

Requirements for Ph.D. in Conservation Biology

Doctoral students are required to complete a minimum of 60 semester hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. Specific courses will be selected in consultation with the advisory committee and will depend on the research objectives and level of the student's preparedness for those objectives. A minimum of 18 credit hours of course work must be at the 6000 level. The following courses or appropriate substitutions are required:

1. Biological Sciences 6022, Scientific Communication (2 credit hours).
2. A minimum of two 6000-level graduate lecture courses in biological sciences (6 credit hours).
3. A minimum of one two-credit graduate seminar course (2 credit hours).
4. One course in statistics course taken at the graduate level (3 credit hours).
5. Demonstrated proficiency in a foreign language.*
6. Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in graduate coursework. Courses with the grade of C may not be applied toward the degree requirements.

* In cases where a foreign language is not appropriate for a student's research goals, a course providing more appropriate skills such as a computer language course may be substituted with the approval of the student's advisory committee.

Up to 12 hours of graduate-level credit taken previous to admission into the Ph.D. program may be applied towards the minimum of 60 hours required for the doctoral degree. However, only six of these hours can be applied to reduce the requirement for 18 hours of 6000-level courses. Any transfer of credits is subject to approval by the student's advisory committee and the graduate coordinator.

The above requirements should be satisfied during the first two years of study. In addition, after successfully passing the General Examination (see below), students are required to take a minimum of 12 credit hours of Biological Sciences 7050, Dissertation Research.

Advisory Committee: Each Ph.D. student has an advisory committee that directs the coursework and research. Students are expected to select a faculty member from the Department of Biological Sciences to serve as chair of the advisory committee by the end of the first semester in the graduate program. By the end of the second semester, the advisory committee is expanded to a minimum of three members. The committee is enlarged from three to five members prior to the general examination (see below). Members of the advisory committee must be members of the graduate faculty, and at least half must be faculty in the Department of Biological Sciences.

Qualifying Exam: Students in the Ph.D. program must pass a qualifying exam prior to the end of their second year in the program. The purposes of the exam are to address deficiencies in the student's preparation and to identify the general area of dissertation research. Student's preparation in the biological sciences is assessed by the Biology Subject test of the Graduate Records Exam (GRE), which must be taken within one year following admission into the program (if not taken prior to admission). Students must score above the 50th percentile in two section tests and above the 75th percentile in one section test. Lower scores require that the

student pass a course in the corresponding area with a B or better. Courses addressing potential deficiencies should be completed prior to the qualifying exam. The exam also includes a brief prospectus of the student's plan for dissertation research. The format of the prospectus will be determined in consultation with the advisory committee.

General Exam: Students in the Ph.D. program must pass a general exam prior to the end of their third year in the program. The general exam includes a written proposal for dissertation research, a public presentation, and a defense of the proposal to the student's advisory committee. The format of the proposal will be determined in consultation with the advisory committee. A student failing the general exam may retake the exam one time, as long as the three year time limit has not expired. Students not passing the general exam by the end of the third year are subject to removal from the Ph.D. program.

Dissertation and Final Exam: A dissertation embodying original research in a specific area in conservation biology is a requirement for the Ph.D. The dissertation must be presented in a seminar open to the public, defended in an oral final examination, and approved by the advisory committee.