



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
Department of Integrative Biology
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK



2015-2016 Academic Year

Introduction

The graduate program in Biology is a research-based program designed for students with interests in any of a broad range of basic science subjects including molecular, cellular, behavioral, evolutionary, ecological, or wildlife population biology. The Program is administered by the Department of Integrative Biology and the Graduate School at the University of Colorado Denver and offers a Masters of Science (MS) program in Biology and a doctoral (PhD) program in Integrative and Systems Biology. The program consists of nearly 50 faculty members from 16 different departments and partnering organizations, and about 40 graduate students. Program inquiries should be directed to:

Graduate Programs in Biology
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Graduate Academic Advisor: Christine Hoff
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Program Goals and Philosophy

Graduate training in Biology at the University of Colorado Denver is intended to prepare students to become critical problem solvers who are qualified to address biology-related issues at national and international levels. The program philosophy recognizes science not as a collection of facts, but rather as a process designed to help make informed decisions about the nature of evidence; scientific methods are used to guide decisions about hypotheses. The program is designed to equip students with the background necessary to generate new ideas and to participate in scientific debates, both academically and publically. Therefore, the goal is to provide advanced training in the current concepts, theories, debates, and methods for modern biology from a curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking and communication through a series of seminars and research-oriented courses that are specifically tailored to student research programs.

Nature of Programs

The graduate programs in Biology are research-based and provide an opportunity for instruction and mentorship from world-class faculty studying both basic and applied problems in biology. Faculty advisors for the Programs are from the Departments of Integrative Biology, Anthropology, Biochemistry, Biostatistics, Cell and Developmental Biology, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Craniofacial Biology, Geography, Mathematics, Pharmacology, Physics, Physiology, and Psychology; additional faculty advisors are affiliated with Denver Museum of Nature and Science and the Denver Botanic Gardens. There is a strong culture of mentorship shared by faculty in the Department of Integrative Biology. This provides the unique opportunity for close collaboration and for high quality individually directed mentoring by advisors and advisory committees. The Programs include a number of formal and informal activities designed to promote a strong sense of community among graduate students on campus.

Resources and Facilities

The campus is located in downtown Denver, one of America's most vibrant cities. The heart of downtown is the 16th Street Mall; a mile long pedestrian zone lined with outdoor cafes, restaurants and retail shops. Shuttle buses provide free transportation on the mall, and the surrounding suburbs and Denver International Airport are linked by light rail. The Denver Performing Arts Complex and Theatres District is just across the street from campus and features live entertainment available nightly. LoDo, Denver's hip historic district, is also a short walk from campus and boasts more than 90 brew pubs, sports bars and music clubs. Denver is situated between the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains; there are many opportunities for outdoor recreation and there are over 300 days of sunshine per year.

The Downtown and Anschutz Medical campuses at CU Denver provide a wide range of resources for research. Facilities for the Department of Integrative Biology were constructed in 2010 and include an AAALAC accredited animal holding facility, core molecular and ecological laboratories, two greenhouses, growth chamber rooms, a cold room, an imaging room, a dark room, a shared instrumentation room, as well as storage and access to cluster computing.

Facilities at the Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora include core facilities for microscopy, imaging, biophysics, genetic sequencing, flow cytometry, histology, NMR, biochemistry, proteomics, and genomics computational facilities.

The greater Denver metro area is home to headquarters for a range of federal agencies including the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Renewable Energy Laboratory. The state office for Colorado Parks and Wildlife is in Denver and local non-profits include the Denver Zoo, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, and the Denver Botanic Gardens. Denver is also becoming a hub for private biotechnology firms, and is home to several nationally ranked hospitals.

Admissions Standards

Biology M.S. program:

- A BA/BS from an accredited institution awarded within the last 10 years (validation of current content may be required).
- Minimum undergraduate GPA: 3.0
- General GRE test: minimum 50% performance in each section (quantitative, verbal, and analytical writing).
- TOEFL: required for international applicants from countries in which English is not the official language
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Official transcripts from all attended institutions
- Students are required to contact faculty in advance. Prior to application, applicants must have identified and contacted an available Faculty Advisor to ensure availability of a position and appropriate research interests.

