



THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
DEPARTMENT OF MICROBIOLOGY AND
PLANT BIOLOGY

GRADUATE STUDENT MANUAL



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This manual incorporates various advisories and information items relevant to the Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology graduate students. This should not be considered a complete or final listing of pertinent items but is compiled to facilitate acclimatization of new students and to serve as a source of useful information during their tenure. **The information listed herein reflects Department policy and is subject to change.** This manual is published for informational purposes and should not be construed as the basis of a contract between a student and the University of Oklahoma. **It is the responsibility of the student to know and follow all rules, guidelines, and deadlines of the Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology and of the Graduate College.** Every effort is made to provide information that is accurate at the time the manual is issued. The University of Oklahoma reserves the right at all times to discontinue, modify, or change its degree programs when it determines it is in the best interest of the university to do so.

The procedures and policies of the Graduate College, the Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology, and other University units remain the final official statements under which graduate work is pursued. Graduate students are expected to be familiar with pertinent portions of the University of Oklahoma Graduate College Bulletin and referenced websites.

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

One of the first questions that might be raised by a new graduate student is: "What do I need to do to get my degree? Ultimately each student develops an individualized plan with their advisory committee, which includes the successful completion of pertinent course work and research leading to a successful defense. This manual is not intended to be a complete outline of the graduate program, but rather a guide of essential steps to be taken during the program.

- I. **STUDENT RECORDS.** To ensure appropriate internal advising support, all graduate student records are maintained in the department office. A copy of all forms and correspondence to other administrative offices, especially the Graduate College, must be submitted to the department.

- II. **COURSEWORK LIMITATIONS.** Refer to the Graduate College website for further information.
 - A. Grade.
An average of 3.0 GPA overall must be maintained in all courses taken for major credit.
 - B. Pass/Fail or Audit Courses.
Courses taken under the pass-fail or audit option cannot be used to fulfill deficiencies, since they do not carry graduate credit.
 - C. Undergraduate Courses.
A maximum of 12 hours of 3000 or 4000-level courses (post-baccalaureate) carrying graduate credits may be counted toward degree programs; with a maximum of nine hours of 4000-level courses from the Department of Microbiology & Plant Biology. Our own departmental 3000-level courses cannot be counted towards graduate programs in the Microbiology and Plant Biology department.
 - D. Degree Completion.
Except for the non-thesis Master's degree option, satisfactory completion of a thesis/dissertation is required.

- III. **ENROLLMENT LIMITATIONS.** Enrollment is generally limited to no more than 16 hours per Fall or Spring semester nor more than nine hours per summer session without the permission of the Dean of the Graduate College. To obtain permission the student's committee chair must petition the Graduate Dean and this petition must be endorsed by the Departmental Graduate Liaison.
 - A. Fall/Spring Semester Enrollment. Students must enroll in a minimum of five credit hours in Fall and Spring Semesters; however the department discourages enrolling in more than ten hours (except for students enrolled in dissertation hours).

- B. Summer Enrollment. Generally, Summer Enrollment is not necessary unless a defense is scheduled (in which case a minimum of 2 hours of Thesis/Dissertation Research is required). In addition, a minimum credit hour enrollment requirement may be stipulated by an outside funding agency, International Student Services, or the Graduate College, so checking with these units is advisable. **Be aware that if you are not enrolled in the summer semester you will be subject to FICA taxes on your summer paychecks.**
- IV. **PUBLICATION.** It is the expectation of the department that the student's research be published in leading peer-reviewed journals in the relevant research areas. These expectations should be discussed with your major professor and your committee early in your degree program.
- V. **GRADUATE SEMINAR (5971).** All graduate students **must attend** the Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology graduate seminar regardless of whether or not they are receiving credit for the course. Attendance will be taken for all students, and those with excessive absences will have additional seminar requirements to complete and should consult with the faculty member in charge of seminar to determine those requirements. In cases in which a required course meets at the same time of the weekly MPBIO graduate seminar, a student may be allowed to attend an alternative seminar for the semester they are enrolled in that required course. In such cases, the student must make a request in advance to the seminar instructor and department graduate liaison and/or chair. International students who enroll in seminar must make sure that they will be presenting to ensure their minimum enrollment restrictions (an *Incomplete* grade may reduce their full-time status). For more information, refer to the section pertaining to your degree program in this manual.
- VI. **ANNUAL STUDENT EVALUATION AND COMMITTEE MEETING.** The Department conducts an annual review and evaluation of our graduate students' academic progress in meeting degree requirements. The review will be conducted by the student's thesis/dissertation advisor and committee members and include a self-evaluation. The process will be overseen by the department's Graduate Program Committee. All aspects of the student's performance will be evaluated, including but not limited to progress made in completing course work, applicable comprehensive examination, research/creative activity, and writing of the thesis/dissertation. The review may also encompass the student's broader scholarly capabilities and professional development. Since the evaluation should not include an assessment of the student's performance as a graduate teaching assistant, the department graduate program committee will request separate evaluations from GTA supervisors each semester.
- A. Notification of Evaluation Result. Each student will receive a copy of their performance evaluation survey from their advisor. After receiving their

performance evaluation, **the student will schedule a meeting with their committee to share the results of the evaluation and update the committee on their overall degree process.** Both the student and the student's Advisory Committee must sign off on the evaluation form, confirming receipt and knowledge of the evaluation. If there are deficient areas and a marginally satisfactory rating is warranted, the evaluation documents will clearly indicate areas where the student should make improvements to receive a satisfactory evaluation. In the event of an overall unsatisfactory evaluation, the student will be notified by formal letter which will also be provided to the Graduate College. In the case of unsatisfactory progress or performance, the department is responsible for monitoring the student's efforts and shall conduct a second review by a designated date. The Graduate College and the student will be notified in writing of the result and conditions for a second review.

- B. Second Evaluation. Should a second review be required for the same evaluation year, the department's Graduate Program Committee shall re-evaluate the student for progress by the date stipulated. Based on the second review, the Department will submit a recommendation to the Graduate College to remove the student from probation, deny further enrollment, or extend enrollment with probation for an additional period. A student who receives an unsatisfactory evaluation for the third time will be denied further enrollment.

VII. ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY CONFERENCE.

In consultation with their major professor and/or advisor, students shall establish an advisory committee, which must be approved by the department Graduate Liaison. An Advisory Committee Conference should be held with this committee as soon as a major interest area is chosen **but must take place by the end of the second semester in residence.** For more information, refer to the section pertaining to your degree program in this manual.

