



Department of Microbiology

Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Graduate Program Handbook

2025-26

(For PhD students entering Fall 2025 or later)



updated January 2026/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
Director of Graduate Studies	Dr. Elizabeth Ottesen	706-424-9224	mibgrdadv@uga.edu
Graduate Program Administrator	Janice Stuart	706-542-2045	mibcoord@uga.edu
Undergraduate Program Associate	Megan Lanter	706-542-2688	Megan.Lanter@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	Amanda/Georgianne	FCFAST-MBIO@uga.edu
Business Services Center	Mike/Lori	fcbsc-life@uga.edu

Who to see if you have a question about:

Graduate School Forms	Janice
Key Checkout	Janice or Megan
Keycard access	Mikiesha
Laser Pointers	Janice or Megan
Making Copies	Janice or Megan (Dept. copier in room 476B)
Mailboxes or mailing via US Mail	Megan
Paychecks	Janice/Georganne
Permission of Department to register	Janice
Purchase Orders	fcbsc-life@uga.edu
Registration	Janice
Reimbursement	fcbsc-life@uga.edu
Reserving Conference Room	Submit request on our website , these go to Janice or Megan
Travel	fcbsc-life@uga.edu or FCFAST-MBIO@uga.edu
Shipping via FedEx or UPS	Janice or Megan
Work Orders	Gerald Lumpkin
MGSA Budgets	FCFAST-MBIO@uga.edu

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

Section 2

GEORGIA



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 11:35 am**
- **departmental seminars on Thursdays at 11:35 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

The University of Georgia Graduate Assistantship Payment Plans allow a student on a graduate assistantship to defer payment of the current term's tuition and fees, health insurance, and parking permit. The deferrable balance is calculated after all actual and expected financial aid is applied to the student account. UGA now offers two separate graduate assistant payment plans to select from for the fall and spring term(s). Under the payment plan terms, enrollees can elect to defer the balance in either four or three equal installments throughout the semester (note: this timing is compressed in summer due to the shortened nature of the term). Students must choose a scheduled payment method to cover their deferred payments. A student can schedule payments via an automatic deduction from their bank account or credit card. Please ensure your bank or credit card information for scheduled payments is up to date to avoid issues with processing your payment. Scheduled payments must clear the bank in order to satisfy your payment obligation. Payments returned by your bank are subject to a \$30 fee, and funds for failed payments are considered due immediately. For more information on plan enrollment periods and installment dates, please visit <https://busfin.uga.edu/finance-division/bursar/students-parents/bursar-payments/> or contact Student Account Services at 706-542-2965.

MIBO Mail, Keys, UGA Cards

Microbiology Departmental Mailboxes

Mailboxes are in the mailroom, 416 Building C. Each lab has a mailbox, which is separate from the PI mailbox. You should check your lab mailbox periodically. Please do not have personal mail sent to the Microbiology Office address.

Lab Keys

If you are rotating in or joining a Microbiology lab, you will get your keys from the MIBO office.

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

Building Key Card Access

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 Building B or Building C. If your lab is in another building, please ask your PI for the access contact person in that 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 provides instructions.

If there is not a desktop computer in the research lab, graduate students can request a computer (if there a desktop is available). Grad Students have access to Adobe and other software on all UGA owned devices. You can check out a license for Adobe on personal devices from EITS using this link .

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 [13 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 13 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 Director of Graduate Studies.

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, 8640 (2 hours), 8150 (6+hours), 8170 (4+ hours) = 17 hours total. Thus, usually one other elective of at least 3 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.

Doctoral Time Limits

Doctoral students must complete all requirements for the doctoral degree and the degree must be awarded within eight (8) calendar years after initial enrollment/registration in the program. Students who fail to complete their degrees within eight years after initial enrollment will be considered as not making satisfactory progress to degree completion and will be dismissed from Graduate School. The Graduate School will notify all doctoral students when they have reached the 7-year mark to warn them about the impending 8-year degree time limit.

See the [Graduate School website](#) for additional information.

