apply for a social security card 10 days after your arrival in the US. More information is available at <http://globalengagement.usu.edu/iss/htm/current-students/international-student-forms> under General Forms.

Before you arrive on campus:

- ☞ Complete all requirements for checklists on pgs. 1 and 8 that apply to you
- ☞ Contact your advisor to discuss coursework
- ☞ Submit the Tuition Award Request form as outlined above
- ☞ Teaching Assistants must register for the International Student TA Training course. Contact the instructor on the first day of class. More information here <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/htm/value-added/training/ta-training>.
- ☞ Register for courses as indicated on our Tuition Award Request form - Pay your fees (this may be taken care of in person, depending on your arrival date - see information in this handbook on registration deadline)

As soon as you arrive on campus:

- √ Meet with your advisor
- √ Meet with the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee
- √ Meet with the Office of Global Engagement/International Students and Scholars (ISS). At ISS you will need to:
 - Register with them and provide them with your contact information (local address and telephone number)
 - Obtain an Employment Authorization Verification letter - give this form to the Biology Business Assistant
 - Obtain information on applying for a Social Security Number
 - Obtain information on international student orientation and socials
 - Obtain information on clubs and organizations of interest to you
- √ Request a letter verifying employment, if employed by the department, from the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee in Biology to submit with your application for Social Security Number
- √ Apply for your Social Security Number as soon after arrival in Logan as possible. Any delay in

applying will delay payment to you. See the ISS website for instructions, under General Forms, <http://globalengagement.usu.edu/iss/hcm/current-students/international-student-forms>. If you have questions you can contact Ogden Social Security Office at 1.800.772.1213.

- √ If you are a TA, contact the instructor of the course to which you are assigned (this should be done prior to the start of the ITA workshop)
- √ Obtain a waiver for health insurance from the Office of Student Health or purchase health insurance through USU (see information above on Health Insurance)
- √ If you are registering for fewer than 6 credits, you must obtain approval from ISS with the Reduced Course Load Form.
- √ When you receive your Social Security Number Receipt, meet with the Biology Business Assistant to complete I-9 and W-2 forms (This will enable the Department to pay you for your fellowship or assistantship)

Please don't hesitate to contact faculty and staff in the Department of Biology or ISS for any assistance.

Students on Fellowships

Recipients of a fellowship from USU will receive details of their fellowships in the award letter. Fellowships on campus are awarded through different offices (e.g., the School of Graduate Studies, the College of Science, and the Department of Biology) and are awarded in different ways. Some are awarded through the financial aid office and will show up at registration. Others are paid directly to the student in 3-4 payments throughout the year. You need to make sure that your contact information is current in the USU Banner System and that the Department has your current information. Once you have a current address and telephone number, provide this to the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee in Biology and change your address on the Banner system online through "My USU."

Students Working as a Teaching Assistant (TA)

TA Workshops. TAs must complete or be enrolled in the appropriate TA Workshop in order to teach on campus. It is best to register for the appropriate workshop soon after you receive notification of the award (and prior to your arrival). Information on the workshops is provided in your TA contract letter and can be found on the Graduate School's website (<https://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/hcm/value-added/training/ta-training/>). If you have any questions, contact the Staff Assistant for Graduate Programs in Biology. You will need to register for the appropriate workshop as follows:

TA Workshop (ITLS 7920). The course is a 1-credit, online class that is graded pass/fail. No incompletes are allowed for this course. There is also a required, 2-hour classroom session that addresses FERPA, sexual harassment prevention policies, and how to accommodate students with disabilities. Students should expect to invest 40-45 hours of time to complete the training.

International TA Workshop (IELI 7920). International students must register for the Workshop prior to arrival at USU. Contact the School of Graduate Studies to register for the Workshop. If you have been awarded a TA for fall semester, you are required to complete the Workshop either before or during the fall semester. You also must take and

pass the SPEAK test. Please wait for registration information from the Staff Assistant for the GPC. The workshop requires a considerable amount of time. Please be prepared to attend the entire workshop. Students who do not complete the workshop risk losing the TA. After completion of the workshop provide the Staff Assistant for the GPC with your certification certificate. **This course is only offered during the fall semester.**

TA Workshop for Native English Speakers. Native English speakers will be required to complete the TA workshop online. Contact the School of Graduate Studies if you have any question on which workshop is appropriate for you. It is to your advantage to register for this course as soon as possible. You will contact the Graduate School to register and will information for taking the online course. If you fail to enroll in the workshop prior to the beginning of your assignment, you risk losing the TA. Loss of a TA will cause a tuition award/waiver to be withdrawn.

