

MS GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

In

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

2024-2025



WHO'S WHO IN THE EEMB DEPARTMENT

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Submit a Help Request: <https://www.lscg.ucsb.edu/tools>

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EEMB Graduate Student Handbook: MS Degrees

These guidelines incorporate both University and Department regulations, and are designed to help ensure that students finish their MS. degrees successfully and in a reasonable amount of time. They are not designed to tie the Department's or the student's hands. Thus, there can be exceptions to many of the rules below if asked of the Graduate Committee. 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 Faculty Graduate Advisor, the Graduate Program Advisor, and possibly Graduate Division.

1. MS Committees:

Students should form a committee during 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 Faculty 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 student and committee will file a "Progress Report and Study Plan" form (see page 8) 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 ensure communication between the student and their committee to facilitate consensus on how the student can best make progress.

At a minimum, the committee will consist of the major professor and two other UC ladder faculty members, one of whom must be from EEMB. The third member can come from another department or even another UC campus if appropriate. Professional researchers, adjunct faculty, or scientists who are not associated with UC may be added to the committee either: (1) in addition to the three core UC members or (2) instead of one of the three core UC members but only with petition and approval by Graduate Division (contact the Graduate Program Advisor for the details of this process). 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 the thesis committee may change as a student's interests and directions shift. The committee needs to be officially nominated via the GradPoint Student system online <https://gradpoint.ucsb.edu/students> Please refer to the Grad Division website for detailed instructions: <https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/academic-services/committees#How-to>

2. Unit requirements (these are the minimum requirement)

Thesis plan: 30 total units

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

No more than half the graduate-level units may be in 596 courses

Comprehensive Exam plan: 36 total units

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

No more than half the graduate-level units may be in 596 courses

3. Course Curriculum:

EEMB 500: Campus Orientation (1 credit): This is a currently offered one-day seminar offered as part of

new student orientation.

EEMB 502: Teaching Techniques (2 credits): This is a currently required course offered by MCDB in Fall and EEMB in Winter. This course may be taken in Winter of the student's first year, rather than Fall, even if TAing for the first time in the Fall of that year.

EEMB 290: Seminar for New Graduate Students (2 credits): This course provides a series of seminars from EEMB faculty, introducing their research and helping to build community with the new cohort of graduate students. This course will be taught by the current Faculty Graduate Advisor.

EEMB 508: Biological Levels of Organization I (4 credits): This course focuses on topics such as adaptation and organismal function, micro/macroeolution, origins of diversity, evolution of behavior, etc.

EEMB 509: Biological Levels of Organization II (4 credits): This course focuses on topics such as ecophysiology, species interactions and coexistence, the causes and consequences of food web complexity, and ecosystem-level processes.

TA requirement: It is a requirement for every student to TA for at least two quarters. However, self-supported students, students on fellowships, or students working as a Graduate Student Researcher can petition the Graduate Committee to waive this requirement.

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 TAship. A 50% time TAship 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.

Thesis: For students getting a M.S. via thesis, they are expected to write and defend an original M.S. thesis. Following successful submission of the thesis, the student gives a public research seminar on their thesis research. Required coursework must be completed by the end of the quarter in which the thesis is submitted.

Comprehensive exam: For students getting a M.A. via comprehensive exam, they are expected to pass a comprehensive exam administered and graded by their thesis committee. Required coursework must be completed by the end of the quarter in which the examination is completed.

5. 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 fellowship) 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 either the Departmental Faculty Graduate Advisor or Department Chair's signature. Please work with the Graduate Program Advisor to organize all petitions.

6. Graduate Student Advisory Committee

The Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GSAC) 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

7. 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.

<p>Graduate Program Advisor <i>Mengshu Ye</i></p>	<p>Go to the Graduate Program Advisor (GPA) for technical information about administrative issues such as timetables, forms, requirements, petitions, etc. If the GPA doesn't have the answer, they will know where to direct you.</p>
<p>Faculty Graduate Advisor <i>Hillary Young</i></p>	<p>This is a rotating faculty position. Go to the Faculty Graduate Advisor for signatures on petitions, and if you have more "academic" questions than you could ask the GPA. For example, if you want to talk about issues relating to your studies, your relationship with your major professor, etc.</p>
<p>Departmental Graduate Committee</p>	<p>This group is comprised of the Faculty Graduate Advisor and three other faculty 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.</p>
<p>Department Chair</p>	<p>The Department Chair is available if you have problems that the Faculty Graduate Advisor is not able to handle satisfactorily.</p>

Graduate Division	<p>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.</p> <p>A particularly useful document is the "<i>Graduate Student Handbook</i>" (https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/handbook/index.aspx). 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 Program Advisor or Faculty Graduate Advisor.</p> <p>For financial issues, please contact Mengshu Ye or Hillary Young</p> <p>For academic issues, Ashley Bradbury (Director of Academic Services; ashley.bradbury@graddiv.ucsb.edu or (805) 893-2013 is probably the right person. The main number of the Graduate Division is (805) 893-2277.</p>
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8. 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 Staff and Faculty Graduate Advisor. Other programs also occasionally have TAs available that are open to students from other departments. The Environmental Studies program is one such program.

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 doctoral 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 website at <https://www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/our-services/extramural-funding>. This has good records of programs, requirements, deadlines, etc.

Progress Report and Study Plan for Graduate Students in EEMB

Student Name: _____ Meeting Date: _____

Year Began: _____ Expected Completion Date: _____

Exams: *(fill out when exams are to be taken or when they were passed - applicable for Ph.D. students only)*

Written # 1: Date: _____ Topic/Examiner: _____

Written # 2: Date: _____ Topic/Examiner: _____

Orals: Date: _____

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.

Progress & Accomplishments this year:

Manuscript submissions to peer-reviewed journals:

Publications accepted in peer-reviewed journals – Please give full citation:

Presentations at scientific meetings - please give authors, title, meeting, date and oral/poster presentation:

Presentations (oral or written) to a lay audience:

Expectations for next year:

Signatures

Advisor # 1: _____

Advisor # 2: _____