- A. Advisory Committee. The advisory committee must consist of members of the graduate faculty listed on the Graduate College website. The majority of the committee members must hold an RM3/RM4 graduate faculty appointment through the department in the student's respective major. Faculty or Research Professors with a special member (SM) status cannot be included in this majority, and they must be familiar with the rules, regulations, policies, and quality standards of the Norman campus Graduate College. A special member may not serve as the chair or outside member of an advisory committee.
- B. Function of the Advisory Committee. In consultation with the student, the advisory committee's role is to plan the degree program and to oversee the student's research progress for successful degree completion.
- C. Advisory Conference. Students are responsible for coordinating their advisory conference (remote, in-person, or blended meeting). The meeting

will include formulating a program study plan to be completed within a specified time frame, including specific coursework required and recommended for the degree program. The student should be prepared to present their initial ideas on research direction/plans and courses taken and planned. After the advisory conference is held, the student must file an official report of the advisory conference outlining a study plan. This study plan report is used to monitor coursework completion toward a degree program in a timely manner. For M.S. students this conference will provide the needed information to fill out and submit the *Program of Study* form to the Graduate College, and for Ph.D. students the *Advisory Conference Report* form.

- VIII. THESIS/DISSERTATION FORMAT.** The Thesis/Dissertation may be prepared in any format acceptable to the Department and Committee with the exceptions indicated in the Graduate College information packet. Retrieve the most current detailed information from the Graduate College website.
- IX. PETITIONS.** As students move forward in their degree program, special circumstances may require making unforeseen changes on forms or normal policies. Petition requests for changes or exemptions may be made in writing by the student's major professor and/or advisory committee. The petition should be forwarded to the Graduate Liaison for endorsement. Once endorsed, the Graduate Liaison will forward the petition to the appropriate parties in the Graduate College. Petitions may not come directly from the student under any circumstance.
- X. CONTINUED ENROLLMENT.** If a student does not complete their degree program by the deadline stipulated by the Graduate College, an enrollment hold will be enforced. A student who has been placed on probation must fulfill the requirements set forth by the Graduate College or be denied further enrollment. Any student not on probation who fails to maintain an overall 3.0 GPA average in their graduate work will be placed on probation. Failure to bring the grade point average up to 3.0 after completing two semesters and an additional summer of further enrollment, will result in denial of subsequent enrollment. The department Graduate Program Committee will review each student's progress each year and recommend continuation or withdrawal from the graduate program.
- XI. ELECTRONIC OR REMOTE PARTICIPATION.** Advances in electronic media have made it possible for meetings to be held without the presence of every member at the same location. Nevertheless, the integrity and significance of oral examination processes (general exams or defenses) must be maintained. The following rules apply: 1) All members of the committee must participate for the full duration of the event, whether in person or remotely. 2) If any member of the committee participating remotely is unable to connect or loses their connection, the event must pause until the connection is restored. 3) All committee members

must have full access to materials relevant to evaluation of the student's performance. Audio of the student and other committee members, and visual materials including slides and handwritten information, must be clearly transmitted. If these requirements are not met, the event must pause until the issue is corrected. 4). Only members of the committee may be present for deliberations about the result.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER'S of SCIENCE DEGREE

A Master's degree program in Microbiology or Plant Biology has some general requirements. The following paragraphs outline those general requirements.

- I. **Summary of M.S. Degree Requirements.** The thesis-based M.S. degree requires 30 hours of graduate-level coursework.
 - A. Thesis Research (5980). A maximum of six credit hours of thesis research may be counted toward the degree program. Following initial enrollment in at least two hours in 5980, each student must maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of two hours of 5980 during each enrolled semester (including the summer sessions if enrolled), until all requirements for the degree are completed or the degree candidacy is discontinued.
Thesis hours cannot be taken until all coursework has been completed (with the exception of having completed at least 1 hour of the 2-hour seminar requirement).
 - B. Graduate Seminar (5971). Two of the 30 credit hours must consist of Seminar in Plant Biology or Microbiology. Students must attend the weekly seminar every semester regardless of whether or not they are receiving credit for the course.
 - C. Outside Credits. At least 3 hours carrying graduate credit must be taken in an "outside" department or area. Plant Biology graduate students may use courses in Microbiology (and vice versa) as their outside hours, as long as these courses are not cross-listed between Plant Biology and Microbiology.
 - D. Transfer Credits. A maximum of 8 hours transfer credit may be applied toward the Master's degree.
 - E. Master's Advisory Committee and Conference. The student's program of graduate study will be determined by an advisory committee approved by the Graduate Liaison and/or Chairperson of the Department. The committee will be guided by the student's statement of goals and by discussions with the student's major advisor as well as other faculty members.
 - (1) The committee will consist of at least three faculty members, one of whom will be from the student's major area of interest (the major professor).
 - (2) The major professor will be the main advisor and will serve as chair of the student's graduate committee.

- (3) Students will select their advisory committee and submit a *Department Advisory Committee Approval Form* by end of their first semester of enrollment in the graduate program.
 - (4) Once an advisory committee has been approved, students will be instructed to set up an advisory conference to formulate their study plan. This should take place by the end of the student's second semester in the graduate program. Drawing on the feedback from this meeting, students should fill out and submit (to the Graduate College) *Master's Thesis Topic and Committee Membership* form and the Program of Study form.
- F. M.S. degree while working on Ph.D. degree. To add a Master's degree program to a doctoral degree program, students must consult their major professor in advance. A *Change of Program* would be required with a fee. Refer to the Graduate College Bulletin for the most current information.

II. Check List for Master's (M.S.) Program

It is the responsibility of the student to stay advised of all university academic calendar deadlines along with graduate college deadlines.

- _____ 1. M.S. Advisory Committee Formation. As soon as a major interest area is chosen, establish an advisory committee. Students will select their advisory committee and submit a *Department Advisory Committee Approval Form* **by end of their first semester of enrollment in the graduate program.**
- _____ 2. M.S. Advisory Conference. After advisory committee is formed, hold an advisory conference to formulate a study plan **no later than the end of the second semester in residence.**
- _____ 3. M.S. Candidacy. It is recommended that students submit their *Program of Study* and *Master's Thesis Topic & Committee Membership* forms (to the Graduate College) soon after their M.S. advisory conference. These forms must be submitted before the student has accumulated 20 hours in their program. In the **semester BEFORE you defend**, check your submitted *Program of Study* and the *Master's Thesis Topic & Committee Membership* forms to ensure there hasn't been any changes. If necessary, you may resubmit these forms with the updated information.
- _____ 4. Master's Continuous Enrollment. Following the *initial* enrollment of at least two hours in Research for Master's Thesis (5980), each student must maintain continuous enrollment on the home campus at the University of Oklahoma in at least two hours of 5980 for the entire semester during each semester enrolled until requirements for the degree are completed or candidacy is discontinued. For more information, refer to the Graduate College Bulletin (under Special Requirements for Enrolling in Research for Master's Thesis).