There are no fees or expenses for the TA workshops, and the credit does not count towards your Program of Study (degree program); however, you will receive one credit on your transcript to document completion of the workshop. Do not include the TA workshop on your **Program of Study** form or the **Tuition Waiver/Award Request** form.

Employment Verification Requirement. TAs must contact the Biology Business Assistant to complete an **I-9** (Verification of Employment) form and a **W-4** form prior to your start date (as indicated on the TA contract). Please plan on submitting required information; you can receive a list of the needed documents from the Business Assistant. If this form is not completed prior to the start date of your TA, we will be required to adjust your start date, which will delay payment of your stipend.

As discussed above, international students must apply for a social security card prior to completing this form. Once you receive your social security receipt, see the Biology Business Assistant to complete this form (bring your passport and original social security receipt). Every effort will be made to expedite your salary payment after you receive your social security receipt. Please be aware that we cannot pay you before this form is completed. Once you receive your original social security card, please bring it to the Business Assistant as soon as possible or your pay and position will be terminated.

Assignments. Teaching assignments are finalized about one month prior to each semester. Assignments are made by the Co-Directors of Graduate Studies in consultation with course instructors and students. Once you have received your assignment, contact the course instructor. The instructor will provide you with the details of your responsibilities in the class or lab. You will be evaluated each semester you work as a TA by the instructor and students.

Students Working as a Research Assistant (RA)

RAs will receive details of salary rates and dates of service from major professor's. Advisors are required to provide this information to the Biology Staff Assistant for Graduate Programs and Business Assistant prior to deadlines for submission of tuition remission/award/grants. Maintain frequent communication with the Staff Assistant for Graduate Programs and Business Assistant to ensure that your RA stipend is processed in a timely manner. This is especially important if

you are switching from one type of stipend to another (e.g., RA to TA). Your tuition waiver/award depends on current stipend information, so it is important that it is always accurate and submitted on time. Of course, receiving a paycheck also depends on this information being submitted in a timely manner.

If you are being paid on a RA, you will need to complete an **I-9** (Verification of Employment) form and **W-4** form prior to your start date. You will need to bring approved forms of identification, <https://hr.usu.edu/forms/>, titled [I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form and Acceptable Documents](#) to the Business Assistant to complete this form. If this form is not completed prior to the start date of your RA, your first paycheck will be delayed. As discussed above, international students must apply for a social security card prior to completing this form. Please be aware that we cannot pay you before these forms are completed.

Direct Deposit

USU requires direct deposit of your paycheck. Provide bank account information to the Business Assistant.

General Orientation Information

Email. You can create your own student account (@aggiemail.usu.edu) in USU INB (<http://banner.usu.edu>). USU Exchange accounts are also available to graduate students upon request; however, be aware that the USU Exchange account will be terminated upon termination of employment, even for temporary interruptions in registration (except summer). In contrast, @aggiemail.usu.edu is a lifetime account. Whichever account you choose, and check regularly, **be sure that it is connected to your ID on Banner** so that you receive information regarding employment, classes, etc.

Office Space. The Department has limited office space for graduate students. In many cases, your major professor can provide office space. If not, contact the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee to see if there is available student office space. Office space will not be assigned until your arrival to campus. While space is limited, every effort will be made to provide you with adequate office space.

Keys. Submit a key request to the Staff Assistant in BNR 121 for approval. It can take a week or two to get keys, so as soon as you arrive you should submit a request. You will need a key for the outside doors of BNR, advisor's lab and office space assigned to you. If you work with a faculty member assigned to another building, (VSB, Herbarium, GEOL), you may also want to obtain keys to all appropriate buildings. Buildings on campus are generally locked at night and on weekends.