Prerequisite courses required:

- One year of general biology (lecture and laboratory)
- One year of any combination of chemistry, physics or mathematics
- One course in applied or biological statistics
- Additional prerequisite requirements may be set by individual faculty

Ph.D. Program in Integrative and Systems Biology:

- A BA/BS or MS from an accredited institution awarded within the last 10 years (validation of current content may be required).
- Minimum undergraduate GPA: 3.0
- General GRE test: minimum 50% performance in each section (quantitative, verbal, and analytical writing).
- TOEFL: required for international applicants from countries in which English is not the official language
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Official transcripts from all attended institutions
- Students are required to contact faculty in advance. Prior to application, applicants must have identified and contacted an available Faculty Advisor to ensure availability of a position and appropriate research interests

Prerequisite courses required:

- One year of General Biology is preferred. Where needed, supplementary courses or reading programs may be designed to provide background information of sufficient depth for the Program curriculum
- One course in applied or biological statistics
- Additional prerequisite requirements may be set by individual faculty

Financial Support

Student loans and other support can be applied for through the University of Colorado Financial Aid Office. However, financial support for graduate students in biology is usually from a combination of research grants, fellowships, and teaching appointments. Students from out of state may wish to apply for Colorado residency as soon as they arrive. The process of obtaining residency is fairly simple and takes less than one year.

The Department of Integrative Biology offers Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) on a competitive basis. GTA are considered full-time student employment and provide a \$15,000 stipend for one academic year (9 months). Full time status is described below and the University Policy on Student Employee Work Hours is provided in Appendix B.

PhD students are typically awarded a one-year fellowship from the CU Denver Graduate School and a second year of employment as a GTA as described above. The one-year fellowship consists of a 9-month stipend of \$20,250 and full tuition costs. PhD Advisors frequently provide support in addition to these sources. Additional support is comprised of grants, fellowships, and teaching appointments awarded to students and/or advisors.

The Department offers grants up to \$1250 on a competitive basis for travel expenses to present research at professional meetings. The Graduate School also offers travel grants for students. Contact the Program Coordinator for details.

Credit Loads and Program Residency

Graduate credits are classified as either coursework credits or dissertation/thesis credits. Independent study and directed research credits are considered coursework and count toward coursework credit loads in both graduate degree programs. Pass/Fail courses and courses with less than B- do not count toward the credit load in either degree program. Graduate students are discouraged from auditing courses, but may be allowed depending on consent of the instructor and the Graduate School Dean.

Minimum Number of Credits

MS minimum is 24-27 coursework credits plus 3-6 thesis credits for research program

PhD minimum 30 coursework credits plus 30 dissertation credits

PhD requires students to register for minimum of five credits dissertation per term after passing comprehensive exam and until reaching 30 total; minimum 1 per term thereafter.

Minimum Duration of Residency in the Program

MS requires minimum 2 semesters of full time scholarship

PhD requires minimum 4 semesters full time scholarship if student holds MS degree

PhD requires minimum 6 semesters full time scholarship without MS degree

Full Time Status

MS students are full time at 5 coursework credits or 1 thesis/candidate credit

MS students are part-time at 3-4 credits

PhD students are full time at 5 credits in fall/spring, 3 credits in summer

Maximum credits is 15 per term, only 10 of which can be dissertation

Transfer Credits

This information is a summary from the Graduate School Student Handbook.

A maximum of 12 transfer credits is allowed for the MS degree, and a maximum of 30 transfer credits is allowed for PhD degree. Coursework taken at the graduate level from any accredited university campus may be considered for transfer credit. Courses taken at the Boulder or Colorado Springs campuses are treated as transfer to and a student may concurrently register for such courses with approval from the CU Denver Graduate School. Tuition for Boulder or Colorado Springs courses is paid at CU Denver. See the Graduate School Student Handbook for details. Graduate coursework taken at CU Denver is considered resident when it is taken as part of a graduate program.

Coursework accepted for transfer credit must not have been applied towards an undergraduate degree or another graduate degree of the same level (e.g., MA to MS). With program approval, graduate coursework (5000 level or above) taken for a Master's degree (from any accredited University, including CU Denver) may apply as transfer credit toward a PhD. Likewise; graduate coursework taken for a completed PhD may apply toward a concurrent/subsequent Master's degree.

Credit cannot be transferred until the student has established a satisfactory record of at least one term of enrollment at the CU Denver and earned a minimum 3.00 GPA. Transferred courses do not reduce the minimum duration of residency in the programs, but may reduce the workload required at CU Denver for the degree.

