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People

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Admission Requirements

Applicants are considered on an individual basis. An online application form, application fee, and transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate coursework must be submitted to the Graduate College. In addition to the Graduate College minimum requirements, applicants must meet the following requirements set by the Department of Biological Sciences:

**Baccalaureate Field.** No restrictions. It is recommended that prior academic work include courses in biological sciences beyond the introductory level (such as cell biology, genetics, ecology, evolution, and physiology), two semesters of organic chemistry, two semesters of physics, and mathematics through introductory calculus. Otherwise qualified applicants may be required by the department to remove specific course work deficiencies by enrolling in undergraduate/graduate (400-level) classes during their first year.

**Grade Point Average.** At least 3.00/4.00 for the final 60 semester (90 quarter) hours of undergraduate study.

**Tests Required.** GRE General including verbal, quantitative and analytical, with no more than one score falling below the 50% percentile.

**Minimum English Competency Score.** TOEFL: paper-based – 620; iBT – Because all our students TA, minimum internet-based total is 90, with minimum subscores of Reading 19, Listening 24, Speaking 26, and Writing 21. Note that this is a higher standard than required for admission by the Graduate College. A workaround for admission of a student with lower Listening and Speaking scores but who otherwise is highly qualified for admission would be faculty RA support on a grant for the first semester. IELTS: 6.5, with minimum subscores of 6.0 for all sections.

**Letters of Recommendation.** Three required, preferably from faculty who are familiar with the applicant’s recent work, and who can comment on the applicant's potential for graduate studies and independent research.

**Personal Statement.** A statement of the applicant’s professional goals and reasons for wishing to attend graduate school is required. The Department of Biological Sciences accepts students with a very wide range of research interests, but considers whether the applicant's research interests are compatible with those represented among the faculty. Applicants are welcome to contact potential research advisors prior to applying. This is necessary for applicants to the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology group, which does not accept students without the enthusiastic support of a prospective faculty research advisor.

**Additional Information.** Please visit our web page and the UIC Graduate College Admissions page for more information about how to apply. Application materials should be submitted by December 1 to be guaranteed full consideration for the following fall semester. Applicants are only considered for spring admission under very unusual circumstances.
Advising Students

Degree requirements. All incoming students receive advising about coursework, registration, and financial support from the Department's Graduate Academic Advisor, Beth Ann Brand. She helps students keep track of degree requirements and deadlines, and helps coordinate appointments for teaching and research assistantships.

Research Advising. Students interested in molecular, cellular, developmental biology and neurobiology usually do not identify a faculty advisor and join a lab until the end of their first year in graduate school. Until that time, new students may bring questions and concerns to the attention of the two faculty members who coordinated admissions. Once students join a faculty research lab, that faculty member becomes the primary research advisor, and will work with the student to select an advisory committee of three (including the advisor) until a preliminary examination committee of five is formed during the second year. New students with interests in ecology and evolution join a lab on admission, and have a faculty research advisor upon arrival. These students should form a committee of three, including the advisor, until a preliminary examination committee of five is formed during the second year.

Requirements for Graduate Degrees

As a graduate student in the Department of Biological Sciences, you are part of a hierarchy that sets requirements for completion of graduate degrees. The Graduate College sets general rules for a wide range of graduate programs throughout the university. The second level is the Department of Biological Sciences, which imposes additional requirements. Finally, advisory and doctoral committees set individualized requirements for classes, and determine when you are expected to fulfill the steps towards a degree.
Degree Requirements for the M.S. and Ph.D. in Biological Sciences

Master of Science General Requirements (Note: Admission for the M.S. is unusual. Applicants to the Ph.D. program are given higher priority for admission and support).

Minimum Semester Hours Required. 32 post-baccalaureate.

Course Work. At least 24 credit hours of 400- and 500-level courses are required. Of those 24, a minimum of 9 semester hours of 500-level courses must be letter-graded (A to F). The remaining courses can be 400 and 500-level courses graded Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) but the 24 hours cannot be project (BIOS 597), thesis (BIOS 598), or independent study (BIOS 596).

Course loads. Full-time is 9 or more credit hours (12 for fellowship holders and international students with F1 or J1 visas) of 400- or 500-level courses during the academic year, 5 in summer (6 for fellowship holders and international students). See Graduate College guidelines for details https://grad.uic.edu/course-loads-and-full-three-quarter-and-half-time

Advising. M.S. students must form a three-member thesis committee in accordance with the rules of the UIC Graduate College. The committee should be approved by the end of the second semester of study. Because admission for a M.S. degree is unusual, most students who receive this degree with a thesis start as Ph.D. students but change plans.

Comprehensive Final Examination. Required. The examination typically includes an oral presentation and defense of the research thesis.

Thesis. Required for a thesis masters. Students must earn at least 5 credit hours of BIOS 598. The thesis is defended orally before the committee. Revised theses must conform to specific guidelines before they will be accepted by the Graduate College. The Thesis Masters is for students intending to pursue a higher research degree or research career.

Research Seminar. Master of Science students who successfully defend their thesis are expected, but not required, to present a departmental seminar after the recommended thesis revisions are made.

Project Masters. This is a terminal degree, awarded with a successful defense of a research report. Committee and course requirements are the same. Students opting for a report masters following a change of plans do not intend to pursue a research degree or a research career. Students are not admitted for a report masters.

Doctor of Philosophy Requirements

Minimum Semester Hours Required. 96 post-baccalaureate.

Course Work. At least 22 credit hours of 400- and 500-level courses are required. Of those 22, a minimum of 8 semester hours of 500-level courses must be letter-graded (A to F). The remaining
courses can be 400 and 500-level courses graded Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) but the
22 hours cannot be project (BIOS 597), thesis (BIOS 599), or independent study (BIOS 596).

**Course loads.** Full-time is 9 or more credit hours (12 for fellowship holders and international
students with F1 or J1 visas) of 400- or 500-level courses during the academic year, 5 in summer
(6 for fellowship holders and international students). See Graduate College guidelines for details
https://grad.uic.edu/course-loads-and-full-three-quarter-and-half-time

**Advising.** Ph.D. students must form a three-member advisory committee during the first year.
This includes the advisor and two others, usually from the department. In the second year, Ph.D.
students must form a five-member preliminary exam committee in accordance with the rules of
the UIC Graduate College. The committee should be approved by the Graduate College by the
end of the third semester of study.