Mailboxes. Graduate Student mailboxes are located in BNR 119, next to the Biology main office. You will have a mailbox assigned to you prior to your arrival. Please do not use your department mailbox for personal mail delivery. Mail related to your research (catalogs, correspondence, publications, etc.) is accepted; bank statements, bills, personal catalogs, and magazines, etc. are not.

Photos. The Department of Biology has a photo board for faculty, staff, and graduate students located outside the Biology main office, BNR 121. Please contact the staff in the main office to arrange to have your photo taken for the board.

Website. Graduate students may have personal pages on the Biology website. Contact the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee for information on setting up and making changes to your webpage.

YOUR FIRST SEMESTER AT USU

By the start of your first semester, you should be registered, have Biology email access, and have completed the TA workshop (or be enrolled) if you are a TA. You are now ready to embark on your graduate program in earnest. During your first semester at USU, it is important for you to familiarize yourself with the people, policies, and procedures that will enhance your graduate program. To begin this process:

Checklist

- ☞ Review the Graduate Programs Policy, and be aware of the deadlines
- ☞ Attend BIOL 6750 - Topics in Biology (make sure you are enrolled in section 001)
- ☞ Attend the Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA) meetings
- ☞ Obtain required approval for your research and attend safety trainings as required
- ☞ Start familiarizing yourself with research in the Department
- ☞ Attend Department Seminars
- ☞ Meet with your advisor often

Graduate Programs Policy and Graduate Programs Committee

Policy. The Graduate Programs Policy is posted on the USU Biology website under Graduate Info (<http://www.biology.usu.edu/htm/graduate-info/for-current-students>). It contains departmental policy from admission to completion. It is important that you familiarize yourself with this document. You will also want to become familiar with the School of Graduate Studies policy and procedures (<http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/>). It is your responsibility to follow these policies. When you have questions regarding policy or procedure contact your major professor, the Staff Assistant for Graduate Programs, or the Directors of Graduate Studies.

Graduate Programs Committee (GPC). The GPC is an advisory committee to the Department Head of Biology. This committee reviewed your application and recommended your acceptance and financial award. GPC advises the Head on changes to policy and issues concerning graduate students. They will review and approve your supervisory committee, Program of Study, and proposal, and will be advised of your progress throughout your degree program in the Department. GPC evaluates and recommends recipients of awards and scholarships to the Head. You are encouraged to contact members of the committee at any time with concerns or for advice. A vital GPC contact for you, as a student, is the graduate student representative. You are encouraged to contact your student representative if you want to convey concerns to the committee on policy or procedure.

Your first contact with questions on policy and procedure will be your major professor. Some issues will need to be resolved by contacting the Directors of Graduate Studies.

Topics in Biology-BIOL 6750 (an introduction to graduate studies)

BIOL 6750 Section 001, Topics in Biology is a required 1-credit course that will provide you instruction on departmental policy and deadlines and valuable information on research, scientific integrity and ethics, publishing, writing your thesis/dissertation, and pursuing a career after completion of your degree.

You may also take other sections or other Special Topics courses. To do so, you will need to obtain authorization to sign into two different sections of the same course. To sign up for two sections of BIOL 6750 see the Staff Assistant for the GPC.

If you begin your degree program in spring or summer semesters, you are required to register for this course in the first fall semester of your graduate program.

Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA)

You are now a member of the BGSA and are encouraged to participate in their meetings, fundraisers, and activities. The graduate students in Biology are a diverse and friendly group. Your contribution to the group is valuable to the Department, and may benefit you as well. Many of the committees in the Department include a graduate student representative. Nominations are held each year for these positions and for officers in the association. Information on the BGSA is provided on the departmental website. Contact the president of the BGSA for additional information. There are also opportunities to represent the Department and the College of Science in the Graduate Student Senate (GSS).

