

Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Graduate Student Handbook 2021–2022



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For New Students

Overview

Welcome to EEB! This handbook has two purposes: to help you get oriented to the department when you first arrive and to serve as a reference throughout your graduate career.

The Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (EEB) is one of three biology departments at the University of Connecticut and currently includes approximately 30 faculty members, 50 graduate students and a number of postdocs. Most faculty members are based on the Storrs campus, but the department does include professors who teach at other campuses within the UConn system. EEB shares responsibilities for undergraduate biology teaching with the other two biology departments - Molecular & Cell Biology (MCB) and Physiology & Neurobiology (PNB). Department members also interact with biologists in the Natural Resources and the Environment (NRE), Geosciences (GSCI), Plant Science and Landscape Architecture (PSLA), Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), and Marine Sciences (MARN) departments, and collaborate with a variety of faculty elsewhere on campus.

The EEB department is spread across four buildings on North Eagleville Road. The Torrey Life Sciences (TLS) building houses the department offices (TLS 312B-314), the Department's main conference room (the Bamford Room, TLS 171B), several teaching labs, and the mailroom. The newly renovated west wing of Gant (GW) houses the labs and offices of about half the Department's faculty. Floors 2-5 of the north wing of the Pharmacy/Biology Building (PBB, also called BioPharm) are home to labs and offices of most other EEB faculty members. This building also contains two small conference rooms (commonly called the BioPharm "fishbowls"), one on each of the second and third floors. Finally, the Biology/Physics Building (BPB) contains the departmental collections facility, two large lecture halls used for departmental seminars and undergraduate lecture classes, and research greenhouses on the roof. Behind TLS, and between PBB and BPB, lies another set of greenhouses, which hold the department's live plant collection.

EEB is currently led by Department Head Pam Diggle. The Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee (GAAC) is the faculty committee most relevant to graduate students; it oversees the admissions process, makes teaching assistantship (TA) assignments, and administers departmental fellowships and summer support. The current chair of the committee is Chris Elphick.

Soon after arriving on campus, new students should get to know the EEB office staff. Nick Boston in TLS 314 will be an important point of contact for travel reimbursements and international student visas. Leah Rossettie in TLS 312 can answer questions relating to payroll, the Registrar, the Graduate School, and lab purchases.

What to know before you arrive

You should plan to arrive in Storrs at least a week before the semester begins, to complete the graduate student orientation, fill out employment paperwork, and generally get situated before classes start.

There is now a graduate school-wide [orientation program](#) with special sessions for international students, TAs, and new graduate students in general, with different sessions focusing on things like health insurance, the [Writing Center](#), professional preparation, etc. The sessions aimed at TAs are mandatory for students to complete before they start teaching. If you are supported on a research assistantship (RA), or in some other way, you may delay taking this orientation.

If you are a teaching assistant (TA) you will likely have a TA meeting for the class you are assigned to during the week before classes start; attending these meetings is a contractual requirement of many TA appointments because they are used to resolve scheduling issues and ensure that health and safety requirements are met.

If you have questions, Leah Rossettie and your advisor are a good place to start, depending on the kind of question. New lab mates or other graduate students are also good sources of information.

TA assignments will be sent by email about a month before the semester begins. We strongly encourage you to get in touch with the course or lab instructor once you know your assignment. Procedures for assigning specific sections in courses with multiple TAs vary; watch for an email from the course instructor requesting your schedule information and preferences. You might want to talk to your advisor about what courses to take before stating your preferred teaching times. Although we work hard to accommodate TA preferences, sometimes it is impossible to schedule everyone into course sections that avoid overlap with other activities.

It is important to register for at least the minimum required number of class credits (6 for students on a TA/RA; 9 for students on fellowship) **before the start date of your Graduate Assistantship** (no later than August 22, for fall semester)—this will ensure that your tuition waiver gets applied and that you receive a copy of your fee bill before it is due. Your advisor will have suggestions about what courses might be good for you. Note that these 6 or 9 credits include your “research credits.” Research students are advised to register for GRAD 5950 (Master's) or GRAD 6950 (Doctoral); BS-MS students should register for EEB 5889. Register for the section that corresponds to the number of credits you need (e.g., section 02 for two credits). More detailed information is included below under ‘how to register and pay your bill’.

Before the semester begins, students supported by an RA or TA must either pay their fees or arrange to have them paid through payroll deduction. Information on doing this is available here: <http://studentadmin.uconn.edu/help/students/request-ga-payroll-deduction/>

UConn and the Department will use your official UConn email to communicate with you—so start using that account as soon as you can.

Additional Information for INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The [International Student and Scholar Services Office \(ISSS\)](#) is your primary source of help and information. You should call or email this office for any questions or help that involve your status as a foreign student. It is also a good idea to talk to other international students here or in other departments, as more experienced students have likely already dealt with money, visas, taxes, special funding, etc., and can provide guidance that may help you avoid unexpected problems. It is also important to make sure you have all the required vaccinations before you arrive—the required information can be obtained through [Student Health Services](#).

If you are attending UConn on an F-1 or J-1 visa, you are required to attend a multi-part orientation for new international graduate students scheduled for August. More information is available [here](#). Please contact Nick Boston to register for this orientation, as the Department will pay for your registration fee. You should also plan to attend the university-wide Graduate School orientation and, if appropriate, the TA orientation.

Additionally, if you have been offered a TAship, you must satisfy UConn's English Proficiency requirement. For more information, see the [ITAP](#) web site. Generally, students for whom English is not a first language will have to take a [proficiency exam](#), but the exam is waived under some circumstances ([this link](#) has details).

As you will be earning money in the United States, you will be required to pay taxes both to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of the US government and to the state of Connecticut. These taxes are taken out of your pay every pay period and you must file income tax forms by April 15 every year. If you are paying US taxes for the first time, get started early on the forms. The International Student Services Office provides [resources for tax preparation](#) and arranges tax workshops, but it is up to you to find out when they are and to attend if you would like assistance. These sessions are very useful, and will make your life much easier.

If you are interested in renting an apartment near campus, it is a good idea to email a current graduate student or your advisor, who can send an email out to the departmental listserv, as other students are often looking for housemates. Popular places to stay are Storrs itself, elsewhere in Mansfield, or in the town of Willimantic, which is a few miles away. A [bus line](#) connects Willimantic to campus. Some students choose to live in one of the towns closer to Hartford, which can be less expensive but requires a longer commute, without easy access to public transportation. A [bus line](#) connects Storrs to downtown Hartford.

Other information about how to navigate being a student in a new country and advice on such things as how to [obtain a Social Security Number](#), set up a bank account, [get a driver's license](#), buy a car, etc. can often be obtained by talking with other graduate students (e.g., the EEB Graduate Student Association has developed a mentorship program to give new students a way to meet and get advice from other graduate students). Several EEB faculty members also have experience being an international student in the US.

EEB Graduate Programs

The department sponsors four graduate degree programs:

- PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
- MS in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (plan A, thesis-based)
- MS in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (plan B, coursework-based)
- MS in Biodiversity and Conservation Biology (plan B, includes internship and research components; often pursued as an integrated BS-MS)

The dates for completing benchmarks for each program are summarized in the following table, and discussed in detail below. Each benchmark should be completed by the end of the named semester after matriculation (e.g., '3rd' means by the end of your 3rd semester in EEB). Forms associated with these benchmarks can be found on the Graduate School web site, [here](#). All students also should plan to meet with their full advisory committee at least annually.

	PhD	MS (Plan A)	MS (Plan B, EEB)	BS-MS (Plan B, Biodiversity)
Form provisional committee	1st	1st	N/A	N/A
Formalize committee	3rd	2nd	1st	1st
Plan of Study	3rd	2nd	1st	1st
General Exam	4th	N/A	N/A	N/A
Prospectus	5th	N/A	N/A	N/A
Defense/Final examination	10th	4th	4th	4th

N/A = not applicable

Students will complete the following requirements and meet each benchmark by the stated times. Exceptions will be allowed as detailed in the program descriptions below. In addition, any leave of absence approved by the Graduate School delays all items for the duration of the absence. Students are also responsible for ensuring that all Graduate School requirements are met; should discrepancies arise between this document and the [graduate catalog](#) then the latter takes precedent. Any such discrepancies should be reported to the Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee (GAAC) so that this document can be updated.

A major goal for any student conducting research is to make important scientific discoveries. These discoveries will only be known to the scientific community at large if you publish your results in scientific peer-reviewed journals. Published research is also a key metric by which researchers are judged throughout their careers. So, from the minute you begin your program, start thinking about ways to publish your work and to start generating publications early, rather than stockpiling results and writing everything up in your last year. Developing a strategy that leads to publications throughout your graduate career will make the writing of your thesis or dissertation much easier and will also make you more competitive for jobs once you are done.