**Annual committee meeting and assessment.** Students are required to have an annual
committee meeting and assessment, and return the completed, signed committee meeting forms
(included at the end of this manual) to the Graduate Academic Advisor (Beth Brand). The
student must provide the committee with a written self-assessment at least one week in advance
of the annual meeting. Students should consult their advisor and committee for specific
additional expectations.

**Preliminary Examination.** In the second year or at the latest by the end of the fifth semester,
Ph.D. students must take a written and oral preliminary examination demonstrating
comprehensive knowledge of their field, and proficiency in the design and execution of the
proposed dissertation research. The written portion is a written research proposal that must be
submitted to the examination committee at least two weeks before the examination date (or on a
date agreed upon by the student and committee). The length and nature of the research proposal
should be discussed with the advisor and examination committee; a typical proposal follows a
NSF or NIH format, either of a doctoral dissertation improvement grant proposal (eight single-
spaced pages plus bibliography) or a regular proposal (15 single spaced pages plus bibliography).
The examination format should also be discussed with the advisor and committee; it commonly
starts with a brief oral presentation of the proposed research, followed by questions from the
committee. Exam topics range from details about the planned research through broad issues
relevant to the student’s field of research.

The examination committee must be approved by the Graduate College prior to the exam. More
information and a download of the Committee Recommendation Form can be found on the
Graduate College Examination page (https://grad.uic.edu/exams-defense). The form should be
submitted to the Graduate College at least three weeks before the planned examination date.

If a Ph.D. student does not pass the preliminary examination on the first attempt, the exam may
be repeated by the end of the next semester if the examination committee is willing to serve. If a
student is deficient in one aspect of the exam, a conditional pass on one topic is permitted. This
generally includes a written assignment or course that must be approved by the preliminary
examination committee at a date set by the committee. A conditional pass must be resolved no
later than the semester following the oral preliminary examination. The examination is passed
once the conditions have been met and approved by the examination committee. No more than
one conditional pass is permitted. Students who do not pass the preliminary examination on the first or second try will be dismissed from the doctoral program.

Most courses must be completed, and the preliminary exam must be passed, to advance to the status of Candidate for the Ph.D. The status of candidacy for the Ph.D. assumes that most required graded courses have been completed, leaving full time for research. With advisor approval, doctoral candidates may take optional graded courses.

Dissertation. Students must earn at least 32 hours of research credits in BIOS 599. Research for the Ph.D. degree typically requires two to three years beyond the preliminary examination. Students who do not complete all of their degree requirements within five years of passing the preliminary exam must retake the exam or petition for an extension. Dissertations are defended orally before a five-member dissertation committee formed in accordance with the rules of the Graduate College. Note that the Dissertation Defense must be scheduled with approval of the Graduate College. The dissertation must be submitted to the committee at least two weeks before the defense date. Defense of the dissertation includes a public seminar on or after the date of the oral examination by the doctoral examination committee. Dissertations must conform to specific guidelines before they will be accepted by the Graduate College.

Exam and Dissertation Committees. The preliminary examination and dissertation committees often include the same people, but may not. In line with Graduate College rules, the preliminary examination committee must include at least three UIC faculty who are full members of the Graduate College. A dissertation committee must include at least two UIC faculty, including the doctoral advisor, who are full members of the Graduate College.

Additional Requirements. In addition to the Graduate College minimum requirements for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees, graduate students in Biological Sciences must meet the following requirements:

Core Class Sequence. During the first year, students take a core sequence in areas of their research interest. For students in the Ecology and Evolution research area, the sequence is BioS 531 and BioS 532. For those in the Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology and Neurobiology areas, the sequence is BioS 524 & BioS 525. Courses beyond the first year will be chosen by the student in consultation with their research supervisor and advisory committee.

A required second-year elective for MCDBN students may include BioS 526, NeuS 501, or an advanced GPN or GCLS course. Recommended courses can be found here: MCDB & Neuro graduate learning objectives

Seminars. Students register every semester for seminars in their interest area. In Ecology and Evolution the seminar is BioS 539, a 0-credit S/U-graded course based on attendance at the Ecology and Evolution Seminar Series. Students who intend to present a seminar in the series (during the semester in which they defend their dissertation) may register for 1 credit in BioS 539. Students with a coursework or teaching conflict with BioS 539 should inform the course coordinator at the start of the semester.
In MCDB and Neurobiology, BioS 592 is a seminar where students present work to peers and faculty. BioS 595 is the seminar for outside speakers. Both BioS 592 and BioS 595 each have a section held on west campus and on east campus such that a student may attend any of them.

**Additional Courses.** Other courses needed to fulfill the program requirements are decided with input from each student’s advisor and committee. Students can fulfill their course requirements with relevant classes from any department at UIC. Ph.D. students can also take advantage of the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program to take classes at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University.

**Laboratory Rotations.** Students interested in molecular, cellular, developmental, or neurobiology are required to spend a minimum of three rotation periods of 7 weeks each conducting research in different laboratories before selecting the laboratory for his/her thesis research. Students are expected to submit a report that describes each rotation project no later than one week after the end of the rotation. One copy of the report should be given to the professor and one copy to the graduate academic advisor (Beth Brand). No formal commitments between a faculty member and student are made until all rotations have been completed. Rotation laboratories are assigned on the basis of preferences and laboratory capacity, and the fit of student interests with the research program of a laboratory. When the rotations have been completed in April, first year students are matched to the laboratories in which they will pursue their thesis research in accordance with their preferences and the wishes of the professors. It is the responsibility of the student to find a thesis advisor by the end of the spring semester. Rotations may be taken in laboratories of faculty across the department.

