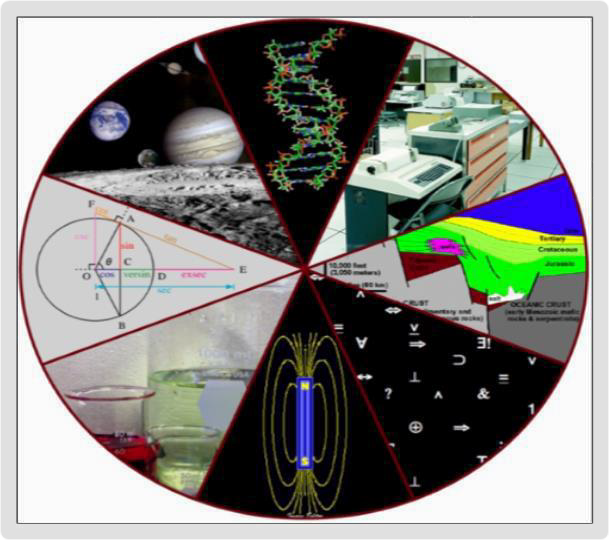
**FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY**

***BIOLOGY MASTER’S PROGRAM AND***

***PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE MASTER IN THE BUSINESS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY(PSM)***



**Guide to Obtaining a Master’s Degree in Biology REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. **INTRODUCTION & PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS – p. 3**
2. **Exciting Careers in Biology – p. 4**
3. **APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS – pp. 5-6**
   1. Admission/Application Procedures
   2. Deadlines to Apply
   3. Application Requirements
   4. Prerequisite Requirements
   5. Transfer Credits
   6. Conditional Acceptance
   7. Term of Enrollment
4. **FAU BIOLOGY DEPARTMENTAL ADVISOR (CHAIR OF COMMITTEE) – p. 7**
   1. What is an FAU Biology Departmental Advisor
   2. FAU Biology Department Advisor Requirements Prior to Acceptance
5. **PROGRAM POLICIES- pp. 8-13**
   1. Program Grade Requirement
   2. Mandatory Program Meeting
   3. Plan of Study (due by end of 1st semester)
   4. M.S. Supervisory Committee Membership Nomination Requirements & Form#**6 (must be completed before registering for Master’s Thesis Proposal BSC 6963 or Master’s Thesis BSC 6971 credits can be taken). See Graduate College website for Form#6**

\* Faculty Appointment in Biology Formal definitions, policies, and procedures within the purview of the Graduate College policy

* 1. Scheduling Timeline for Completion of Degree Requirements
  2. Graduate Student Individual Development Plan/Annual Progress Evaluation
  3. Satisfactory Progress and Good Standing
  4. Not in Good Standing and Dismissal
  5. Communication Between Graduate Students and MS Biology Program
  6. Electronic or Digital Signature

1. **DEPARTMENTAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES– pp. 14-16**
   1. Teaching Assistantship (TA)
   2. Biology Teaching Assistantship Position job assignments
   3. Teaching Assistantships Priority System
   4. TA Request
   5. Teaching Performance Evaluation
   6. T A Grade Requirement
   7. Mandatory Orientation TA Meetings
   8. TA Contract Termination
   9. TA for International Students
   10. Research Assistantship and Research Assistant
   11. Tuition Waivers and Financial Aid Requirements
2. **GRADUATE COLLEGE TUITION BENEFITS POLICY – pp. 17-20**
   1. Benefits Information
   2. Graduate Tuition waivers
   3. Important: Teaching Assistantship and Research Assistantship information
   4. Full-Time Status Eligibility Guidelines (Graduate College Policy) (Form#10)
3. **REGISTRATION FORM REQUIRED FOR RESEARCH AND INTERNSHIPS (i.e., NON-COURSECREDITS) – p. 20**
4. **MASTER’S DEGREE OPTIONS AND DEGREE OPTION REQUIREMENTS – pp. 19-27**
   1. Thesis, pp.21-24 B) Non-Thesis and Master’s Along the Way (for IB-PhD), p. 25

C) MST, p. 26 D) PSM-BB, p. 27 E) BS/MS, p. 27

1. **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATATIONS AND EVALUATION OF INTERNSHIPS – pp. 28-30**
2. **CHANGE OFDEGREE OPTIONS – p. 30**
3. **LEAVE OF ABSENCE – p. 31**
4. **GRIEVANCEANDAPPEAL PROCEDURES – p. 31**
5. **SCHEDULES AND DEADLINES FOR THE MASTER’S DEGREE OPTIONS – pp. 32-34**
6. **Introduction**

Department of Biological Sciences offers 5 MS Degree options. Each program is uniquely tailored for each student depending upon areas of interest and the FAU Biology Faculty member the student works with. Each student entering the program must have an FAU Biology Faculty member who will supervise the student for the degree option they choose. See below for degree options and descriptions of each program.

**Degree Program Options and Brief Descriptions**

**MS Thesis *Option (36 credits)*** is designed for students whose career goals include a research emphasis. This option requires completion of a research project and thesis. This option is tailored for students interested in doing research or contemplating graduate work for a Ph.D. degree.

**MS Non-Thesis *Option #1 (36 credits)*** is designed for students who wish to improve their knowledge in the biological sciences through a rigorous series of courses and exams, or for Integrative Biology PhD students choosing Biology for a Master's Along the Way (MALW) degree.

**Master in Science Teaching Non-Thesis *Option #2* (30 - 36 credits)** is designed for students who wish to satisfy requirements for teaching in high school or junior college. In addition to regular course work, students in this option may also elect to complete a Research Report (a short paper describing the results and significance of a circumscribed research project). Depending upon background, students may also be required to take 6 hours of Education Internship credits.

**Professional Science Master in the Business of Biotechnology (PSM-BB) Option *(34 credits)*** is intended as a terminal degree for students interested in entering the workforce following completion of the degree. The program is tailored for the student with undergraduate training in biology or chemistry who is primarily interested in working in the business-side of the emerging biotechnology industry. The program includes traditional classroom courses in both business and science that culminates in two internship experiences. The first internship provides experience working side-by-side with a research scientist. The second internship exposes the student to the business-side of the biotechnology industry.

**Program is Currently under Construction: Combined BS/MS Option** is a Molecular and Biotechnology fast track to an MS degree (153-156 credits, 120 for the undergraduate degree and 33-36 for the master's degree. Students complete the undergraduate degree first, taking no more than 12 credits of graduate coursework in their senior year, which will then be used to satisfy both degrees.)

This combined degree program leads to both bachelor’s (B.S.) and master’s (M.S.) degrees in Biological Sciences with an emphasis in molecular biology and biotechnology. It is a laboratory intensive curriculum that provides hands-on training for students who are interested in a career in the rapidly expanding field of biotechnology. This program will also provide excellent preparation for pursuing advanced degree studies.

1. **Exciting Careers in Biology**

To see what exciting careers that you can have with a master’s degree in Biology and Professional Science Master’s in Business Biotechnology, visit the FAU Career Center.

Go to the link below to discover Biologist career job titles, job and internship links, industry information links, as well as related FAU student organizations. The content and resources are representative of typical career paths associated with these degrees and do not represent a comprehensive list.

[**http://www.fau.edu/career/majors/biologicalsciences.php**](http://www.fau.edu/career/majors/biologicalsciences.php)

**FAU Career Center**

We encourage you to explore multiple majors at the link below to learn about a wide range of career opportunities to decide what the best degree is for you and your future.

You can visit The FAU Career Center, which has professionally trained and nationally certified counselors to help you in your career decision. If you are undecided about your major, career, or other career-related decisions, our counselors maybe able to assist you.

For more information on career counseling and/or to schedule an appointment contact the FAU Career Center at 561-297-3533.

Link to FAU Career website: [**http://www.fau.edu/career/majors/**](http://www.fau.edu/career/majors/)

**Ready to Apply?**

**See Biology MS Application Procedures and Requirements (next page)**

### APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

#### Apply Online:

* Apply online through the Graduate College Gradcas link: <https://gradcas.liaisoncas.org/apply/>

.



* 1. ***Application Deadlines:***
* Fall term- January 15th
* Spring Term- October 1st.