PhD Program: Departmental Expectations and Requirements

SKILLS

By the time they complete their degree, EEB PhD students should be able to:

1. Develop novel research questions and place their significance in the context of the biological sciences.
2. Design and successfully implement a research plan that addresses their research questions, demonstrating mastery of experimental design, quality control, troubleshooting, data management and organizational skills.
3. Write grant proposals, know the primary funding sources for research in EEB, understand how grants are managed, and be able to develop a research budget.
4. Present their research to peers via talks, posters, and in the form of scientific publications.
5. Understand the publication process, including journal selection, paper submission, and how to conduct peer review.
6. Communicate their research beyond their peers to a broader public.
7. Articulate the broader impacts of their research program.
8. Understand and abide by the legal and ethical expectations placed on scientists.
9. Teach undergraduate students within the field of EEB.
10. Although EEB does not have a foreign language or related areas requirement, student committees may have this requirement for particular students. For example, a language requirement might be applied to a student working in a foreign country.

KNOWLEDGE

By the time they complete their degree, EEB PhD students should:

1. Know the fundamentals of ecology, evolutionary biology, and systematics.
2. Understand the general biology of a broad range of organisms.
3. Know the history of research within their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.
4. Have quantitative skills appropriate to their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.
5. Have depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate to their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.

TIMELINE AND KEY MILESTONES

1. Form a provisional committee of at least 3 faculty members, including the major advisor, before the start of the second semester.

Each student is required to form an advisory committee that will guide them through their degree. Membership of the committee should be determined in consultation with the major advisor. The role of this committee is solely to guide the student's initial course selection and to help them begin planning their research. Committee members may be added or removed at any time, and changes are especially encouraged when they accommodate changes in research direction. Provisional committee members do not need to be on the student's final dissertation committee.

2. Finalize committee membership and submit a plan of study to the Registrar before the end of the third semester.

The major advisor and at least one associate advisor must be members of the Graduate Faculty in EEB. Associate advisors from other departments and from outside UConn are common. The Department must submit a formal request to the Graduate School, including the person's CV for an outside advisor to be approved. After committee membership has been formalized, subsequent changes in membership remain possible and are encouraged when they will help the student meet their research goals. Similarly, changes to the plan of study are encouraged when they will improve the student's ability to conduct their planned research. Changes at this stage will require the approval of appropriate paperwork through the Registrar.

Each student is required to submit a plan of study to the Registrar. The plan of study should identify any courses that the department or the student's committee requires the student to take in order to complete their degree. The student should consult the graduate catalog to ensure that the plan is compliant with Graduate School requirements.

3. Meet with their committee at least annually.

Each student should meet with their provisional committee before the start of their second semester to initiate discussions about their research directions and plan of study. Thereafter, they should meet annually to update their committee on their progress and to discuss future plans.

4. Take their general exam before the end of the fourth semester.

All students must complete an oral general exam. The purpose of this exam is to assess a student's understanding of the fundamentals of their field and the general information necessary to complete their graduate training and dissertation research, as determined by the five members of their examination committee. The exam committee is charged with using the exam to help the student to identify areas of strength and any remaining areas of weakness. Wide-ranging weaknesses will result in failure, but the committee has the option of addressing less serious/more narrowly-defined weaknesses by requiring the student to undertake additional study (e.g., classes, committee-defined assignments, etc.) and/or a follow-up exam in a format that they consider appropriate.

Each student should consult with their committee members well in advance of the exam (at least 3-6 months) for advice on how to prepare in order to make the exam a productive exercise. The departmental norm for the oral exam is to begin with the student giving a short (maximum of 15 min) overview of their research interests. An initial round of questioning focused on the presentation should also be short. This round of questions should be followed by more general questions from each committee member in turn. Exams should not last longer than 3 hours.

A student may request a one semester extension of the general exam deadline, which can be granted by their committee. For extensions beyond the fifth semester, a student must apply to

the GAAC, which will consult with the student's committee in deciding whether to approve the request. Except in cases of emergency, requests for extensions should be submitted by the beginning of the semester in which the exam should be taken. Students should note that unapproved extensions may affect continued departmental funding of the student (e.g., TA support, eligibility for departmental awards).

5. Defend in a committee meeting and then submit a dissertation proposal before the end of the fifth semester.

The dissertation proposal should outline the research that the student plans to conduct, place that work in the context of previous work in their field, and demonstrate how the proposed work will contribute new knowledge in their field. It is recommended that the document include an introductory literature review, a description of methods, a timeline, a summary of proposed chapters, and a discussion of the work's significance. The proposal should be no more than 10 pages long (excluding references).

Once individual committee members have approved a proposal, the student should arrange a meeting at which the proposed work is presented to the full committee and to two reviewers who are not committee members. The outside reviewers are chosen by the Department Head; the advisor can suggest appropriate reviewers (who may be EEB faculty members, other UConn faculty members, or individuals from outside of UConn). One intent of this meeting is to allow the student to benefit from the synergistic discussions that often emerge from committee members hearing each other's questions and suggestions. Another is to satisfy the Graduate School proposal review requirement. Faculty participation via video conference is acceptable, and external reviewers are encouraged. The committee-approved proposal should be distributed at least a week before the meeting date. The meeting should begin with the student giving an ~30 min presentation of their research plans, which will be followed by discussion. If two non-committee members are unable to participate in the proposal review meeting, then the proposal must be sent out for additional review in order to meet Graduate School rules (this can be done before the meeting so that any comments can be discussed). Students should consult the graduate catalog in order to ensure that they meet all Graduate School requirements for the proposal submission.

A student may request a one semester extension of the proposal deadline, which can be granted by their committee. For extensions beyond the sixth semester a student must apply to the GAAC, which will consult with the student's committee in deciding whether to approve the request. Except in cases of emergency, requests for extensions should be submitted by the beginning of the semester in which the proposal is due. Students should note that unapproved extensions may affect continued departmental funding of the student (e.g., TA support, eligibility for departmental awards).

6. Distribute complete draft dissertation chapters to committee at least three weeks prior to defense exam.

To receive helpful feedback from the advisory committee it is important for a student to consult with them throughout the writing period. Once the student has a final draft of the dissertation,

they should distribute it to all committee members and anyone else who will participate in the examination (closed door) portion of the defense.

7. File Dissertation Tentative Approval Page with Registrar and announce the oral portion of your defense via the University Events Calendar at least two weeks prior to defense exam.

These two items are university-wide requirements. Be sure to review the Graduate School web site for details on how to do these things and for any other dissertation-related requirements imposed by the University. Note that the Approval Page indicates that your committee has tentatively approved the dissertation, which is why it is essential that they receive a complete draft at least 3 weeks before the defense exam (see above). Information on dissertation requirements is available on the Registrar's web site [here](#).

8. Complete defense (recommended: before the end of the tenth semester).

Departmental support for students is guaranteed for up to 5 years from the date of matriculation, subject to the continued availability of funds, satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant, and satisfactory progress towards degree completion. Students should, therefore, complete their dissertation defense within this time frame. Students in their 10th semester after matriculation may request an extension of TA support of up to one year. Extensions of TA support beyond the 12th semester will generally only be granted in cases in which substantial extenuating circumstances have prevented degree completion, and on a semester-by-semester basis. Extension requests should include a written statement of the student's progress, details of work that remains, and a timeline for completion. Extension requests will be reviewed by the GAAC and must have the support of the student's committee.

The defense presentation should be scheduled for a 60-min period in which the student gives a talk and takes questions from a general audience. This presentation will be followed by a closed-door session with at least 5 faculty in attendance (i.e., the student's committee plus additional faculty if the committee has fewer than 5 members). Be sure to check Graduate School rules on the timing of the defense because final dissertation paperwork must be submitted to the Registrar at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the student plans to graduate (see the [academic calendar](#) for details).

MS Program (Plan A, thesis-based): Departmental Expectations and Requirements

SKILLS

By the time they complete their degree, EEB MS students should be able to:

1. Successfully implement a research plan that addresses a research question, demonstrating mastery of experimental design, quality control, troubleshooting, data management and organizational skills.
2. Place the significance of their research in the context of the biological sciences.
3. Be familiar with the primary funding sources for research in EEB, understand how grants are managed, and be able to develop a research budget.
4. Present their research to peers via talks, posters, and in the form of scientific publications.
5. Understand the publication process, including journal selection, paper submission, and the role of peer review.
6. Communicate their research beyond their peers to a broader public.
7. Articulate the broader impacts of their research program.
8. Understand and abide by the legal and ethical expectations placed on scientists.
9. Teach undergraduate students within the field of EEB.

KNOWLEDGE

By the time they complete their degree, EEB MS students should:

1. Know the fundamentals of ecology and evolutionary biology.
2. Understand the general biology of a broad range of organisms.
3. Know the history of research within their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.
4. Have quantitative skills appropriate to their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.
5. Have depth and breadth of knowledge appropriate to their sub-discipline, as determined by the student's committee.

TIMELINE AND KEY MILESTONES

1. Form a provisional committee of at least 3 faculty members, including the major advisor, before the start of the second semester.

Each student is required to form an advisory committee that will guide them through their degree. Membership of the committee should be determined in consultation with the major advisor. The role of this committee is solely to guide the student's initial course selection and to help them begin planning their research. Committee members may be changed at any time, and changes are especially encouraged when they accommodate changes in research direction. Provisional committee members do not need to be on the student's final thesis committee.