Research Approval and Laboratory Safety Training Requirements

All University research involving human subjects, use of animal subjects, radiation or radiological materials, recombinant DNA, or biohazardous materials must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate University committee(s) before the research is initiated. You, with the assistance of your major professor, are responsible for obtaining the necessary approval for your research. Verification of approval must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies Office before your Program of Study (for MS students) or Application for Candidacy (for doctoral candidates) can be approved. For further information, students should contact the School of Graduate Studies or the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

Students working in a lab either as a RA or TA are required to complete laboratory safety training through the USU Environment and Safety Office (<https://rgs.usu.edu/ehs/>). Contact this office for information on the appropriate workshop for you. In some cases, recertification is required. Make sure you are aware of the requirements so that your research, teaching position, or graduation is not negatively affected.

Research in the Department of Biology

Faculty Research. It is to your advantage to become acquainted with research in the Department outside of your assigned lab. This will help you choose members for your supervisory committee and provide you with additional contacts for collaboration.

The Biology faculty are a highly-interactive group of biologists conducting research programs across a wide range of topics. Collaboration is not limited within the Department, but extends to other departments and units at USU and other institutions. Your research opportunities will expand significantly if you become aware of the opportunities you have within and outside the Department. Investigate opportunities on the Department website and discuss options with your advisor.

Research Facilities. The Department manages several facilities that you can take advantage of in your research. Greenhouses, an extensive Insect Collection, the Intermountain Herbarium, Microscopy Core Facility, a Plant Pest Diagnostic Lab, and the Stable Isotope Lab are available for your use. Visit the Biology website for contact information on these facilities. In addition, a wide range of collaborative efforts on campus provide additional resources (e.g., USDA Bee Biology and Systematics Lab, Center for Advanced Nutrition, and Center for Integrated BioSystems) to enhance your research.

Department of Biology Seminars

The Department hosts a seminar series during fall and spring semesters. Seminars are scheduled on Tuesdays at 3:30 in BNR 202. Seminars are not offered for credit and may not occur weekly throughout the entire semester. Seminar announcements will be disseminated through email and posted on Department bulletin boards and electronic displays.

Graduate students are encouraged to nominate guest speakers to the Seminar Committee. If you would like to nominate a seminar speaker, contact the BGSA or the current Chair of the Seminar Committee.

Biology Coffee Hour

The Department hosts a coffee hour to encourage discussion and socializing among faculty, staff, and graduate students. Each coffee hour is hosted by a lab/group who volunteer to provide refreshments, prepare coffee, etc. A schedule and signup sheet is located in the departmental mail room.

Administrative and Research Staff Resources in the Department of Biology

The Department of Biology employs a number of (friendly!) administrative staff members who are available to assist you throughout your program at USU. Current department administrative staff include

- Kami McNeil, Staff Assistant to Graduate Programs (main contact for graduate programs information and procedures)
- Brian Joy, Office Staff Assistant, and student assistants (mail, photocopying, keys, and travel authorizations)
- Monica Schruhl, Business Assistant (payroll, supply orders)
- Nancy Kay Pierson, Administrative Assistant (manages the Department's recruitment and development efforts as well as personnel and continuing education)
- Marianne Harris, Greenhouse Manager (greenhouse teaching and research needs)
- Michael Piep, Herbarium Assistant Curator (herbarium access and research assistance)
- Joe Shope, Systems Administrator, and student IT staff assistants (computer and networking needs)
- Ryan Davis, Diagnostician, Plant Pest Diagnostic Lab (BNR 203)
- Dr. Dennis Welker, Director of Undergraduate Studies (undergraduate curricula)
- Josh Wardle, Academic Advisor (undergraduate student advisement)
- Mike Long, Business Manager (grant and contract budgets and proposals)