**All Documents for both Graduate college and Departmental must be received by the above deadlines.**

**Incomplete files will have to re-apply for the next term**.



#### Graduate College Requirements:

* Link for Graduate College Requirements <https://www.fau.edu/graduate/apply/>
* Transcript submission requirement link: <https://www.fau.edu/graduate/apply/>
* International Transcript requirements link: <https://www.fau.edu/graduate/apply/foreign-credential-evaluation/>



#### Biology Department Application Requirements for Thesis/Nonthesis, MST and PSM Degree

**All departmental documents are uploaded through the GradCas online application**

* 1. **Academic Record** (official transcript) see above link on how to submit
* **GPA requirement:** 3.0 or better average on the last 60 hoursof undergraduate credits or established graduate level proficiency
  1. **Letters of recommendation:** 3 are required (letters by previous professors are preferable)
  2. **Statement of goals and interests (please type)**
  3. **Graduate Student Biology Faculty Advisor Verification Form:**
* **Thesis, Non-thesis, MST students** – see page 6 for Faculty Advisor Form requirements
* **Professional Science Masters in Biotechnology Applicants**-Please email Dr. Cavallo at [mcavallo@fau.edu](mailto:mcavallo@fau.edu)
* **Form link for Masters Verification form** : <https://biology.fau.edu/pdf/ms_sponsor_verification_form-2025.pdf>



1. ***Prerequisite Requirements******Courses***

* *Introductory Biology (Biology 1 and Biology 2)*
* *Calculus*
* *Physics*
* *Biochemistry*
* Deficiencies in these preparatory courses can be fulfilled by taking the appropriate courses or by-passing equivalency exams. The student’s Advisor and Graduate Supervisory Committee will be responsible for deciding which of these deficiencies must be taken before the students complete the graduate degree.
* Undergraduate Course **will not** count toward the master’s degree.



1. ***Transfer Credits:***

* **FAU non-degree seeking student**: up to a maximum of 12 graduate level credits can be potentially apply to the master’s degree.
* Master's programs may accept a maximum of 6 graduate credits earned from another institution beyond a baccalaureate degree (University Catalog for Transfer Credit Policy).



1. ***Conditional Acceptance***

* Applicants who show promise, but fail to meet the department’s minimum standards (e.g., GPA) can be potentially admitted on "conditional status". If accepted, student must complete a minimum of two (2) graduate level courses taken for a letter grade (not S/U) with a minimum of ‘B” grade in each class in the 1st semester.
* Satisfactory performance in these courses will enable the student to be reevaluated by the MS Graduate Programs in Biology Committee for official entry into the graduate program. Excluding summer terms (when graduate class offering is limited),
* **Conditionally admitted students must complete the two (2) graded courses in their first term (either fall or spring, depending upon when they were admitted).**



#### Term Enrollment:

* Students who are accepted must register for classes for the term in which they were accepted – there are no deferments.
* Students who do not register in their initial term will have their application records deactivated and, thus, will need to reapply if they wish to be considered for degree conferral.

1. **FAU Biology Departmental Advisor (Chair of Committee)**
   1. **What is an FAU Biology Departmental Advisor?**

The **FAU Biology Departmental Advisor is the Chair of your MS Committee**. As such, they help you, the student, achieve your educational and professional goals by working closely with you to finish the degree in a timely fashion. From the first semester through to the last semester they will work with you on courses and research (when applicable) that would give you the skills and connections needed to complete your degree, including Thesis research, Non-thesis Comprehensive Exams, and Internships in the Professional Science in Business of Biotechnology.



* 1. **FAU Biology Department Advisor Requirements Prior to Acceptance**
     + Each student must have an FAU Biology Departmental Advisor (Chair of Master’s Committee) Thesis, Non-Thesis, MST and PSM (for PSM program please contact Dr. Cavallo)

**Committee Member definitions:**

* FAU Biology Faculty: Member of the Biology Faculty and listed under the institution “College of Science”
* Co-Advisor: Non-Biology Faculty or Affiliate or FAU Biology Faculty
* Non-Biology Faculty- FAU Professors listed under other “institutions”
* Affiliate**:** Faculty employed by another university or institution.
  + - Please visit our FAU Biology Departmental Faculty at the link below

<https://biology.fau.edu/home/biology_ms_program_faculty.php>

**NOTE**: Faculty not listed under the “FAU College of Science” can only be Co-Chair with an FAU Biology Faculty Member (both Biology Faculty member and Co-advisor need to sign the form at link below)

**NOTE**: (To sign as a Co-Advisor- Non-Biology Faculty or Affiliate must also be listed on the FAU Graduate Faculty website Under College of Science - <https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-services/graduate-staff-faculty-resources/graduate-faculty/>

* + - **Once you find a faculty member in your area of interest**, **contact them directly to see if they are taking new students for the semester in which you are applying**. Keep in mind that they may not be able to accept a new student for a variety of reasons, including prior commitments with students currently in the program.
    - Once an FAU Biology Faculty Members agrees, send them the Graduate Student Biology Faculty Advisor Verification form located here: <https://biology.fau.edu/pdf/ms_sponsor_verification_form-2025.pdf>
* Once signed and completed, you will upload the document via the online application process through the Graduate College Gradcas.



1. **PROGRAM POLICIES**
   1. **Program Grade Requirements**
      * Only graduate students enrolled for **9** semester hours (Fall and Spring terms) are considered "**full- time**." **Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 [B] each semester in all course work.**
      * **Passing grades:** The grades of "A" through “B," and "S," are passing grades.
        + Note: The grades of "B-," "C+" and "C," while considered passing for undergraduate students, are indicative of unsatisfactory work for graduate students.
      * **Failing grades:** The grades of “ B-,” “C+,” “C, "C-," "D+," "D," "D-," "F" and "U" are unsatisfactory grades. No credits are earned in courses in which grades of "AU," "CR," "F," "I," "U," "W," "WM" or "ZR" are received.



### Mandatory Program Meetings

1. **Program Meetings**

Annually (or biannually) the MS Graduate Program in Biology will have a meeting(s) required of all students in the program (Thesis, Non-thesis, MST and PSM students) **which will be on the Friday before classes start in Fall and Spring terms, respectively**.

**Program requirements, updates, introductions, orientation, and question/answers will be among the topics. Such meetings will likely be the only time all students in the program will meet simultaneously. THUS, THEY ARE MANDATORY.**

**Those who miss such meetings without prior approval are considered out of good standing, and risk removal from the program.**

### Mandatory Program Meeting Petition to Excuse Absence

##### Students must petition the MS Biology Graduate Program Committee at least one (1) month in advance of such scheduled meetings for approval to be excused from attending.

Petitions will not be approved for staying extra days before or after an attended conference begins or ends, respectively, or taking personal vacations, or reunions, weddings, etc.--- these are not considered excused absences for missing such mandatory program meetings. Again, such petitions based on the criteria discussed above will not be approved and the student will be considered Out of Good Standing in the program. Please see section G and H in Program Policies

##### Petition Instructions:

* **One (1) month prior to Mandatory Program Meeting have the Chair of your Committee email Dr. Brooks at** [**wbrooks@fau.edu**](mailto:wbrooks@fau.edu) **and cc**  [**rdixon@fau.edu**](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu) **an email request to miss the Biology Mandatory meeting for presenting at conference or scientific meeting.**
* Send a copy of the agenda for the scientific meeting or conference showing that you will be presenting a seminar or poster of your research. Similarly, if research data collection is involved, similar documentation/verification must be provided



### Plan of Study

**This is the set of courses that, in consultation with your advisor, you will take to complete the coursework and credit hour aspects of your degree requirements.** Please see section VII. MASTER’S DEGREE OPTIONS AND DEGREE OPTION REQUIREMENTS for the degree you are seeking.

### Plan of Study requirement:

* Review your course degree requirements for the degree you are seeking.
* Undergraduate courses do not count towards your degree program.
* Meet with your academic advisor to discuss your courses.
* Use checklist for your degree (checklist is sent by email after add/drop in your 1st semester).
* Initiate Plan of Study and let the MS Biology Graduate Program Assistant

(Becky at [rdixon@fau.edu](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu) know when it is ready for review so that potential corrections

can be made before official submission and approval.

* Add in grades for completed courses
* Put courses in chronological order.
* Have your advisor send an email to [rdixon@fau.edu s](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu)tating that they have reviewed and approve.

**Note for graduate students receiving tuition benefits (eligible GAs, GRAs, and GTAs):**

**An** approved POS is required to receive tuition benefits beyond the second semester of the assistantship. Students receiving tuition benefits as part of an assistantship are required to file a POS and obtain final approval from the Graduate College by the end of the second semester of the assistantship.

**Plan of Study Submission Instructions:**

1. Log in to your MyFAU account at [myfau.fau.edu](https://myfau.fau.edu/)
2. In the lower-left corner of the page, click on "Academic Success"
3. Scroll down to “Graduate Students Resources", and click on "MyPOS"
4. Follow the prompts

### For Assistance with online Plan of Study System please contact:

[graduatesupport@fau.edu](mailto:graduatesupport@fau.edu) or call 561-297-2203



### M.S. Supervisory Committee Membership Nomination Requirements, Instructions and Form



The M.S. Supervisory Committee consists of three FAU Biology Graduate Faculty Members that will guide and facilitate the student’s progress toward completion of their master’s degree.