All courses accepted for transfer must:

- Be graduate level (5000 or above)
- Have a "letter" grade (pass/fail not accepted)
- Have a grade of "B minus" or better
- Be validated by the Program Director if not taken within seven (7) years of the PhD comprehensive exam or the Master's final exam
- Be transferred prior to the semester in which the PhD comprehensive or Master's final examination is administered

Programs of Study

The Department of Integrative Biology offers research-based and coursework-based programs for the **MS** degree in Biology, and a research-based program for the **PhD** degree in Integrative and Systems Biology. Students are required to maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA in each of the programs. Consequences for failing to meet this requirement are described in the Academic Probation section of the Graduate School Student Handbook; students with GPA < 3.0 are ineligible for employment by Integrative Biology as a GTA.

For the **Master's degree**, students typically matriculate into research-based programs. Under unusual circumstances, students and/or thesis advisory committees may petition to transfer from the research into the coursework program (see Appendix C for conditions). The research-based program requires a minimum of 30 credits, and the coursework-based program requires a minimum of 32 credits. A maximum of 12 hours of graduate level courses may be transferred and counted toward the degree in either program (see section on transfer credits). Both programs require the student to form an advisory committee and to deliver and orally defend written work before the advisory committee; this defense constitutes the final exam for both programs as required by the Graduate School.

The **PhD degree** requires a minimum of 60 credits. Up to 30 hours of graduate level courses from other graduate programs may be transferred and counted toward the degree. The PhD program also requires students to pass the Preliminary Exam, to form an Advisory Committee and an Examination Committee, to pass the comprehensive exam, and to orally present and defend a written dissertation.

Coursework-based MS degree program requires

1. Approved petition to transfer into coursework-based program
2. Completing a minimum of 32 credits
3. Writing and defending a publication-quality thesis

Research-based MS degree program requires

1. Completing 30 credits including 4-6 thesis (BIOL 6950)
2. Writing and defending a research proposal
3. Writing and defending a thesis (including a publishable paper)

Research-based PhD degree program requires

1. Completing 60 credits including 30 dissertation (BIOL 8990)
2. Passing the Preliminary Exam
3. Writing and defending a research proposal
4. Passing the Comprehensive Exam
5. Writing and defending a dissertation (including >1 publishable paper)

Curriculum

The graduate programs in biology share a minimum core curriculum, and required additional specializations for each program as follows:

Minimum core curriculum required by all programs

BIOL 6705 (2 credits) Principles of Biological Research in first year

BIOL 6705 (2 credits) Principles of Biological Research in second or later year

BIOL 6764 (3 credits) Biological Data Analysis in first year

BIOL 6655 (2 credits total) Seminar (must take 1-credit course at least twice)

Propose name change and credit increase for “principles” to

BIOL 6705 (3 credits) “Workshop in Biology” to reflect the idea that this is a workshop designed to teach writing and peer review of student work

Propose credit increase for BIOL 6764 from 3 to 4 to provide R-based lab

Additional minimum requirements for the coursework-based MS program

BIOL 5880 (4 credits) Directed Research: advisor guided research project

Additional minimum requirements for the research-based MS program

BIOL 6950 (1-2 credits) Master’s Thesis in first spring/summer to write proposal

BIOL 6950 (3-4 credits) Master’s Thesis in final semester to write thesis

Additional minimum requirements for the research-based PhD program

BIOL 6002 (2 credits) Biology Skill Sets – Pedagogy

BIOL 7010 (3 credits) Topics in Integrative and Systems Biology in first semester

BIOL 7010 (3 credits) Topics in Integrative and Systems Biology in second semester

BIOL 8990 (30 credits total) Doctoral Dissertation, after passing Comprehensive Exam

Propose change in name and content for “topics” requirement to

BIOL 7010 (3 credits) Foundations of Integrative and Systems Biology first year

BIOL 7020 (3-9 credits) Current Topics in Integrative and Systems Biology

This change uses Foundations as a preparation for part of prelims (intro to topics), and uses Current Topics as a journal-club type course that can be student-driven based on cohort interest. Would suggest it as recommended for MS students also

Recommended electives for all programs

BIOL 5840 (3-6 credits) Independent Study: background research and skill development

BIOL 5880 (3-6 credits) Directed Research: data collection, model/analysis development

ENGL 5175 (3 credits) Writing in the Sciences

Recommended electives for PhD program

BIOL 7920 (3 credits) Directed Reading: advisor-guided proposal development

Graduate School is trying to develop ENGL science grant writing course (3 credits). May require it for PhD and recommend it for MS once it’s offered.