2. Finalize committee membership and submit a plan of study to the Registrar before the end of the second semester.

The major advisor and at least one associate advisor must be members of the UConn Graduate Faculty, with training relevant to EEB. Associate advisors from outside of UConn are common. The Department must submit a formal request to the Graduate School, including the person's CV for an outside advisor to be approved. After committee membership has been formalized, subsequent changes in membership remain possible and are encouraged when they will help the student meet their research goals. Similarly, changes to the plan of study are encouraged when they will improve the student's ability to conduct their planned research. Changes at this stage will require the approval of appropriate paperwork through the Registrar.

Each student is required to submit a plan of study to the Registrar. The plan of study should identify any courses that the department or the student's committee requires the student to take in order to complete their degree. The student should consult the graduate catalog to ensure that the plan is compliant with Graduate School requirements.

3. Meet with their committee at least annually.

Each student should meet with their committee before the start of their second semester to initiate discussions about their research directions and plan of study. Thereafter, they should meet at least annually to update their committee on their progress and to discuss future plans.

4. Distribute complete draft thesis chapters to committee at least two weeks prior to defense exam.

To receive helpful feedback from the advisory committee it is important for a student to consult with them throughout the writing period. Once the student has a complete thesis draft, they should distribute it to their committee so that there is ample time for review prior to the defense.

5. Complete thesis before the end of the second year.

Departmental support for students is guaranteed for up to 2 years from the date of matriculation, subject to the continued availability of funds, satisfactory performance as a graduate assistant, and satisfactory progress towards degree completion. Students should, therefore, complete their thesis, present their thesis research to the department, and take their final examination within this time frame. Extensions of TA support beyond the 4th semester after matriculation will generally only be granted in cases in which substantial extenuating circumstances have prevented degree completion, and on a semester-by-semester basis. Extension requests should include a written statement of the student's progress, details of work that remains, and a timeline for completion. Extension requests will be reviewed by the GAAC and must have the support of the student's committee.

The defense presentation should be scheduled for a 60-min period in which the student gives a talk and takes questions from a general audience. This presentation will be followed by a closed-door session with the student's committee. Be sure to check Graduate School rules on the timing of the defense because final thesis paperwork must be submitted to the Registrar at least two weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the student plans to graduate (see the [academic calendar](#) for details).

MS Program (Plan B, coursework): Departmental Expectations and Requirements

Plan B MS degrees are uncommon in EEB and there are no specific departmental requirements beyond those set by the Graduate School. A minimum of 30 course credits is required. Students should consult with their graduate committee as early as possible to develop a plan of study.

TIMELINE AND KEY MILESTONES

1. Form a committee of at least 3 faculty members, including the major advisor, and submit a plan of study to the Graduate School before the start of the second semester.

Each student is required to form an advisory committee that will guide them through their degree. Membership of the committee should be determined in consultation with the major advisor. The major advisor and at least one associate advisor must be members of the UConn Graduate Faculty, with training relevant to EEB. Associate advisors from outside of UConn are common. The Department must submit a formal request to the Graduate School, including the person's CV for an outside advisor to be approved.

Each student is required to submit a plan of study to the Graduate School. The plan of study should identify any courses that the student's committee requires the student to take in order to complete their degree. The student should consult the graduate catalog to ensure that the plan is compliant with Graduate School requirements.

After committee membership has been formalized, subsequent changes in membership remain possible and are encouraged when they will help the student meet their goals. Similarly, changes to the plan of study are encouraged when they will improve the student's ability to obtain suitable training to meet their career goals. Changes at this stage will require the approval of appropriate paperwork through the Graduate School.

2. Meet with their committee at least annually.

Each student should meet with their committee before the start of their second semester to develop a plan of study. Thereafter, they should meet at least annually to update their committee on their progress and to discuss future plans.

3. Successfully complete a final oral exam.

Early in their fourth semester, the student should schedule a final exam with members of their graduate committee. This exam must be passed before the degree conferral date. The exact format and content of the exam will be set by the committee and the student should seek advice from their advisor about how to prepare. Exams typically last 1-2 hours and focus largely on material covered during the student's coursework.

BS-MS Program in Biodiversity and Conservation Biology: Departmental Expectations and Requirements

The BS-MS program prepares students for careers in biodiversity management, conservation, and environmental education, offering graduate-level training in the subject without the extensive research of a thesis-plan Master's degree. The curriculum includes EEB courses in ecology, evolution, systematics, natural history, and coursework in other subjects (e.g., public policy, economics, ethics, GIS). For students with a BS in EEB from the University of Connecticut, the program is designed as an accelerated (fifth-year) MS degree. Students who have completed a BS in another program must complete all courses required by the undergraduate EEB major, or equivalent courses, to earn this MS degree. This handbook covers only requirements for the MS portion of the joint BS-MS program in Biodiversity and Conservation Biology; for additional details, see the program website on the EEB homepage. Note that the BS-MS program is overseen by its own steering committee, which is separate from the GAAC. The chair of this committee and Program Coordinator is currently Eric Schultz.

TIMELINE AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

1. Gain formal admission to the program.

Students must apply and be granted admission to the Graduate School (see [this link](#) and details on the BS-MS web site) before they begin the fifth year, MS degree portion of the program.

2. Form an advisory committee comprising the major advisor and at least 2 additional faculty members, and submit a plan of study to the Registrar before the start of the second semester.

Every student must have a major advisor, who is identified upon admission to the Graduate School. The advisory committee is formed in consultation with the major advisor and includes two associate advisors. The major advisor and at least one associate advisor must be members of the Graduate Faculty in EEB. One associate advisor may be faculty in a department other than EEB, or may have an affiliation outside the University in accordance with Graduate School procedures.

The student must prepare a [plan of study](#) containing the courses they will take to gain mastery of knowledge in the field, including the core courses, elective courses, and related courses. The student's advisory committee must approve the plan of study. Copies should be submitted to the Registrar and the Program Coordinator.

Failure to form an advisory committee or submit a plan of study in a timely fashion will be grounds for removal from the program.

3. Complete required coursework

I. Credit requirements

30 total credits. These credits will include at least 14 credits of course work, exclusive of the related or supporting area and the required research and internship credits. Up to 12 credits of coursework required for the MS in EEB can also have been used for the BS. If a required

course cannot be taken for reason(s) beyond the student's control, a substitute course may be taken with prior permission from the student's advisory committee. Permissions for substitution will be granted only in response to unforeseeable events (e.g., a course is canceled at short notice), and not in cases of failure to plan ahead.

II. Course requirements

1. EEB 5301 Population and Community Ecology (3 credits)*
2. EEB 5310 Conservation Biology (3 credits)*
3. EEB 5348 Population Genetics (3 credits) OR EEB 5449 Evolution (3 credits)*
4. EEB 5369 Current topics in Biodiversity (1 credit)
5. EEB 5370 Current topics in Conservation Biology (1 credit)
6. EEB 5347 Principles and Methods of Systematic Biology (4 credits) OR one of the following taxonomic diversity courses:
 - EEB 3266 Field Herpetology (3 credits)
 - EEB 4250 General Entomology (4 credits)
 - EEB 4252 Field Entomology (4 credits)
 - EEB 4260 & 4261 Ornithology & Ornithology lab (4 credits)
 - EEB 4272 The Summer Flora (3 credits)
 - EEB 4274 Introduction to Animal Parasitology (4 credits)*
 - EEB 4275 Invertebrate Zoology (4 credits)*
 - EEB 5200 Biology of Fishes (4 credits)*
 - EEB 5204 Aquatic Plant Biology (4 credits)***
 - EEB 5220 Evolution of Green Plants (3 credits)*
 - EEB 5240 Biology of Bryophytes and Lichens (4 credits)*
 - EEB 5250 Biology of the Algae (4 credits)*
 - EEB 5254 Mammalogy (4 credits)***
 - EEB 5265 Herpetology (4 credits)*
 - EEB 5271 Systematic Botany (4 credits)*
 - EEB 5477 Insect Phylogeny (3 credits)***

Related Area Courses: Students are required to take at least 6 credits of coursework in related fields: Environmental Policy, Ethics and Management; Environmental Economics; and Environmental Analysis. At least one course from each of two of the three sets of courses listed below must be taken to fulfill this requirement. If students have already taken a course from one area as part of their BS, they are encouraged (but not required) to take their MS courses from the other two areas. Students should be aware that some of these courses may require prerequisites.