- _____ 5. Thesis Instruction Packet. In the beginning of their graduating semester, students are strongly encouraged to review their program Instruction Packet that is available on the Graduate College website. **You must provide at least one chapter of your thesis to your committee 7 weeks prior to your thesis defense, and a full draft at least 4 weeks before your defense.** Revisions of the thesis may be required by the advisory committee before the defense.
- _____ 6. Defense/Examination and Graduation Applications. In the semester you plan to graduate, apply for graduation online according to the deadline indicated on the Academic Calendar. Within the first two weeks of the final semester, submit the *Request for Degree Check* form to the Graduate College. At least two weeks before your defense, submit the online *Report of Reading Copy Submission* form and *Request for Authority for Thesis Defense* form available on the Graduate College website, and any other required attachments if applicable (i.e. Animal Research Use, etc.).
- _____ 7. Authorization to Defend. You are not authorized to defend or take your examination until you receive the *Authority Report Form* from the Graduate College. Within *72 hours* after the final examination is held the *Authority Report Form* must be returned to the Graduate College Office with the results and signatures of *all* committee members. The candidate only has one opportunity to defend the thesis. If a majority vote “unsatisfactory”, then the exam will be judged unsatisfactory.
- _____ 8. Thesis Seminar and Defense. Each candidate for the M.S. degree in Microbiology or Plant Biology is required to present a seminar based on their thesis research. This seminar will be open to the public, and immediately following the presentation the candidate will take questions from the general audience. After the public seminar, the final oral examination with only the student and graduate committee present will convene.
- _____ 9. Thesis Submission. After the advisory committee has approved the final version of the thesis, the student must submit the *Approval for Thesis Submission to ShareOK* form to Graduate College. The digital thesis must be submitted to SHAREOK no later than 60 calendar days after your defense or the Friday of the last week of classes (one week before the end of Finals Week), whichever comes first. SHAREOK is the institutional repository for the OU Library. Digital assets placed in the repository are available to a global audience, and search engine optimization techniques are used to increase their visibility to researchers and thus their impact on the global community. The department has a 3-year embargo available that prevents release of theses/dissertations even though they are deposited with SHAREOK. Be sure to indicate on the *Request for Authority for Thesis Defense* form whether you wish to take advantage of this option. You should discuss this with your committee chair. Please refer to the

Thesis/Dissertation Instruction Packet available on the Graduate College website that contains important information about research related issues, copyright, and tools to make sure your document meets the Graduate College formatting requirements.

REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-THESIS MASTER'S of SCIENCE DEGREE

The non-thesis M.S. is the coursework degree generally selected by those students interested in obtaining an advanced degree without research specialization. The course requirements are flexible and will be determined by the Graduate Liaison after discussions with each student. The flexibility allows personalization of the degree program to match each student's interests and future needs.

I. Summary of non-thesis M.S. Degree Requirements.

- A. Coursework. The non-thesis M.S. degree requires 32 hours of graduate-level coursework.
 - a. Courses must mainly be at the 5000-6000 level. No more than 6 hours in courses carrying graduate credit below this level can be applied toward the degree.
 - b. Students may use courses outside the specialization area (non-MBIO/PBIO courses) towards the degree. These courses must be approved by the Graduate Liaison.
 - c. No more than 15 hours of S/U graded courses may be applied to the degree.
 - d. A minimum of 15 credit hours must come from MBIO or PBIO courses.
- B. Graduate Seminar (5971). One of the 32 credit hours must consist of seminar in Plant Biology or Microbiology (students must attend the weekly seminar every semester regardless of whether or not they are receiving credit for the course).
- C. Non-Thesis Examination. The non-thesis 24-hour take home comprehensive written examination is one of the requirements of the program and cannot be waived. Because the non-thesis is comprehensive, a student should complete all required courses on their *Program of Study* form before taking the exam. Each student will have an examination committee consisting of three faculty members from the department. For MBIO students, two of those committee members must be MBIO faculty and for PBIO students, two of those committee members must be PBIO faculty members. Upon completion of the examination by the student, the committee will evaluate the student's work, and determine whether it is satisfactory. If the student's work is unsatisfactory then the student may, at the discretion of the committee, repeat the examination in the following semester. The comprehensive examination may not be taken a third time.
- D. Non-Thesis M.S. degree based on the results of the General Exam. A Ph.D. student may obtain a non-thesis Master's degree upon completion of the general exam. There is a small window of opportunity to pursue this. You should be advised by your Major Professor/Committee Chair and the Graduate Liaison before proceeding.

II. Check List for Non-Thesis Master's (M.S.) Program

It is the responsibility of the student to stay advised of all university academic calendar deadlines along with graduate college deadlines.

- _____ 1. Non-thesis M.S. Examining Committee. As soon as a major interest area is chosen, establish an advisory committee. Students will select their advisory committee and submit a *Department Advisory Committee Approval Form* **by end of their first semester of enrollment in the graduate program**.
- _____ 2. M.S. Advisory Conference. After advisory committee is formed, hold an advisory conference to formulate a study plan **no later than the end of the second semester in residence**.
- _____ 3. Non-thesis M.S. Candidacy. File for candidacy by completing a *Program of Study* form before reaching accumulated 20 hours of your program. You should indicate "non-thesis" in writing at the top of the form. The *Program of Study* form must be up to date and approved by the Graduate College to be admitted to candidacy. Note your Program of Study must be approved at least halfway through the semester before you intend to complete your degree. A student must enroll in at least two graduate credit hours for the entire semester at the University of Oklahoma in the semester in which the non-thesis examination is taken. For more information, refer to the Graduate College Bulletin (under Special Requirements for Enrolling in Research for Master's Thesis).
- _____ 4. Non-Thesis Instruction Packet. In the beginning of their graduating semester, students are strongly encouraged to review their program Instruction Packet that is available on the Graduate College website. Non-Thesis students should meet with their examining committee for preparation, as this will allow them ample time to prepare for the comprehensive examination.
- _____ 5. Graduation Applications and Examination. In the semester you plan to graduate, apply for graduation online according to the deadline indicated on the Academic Calendar. The Graduate Liaison will need to request authority for your examination from the Graduate Dean one week in advance. Coordinate with your examining committee to determine a date for your exam and communicate this information to the Graduate Liaison. Note the exam must be completed no later than the Friday of pre-finals week.
- _____ 6. Authority Report Form. The *Authority Report Form* must be returned to the Graduate College within four weeks of the exam completion and within one week of the decision. If a majority of members vote "unsatisfactory", then the exam will be judged unsatisfactory.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DOCTORAL (PH.D.) DEGREE

