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# **MA GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**In**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY, EVOLUTION AND MARINE  
BIOLOGY**

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## **EEMB Graduate Student Handbook: MA Degrees**

These guidelines incorporate both University and Department regulations, and are designed to help ensure that students finish their MA. degrees successfully and in a reasonable amount of time. They are not designed to tie the Department's, or the student's hands. Thus, most "rules" are flexible. If there is a reason to alter timetables, take leaves, or otherwise act outside of these guidelines, it may be possible with appropriate petitions. To prepare such petitions, it is important that the student work with their major professor, the Departmental Graduate Advisor and possibly Graduate Division.

### **1. MA Committees:**

Students must form a committee in their first year. They should consult with their major professor in determining who would be the most appropriate committee members. They may also want to consult with the Departmental Graduate Advisor. The primary role of a student's committee is to act as a support system and resource, provide multiple perspectives and broaden the expertise beyond that which a single major professor could offer. The committee will work with the major professor on advising the student on classes, exams and exam schedules, and on the student's specific research. The committee will file a "Progress Report and Study Plan" form (see page 9) every year. This serves not only as a record of progress but should also identify the student's plans for the next year. This ensures that the student and committee agree as to where a student is in their program, and what is planned for the future. These procedures can act as protection for the student should disagreements arises.

At a minimum, the committee will consist of the major professor and two other UC faculty members, one of whom must be from EEMB. The third member can come from another department or even another UC campus if appropriate. Adjunct faculty or people who are not associated with UC may be added to the committee, but only in addition to the three core UC members. If any of the committee members are away on sabbatical, or other leave, a temporary member may replace them during that time. The membership of an advisory committee may change as a student's interests and directions shift. The initial committee is established within the Department and the official committee forms are filed with the UCSB Graduate Division (See Graduate Assistant for forms) at the beginning of the year they plan to finish.

In cases where a student persistently fails to demonstrate sufficient progress in his or her studies for a period of at least two years, the committee may recommend to Graduate Division that the student be dismissed from the program. If at least a majority of the committee recommends dismissal, the case will be forwarded to the EEMB Graduate Committee for final evaluation, before a possible formal request is made to Graduate Division to dismiss the student.

### **2. Unit requirements (these are the minimum requirement)**

Thesis plan: 30 total units

20 must be graduate units (200 & 500 series courses)

Only 10 of those can be 596.

Comprehensive Exam plan: 36 total units

24 must be graduate units (200 & 500 series courses)

Only 12 of those can be 596.

### **3. Other Academic Standards:**

**Seminar for New Graduate Students:** This seminar is designed to familiarize new graduate students with the EEMB faculty and the diversity of research being conducted in the department and to provide a forum for interactions among new graduate students. It is required of all incoming graduate students unless special circumstances prevent attendance.

To enroll in this course, students should sign up for two units of **EEMB 290** with the EEMB department Chair's instructor code (this can be found in a box chart in the Quarter Schedule of Classes).

Starting Fall 2008, students will be required to take the EECore graduate curriculum (unless their advisor writes a request for them to be exempt).

#### **508. Levels of Biological Organization I: Individuals & Populations**

(4) Nisbet, Oakley, Sweet, Proulx

*Prerequisite: graduate standing. Lecture, 3 hours; Discussion, 1 hour.*

This is the first in a set of two advanced courses in ecology and evolution, and includes modules on adaptation and organismal function (including physiological ecology), life history theory and fitness, and population dynamics.

#### **509. Levels of Biological Organization II: Communities & Ecosystems**

(4) Oakley, Melack

*Prerequisite: graduate standing. Lecture, 3 hours; Discussion, 1 hour.*

This is the second in a set of two advanced courses in ecology and evolution, and includes modules on the origins of diversity, species interactions and coexistence, the causes and consequences of food web complexity, and ecosystem-level processes.

**TA requirement:** In order to TA, there are two training courses that must be taken at least once. These are:

**EEMB 500:** Campus Orientation (1 unit). This is a one-day seminar offered once a year in the fall.

**EEMB 502:** Teaching Techniques (2 units). Offered by MCDB in fall, and EEMB in winter. This may be taken in the winter of the student's first year, rather than fall, even if TAing for the first time in the fall of that year.

Additionally, a student may receive course credits for TAing. To get this credit a student must register for EEMB 501. This has a variable number of units (1-4), depending on the time commitment of the TAsip. A 50% time TAsip is worth 4 units.

**Minimum GPA:** Students must maintain a minimum GPA of at least 3.0 *at all times*. Graduate Division will automatically place students who fall below this on academic probation. Students who fail to bring their GPA up to 3.0 may become subject to being dropped from the program. Students **must** register for at least one class with a letter grade during their first year to establish a GPA.

**Carrying too many I, NG, or NR grades:** These are Incomplete, No Grade, or No Record, and are for unfinished courses. Students may not carry more than 12 units of such grades. The first quarter this occurs, a student will receive an advisory from the Graduate Division. The second quarter, they will be placed on academic probation. After 3 quarters without clearing up the incomplete courses, a student may be dropped from the program.

#### **4. Administrative Issues:**

- FAFSA forms: All students are expected to file the "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" form *every* year. The form is available at: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>. This may seem like a nuisance, but there are fellowships available through UCSB (e.g. fee fellowships) that are *not* available if you have not filed a FAFSA. The FAFSA for the following school year is usually due by early March. Make it a habit to fill this form out at the beginning of each year.
- Registration: Students are expected to remain registered every quarter they are in the program, unless they are on approved leave.
- Credit requirements: All students must register for at least 12 units each quarter to maintain their status as full time students.
- Petitions: In cases where a student needs to act outside the guidelines, it likely takes a petition to either the Department or to Graduate Division. For petitions for leaves etc. the forms are available at Graduate Division. All petitions will need the Departmental Graduate Advisor's signature.