EVERYTHING IN-BETWEEN

Checklist

- ☞ Review the Graduate Programs Policy for policy and procedure on completion of requirements for your degree program
- ☞ Submit your **Supervisory Committee Assignment** form (***by end of second semester***)
- ☞ Enter your **Program of Study** (***by end of second semester***) in DegreeWorks through Access Banner, see <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>
- ☞ Complete the **Thesis/Dissertation Authorship and Copyright** forms which are available on the School of Graduate Studies website
- ☞ Check your **transcript** and **grades** periodically throughout your program
- ☞ Attend a workshop at the School of Graduate Studies on preparing your thesis/dissertation, see <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/htm/value-added/training/workshops> for the schedule of workshops
- ☞ Obtain the **USU Publication Guide** - available at the Graduate School website (rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/degree/thesis-dissertation-preparation-review)
- ☞ Complete your **Comprehensive Exams** (within first 1 ½ years for MS program, and by 2 years or 45 credits, whichever comes first for PhD program)
- ☞ Submit your **Proposal** - after approval by your committee (with your Program of Study (MS), or with Application for Candidacy (PhD))
- ☞ Doctoral Candidates - submit your **Application for Candidacy** (upon completion of comprehensive exams, and at least three months before final defense)
- ☞ Submit your Thesis/Dissertation to your committee (allow members **at least four weeks to review**)
- ☞ Submit an **Appointment for Examination** form to schedule your defense (obtain the form from the School of Graduate Studies website and submit to the Staff Assistant for the GPC at least 10 working days before the scheduled defense)
- ☞ Defend your thesis/dissertation

Forming Your Committee

You are required to submit your **Supervisory Committee Approval form** as outlined in the Graduate Program Policy. Submit the form (complete the online form at rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms) and a 1-2 page outline of your research proposal to the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee. The form must be approved by your advisor and proposed committee members. The form and your research outline will be reviewed by the Graduate Programs Committee. They will recommend approval to the Department Head. The Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee will process the form. If the form is not approved, the GPC will contact your advisor with a recommendation.

Your committee approval form must be submitted by the end of your second semester.

Program of Study

You will enter your proposed **Program of Study (PoS)** in DegreeWorks through Access Banner,

see <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>. Complete the **Program of Study Signature Form** for digital signatures by you, your advisor, your approved supervisory committee members, the Department Head, and the School of Graduate Studies. Obtain the form from the Graduate School's website (rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms). Submit the form and your approved course list with course titles to the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee for approval by the Graduate Programs Committee.

You should be aware that courses not on your approved PoS form **will not be covered by a tuition waiver/award**. If you have taken a course and received a waiver/award for the course, and it does not appear on your approved PoS, you will be required to pay back the waiver/award. It is also critical that you submit your Program of Study in a timely manner or it will delay approval of a tuition waiver/award.

Be cognizant of courses listed on your PoS; these are required courses for you to complete. You must register for courses exactly as approved on your PoS. Once you have completed courses as outlined on your PoS, you will register for Continuing Graduate Advisement (BIOL 6990 - MS students; BIOL 7990 - PhD students) until you complete your degree.

A common mistake is to register for Continuing Graduate Advisement (BIOL 6990/7990) instead of Thesis/Dissertation Research (BIOL 6970/7970) or *visa-versa*. To avoid costly petitions to change these credits to the correct credits, make sure you register for the correct course.

Amendments to the Program of Study are completed through the Program of Study Revision form, obtained from the School of Graduate Studies website. No changes can be made to the PoS within the two months prior to the defense.

The Program of Study form must be submitted by the end of your second semester to maintain eligibility for tuition waivers.

MS students are required to submit their thesis proposal with the PoS form. MS students must also submit the Thesis Authorship and Copyright forms at this time. These forms are found on the School of Graduate Studies website.

PhD students submit their dissertation proposal, and Dissertation Authorship and Copyright forms with their Application for Candidacy. These forms are found on the School of Graduate Studies website.

Grading

USU policy requires that graduate students pass all courses with a C grade or above. Courses required for your program or as prerequisites (required during your graduate program) may not be taken pass/fail, with the exception of seminars, special problems, interdisciplinary workshops, thesis or dissertation research, and continuing graduate advisement. Thesis and dissertation research credits (BIOL 6970 and 7970) will be temporarily assigned an incomplete grade. After successful defense of your thesis/dissertation, your major professor will submit a **Change of Grade** form to change these incomplete grades to "Pass." This is the only course that an incomplete can be on your record for more than 1 year. If you receive an incomplete grade in any other course, it will automatically revert to a "Fail" (or whatever grade it is assigned, e.g., I/C, I/D) after one year. Research credits will not be graded, or changed from incomplete, until after you successfully defend.