Listed below are major requirements for the Ph.D. degree, which should be completed by the student with advice from the major professor and the advisory committee. The candidate should be familiar with the requirements as specified regarding: (1) University requirements for full graduate standing; (2) General requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy; and (3) Department prerequisites for full graduate standing. To obtain a Ph.D. degree, the student must successfully complete relevant course work, pass the General Examination, and successfully defend the Ph.D. dissertation.

- I. **Summary of the Ph.D. Degree Requirements.** A graduate student with/without a Master's degree has the option of enrolling in a Ph.D. program with the approval of the research advisor and the Graduate College. The student **must complete 90 credit hours of graduate level work** beyond a Bachelor's degree.
 - A. Dissertation Research (6980). After the initial enrollment in 6980 for at least two credit hours, continuous enrollment in at least two credits per semester is required until all requirements are completed for the Ph.D. degree. Dissertation hours cannot be taken until all coursework has been completed (the only exception to this is that 1 hour of seminar credit can still be taken after the start of dissertation hours). Additionally, the student cannot begin to enroll in dissertation hours until the semester of their general exam.
 - B. Graduate Seminar (5971). Doctoral students are required to complete three credit hours in their discipline-specific seminar course, and attend seminar every semester regardless of whether or not they are receiving credit for the course (EEB students will be under the direction of a MBIO or PBIO faculty member and should also attend the EEB seminar series).
 - C. Outside Credits. Ph.D. students will usually be recommended to take up to 6 hours of graduate level credit in courses outside of the Department. A minimum of 3 outside hours is required.
 - D. Tools of Research. Every doctoral student must take (or present credit from an accredited college) two courses that enhance the written and oral communication skills such as technical writing, foreign language, communication, etc., and/or the quantitative skills such as computer programming or statistics.
 - E. Transfer Credits. Regardless of the age of the hours, the total number of hours applied or transferred may not exceed 49 percent (44 credit hours) of the hours required for the doctoral degree. Transfer credit for thesis research from a completed master's degree may be applied to a doctoral degree but is limited to the total thesis hours required for the equivalent master's degree at OU (6 hours).
 - F. In Residence. The Graduate College requires the student must be in residence at the University of Oklahoma at least two consecutive full semesters (excluding summer sessions) and be engaged in coursework and research activities prescribed by the Department. However, the nature

of our department's degrees requires a more stringent requirement for students to be on the OU Norman campus engaged in their research program for the majority of their degree program. If a particular situation or research project warrants a deviation from this policy, permission must be obtained from the Department Chair, Department Graduate Committee and the student's Graduate Committee. In such a situation, a memo of understanding outlining the conditions of such an agreement would be provided to all parties.

- G. Dissertation Advisory Committee. Students are required to establish their advisory committee by the end of the first semester of enrollment in the graduate program and submit a *Departmental Advisory Committee Approval Form*. For Microbiology and Plant Biology doctoral students, the advisory committee must consist of at least four graduate faculty members (majority from the student's major and holding an MPBIO RM3/RM4 graduate faculty appointment). The committee must have a committee chair, a graduate faculty member from another department at the University of Oklahoma (Graduate College representative), and at least two other members of the MPBIO graduate faculty. Special members (SM) cannot serve as the committee chair, outside member, or count towards the departmental majority. The Graduate Liaison will approve the committee if the committee is balanced and meets Graduate College policies. The Graduate College will be advised of your committee composition upon submission of the Advisory Conference Report.
- H. Advisory Conference. Once the Dissertation Advisory Committee has been approved, students will be instructed to set up an advisory conference to formulate their study plan. This conference must take place by the end of the second semester in the program. After this meeting, an *Advisory Conference Report (ACR)*, signed by all members of the Dissertation Committee and the Department Liaison, should be submitted to the Graduate College and used to monitor the completion of coursework. Should any changes in committee membership become necessary, the student must submit a Request for Change in Committee Form to the Graduate College. For other changes to the *Advisory Conference Report*, such as planned coursework, a new/updated ACR form must be submitted and approved by the student's Dissertation Committee and the Graduate College Dean. No changes in the membership of the Doctoral Committee are permitted within thirty days of the general exam or dissertation defense, so make sure to document changes as soon as they occur. To prevent heavy paperwork loads the Graduate College requests that ACR changes to update coursework be done only the semester before applying to take the general exam and prior to submitting a degree check for graduation. The forms are available on the Graduate College website, as well as a *Checklist for Completion of Doctoral Degree* to be used as a guide.
- I. General Exam. The dissertation advisory committee will administer the general examination. The student is expected to complete all required

coursework in the first four semesters (Fall/Spring semesters only) and take their general exam in the fifth semester. Full details of the general exam are explained in Section III and Appendix II.

To facilitate this process, department and Graduate college paperwork deadlines are as follows:

- Semester 1: Department Advisory Conference Membership form must be submitted by Dec 15th or May 15th for those that enter in Fall and Spring semesters, respectively.
- Semester 2: First Committee Meeting and ACR submitted to the Graduate College.
- Semester 4: Any ACR updates needed prior to the General Exam must be submitted to the Graduate College
- Semester 5: The *Application for General Exam for the Doctoral Degree* form is due to the Graduate College by the end of the second week of the semester. After both written and oral parts of the General Exam have been completed, submit the *Authority Report Form for General Exam* to the Graduate College.

II. Requirements of Specific Programs

A. Ph.D. in Microbiology

1. Dissertation Research (6980). A minimum of 30 hours must be taken in Dissertation Research.
2. Teaching. It is recommended that every graduate student obtain experience in teaching.
3. Outside Credits. Each student must have a minimum of 3 hours of credit outside their major.