Procedures

Advisors and committees

MS thesis advisor is the primary research mentor for MS students

Identified prior to admission by the student

MS thesis advisory committee advises research program, assesses proposal and thesis

Formed by student before start of second year

Minimum 3 faculty members, majority on Integrative Biology program roster

Chaired by thesis advisor

PhD dissertation advisor is the primary research mentor for PhD students

Identified prior to admission by the student

PhD preliminary examination committee assesses preliminary exam

Appointed by department, chaired by the Graduate Program Director

The PhD Dissertation Advisor may not be on the Committee

PhD dissertation advisory committee advises and monitors research progress

Formed by student before start of second year

Minimum 3 members, majority on Integrative Biology program roster

Chaired by dissertation advisor

PhD examination committee assesses comprehensive exam and defense of dissertation

Formed by student prior to comprehensive exam

Minimum 4 members; dissertation advisory committee plus external chair*

*Must not be on advisory committee

Exams and other Milestones

Formation of and first meeting with advisory committee should be done before the start of the second year for both MS and PhD students. Students are encouraged to schedule regular meetings (i.e. once per semester) with the full committee and/or with individual committee members for the remainder of their graduate programs. These meetings are opportunities for feedback on the program of research and to keep the committee apprised of progress and problems with the research program.

Defense of MS proposal must be complete before starting second year of program or any GTA employment may be terminated. The written research proposal must be submitted to the MS thesis advisory committee 3 weeks prior to oral defense presentation.

Assessment can result in pass, conditional pass, or failure.

Conditional Pass requirements must be satisfied within 4 months of exam

Failure may lead to

Committee offering a second attempt within 4 months

Committee recommending transfer to coursework program

Committee recommending dismissal from MS program

Defense of MS thesis includes a written thesis submitted to the MS thesis committee 3 weeks prior to oral presentation. Ideally, the written thesis is formatted according to author guidelines for publication in an appropriate peer-reviewed journal. The oral

presentation of thesis is open to the public and must be widely advertised; ideally it is given as part of the Departmental Seminar Series. Presentation of the MS thesis is followed by a private defense before the MS thesis committee. The defense can result in pass, conditional pass, or failure.

Conditional Pass requirements must be satisfied within 4 months of exam

Failure may lead to

Committee offering a second attempt within 4 months

Committee recommending transfer to coursework program

Committee recommending dismissal from MS program

PhD preliminary examination must be completed before start of second year in PhD program. The preliminary examination determines if a student is qualified to continue toward a research proposal in the doctoral program in Integrative and Systems Biology. The assessment is based on breadth of knowledge in Integrative and Systems Biology, depth of knowledge in a specific sub discipline and, most significantly, on the ability to integrate concepts and apply modern methods to address larger questions in biology. The PhD Preliminary Examination Committee determines the specific form and focus of the examination. In general, the examination will require a written response to questions about readings from the primary literature and an oral response to questions about the written component. The examination spans two months, with the written component administered over the course of about one month, followed within 3 weeks by the oral examination. Students may wish to discuss particulars with the Preliminary Examination Committee and other faculty well in advance of the scheduled examination date, which is near the end of the second semester of academic residency. The preliminary examination results in pass, conditional pass, or failure. Conditional pass requirements must be satisfied within 4 months of the exam. Failure may lead to the Preliminary Examination Committee recommending transfer to MS program or recommending dismissal from all graduate programs.

PhD comprehensive examination must be completed before the end of the third year of academic residency. The comprehensive examination evaluates overall comprehension of a sub discipline of Integrative and Systems Biology. The comprehensive examination includes both written and oral components and is designed to reveal the potential capacity for a student to contribute original discovery to the field. The written component consists of the dissertation research proposal, which should expose sufficient depth of background knowledge and feasibility of approach for the dissertation to impact the field via original discovery. The written proposal must be submitted to the PhD Examination Committee at least 3 weeks prior to scheduled oral examination. The oral examination is a seminar that must be widely advertised and open to the public; the seminar may be scheduled as part of the Departmental seminar series (though it may require only half the time). The public seminar is followed by a private defense with the student's PhD Examination Committee. The Comprehensive Exam results in pass, conditional pass, or failure. Students who pass the Comprehensive Exam automatically advance to PhD candidate status. Conditional Pass requirements must be satisfied within 4 months of examination before advancement to candidacy. Failure may lead to the PhD Examination Committee recommending transfer to MS program or dismissal from all graduate programs.