7. One of the following courses in Environmental Policy, Ethics and Management:
 - ARE 3434 Environmental and Resource Policy (3 credits)
 - EVST/POLS 3412 Glob Evt Politics (3 credits)
 - GEOG 4210 Urban and Regional Planning (3 credits)
 - NRE 3155 Water Quality Management (3 credits)*
 - NRE 3245 Environmental Law (3 credits)

NRE 4165 Soil and Water Management and Engineering (3 credits)*
NRE 4335 Fisheries Management (3 credits)
NRE 5200 Sustainable Natural Resource Management (3 credits)
NRE 5345 Advanced Fisheries Management (3 credits)***
PHIL 3216 Environmental Ethics (3 credits)
SOC1 3407 Energy Environment & Society (3 credits)***
Any graduate level course (3+ credits) that relates to Environmental Policy and Ethics and that is approved by the student's committee

8. One of the following courses in Environmental Economics:
 - ARE 4462 Environmental and Resource Economics (3 credits)
 - ARE 4438 Valuing the Environment (3 credits)
 - ARE 5464 Benefit-Cost Analysis and Resource Management (3 credits)
 - Any other graduate level course (3+ credits) that relates to Environmental Economics and that is approved by the student's committee

9. One of the following courses in Environmental Analysis:
 - GEOG 3505 Remote Sensing of Marine Geography (3 credits)
 - GEOG 5500 Fundamentals of Geographic Information Science (3 credits)
 - GEOG 5510 Application Issues in Geographic Information Systems (3 credits)
 - NRE 3535 Remote Sensing of the Environment (3 credits)
 - NRE 4535 Remote Sensing Image Processing (3 credits)
 - NRE 4665 Natural Resources Modeling (3 credits)
 - NRE 5205 Decision Methods in Natural Resources (3 credits)
 - NRE 5215 Introduction to Geospatial Analysis with Remote Sensing (3 credits)
 - NRE 5575 Natural Resource Applications of Geographic Information Systems (3 credits)
 - NRE 5585 Python Scripting for Geospatial Analysis (3 credits)
 - Any other graduate level GIS course (3+ credits) that is approved by the student's committee

*Course taught only in alternate years

**This list provides only graduate versions of dual undergrad-grad courses

***Course taught irregularly or not likely to be offered in near future

III. Research requirement

The degree requires at least 4 credits of Master's research experience (EEB 5889). Since the BS-MS program is not a Plan A thesis MS, students are not required to develop their own research project and no formal thesis is required. To demonstrate proficiency, students are expected to write a short paper (2 or more pages) summarizing the project they worked on and its broader significance. The paper should cover (a) why the work was conducted, (b) how it was conducted and what the student's role was, (c) what the research revealed, and (d) the significance of the results. The paper should be written as though for a general, but informed, audience (e.g., a likely future employer). The background information and significance section

should reference relevant literature. This paper must be approved by the student's committee before the final examination date is set. Students should be able to talk about their research experience in an informed way appropriate to an MS student, and be prepared to answer questions about their research experience during their final examination.

Students are encouraged to obtain this research experience off-campus, perhaps in association with the internship component of their degree program. If a student has gained substantial research experience as an undergraduate they may petition their committee to take other graduate level courses, or an additional internship, instead of an additional 4 research credits. "Substantial" research experience means work appropriate to that of a graduate student (e.g., research leading to a substantial undergraduate thesis, a first-authored publication, or equivalent). Students who wish to make this petition are still required to write a short paper summarizing their prior research (following the guidelines described above) and must provide justification for taking the alternative course(s). The decision to accept the petition lies with the student's committee, but copies of the paper and justification should be sent to the Program Coordinator.

IV. Internship

Students are required to participate in at least one internship of no less than two months total duration with an appropriate organization over the course of their degree program. Students will likely need at least three credits of internship and may count no more than nine credits towards the BS-MS degree. Each credit represents 42 hours of work. Students may enroll in a zero-credit course (EEB 5881) for a summer internship, and then enroll during the subsequent academic year in the for-credit internship course (EEB 5891) for which credits are earned by writing a paper on the internship. The internship provides students with experience in the practical applications of biodiversity and/or conservation outside of the university. Examples of appropriate host agencies can be found on the BS-MS web site.

4. Successfully complete a final oral exam.

The final examination is taken near the close of the candidate's period of study, no later than one year after the completion of coursework as contained in the Plan of Study and prior to the degree conferral date. The internship and research requirement must be satisfied before the final examination can be taken. No fewer than three faculty members, including all members of the candidate's advisory committee, participate in the oral examination. At minimum, the final exam will consist of questions based on the student's coursework, research and internship experience, and the application of the acquired knowledge to the student's proposed career. Students should schedule this exam with members of their graduate committee as early as possible in their final semester. The exact format and content of the exam will be set by the committee and the student should seek advice from their advisor about how to prepare. Exams typically last 2 hours and consist of questions based on the student's coursework, research and internship experience, and the application of the acquired knowledge to the student's proposed career.

Acceptable Progress (for all degree programs)

The department considers all students who have the support of their advisor and advisory committee, have completed the appropriate benchmarks for their career stage, and are within the timeframe specified for their degree program (including those who have had 1-semester extensions granted by their committees or longer extensions approved by the Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee) to be making satisfactory progress. Your annual committee meeting is a good place to review your academic progress and establish goals for the upcoming year.

Switching Degree Programs

Between MS programs: Students who wish to switch between MS programs must obtain the consent of their advisory committee, notify Leah Rossettie and the Graduate Admissions and Awards Committee, and complete the appropriate paperwork through the Graduate School.

MS to PhD: Students who complete their MS at UConn and wish to remain for a PhD should apply to the PhD program on the same schedule as other applicants. Students who are admitted to the MS program and wish to switch to the PhD program without completing their MS must also formally apply to the PhD program on the same schedule as other applicants. Note that students who complete a thesis-based MS degree generally have their support clocks “reset” upon entering the PhD program, such that a student is eligible for 2 years of support for the MS program and another 5 for the PhD program. Students who enter the PhD program without completing their MS degree generally have their support clock extended to a total of 5 years of support from their initial matriculation into the MS program.

PhD to MS: Students who enter the PhD program and wish to switch to an MS program should obtain the approval of their committee and then consult with Leah Rossettie about completing the appropriate procedures through the Graduate School. If the student has completed their general exam, their committee has the option of using this to satisfy the MS exam requirement.

Financial support when switching programs: *Switches between programs may affect the awarding of TAs or other forms of financial support.* Students switching from a research-based degree to a coursework degree will no longer be guaranteed TA positions. Additional review by the GAAC is required for any student switching from a program that does not come with a guarantee of support to one that does if the student wishes to receive support in the form of a departmental TA at any point in their new program. This review should take place at the time that the switch between programs is made.

Courses and Seminars

Finding out about courses

The directory of classes, available through UConn's Student Administration System (also called PeopleSoft) will be your main source of information about courses, but **there are often courses and seminars available that are not announced until shortly before the semester begins.** EEB graduate seminars are often announced via the departmental listserv during the month before a semester starts, so make sure you pay attention to your email. In your first semester, you should ask your advisor and lab mates about which courses to take. It is also a good idea to consult the department's course [website](#) to see what is offered during particular semesters, although this site often will not include ad hoc seminar courses. Some graduate courses are offered annually, but most are offered every other year. Independent study and reading classes are also available if you or someone else organizes them. Talk to your advisory committee and fellow students about a specific course offering if you are not sure if it is for you.

Orientation Course

All entering students are strongly encouraged to take the class **Preparing for a Career in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB 5100)**. This course is aimed at first year graduate students in all EEB degree programs and is offered every fall semester. It will introduce a wide range of topics related to success in graduate school and beyond. Different faculty members lead each week's session, so the course also serves as a way to meet much of the department's faculty.

Courses outside EEB

Many students take out-of-department classes, especially in statistics. Below is a (partial) list of some non-EEB courses that grads have taken and found to be useful. It is always best to find someone who has taken the course and get the real scoop.

Responsible Conduct of Research (GRAD 5910): All students supported by federally-funded grants or fellowships are required to complete a course in "responsible conduct of research". Currently, the University offers two ways to satisfy this requirement: 1) GRAD 5910, a 1 credit course offered through the Graduate School every semester; or 2) a combination of online training and in-person training through the graduate school. For more information, see <https://ovpr.uconn.edu/services/rics/responsible-conduct-of-research/>

Fundamentals of Teaching and Learning (EDCI 5830-001): For students interested in teaching, this course is highly recommended. There is also a certificate program (Graduate Certificate in College Instruction) associated with the course: <http://gcci.uconn.edu/>

Natural Resource Applications of Geographic Information Systems or Remote Sensing Image Processing (NRE 5575): For students interested in GIS and remote sensing technologies and their applications to ecological and environmental questions. Offered by the NRE department. Additional GIS courses are also offered in NRE and in the GEOG department.

Applied Statistics I (STAT 5505) and II (STAT 5605): Offered by the Statistics Department; I focuses on exploratory data analysis; II covers ANOVA, regression, and GLM.

Electron Microscopy (PNB 5347): This course provides necessary training for students wishing to use instruments in the electronic microscopy facility.

Projects in Electron Microscopy (PNB 5351): This course gives students an opportunity to conduct independent projects, using their own research materials, through the EM facility.

Seminars

Departmental Seminar: The weekly Departmental Seminar, in which outside speakers as well as members of EEB present their research, is usually held on Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:30 pm. You are expected to attend seminar every week, as it is good to hear about work from other scientists working in the broad field of EEB. When taking place in-person, the seminar will be followed by a short reception to facilitate informal interactions with the speaker. Most weeks, there is a graduate student/postdoc brown bag lunch with the seminar speaker, and interested students are also encouraged to sign up for individual meetings with the speaker, or to join them for other meals. An email describing opportunities to meet with speakers is typically distributed a few days before each seminar.

Teale Lecture Series: This is an interdisciplinary seminar series on Nature and the Environment that is open to the university community and the public, and co-sponsored by EEB. Typically there are six lectures each academic year, held on Thursdays from 4 to 5 pm, at the Dodd Center and followed by a reception. Teale lectures generally serve as the departmental seminar in the weeks that they occur.

