



Department of Microbiology

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Graduate Program Handbook

2023-24

(For PhD students entering Fall 2023 or later)



Department of
Microbiology

updated January 2024/JS

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*Scan this QR code for the web based
Graduate Handbook and access to all
clickable links.*



Section 1



Microbiology Administrative Personnel

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Department Head	Dr. Aaron Mitchell	706-542-3747	Aaron.mitchell@uga.edu
Graduate Coordinator, Advising	Dr. Elizabeth Ottesen	706-424-9224	mibgrdadv@uga.edu
Graduate Program Associate	Janice Stuart	706-542-2045	mibcoord@uga.edu
Undergraduate Program Associate	Megan Lanter	706-542-2688	mibougrad@uga.edu
Biological Sciences Office Manager	Mikiesha Hill	706-542-1693	mikiesha@uga.edu

Microbiology Office Staff:

Graduate Program Administrator	Janice Stuart	706-542-2045	mibcoord@uga.edu
Undergraduate Program Associate	Megan Lanter	706-542-2688	mibougrad@uga.edu
Biological Sciences Office Manager	Mikiesha Hill	706-542-1693	mikiesha@uga.edu

Franklin College Business Office Personnel for Microbiology

Business & Financial Affairs Manager	Jennifer/Aaliyah	FCFAST-MBIO@uga.edu
Business Operations Partner	Christie Haynes	fbpsc-life@uga.edu

Who to you see if you have a question about:

Graduate School Forms	Janice
Key Checkout	Janice or Megan
Laser Pointers	Janice or Megan
Making Copies	Janice or Megan (Dept. copier in room 327)
Mailboxes or mailing via US Mail	Megan
Paychecks	Janice/Jennifer
Permission of Department to register	Janice
Purchase Orders	Christie
Registration	Janice
Reimbursement	Christie
Reserving Conference Room	Janice or Megan
Travel	Christie
Shipping via FedEx or UPS	Janice or Megan
Work Orders	Mikiesha
MGSA Budgets	Aaliyah/Jennifer

**If it's not on this list, ask Janice

Section 2



Registration

Registration must be completed before classes start. For dates specific to each semester, follow this link to the [Academic Calendar](#) on the UGA Registrar's website.

You should register for at least 18 Credits spring and fall semesters, and 15 Credits each summer.

Please make every effort to plan your schedules this year and in coming years to allow for attendance at

- **student seminars on Tuesdays at 11:10 am**
- **departmental seminars on Thursdays at 11:10 am.**

Attending Seminars is an important component of your graduate education and professional preparation.

The majority of PhD students will follow the [Typical Program of Study](#).

Fee Payments

Beginning fall 2018, the current payroll deduct process will be replaced with an optional Graduate Assistant Payment Plan. The payment plan will allow graduate students on assistantship to set-up four (4) installments for fall and spring and (2) installments for summer to cover tuition and fees as well as parking permit charges. During the enrollment process, students can schedule future installment payments to be automatically drafted from their bank account or charged to a credit card. The plan does not require an enrollment fee nor a deposit to enroll. There will no longer be an option to have your tuition and fees deducted directly from a paycheck.

For more information on plan enrollment periods and installment dates, please visit

http://busfin.uga.edu/bursar/grad_asst_payment_plan_documentation_fall_spring.pdf or contact Student Account Services at 706-542-2965.

MIBO Mail, Keys, UGA Cards

Microbiology Departmental Mailboxes

Mailboxes are in the main office (527 Bio Sci). Each lab has a mailbox, you will use the mailbox for whichever lab you are currently in. Note, faculty members have different mailboxes and their mail will not be in the “lab” boxes. Please do not have personal mail sent to the Microbiology Office address.

Lab Keys

If you are rotating in a Microbiology lab, you will get a key from the office. If you decide to choose a Microbiology lab as your home lab, you will get whatever appropriate key for that lab from the office as well.

If you join an adjunct’s lab, you will need to get a key and after-hours building access from their department’s personnel—whoever is in charge of giving out keys.

UGA Cards

Once you join the department, email Mikiesha with your UGA 81#. Once Mikiesha puts you in the system, you will use your UGA card as your key to access the Biological Sciences Building.

Computer Policy Microbiology Department

Only UGA owned computers can be assigned an IP number and be on the wireless network.

All non-UGA owned computers will use the PAWS wireless network. To find out more information about the PAWS wireless network, http://eits.uga.edu/network_and_phones/wireless. Please access the link and read carefully. You can connect your smartphones, Android phones, etc. to the wireless network, and this link should be able to tell you how.

If there is not a desktop computer in the research lab, graduate students can request a computer (if there a desktop is available).

To be able to log into to the UGA network with a departmental computer, your MyID has to be registered with Franklin IT (FOIT). You can contact Franklin College IT department at this email address and phone number: helpdesk@franklin.uga.edu and 706-542-9900

Printing in the research labs is available on personal and departmental computers. Printers need to be set up by Franklin IT department on the computers you are using before you able to print. Again, you can contact Franklin IT by the email or phone in the above point.

If you have any technical issues with your computer, etc., please put in a ticket. Usually, the Biological Sciences ITs will quickly respond to your inquiry. Access this link: <https://franklin.uga.edu/office-information-technology> and login with your My ID and password. From there, you will be able to submit a ticket with your concerns or questions.