The Graduate School *requires* PhD Advisory Committee meetings at least once per year after the student passes the Comprehensive Examination; it further recommends more frequent meetings. The *Graduate Program in Integrative and Systems Biology* **requires** all PhD students who have advanced to candidacy to schedule and convene PhD Advisory Committee meetings (or at least a series of individual meetings with respective committee members) every semester until graduation. These meetings must be registered with the Graduate Program Coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to identify the best available meeting times and to schedule and register the meetings. The importance of these meetings cannot be overstated; they serve to protect the student and advisor from potentially disruptive misunderstandings that arise from lack of communication.

The map of forms and procedures for the graduation term in all programs is complex

At start of the final term, be sure to

1. Obtain and submit application for graduation with Graduate School
2. Obtain and submit application to candidacy (MS) with Graduate School
3. Complete thesis format review
4. Submit unbound hard copy of thesis by deadline
5. Schedule final exam/defense
6. File request for exam 2 weeks prior to exam
7. Submit Statement of Approval Form the Graduate School prior to final thesis
8. Submit final revised thesis to Graduate School prior to published deadline

Appendix A: Reasonable Expectations for the Advisor/Student Relationship



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Graduate Advisors

Graduate advisors are expected to communicate openly and honestly about the funding situation in their labs and about their mentoring philosophies as related to the student's goals for graduate school. The advisor is expected to identify benchmarks that would indicate satisfactory progress through the program, and to conduct an open discussion about expectations related to publication, authorship order, and applying for grants to help cover the costs of stipends, tuition, and research expenses. These discussions are expected to occur very early and often in the student program, ideally starting even before the student joins the lab.

Graduate advisors are expected to work with students to identify thesis topics that match student interests and that build on their strengths. Complementary to this, advisors are expected to guide the development of a program of study for the student, and to assist in managing (but not to determine or facilitate) the schedule of milestones and associated forms required for graduation.

Graduate advisor mentoring should result in students becoming independent scientists. To that end, graduate advisors are expected to mentor students in the design of projects, and in all aspects of the implementation and presentation of research. The advisor should encourage students to give frequent presentations on various stages of their research, including especially the proposal development stage. Advisors guide students to develop presentations intended for a range of audiences, from those in the research lab up to an audience at an internationally attended professional meeting. When possible, the advisor should attend professional meetings with the student and help the student establish connections with other scientists who might benefit some aspect of the student's research or future career. Advisors are expected especially to mentor students in scientific writing and in publishing their work in peer-reviewed journals as these activities form the basis for professional network development in the sciences.

Graduate Students

Graduate students are expected to communicate regularly with their advisor and their advisory committee about the progress and problems of their research programs. Students are expected to behave independently and to take responsibility for their own learning, including asking for help when required. Students are ultimately responsible for developing a defensible research proposal that will lead to eventual publication of results in a peer-reviewed outlet.

Students are expected to professionally represent the Graduate Program, the Department of Integrative Biology and their advisor at all times. Students should actively engage in their advisor's lab group and collaborate with other students in the graduate program as appropriate. Students are expected to network with other students and faculty in the Program and at other Universities by presenting their research at professional conferences. Students are expected to become aware of and pursue funding opportunities to enhance their research programs.

Students are expected to manage their time wisely so that they can meet deadlines established by their advisor, by their advisory committee, by course instructors, by the graduate program, or by the graduate school. Students are expected to understand Department, Program, and Graduate School policies as they relate to student conduct, requirements, and timelines. Students are ultimately responsible for understanding and adhering to all requirements for graduation, and (of course) are *expected to enjoy their time in graduate school*.

Appendix B: Student Work Hours Policy



University of Colorado
Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus

Title: Student Employee Work Hours
Prepared by: Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources
Effective Date: July 1, 2015
Applies: Anschutz Medical Campus and Denver Campus

Introduction

The University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus has adopted certain requirements and guidelines for student employees. The University of Colorado, including the Anschutz, Boulder, Denver and Colorado Springs campuses as well as the CU system office is one employer for the purpose of counting student employee work hours. Additional information regarding student employment is available in the Student Employment Handbook located on the Student Employment website.