Continued Graduate Advisement (CGA) credits will be assigned a "Pass" grade each semester. These cannot be assigned any other grade.

It is your responsibility to periodically check your transcript throughout your program and ensure that you have registered correctly, that it matches your approved program, and that you have been graded correctly. See the departmental and Graduate School policies for more details on grading and restrictions.

Research Proposal

You will submit a formal research proposal to your Supervisory Committee. Master's students will submit this with their proposed **Program of Study** before the first committee meeting. Doctoral students will submit this before approval of the **Application for Candidacy** and no later than three months before your final defense. Details on the research proposal are available in the Graduate Programs Policy.

Comprehensive Exams

Obtain the **Record of Comprehensive Exam** form from the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee or the Graduate School's website. Doctoral candidates must also obtain an

Application for Candidacy form.

You are required to take your comprehensive exams within your first 1 ½ years for MS students and by 2 years (or after 45 credit hours, whichever comes first) for Ph.D. students. Your comps are administered by your advisor and supervisory committee. See the Graduate Programs Policy for specific details.

After your comps are completed, you must submit the signed forms to the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee for Department Head's signature and processing. In the event that you fail the exam, your committee will designate a time to retake the exam. Refer to the Graduate Programs Policy for further information.

Application for Candidacy (PhD students only)

The dissertation proposal must be approved by the Supervisory Committee before completing the **Application for Candidacy Form**, which must be submitted at least three months before the PhD student's final defense. The form is signed by all members of the committee and the Department Head, and attests that the student is ready to conduct independent dissertation research. This form is filled out in conjunction with the PhD comprehensive oral exam. This form is available on the School of Graduate Studies website and submitted to the Staff Assistant for the GPC.

Authorship and Copyright Agreements

Thesis/Dissertation Authorship and **Thesis/Dissertation Copyright** forms are submitted with the Program of Study form and thesis proposal for MS students, and with the Application for Candidacy for PhD students. Obtain these forms from the Graduate School's website (<http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms/additional-forms>).

The School of Graduate Studies also offers the Thesis/Dissertation Embargo form for those who want to restrict electronic release of their thesis or dissertation (see above website). Early in the student's degree program, ownership and right to the data to be utilized in the thesis/dissertation should be discussed with the major professor. Students should discuss

their plans for publication with their major professor and committee members to avoid misunderstandings about co-authorship or acknowledgment as parts of the thesis/dissertation are published. The student's signature as well as the committee members' is required on the form to indicate that the plans have been discussed and all are in agreement. Submit to the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee.

Workshops for Thesis/Dissertation Preparation

The School of Graduate Studies offers workshops throughout the year to help you prepare your thesis/dissertation. It is important that you take this course as early as possible before you begin your thesis/dissertation. The course provides valuable information on preparing your thesis, copyright laws, formatting, and approval process. See the Graduate School's website (rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/htm/value-added/training/workshops) for dates the workshop is offered.

Thesis/Dissertation Format

In consultation with your major professor, select format(s) to be followed while preparing your thesis/dissertation. Submit the **Thesis/Dissertation Format and Style Guide** form (<http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms>) along with journal sample(s) to the Staff Assistant for GPC for approval before submitting your thesis/dissertation to the School of Graduate Studies for review. The Biology Department does not have a Department Style Manual. You can obtain a *USU Publication Guide* either from the Graduate School's website (rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/degree/thesis-dissertation-preparation-review) or the bookstore. Review the last chapter in this handbook—Completion of Your Degree at USU—for additional information on preparation of your thesis/dissertation. Follow the steps outlined in the

Thesis/Dissertation Review Process (Review Steps Responsibilities.pdf).

Appointment for Examination

You must submit the **Appointment for Examination** form at least 10 working days prior to your defense. The form designates the date, time, and location of the exam and is signed by your Supervisory Committee. Submit to the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee.

Late forms may not be processed and you will be required to reschedule the exam. In extenuating circumstances, you must request a letter from the Department Head (see the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee to do so) that will petition the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies to accept a late Appointment for Examination form.