Tuesday Evening Seminars: Usually held at a faculty member's home, these occur irregularly and are generally informal. Food and drink are provided. These seminars are a great venue in which to introduce yourself to the department by talking about your previous research, or to talk about a project before it is fully formed.

Graduate Student Symposium: Graduate students also have the opportunity to give research talks in a yearly symposium, currently held in the spring semester, and organized by the EEB graduate students. Everyone is encouraged to contribute, even in their first year. Pre-UConn work can be presented, as can ideas for research projects that are still under development. Participating in this departmentally-sponsored symposium is a good way to practice before presenting at national meetings.

Financial Support

Students admitted to a research degree program (either MS or PhD) are usually admitted with an expectation of financial support through a graduate assistantship for the expected duration of their degree program (2 years from matriculation for MS students, 5 years from matriculation for PhD students). All offers of financial support are conditional on satisfactory academic progress, satisfactory completion of assigned duties, and availability of funds. For students who switch from the MS program to the PhD program without completing a research-based MS degree, support will generally be extended to 5 years from initial matriculation into a UConn EEB graduate program.

Teaching assistantships (TAs): Students pursuing research-based MS and PhD degrees who lack other forms of support are typically offered graduate teaching assistantships. Students with a full-time academic year TA position are funded to work the equivalent of 20 hours/week for 9 months (August 23-May 22). There are three stipend levels, depending on the student's stage in their graduate program. These positions are covered by the contract between the University and the Graduate Employees Union and the payment levels are posted on the university's [website](#). See the Teaching Assignments section for additional information about TAs.

Research assistantships (RAs): Students may be supported on graduate research assistantships, which are usually grant-funded and offered by advisors to students in their own lab. Students with a full-time academic year RA position are funded to work the equivalent of 20 hours/week for 9 months (August 23-May 22). Again, there are three stipend levels, depending on the student's stage in their graduate program. These positions are covered by the contract between the University and the Graduate Employees Union and the payment levels are posted on the university's web site.

University fellowships: The Graduate School awards a small number of fellowships each year. These include the Jorgensen Fellowship (JF) and the Harriott Fellowship (HF) for outstanding doctoral students, and the Crandall Fellowship (CF) for outstanding master's students. These awards are made during the admissions process, and are part of a student's initial offer letter. For more information on internal graduate awards see the Graduate School [website](#).

Outside fellowships: Students are strongly encouraged to apply for outside fellowships for which they are qualified. In addition to NSF Graduate Research Fellowships ([GRFP](#)), in recent years, students have received support through the Switzer Foundation and the Fulbright Foundation, among other programs. A few students have also supported themselves on grants that they wrote in collaboration with their advisors.

Tuition waivers: Students employed at 50% or more time (i.e., 10 hours/week) on a Teaching or Research Assistantship receive a full tuition waiver along with a partial waiver of fees. These benefits are negotiated by the Graduate Employee Union. Students are responsible for paying the remaining fees. Many fellowships (e.g., NSF GRFP) pay the University a fixed amount in lieu of tuition and fees.

Demi fellowships: The department receives a small budget for internal fellowships, which are generally awarded to senior PhD students who are making excellent progress and have taught in the majority of their semesters. They are also sometimes awarded to students who have compelling reasons to seek teaching release earlier in their graduate career (e.g., to support an extended field season). Usually, 3-4 fellowships are awarded each year. Students must be nominated by their advisor. A call for nominations is sent out by email once or twice per year.

Dissertation fellowships: These \$2000 fellowships are awarded by the Graduate School through a semi-annual competition and supplement other forms of support. Most PhD students who have advanced to candidacy are eligible and all eligible students are encouraged to apply. This fellowship may only be received once.

Outside employment: UConn offers TA positions and internal graduate fellowships on the expectation that students supported in this way will devote themselves full time to their graduate program responsibilities. Thus, TAs and internal fellowships are offered with the understanding that students will not hold additional employment during the academic year. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved in writing by both the major advisor and Department Head.

Financial aid: The pool of financial aid set aside for graduate students is quite limited. If you are a US citizen or permanent resident and submit the Federal FAFSA form by the deadline, you may be awarded financial aid, including in the form of a work-study position. If you apply, you should do so as early as possible, since the time of application affects your place in line if you are in the highest need category. If you receive a work-study award, talk to your advisor and the GAAC, as the department may be able to support you in a research position.

Summer support: The department has limited funding for summer support. When funding is available, it is offered as a mixture of fellowships and student labor positions, and is intended to cover basic living expenses. Students are also encouraged to talk to their advisors about opportunities for summer support through grants and other support available through their lab, which is the largest source of summer support, and to seek research grants of their own.

When funds are available, the GAAC awards summer funding based on a combination of need and merit. During the spring semester, the committee generally requests information from all students about other sources of summer support and accomplishments during the previous year. Typically, available funds are first applied to subsistence awards, to help ensure that all students have some minimal level of summer support. If sufficient funding is available, then awards may also be made to recognize significant achievements, especially first-authored publications based on work conducted at UConn, research grants, and exceptional service to the department or university. Current summer funding levels have been declining and students should not rely on departmental support.

Additional sources of summer support within the university include the following:

- Summer TA positions in BIOL 1102 and EEB 2244 (the pay is unfortunately substantially less than for the same amount of work during the academic year).

- Instructor of record positions for EEB's summer field courses (watch for an email in the fall soliciting interest in these positions).
- Other summer positions within the University, e.g., students have worked as tutors for athletes or at the Writing Center.
- Graduate Dissertation Fellowships (see above). These fellowships are awarded during the academic year, and supplement a TA/RA position. Students are therefore encouraged to save them to help cover summer expenses.
- Students with Jorgensen, Harriott, and Crandall Fellowships also have more support than a regular TA/RA, which can help defray summer expenses.

Departmental research awards: The department has a number of endowed funds that support graduate student research. There is an annual call for proposals in the spring. Proposals are reviewed by a committee of faculty members. Successful proposals typically receive funding before the end of the spring semester. Priority is generally given to supporting research expenses, but these awards are sometimes used to support participation in short courses and travel to professional meetings. These awards cannot be used to support graduate student salaries or stipends. Awards generally range from a few hundred dollars to a thousand dollars (occasionally more), with the larger amounts available only for plant-related research (due to restrictions on how the different funds can be used). The funds are listed below; most honor former faculty members.

EEB Graduate Student Research Fund (all areas)

Henry N. Andrews Endowment (botany)

Ronald Bamford Endowment (botany)

George Clark, Jr. Endowment (ornithology)

Russell and Betty DeCoursey Endowment (entomology)

Alfred Hunyadi Forestry Fund (forestry)

Jerauld Manter Endowment (ornithology)

James A. Slater Endowment (entomology)

Francis R. Trainor Endowment (aquatic ecology)

Ralph M. Wetzel Endowment (vertebrate biology)

Walter R. Whitworth Endowment (fishes)

Conference participation awards: Upon advancement to candidacy, PhD students become eligible for up to \$750 in funding from the Graduate School to support costs associated with presenting at a professional meeting. These funds come from an account maintained by the Graduate School; these funds may be exhausted before the end of each semester, so students are encouraged to apply as early as possible. This is a one-time award; even if the reimbursable expenses are less than the allowable amount, students are not eligible for a second travel award. Before applying for a travel award, the university process to secure permission to travel must be completed (see Travel). More information is available [here](#).

Teaching Assignments

Late in the fall semester, and again in the summer, the GAAC emails a list of TA positions available in the upcoming semester and requests preferences from both TAs and those faculty members teaching courses. (You may not see this message before your first semester.) The GAAC makes teaching assignments, to the extent possible, considering instructor preference, student preference, experience with the course material, and other factors. Students are notified of their assignment by email, usually about a month before the semester begins. The department makes reasonable efforts to adhere to the timeline specified in the Graduate Employees Union contract, but assignments may change any time up until the semester begins, especially when changes accommodate students who have received grant or fellowship support. The contract between the Graduate Employees Union and the University mandates that all TAs receive a formal description of duties specific to their assignment; these vary by course. Instructors aim to provide these at least 30 days before the semester begins.

Most students teach laboratory sections for the introductory biology classes, BIOL 1102 (aimed at non-majors), BIOL 1108 (aimed at majors) and BIOL 1110 (focused on plants). In BIOL 1102, students typically serve as co-TAs, with each section having 2 TAs. In BIOL 1108 and 1110, each lab section has a single TA. Students who are interested in serving as a TA for an upper level class are encouraged to contact the course instructor(s) to discuss their interest, since instructor preference carries the greatest weight in determining upper level TA assignments.

TAs are responsible for contacting the course instructor before the semester, being available for preparatory work (including TA meetings) the week before the semester begins, and being available to fulfill their TA responsibilities throughout the semester, including final exam week. Thus, students should plan summer field work or other travel in order to be back in Storrs with sufficient time before the semester begins to participate in these activities. Failure to do so may jeopardize current or future TA support. Students on 9-month TA appointments are paid over the winter break and may be expected to assist in other teaching-related duties specific to one of their TA assignments during this period.