An exception to this process is for new students in Ecology and Evolution, who apply to and are admitted directly to laboratories and a prospective advisor. Travel, time-sensitive field seasons, and winter preclude a rotation schedule for most E&E students and faculty. However, E&E faculty and students in laboratory sciences that do not depend on seasons or travel may wish to participate in a rotation process.

**Annual Committee Meeting and Assessment**

Consistent with [Graduate College requirements](#), graduate study in Biological Sciences requires annual evaluation including the following components:

1. Student’s self-assessment of the previous year’s progress.
2. An annual meeting that includes the student, the advisor, and at least two other members of the committee.
3. A written committee assessment of student progress.
4. Independent post-meeting comments, when necessary, from the advisor and at least two committee members.
5. Opportunity for the student to meet with the DGS, associate DGS, or Department Head, and/or submit a written response to the committee report.

1. The completed **Student Self-Assessment form** (See Appendix) should be sent to the committee prior to the annual meeting. This form provides students the opportunity to highlight their progress over the previous year toward coursework completion, research activities, and
thesis preparation, as well as recent and upcoming professional activities. Not all items on the assessment form will apply to all students.

2. The student will schedule a meeting with the advisor and committee during the academic year. Preferably all members of the committee will be in attendance, but at least two members, in addition to the advisor, must be present. The advisor and committee are likely to have requirements in addition to the Student Self-Assessment; these typically include an oral presentation, and/or a written progress report to be presented at the annual meeting.

3. Following the meeting, the committee will fill out the Committee Assessment form. An alternative evaluation form is provided as an option for first-year students; the advisor will provide guidance about which form to use.

4. The advisor and at least two additional committee members should independently complete a brief Post-Meeting form. This provides individual committee members an opportunity to raise issues that were not adequately discussed at the meeting. If there are no additional issues, evaluators may note that on the form.

5. Students will read and sign the Committee Assessment and Post-Meeting forms. The signature verifies that the student has read the forms, and does not necessarily indicate agreement with the content. Students have the option to discuss the assessment with the DGS, or associate DGS, or Department Head; and/or students may formally respond to the assessment in writing. Signed copies of all forms should be submitted to their research group coordinator.

Progress Toward Completion of the Degree

Thesis/Dissertation. A Ph.D. dissertation or M.S. thesis is an individual effort. Each student will work closely with an advisor and committee to plan what, and how much, is to be included into a thesis or dissertation. A M.S. thesis generally yields a solid publication, while a Ph.D. dissertation yields three to five or more. The advisor and committee will spell out expectations in more detail.

Even though the written dissertation is the culmination of a Ph.D. career, it is largely a symbolic achievement. In fact, even when published online by the University (Indigo), few graduate theses are widely read. Graduate research becomes part of the mainstream of scientific communication once it is published in peer-reviewed journals. It is often useful to think of the dissertation as a series of publishable manuscripts, and even to plan each chapter with a specific journal in mind. A doctoral committee can provide guidance on how to break your research project into solid, publishable manuscripts. Successful students have submitted and/or published at least some of their dissertation work before their defense.

Thesis Format. The UIC Graduate College has specific requirements about the format of the thesis and the associated documents that are submitted with it. Download the thesis manual and follow it carefully (https://grad.uic.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/ThesisManual_rev_06Oct2016.pdf). All M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations must be submitted electronically; the Graduate College provides complete information on the electronic thesis and dissertation process.
Defense and Final Seminar. The student, advisor, and committee work together to decide when a research thesis or dissertation is ready for defense. Students need to be flexible about defense dates and plan well in advance; it can be difficult to find a time when all of your committee members are available. A doctoral advisor and committee will usually expect to receive a copy of a completed thesis/dissertation at least two weeks before the defense. The oral defense often includes a brief oral summary of the thesis research; students should consult with his or her advisor to establish the expected length and content. Most of the defense will consist of questions from the thesis or dissertation committee. Students should discuss expectations with their doctoral committees prior to the defense.

During the defense, the committee is likely to have suggestions for improving the thesis, ranging from minor clarifications to major changes. In some cases, the committee might even feel that more data are needed to make one or more of the chapters acceptable. Such major criticisms can usually be avoided if the committee is kept informed throughout the course of the project.

A public seminar is required for Ph.D. students and strongly recommended for M.S. students. The seminar may be scheduled after the dissertation defense is successfully completed or on the day of the oral defense. The public seminar is one of the UIC requirements for completion of the Ph.D.; you may not submit your thesis to the Graduate College for final approval until after the public seminar, and after at least four members of the doctoral committee are satisfied that problems or concerns raised during the defense have been successfully addressed.

Graduation. Graduation dates are set in the spring, summer, and winter. Commencement ceremonies are held in December and May. Each of these dates is associated with specific deadlines for when the Intent to Graduate form and the approved thesis or dissertation must be filed with the Graduate College. The exact dates vary from year to year, but in general:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For graduation in:</th>
<th>Intent to Graduate Form must be submitted by:</th>
<th>Approved thesis/dissertation must be submitted by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Second week of September</td>
<td>End of October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>End of January</td>
<td>Third week of March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Third week of June</td>
<td>Third week of July</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several months before graduation, each student should map out a timeline that includes:

1) completion of research activities
2) submission of Intent to Graduate form to the Graduate College
3) submission of Committee Recommendation form to the Graduate College at least four weeks before the defense
4) completion of the thesis/dissertation
5) submission of thesis/dissertation to committee two weeks before the defense
6) defense
7) thesis/dissertation revision following the defense
8) research seminar
9) submission of thesis/dissertation to Graduate College
The Graduate College provides [more information](#) about the steps to graduation, and links to the relevant paperwork.

**Time Limits.** General time limits for graduate degrees are set by the Graduate College. The M.S. degree must be completed within five years of admission. The Ph.D. degree must be completed within seven years for students admitted with a M.S. degree, and nine years for students without the M.S. Under some circumstances, a student can request a deadline extension. Extension requests will be considered individually by the Department and the Graduate College. Students not in good standing, and who are not making reasonable progress in coursework or research, as judged by their committee in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Department Head, will not be granted extensions and will be dismissed from the program. **Note:** the time limit on departmental financial support is independent of the Graduate College time limits (see Limits to TA Support under Financial Support below). Continued funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress toward degree completion.

