

MS DEGREE PROGRAM IN BIOLOGY INFORMATION SHEET

QUALIFYING COURSES If admitted in conditional classified standing, qualifying courses worth at least 10 units total are required. These courses are listed with an asterisk (*) on your program, and must be 4000-level. An overall 3.00 GPA in these qualifying courses is required, or disqualification from the program may result.

5000-LEVEL COURSES The department issues registration permits for 5000-level (graduate) courses; email the department graduate coordinator.

FULL-TIME STATUS You are considered **full-time by the university** if you are enrolled in even ONE UNIT of 5970 or 5990, or 0 units of UNIV 9000. For INS purposes, international students are full-time with 6 units of 5000-level or 8 units of 4000-level coursework.

GRADUATE PROGRAM OF STUDY and COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS Your degree program lists all the classes you intend to take, and must be filled out in your **1st semester**. Changes to your program must be requested **BEFORE** receiving a grade in a course; the department cannot consider substitutions after a grade is given. Inform the principal graduate advisor (Dr. Kirsten Fisher; kfisher2@calstatela.edu) as soon as you need to change your program. Up to 9 units of coursework may be transferred onto your program from another institution.

BIOL 5980 - GRADUATE DIRECTED STUDY One-three units of BIOL 5980 may be taken by graduate students who have been accepted into a research laboratory while working on the thesis prospectus; the units contribute to the unit total for full-time status, but no units are applied to the MS degree program. Students with advisors in the Dept. of Biological Sciences should register for one unit of 5980 each semester until their prospectus is approved.

BIOL 5200 – PROFESSIONAL WRITING IN THE LIFE SCIENCES This required graduate writing class is taken in the spring term of your first year; by the end, you will have completed a draft of your thesis prospectus. The final draft should be submitted to the department at the beginning of the following fall semester.

THESIS PROSPECTUS Consult your research advisor on the prospectus after reviewing the guidelines on the department website. Submit the final draft, with signatures of all committee members, to the department by the **first day of the semester** in which you aim to enroll in supervision units (Biol 5970 + 5990), which cannot be taken until a signed prospectus is submitted. Final approval by the department's Graduate Affairs Committee is needed for you to continue taking 5970/5990 units.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY After completing **12 units** on your program with at least a 3.0 GPA, you will be advanced to candidacy by the College office. You **cannot** register for 5970 or 5990 units until you have been advanced to candidacy so make sure this happens!

APPLYING TO GRADUATE You must apply to graduate **one semester** in advance, according to deadlines published by the Graduation Office. Application requires department Graduate Advisor permission and payment of a fee. If you apply but are not ready to graduate in the appointed term, you will need to reapply to graduate in a subsequent semester.

THESIS DEFENSE The department requires a public thesis seminar, to which you may invite friends, family and the department, followed by a closed-door oral defense with your thesis committee. Contact the department when you are ready to schedule a room & time for your defense. Your committee needs **3 WEEKS** to read the final draft of your thesis!

FILING OF THESIS Early in your writing process, you should **confirm deadlines and format** with the Library Thesis Coordinator, who offers help sessions each term and can provide thesis guidelines. You must enroll in BIOL 5990 or UNIV 9000 in the semester you file your thesis with the Library. Pay attention to deadlines, and give your advisor and committee ample time to read drafts.

TEACHING AND GRADING ASSISTANTSHIPS TA and GA positions are posted the 4th week of every semester; inquire about available positions when registering for the next term if you are interested in teaching or grading for the department.