B. Ph.D. in Plant Biology

1. Dissertation Research (6980). A minimum of 30 hours must be taken in Dissertation Research.
2. Teaching. It is recommended that every graduate student obtain experience in teaching.
3. Outside Credits. Each student must have a minimum of 6 hours of credit outside their major.

C. Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

The graduate program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology spans over 40 faculty across campus, supervising students from the Departments of Microbiology & Plant Biology and Biology at the University of Oklahoma.

In addition to the requirements for either a Plant Biology or a Microbiology Ph.D. degree, students seeking a Ph.D. in EEB must take:

--PBIO/MBIO 5453 (Advanced Ecology and Evolutionary Biology),
--2 credit hours of PBIO/MBIO 5471 (Seminar in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology).

Statistics intensive courses are strongly recommended, including Quantitative Biology (BIOL 4913), Multivariate Analysis (BIOL 5943), Advanced Applied Statistics (MATH 5793), and Psychological Statistics I and II (PSY 5003 and 5013). Coding intensive courses such as Programming in R for Biology (BIOL 5923) will also suffice. Further information pertaining to the EEB Ph.D. program can be found at www.ou.edu/eeb.

III. The General Exam

This section summarizes the departmental expectations, requirements and guidelines for the General Exam. These are in addition to those of the Graduate College, which are outlined in [Section 8.5 of the Graduate College Bulletin](#).

A. Goals of the General Exam

- To ascertain the student's fundamental knowledge base in their general field of study (EEB, MBIO, PBIO)
- To ascertain the student's knowledge of their respective research area (e.g. core knowledge necessary to successfully carry out their research project)
- To ascertain the ability of the student to formulate scientific questions and adequately articulate those questions to an audience (in written and oral form)
- To ascertain the student's ability to formulate hypotheses and develop objectives/aims that adequately test those hypotheses
- To ascertain the student's ability to design experiments and incorporate appropriate controls
- To ascertain the student's ability to critically analyze and interpret experimental data
- To evaluate the student's capacity to understand the broader impacts/bigger picture associated with a research question

B. Written Exam

Upon receiving authorization from the Graduate College to proceed with the General Exam, the student may begin work on the written portion of the exam. The written portion of the exam will consist of a research proposal on

the student's dissertation research project. Specific formatting and content information for the components of the written portion is provided in Appendix II.

1. Phase 1 – Specific Aims Page: No later than the 4th week of the fifth semester, the student will circulate a Specific Aims page to their advisory committee for general feedback. Individual committee members have one week to provide comments/feedback to the student. The student is expected to address this feedback when developing their full written proposal.
 2. Phase 2 – Full Proposal: Once feedback is received, the student will have up to two months to write a full research proposal based on their proposed aims. **The student is encouraged to consult with their major advisor and all committee members during the preparation of the research proposal.** However, committee members including the committee chair will not serve as editors of the proposal prior to its submission. The role of the committee and committee chair is to point out significant problems/concerns that the student should address before final submission. Students may also seek input on a proposal draft from their peers and senior lab members (postdoctoral and research scientists). The expectation is that the final submitted proposal represents the individual work of the student.
 3. Evaluation of the written exam: Within two weeks of receipt of the written proposal, the committee will confer and make a determination as to whether these materials are satisfactory i.e., whether the proposal is of sufficient quality that it can be orally defended. If the committee has any hesitations/concerns on the proposal it must convene an in-person meeting to discuss the outcome. The committee will review the research proposal according to the following criteria:
 - i. adequate review of the literature, delineating the relation of the proposed work to the state-of-knowledge in the field
 - ii. clearly defined objectives (specific aims)
 - iii. significance of the proposed work
 - iv. general plan of work and alternative approaches to the problem
 - v. the ability of the student to apply their knowledge in their field of study and related areas to a particular problem.
- Per Graduate College policy, the following outcomes can be rendered for the written exam:
 - i. **Satisfactory:** The student may schedule an oral defense to take place no later than the Friday of the week before finals. *To facilitate scheduling, a "save the date" can be done for the oral exam but under no circumstances should the oral exam be planned for the same time the advisory committee is set to render a decision on the written portion.* The Authority Report Form is marked satisfactory for the written portion and the committee chair maintains possession of the form until the oral exam is complete.

- ii. **Marginal:** For a marginal results, the proposal must be scientifically sound, and the committee must agree that the student can address the committees concerns without extensive rewrites. The committee will petition for an abeyance of the written exam as detailed in Appendix III. The authority report form is not returned at this stage. Additional work to be undertaken by the student must be clearly specified and completed within two weeks of the original written exam. *Under no circumstances should the student proceed to the oral portion of the exam until their written exam has been reevaluated and deemed "satisfactory"*.
- iii. **Unsatisfactory:** The authority report form is marked "unsatisfactory" for the written portion; the oral portion is left blank and all committee members sign. *Under no circumstances should the student proceed to the oral portion of the exam.* The student submits the form to the Graduate College and applies to take the exam in the following semester. If the second attempt is unsuccessful the student is dismissed from the Ph.D. program but has the option to finish a Master's degree.

C. Oral Exam

Once the written exam is deemed acceptable, the student may begin preparing for the oral exam. The oral exam will include an oral defense of the written exam as well as general background questions in the student's area of study (EEB, MBIO, PBIO). The student will prepare an ~30-minute presentation of their proposal materials. The student should be prepared for interruptions and questions throughout their oral presentation. Once the committee feels the questioning has been exhausted (or 3 hours have passed), the committee must render one of the following outcomes per Graduate College policy:

- i. **Satisfactory:** The committee marks the authority form with "satisfactory" for the written and oral portions, signs the form and the student returns the form to the Graduate College within 72 hours of the oral exam. The student will be admitted to Ph.D. candidacy.
- ii. **Marginal:** The committee will petition for an abeyance of the oral portion as detailed in Appendix III. Additional work expected of the student must be identified and should be addressed no later than the third week of the semester following the abeyance request. At the end of this time period, the committee will reevaluate the results of the oral exam and deem them either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
- iii. **Unsatisfactory:** The committee marks the authority report form "satisfactory" for the written portion and "unsatisfactory" for the oral portion and signs. The student submits the form to the

Graduate College and applies to take the exam in the following semester. Even though the written portion was passed the student has to retake both portions of the exam. If the second attempt is unsuccessful the student is dismissed from the Ph.D. program but has the option to finish a Master's degree.