**Leave of Absence.** The Graduate College provides detailed information for students who need to take a leave of absence (see Appendix). Time taken on a leave of absence is not counted toward the time limit for degree completion.

**Changing Labs/Advisors.** If a graduate student and his or her advisor decide to end the student-advisor relationship, it is the student’s responsibility to find a new advisor and compose a new committee quickly. Students should typically plan to find a new advisor within a semester, and decide on the committee composition during the following semester or summer session. Students who cannot find a new advisor will be dismissed from the program.

**Switching from the M.S. to the Ph.D. Program.** Changing from the M.S. to the Ph.D. program is a mutual decision made by a student and potential Ph.D. advisor, the relevant research group, the Department, and the Graduate College. Once a student identifies a faculty member to serve as the Ph.D. advisor, she or he should complete the departmental approval form (see Appendix), the Request for Change of Graduate Program form, and a petition to transfer credits from the in-progress M.S. to the Ph.D. Once the forms are approved by the Department, the departmental approval form will be retained in the student’s file, and the Change of Program form and petition to transfer credits will be forwarded to the Graduate College for their assessment/approval.

**Switching from the Ph.D. to the M.S. Program.** Changing from the Ph.D. to the M.S. program is a decision made by the student and the advisor, and does not require formal Departmental approval. The student should submit the Request for Change of Graduate Program, and the petition to transfer credits from the Ph.D. to the M.S.

**Good Standing**

“Good standing” in the Department of Biological Sciences reflects adequate and timely progress towards a degree. This includes maintenance of a B average or better in graded courses (3.0 of 4.0), compliance with self-assessment and annual committee-meeting requirements, and a first attempt at a preliminary examination in the fourth or no later than the fifth semester. Students who fail a preliminary examination on the first try may re-take the exam in the next semester if
an examination committee is willing to serve. Candidacy for the Ph.D. will normally be achieved in the fourth or fifth semester of graduate study, and must be achieved no later than the end of the sixth semester of graduate study. A productive association with an advisor after the second semester is expected to result in progress in thesis or dissertation research in two to no more than five (M.S.) years or four to no more than seven (Ph.D.) years.

Students who do not meet these requirements are low priority for departmental support and may be dismissed from the program. Consistently substandard teaching-assistant evaluations from students (< 3.0) or instructors may result in loss of TA support. Exceptions will be evaluated by the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Financial Support**

Graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences receive departmental support in the form of a Teaching Assistantship (TA) or Research Assistantship (RA). At the beginning of each semester, the Graduate Office will circulate a Financial Aid Request form. Students indicate whether they will need a teaching assistantship, expect to receive a research assistantship, or have some other means of support.

The Graduate College website provides [information on obtaining funding](#) for graduate school. Although the Department of Biological Sciences is committed to supporting graduate students, all are encouraged to seek alternate sources.

**Fellowships.** Most Biological Sciences graduate students are funded by TAs or RAs, but some are funded by fellowships. These come from a variety of sources, including UIC (e.g., University and Lincoln Fellowships and Dean's Scholar Awards; more below), externally funded training grants, and from external sources such as the National Science Foundation and the Environmental Protection Agency. Funding supplied by a fellowship is variable: obligations that go with it are spelled out by the funding agency.

**Teaching Assistantships.** Teaching Assistantships are 4.5-month appointments, assigned for the Fall and Spring semesters. Most TAs are 50% appointments, or 20 hours per week. As of Fall 2017 a 50% TA included a monthly salary of $2181.00 for 4.5 months. The number of summer TAs is extremely limited. Most of these are 2-month, 33% or 67% appointments. The number of requests for 67% summer TAs is much greater than the number of positions available, so many students will not receive summer TA support; some will receive offers for 33% appointments. It is important to plan ahead in case summer TA support is unavailable.

There are several kinds of TA assignments. TAs in undergraduate laboratory courses provide lab instruction, assign and grade quizzes and lab reports, and assist with administering and grading exams. TAs in lecture-only courses grade exams, homework, or problem sets, lead discussion or review sessions, and help administer exams. A small number of laboratory preparation TA positions involve laboratory setup for undergraduate lab courses.

Course instructors usually set up a meeting with their TAs before the start of each semester, and will provide information on the duties for the TAs in their class. *Students who accept an offer of a TA assignment are required to be present for meetings or any other TA-related activities*
scheduled during the week prior to the start of instruction. Students who arrive at UIC after this time are not eligible for TA assignments.

Students who request a TA can indicate their course preferences on the Financial Aid Request Form. Reasonable efforts are made to give students their first or second choice, while still incorporating instructor preferences and making sure all courses have enough TAs. Have patience if you don't get one of your top choices and approach it with an open mind; you might find the change to be interesting!

**Outside employment.** Consistent with Graduate College regulations, students are discouraged from employment outside the university during semesters when they hold teaching or research assistantships. Inability to meet the 20-hour per week obligation will result in termination of Teaching Assistant support.

**Limits to TA Support.** Priority for teaching assistantship positions will be given to students in the first five years of their Ph.D. program, or the first two years of their M.S. program. Students in good standing who request TA support beyond these time limits will be considered if positions are available. These students may be required to submit a justification, along with a detailed timeline summarizing planned steps to completion of the degree.

**Union Representation.** Teaching assistants are represented by the Graduate Employees Organization, Local 6297 IFT-AFT, AFL-CIO. The union represents Teaching and Graduate Assistants; it does not represent Research Assistants. The GEO contract is effective from August 16, 2015 through August 15, 2018. Details are given: [Graduate Employees Organization](https://www.geoweb.org/)

**Research Assistantships.** Research Assistantships are funded by external research grants awarded to members of the department. Most faculty members use RA funds to support their own students. As an RA, a student will work for the Principal Investigator (PI) of the grant with the goal of fulfilling the objectives of the funded proposal. Depending on what research was funded, a research assistant might be doing something that is closely related to his or her thesis or dissertation research. Alternatively, a student may work on a separate project for the salary and experience, unrelated or tangentially related to student research. Either way, the exact nature of the work, the schedule, and the time expectations must be agreed upon by the RA and the PI.