TA responsibilities and other professional opportunities (e.g., presenting research at a meeting, attending a workshop) may conflict occasionally. In such cases, we encourage TAs to work with the course instructor and their fellow TAs to see if a brief absence can be accommodated. For unexpected absences (e.g., illness or family emergency), TAs should contact the person responsible for their course as soon as reasonably possible and apply for a leave following procedures outlined on the [human resources website](#). Further details on managing absences from teaching duties, and vacations, are included in the collective bargaining agreement between the University and the Graduate Employees Union.

Students who have unusual circumstances that affect their preferred teaching assignment should either note these in their preference submissions or send a separate email to the head of the GAAC. Examples of special requests that the department has sometimes been able to accommodate include designing schedules to allow for time-sensitive research work, especially

when it requires time off campus. If a student anticipates being on parental leave for a portion of any semester, they should also notify the GAAC at the time that teaching preferences are submitted or as soon as possible thereafter.

Safety Training & Research Compliance

Employee Safety Orientation

Before beginning work in any new lab space, you should receive an employee safety orientation for the space. This will provide an overview of the hazards present in the work environment. In addition to reviewing the Workplace Hazard Assessment (WHA) for the space, the online [Employee Safety Training Assessment](#) must be completed by you and the supervisor of the space (e.g., your advisor if you work in their lab) and returned to Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) within 5 days of starting to work in a space

Safety Training

Depending on your research area, you will likely need to complete some combination of biological and chemical safety training courses, which are offered by UConn's EHS Division. When you complete your ESTA form a list of training requirements will be generated. See the [EHS website](#) to find a list and schedule of courses. Some of the more common courses taken by members of this department are:

- Initial lab safety and chemical waste management
- Biosafety-general training
- Biological safety in [insert your group of study organisms here] research
- Shipping and transportation of biological agents

After an initial in-person training, many courses can be updated through online modules offered in the University's online teaching platform, HuskyCT. These will appear on HuskyCT after you register, although it sometimes takes a couple of days.

As a TA, you are also responsible for providing some components of safety training, and adhering to safe practices, in any lab or field courses that you teach.

COVID-19

The ongoing pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 disease that it causes have resulted in a constantly updating set of requirements that everyone associated with UConn needs to adhere to. For the latest information about how this affects university operations, please visit [this web site](#). For information related specifically to research, [go here](#).

Research and Teaching with Live Vertebrates ([IACUC](#))

All research and teaching using live vertebrates must be conducted under the auspices of a protocol approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). For work that is purely observational, it may be possible to obtain a waiver from the IACUC. Before conducting any research that involves handling live vertebrates, students must complete the university's IACUC training (see the UConn IACUC website for details). For your own research,

check with your advisor to determine whether your lab already has an approved protocol. For new studies, be aware that IACUC protocols may require two or more rounds of revision before approval is obtained. It is recommended that students planning vertebrate research, or who will be the instructor of record for a course that uses live vertebrates, begin the protocol application process at least 6 months in advance.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

All research involving human subjects must be conducted with the approval of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This requirement includes surveys and questionnaires used in research. Before submitting an IRB protocol for review, a student and their advisor must complete the IRB's training program, which can be conducted online (see the UConn IRB web site). As with IACUC, the process for obtaining an approved IRB protocol can take multiple rounds of revision and approval is subject to the IRB's meeting schedule. Consequently, it is recommended that students planning to do any research that involves humans begin the protocol application process at least 6 months in advance.

Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)

All research that uses recombinant or synthetic DNA molecules, biological agents, or toxins, must be registered with, reviewed by, and approved by, the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) before it can be pursued. This requirement applies to even simple procedures, such as standard cloning into *E. coli*. Check with your advisor before undertaking any such work to see if it is already covered by the lab's IBC registration, or whether an amendment needs to be filed. See the IBC web site for more information.

Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

All students who are supported by NIH or NSF funds (whether as an RA or on a fellowship) are required to complete a course in responsible conduct of research. See the section on courses (above) for options.

Policies and Procedures

The University has developed a large number of policies relevant to life as a graduate student; see the student [policies web page](#). The [graduate catalog](#) contains additional policies related to academic matters. While these deal with unusual circumstances, they set some important constraints on how the department operates.

Leaves of Absence

Under compelling personal or medical reasons, a graduate student may request a long-term leave of absence from their graduate program for a period of up to 12 months. Details on the conditions under which leaves will be granted and the procedures to be followed in requesting a leave are available in the [graduate catalog](#) and [on the Graduate School web site](#). If you are able to, you are strongly encouraged to discuss your situation with your advisor. Another resource is the Graduate Student Advocacy Officer at the Graduate School. Short term leaves from GA duties follow a different procedure administered by [Human Resources](#).

Withdrawal & Dismissal

If, at any time, a student's academic performance, progress in a graduate degree program, or professional development and/or suitability is judged by the advisory committee to be unsatisfactory to the degree that dismissal is warranted, the advisory committee must submit its written recommendation that the student be dismissed on such grounds. This decision may be appealed through the Graduate School.

Other Key University Policies to be Aware of:

[Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence](#)
[Violence in the Workplace Prevention](#)

Useful Resources for Grad Students

EEB Graduate Student Association (GSA)

All graduate students in EEB are eligible for membership in the student-run GSA, which is led by a group of student officers. The organization provides a forum in which all graduate students in the department are welcome to discuss any issues relevant to graduate school.

The GSA typically has 2-3 meetings a semester, but additional meetings can be called as necessary. Meetings follow parliamentary procedure, as well as the guidelines specified by the organization's constitution and by-laws. Meetings are typically held at 5 pm on Thursdays, after the EEB department seminar.

Activities undertaken by the organization include hosting an annual graduate research symposium, running fundraisers for GSA activities, and the invitation of a speaker for a departmental seminar. The GSA has also organized a mentoring program to pair each new graduate students with a student who is already in the program. The EEB Graduate Student Association faculty advisor is Chris Elphick.

[Graduate Employee Union](#)

Since 2015-16, UConn graduate students employed as teaching or research assistants have been covered by the collective bargaining agreement negotiated by the graduate union and the administration. You can learn more about your rights and responsibilities as a union member here: www.uconngradunion.org/.

[The Graduate School and the Office of the Registrar](#)

The Graduate School (located on the second floor of the Whetten Graduate Center) and the Registrar (located in the Wilbur Cross building) are responsible for a myriad of paperwork: graduate registration; graduate fellowships; approving your plan of study, dissertation prospectus; and dissertations. The paperwork you will need to file at various stages of your graduate career is available here: <https://grad.uconn.edu/forms/>.

Fellowship Advisor

The Graduate School employs a fellowship advisor who specializes in graduate fellowships in the STEM fields (currently [Stuart Duncan](#)). In addition to offering informational sessions that

provide an overview of national STEM fellowships, the STEM fellowship advisor is available for individual consultations to provide feedback on application materials. This resource is an excellent supplement to the support offered within the department.

Broader UConn Community

Other places on campus where you might find people or resources that are helpful include:

- [Asian American Cultural Center](#)
- [African American Cultural Center](#)
- [Graduate Students of Color Association](#)
- [Native American Cultural Programs](#)
- [Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center](#)
- [Rainbow Center](#)
- [Women's Center](#)

Bamford Room (room TLS 171B)

This room houses a complete collection of dissertations from the Department, as well as many of the books published by the faculty. This room is also frequently used for group meetings and (informal) seminars. Email EEBRoomScheduling@uconn.edu if you want to reserve the room for a meeting.

Biological Collections

An extensive collection of vertebrate, invertebrate, and plant specimens from around the globe is available for research purposes. Students must pass EEB 5500 Introduction to Natural History Collections, which is offered annually, prior to use of collection facilities.

Center for Genome Innovation

This core facility supports NextGen library preparation and sequencing. It also provides training and consultations for students planning projects that will require these resources.

Collections Library

This library holds botanical, vertebrate, invertebrate, and other biological resources. Some journals that are not found at the library may be found here. Located in the BioPhysics building (BPB 112). Grad students must pass EEB 5500 Introduction to Natural History Collections prior to using the Collections Library.

Computational Biology Core

This facility provides computational power and technical support. The computer clusters maintained by the facility offer a wide range of software useful for genomic and phylogenetic investigations. At present, the use of these computers is free. Staff provide training and consultation in the use of bioinformatics tools at no charge to UConn graduate students and faculty. You can request an account, schedule a consultation, or request software, using their [online form](#).

Greenhouses

Collection greenhouses contain the department's live plant collection. They are located behind Torrey Life Sciences and are open to the public from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm, M-F. Research greenhouses are located on the 6th floor of the BioPhysics building, next to TLS, but access is limited to those performing research in this facility. If you would like to use this space for your research, talk with Meghan Moriarty.

Electron Microscopy Facility

The Bioscience Electron Microscopy Lab is located in the BioPhysics Building (BPB G06).

Software and Computing

UConn makes a large amount of software available to students for free or at substantially reduced cost. Free software can largely be accessed via the university's [Software Catalog](#). Note that software that is not listed on the home page might be available after you log in (e.g., certain GIS packages).