D. Authorization for Deviation from Schedule

Extensions to the timeline for the General Exam will only be granted in specific circumstances. Such circumstances include:

- i. If a student takes an official leave of absence approved by the Graduate College
- ii. If a student entered the program with coursework deficiencies (e.g. was not a biology major as an undergraduate) and requires additional foundational coursework
- iii. National Guard Duty or military deployment
- iv. Students that participated in the rotation program during their first semester may be permitted a one semester extension if the Advisory Committee feels it is necessary

Students requesting extensions must formally petition the Department Graduate Committee with the approval of their Advisory Committee Chair.

IV. Checklist for Ph.D. Degree Program

It is the responsibility of the student to stay advised of all university academic calendar deadlines along with graduate college deadlines.

- _____ 1. Advisory Committee. As soon as a major interest area is chosen, establish an advisory committee. Students will select their advisory committee and submit a *Department Advisory Committee Approval Form* **by end of their first semester of enrollment in the graduate program.**
- _____ 2. Advisory Conference. It is the student's responsibility to arrange an advisory conference meeting with the Dissertation Committee. The advisory conference must be held with the Dissertation Committee as soon as a major interest area is chosen, but in no case later than the end of the second semester in the program. After the conference, the student must file a completed *Advisory Conference Report (ACR)* with the Graduate College. The report must be signed by the Dissertation Committee and the Graduate Liaison. This will include the requirements to be met for the degree as specified by the Committee during the conference, including any specific skills or tools that are to be a part of the program. The report will be submitted to the Graduate College Dean, with copies to the student, each member of the committee, and the Departmental Office.

Any subsequent changes in advisory committee membership must be approved by the student's current committee and the Graduate College by submitting a Request for Change in Committee Form. For other changes to the *Advisory Conference Report*, such as planned coursework, a new/updated ACR form must be submitted and approved by the student's advisory committee and the Graduate College Dean. No change in the membership of the Dissertation Committee is permitted within thirty days of the general exam or the dissertation defense.

- _____ 3. *Application for General Exam.* Each student is expected to take their general exam by the end of the fifth semester in the program. When coursework has been completed, the prospective candidate must file with the Graduate College a completed *Application for General Exam for the Doctoral Degree* form. Applications are available on the Graduate College website and are due within the first two weeks of the semester in which the exam will be taken. The examination must be completed no later than the Friday of the last week of classes (the week before finals). Faculty may have limited Summer Semester availability, so check ahead with your committee if you are considering a summer General Exam.

After the examination is authorized by the Graduate College Dean, the student should arrange a time and place for the examination with their Doctoral Committee. Students will be examined over the areas of their respective disciplines listed previously in this manual.

- _____ 4. *Admission to Candidacy.* After the general examination is completed, the major professor will complete the *Authority Report Form for the General Exam* provided by the Graduate College, indicating whether the student had a satisfactory or unsatisfactory result. If the General Exam result is satisfactory, the student will be admitted to candidacy for the Doctoral degree. If all or any portion of the general examination is unsatisfactory, a report must be submitted to the Graduate College Dean indicating a failure on the examination. In the case of an unsatisfactory result, the student may retake both parts of the exam in the following semester. If a student does not obtain a satisfactory result on both portions of the general examination on the second attempt, they will be terminated from the doctoral program. If a student's performance is marginal, but not unsatisfactory, and the examining committee wishes the student to do further readings, coursework, investigations, etc. in a set time, the results of the examination can be held in abeyance with the approval of the Graduate College Dean. At the end of the time limit (the third week of the following semester) the committee must file the report with the Graduate College.

Any Authority report received in the Graduate College without a unanimous vote will be investigated by the Graduate College Dean. The Dean may choose to confer with the dissenting member(s), with the committee chair, or with the entire committee. The course of action taken will be dictated by each individual case.

The Graduate College provides authorization for a student to hold their general examination and must receive a report on the outcome of each general examination. If the examination was not held, a report indicating the reasons why it was postponed must be submitted.

- _____ 5. *Defense/Examination and Graduation Applications.* In the semester you plan to graduate, apply for graduation online according to the deadline indicated on the Academic Calendar. Within the first two weeks of the final semester, submit the *Request for Degree Check* form to the Graduate College. At least two weeks before your defense, submit the online *Report of Reading Copy Submission* form and *Request for Authority for Dissertation Defense* form available on the Graduate College website, and any other required attachments if applicable (i.e. Animal Research Use, etc.).
- _____ 6. *Reading Copy of Dissertation.* The doctoral candidate should prepare and distribute reading copies of the dissertation to the doctoral committee. The reading copy should be in an acceptable dissertation format and must include all figures and tables, numbered pages, and a complete bibliography. When the reading copy has received preliminary approval of the major professor, it can be shared with the rest of the committee. A reading copy of your thesis must be provided to your committee early in the semester of your defense (see Appendix IV for additional information).

All members of the Dissertation Advisory committee must read and determine whether the dissertation demonstrates the student's ability to conduct original research and makes a significant contribution to the student's discipline. When the dissertation is acceptable and a degree check indicates that the student has completed all course work with acceptable grades, the student may schedule the final oral examination. **At least one chapter of the dissertation must be submitted to the committee 7 weeks prior to the dissertation defense, and a full draft at least 4 weeks before the defense.** Additional revisions of the thesis may be required by the advisory committee before the defense.
- _____ 7. *Doctoral Seminar and Dissertation Defense.* Each candidate for the Ph.D. degree in Microbiology or Plant Biology is required to present a seminar based on their dissertation research. This seminar is open to the public, and immediately following the presentation the candidate will take questions from the general audience. After the public portion of the defense is completed, the final oral examination with only the student and graduate committee present will convene.
- _____ 8. *Dissertation Authority Report Form.* You are not authorized to defend until you receive the *Authority Report Form* from the Graduate College. Within 72 hours after the final examination is held the *Authority Report Form* must be returned to the Graduate College Office with the results and signatures of *all* committee members. The candidate only has one

opportunity to defend the thesis. If a majority vote “unsatisfactory”, then the exam will be judged unsatisfactory.

- _____9. *Dissertation Completion.* After the advisory committee has approved the final version of the dissertation, the student must submit the *Approval for Dissertation Submission to ShareOK* form to Graduate College. The digital dissertation must be submitted to SHAREOK no later than 60 calendar days after your defense or the Friday of the last week of classes (one week before the end of Finals Week), whichever comes first.