Section 3



Work schedules and expectations

As graduate students, it is important to recognize that your schedule, and hours in the lab extend well beyond the classroom schedule and typical work week. This likely includes the expectation that you are spending evening and weekend time on your research and/or coursework. Clarify these expectations with your PI. Faculty are encouraged to make accommodations for religious holidays in particular, and may be flexible with regard to other time off, but that should not be assumed. In the event of illness or injury that results in absence from work, it is the graduate assistant's responsibility to contact their PI as soon as possible.

Students should always confer with their advisor or current rotation host when considering time off, and to clarify expectations.

Microbiology Grad Student Vacation Policy

Vacation Policy

All Microbiology Graduate Assistants, no matter what the source of funding for the assistantship, do not accrue any official vacation time, other than the 12 official university holiday days. Approval for planned absences must be obtained in advance from the Graduate assistant's major professor. In the event of an illness or injury that results in absence from work, it is the graduate assistant's responsibility to contact their major professor as soon as possible.

Comments on policy:

There is often some confusion about breaks upon the transition to grad school. You are supported with a yearly stipend as graduate assistants, which carries an obligation/schedule more like the work schedule of other UGA employees and less like the schedule of typical students. There are "Instructional holidays" like spring break and fall break, which you may notice are NOT on the list of 12 holiday days. Although there are no classes those days, the university is open and working. The same goes for the time between finals and the start of classes in the spring – the five days between Christmas and New Years are the only days the University is closed.

As a practical matter, many people take extra days off from time to time, especially during instructional holidays. Many graduate students work nights, weekends, and the official holidays like the fourth of July. Taking off other days may be fair and reasonable compensation. However, that is a discussion to have with your PI. You are not officially "off" just because classes are not in session. Finally, while UGA stays open through many religious holidays, UGA does ask faculty and others to be accommodating of these days. If you wish to observe a religious holiday on a workday, you should talk to your PI and any instructors who would be affected. If you encounter any difficulty in this regard, please discuss the issue with the graduate coordinator.

Grad School Course Requirements

Below are two key Graduate School rules regarding coursework requirements for graduate degrees. As a practical matter, most of our students satisfy these rules easily, as explained below.

20-hour rule (16-hour rule if you have a MS):

- Doctoral students must take 16 or more hours of 8000- and 9000-level courses, not including 9000 (research) or 9300 (dissertation writing).
- The doctoral program of study for a student who bypasses the master's degree must contain four additional hours of UGA courses open only to graduate students, which usually means 8000-level coursework, but may include 7000 or 6000-level courses. Most 6000-level courses do not count, because they are open to undergraduates. Exceptions may include MIBO 6010 (lab meeting), which can count in a semester when no undergraduates enrolled.

The typical student in our curriculum takes the following classes that count toward the 20-hour rule: 8120 (5 hours), 8620, 8630, 8640 (3 hours), 8150 (6+hours), 8170 (4+ hours) = 18 hours total. Thus, usually one other elective of at least 2 hours is sufficient to meet this requirement. For practical purposes, most of our students will easily meet the 20-hour rule.

30-hour rule:

Residency rules require 30 hours in the program and at least one course graded A-F. Note: This rule cannot be waived, even for transfer students.

The residence requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree is interpreted as 30 hours of consecutive graduate course work that is included on the program of study. Courses listed under the category "Other Departmental Requirements" do not count as part of the residence requirement (e.g., GRSC7770), but they do not constitute a break in residence if they are the only hours taken during a given semester. A maximum of three hours of dissertation writing (9300) and fifteen hours of 9000 may be included toward the required residence.

A typical student in our curriculum meets this requirement easily. Having met the 20-hour rule, a student adds 3 hours of 9300 and therefore needs only 7 hours of 9000 research to reach thirty hours. Most of our students are well over this requirement.



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PhD Microbiology Program Degree Requirements*

You will need to take a minimum of 20 hours of content courses at the 8000 level (in addition to Doctoral Research and Dissertation courses; 9000 and 9300).

Requirements	Description	Comments
MIBO 8120	Foundations of Microbiology	5 credits
MIBO 8150	Seminar in Diversity of Microbial Research	1 credit, repeated
MIBO 8170	Seminar in Prokaryotic Diversity	1 credit, repeated
*MIBO 8620	Introduction to Proposal Writing (*optional)	1 credit each
MIBO 8630	Quantitative Macromolecule Analysis	Modular: each section meets for 1/3 of the semester
MIBO 8640	Statistics (or other full-length statistics course)	
MIBO 9000	Doctoral Research	
GRSC 7770	Seminar in Graduate Teaching ¹	Dr. Walker
Electives	Approved courses with scientific content ²	5 credits
Teaching Requirement	2 semesters of teaching are required ³	
Publication Requirement	Publish at least one peer-reviewed research manuscript as first or co-first author prior to defending thesis.	
MIBO 9300	Doctoral Dissertation (taken in final semester)	3 credits
1	GRSC7770 is not an official program requirement but is required to teach at UGA	
2	For doctoral students without Master of Sciences degrees, the program of study must contain at least 5 credit hours of courses in addition to MIBO8630, MIBO8640, and MIBO8120 whose primary purpose is to provide scientific content. Courses related to policy (for example GRSC prefixes), seminar courses (for example MIBO8160, MIBO8170), or independent research (MIBO8900, GRSC8000) do not fulfill this requirement. Eligible courses to fulfill this requirement include but are not limited to: MIBO6030, MIBO6090, MIBO6100, MIBO6120, MIBO6220, MIBO6220S, MIBO6300, MIBO6310, MIBO6320, MIBO6450, MIBO6500, MIBO6600L, MIBO6610, MIBO6620, MIBO6650, MIBO6680, MIBO6700, MIBO6710L, MIBO8110L, MIBO8200, MIBO8260, MIBO8270L, MIBO8520, MIBO8700, MIBO8960, and MIBO8980. Other courses can be used to fulfill this requirement with the permission of the dissertation advisor, doctoral committee and graduate coordinator.	
3	One semester of required teaching may be waived if the student completes an approved professional development experience (expected to be equivalent in time/effort to a semester of teaching).	