**Committee Member definitions:**

* FAU Biology Faculty: Member of the Biology Faculty and Listed under the institution “College of Science”
* Co-Advisor: Non-Biology Faculty or Affiliate or FAU Biology Faculty
* Non-Biology Faculty- FAU Professors listed under other “institutions”
* Affiliate**:** faculty employed by another university or institution.

**FAU Biology Master's Supervisory Committee Requirements**:

3 Minimum Committee Members

**Thesis, Non-Thesis, MST**

* + **Chair of the Committee**
* must be a member of the FAU Biology Faculty

**or**

* you can have an FAU Biology Faculty Member and a Co-Advisor

**FAU Biology Master’s Program Faculty:**

Please see link below to select your Committee Members:

<https://biology.fau.edu/home/biology_ms_program_faculty.php>

**NOTE:** Additional 4th:

* An optional fourth (or more) member can be on your Supervisory Committee

(not required to a signer on the Thesis)

**NOTE**: Graduate College Policy: (Thesis Students)

All three members must be a Member of the Graduate College Faculty or Associate Graduate Faculty

to be a signer on your Thesis.

<https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-services/graduate-staff-faculty-resources/graduate-faculty/>

1. FAU Biology Master's Supervisory Committee **Requirements: PSM-BB**

* **Chair of the Committee: Dr. Michelle Cavallo**

**Non-Biology Faculty and Affiliates:** To apply for an Appointment in the Biology Department

please see link below for instructions

[*https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/affiliate\_and\_graduate\_faculty\_process.php*](https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/affiliate_and_graduate_faculty_process.php)

**Instructions to set up “Thesis Students Master’s Committee”**

1. Meet with your advisor during your first semester to discuss who you would like to serve as part of your required thesis committee.
2. Contact each potential FAU Biology Faculty Master’s Program Member once they agree to be on your committee. Have each individual member sign the Master’s Thesis Committee Approval Form #6 (form is found on the Graduate College website):

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-services/forms/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-services/forms/)

1. Turn in Signed Master’s Thesis Approval Form#6 to Becky Dixon at [rdixon@fau.edu](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu) to get

Biology Department chair signature. Form will be forwarded to College Dean for next signature>

IMPORTANT: Graduate College Policy

Form6 must be approved before you can sign up for Master’s Thesis Proposal BSC 6963 or Master’s Thesis Credits (BSC 6971) or Master’s Thesis Defense (BSC 6975)

## Instructions to set up Committee for “Non-Thesis, MST and PSM -BB Students”

* Meet with your advisor during the end of your first semester or beginning of your second semester to discuss who you would like to serve as part of your required committee.
* Contact each potential FAU Biology Faculty Master’s Program Member, and once they agree to be on your committee get each individual member’s signature on the Biology Master’s Members for Supervisory Committees Form. [**https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/graduate\_student.php**](https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/graduate_student.php)
* PSM-BB students please contact Dr. Cavallo (mcavallo@fau.edu)

##### Turn in Signed Biology Master’s Members for Supervisory Committees Form to [rdixon@fau.edu](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu)

**by the last day of your 2nd semester to be considered making adequate progress and stay in good standing.**



* 1. **Scheduling Timeline for Completion of Degree Requirements.**

**All Biology Master’s and PSM-BB Students working full-time towards degree are expected to complete all requirements for degree within two (2) years after entering the program.**

*Scheduling Timeline Requirements:*

1. The Biology Master’s and PSM-BB Programs **require that all (full and part-time) students complete the Plan of Study prior to the beginning of their 2nd semester**
2. **Form a Graduate Supervisory Committee** See procedures for committee formation in Advisor & Graduate Supervisory Committee above.
3. MS Thesis option students must **present a Thesis Proposal Seminar no later than the 3 r d semeste**r of graduate study (see Thesis Proposal requirements)
4. MS Thesis Option students (in a subsequent term) **must present a Master’s Defense Seminar no later than the 4th semester** of graduate study (see Thesis Defense requirements)
5. MS Non-thesis Option 1 and Non-thesis Option 2 - MST students **must complete the Comprehensive Exams no later than the 4th semester** (see Comprehensive Exams Requirements)
6. PSM-BB Students, first internship should be completed no later than the 3rd semester.
7. PSM-BB Students, second internship should be completed no later than the 4th semester.

##### No student may take more than seven (7) years to complete a Master’s degree.

1. Students who do not enroll for classes one term (Fall or Spring) can enroll the subsequent term without issue. However, students that do not enroll for 2 or more consecutive terms must reapply to the graduate program.



* 1. **Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) & Annual Progress Evaluation**

DUE: **November 1st IDP**

**April 15th IDP & Annual report**

**Must include:**

* the semester/year in which the student entered the graduate program
* progress made by the student since entering the program (or since the previous year's report if the student is in his/her second year of study)
* goals and plans for the upcoming year

**NOTE:**  **The report must be signed and dated by both the student and advisor**. Failure to submit report by the deadline can result in the loss of financial (T.A.) support during the Summer terms, and each subsequent semester until the report is received and reviewed by the MS Graduate Programs in Biology Committee



### Satisfactory Progress and Good Standing



**Students are expected to maintain good academic standing and make adequate progress toward completing their degree. Students are responsible for being aware and in compliance with all Departmental and University requirements. See Below for minimum departmental requirements.**

##### Students maintaining good academic status and making adequate progress and in Good Standing are those that meet the following minimum requirements:

* Maintain **a cumulative GPA of 3.0** and receive **grades of B or higher or Satisfactory(S) in all graduate work**
* **Meet all required deadlines**
* **Attend all mandatory meetings** (e.g., MS Meetings, TA meetings, IACUC for those working with vertebrates and cephalopods, Lab Safety)
* **Adequate and ethical performance as both** **a student in classes and as a TA/RA**

**NOTE:** The schedule timelines for completion outlined will be used by the MS Graduate Programs in Biology Committee to judge whether students supported by Teaching Assistantships are making "satisfactory progress in the program." Students attending Graduate School on a part-time basis must satisfy both their advisor and their Graduate Supervisory Committee that they are progressing with their degree requirements as rapidly as possible.

### Not in Good Standing and Dismissal



Students who do not comply with the minimum requirements above will be placed in **Not in Good Standing** status. In such case, students will be required to schedule a meeting with the MS Biology Graduate Chair to discuss their situation, including a plan to get back into **Good Standing** as soon as possible. While in **Not in Good Standing** status, students are ineligible for Teaching Assistantships. Additionally, students who remain in **Not in Good Standing status** for 2 consecutive semesters risk removal from the program.



* 1. **Communication Between Graduate Students and MS Biology Program**

The MS Biology Program is large and geographically located among multiple FAU campuses. Thus, **email is the official communication form for the program**. As such, we require that all MS Graduate students use their FAU-assigned email. We suggest that students create a folder in their email client software specifically for our email communications. We understand that newly admitted students may not yet have an FAU email address; so, we will temporarily use private or non-FAU email addresses until such students have their official FAU email addresses.



### Electronic or Digital Signature Policy

The MS Biology program requires written permission in advance from the Professor before the program will consider accepting any document presented by the graduate student with a copy of a professor’s electronic or digital signature. Written permission must be sent by email directly by the Professor to the Program Assistant; forwarded emails will not be accepted.



### DEPARTMENTAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

* 1. **Teaching Assistantship (**TA) is potentially available to graduate students to help finance their educational studies (NOTE: these positions are highly competitive)
     + For eligibility to receive a Teaching Assistantship, you must be admitted into the Biology Master’s program and follow all of the Biology Master’s Program Regulations Policies, and remain enrolled as a full-time graduate student, and maintain good standing.
     + All credit hours covered by the Tuition benefit must be required for the degree. Student must pay directly for any course not required for the degree. For the official Graduate College policies, please see section V, below, *Tuition Benefits Policy for Graduate Students*



### Biology Teaching Assistant Job Responsibilities may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Teaching a lab, lab prep, writing and grading quizzes and exams, making copies as needed, meetings, grade spreadsheets, and general academic preparation for teaching the labs.
2. Proctoring exams given by others in the Department
3. Office hours - where you are available to students for the lab you teach. (2 hours minimum required every week)
4. Attend one of the Teaching Effectiveness Workshops offered in the current semester.