SHAREOK is the institutional repository for the OU Library. Digital assets placed in the repository are available to a global audience, and search engine optimization techniques are used to increase their visibility to researchers and thus their impact on the global community. The department has a 3-year embargo available that prevents release of theses/dissertations even though they are deposited with SHAREOK. Be sure to indicate on the *Request for Authority for Dissertation Defense* form whether you wish to take advantage of this option. You should discuss this with your committee chair. Please refer to the Thesis/Dissertation Instruction Packet available on the Graduate College website that contains important information about research related issues, copyright, and tools to make sure your document meets the Graduate College formatting requirements.

At the time you deposit your dissertation, you must also complete and submit the online *Survey of Earned Doctorates*.

PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Student Health Insurance

Graduate students are eligible for the Student Health Plan as long as they meet the following requirements:

1. Must be enrolled in at least 5 credit hours during the fall or spring semesters, or 2 credit hours in the summer semester for summer only coverage. In their final semester, students may take only 2 credit hours and still be eligible for health insurance.
2. Be appointed to a .5 FTE or greater position (as a Graduate Teaching or Research Assistant or a combination of the two).

II. Graduate Assistantship information

A. Duties

All graduate assistants are expected to spend an average of 20 hours per week on their assistantship. If a student has concerns about their GA workload, they are encouraged to talk with their assistantship supervisor. Students may also talk with the Graduate Liaison or a member of the Graduate Committee.

Graduate Teaching Assistant: This work typically consists of some combination of the follow activities, as directed by the supervisor of the GTA: 1) Assisting classes to which they are assigned. Assistants should attend lectures and/or other relevant components of the courses in which they are assisting for the first time. 2) Holding regular scheduled office hours. 3) Grading papers for sections of courses in which they assist and turning in grade reports in a timely manner. 4) Preparing teaching aids (outlines, drawings, tests, etc.) for sections of courses in which they assist. Assistants who have not fulfilled all their hourly obligations by the end of the semester may be asked to do additional tasks by the instructor or by the Department.

Graduate Research Assistant: duties of a GRA vary based on the needs of the GR supervisor. Typical duties may include: lab or field site maintenance, data collection or analysis, assistance with presentations or reports, or other research support activities.

B. Time Records

Written weekly time records are to be kept by each assistant of their time spent working for the Department. Students are required to report monthly assistantship hours to the University. You will receive instructions via email on when and how to report these hours.

C. Good Standing

All graduate assistants must maintain a grade average of 3.0 in accordance with the Graduate College regulations on academic standards and must perform assigned research and teaching duties in a manner satisfactory to the Department, Graduate College and the University of Oklahoma.

1. **Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)**

- (a) Satisfactory Progress. Students must have an annual evaluation rating stating they are making satisfactory progress towards their degree to be eligible for a GTA position. GTAs will be available to those making marginally satisfactory progress at the discretion of the Department Chair.
- (b) Limitations on GTA Eligibility. The department reserves the right to revoke/limit/lower priority of a student's GTA eligibility in response to (1) poor teaching performance based on student and/or supervisor evaluations, (2) prolonged time to degree (~3 years for M.S. and ~6 years for Ph.D.), and/or (3) student misconduct.

2. **Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs)**. The length of time a student is employed on a research assistantship will be left to the discretion of the professor under whom the student is employed.

D. Tuition Waiver

In spring and fall semesters, a student may be eligible for a waiver of up to the total number of hours remaining toward the degree provided that they enroll in 5 or more credit hours and hold a graduate assistantship of at least .50 FTE. In the summer, a student's eligibility for a waiver is based on whether they held or will hold a qualifying appointment in the preceding spring or following fall semester.

A student's maximum total waiver over the course of a single degree program is the number of hours remaining toward the degree when they first receive a tuition waiver (30 hours for Master's degree and 90 hours for a Ph.D. degree). If a student is in the final semester of their degree program and has exhausted their tuition waiver, they may receive an additional one semester of waiver to complete their degree (provided the student otherwise qualifies for tuition waiver).

Qualified students who wish **to receive a tuition waiver must complete** the Professional Ethics Training–Responsible Conduct of Research (PET-RCR) . PET-RCR registration is available on the Graduate College website.

SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

- I. **Definition.** A graduate assistant is defined as any graduate student appointed as a graduate teaching or research assistant, or graduate teaching or research associate.
- II. **Workload.** Because one of the primary purposes of a graduate assistant appointment is to aid the student in the successful completion of a graduate program, graduate assistants may not be appointed for more than one-half (0.5 FTE) employment without special permission of the Graduate College Dean. The Department must submit a written justification for all appointments greater than 0.5 FTE. A 0.5 FTE graduate teaching assistant would normally involve twenty hours per week. This would include time spent in the classroom or laboratory, preparations, office hours, etc. In no case is a graduate student permitted to be appointed to greater than a total 0.7 FTE.
- III. **Enrollment Load.** The graduate assistant's academic course load for each term should ensure that they are making satisfactory progress toward the degree. However, the minimum enrollment for fall and spring semesters must be **five credit hours**, unless otherwise stipulated by the Graduate College. Only two credit hours are required in the final semester.
- IV. **Professional Ethics Training – Responsible Conduct of Research (PET-RCR).** All graduate assistants (GRAs and GTAs) who wish to receive the Qualified Graduate Assistant tuition waiver must complete the online Professional Ethics Training – Responsible Conduct of Research (PET-RCR) workshop through CITI. Students are encouraged to complete the training as early as possible but must complete the training before the start of the third semester of enrollment, otherwise, a tuition waiver will be withheld.
- V. **English Proficiency for International Graduate Assistants.** The State of Oklahoma requires certification for any non-native speaker of English who has contact with students in an *instructional capacity*. To meet this requirement at the University of Oklahoma, the English Training and Certification Services administers language proficiency training and support services leading to Certification of Proficiency in English. Assessment and services are administered by the University's English Training and Certification Services located in Robertson Hall 213 (731 Elm Avenue). For further information refer to the ETCS website or contact their office at (405) 325-1838.
- VI. **Outside Employment.** Graduate assistantships are considered to be .50 FTE (20 hours per week) appointments. A teaching assistantship plus academic work toward a graduate degree is a full-time commitment and **is incompatible with external employment during the semesters of appointment. Graduate teaching assistants considering external employment during the period of the assistantship must obtain prior approval from the director of graduate studies.**

If you have any questions about your degree program, please contact your major professor or the department Graduate Liaison. For further information not covered in this manual, please refer to the **Graduate College website:** <http://www.ou.edu/gradcollege>.