Be aware that changes to your committee members cannot be made within **six weeks** of the defense. If a defense is scheduled during a semester break, you will be required to register for a minimum of 3 credits the following semester.

You must submit your thesis/dissertation to your committee members at least four weeks before your scheduled defense date. A committee member can choose not to proceed with the defense if they are not given enough time to review and approve your thesis/dissertation. Your defense will then need to be rescheduled. Review the policies of the Department and the School of Graduate Studies for the details.

Be aware of the deadlines for graduation and participation in commencement exercises prior to scheduling your defense. Holding a defense late in a semester, particularly the last few weeks, will put you in jeopardy of not completing degree requirements that semester, and participation in commencement is unlikely. See the School of Graduate Studies website for graduation deadlines, <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/degree/degreecompletiondeadlines>.

Defense

As the first part of your defense, you are expected to present a Department seminar. You should contact the Chair of the Seminar Committee to schedule your defense seminar during the regularly scheduled Department of Biology Seminar time. Seminars are usually held Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. Please provide information to the Biology Office Staff Assistant to announce your seminar. A flyer will be created and distributed by email.

The School of Graduate Studies will provide your committee members with verification of the scheduled defense. The outside committee member will be designated as the chair of your defense. You must download the **Record of Examination** form from <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/forms/additional-forms>. You will receive graduation and thesis/dissertation submission information from the School of Graduate Studies. Following your defense, your committee will sign and submit the Record of Examination form to the Staff Assistant for the GPC. Your Change of Grade request will be handled by the Staff Assistant for the Graduate Programs Committee and the Department Head.

Final Submission of Thesis/Dissertation

Your committee members will provide you with suggestions and changes to your thesis/dissertation. You are responsible for making the required changes and submitting a revision to your major professor for review. The student is responsible for proofreading the thesis or dissertation and having it read and approved by all committee members and the department reviewer (major professor professor).

An original cover page with signatures of all supervisory committee members is required. Submit an electronic version of the thesis/dissertation and cover page to the Staff Assistant for the GPC who will submit the documents to the School of Graduate Studies. You will submit the original signed cover page to the School of Graduate Studies after final approval of your thesis/dissertation.

COMPLETION OF YOUR DEGREE AT USU

Checklist

- ☞ Complete the **Thesis/Dissertation Format and Style Guide** form (before thesis/dissertation submission)
- ☞ Make sure your committee has submitted the **Record of Examination** form to the Staff Assistant for GPC (immediately after defense)
- ☞ Check your transcript and make sure all incomplete research credits have been changed to a passing grade
- ☞ Make all changes required by your committee to your thesis/dissertation
- ☞ Carefully review the *Publication Guide for Graduate Students* and make sure your thesis/dissertation is formatted properly
- ☞ For further steps in the Thesis/Dissertation Approval process, please refer to “Review Steps Responsibilities.pdf” available from the SGS website (rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/degree/thesis-dissertation-preparation-review)
- ☞ Complete the online **Graduation Information Checklist** and pay the \$15 diploma fee at the Registrar’s office
- ☞ Provide the Department with a forwarding address and contact information
- ☞ Keep in touch with us - contact the Department occasionally with current information on your progress to include on our website. Consider establishing a graduate fellowship, travel fund, or scholarship to assist new graduate students, after you become a world-renowned scholar and alumna/us of USU

Thesis and Dissertation Review by the Department Reader

As discussed before, you will want to address issues concerning publication of the thesis and dissertation early in your program. At this point, we’ll assume you have defended and are ready to submit your thesis/dissertation for formal review. The department’s thesis reader is your major professor. Your committee members may require you to make corrections and changes to your thesis/dissertation, including formatting changes. They do not, however, serve as the departmental thesis reader. You and your major professor are responsible for ensuring that your thesis/dissertation is properly formatted and ready for review by the School of

Graduate Studies. Prior to submitting your thesis for reading, please take the following steps:

- Obtain a *Publication Guide for Graduate Students at Utah State University* (*Publication Guide.pdf*) may be obtained from <http://rgs.usu.edu/graduateschool/degree/thesis-dissertation-preparation-review>
- Read the guide with care before you begin any part of your writing efforts, such as obtaining references for a review of literature. Correct style choice may avoid the need for time-consuming changes.
- Attend one of the Thesis and Dissertation workshops offered through the School of Graduate Studies throughout the year. Contact your advisor or the reader in the School of Graduate Studies for clarification on questions you have as you write your thesis/dissertation.
- You must follow the style instructions outlined in the *Publication Guide for Graduate Students*.
- If you have a question about a conflict between style according to the Graduate Office Guide and the selected journal style, check with School of Graduate Studies on how to

resolve the problem.