Doctoral Program Degree Requirements (continued)

The core graduate courses required for Microbiology Graduate students are:

- MIBO8120 Foundations of Microbiology (5 credits)
- MIBO8150 Seminar in Diversity of Microbial Research (1 credit, repeated 8x)
- MIBO8170 Seminar in Prokaryotic Diversity (1 credit, repeated 8x)
- 3 - Part Module Below (each module is 1 credit and meets for 1/3 of semester)
 - MIBO8620 Introduction to Proposal Writing (optional)
 - MIBO8630 Quantitative Macromolecule Analysis
 - MIBO8640 Statistics (or other full-length statistics course)
- MIBO9000 Doctoral Research (variable credits)

Other Courses:

- Other courses taken to fulfill a requirement of 20 credit hours of graduate-only course work, including GRSC8000 (Rotations, max 6 CR) and other advanced courses in genetics, biochemistry, cell biology, etc. (decided on by the student in consultation with their advisor and committee).
- Students who earn extramural fellowships may be required to take an additional course in the ethical conduct of science, such as Genetics 8650 (Responsible Science)
- As noted below, GRSC7770 is a course requirement associated with teaching, and MIBO 9300 is taken during the process of writing the thesis/dissertation in the final semester.
- For doctoral students without Master of Sciences degrees, the program of study must contain at least 5 credit hours of courses in addition to MIBO8630, MIBO8640, and MIBO8120 whose primary purpose is to provide scientific content. Courses related to policy (for example GRSC prefixes), seminar courses (for example MIBO8160, MIBO8170), or independent research (MIBO8900 or GRSC8000) do not fulfill this requirement. Eligible courses to fulfill this requirement include but are not limited to: MIBO6030, MIBO6090, MIBO6100, MIBO6120, MIBO6220, MIBO6220S, MIBO6300, MIBO6310, MIBO6320, MIBO6450, MIBO6500, MIBO6600L, MIBO6610, MIBO6620, MIBO6650, MIBO6680, MIBO6700, MIBO6710L, MIBO8110L, MIBO8200, MIBO8260, MIBO8270L, MIBO8520, MIBO8700, MIBO8960, and MIBO8980. Other courses can be used to fulfill this requirement with the permission of the dissertation advisor, doctoral committee and graduate coordinator.

Teaching requirement:

- Teaching for two semesters in introductory, advanced, or graduate-level courses is required. Most students serve as teaching assistants during their third year. One semester of teaching may be waived if the student completes an approved professional development experience (expected to be equivalent in time/effort to a semester of teaching).
- A graduate teaching and career development course, GRSC 7770, is required before the first semester of teaching. In certain instances, GRSC7770 may be taken concurrently with the first semester of teaching.

Doctoral Program Degree Requirements (continued)

Publication Requirement:

The publication of scholarly work is the capstone of your doctoral training.

- All Microbiology PhD students are required to publish a minimum of one peer- reviewed research manuscript as first or co-first author prior to defending their thesis. Manuscripts that are accepted for publication can satisfy this requirement.
- An appeal for an exception to this requirement may be initiated by majority vote of the student's advisory committee and forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator for review.

Defense requirement:

- The final step in graduation is passing a thesis/dissertation defense: a public seminar followed by oral exam with committee (PhD aim for Year 5).
- In the semester of graduation, students must be enrolled in three credit hours of MIBO9300 (writing thesis/dissertation).



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AI Statement

Per the Graduate Bulletin, the master's thesis demonstrates independent judgment in developing a problem from primary sources, and a dissertation represents originality in research, independent thinking, scholarly ability, and technical mastery of a field of study. It is the responsibility of the advisory committee to review and evaluate the thesis or dissertation as a representation of a student's individual effort.

As such, the use of generative AI in theses and dissertations is considered unauthorized assistance per the Academic Code of Honesty and is prohibited unless specifically authorized by members of the advisory committee for use within the approved scope. If approved by the advisory committee, the extent of generative AI usage should be disclosed in a statement within the thesis or dissertation.

See the [link](#) for more information.



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“Track System for Timing of MIBO8120”

Changes to the “Typical Program of Study”: After gathering feedback from current graduate students, the faculty has voted to adopt an informal “track system” for new microbiology graduate students beginning in Fall 2023.

While MIBO8120 Foundations of Microbiology remains a fundamental course to be taken by all of our graduate students, we are altering our recommendation of when to take this course according to the following track system.

Prior to enrolling, you should discuss with your new PI which of these options best fits your background and planned research program.

Bacteriology track A: For students entering labs with projects focused on prokaryotic biology without an existing microbiology BS or MS.

- Take MIBO6090 Prokaryotic Biology in Spring 2024
- MIBO8120 in Spring 2025.

** Note that MIBO6090 can be counted towards the 5 credit elective requirement.

Bacteriology track B: For students with existing microbiology BS or MS.

- Take MIBO8120 in Spring 2024.
- Consider other electives to take in Spring 2025 to fulfill our graduate-level elective requirement.