### Teaching Assistantship Priority System

**T.A. Assignments:** Are distributed based on the following **Priority System**:

* + First and second year MS Thesis students making adequate progress have highest priority over both Non- Thesis, PSM-BB and BS/MS students (support is normally given for a two-year period only)
  + Students admitted under normal status have priority over those admitted conditionally (until those latter students are officially accepted; see Admission Procedures section on p.1)
  + Student must be making satisfactory progress and be in Good Standing (see Program Policies section III)
  + Subject knowledge and teaching ability/past performance

**Summer TA Note:** Because of the relatively few numbers of summer TA positions (fewer courses are offered in the summer), and Integrative Biology PhD students are given highest priority for such positions, all MS are lower priority. When TA positions are available to MS students, the basic priority system above will be used to make assignments. However, MS students should not plan on getting a summer TA more than one time.



### TA Request

* + - Each semester, all students in our Biology MS Graduate programs who are making Satisfactory Progress and are in Good Standing will receive an email regarding TA support.
    - You must respond to this email by the designated deadline (stated in the email) to be considered for a TA position for the upcoming term and fill out the TA interest/scheduling form



### Teaching Performance Evaluation:

Performance as a TA is evaluated and monitored continuously during the teaching assignment by either the Laboratory Supervisor and/or Professor. TA academic progress and success is evaluated annually by the Graduate Program Committee (see ***Annual Evaluation*** under Program Policies section E). Students are expected to demonstrate dedication and ethical behavior in regard to their T.A. duties. This includes teaching and administering the required materials presented by the Laboratory Supervisor and/or assigned Professor.



### TA Grade Requirement:

Students must maintain excellence in their own course work; minimum grade point average of 3.0 B must be maintained each semester in all course work attempted. For those in research tracks, competency and progress in research must be demonstrated and maintained.



### Mandatory Orientation T.A. Meetings:

1. TA’s are all required to attend mandatory orientation meetings prior to **e**ach term – **so do not schedule commitments that would conflict with these meetings. Those who do not attend these required meetings may have their TA contracts canceled.** Keep in mind that the Teaching Assistantship is a job that requires you to abide by all TA contract guidelines and all policies in the Biology MS Program (outlined within this document).

##### Mandatory TA Meeting Petition for Excused Absence:

* 1. **Students must petition the MS Biology Graduate Program Committee at least one (1) month in advance of such scheduled meetings for approval to be excused from attending.**
  2. Petitions will not be approved for staying extra days before or after an attended conference begins or ends, respectively, or taking personal vacations, or reunions, weddings, etc.- these are not considered excused absences for missing such mandatory TA meetings. Again, such petitions based on the criteria discussed above will not be approved and the student will potentially have their TA contract canceled.

##### Petition Instructions:

* + 1. **One (1) month prior to Mandatory TA Meeting have the Chair of your Committee email Dr. Brooks at** [**wbrooks@fau.edu**](mailto:wbrooks@fau.edu) **and cc** [**rdixon@fau.edu a**](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu) **request to miss the Biology Mandatory meeting for presenting at conference or scientific meeting.**
    2. Send a copy of the agenda for the scientific meeting or conference showing that you will be presenting a seminar or poster of your research. Similarly, if research data collection is involved, similar documentation/verification must be provided.



## T.A. Contract Termination:

**T.A. contracts can be terminated at any time** (including those underway), and loss of consideration for future

T.A. support, in cases where there is a serious dereliction of duties. Additionally, graduate students on academic probation will not be considered for T.A. positions.



### Teaching Assistantship for International Students

* As part of our commitment to excellence in teaching, Florida Atlantic University has established a minimum level of English language and teaching proficiency by which all international graduate students may work as graduate teaching assistants. To assure that these standards are upheld, the Graduate College in conjunction with the Department of Teaching and Learning has established the Seminar for International Teaching Assistants (SITA).
* SITA is a multi-purpose program designed to prepare international graduate students to teach undergraduate students at FAU. Such preparation includes developing an understanding of the teaching role in American university classrooms, providing training in English pronunciation and intonation, practicing classroom communication skills and instructional strategies, and assisting students during the first semester of teaching at FAU.
* All international teaching assistants are required to successfully pass a panel review prior to beginning their teaching assignments. The SITA program takes place the week before Fall semester classes commence. There are nine additional sessions offered throughout the Fall semester, for a subset of teaching assistants requiring additional language and teaching development. Contact the Graduate College or see the following link for [additional information http://www.fau.edu/international/internationalassistants.php](http://www.fau.edu/international/internationalassistants.php)

## Research Assistantships



1. **Research Assistantship-** potentially available directly from your Faculty Advisor

For eligibility to receive a Research Assistantship, you must be admitted into the Biology Master’s program and follow all of the Biology Master’s Program Regulations Policies, and remain enrolled as a full time graduate student, and maintain Good Standing.

All credit hours covered by the Tuition benefit must be required for the degree. Student must pay directly for any course not required for the degree. For the official Graduate College policies, please see section V, below, *Tuition Benefits Policy for Graduate Students*

##### Research Assistant Position Job Assignments may include but are not limited to the following:

* 1. Assisting in lab research,
  2. Community‐based research activities,
  3. Developing research and evaluation surveys,
  4. Collecting data, analyzing data using software analysis programs
  5. Data presentation, and/or writing draft research reports

Please check with your Faculty Advisor for availability



**Tuition Waivers and Financial Aid Requirements**

* **All students must notify the Office of Student Financial Aid immediately if they receive or anticipate receiving a tuition waiver or exemption, as financial aid may be affected.** Tuition waivers are considered “resources” and must be considered a part of a student’s financial aid package. To report outside awards, complete the [Student Statement of Outside Resources](http://fau.edu/finaid/resources/forms.php) and submit to the [Office](http://fau.edu/finaid/) of Student Financial Aid. Should it later be found that you are receiving outside resources which you neglected to report, your financial aid package will be adjusted retroactively to include these resources. This adjustment may result in repayment of previously disbursed financial aid.

##### See link below for Financial Aid Office Contact Info:

[**https://www.fau.edu/finaid/contact/**](http://www.fau.edu/finaid/contact/)

**It is the student’s responsibility to pay all “student fees”**



**V) GRADUATE COLLEGE TUTION BENEFITS POLICY**

**Amended February 2023**

* + 1. **Benefits information**

This policy applies to all graduate students eligible for tuition waivers from the Graduate

College//Provost’s office based on the graduate assistantship classification. Throughout this document these students are referred to as graduate assistants. For graduate assistants hired in nonacademic units, prior approval from the Dean of the Graduate College is required for tuition benefits.

Graduate assistants are eligible to receive tuition benefits for up to 27 credit hours in a given academic year, provided all requirements listed below are met:

1. The appointment period must be continuous within the official beginning and ending dates of the academic semester or

summer session.

1. The level of tuition benefit available to students is driven by the FTE of the appointment and enrollment status.
   1. To receive 100% tuition benefits in the Fall and Spring semesters, students must have a 0.5 FTE appointment (20 hours per week) and be classified as

full-time graduate students. (Refer to the Full-Time Graduate Student Classification Status)

* 1. Students who have met the conditions in (a) above during the previous Fall or Spring semester may receive 100% tuition benefits during the Summer term with no minimum enrollment requirement provided they have at least a 0.25 FTE appointment.
  2. Students with FTE employment conditions between 0.25 and 0.50 may receive a prorated tuition benefit based on the FTE appointment and enrollment status.
  3. Except as provided by (b) above, students with an enrollment status less than full-time (as defined by the Full-Time Graduate Student Classification Status) are eligible to receive 50% tuition benefits provided their appointment is at least 0.25 FTE.

1. All credit hours paid by this tuition benefit must be for coursework necessary to complete the graduate degree.
2. The maximum number of credit hours for which graduate students can receive tuition benefits is set at 10% above the published credit hour total for the degree program. Courses taken to remove deficiencies as indicated on the Plan of Study are allowable and do not count toward the 10% limit.
3. An approved Plan of Study is required to receive tuition benefits beyond the second semester of the assistantship. Students receiving tuition benefits as part of an assistantship are required to file a Plan of Study and obtain final approval from the Graduate College by the end of the second semester of the assistantship.
4. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 based on the degree requirements as stipulated on the approved Plan of Study.