Students also have access to free cloud storage for university-related files; see [this site for details](#). For more on computer support, contact the [Technology Support Center](#).

Other Information

Office space

All graduate students receive office space in the department. For students in labs housed in the BioPharm or Gant buildings, office space is generally part of the labs. Arrangements in the Torrey Life Sciences building vary; your advisor will know what space you are assigned to.

Building and room keys

Access to buildings is largely electronic and conducted by swiping your student ID card at the entrance. Access to rooms within TLS, Gant, BioPharm, and BioPhysics is either also by keycard (many classrooms, Bamford, the EEB mailroom, labs in Gant), or via a keypad code (labs in BioPharm), or physical keys (individual offices and some other rooms in TLS). To get the access you need, ask your advisor to send an email to CLASFShelp@uconn.edu with your name, netID, 5-digit ID number (on the back of your card), and a list of rooms you need access to. Nick McIntosh in TLS 155 can also help with keycard problems.

Student ID card

You can obtain your student ID card in the Student Union. You will need to register and pay your fees, or get a fee deferral, before you can get your card. The Bursar's Office, which is in the Wilbur Cross Building, handles registration/fees. For more information on ID cards, including what to do if you lose yours, see www.onecard.uconn.edu.

NetID

UConn will use your NetID to identify you for obtaining access for certain computing services such as: Student Administration, HuskyCT, VPN, etc. It is your initials (3 letters) the year you started in the program (2 digits) and how many people share that info with you when you started

(3 digits) For example: if you are the only person with initials XYZ that started in 2014 your NetID would be: xyz14001. More information can be found here: <https://netid.uconn.edu/>.

Student Administration System (also called “PeopleSoft”)

This system is used for many official interactions with the university. You can use it to search the course catalog and enroll for classes, and to view your class schedule, advisor information, grades, unofficial transcript, charges and payments, and financial aid information. The system is also used by Student Health Services. You can change your personal information (e.g., address) here.

Core-CT

Core-CT is UConn’s payroll system, and allows employees to keep address and contact information up to date in the “Personal Information” section, to set direct deposit and W-4 (tax) preferences, to view past paychecks in the “Payroll” section, and to review health coverage in the “Benefits” section. If you are employed on Student Labor, or any other hourly position, through UConn, this is also where you will submit any timesheets in the “Payroll” section.

Change of address

The University stores your home address in two places: the Student Administration System and Core-CT. If you move, you must change your address in both places to ensure you receive all critical mail (e.g., tax forms).

HuskyCT (Blackboard platform)

Most undergraduate courses, and some graduate courses, are administered through HuskyCT, which is UConn’s version of the Blackboard teaching platform. You will likely have access to HuskyCT for any course you TA. To become familiar with its abilities, consult your fellow TAs or the [online help pages](#). If you are stuck, calling the [Instructional Resource Center](#) (6-5052) can often get you unstuck. HuskyCT is also used for some safety trainings and as a way to meet university compliance requirements.

Email address

Most email addresses take the form firstname.lastname@uconn.edu. If this is not unique, then your email address will also include your middle initial. UConn uses this address for all official communication, so it is important to start monitoring this account even before your arrival.

Departmental mailing lists

The department maintains an email listserv (EEBDEPT-DL@listserv.uconn.edu) as well as sub-lists for graduate students (EEBGRADS-GL@listserv.uconn.edu), faculty (EEBFACULTY-DL@listserv.uconn.edu), staff (EEBSTAFF-DL@listserv.uconn.edu), and postdocs (EEBPOSTDOCS-DL@listserv.uconn.edu). Please send any messages to the list from your UConn email. This ensures that your message is distributed without delay, since posting is restricted to list members.

Departmental twitter feed

The department has an active Twitter feed (@uconneeb) and encourages use of the hashtag #uconneeb for your science-related tweets.

Mail

Mailboxes for all EEB faculty members, staff, postdocs, and graduate students are located in the EEB lounge on the third floor of TLS (room 315). The address for **all** mail is UConn EEB Dept., 75 N Eagleville Rd U3043, Storrs CT 06269-3043.

Faxing

The departmental fax machine is located in TLS 315. The fax number is 860-486-6364.

Phone calls

All labs have phones which can be used for work-related calls. To dial an on-campus number, dial the last 5 digits (e.g., 6-xxxx). Press 8 before dialing any off-campus number. Note that even in the local calling area, the area code (860) is required.

Room reservations

The department has several rooms that can be reserved for small group meetings (e.g., seminar classes, lab meetings, or committee meetings): the Bamford room (TLS 171B), the collections library in the Biology/Physics building (BPB 112), the BioPharm building “fish bowls” (PBB 203 and 303), and various rooms in Gant W. Room reservations can be made with anyone in the EEB departmental office or by emailing EEBRoomScheduling@uconn.edu.

Projectors & mobile TV units

EEB has both projectors and mobile TV units available for teaching and presenting. You can reserve these by emailing the EEB student assistant (EEB.Assistant@uconn.edu) or by talking to them in the third floor EEB office (TLS 314). Note that projectors are designated by colored labels in the EEB reservation calendar. Ask the student working in the office if you need help.

Office supplies

For office supplies for teaching-related needs, see the EEB student assistants.

How to Do Things

How to register and pay your bill

To qualify as full-time, students on RA/TAs must [register](#) for a minimum of 6 credits and students on full fellowships need to register for at least 9 credits. You should first talk to your advisor and other students to find out what courses you should take (see also the Finding Out About Courses section). The [Student Administration System](#) is your gateway to registering for classes. To get into this system you will need your NetID and password (see above).

Registering for classes allows the [Bursar's Office](#) to generate a bill for you. You may be mailed a fee bill, and you can view it online via the Student Admin Student Center, or you can request it in person by visiting the Bursar's Office in the Wilbur Cross Building. You can pay at the Bursar's Office or have this fee deferred via payroll deduction.

Important dates relating to registration, as well as the start/end of the semester, holidays, etc. can be found at the Office of the Registrar's [Academic Calendar](#).

If you need help, there is considerable information on the web site of the [Office of the Registrar](#). If you cannot find what you need to know, ask someone for help. Either talking to another grad student or a call to the Registrar's Office (6-3331) can save a lot of aggravation and frustration.

How to purchase research supplies

The system for ordering supplies is complex. Basic information is included below, but the system frequently changes so ask for help if you run into a problem. Before buying anything, it is important to determine whether an expense is allowable, whether the university has a specific vendor that you have to buy from, and what documentation is required prior to purchase. This may differ depending on the source of funding and type of purchase.

- **Kuali Financial System (KFS):** All university-administered accounts are assigned a Kuali number, with which purchases can be made. A KFS number can be used to buy supplies from the BioSupply Facility and Biotechnology Center. If you wish to make purchases from an on-campus supplier using funds that are not in a KFS account (e.g., because many graduate student grants are paid directly to the student), you must talk to Nick Boston to obtain a KFS number and reimburse the department via personal check.
- **HuskyBuy:** The online purchasing system is complex and students who do not expect to use it regularly are likely to find it more convenient to let Nick Boston know what it is they wish to purchase (by providing the source, including web link or price quote, catalog number, item description, and KFS number for the purchase), and he will place the order. Any student who expects to do a substantial amount of purchasing may find it more convenient to become trained to initiate purchases through HuskyBuy. Purchases made through HuskyBuy are usually delivered directly to the lab.
- **BioSupply Facility (also called the stockroom):** Certain items are kept on hand in the BioSupply facility in TLS 175, managed by Xiaoyang Liu. Stocked items include basic chemicals, pipet tips, nitrile gloves, microcentrifuge tubes, and paper towels. The facility also maintains freezer programs with major biotechnology companies. Some supplies are available for pick-up, while others can be special-ordered. The facility passes along

all discounts it receives, including free shipping, but it also adds a 7% cost recovery fee (to a maximum of \$25).

- **EEB department credit card:** Some purchases (current limit: \$4999) that are being paid for with a KFS number can be made on the departmental credit card by Leah Rossettie (Nick Boston can also help with this). To make a purchase, you will need to provide detailed ordering information, including the web address at which you found the item and the KFS number. Items purchased in this way are delivered to the EEB department office. If you receive a large package, you will usually be notified by email, but otherwise, you should watch your mailbox for the shipment's arrival.
- **Reimbursement:** There are strict rules for what may be reimbursed and rules change regularly. In general, you should assume that expenses are not reimbursable (because very few are). If you have an unusual circumstance, consult with Nick Boston to see whether an exception can be granted and to ensure that you follow the rules correctly. Also, make sure that you keep all documentation (receipts, etc.) associated with each purchase.
- **Outside grants:** If you receive an award from an outside funder, it may be possible to establish a UConn account using this money, and then purchase supplies (and get University discounts) using that account. Talk to Nick Boston, in the EEB office, if you want to learn more about this option.