Eukaryotic Microbiology track:

- Take MIBO8960 Fungal Genetics in Spring 2024
- MIBO8120 in Spring 2025.

**Note that MIBO8960 can count towards the graduate level elective requirement.

Typical Program of Study

PhD Microbiology:

FIRST YEAR

*Select [Advisory Committee](#) by end of summer

Fall:

- GRSC8000 (PhD Lab Rotations) (variable credits)
- GRSC8010 (Professional Development) (1 credits)
- GRSC8020 (Primary Literature Skills) (2 credits)
- GRSC8550 (Responsible Conduct of Research) (1 credit)
- Electives: GRSC8200 (Communicating Research and Scholarship) (1 credit)

Total of 18 Credits

Spring:

- MIBO6010 Critical Review of Research in Microbiology, Lab Meeting (2 credits)
 - MIBO6090 Prokaryotic Biology (4 credits)
- **OR**
- MIBO8120 Foundations of Microbiology (5 credits)
See “Track System for timing of MIBO8120”
- MIBO8150 (1 credit, repeated 8x)
- MIBO8170 Student Seminar (1 credit, repeated 8 x)
- MIBO9000 PhD Research (Variable credits)
- GRSC7770 Graduate Teaching & Career Development (1 credit)
- Possible Elective

Total of 18 Credits

Summer:

- MIBO9000 PhD Research (Variable credits)

Total of 15 Credits

SECOND YEAR

*Have [research proposal](#) approved by committee before the end of the Fall semester.

*Complete [Written Exam](#) by midterm of Spring and pass oral defense of it before last day of class, Fall semester year 3.

Fall:

1. MIBO6010 Critical Review of Research in Microbiology, Lab Meeting (2 credits)
2. MIBO8150 (1 credit, repeated 8x)
3. MIBO8170 Student Seminar (1 credit, repeated 8 x)
4. 3 - Part Module Below (each module is 1 credit and meets for 1/3 of semester)
 - MIBO8620 Introduction to Proposal Writing (optional)
 - MIBO8630 Quantitative Macromolecule Analysis
 - MIBO8640 Statistics (or other full-length statistics course)
5. MIBO9000 PhD Research (variable credits)
6. Possible Elective

Total of 18 Credits

Spring

1. MIBO6010 Critical Review of Research in Microbiology, Lab Meeting (2 credits)
2. MIBO8120 Foundations of Microbiology (5 credits) **If not taken in Spring year 1**
3. MIBO8150 (1 credit, repeated 8x)
4. MIBO8170 Student Seminar (1 credit, repeated 8 x)
5. MIBO9000 PhD Research (variable credits)
6. Possible Elective

Total of 18 Credits

Summer:

1. MIBO9000 PhD Research (variable credits)

Total of 15 Credits

THIRD YEAR AND BEYOND

- *Pass [Oral Exam](#) by first day of finals, Fall Year 3
- *Have [annual committee meeting](#) with your research committee (beginning one year after achieving candidacy)
- *Serve as [Teaching Assistant](#) for two semesters

1. MIBO6010 Critical Review of Research in Microbiology, Lab Meeting (2 credits)
2. MIBO8150 (1 credit, repeated 8x)
3. MIBO8170 Student Seminar (1 credit, repeated 8x)
4. Electives (as necessary, many students will have no more electives at this point)
5. MIBO9000 PhD Research (variable credits)

Total of 18 hours

SEMESTER OF GRADUATION

1. MIBO9000 PhD Research (variable credits)
2. MIBO9300 PhD dissertation preparation (3 credits, taken in semester of graduation)

Total of 18 hours (15 if in Summer)

Establishing your Advisory Committee

Advisory Committees are chosen in the first year, usually in the summer. The members of your Advisory Committee should be viewed as an additional resource as you pursue your graduate research. Rules governing committee structure are provided below. The composition of the committee must be formalized with an [Advisory Committee Form](#), which should be completed in GradStatus. The submission will then be forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator for approval.

Doctoral Committee Structure:

A doctoral student advisory committee shall consist of a minimum of four members. The minimum number of Microbiology Faculty members will be 2, not including adjuncts. The major advisor must have a faculty appointment as a regular or adjunct member of the department. (These are departmental rules.)

Additional Graduate School Rules

There must be at least three members of the Graduate Faculty, including the major professor, who will serve as the chair of the committee. Additional voting members may be appointed to the committee and may include no more than one non-UGA faculty*, who must hold the terminal degree in their field of study. There must be greater than 50% UGA Graduate Faculty representation.

*A voting non-UGA faculty member can only be appointed to the doctoral committee by recommendation of the graduate coordinator and the major professor and by final approval of the dean of the graduate school. The graduate coordinator must send a letter of appointment and vita of that person along with the Advisory Committee form. It must be explained why the services of the non-affiliated person are requested. The student and major professor should provide this explanation to the graduate coordinator. A person nominated must have distinguishing credentials in the field of study.

A non-affiliated person appointed to a graduate student committee must attend meetings associated with the appointment.

Master Committee Structure:

The master degree student advisory committee shall consist of a minimum of three members. The minimum number of Microbiology Faculty members will be 2, not including adjuncts. The major professor must have a faculty appointment as a regular or adjunct member of the department. (The latter two rules are departmental requirements.)

Additional Graduate School Rules

The chair and at least one other member must be appointed members of the UGA Graduate Faculty. If more than three members are appointed to the committee, a majority of members must be UGA Graduate Faculty. A non-UGA affiliated person may serve as a non-voting member of the committee.