##### B) . Please note the following conditions for Graduate College Tuition Waivers:

1. Although the tuition benefit can cover up to 27 credits per academic year, the maximum tuition waiver that will be applied to a student’s account is 10 credits in any given semester. If a student is graduating in the current semester up to 12 credits of tuition waivers may be applied without a Form 10 petition. Programs requiring enrollment in 30 credit hours in an academic year (as indicated in the university catalog) will be granted tuition benefits to cover these credits.
2. Due to our limited tuition waiver budget, approval of tuition waivers is not automatic, and upon review of waiver request, the Graduate Dean may deny tuition waiver benefits.
3. Any non-resident graduate assistant with a minimum of 0.25 FTE will be charged an out-of-state nonresident fee of $0.00. It is the graduate assistant’s responsibility to pay **all** student fees. Tuition waivers do not cover local fees and other student fees.
4. Graduate assistants who resign or terminate their assistantship before the end date of their employment period will forfeit all their tuition benefits and must repay the university the full

amount of tuition paid by this benefit for the term in which they were enrolled.

1. The last day to receive tuition benefits in any given semester is the “last day to drop/add courses without consequences” as indicated in the FAU academic calendar. After this date students will not be eligible to receive tuition benefits in that semester. If a graduate assistant is hired after the date the tuition and fees are due, the graduate assistant is responsible for paying the tuition and fees. When the graduate assistant is fully hired and on-boarded, the hiring department should notify the Graduate College to determine if the student meets the tuition waiver eligibility requirement. If the graduate assistant is eligible, prior approval from the Graduate College is required to apply the tuition benefit.
2. To use tuition benefits for a graduate research assistants (GRAs) position, prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College is required using Forms 20 and 21. When faculty submit grant applications in which the budget includes stipend funding for a GRA position, then the Principal Investigator(s) is expected to also budget for the GRA’s tuition at the in-state rate. Exceptions will be considered if the funding agency states that tuition is not an allowable budget item.
3. To use tuition benefits to support graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College is required.
4. To award an assistantship, both the stipend and accompanying tuition benefit must be available. The amount of the tuition benefit cannot be manipulated, reduced, or eliminated to fulfill this requirement.
5. During the Fall and Spring semesters, graduate assistants may not work more than a combined total of 20 hours per week for all appointments. However, graduate assistants may work additional

hours with prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College using Form 10 – Request to Waive a University Requirement.

1. Graduate assistants in their last semester of study should enroll only in the number of credit hours necessary to fulfill their degree requirements. Graduate assistants who have completed all degree requirements as listed on their Plan of Study can enroll only in one thesis/dissertation credit hour to complete their thesis/dissertation while remaining eligible for 100% tuition benefit. International students affected by this policy must consult with the [ISSS Office](http://www.fau.edu/isss/) regarding the Reduced Course Load requirements to assure compliance with U.S. Immigration laws.
2. A reduced enrollment status can impact disbursement of financial aid and qualification for health insurance, depending upon the rules of the lending institution and insurance provider. It is the responsibility of the graduate assistant to know the enrollment status requirements of individual lending institutions and insurance providers.
3. Exceptions to these requirements may only be made with prior approval by the Dean of the Graduate College.



# c) Important: Teaching Assistantships and Research Assistantships

## All credits hours covered by the Tuition Benefit must be required for the degree regardless if you have a TA/RA or both.

* + **All courses paid for with a TA/RA must be listed on the Plan of Study.**
  + **Only 5000-6000 level courses count toward the degree and are covered by Tuition waivers.**
  + **Consult with your advisor to make sure all courses you enroll in (5000-6000 level) will be degree applicable. Otherwise, the course will have to be paid out of pocket**

**Thesis students only**

* + **The 10% allowed above degree requirements for Tuition waivers is for when you have completed all your degree requirements (36 credit) and only need to be enrolled in a 1 credit Master’s Thesis credit to complete your thesis writing/defense. (10% is up to 3 credits)**

**Non-Thesis Option 1 and 2 and PSM-BB program.**

* + **Non-thesis Option 1: Degree requirement 36 credits (Tuition waiver is up to the 36 credits that are required for the degree)**
  + **Non-Thesis Option 2 MST: Degree requirement is 30-36 credits. (Tuition waiver is up to the 30- 36 credits that are required for the degree)**
  + **PSM-BB- Degree requirement is 34 credits. (Tuition waiver is up the 34 credits that are required for the degree)**



### Full-Time Enrollment

**Fall and Spring Terms: Graduate students registered for a minimum of 9 credits are considered full-time**, registrations for 7 credits are considered 3/4-time, and registrations for 4.5 credits are considered half-time.

**Summer Terms: Graduate students registered for a minimum of 6 credits are considered full-time**, registrations for 4.5 credits are considered 3/4-time, and registrations for 3 credits are considered half-time.

### Full Time Status Eligibility Guidelines (Graduate College Policy) (Form#10)



##### Graduate Assistants on Tuition Waiver

The Graduate College will verify enrollment status for graduate tuition benefits through Banner and direct communication with academic departments, as necessary. **Graduate students with tuition waivers remain eligible for 100% tuition benefits it at lest one of the enrollment criteria listed below is met.**

* 1. Enrollment of a minimum of 9 credit hours in Fall/Spring semester
  2. Enrollment in a minimum of 1 credit hour of minimum half time-equivalent coursework (thesis credits, directed independent study, internship, practicum, etc.)
  3. Final semester of study (can be less than 9 credits)
  4. Approved Form 10 petition (Graduate College will review registration for students on tuition waivers)

##### See Link Below to complete the Form #10 for any courses not listed above

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-services/forms/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php)

**International Students**

International students who wish to register for reduced credit hours are still required to complete the [Reduced](http://www.fau.edu/international/forms/RCLform%20323.pdf) [**Course**](http://www.fau.edu/international/forms/RCLform%20323.pdf) **load form** and should work directly with the Center for Global Engagement[.](http://www.fau.edu/international/forms/RCLform%20323.pdf) [**https://www.fau.edu/global/international/forms/**](http://www.fau.edu/international/forms/RCLform%20323.pdf)

### REGISTRATION FORM REQUIRED FOR RESEARCH AND INTERNSHIPS (i.e., Non-Course Credits)

* + [Students registering for any of the](http://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/index.php) following (see list below) **must complete a registration form that is signed by both you and your advisor.**
  + Link for the Registration Form: [**https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/graduate\_student.php**](https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/graduate_student.php)
  + Send the completed and signed form to [rdixon@fau.edu o](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu)r bring directly to Biology Office at SC 136.

### Master’s Proposal (BSC 6963)

**Master’s Defense (BSC 6975) Master’s Thesis (BSC 6971)**

**Directed Independent Research (DIR) (BSC 6917) PSM-BB Business Internship (MAN 6946)**

**PSM-BB Science Internship (BSC 6946) Master’s Comprehensive Exam (BSC 6962)**

1. **MASTER’S DEGREE OPTIONS AND DEGREE OPTION REQUIREMENTS Master of Science – (Thesis Option) (36 credits)**

**Master of Science – (Non-Thesis Option 1) (36 credits)**

**Master of Science in Teaching - (MST/Non-Thesis Option 2)(30-36 credits) Professional Science Master in Business Biotechnology - (PSM-BB)(34 credits)**

**Combined BS/MS with a Major in Biological Science – (120 credits for the undergraduate degree &**

**33-36 credits for the MS degree).**



**A. Master of Science with Major in Biological Sciences (Thesis Option)**

##### The M.S. Thesis Degree option requires a minimum of 36 total credits. Student Curriculum Degree Requirements include the following:

1. At least half or 18 credits must be Biology Department courses (5000 or 6000 level)
2. 12 credits of graded coursework at the 6000 level (exclusive of any research credits)
3. Before students can register for Master's Thesis Proposal Seminar (BSC 6963) (i.e., student formally presenting their research proposal to their committee and subsequent approval by the committee), students doing exploratory research can take up to 6 credits, which can include:
   1. Up to 3 credits of Directed Independent Research (DIR; BSC 6917) or up to 3 credits Directed Independent Studies (DIS)/DIR taken outside of Biology. Any combination of DIR/DIS, regardless ` of source, cannot total more than 3 credits that will count toward the degree.
   2. Up to 3 credits of Master's Thesis (BSC 6971)

**NOTE:** Master's Committee form#6 must be approved before you can be registered for BSC 6971.

1. Master's Proposal Seminar BSC 6963 (1 credit maximum) See Proposal Requirements section below. **Note:** Must have Masters Committee Form#6 approved before you can register for BSC 6963
2. Master’s Defense Seminar BSC 6975 (1 credit maximum) (see Defense Requirements section, below)
3. Minimum of 6 credits of BSC 6971 Master’s Thesis credits is required.

\***Note:** Must turn in Master’s Committee Form #6 and be approved before you can register.