POLICY UPDATE: CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE REQUIREMENT

March 13, 2025

On March 12, 2025, Graduate Council approved the following revisions to the Cumulative Grade Point Average Requirement policy, clarifying its applications to degree-seeking and non-degree seeking graduate students:

All graduate students (degree-seeking and non-degree seeking) must maintain an average of 3.0 (B) grade point average (GPA) both on the graduate transcript and on all courses on the program of study to remain in good academic standing (see Probation & Dismissal policy). No grade below C (2.0) will be accepted as part of a program of study for a graduate degree.

In addition, degree-seeking students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher to be eligible for admission to candidacy and graduation. When a graduate course is repeated, the last grade received will be used in calculating the cumulative graduate average that is used for probation, dismissal, admission to candidacy, and graduation.

Students will not be approved for graduation if they have a grade of I or ER which, when changed to a recorded grade, could cause the graduate grade point average to fall below the minimum required for graduation.



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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 8640	Statistics (or other full-length statistics course)	Modular: each section meets for 1/3 of the semester
MIBO 9000	Doctoral Research	
GRSC 7770	Seminar in Graduate Teaching ¹	Dr. Goodwin
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 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 Director of Graduate Studies.	
³	One semester of <u>required teaching</u> 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 7x)
- MIBO8170 Seminar in Prokaryotic Diversity (1 credit, repeated 7x)
- 2 - Part Module Below (each module is 1 credit and meets for 1/3 of semester)
 1. MIBO8620 is an optional segment on proposal preparation aimed at guiding students through the preparation of an NSF GRFP proposal that also can be used to satisfy the prospectus requirement of the department.
 2. MIBO8640 is a statistics/quantitative analysis module that is required but can be alternatively met by taking a suitable statistics course in another department.
- 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 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 Director of Graduate Studies.

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 Director of Graduate Studies 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 Year 1
- MIBO8120 in Spring Year 2.

** 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 Year 1.
- Consider other electives to take in Spring Year 2 to fulfill our graduate-level elective requirement.

Eukaryotic Microbiology track:

- Take MIBO8960 Fungal Genetics in Spring Year 1
- MIBO8120 in Spring Year 2.

**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, submit form in GradSlate.

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 7 x)
- MIBO8170 Student Seminar (1 credit, repeated 7 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 7 x)
3. MIBO8170 Student Seminar (1 credit, repeated 7 x)
4. 3 - Part Module Below (each module is 1 credit and meets for 1/3 of semester)
 - MIBO8620 Introduction to Proposal Writing (optional)
 - MIBO8640 Statistics (or another 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 7 x)
4. MIBO8170 Student Seminar (1 credit, repeated 7 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 7 x)
3. MIBO8170 Student Seminar (1 credit, repeated 7 x)
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 **GradSlate**. The submission will then be forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies 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/courtesy appointees.** 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 Director of Graduate Studies and the major professor and by final approval of the dean of the graduate school. The Director of Graduate Studies 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 Director of Graduate Studies. 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/courtesy appointees.** 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 Director of Graduate Studies, and the Dean of the Graduate School. You will need to submit a new Advisory Committee Form in **GradSlate**.

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 Admin 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 Administrator](#).

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 **GradSlate**. 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 (<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 Director of Graduate Studies 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 Director of Graduate Studies 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

Research Proposal/Prospectus

1. Doctoral students will submit a Research 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 conclusion of MIBO 8620. 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 before submitting to your committee.

Students should copy the Graduate Program Administrator at mibcoord@uga.edu when the Proposal is distributed to the committee.

2. The Advisory Committee will decide whether to accept the Proposal. Within two weeks, faculty should notify both the student and the Graduate Program Administrator 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 administrator (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 Administrator. 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 PI are limited. Therefore, the Proposal is an invaluable opportunity to work with the PI on shaping a research plan.

3. Please include the "Note to Committee" on the following page with your Research Proposal submission.

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 Research 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 a Research 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 PI, 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 Administrator 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 Administrator (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 Director of Graduate Studies 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 Administrator 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 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 [Oral Exam Report](#) and 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 Administrator at least two weeks prior to the oral exam, and the Program Administrator will obtain the exam approval form from The Grad School for the student. Regardless of pass or fail, the form must be completed by the Committee 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 Director of Graduate Studies 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 a re-take of the written exam must be received by the Director of Graduate Studies 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 and publication 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 Administrator 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.

Defending

Preparing and Defending your PhD/MS Dissertation/Thesis

You are responsible for knowing and following the deadlines set forth by the Graduate School. Useful links to Grad School pages are provided at the bottom of this section.