- To ensure that your major professor and committee members have adequate time to review your manuscript, you should plan with them well in advance. Provide your committee with pertinent information regarding the journal you have selected. Your committee must also be aware of the School of Graduate Studies' guidelines.
- You may opt to hire a professional editor to review your document to ensure it meets the requirements and standards of the School of Graduate Studies. Contact the Graduate School to obtain references.
- After changes have been made following your committee's review, submit the following to your major professor for final departmental approval.
 - o Completed thesis/dissertation with signed cover page
 - o Sample journal style paper
 - o Instructions and policies for journal style selected

Please plan on five to ten working days for department review depending on your major professor's schedule. This reading is a preliminary screen for any lack of adherence to the School of Graduate Studies Style Requirements, as outlined in the "Guide." This is also a final line-by-line quality check. It includes efforts to locate errors of spelling, abbreviations, symbols, capitals, punctuation, grammar, uniformity, omissions, repeats, spacing, ambiguity, and wordiness. Any changes will be indicated on the document and a checklist of corrections will be provided. After corrections are made, submit the complete corrected original to your major professor for final approval and signature of the form. The document is then delivered to the School of Graduate Studies and returned to the student with a list of corrections. Corrections are made by the student, and both versions are submitted to your major professor to verify that corrections have been made. After verification, the form provided by the Graduate School is signed by your major professor and returned with the complete corrected thesis/dissertation for the signature of the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. The signed thesis/dissertation is returned to the student. The student then makes copies and submits all copies and required paperwork and fees for publication to the Library (Current Periodicals desk). A receipt of the publication fees must be delivered to the School of Graduate Studies before the degree will be posted. You can pick up personal copies from the library on the date specified. The Library will keep a copy and send one to the Department.

The Department maintains a library of thesis/dissertations. You may contact the Staff Assistant to the Graduate Programs Committee to check out a thesis or dissertation.

Thesis/Dissertation Approval Process

Thesis and dissertations are approved through the School of Graduate Studies. You, your major professor, and the School of Graduate Studies must closely monitor the following:

- margins
- spacing
- indention
- pagination
- divisions (title page, abstract, contents, list of tables, list of figures, references, appendices, and vita [in dissertations])
- subheading scheme
- use of figures/tables (adherence to style guidelines)

- credits (permission-to-reprint letters, if necessary)
- citations
- plagiarism

The student's committee, primarily the committee chair, is responsible for issues dealing with the general intelligibility of the dissertation or thesis, issues such as conventional grammatical usage, coherence, and readability. Faculty and students should be thoroughly familiar with the requirements outlined in the Publication Guide and the style of the chosen journal.

Graduation Forms

USU holds one commencement after spring semester each year. Refer to the School of Graduate Studies website for fees and graduation deadlines. Graduate students may apply for graduation online at www.usu.edu/registrar/hm/graduation/apply-online. Be sure that all forms are completed and relevant fees paid by the deadlines.

Parting Thoughts

The Department of Biology hopes that your graduate program experience has been valuable and a worthwhile endeavor. We hope that you will leave USU having not only obtained an advanced education and another degree, but having made important contacts that will benefit you in your future career or educational endeavors. We consider you a part of the Biology family at USU and anticipate your continued association with the Department. We look forward to hearing from you and being kept apprised of your accomplishments. Whether you go on to a postdoc, a research or academic position, or pursue another degree, keep in touch with us. We expect to include your achievements on our "Where did they go" section of our website to show prospective graduate students the myriad opportunities, possibilities, and benefits that a graduate degree at USU offers. Best wishes in your future endeavors.