###### \*Note: No more than 12 credits of Master’s Thesis credits can count toward the degree

1. Remaining courses must be at 5000 or 6000 level.



##### Thesis Proposal Requirements



The MS Graduate Program in Biology does not have a precise, required written thesis proposal format. Students should check with their advisor and Graduate Supervisory Committee for the format best suited to the particular discipline. Any format chosen should begin with a title page with the following: project title, student’s name, and committee member names and signature lines for approval. Additional sections should include an abstract, introduction/background, objectives/research questions, proposed research, and methods/procedures, expected results, and literature cited.

Although the Graduate College only reviews completed, approved theses, they do have some specific formatting requirements for the layout. Thus, it is advisable to review their requirements. Please see the link below:

[**http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php)



**Thesis Proposal Procedures**

1. Send completed 1st draft of proposal to Chair of your Graduate Supervisory Committee for edits and final approval. **Please allow at least 2 months to work with your Chair,** as developing an approved draft at this point in the process can be tedious and protracted.
2. Send approved copy of your proposal to the remaining members of your committee. **Please allow the committee members a minimum of 1 month to review your proposal before any scheduled seminar date.**
3. When you send your proposal to your committee members, request available dates (minimally 1 month **from when you sent the proposal to them**) and times to consider for presenting your proposed research project.
4. **Three weeks prior to the approved proposal date by all of your committee members, contact the MS Biology Office staff to schedule the seminar.** Such advance notice is required to ensure a room can be reserved, and any necessary video-conferencing can be scheduled. **However, until the date is approved by all committee members, the office cannot submit the request to reserve a conference room**.
5. **Send a flyer to the Biology Office (who will email all faculty and graduate students) a minimum of 7 days before approved, scheduled proposal seminar date**. Post flyers around building in which the seminar will be given. **Students will have to reschedule such seminars if the timelines are not followed** (i.e., posting flyers/emailing office flyer for a seminar with less than a week’s notice is not permitted).
6. After the seminar has been presented, all non-committee members exit the room. The Graduate Supervisory Committee will meet with the student, continue to ask questions, then ask the student to step outside the seminar room, and subsequently decide if the thesis proposal is approved/disapproved, or if additional editing is required. **They will then ask the student to step back into the room to notify them of their decision.**

##### Final Paperwork for Biology Departmental Requirements:

* 1. Completed Thesis Proposal form (see link below) [**http://biology.fau.edu/pdf/MS\_Thesis\_Proposal\_Form\_2015.p**](http://biology.fau.edu/pdf/MS_Thesis_Proposal_Form_2015.pdf)**df**
  2. Rubric form from each committee member. Biology Office staff will email form to student before the proposal date.
  3. Proposal form and rubric forms must be submitted to Biology Office



##### Thesis Defense Requirements



The final, approved thesis document will be published by the University. Although the University does allow disciplines to organize theses, to some degree based on accepted discipline-specific guidelines, there are still specific formatting requirements. The final written thesis defense must be submitted and approved by the University. **Thus, students at the defense-writing stage need to review the current University thesis requirements and are required to attend Thesis/ Dissertation Workshops**. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure all requirements for the Defense and submission of the Thesis have been followed. As stated in the previous section, please [see the following link:](https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/formatting.php)

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/formatting.php**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/formatting.php)



##### Thesis Defense Procedures

1. Check Graduate College Deadlines the semester before you plan to apply to Graduate. **Links are below**. You will need to do the Application for Degree, signature page, submit dates for your defense seminar, and check for deadlines to turn in completed thesis so that you can prepare for your final semester.
   1. [Application Deadline and Thesis Submission](https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php) Deadlines:[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/deadlines/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/deadlines/)
   2. Application to degree: [**https://www.fau.edu/registrar/graduation/deg\_app\_cert.php**](http://www.fau.edu/registrar/graduation/deg_app_cert.php)
   3. Signature Page template: [**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/thesis-d**](https://www.fau.edu/registrar/graduation/deg_app_cert.php)**issertation/signature-page/**
   4. Defense Announcement and Signature Page Review Submission -

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/thesis-dissertation/formatting/**](https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/fall-graduation.php)

1. Review Thesis and Dissertation Guideline Tutorials: See link below.

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/thesis-dissertation/formatting/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/thesis-dissertation/formatting/)

**NOTE: The Thesis Guide Tutorials are very important - the Graduate College will disapprove your Thesis if you do not follow the guidelines precisely which includes: correct paper, pen and formatting of the pages**

1. Send completed Thesis to Chair of your Graduate Supervisory Committee for edits and final approval a minimum [of 3 months before the anticipated Thesis Defense date. Specifically, if you are planning to graduate in the](https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/workshops.php) Fall term you should send your completed thesis to the Chair of your Committee before August 15th, and for the Spring term before January 1st.
2. Once the Chair of your Committee has approved your thesis for dissemination, send copies via email to the remaining members of your committee (cc your Chair). **Allow the committee members a minimum of 4-6 weeks to review your thesis before any scheduled Thesis seminar date.**
3. **The Thesis Defense** (which serves as the Comprehensive Examination for MS Thesis

students) will typically follow immediately after the seminar has been presented, requiring that all non- committee members exit the room. The Graduate Supervisory Committee will meet with the student, continue to ask questions, then ask the student to step outside the seminar room, and subsequently decide if the thesis is approved/disapproved. They will then ask the student to step back into the room to notify them of their decision. **If approved,** the student will complete the signature page (see #6). **If disapproved,** the advisor will inform the student about what needs to improve, if applicable and feasible. If the committee deems the thesis, etc. are not acceptable and corrections or alterations are not feasible, the student would be ineligible to continue in this Biology Thesis Program. They would be still eligible to switch to a non-thesis track, which would require approval by their current or new advisor.

1. **For your signature page, do not wait until the Graduate College deadline to start**

looking for your committee members, Chair of Biology Department and CESCOS Dean to obtain your signatures. Finding out at the last minute that one of the required signatures is not possible because of an absent faculty member or administrator can result in a student postponing graduation until the next semester. Instead, contact them ahead of time to check for their availability.

##### On Graduate College Signature page:

\*Please visit link below for more information on virtual signature page routing:

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/thesis-dissertation/signature-page/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/thesis-dissertation/signature-page/)

**Please note:** It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the names and titles of the committee members and college officials listed on the signature page are accurate.

### Questions? Please contact us at:

[GraduateWriting@fau.edu](mailto:GraduateWriting@fau.edu) | 561-297-2817

[|](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php)

##### Final Paperwork for Biology Departmental Requirements

1. Completed Thesis defense form. See link below:

##### https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/graduate\_student.php

1. Rubric form from each committee member. Biology Office staff will email form to student before the Defense date.
2. Defense form and rubric [forms must be submitted to](mailto:graduatewriting@fau.edu) Biology Office (SC 136)

##### Final Paperwork for Graduate College Requirements

See link Below to Check Graduate College website for final paperwork requirements

[**http://fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php**](http://fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/degree-completion/thesis-and-dissertation/index.php)



**Master’s Thesis Proposal (BSC 6963) and Master’s Thesis Defense (BSC6975) Policy**

* Proposal and Defense Seminars cannot be completed in the same semester (This includes if you received an Incomplete.
* Example, you received an Incomplete in Fall and on your POS you were scheduled to do your Defense in Spring. You will be required to move your Defense to summer.



### Master of Science with Major in Biological Sciences (Non-Thesis Option 1)



##### The M.S. Non-Thesis Degree option requires a minimum of 36 credits. Student Curriculum Degree Requirements include the following:

* 1. Required a minimum of 18 credits must be Biology Department courses at 5000-6000 level.
  2. Eighteen (18) of the 36 credits must be at the 6000 level or higher
  3. Two (2) of the 36 credits must involve courses in which the student presented a formal seminar

(Requirement can be completed in any course taken where you present Formal seminars)

* 1. Up to three (3) Direct Independent Research (BSC 6917) credits may be counted toward this degree (including DIR/DIS credits taken outside of Biology Department)
  2. One (**1 credit maximum**) of the 36 credits must be the

##### \*Master’s Comprehensive Exam (BSC 6962)

* 1. **Students must take and pass a minimum of three (3) written comprehensive exams given by committee on designated areas within the microbiology and organismal specialties. Question types will require written responses, essay and definition format (see section VIII. Comprehensive Examination and Evaluation of Internship section below for more details).**
  2. Remaining courses must be at 5000-6000

##### The Following Courses will not count toward the Non-Thesis Option 1 Degree:

**Master’s Thesis (BSC 6971)**

**Master’s Thesis Proposal (BSC 6963) Master’s Thesis Defense (BSC 6975)**

**Integrative Biology PhD Program Master’s Along the Way**



As part of the agreement between the Biology MS program and Integrative Biology (IB) PhD program, students choosing Biology for a Master's Along the Way degree will be verified for completion of degree requirements by the Biology Department during the Graduation Audit Check. Please consult with your IB PhD advisor early in matriculation to ensure the curriculum followed satisfies the requirements for the M.S./Non-Thesis Option 1.