**Tuition Waivers.** Students in the Department of Biological Sciences with fellowships or with 25% or more Teaching or Research Assistantships receive a waiver that covers the cost of tuition, tuition differential, service fee, health service fee, academic facility maintenance fund assessment (AFMFA), and library and information technology assessments (LITA). The waiver also covers $199.50 or 33%, whichever is greater, toward the cost of university health insurance, CampusCare (if enrolled in the plan), provided in the fall and spring semesters only. Students with waivers are responsible for paying the general fee, CTA transportation fee, student-to-student fee, sustainability fee, and the remainder of the cost of health insurance beyond the contribution from the waiver. Students with assistantships in the spring semester, and who received a tuition waiver in the spring, are entitled to a waiver for the summer term immediately following even if they do not hold a summer assistantship, provided they are registered for at least three hours during that summer term.
Board of Trustees (BOT) Waivers. The Department controls a small number of "free-standing" BOT tuition and service fee waivers that are not associated with TA or RA positions. To be eligible, students must register for 12 hours in fall/spring and 6 hours in summer. Students with outside employment are a lower priority for the waivers. Students who plan to request a BOT waiver must notify the Graduate Advisor as early as possible. BOT waivers are awarded one semester at a time; there are no guarantees that one will be available. The Graduate College also has BOT waivers for students who win individual internal and external fellowships, and for students selected by their programs for externally-funded training grants. The number of “free-standing” waivers available for departmental support is small and fixed by the Graduate College.

As an alternative to waivers for senior students who need to write full time, students who have passed preliminary examinations, achieved candidacy, and have sufficient credits, may register for 0 hours, thereby minimizing tuition and fees. Domestic students in good standing may accept TA or RA positions in subsequent semesters. International students must check with the Office of International Students to be sure visa regulations are not violated.

Travel Funds. The Department of Biological Sciences provides up to $600.00 for travel to a meeting to present a talk or poster, or to attend a workshop (subject to available departmental funding.) Funds will be provided for up to one trip per year. Students should fill out the BioS Graduate Student Request for Travel Funds prior to the meeting or workshop and have it signed by the student’s advisor and the Department Head. Receipts should be turned in to Alma Sias for reimbursement after the meeting.

Health Coverage

Routine medical care and prescriptions are covered at the Family Medicine Center. Costs are covered with the health service fee (which is covered by the tuition waiver; see above). Catastrophic illness and injury are covered by CampusCare medical insurance. Enrollment in CampusCare is automatic. Students can waive CampusCare if they provide proof of outside insurance, but will still be charged for the health service fee. Students who do not register over the summer do not pay the health service fee and cannot use the Family Medicine Center, but they may purchase an extension to their CampusCare coverage for the summer if they were covered during the spring semester.

UIC Awards and Fellowships

This list focuses on awards available to graduate students from Illinois, the University of Illinois system, and/or the University of Illinois at Chicago. The list is not exhaustive.

Graduate Student Council Project Awards [More Information]. Up to $500 awarded to graduate student associations or individual students who seek to complete a service project.

Graduate Student Council Travel Awards [More Information]. Up to $275 for students actively participating in academic or professional meetings. Awards may be used for reimbursement of transportation, lodging, registration, and meal costs.
Graduate College Student Presenter Awards [More Information]. Awards of $100, with a possibility of an additional $100 in matching funds for contributions from the department or advisor, for degree-seeking graduate students presenting research at a scholarly meeting or conference.

Arnold R. and Doris G. Bodmer Science Travel Award. Applications for this award are sent in February for the March deadline. Arnold Bodmer, an emeritus professor of physics, and his wife Doris established this award in 2007 to permit students to travel abroad as part of their education in science. It will provide upper-level undergraduate and first- or second-year graduate students in the Natural Sciences or Mathematics resources to travel abroad for science-related study, seminars or workshops. Students who wish to attend a conference abroad without presenting a paper may also apply, but preference will be given to those presenting. Awardees must provide a post-travel report to the College describing their work.

Provost's & Deiss Awards for Graduate Research [More Information]. The Graduate College provides two programs of support for research by graduate students at UIC: the Provost's Award for Graduate Research and the W.C. and May Preble Deiss Fund for Biomedical Research. The Provost's Award is open to all graduate students currently enrolled at UIC and the Deiss Fund is for graduate students engaged in research in clinical or basic medical sciences. Students may apply on a competitive basis for awards of $1000 to $3000 to support their research. Awards will be made in two competitions annually, once in Spring semester and once in Fall semester.

Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship [More Information]. This program will award five, $5,000 fellowships to continuing UIC African-American, Latino(a) or Native-American graduate or professional students who have demonstrated high academic achievement. Students must have completed at least one semester at UIC, and must plan to be enrolled full-time during the coming academic year. Present or past holders of the MLK, Jr. graduate or professional awards are not eligible. Full or part-time UIC employees are not eligible (this does not include student workers or graduate assistants). Applicants must be citizens or eligible non-citizens. Graduate students who receive the MLK award stipend also receive a tuition and selected fees waiver from the Graduate College.

LAS Alumni Association Merit Award [More Information]. This award was created in 1992 to recognize current students’ academic achievement and service to the university and the community with a monetary award. Each recipient will receive a $2,000 award (to be applied toward tuition). Recipients are expected to attend the LAS scholarship event in spring 2015, where their accomplishments will be recognized by the Dean.

The Laurette Kirstein Scholarship is administered by the Office of International Services [More Information]. This fund provides for 5 awards of $5,000 each (in the form of student account credit for tuition, books, living expenses). Eligible applicants are international students currently enrolled full-time at UIC, with a minimum UIC GPA of 3.5/4.0

The Paul D. Doolen Graduate Scholarship for the Study of Aging [More Information]. The objective of the Doolen Scholarship is to facilitate the study of aging by providing scholarships to two outstanding graduate students. These scholarships are made possible by an endowment from the Retirement Research Foundation to honor the late Mr. Paul D. Doolen, a long-time
member of the University of Illinois Foundation Board of Directors. Scholarships of up to $5,000 each may be awarded to two graduate students in their second year of study or beyond, whose principal scholarly interest is in the field of aging. The Doolen Scholarship is a one-time award and does not include a tuition waiver from the Graduate College.

**Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois [More Information].** The Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Program (DFI) is a fellowship initiative designed to increase the number of traditionally underrepresented faculty and staff at Illinois institutions of higher learning. DFI is a program for graduate students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education, who have received high school diplomas or post secondary degrees from educational institutions in Illinois, or who have three or more years of residency in Illinois and are citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Upon graduation, award recipients must agree to actively seek and accept a full-time appointment at an Illinois post-secondary educational institution, or accept a position as an employee of the State of Illinois in an administrative, educational-related position equal to the number of years of the DFI fellowship. Students failing to fulfill this condition of the award must repay 20 percent of their cumulative award amount.

**U of I children of employees, children of veterans, and senior citizens tuition waivers [More Information].** As a state institution, the University of Illinois provides waivers for children of U of I employees, children of veterans of Illinois, and senior citizens.

**University Fellowships [More Information].** University Fellowships are awards aimed at recruiting outstanding students newly admitted to graduate programs at UIC. Students who have previously been admitted to a graduate program at UIC may be eligible if it can be demonstrated that this award would be part of a genuinely new recruitment effort (transitioning from a M.S. to a Ph.D. program within the same department does not meet this criterion). To be considered, an admitted applicant must be nominated by the Department. An application will be prepared by the Department and submitted to the Graduate College. Applicants are reviewed by the Graduate Awards Committee and evaluated for academic excellence on the basis of post-secondary record, letters of recommendation, personal statement, standardized tests, and other criteria as deemed appropriate by the committee.

University Fellows receive a 12-month, $22,000 stipend; additional funds to bring up to equity with TA and RA salaries may be available. Recipients may accept part-time assistantships or other awards related to their field of study up to a total of 50% time. Work unrelated to the field of study is not allowed. Graduate hourly appointments are also not permitted. Recipients also receive a tuition and fee waiver from the Graduate College. The waiver covers tuition (including tuition differential) service fee, health service fee, academic facilities maintenance fund assessment, library and information technology assessment, and $200/ per academic year towards Campus Care, if applicable. All other fees are the responsibility of the student.

**W.C. Deiss Fellowship [More Information].** The W. C. Deiss Fellowship is awarded annually to a student being recruited to a graduate program in the life sciences at UIC. Students who have previously been admitted to a graduate program at UIC may be eligible if it is demonstrated that this award is part of a genuinely new recruitment effort. The Deiss recipient will be selected by the Graduate College Awards Committee from the nominations submitted for the University Fellowship. Recipients of the Deiss Fellowship receive a 12-month, $25,000 stipend. When
necessary, the Department will supplement the Fellowship stipend to match the 12-month pay rate of a TA or RA in Biological Sciences. The award period runs from August 16–August 15. The Award is renewable in the fourth year under the same procedures as the University Fellowship Awardees. Additionally, in the fourth (final) year of the fellowship, the Deiss recipient will receive a $1500 research allowance.

**Chancellor's Supplemental Graduate Research Fellowship Program** [More Information]. The Chancellor’s Graduate Fellowship Program provides one-year pilot grants to support preliminary research of students seeking future funding from external sources. Proposals should describe pilot studies that will be used to develop their PhD dissertation project, or other terminal degree capstone project, in order to be competitive for external funding opportunities. Funding of up to $5,000 for one year will allow graduate or professional candidates to supplement their existing stipends. Applications will be evaluated not only on the quality of the prospective student, but also the quality of the proposed project and the involved role of the mentor. A faculty mentor must support the project but it is expected that the student will play the major role in the writing of this application.

**The Dean’s Scholar Award** [More Information]. The Dean's Scholar Award is a one-year, non-renewable award presented by the Dean of the Graduate College in recognition of a student's scholarly achievement. It is intended to provide the most distinguished, advanced-level graduate students with a period of time dedicated solely to the completion of their programs. The Dean’s Scholar competition is open to doctoral students who have passed the Graduate-College-required Preliminary Examination at the University of Illinois at Chicago and are well into their dissertation work. The number of awards offered each year varies. To be considered, a student must be nominated by the Department. An application will prepared by the Department and submitted to the Graduate College, and applications will be reviewed by the Graduate College Awards Committee at their April meeting.

The Department can nominate a maximum of two applicants for the Dean’s Scholar Award. A partial application, including the statement of research plans, status, and expected time to completion (up to 750 words), and the list of awards, honors, presentations, and publications (up to three pages) are due with the graduate staff five weeks before the Graduate College deadline. Selected nominees will request three letters of recommendation. All application materials are due with the graduate staff one week before the Graduate College deadline.

Recipients of the Dean's Scholar Award receive a 12-month, $22,000 stipend. When available, the Department will supplement the Fellowship stipend to match the 12-month pay rate of a TA or RA in Biological Sciences. The recipient also receives a tuition and fee waiver from the Graduate College. The waiver covers the tuition (including differential, if any), service fee, health service fee, academic facilities maintenance assessment fee, library and information technology assessment, and $200/ per academic year towards Campus Care, if applicable. All other fees are the student’s responsibility.

**Abraham Lincoln Graduate Fellowships** [More Information]. Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States who have participated in a McNair Scholars Program, or have attended a Historically Black College or University, a Hispanic Serving Institution, or a Tribal College; or who come from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in
graduate programs. The applicants must be enrolled as a degree-seeking student in a graduate program at the University of Illinois at Chicago or must have completed an application for fall admission to the UIC Graduate College. There are two kinds of Abraham Lincoln Graduate Fellowships:

1) Recruitment Fellowship (2 year). This competition is primarily for Graduate Students new to UIC. To be considered, an admitted applicant must be nominated by the Department. An application will be prepared by the Department and submitted to the Graduate College. Students previously admitted to the UIC Graduate College may be eligible for recruitment competitions IF they are being actively recruited to a new graduate program. For questions about eligibility, contact the Graduate College. These awards provide up to two years of Graduate College funding (two years for doctoral students, one year for masters students). In year one of the Lincoln Fellowship, the award recipients receive a 12-month, $22,000 stipend. The recipients also receive a tuition and service fee waiver from the Graduate College. The waiver covers all tuition (including differential, if any), service fee, health service fee, academic facilities maintenance assessment fee, library and information technology assessment, and a $200/per academic year, payment to Campus Care, if applicable. All other fees are payable by the students.