#### **5. Graduate Student Advisory Committee TBA**

The Graduate Student Advisory Committee meets monthly with the EEMB Chair, Vice-Chair, and Chair of the Graduate Affairs Committee. This committee has been formed to discuss and obtain advice on departmental and campus issues, and to engender and develop new ideas. Graduate students should feel free to meet with the Vice Chairs or Chair to discuss their concerns or departmental issues through the members of the Graduate Student Advisory Committee

#### **6. Other places to go for information, advice, and help:**

In general, your major professor is the best starting point for questions and problems, but there is a variety of other people and places to go for information and advice.

- Graduate Assistant  
*Melanie Fujii*  
*4314 Life Sciences Bldg.* Go to Melanie for technical information about administrative issues such as timetables, forms, requirements, etc. If Melanie doesn't have the answer, she knows who to send you to for it.
- Departmental Graduate Advisor  
*Debora Iglesias-Rodriguez* This is a faculty member, and the job rotates. Go to the advisor for signatures on petitions, and if you have more "academic" questions then you would talk to Melanie. For example, if you want to talk about issues relating to your studies, your relationship with your major professor, etc. go the Graduate Advisor.
- Departmental Graduate Committee  
*Debora Iglesias-Rodriguez*  
*Todd Oakley*  
*Tom Turner*  
*Hillary Young* This group is comprised of the Graduate Advisor and three other members. They are responsible for overseeing the EEMB graduate program as a whole. When the advisor is unavailable, the other members can sign petitions and similar things.
- Department Chair  
*Craig Carlson* The Department chair is available if you have problems that the Graduate Advisor is not able to handle satisfactorily. This is equivalent to a "Court of Appeals", so you shouldn't need to do this.

Graduate Division

Graduate Division is the administrative branch of UCSB that oversees all things relating to graduate programs. They have a lot of useful information at <http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu>. A particularly useful document is the "Graduate Student Handbook" (<http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/handbook>). They also have a lot of good people who can provide you with advice on problems you may have, if you can't get the answer from the Graduate Advisor or Graduate Assistant. For financial issues, Jenny Bisheff ([bisheff@graddiv.ucsb.edu](mailto:bisheff@graddiv.ucsb.edu) or (805) 893-2710) is the one to talk to. For other issues, Rickie Smith (Director of Academic Services; [rickie.smith@graddiv.ucsb.edu](mailto:rickie.smith@graddiv.ucsb.edu) or (805) 893-5485) is probably the right person. The main number of the Graduate Division is (805) 893-2277.

### **Financial Support:**

The general EEMB philosophy is that students should be properly supported so that they can focus on their academic program. This support may be in the form of teaching assistantships (TA), University fellowships, departmental fellowship support, graduate student research (GSR) positions, extramural funding, or some combination of these. In EEMB, most sources of support are coordinated through the student's major professor.

**Teaching assistantships:** The major professor will make requests to the Department for teaching assistantships for their students. Each professor can generally count on TA support for one student per year (three quarters total support). How they allocate this among their students is up to them. Faculty requests for TA support are then balanced against the courses that need TAs and the particular expertise needed for those courses. The balancing of requests and needs is done by the Graduate Assistant and the Graduate Committee. Other programs also occasionally have TAs available that are open to students from other departments. The Environmental Studies program is a one such program, and takes applications during winter quarter.

**Departmental funds:** The Department receives a modest sum of money every year to use for supporting graduate students. Most of that money is used to pay out-of-state tuition and first year fellowship packages for incoming students. Typically, there is enough money to only support several quarters' worth of continuing graduate students. Individual faculty members are responsible for nominating students for departmental graduate support funds, which are then allocated based on a combination of merit, need, and the student's past history of receiving these funds.

**Graduate student researcher positions:** Individual faculty may have research grants with graduate student support incorporated into them. They are entirely responsible for allocating these funds among graduate students.

**Fee fellowships:** Each year the Department is allocated a small amount of money to use to help students cover fees. These fellowships may only be awarded to students who are considered "financially needy" (which includes most students). This *requires* that students have filed the FAFSA form. Students can apply directly to the Department for these funds. Calls for requests will go out each spring quarter.

**Extramural funding:** There is a wide range of fellowships that students may apply for. Students are encouraged to visit Graduate Division's on-line newsletter, at <http://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/resources/newsletters>. This has good records of programs, requirements, deadlines, etc.

## Progress Report and Study Plan for M.A.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Began: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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MA Program Plan I (by thesis)\*

MA Form I submitted\_\_\_\_\_ (\*necessary for MA Program Plan I only)

OR

MA Program Plan II (by exam)

Exams: (*Fill out when exams are to be taken or when they were passed*)

Written #1:      Date:                          Topic/Examiner:

Written #2:      Date:                          Topic/Examiner:

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Performance to date:

On track \_\_\_\_\_    Some problems \_\_\_\_\_    Unsatisfactory\_\_\_\_\_

*If there have been problems, note below what they are and what will be done to solve them.*

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Progress and Accomplishments this year:

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Expectations for next year:

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Committee Signatures (If you are receiving MA by exam only your Chair's signature is required)

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_                          Member #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Member #2: \_\_\_\_\_                          Member #4: \_\_\_\_\_