Replacing A Committee Member:

If you need to replace a committee member for any of a number of reasons, for example if he or she is absent from campus for extended periods of time during a critical phase of your graduate program, you may do so with the concurrence of your major professor, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Dean of the Graduate School. You will need to submit a new Advisory Committee Form in GradStatus.

Committee Meetings

Committee Meetings to Monitor Graduate Student Training Progress:

An annual meeting of each student with their committee is required to ensure satisfactory training progress and timely graduation.

- For PhD students the first of these meetings usually will be the oral component of the qualifying exam.
- For MS students the first meeting must take place in the Fall term of their second year.

Subsequent meetings must occur within 12 months of the preceding meeting. Students must accomplish this requirement to be permitted to register for the next semester after that 12-month period. Plan for committee meetings well in advance to avoid conflicts with exams, scientific meetings, etc.

Suggested Outline for Student Presentation Design (aim for 1-hour total meeting including time for interruptions)

- Background ~5 minutes
- Data ~20 minutes
- Future research goals ~ 2 minutes
- Professional development ~2 minutes
- Benchmarks/timeline goals ~1 minute

Any one of the following four options will suffice for the annual progress evaluation. For all options, at least three of the PhD committee members or two of the three MS committee members must be present. We strongly encourage use of all committee members whenever possible.

Option 1. A traditional committee meeting with committee members present physically or by conference call where the student presents their research plan and progress.

Option 2. Presentation of a public departmental seminar in academic semester 5, 6, 7, or 8 will count as the committee meeting for that year (year 3 or 4).

Option 3. Presentation at a regularly-scheduled lab group meeting of one of the committee members other than the mentor.

Option 4. One-on-one meetings between the student and each committee member.

The format chosen each year is determined by consultation between the mentor and student, and agreed upon by the individual committee member(s).

Record-keeping

After each meeting a signed [Committee Meeting Form](#) will be given to the Graduate Program Associate to be added to the student record. The form notes the meeting format used, the committee members present, and their evaluation of his/her progress. At this time [the student must also file an updated CV](#) using [UGA Elements](#) and provide an electronic copy to the [Graduate Program Associate](#).

General Evaluation Criteria

The majority of the committee members present at an annual meeting (but not less than 2 members for an MS student) must deem the 12-month progress to be satisfactory. Satisfactory progress means that the student is actively engaged in taking and analyzing data and is making and implementing judicious choices in troubleshooting his/her project, regardless of whether a specific experimental result has been obtained. Faculty may also recognize outstanding progress by a student as commendable.

Remedial Action

If the majority finds progress unsatisfactory, the committee must devise a 6-month plan of action to remedy deficiencies and record that plan on the form. The plan should explicitly state the deficiencies in the annual progress and make specific recommendations to remedy the situation. Within 6 months, the student must present to the committee (using any above meeting format) evidence of satisfactory progress, as stated on the form. The decision of the committee must immediately be reported by the major professor to the GAC and the Department Head.

If progress is deemed satisfactory at the 6-month meeting, the committee will decide whether the student should meet again in 6-months for his/her regularly scheduled annual meeting or have a meeting again in 12 months (now six months offset from the original cycle. In either case, students will then have a 12-month meeting cycle again as long as progress is satisfactory.

If a majority of the committee still finds progress unsatisfactory at the 6-month meeting, the student will be precluded from registering for classes in the next academic term; i.e. they will be dropped from the graduate program.

First Year: Things to Remember

1. With few exceptions, all students will conduct laboratory **rotations** during fall semester and officially declare an advisor before the end of the calendar year per ILS department guidelines.
2. By summer of the first-year students should choose a committee (<https://mib.uga.edu/committees>) and submit the [Advisory Committee Form](#) in GradStatus. The composition of the committee should be discussed with the student's advisor, who is also a committee member.
3. Toward the end of the First Year, students should start working on an [NSF GRFP Proposal](#) and should discuss a program of study with their advisor. These will be due in the Second Year (<https://mib.uga.edu/second-year>).

PLEASE NOTE: We are continually evaluating and updating the Microbiology Graduate Handbook to reflect the most current policies and procedures. Please refer to the website for the most current Graduate Handbook.

Second Year: Things to Remember

Students are responsible for registering (<https://mib.uga.edu/registration-enrollment>) themselves on time each semester (fall, spring, and summer). Be aware of deadlines, and be sure to get advisement or course-specific permissions on time to register.

Review the Departmental Requirements (<https://mib.uga.edu/course-requirements-phd>) and typical program of study (<https://mib.uga.edu/phd-microbiology-typical-program-study>) to ensure that you stay on track and register for appropriate courses each semester.

1. Follow instructions for preparing and submitting your NSF Proposal (<https://mibo.franklin.uga.edu/nsf-grfp-proposal>) by the NSF submission deadline.
2. During spring semester, follow instructions for undertaking your Preliminary Exams (Prelims) (<http://mib.uga.edu/prelims>). Upon successful completion of the Prelims, you should also file forms for [Admission to Candidacy](#).
3. During spring semester, you will need to file your program of study. The program of study should be outlined after consultation with your advisor and with input from the committee. See the Program of Study Rules and form (<https://mibo.franklin.uga.edu/final-program-study-instructions>) and a typical series of coursework in the program (<https://mibo.franklin.uga.edu/phd-microbiology-typical-program-study>).
4. Anticipate fulfilling the Teaching Requirement (<https://mibo.franklin.uga.edu/teaching-requirement>) the next year and plan with your advisor and Graduate Coordinator which courses you are interested in TA-ing.