APPENDIX

I. **Appendix I: Graduate Certificate in Microscopic Imaging & Technology**

The Certificate Program in Microscopic Imaging and Technology is designed for graduate students with a strong interest in using advanced imaging technology to characterize biological, materials and physical science specimens at a range of resolutions that can reach to a near atomic level. Students who may be interested with this certificate come from a wide range of interests (e.g., Biology, Microbiology, Plant Biology, Biomedical Engineering, Biotechnology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Materials Sciences, Nanotechnology, Physics).

A. Requirements:

Complete twelve hours of *core microscopy courses*:

BIOL/MBIO/PBIO 5364 Transmission Electron Microscopy (4 credits)

BIOL/MBIO/PBIO 5374 Scanning Electron Microscopy (4 credits)

BIOL/MBIO/PBIO 5394 Advanced Light Microscopy (4 credits)

Complete three hours of *independent research* in which student demonstrates research skills in microscopy as part of their graduate research:

To fulfill this requirement, students will enroll in three hours of graduate research courses selected from an approved list maintained by the Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology.

B. College Limitations:

All courses must be taken at OU; No transfer credit will apply; Cannot be more than five years old *as of the semester* the graduate certificate is awarded; GPA of 3.0 or higher is required for *all coursework applied* to the graduate certificate; At least 50 percent of the courses must be coded at the 5000 level or higher.

Students must submit a separate application to the certificate program on the [Graduate College Website](#). Once admitted, students will submit the [Graduate Program Certificate Report](#) with the signature of the Department of Microbiology and Plant Biology Graduate Liaison, regardless of their home degree program.

Contact Information

- For questions on Microscopy coursework contact
 - Graduate Program Administrator, Ms. Heidi Mueller, heidi.a.mueller-1@ou.edu, 325-4322
- For administrative information contact
 - Graduate Liaison, Dr. Heather McCarthy. heather.mccarthy@ou.edu
 - Graduate Program Administrator, Ms. Heidi Mueller, heidi.a.mueller-1@ou.edu, 325-4322

II. Appendix II: General Exam Proposal Format

The written portion of the General Exam consists of two sections: A) Specific Aims Page and B) Project Description. As per Section III.B.1 above, the Specific Aims Page must be completed and circulated to the advisory committee for feedback prior to developing the Project Description. The expected formatting and content for each section is described below.

A. Specific Aims Page

- Formatting
 - Limited to 1 Page
 - Single-spaced
 - 1-inch margins
 - Arial, Times or similar font of 11 pt or larger
 - No figures
- Content
 - Key background information (max 1 paragraph)
 - Statement of gap in knowledge in the field
 - Statement of Significance
 - An overall objective of the proposed work
 - Central hypothesis
 - Rationale
 - Specific Aims/Objectives list with
 - Include brief (one to two sentences) statements on approach
 - More defined hypothesis (working hypotheses for each aim)

B. Project Description

- Formatting
 - 15 pages maximum-including figures and tables, does not include references
 - Single-spaced
 - 1 inch margins

- o Arial, Times or similar font of 11 pt or larger (9 pt for figure legends)
- Content
 - o Overview and Objectives
 - The majority of this information should come from your specific aims page but can be expanded (fleshed-out) up to two pages
 - o Significance and statement of what knowledge successful completion of the proposed aims will bring about (1 to 2 paragraphs)
 - o Background (3 to 5 pages)
 - Review of Relevant Literature
 - This should not be an exhaustive review but contain enough information for the reader to determine what is known in the field and set you up for identifying where key information is missing
 - Preliminary Data (this should be any data you have generated towards your project)
 - o Relationship to Work in Progress (1 to 2 paragraphs)
 - In your lab
 - At the university
 - In the field
 - o Research Plan (3 to 5 pages)
 - For Each Aim
 - Brief intro including working hypothesis, rationale, justification
 - Experimental Approach including appropriate controls
 - Expected Outcomes
 - Potential Pitfalls/Alternative Approaches
 - o Timeline
 - o Long-term Implications (1 to 2 paragraphs)
 - What new knowledge is expected to be generated

III. Appendix III: Abeyances of the General Exam

In circumstances where either the written or oral portion of the exam are considered a marginal pass, the committee can request to hold the result of the exam in abeyance while the student works to remedy the issues. In such a case, the advisory committee chair drafts a petition (to be submitted by the Graduate Liaison) addressed to the Dean of the Graduate College. The entire committee must agree that if the identified issues are addressed then the students' performance would be considered a pass. Additionally, the specific expectations of work to be completed and timeline for completion must be discussed with the student before submission of the petition.

The petition must include the following information:

- Department Letterhead
- Student Name and ID number
- Reason for abeyance
- Detailed list of expectations/work to be completed to bring performance up to a passing level
- Time frame for resolution of the issues
 - o For the Written Portion two weeks should be permitted.
 - o For the Oral Portion the abeyance should be resolved no later than the third week of the semester (Fall & Spring only) following the abeyance request.
- Signature of the Committee Chair
- Endorsing signature of the Graduate Liaison

IV. **Appendix IV: Timeline for submission and revisions of theses and dissertations**

At least one chapter of the *reading copy* of the thesis/dissertation must be distributed to the committee seven weeks before the defense, with the complete copy provided no later than four weeks before the defense date.

- *What is the reading copy? A complete version of the document, in the approved Graduate College format, that has been **approved by your committee chair** for distribution to the committee. Documents that have not been reviewed by the committee chair should not be submitted to the committee.*

Committee members should request any significant rewrites/reanalyzing of data, etc. within two weeks of the receipt of the thesis/dissertation.

At this point, the committee and/or student can go through multiple iterations of the document, as necessary.

The *penultimate copy* of the thesis/dissertation must be submitted to the committee two weeks (ten business days) before the oral defense date.

- *What is the penultimate copy? A complete version of the document, in the approved Graduate College format, that has been **approved by your entire committee** for an oral defense. At this point, the only expected edits remaining should be grammatical and/or formatting and should not constitute significant rewrites. The committee confirms their approval of this version by signing the Report of Reading Copy Submission form (submitted to the Graduate College by the student).*

The *final copy* of the thesis/dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate College/SHAREOK within 60 days of the defense but not later than the Friday of the last day of regular classes (one week before the end of Finals Week) in the semester of completion.