2) Recruitment and Retention Fellowships (1 year). One-year recruitment awards are for students new to UIC (or students being actively recruited to a new graduate program). The general terms of this award are the same as those of the two-year recruitment award, except that both masters and doctoral students will be eligible for only one year of support from the Graduate College. Departments will be obligated to fund one-year recruitment award winners for year two. One-year retention awards are for students already enrolled in a UIC graduate program who are at the advanced stage of their academic studies. All applicants must be nominated by their departments. Selection criteria for all Abraham Lincoln Fellowships will be based on academic achievement, promise, and alignment with the goals of the fellowship.

The Department can nominate a maximum of two applicants for the one-year Recruitment and Retention Fellowships. A partial application, including the research plan (up to 300 words), the statement on how the goals of the Lincoln Fellowship program are aligned with those of the applicant (up to 300 words), and the list of awards, presentations, and publications are due with the graduate staff five weeks before the Graduate College deadline. Selected nominees will request three letters of recommendation. All application materials are due with the graduate staff one week before the Graduate College deadline.
Life Around UIC

Restaurants and Bars

Little Italy (Taylor St. near East Campus)
- Al’s Italian Beef (1079 W. Taylor)
- Busy Burger (1120 W. Taylor)
- Chez Joël (1119 W. Taylor)
- Demitasse (1066 W. Taylor)
- Little Joe’s (1041 W. Taylor)
- Tatsu (1062 W. Taylor)
- Thai Bowl (1049 W. Taylor)
- Tufano’s Vernon Park Tap (1073 W. Vernon Park)
- Tuscany (1014 W. Taylor)

Little Italy (Taylor St. near West Campus)
- Conte de Savoia (1438 W. Taylor)
- De Pasada (1519 W. Taylor)
- Francesca’s on Taylor (1400 W. Taylor)
- Hawkeye’s (1458 W. Taylor)
- Pompei (1455 W. Taylor)
- Sweet Maple Cafe (1339 W. Taylor)
- Yummy Thai (1418 W. Taylor)

Greektown (Halsted & Jackson)
- Artopolis Café and Bakery (306 S. Halsted)
- Athena (212 S. Halsted)
- Greek Islands (200 S. Halsted)
- Mr. Greek Gyros (234 S. Halsted)
- Parthenon (314 S. Halsted)

University Village (Halsted & Maxwell)
- Jim's Original Polish (1250 S. Union)
- Kohan (730 W. Maxwell)
- Lalo’s Restaurant (733 W. Maxwell)
- Lotus Café (719 W. Maxwell)
- Morgan’s Bar and Grill (1325 S. Halsted)
- Hash Browns Cafe (731 W. Maxwell)

Other Places Nearby
- Manny’s Deli (1141 S. Jefferson)
- White Palace Grill (1159 S. Canal)
- Eppels Restaurant (554 W. Roosevelt)
Housing

Most of the students in the Department live off-campus, but there are on-campus options available as well. The Graduate College provides some general information and sources for finding housing.

**UIC On-Campus Housing.** Unmarried graduate students are offered shared, furnished, apartment-style housing that includes a variety of conveniences.

**Off-Campus Housing.** Housing in a city the size of Chicago is incredibly varied in terms of price and quality. Often, the best source of information about affordable, safe housing will come from conversations with current graduate students. They can give you general ideas about neighborhoods and general areas that you should either seek out or avoid. Once you have a general idea about where you would like to live, you can look for available housing in several places, including:

- **UIC’s Database**
- **The Chicago Reader.** This is a free weekly newspaper that you will see in restaurants, bars, and around UIC. The paper itself has a huge listing of classified ads, and you can also use their online site to look for housing.

Public transportation

Several forms of public transportation are available to residents of the Chicago area. Use the links below for service and route information:

**UIC Intercampus Bus Service** – Free for UIC students with ID. Runs frequently between East and West campuses.

**CTA** – Subway, elevated trains (EL) and bus service for entire Chicago area. (Note: students registered for at least 9 hours are assessed a CTA transportation fee and are issued a UPass good for unlimited travel on all CTA trains and buses during the semester.). Maps may be downloaded [https://commuter.uic.edu/files/docs/uic_metra.pdf](https://commuter.uic.edu/files/docs/uic_metra.pdf)

**Pace** – Bus service for the suburban communities.

**Metra** – Train service between downtown and suburbs.

Activities and Recreation

**Graduate Student Council.** The [Graduate Student Council](http://) is the governing Graduate Student Body consisting of representatives from all degree-granting programs in the Graduate College. The Council has three primary goals

1) Advocacy through representation on University Committees
2) Academic Support through Travel Grants and Workshops
3) Community Building through Social Events and Project Grants

Recreation Facilities

**Student Recreation Facility** (737 S. Halsted)
- 18,000 sq. ft. of the latest and most sophisticated exercise equipment available
- 1/8 miles, 3-lane jogging track
- Lap/Leisure Pool
- Racquetball and convertible squash courts
- 4 court wood floor gymnasium
- 11,000 sq. ft. Multi Activity Court
- Group Fitness Suites
- Human Performance Lab
- 42 ft. Rock Climbing Wall
- Outdoor Adventures Office
- Cafe and coffee bar
- Active and Passive Lounge Areas
- Daily and Annual use lockers

**Sport and Fitness Center** (828 S. Wolcott; Student Center West)
- 8,000 square foot fitness floor equipped with state-of-the-art training equipment
- 3 lane running track
- 2 group exercise studios
- 2-court gymnasium equipped for basketball, volleyball and badminton
- Carpeted walking track
- 3 racquetball courts, one with a glass back wall
- 6-lane swimming pool with on-deck sauna room
- Full-service locker room with daily use and annual rental lockers
- Multi-purpose room with a ping pong table
- Boxing equipment
- Equipment check-out area
- Lounge area equipped with e-mail stations - Wi Fi accessible