*** If you and/or your PI feel an extension to these timelines is needed, do not hesitate to request one. To do so, email the graduate coordinator and in one to two sentences describe the situation.**

Third Year and Beyond:

1. Third year-fulfill TA requirement alluded to above
2. Each year hold a committee meeting. If you expect (or want) to present your work in MIBIO8170 as part or all of this meeting requirement, contact course instructor in the fall.
3. All Microbiology PhD students are required to publish a minimum of one peer-reviewed research manuscript as first or co-first author prior to defending their thesis. Manuscripts that are accepted for publication can satisfy this requirement.

NSF GRFP Proposal

1. Doctoral students will submit an NSF GRFP proposal that all second years will be preparing as part of MIBO8620. Second Year PhD students should plan on submitting the final version of both your personal statement and research plan documents to your committee at the time of NSF submission (usually due in late October). Please remember that in preparing your proposal you should provide a draft to your major professor well in advance (2 weeks) of the due date to allow them to provide feedback on your proposal.

Students who are ineligible for the GRFP program can prepare an alternate proposal for this assignment. In that case, please also provide your committee with a description of the proposal format and requirements for the chosen program.

Students should copy the Graduate Program Associate at mibcoord@uga.edu when the proposal is distributed.

2. The Advisory Committee will decide whether to accept the proposal. Within two weeks, faculty should notify both the student and the graduate program associate whether the proposal is acceptable. If acceptable, the student may then proceed with preparations for the expanded formal version of the written exam. If acceptable, faculty may simply provide a "go ahead" signal (by indicating acceptance) or faculty may provide additional comments and suggestions to the student to help with plans for the longer written document due in spring semester. If significant changes are warranted, faculty should indicate to the student and to the program associate (within two weeks of receiving the proposal) that the student must provide a new or substantially revised proposal for approval. The committee will vote on a resubmitted proposal within two weeks of receipt by notifying the student and the graduate program associate. It is expected that a version of the proposal be accepted by all committee members by the end of November at the latest.

You will be communicating with your committee concerning your proposal; however, you are not required to schedule a meeting during the Fall Semester of your second year. For PhD students the first required annual meeting will be the oral component of the qualifying exam.

Important Note: The proposal parallels the structure of the written preliminary exam. However, for the preliminary exam, contributions from the advisor are limited. Therefore, the proposal is an invaluable opportunity to work with the advisor on shaping a research plan.

Note to committee

The following note to the committee should be copied and pasted onto the body of the email to the advisory committee at the time of proposal submission ([Click here to download in Word format](#)):

Note to Committee: (provided as written per Microbiology program guidelines)

The Microbiology graduate program stipulates that an NSF GRFP proposal be distributed to committee members in the Fall of a students' second year (usually due in late October). The proposal is not typically accompanied by a committee meeting but serves as a precursor to the written and oral exams usually taken in spring of the second year, which also focus on the student's proposed research. Usually, the proposal is a nascent and distilled version of the anticipated written prelim. *The primary purpose of the proposal is to identify any major concerns that may exist so that the student does not move forward with a fatally flawed project*; however, a rewrite may be requested for any reason. The proposal also affords the student a chance to work more closely on developing the written proposal with their advisor, who is not allowed to help edit the written prelim. Moreover, feedback from committee members can be invaluable in helping students avoid mistakes or confusion on their written prelims. Evaluation of the proposal should proceed as follows:

- Within two weeks of receiving the proposal, committee members should notify the student and the grad program assistant whether the proposal is acceptable or not.
- Faculty may simply indicate "acceptable" or they may provide additional comments and suggestions to help with the longer written prelim. Consultation is usually done by email or one-on-one. Typically the committee does not meet following the proposal.
- If significant changes are warranted, faculty should indicate to the student, his/her advisor, and the graduate program associate that the student must provide a new or substantially revised proposal. Again, a two-week turnaround from receipt of the revised proposal to notification is expected.
- Upon conferring with the advisor and other committee members, a meeting of the full committee to discuss the proposal may be in order.
- It is expected that a version of the proposal be accepted by all committee members by the end of November at the latest.

Preliminary Examinations & Advancement to Candidacy

Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations (<https://mibo.franklin.uga.edu/prelims>)

WRITTEN EXAM

During the first half of the Spring Semester of the second year, each doctoral student will prepare a written proposal for his/her dissertation project and present it to the advisory committee no later than the mid-point of the semester (ca. middle of Week 8; see the web-based [UGA Academic Calendar](#)). The major professor may provide general guidance only on the Specific Aims section of the proposal, but the student is strongly encouraged to get input from other faculty (including his/her committee), post-docs, and more advanced students in drafting the final proposal.

When students distribute their proposals to committee members, they should email the Graduate Program Associate (mibcoord@uga.edu), stating the date it was distributed and the names of the committee members. This will help us get the results of the exams reported promptly. If committee members reside outside the Microbiology Department, it is the student's responsibility to communicate the rules and timeline governing the exam process (e.g. that committee members have two weeks to submit an evaluation) to such committee members.

The advisory committee should decide within 2 weeks whether the student has passed this written portion of the qualifying exam, and committee members should notify the student and the Graduate Program Assistant of their evaluation. In the event that it is not a passing evaluation, the Graduate Coordinator should be notified as well. The committee members may choose to return the marked-up proposals to the student.