Applying to Graduate

You must apply for graduation, and it is advised you do this well in advance of your expected graduation semester. It is safer to apply a semester in advance of when you expect to graduate than to find you are unable to graduate because you waited too long. As of summer 2013, the Grad school rules state “An application for graduation must be filed with the Graduate School no later than Friday of the second full week (the first full week for summer) of classes in the semester of the anticipated graduation date.”

Registration your final semester

Be sure to register for 3 credits of MIBO9300 or MIBO7300 (dissertation/thesis writing) in the semester you plan to graduate. If you do not graduate, this course is repeatable (for a maximum total of 9 credits).

Scheduling Your Defense

1. Ask your committee well in advance to confirm a defense date in case someone will be away for an extended period and may need to be replaced on your committee, which requires submission of a revised committee form to the Graduate School for approval.
2. The defense announcement must come from the Director of Graduate Studies office at least two weeks prior to the exam. It is your responsibility to notify the graduate program assistant of the defense date and to leave enough time that this announcement can be made by our office at least two weeks before your defense. This is a graduate school rule, and failure to provide ample time for notice of the defense could result in postponement and rescheduling.
3. Members of your committee probably will want a copy of your thesis or dissertation **two weeks prior** to the defense. This is not a rule however, and some committee members may request more or less time. *It is each student's responsibility to communicate with the committee no later than when scheduling the defense to determine when the committee members require the document.* If the dissertation/thesis is distributed too late for the committee to evaluate it prior to the defense, the defense may have to be cancelled and rescheduled.
4. The graduate school must be notified if the defense is postponed.

Thesis and Dissertation Details

See the Grad School Website for a dissertation/thesis format overview. You can find dissertation template examples here.

You may use published articles as chapters in your dissertation or thesis if you are first author (or co-first author, i.e. you are designated as contributing equally to the article with the first author). If there are multiple authors on the paper, you need to briefly tell what each author did in the research and writing of the manuscript; the best place to do this is on the first page of the chapter where you give the title and authors. Also, you must get permission from the journal to reproduce your paper in the thesis or dissertation.



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:

- Director of Graduate Studies: 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: Dr. Kelly Dyer
 - ilsdirector@uga.edu
- Ombudsperson for students: Charisse Harper
 - Email: charper@uga.edu
 - Website: https://ombuds.domain-account.com/about_ombuds/
- Counseling and psychiatric services (CAPS)
 - Email: <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/welcome>



Department of Microbiology

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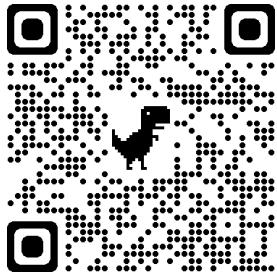
Graduate Student Complaint Procedures

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 Director of Graduate Studies 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 Director of Graduate Studies.
3. The department head and/or Director of Graduate Studies 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.

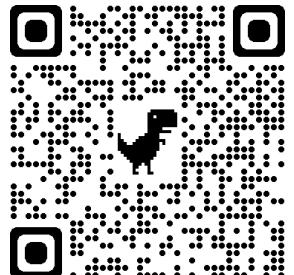
Helpful Links



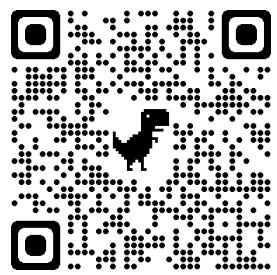
Graduate School Forms



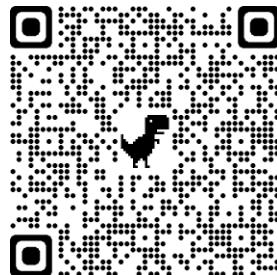
Graduate School Policies and Procedures



Tuition and Fees



Travel Funding



Student Accounts



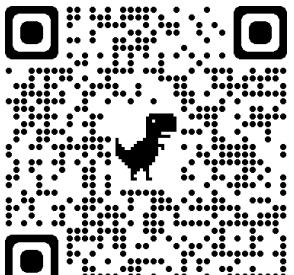
Schedule of Classes



Well-Being Resources



Thesis and Dissertation Overview



Important Dates and Deadlines for Graduation