### Master of Science in Teaching with Major in Biological Sciences (Non-Thesis Option 2)



##### The M.S.T. Degree option requires a minimum of 30-36 credits Student Curriculum Degree Requirements include the following:

* 1. Required 15/18 credits must be Biology Department courses at 5000-6000 level.
  2. Fifteen (15/18) of the 30-36 credits must be at the 6000 level or higher; the remaining 15/18 credits must be at the 5000 or 6000 level.
  3. Two (2) of the 30-36 credits must involve courses in which the student presented a formal seminar (requirement can be completed in any course taken where you present formal seminars).
  4. Maximum of three (3) Directed Independent Research (BSC 6917) credits may

be counted toward this degree (including DIR/DIS credits taken outside of Biology Department)

* 1. One (**1 credit maximum**) of the 36 credits must be the \*Master’s Comprehensive Exam (BSC 6962)
  2. Students must take and pass a minimum of three (3) written comprehensive exams given by committee on designated areas within the microbiology and organism specialties. Question types will require written responses, essay and definition format (see section VIII. Comprehensive Examination and Evaluation of Internship section below for more details).
  3. Students must take 6 credits of approved graduate courses in education or another cognate field if they plan to teach in high school and hold a Rank III secondary certificate (obtained independently from this M.S.T. degree), or if the student intends to teach at the college level.
  4. Six (6) additional credits of Internship (EDG 6940) are required, except for those with two years of teaching experience at a secondary school or junior college level.

**Choose one of the following options below to complete requirement:**

Option 1: Internship with a local public school (student independently set up

internship with a public school)

Option 2: Teach a laboratory course in the Biology Department at FAU

**To enroll in internship EDG 6940-**

Option 1: send the following information

School Name

Supervisor Name and contact information

Option 2: Send laboratory course you will be teaching

* To receive Grade: **Complete Internship Evaluation form with Supervisor**. This must be submitted to Biology Department for you to receive your grade.

The Following courses will not count toward the Non-Thesis Option 2 Degree:

Masters Thesis (BSC 6971)

Masters Thesis Proposal (BSC 6963) Masters Thesis Defense (BSC 6975)



### Professional Science Master (PSM) in the Business of Biotechnology (BB) The PSM - BB Degree Option requires a total of 34 credits.

**Core Courses-** 10 credits required

* Venture Creation ENT 6016 3credits
* Biotechnology Business Development ENT 6196 3 credits
* P.S.M. - Scientific Internship BSC 6946 2 credits
* P.S.M. Business Internship MAN 6946 2 credits

**Course Degree Requirements:**

* **Sciences Courses**- 15 credits (see catalog for most up to date course selection)
* **Business Courses**- 9 credits (see catalog for most up to date course selection)

**See Link below for PSM Internship Enrollment form**

[**https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/psminternships.pdf**](https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/psminternships.pdf)

**Science Internship:** student working directly with research scientists.

**Business Internship**: Students working directly with a company that involve working on the business and administrative side of the company or institute, including technology transfer and business development offices.

**Complete Internship Evaluation form with Supervisor**. This must be submitted to Biology Department for you to receive your grade.



1. **BS/MS - Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Fast Track (program is currently under construction)**

##### The combined degree program is 153-156 credits, 120 for the undergraduate degree and 33-36 for the master’s degree. Students complete the undergraduate degree first, taking no more than 12 credits of graduate coursework in their senior year, which will then be used to satisfy both degrees.



1. **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS and EVALUATION OF INTERNSHIPS**



Completion of the Master’s degree requires that all Thesis, Non-Thesis & MST students pass a

Comprehensive Examination, to be administered by the student's Graduate Supervisory Committee.

1. For students in the M.S./Thesis Option, the Comprehensive Examination consists of a thesis defense, which focuses on the completed research project and the student’s relevant knowledge base.
2. For Students in the PSM-BB, the Comprehensive Examination consists of a Business and Science Evaluation of your Internship (See Biology office for copy of evaluation form)
3. For students in the M.S./Non-Thesis Options #1 and #2, the Comprehensive Examination consists of a 3 traditional, written test to ensure students have a broad knowledge base in Biology.



### A. Procedures for Scheduling/format/Completing Comprehensive Exams

### M.S./Non-Thesis *Option #1 and 2*

1. **During the term prior (or earlier) to the term in which the exams will be administered,** students should contact committee members “individually” to ask for guidance (e.g., references, books) regarding how best to study for the designated subject area to be covered.
2. The student and their Graduate Supervisory Committee will select the **3** "specialty areas" **covered in the exams** from the list below. **Must be in 3 different specialty areas.**

**Microbiology specialty areas:** Bacteriology

Cell Biology

Immunology

Molecular Genetics

Virology

**Organismal specialty areas:** Anatomy and Development

Behavioral Biology

Ecology

Evolutionary Biology

Neuroscience Physiology

Systematics

1. Schedule date(s) “individually” with each committee member **with a minimum of two weeks separating each exam**, given the comprehensive nature of each exam.

Following are the deadlines for completing all exams for each term:

**Fall term = November 15 Spring term = April 15 Summer term = July 15**



1. Once all of the exams are scheduled with your committee, and prior to the beginning of the term in which the

exams will be given, students are required to send an email to the MS Graduate Programs in Biology office [(rdixon@fau.edu)](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu) with the following information

##### (Copy and paste the form information below into the email message):

**EXAM 1 – Specialty Area 1 = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Committee member name ;**

**Exam Date Format closed-book open-book; Time restrictions**

**EXAM 2 – Specialty Area 2 = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; Committee member name ;**

**Exam Date Format closed-book open book; Time restrictions**

**EXAM 3 – Specialty Area 3 = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_); Committee member name *;***

**Exam Date Format closed-book open book; Time restrictions**

1. **Exam dates cannot be changed without written consent from the professor administering the exam**
2. The MS Graduate Programs in Biology will then review the information for approval. Once approved, students and committee members will be notified. **Students cannot take any comprehensive exam without such prior approval.**
3. Once approved, register for Master’s Comprehensive Exam (BSC 6962 ) see link below for registration form.

<https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/masters_comprehensive_exam_registration_form_2025.pdf>



**Written Comprehensive Examination Format**: To ensure that all M.S./Non-Thesis Options #1 and #2 students are examined

in a thorough and equitable manner within the 3 specialty areas, the following are acceptable exam formats and expectations:

1. Each written exam will be administered on the date agreed to by the student and their committee members.
2. Each exam must cover one of the 3 chosen specialty areas (i.e., two committee members cannot cover the same specialty area).

##### Exams will consist of questions unknown to the student prior to administering the exam.

1. **Question types require a written response, e.g. essay and definition format**. In addition to

expecting a broad knowledge base covered within the 3 specialty areas, assessing written communication

skills of these s t u d e n t s are also very important.

1. **Exams should be of sufficient rigor and coverage thereby typically requiring significant study efforts by students** (which is why students are required to contact committee members the term prior to the actual exams). Committee members should provide students with reading and supplemental study suggestions upon request.
2. The assumption will be that closed-book format will be used for the exam. If open-book format is used, such exams should be of sufficient rigor to be comparable to a closed-book exam. In either case, a specific time frame must be established when the student and committee member initially meet (i.e., term before) to schedule the exam (e.g, 3 hours for a closed-book exam; due in 24 hours for an open-book exam).

##### Previous or current course work (and associated exams) cannot substitute for the Comprehensive Exams.

1. **Research/summary/review papers cannot substitute for the Comprehensive Exams**. Such papers, however, may supplement the written exam, if this is required by a committee member (who must articulate this to the MS G **Failure to pass any of the 3 examinations (i.e., each committee member’s exam) will require that the student be re-examined for the failed exam.**



**After Completion of Exam**

* + Request your Committee members to forward scanned copies of both the exam questions and answers, graded by the Professor to the MS Graduate Programs in Biology office [(rdixon@fau.edu)](mailto:rdixon@fau.edu)
  + Grades will not be given until office has received all completed exams copies.
  + As with other grades, documentation must be retained for a minimum of 5 years.
  + Send each Professor the Rubric form ( see link below) <https://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/graduate_student.php>

**Retaking Exam:**

For exams not passed, you will have the opportunity to retake.

Failure to successfully pass the 2nd attempt would result in the student being ineligible to continue in this Biology Non-Thesis Program. They would still be eligible to switch to a thesis track, which would require approval by their current or new advisor.