If more than one committee member requests that the exam be rewritten or rates the exam as unacceptable, the student is allowed a single rewrite of the proposal to incorporate changes based on input from the committee. The rewrite must be submitted within 3 weeks after the pass/fail decision. As with the first submission, the committee is expected to evaluate the proposal within two weeks and will be contacted by the Graduate Program Associate if they do not. A student failing this re-written exam (i.e., receiving an unacceptable ranking from more than one committee member) will transfer to the M.S. program.

ORAL EXAM After passing the written exam, the student will schedule an oral exam to take place no later than the last day of finals in the Fall Term of year 3. An exam committee chair will be appointed by the major advisor prior to the oral preliminary exam meeting. The chair will be a tenured faculty member who scored the written proposal with a passing grade. Prior to the exam, the chair will read the policy regarding Microbiology preliminary exam format.

- At this exam, the student will be allowed a maximum of twelve slides and fifteen uninterrupted minutes for a presentation, to be followed by questions that are specific to the proposal as well as questions that test general knowledge.
- Students may prepare a limited number of extra slides that might facilitate discussion of complex datasets, pathways, structures, etc.; however, text should be minimized and committee members may stipulate whether such slides can be used to answer any particular question.
- Typically, initial questions will focus on the proposal, but there should be time for general knowledge questions as well.
- During the exam, the student's advisor will not participate in the discussion unless asked a direct question and granted permission to participate by the committee chair.
- After the exam, the exam committee chair will draft an evaluation letter summarizing the student's performance and indicating specific strengths and weaknesses that were identified by the exam committee. This letter will be submitted to the student, the major professor, and the Graduate program assistant.

It is the responsibility of the student to schedule the exam well enough in advance to ensure that all committee members can attend in person or by conference call.

The Graduate School must be informed of the date, time, and location of oral exams at least two weeks in advance. That information should be given to the Graduate Program Associate at least two weeks prior to the oral exam, and the Program Associate will obtain the exam signature form from The Grad School for the student. Regardless of pass or fail, the form must be returned to the Graduate School within two weeks after the announced oral exam date. If the student fails the first oral exam (same conditions as above for written exam), he/she must retake the exam by the end of finals in the immediately following summer "through session". Failure on the re-take of the oral requires transfer to the MS program.

PASSING THE EXAM

Regardless of the number of members on an advisory committee (usually four or five for doctoral committees), a student will only pass the exam if no more than one unsatisfactory (failing) grade is received.

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

After passing the written and oral exams, the student must complete this [form](#) to apply for admission to Ph.D. candidacy. Generally, the petition for advancement to Candidacy is submitted at the same time as the form signed by committee members evaluating the preliminary exams. Note that there is a 2-semester residency requirement following admission to candidacy before a student can graduate.

POSTPONEMENT

The student and his/her advisor may request a postponement in the above schedule due to special circumstances. This is done by a written request to the Graduate Coordinator that explains the reason for the delay and suggests an alternative schedule. Requests for postponement of the written exam must be received at least two weeks before the exam is due. Requests for postponement of the oral exam or of are-take of the written exam must be received by the Graduate Coordinator within one week after the pass/no-pass decision. A postponement beyond the Fall Semester of the third year generally will not be granted.

Format for the Research Proposal Component of the Qualifying Exam

Length/Typography: The total proposal length should be no more than 12 typed, single-spaced pages (~6000 words) in 12-point Times or Arial fonts. You may place figures, tables and photos on separate pages together with their corresponding legends or footnotes. These pages DO count towards the total length and you should subtract 1/3 page from the page limit for each figure and table. These pages may be interspersed among the text pages or clustered at the end of the document. Alternatively, you may embed figures and tables within the text such that the total document length is no more than 12 pages.

Organize the proposal as follows:

Title Page: A succinct but informative title for your project, your name, the date (month and year) and the names of your committee members (does not count in the page limit).

Specific Aims: This is a brief summary or abstract of the proposed work. Provide a short introductory paragraph followed by a brief "bullet" listing (each item no longer than a short sentence) of the specific studies that you propose in the order in which they will be conducted. The Specific Aims page is your opportunity to make a good first impression regarding the importance of your project. It should be simple, clear, and succinct. (0.5-1 page).

Background/Significance: Summarize the relevant information leading to your proposed work. critically evaluate the pertinent existing knowledge in the field. Identify the gaps in that knowledge that your work will fill. Clearly establish the importance and relevance of your proposed work (2-2.5 pages).

Preliminary Studies: Describe your own recent/current work in preparation for the proposed experiments. This section should support the feasibility of the proposed studies and provide evidence that you can carry out related experiments (2---3 pages).

Research Design and Methods: Describe the experimental approaches you will take to complete the Specific Aims. It is generally sufficient to simply cite references for routine/standard procedures, but you should address specific modifications or details that are relevant to your own project. Be aware that you should understand thoroughly the techniques you will be using, as you can expect questions on them during your oral exam. If several techniques are available for asking a certain type of question, explain why you chose the technique(s) you have and not another. Anticipate where potential problems might arise and indicate alternative approaches. Most importantly, explain how your observations will test your hypothesis. The purpose of this section is to describe what you will do, and demonstrate how well you understand what you will do, how you will deal with problems which might reasonably arise, and where this work might lead (5---6 pages).

References: Use ASM journal format to cite references in the text and to list at the end of document. Reference list does not count in the text page limit. Make sure that the title of each cited reference and ALL authors are included.