Hiring personnel

Field and lab assistants can be hired on university research funds. There are lower overhead expenses for student workers who are hired through student labor; however, these students must be enrolled at the time of employment. In some cases, it may be possible to establish a University account to allow the assistants to be hired as university employees on awards made to students; talk to Nick Boston as early as possible if you find yourself in this position. Hiring assistants on grants that are awarded directly to students (rather than going through the Office of Sponsored Programs) is more complicated because they cannot be hired as university employees. If you are in this situation, seek advice from your advisor or others in the department. ***If you plan to hire field or lab assistants, please provide the EEB office with the anticipated term, duties, and funding details of any personnel well in advance of the planned start date.***

Personnel hired on grants must take the EHS Employee Safety Training Assessment (<https://ehs.uconn.edu/esta/>) and are required to meet all compliance training requirements relevant to their work (e.g., lab safety, IACUC, etc.). Volunteers also should receive all appropriate training. If you have volunteers working for you, it is advisable to develop a formal volunteer agreement (see Nick Boston for details).

Parking

There is student parking relatively close to the biology buildings. You must obtain a parking permit (after paying fees or receiving a fee deferral) from Parking and Transportation Services. The cost of the permit will depend on the lot(s) you wish to park in. For more information, see the web site: <http://park.uconn.edu/>. Most students select the Graduate Assistant Commuter

Student Area 2 permit. This allows you to park in both employee Area 2 and commuter student lots. EEB graduate students most often use F lot. You can park for free almost anywhere on campus after 5:00 pm.

Travel

Travel regulations change frequently and travel often requires advance approval; consult the latest policies at <http://travel.uconn.edu> prior to any university-related travel.

- UConn uses Concur as its travel expense system. You may log into Concur using your NetID and password from the travel.uconn.edu website. You must submit a Request in Concur prior to your date of anticipated travel. There, you will request a parking pass (e.g., for Bradley Airport) if needed and create your itinerary for booking travel (if booking through Concur).
- International travel also requires additional registration and approval several weeks prior to departure. This is handled through the Office of Global Affairs (education abroad section). Currently, information is available on their [website](#) and in a University [student international travel policy document](#).
- The University provides health insurance for all UConn-related international travel at no cost to you. At present, you are automatically signed up for this insurance when you receive approval to travel internationally. If you do not receive notification prior to travel, check that the message did not get sent to your spam box.

Travel Reimbursements:

- Reimbursement of travel expenses is processed in the EEB office. Note that many expenses require original receipts, so save all paperwork. You may find [this checklist](#) helpful in preparing your reimbursement request.
- EEB office staff will fill out the electronic post-trip Expense Report in Concur. You may be asked to provide further information if it is not provided up front in the travel Request and will need to submit receipts to the EEB office.

Staff Directory

We are lucky to have a knowledgeable and dedicated staff. Figuring out where to go for what—or what procedures need to be followed—is not always easy; here are some suggestions for where to start:

EEB staff

Nick Boston (EEB Program Assistant)

Office: TLS 314; Phone: (860) 486-2296; E-mail: nicholas.boston@uconn.edu

Questions about regular & student payroll and timecards, international student and scholar visas, travel, graduate student grant funding when funds are held by a departmental account, and how funds in other accounts can be used.

Leah Rossettie (EEB Program Assistant: Graduate Coordinator)

Office: TLS 312; Phone: (860) 486-4319; E-mail: Leah.rossettie@uconn.edu

Questions about graduate admissions, GA appointments, graduate payroll, summer support, course scheduling, and purchasing.

Other biology staff

Nick McIntosh (IT support for university-owned computers)

Office: TLS 155; Phone: (860) 486-0308; E-mail: bcscomputers@uconn.edu

See Nick if a university-owned computer is having problems.

Xiaoyang Liu (BioSupply Facility Manager)

Office: TLS 175; Phone: (860) 486-5024; E-mail: xiaoyang.liu@uconn.edu

See Xiaoyang to buy basic lab supplies.

Cheryl Dudley (TLS Building Services Manager)

Office: TLS 163; Phone: (860) 486-8886; Cell: (860) 208-1023; E-mail:

cheryl.dudley@uconn.edu

Questions related to building and facilities-related issues in TLS: from floods to light bulb replacements. Cheryl is also the source of physical keys for TLS.

Skip Copeland (PBB building manager)

Office: PBB 101A; Phone: (860) 486-5264; Cell: (860) 455-5136; E-mail:

francis.copeland@uconn.edu

Questions related to building and facilities-related issues in the Pharmacy/Biology Building (PBB). Skip can also program your student ID to allow access to PBB afterhours.

Brett DeMarchi (Biology/Physics, Gant, and Beach Hall Building Manager)

Office: TLS 161A; Phone: (860) 486-4314; Cell: (959) 444-6264; E-mail:

brett.demarchi@uconn.edu

Questions related to building and facilities-related issues in the Biology/Physics Building (BPB), Gant, and Beach Hall.

EEB collections staff

See the appropriate manager for your favorite study organism.

Meghan Moriarty (EEB Greenhouse, Plant Growth Facilities Manager)

Office: BPB 603; Phone: (860) 486-8941; E-mail: meghan.moriarty@uconn.edu

Sarah Taylor (Plant Collections Manager)

Office: BPB 125; Phone: 860-486-1889; E-mail: sarah.taylor@uconn.edu

Katrina Menard (Invertebrate Collections Manager)

Office: BPB 126; Phone: (860) 486-4451; E-mail: katrina.menard@uconn.edu

Erin Kuprewicz (Vertebrate Collections Manager)

Office: PBB 600A; Phone (860) 486-4156; E-mail: erin.kuprewicz@uconn.edu

Where To Go When You Need Help

Immediate threats to life or health

Dial 911 (this works from campus phones; there is no need to dial 8 first).

Non-life-threatening lab emergencies

Call [Environmental Health and Safety](#) at 860-486-3613.

Submit a service request at <https://fo.uconn.edu/request-services/>

Building emergencies (e.g., floods, power outages)

- TLS building manager: Cheryl Dudley (cell 860-208-1023)
- BioPharm building manager: Skip Copeland (cell 860-486-5264)
- Gant: Brett DeMarchi (cell 959-444-6264)
- All can help with any building in an emergency
- After hours: call Facilities at 860-486-3113 and follow up with an email to the building manager.

General resources

The Graduate School maintains a web site with [information especially for new graduate students here](#), and the Ombuds Office maintains [a general list of key web sites](#) here.

Ombuds Office

If you are not sure where to turn after reading this list, the Ombuds Office may be a good starting point: *“The UConn Ombudsman serves as a neutral resource who provides confidential and informal assistance to members of the campus community. The Ombuds Office was established to provide a confidential, neutral resource for staff, faculty, and graduate students to express concerns, identify options to address workplace conflicts, facilitate productive communication, and surface responsible concerns regarding university policies and practices.”*

Other important resources

Financial stress

- The [GSS graduate student emergency loan fund](#), administered by the Graduate Student Senate, provides short term loans for financial emergencies.

Mental health (your own or that of someone you are concerned about):

- For immediate help, Call UConn’s Counseling Services at 860-486-4705 and ask to speak to the “On-Call Therapist”
- UConn Counseling & Mental Health Services: <http://counseling.uconn.edu/>
- 1-800-GRAD-HLP (National Grad. Crisis Help Line)

Addiction issues

- UConn Alcohol and Other Drug Education Office: <http://aod.uconn.edu/>

Disability accommodation

- The Center for Students with Disabilities works with students to ensure that they receive appropriate educational accommodations for documented disabilities:
<http://csd.uconn.edu/>

Visa questions

- Nick Boston (nicholas.boston@uconn.edu) in the EEB office.
- International Student and Scholar Services: <http://iss.uconn.edu/>

Problems with your advisor

- If problems arise between you and your advisor that you would like assistance in resolving, we recommend talking informally with your other committee members or another faculty member you are comfortable with. If the situation persists, then contact the Department Head.

Problems related to employment or working conditions as a TA/RA

- The procedure for resolving employment-related problems is established by the Graduate Student Union contract. The first steps are to try to address any problems informally by talking directly to your supervisor. If that does not produce a satisfactory resolution, you should submit a written report to the Department Head, with whom you may also wish to consult informally. The [Graduate Employee Union](#) can advise you on additional steps in the process, should they become necessary.

Discrimination or harassment

- The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) investigates complaints related to discrimination and harassment. This is the place to report any violations that you experience:
equity.uconn.edu.
- **Note that any individual who is notified of sexual assault or harassment while acting in a supervisory capacity is required to report this information to OIE (this includes TAs, RAs in a lab, or anyone who works directly with undergraduate students).**
- From the university's [non-discrimination policy](#): “The University of Connecticut complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action. The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of legally protected characteristics in employment, education, the provision of services and all other programs and activities. In Connecticut, legally protected characteristics include: race; color; religion; ethnicity; age; sex; marital status; national origin; ancestry; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; genetic information; veteran status; disability; and workplace hazards to reproductive systems. Employees, students, visitors and applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations to address limitations resulting from a disability. The University engages in an interactive process with each person making a request for accommodations and reviews the requests on an individualized, case-by-case basis. To request an accommodation or for questions related to the

University's non-discrimination policies, please contact: Elizabeth Conklin, J.D., ADA Coordinator, Title IX Coordinator, Associate Vice President, Office of Institutional Equity, 241 Glenbrook Road, Unit 4175, Storrs, CT 06269-4175, Phone: (860) 486-2943, Email: equity@uconn.edu / Website: equity.uconn.edu".