Policy Statement

- 1) Maximum work hours allowed.
 - a) Multiple positions.
 - i) All campuses and system administration of the University of Colorado and all departments, colleges, centers, divisions or other degree or non-degree units are considered one employer under Internal Revenue Service rules.
 - ii) Students working in more than one position at a University of Colorado campus and/or system administration of the University of Colorado are required to:
 - I. Disclose current CU Employment at the time of application for any subsequent CU jobs. Should the student employee be offered additional jobs, s/he must inform his or her other supervisor(s) and gain their approval prior to accepting any offer.
 - II. The first department currently employing a student is the primary department. The student's supervisor in this department will be considered the supervisor of record.
 - III. Additional disclosure to the supervisors is required any time the student employee changes positions.
 - b) The number of hours a student employee may work in all positions combined (the aggregate of a student employee's multiple positions in multiple departments for any University of Colorado employer) is limited as follows:
 - i) Fall and spring semesters: For the purpose of this policy, the fall semester is defined as August 15 through January 1 and the spring semester is defined as January 1 through May 15. The maximum number of hours a student employee may work during a fall or spring semester is 25 hours per week or 50 hours per bi-weekly payroll period, provided no single week in that period exceeds 40 work hours.
 - ii) Summer: For the purpose of this policy, summer is defined as May 15 through August 15. The maximum number of hours a student employee may work during the summer is 40 hours per week.
 - c) Student employees exceeding the work hour limits established above may become eligible for employee health benefits under the Affordable Care Act. Employee Services will notify the student and primary supervisor of such eligibility.
 - d) Exception: The employing department head(s) may determine that the department(s) business purposes or work objectives cannot be accomplished within the work hour limits established above.
- 2) Consequences
 - a) Supervisors are responsible for communicating this policy to their student employees and student employees are responsible for communicating with the supervisor(s) if they are no longer students or are scheduled to work more than the maximum total work hours allowed for all jobs.
 - b) In the event a student employee becomes eligible for employee health benefits under the Affordable Care Act, employer benefits contributions will be proportionately charged to the department(s) where the student was employed when the limits were exceeded, regardless of where the student is currently employed.

Departments may be also subject to additional administrative charges as violation of this policy subjects the University to additional exposure under the Affordable Care Act.

Appendix C: Petition to Transfer into Coursework MS Degree Program



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Students accepted into the MS program are generally expected to complete the research program, however, unforeseen circumstances may prevent a student from completing the research. In these unusual circumstances, the student and/or thesis advisory committee may petition to transfer from the research program into the coursework program. This decision should not be made lightly as there are academic and financial consequences. Among these, it is important to understand that **students in the coursework program are ineligible to be hired by the Department of Integrative Biology as graduate teaching assistants.** The coursework program requires additional academic credits, and any previously taken thesis credits (BIOL 6950) will be lost (the coursework degree cannot transcript thesis credits). The student and advisor must therefore have an open discussion about the costs and benefits that the switch will incur for both the student and for the advisor. In some cases, the coursework option may end up being the more appropriate option for the development of the student and the needs of the advisor's research labs. Should that be the case, and a program transfer ends up in the best interest of all parties, the process for switching is described here.

Communication

Student-initiated requests should begin by notifying the Thesis Advisor. Advisor- or Committee-initiated requests should begin by notifying the student. Students and Advisors are required to work together toward the completion of a petition and so will need to communicate clearly and honestly to develop a plan to satisfy the requirements of the coursework program. Either party may wish to discuss the pros and cons with the Graduate Program Director before addressing the option with the other affected party.

In cases where the student and advisor are unable to work collaboratively toward a plan and resultant petition for the transfer, the initiating party may request that the Graduate Program Director (or the Departmental Chair in cases involving the Director) arbitrate the process; **however, such requests may be made only after all attempts at collaboration between student and advisor have been exhausted.**

Petition

A formal petition to transfer must be prepared by the initiating party and submitted to the Graduate Program Director for review by the Graduate Advisory Committee. The petition consists of the following items:

1. Formal letter from the initiating party (student, advisor, or committee) clearly describing the reasons the student cannot complete the research program
2. Transcript of courses taken while in the research program
3. List of Thesis Advisory Committee members
4. Detailed plan for completing the coursework program including
 - a. Additional courses
 - b. Content of written thesis
 - c. Timeline
5. Formal letter from the other party (student or advisor) corroborating these reasons and endorsing the proposed plan for completing the coursework program, including any necessary statements about financial and/or academic support

Approval

The Graduate Advisory Committee reviews the petition and makes a recommendation to the Graduate Program Director and the Chair of the Department of Integrative Biology. Because a transfer has potential consequences for the Graduate Programs and for the Departmental needs for GTA employment, the petition must be approved by both the Program Director and the Department Chair (or designees). The petitioner may be asked for additional information or clarification before a decision can be made, and there is no guarantee that the request will be approved.