Pre-Graduation Checklist

After you have been admitted to candidacy, make sure to follow these guidelines until you are ready to defend:

- Be sure you have fulfilled your teaching requirement if you have not done so already.
- Follow rules for having an annual committee meeting (or appropriate substitute).
- Submit an updated Elements CV to the Graduate Program Associate annually.
- Register on time each semester.
- Familiarize yourself with the rules and [deadlines for graduation](#) well in advance of your projected graduation semester.
- Finish any requirements on your program of study.
- If your program of study or committee changes, be sure to file the appropriate [form\(s\)](#).

Applying for Graduation and Defending

- Apply for graduation in Athena ([Application Instructions](#))
- Register for MIBO9300 (or 7300 for MS) for 3 credits in the final semester
- Follow instructions on the graduate school website and in this handbook for preparing your dissertation and scheduling your defense.
- At time of defense, submit the [Approval for Doctoral Dissertation](#). Submit your final, corrected Dissertation and complete the [ETD](#).
- Please complete an exit survey after completing all graduation requirements
https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2ccRS13v0HDkf1X.



Department of Microbiology

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Student-Faculty and Peer Conflict Management Resources

The Microbiology department acknowledges that student-faculty and/or student-student interpersonal conflicts may arise during the graduate school experience. Unfortunately, these situations can have a negative impact on the overall mental health and academic performance of graduate students and their mentors. As a first step and/or for minor conflicts, students may consider reaching out to senior lab mates or post-docs. Senior lab staff might have useful suggestions on effective communication to help resolve conflict with the faculty member/peer. For larger conflicts, particularly conflicts with a faculty mentor, consider reaching out to your thesis advisory committee and/or another faculty member in the department. All faculty members are conscious of the need for discretion in such cases and will keep these conversations confidential (even/especially from your advisor) if requested.

Additionally, the Microbiology department as a whole and the graduate school are working towards mitigating these conflicts by providing the appropriate support and resources for the graduate students. Below is a list of *additional* resources that could be useful should a conflict arise. Please do not hesitate to reach out or contact any of the offices/people below.

Microbiology specific:

- Graduate Student Advising Coordinator: Dr. Elizabeth Ottesen
 - Email: MIBGRDADV@uga.edu
- Microbiology Peer Mentoring Program
 - For information on the current microbiology mentors or co-chairs of the program are, email Janice at mibcoord@uga.edu.
- Microbiology Graduate Student Association (MGSA)
 - MGSA consists of different officers who could be good resources. If you don't know who your MGSA officers are, email Janice at mibcoord@uga.edu.

Graduate School/UGA

- ILS Director: Lance Wells
 - ilsdirector@uga.edu
- Ombudsperson for students: Charisse Harper
 - Email: charper@uga.edu
 - Website: <https://eoo.uga.edu/policies-resources/the-ombudspersons/>
- Counseling and psychiatric services (CAPS)
 - Email: <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/welcome>



Department of Microbiology

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Graduate Student Complaint Procedures

Procedure for reporting complaints and the review/appeal process.

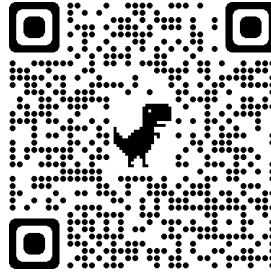
When a graduate student has a complaint about the performance or behavior of a faculty member directly related to their responsibilities as a Graduate Faculty member, the following procedure is recommended.

1. The first course of action should be to try to resolve the complaint directly with the faculty member. If the student is unsure about how to address the issue with the faculty member, they are encouraged to seek advice from a dissertation committee member or the graduate coordinator prior to discussing the issue with the faculty member in question.
2. If the student/faculty member is unable to resolve the complaint with the Graduate Faculty member, then an oral or written complaint should be delivered to the department head and/or the departmental graduate coordinator.
3. The department head and/or graduate coordinator must investigate the complaint and work with the student/faculty member making the complaint (complainant) and the Graduate Faculty member.
4. Additional steps to address and resolve the issue will be taken by the administration as outlined in the Microbiology Graduate Faculty Guidelines.

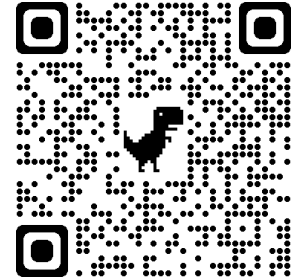
Helpful Links



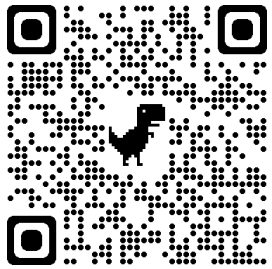
Graduate School Forms



Graduate School Policies and Procedures



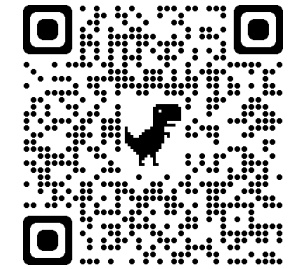
Tuition and Fees



Travel Funding



Student Accounts



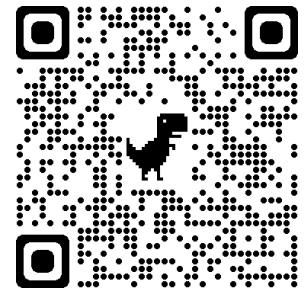
Schedule of Classes



Graduate Peer Support Network



Thesis and Dissertation Overview



Important Dates and Deadlines for Graduation