**Games and Bowling Center** (750 S. Halsted; Student Center East)
- 16 bowling lanes
- 16 billiards tables
- Video games and pinball

**UIC Pavilion** -- The UIC Pavilion hosts concerts, UIC sports, meetings, festivals, and corporate, civic, and cultural events.
Appendix - Departmental Forms

Annual Graduate Student Review Forms
   Student Self-Assessment
   Committee Assessment
   Committee Assessment, 1st Year (Optional)
   Post-Meeting Form for Advisor / Committee Members

Change from M.S. to Ph.D.
Annual Graduate Student Review
Student Self-Assessment

Name ________________________________________

Signature/Date______________________________

Degree sought _________ Year of entry _________

Area of specialization ____________________________________________

Committee members - indicate chair, advisor (if different from chair), and outside member(s)

(1) __________________________________________

(2) __________________________________________

(3) __________________________________________

(4) __________________________________________

(5) __________________________________________

(6) __________________________________________

M.S. students

Expected date of thesis defense _______________________

Ph.D. students

Preliminary exam completed or expected ____________________

Expected date of dissertation defense _____________________

Teaching assignments over the past year

Course ___________ Semester ___________ Instructor ______________

Course ___________ Semester ___________ Instructor ______________
Student Self-Assessment (continued)

Coursework

1. Other than BioS 598/599, have all coursework requirements been completed? __________
   If yes, skip to Honors and Awards.

2. Courses in progress (excluding BioS 599)

3. Planned courses for the next two semesters (excluding BioS 599)

4. With respect to coursework, do you have any specific issues or concerns you would like to address with your mentor and/or other committee members?

Honors and Awards

1. Funding – list any independent funding you have applied for over that past year, and note whether it was awarded, and the amount.

2. List any other research-related awards and recognition from the past year.
Student Self-Assessment (continued)

Research

1. Briefly summarize your research progress over the past year. Where relevant, include accomplishments related to project design, fieldwork, lab work, data analysis/interpretation, publication, and thesis preparation. (If you have submitted a separate, detailed research progress report at the request of your committee, you may leave this blank and skip to question 2.)

2. Did your progress over the last year meet, exceed, or fall short of your own personal expectations and goals?

3. Have you encountered any unexpected difficulties with your research that you would like to discuss with your committee at your annual meeting?
Student Self-Assessment (continued)

Professional Activities

1. Dissemination of results over the past year – including attendance at conferences; contributed or invited talks or posters; manuscripts prepared, submitted, or accepted/published.

2. Service activities over the past year – including manuscript review, service on UIC or Departmental committees or organizations, service in professional societies, public outreach.
## Annual Graduate Student Evaluation

**Committee Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature / Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<td>Committee Member</td>
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<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis Topic:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Needs work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understanding of thesis issues and hypotheses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Familiarity with pertinent literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Critical thinking about problem and approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Quality and quantity of experimental work</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Clarity of presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Overall rating</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Specific problems:**

**Suggestions:**

**Expected time to completion:** __________________________

_________________________  ______________________
Student Signature             Date

Signature indicates that the student has read the evaluation, and does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the content. Students have the option to meet with the DGS, associate DGS, or Department Head to discuss the assessment, and/or submit a written response to the department.
First-Year Graduate Student Evaluation
Committee Assessment
(The regular annual assessment form might be more appropriate for some first-year students; check with advisor.)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature / Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty evaluator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty evaluator</td>
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MCDB: first-year faculty evaluators are the Research Area coordinators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. First year coursework*</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Needs work</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Laboratory Work / Fieldwork / Research:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Effort</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Lab meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Reads the literature</td>
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*Satisfactory coursework: the student has met the Graduate College minimum requirement of 3.0 GPA.
Needs work: additional course work is necessary to bring the GPA up to the minimum requirement
Unsatisfactory: it is not recommended that the student continue as a Ph.D. candidate

Comments:
Course work:

Laboratory Work / Fieldwork / Research

_____________________________________________________
Student Signature

_____________________________________________________
Date

Signature indicates that the student has read the evaluation, and does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the content. Students have the option to meet with the DGS, associate DGS, or Department Head to discuss the assessment, and/or submit a written response to the department.
Annual Graduate Student Evaluation
Post-Meeting Form

This should be filled out by the advisor and at least two committee members.

Student ____________________________________________________________

Advisor / Committee Member __________________________________________

Signature/Date______________________________________________________

Are there any problems or challenges faced by this students that you feel were not fully addressed at the meeting?

Committee meetings tend to focus on problem-solving, so things that are going well might receive limited discussion. Would you like to highlight any of the student’s successes and accomplishments that were not emphasized at the meeting?

____________________________________________________  ______________________
Student Signature                   Date

Signature indicates that the student has read the form, and does not indicate agreement or disagreement with the content. Students have the option to meet with the DGS, associate DGS, or Department Head to discuss these comments, and/or submit a written response to the department.
Department of Biological Sciences
Request to Switch from M.S. to Ph.D. Program

This form should be filled out in before you submit the Graduate College Request for Change of Graduate Program and the associated petition to transfer credit. After both forms have been completed, bring them to the Department Head or Director of Graduate Studies for signature. If approved, the Graduate College forms will be forwarded to them for final approval, and this Department form will be retained in your file.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Term/Year of Requested Change</th>
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<tr>
<th>Mailing Address</th>
<th>Current M.S. Research Group (MCDB, E&amp;E, Neuro)</th>
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<tr>
<th>City, State, Zip Code</th>
<th>Requested Ph.D. Research Group</th>
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<tr>
<th>Student UIN</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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Obtain the following signatures in the order that they are listed:

1. Prospective Ph.D. Advisor - print name

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2. Research Group Admissions Coordinator - print name

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3. Research Group Coordinator - print name

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4. Department Head or Director of Graduate Studies - print name

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