1. **CHANGE of DEGREE OPTIONS**

Students are admitted to the MS graduate program in Biology for one of the 5-degree options. However, the Graduate College considers there to be only **3 distinct Biology MS Degrees**:

1. M.S./Thesis, M.S./Non-Thesis/Option #1, BS-MS
2. M.S./Non-Thesis Option #2 (Master in Teaching)
3. PSM-BB

If circumstances should change and a student wishes to change their degree between the 5 Biology

Master’s Degree options, after consultation with an agreement by their Graduate Supervisory Committee, you must complete the below items

**Items to complete to change degree:**

1. Fill out the Graduate College Change of Program form#16
2. Update Graduate Student Faculty Advisor
3. Verification form must be completed and signed by your new advisor
4. New Committee Formation form must be completed.
5. Make updates to Plan of Study
6. **GRADUATE COLLEGE LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY:**

Graduate students who find it necessary to temporarily suspend their studies may apply for leave of absence from graduate study. Leave of absence is intended for students who are unable to pursue their studies at all, rather than for students who are actively working on a thesis or dissertation after completing coursework. Leave of absence is approved by the Graduate College on the basis of the recommendation of the student’s faculty advisor, department chair and college dean. To apply for a leave of absence, students use a Form 10-Request to Waive a University Requirement.

Degree-seeking students returning after an absence of more than one year will be subject to the following:

1. File a new graduate admissions application with appropriate documentation.
2. Re-establish Florida residency for tuition purposes.
3. Be in good academic standing (eligible to return) at FAU and at any institution attended since the last period of enrollment at FAU.
4. Provide official transcripts to the Graduate College from any institution attended since the last period of enrollment at FAU.
5. Submit proof of conformity to the Measles Immunization Policy of the State University System for graduate students under the age of 40 who have not previously submitted this information.
6. Students who were enrolled without being fully admitted into a graduate degree program will not be eligible to return.
7. Returning students will be admitted under the catalog guidelines in place at the time of re-admission.

### GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

The Biology Department recognizes that these guidelines cannot anticipate all circumstances that may affect a student’s progress in the Program. Therefore, exceptions to these regulations may be sought by the student through a petition submitted to the MS Graduate Programs in Biology Committee. If this committee does not resolve the matter to the student’s satisfaction, he/she may bring the matter before the Chair of the Biology Department who, in consultation with the faculty, will make a final decision.

SCHEDULESAND DEADLINES FOR THE MASTER’S DEGREE OPTIONS

Following are guides to assure that you are making adequate progress toward the completion of your respective degree. The Graduate Program Committee will also base its evaluation of your annual report on these schedules



**Master of Science Thesis Guidelines**

**(36 credits)**

**Semester I**

* + Consult advisor and take courses that fulfill your degree requirements (see Specific requirements for MS Thesis option)
  + Enroll in courses- we recommend to take 6 credits of graduate course (**5000-6000**) and up to 3 credits of Directed Independent Research (BSC 6917) or up to 3 credits of Directed Independent Studies (DIS)/DIR taken outside of Biology or 2 credits of DIR and a seminar course. Make sure to consult with your advisor to make sure all courses are degree applicable.
  + Decide on your Thesis Topic
  + Choose Committee Members in consultation with Advisor ( see Advisor & Graduate Supervisor page 9)
  + Complete supervisory Committee Approval form. (see link below).

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-services/forms/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-services/forms/)

* + Complete Plan of Study [( must submit by the end of 1st semester) Visit Graduate College](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php) website for Instructions:

[https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/)

### Semester II

* Consult advisor and take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements for MS Thesis option)
* Enroll in courses, we recommend to take 6 credits of graduate courses (5000-6000 level) and up to 3 credits of

[Masters Thesis BSC 6971](https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/docs/Thesis%20Committee%20Approval%20Form%206.pdf)

**IMPORTANT: MS Committee Member form#6 must be fully approved before you can take Master’s Thesis Credits (BSC 6971)** See Advisor & Graduate Supervisor page 9

* + Start **Thesis Proposal writing –**see Thesis Proposal guidelines

### Semester III

* Consult Advisor and register for **Master's Thesis Proposal seminar (BSC 6963)** (1 cr) **Present your** Thesis Proposal See Proposal guidelines (Must have MS Committee Member form#6 approved to take proposal credit)
* Take courses that fulfill degree requirements (see specific requirements f or MS Thesis option)
* Submit **"Revised" Plan of Study**, if necessary (Please visit Graduate College website for instructions) [**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php)
* IMPORTANT: Review Thesis **Formatting** Guidelines. **https://**[**www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/thesis-dissertation/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/thesis-dissertation/)
* **Finish writing your thesis defense** and send to Committee Chair-See Thesis Defense Guidelines

### Semester IV

* **Apply for graduation** early in term (see specific deadline date published on Graduate College Website)

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/deadlines/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php)

* Consult Advisor and register for **Master’s Thesis Defense seminar (BSC 6975)** (1 cr)
* **Present your thesis results to the department** (see Thesis Defense Guidelines)
* See **Thesis Submission Checklist** link below.

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/documents/thesis-dissertation-submissio**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.ph)**n-checklist.pdf**

* **Submit your thesis to the Graduate College (see deadline date; Don't miss it!)**



### Master of Science/Non-Thesis (36 Credits)



#### and

**M.S.T./Master in Teaching (30-36 Credits)**

**Semester I**

* + Consult advisor and take courses that fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements for Non-Thesis and MST options)
  + **Choose committee members** in consultation with advisor (see Advisor & Graduate Supervisory),
  + **Review Comprehensive Examinations** requirements; select 3 areas within one specialty group; committee members chosen should be based on the specialty areas selected for the Comprehensive Examinations (see section III-D)
  + Plan of Study submit by **end of the 1st semester**

Instructions: [**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/)

**Semester II**

* Take courses that fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements for Non-Thesis and MST options)
* Complete **MS Supervisory Committee Membership Form:** [**http://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/index.php**](http://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/index.php%C3%A2%C2%80%C2%A2)

**For MST students**, begin making arrangements for the **Education Internship**

### Semester III

* Take courses that fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements for Non- Thesis and MST options)
* Submit **"Revised " Plan of Study**, if necessary (Please visit Graduate College

website for instructions: [**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/)

* [**Contact committee members to schedule Comprehensive**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php) **Examinations** (see deadlines for each term) **which should be taken in the 4th semester** (see Comprehensive Examinations: Written Comprehensive Examination Format for format requirements and to schedule dates for exams) [**http://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/index.php**](http://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/index.php)

##### Send (via email) Comprehensive Exam schedule to Biology Office for review and approval

**Semester IV**

* **Apply for graduation** early in term (see specific deadline date published in Schedule of Courses)

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/deadlines/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php)

* Register for Master’s Comprehensive Exam (BSC 6962) and take the three (3) required Comprehensive Examinations (see page 29) and complete Comprehensive Examination Form (on Biology Website: [**http://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/index.php**)](http://biology.fau.edu/formsandpolicies/index.php)
* Complete course work



### Professional Science Master (PSM) in the Business of Biotechnology (34 Credits)



**Semester I**

* + Consult advisor (Dr. Cavallo) and take courses that fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements for PSM-BB option)
  + Complete Plan of Study (must submit by end of 1st semester).
  + Visit Graduate College website for online instructions:

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/)

**Semester II**

* Take courses that fulfill degree requirements (see Specific requirements for PSM-BB option)
* Consult with Advisor (Dr. Cavallo) to **set up Internships**
* **Send CV/Resume** to Advisor (Dr. Cavallo)

### Semester III

* Take courses that fulfill degree requirements (see specific requirements for PSM-BB)
* **Take Business or Science Internship** (2 credits) (Biology Office has registration from which must include synopsis of work responsibility)
* Have Supervisor of Internship **Complete Evaluation form at end of internship** (1 week before grades are due)
* Submit **"Revised " Plan of Study**, if necessary (Please visit Graduate College website for instructions:

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/plan-of-study/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/index.php)

**Semester IV**

* **Apply for graduation** early in term (see specific deadline date published in Schedule of Courses)

[**https://www.fau.edu/graduate/degree-completion/deadlines/**](http://www.fau.edu/graduate/forms-and-procedures/student-deadlines.php)

* Take courses that will fulfill degree requirements (see specific requirements for PSM-BB)
* **Take Business or Science Internship** (2 credits) (Biology Office has registration form which must include synopsis of work responsibilities)
* Have Supervisor of Internship Complete Evaluation form at end of internship (1 week before grades are due)

Enjoy your Master’s Program. Please fill free to contact us with any questions.