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Student Handbook
2026

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- **Revised August 12, 2026**
- **Information compiled by the Graduate Program Administrator and Graduate Program Director**

What is the difference between the Department of Ecology, Evolution, & Natural Resources and The Graduate Program in Ecology & Evolution?

The Department of Ecology, Evolution, & Natural Resources (hereafter, "the Department") was founded in its current form in 1997. It superseded a previous department of Natural Resources, which had a long and successful history focused on undergraduate education and research. The Department is primarily responsible for matters relating to undergraduate education in Ecology and Evolution, Environmental Geomatics, and Environmental Planning curricula. It also provides a physical home for some (but by no means all) of the faculty and students associated with the Graduate Program in Ecology & Evolution (hereafter, the "Graduate Program"). Most faculty in the Department belong to the Graduate Program, but many members of the Graduate Program hail from other departments. Although it was envisioned that the Department would provide administrative and financial support for the Graduate Program, it currently does this to a rather limited extent. There are a few TA and GA lines administered by the Department that typically support students in the Graduate Program. Roughly half of TA support originates from outside of the Department, principally from TAs within the Division of Life Sciences, which is part of the School of Arts and Sciences. The Department does not admit graduate students or confer graduate degrees. The chair of the Department is typically not the director of the Graduate Program.

The Graduate Program (hereafter, “the Program”) was founded in the mid 1970s by the well-known ecologists Murray Buell and Paul Pearson. The Program is a multidisciplinary umbrella group consisting of ~70 faculty in many different departments, drawn from three Rutgers Campuses and other locations including the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. The Program defines criteria for graduate admissions, evaluates student progress, and ultimately is responsible for certifying that students have completed the requirements for a graduate degree. The Program runs the weekly seminar series, coordinates the administration of graduate student financial support, and facilitates communication between the university and graduate students. There are ~ 45 graduate students enrolled in the Program, most of whom are Ph.D students. Operations of the Graduate Program are overseen by the Graduate Program Director, who is elected by the Graduate Program Faculty, and the Graduate Program Administrator. The Program coordinates with both the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS) in matters of fellowship support and various teaching, research, and travel awards. Some graduate programs at Rutgers are congruent with discipline departments (e.g., English, History, Physics). Our Program is much more extensive than that.

The Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolution

Mission Statement

The Ecology and Evolution Graduate Program at Rutgers University aims to foster a diverse environment rich in critical thinking and open communication. We are committed to mentoring the next generation of scientists to solve 21st-century problems and be stewards to our planet.

Program Personnel

Program Director (3-year term)

- Representative of Program students and faculty to the School of Graduate Studies and the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.
- Sets policy for the program in consultation with the faculty.
- Maintains academic standards and quality of program.
- Appoints Admission Committee, Scholastic Review Committee, Curriculum Committee and Seminar Committee.
- Signs many necessary forms such as Ph.D. and Master's Candidacy forms, Credit Transfer forms, Change of Status forms, Extension forms.

Program Administrator

- Support and contact person for all graduate students and faculty and GPD.
- Keeps files up to date on all students and faculty in program.
- Distributes many necessary forms for graduate students as named above and has Special Permission numbers for courses and Preliminary Proposal forms, among others.

Student Representatives to the Program

- Two students: one post-qualified and one pre-qualified.
- Terms run from fall semester to fall semester.
- Voting power in all matters except faculty appointments and retention, student advancement, examination, or accreditation.
- More information in the By-Laws.

Contact People

and their relationship to you as students

- **Rachael Winfree,** Program Director and Professor
  rachael.winfree@rutgers.edu
  848-932-8746
- **Shaneika Nelson**, Senior Program Administrator
  s.nelson@rutgers.edu
  848-932-3213
- **Denise McNair Sanders,** Departmental Administrator
  Any questions or problems regarding HR, Benefits, payroll, expense reimbursement and building issues.
  denisesanders@sebs.rutgers.edu
  848-932-3210
- **Allison Gradina**, School of Graduate Studies
  All forms post-candidacy goes to Allison and any questions relating your thesis/dissertation format.
  allimera@grad.rutgers.edu
  848-932-7034
- **Janis Roden,** Business Manager, School of Graduate Studies
  jroden@rutgers.edu
  848-932-2286
- **Teresa M. Delcorso-Ellmann**, Senior Associate Dean, SGS
  Director of GradFund
  Teresa knows all there is to know about external funding for graduate students.
  delcorso@gradfund.rutgers.edu

Applying for TA (Teaching Assistantship) Support

As of 2026, DEENR administers 8 TA lines, where a line consists of a one-year TA appointment that involves teaching in one fall and one spring course. Students have the opportunity to apply for these TA positions in March prior to the academic year of the appointment, through an application portal that is emailed to all graduate students by the Senior Program Administrator. Decisions about TA appointments are made in April by the Department Chair and the Graduate Program Director. Students are notified of these decisions by 30 April in each year.

TA positions are also available on an application basis through the Division of Life Sciences (DLS), which is part of the School of Arts and Sciences, not part of SEBS. The EE graduate program does not have authority over the administration of these TA positions; they are administered by DLS. The DLS TA positions are primarily in General Biology, with a few positions in Genetics, Parasitology, and other courses. All Ph.D students are strongly encouraged to apply for a DLS TA position in each year, unless they are certain that they have other funding for the coming year, through an internal or external fellowship, or from one of their advisor's external grants. DLS TA applications are generally due in February or March, and require an online form and undergraduate transcript submission, followed by an in-person interview. The Program Administrator will send an email with DLS TA application information when the application process opens. Historically DLS TA decisions and appointments have not been made until later in the year, e.g. June or July.

Sources of Research Funding Within the EE Program

The EE Graduate Program offers small grants for graduate student research every year on a competitive merit basis. The Request for Proposals (RFP) for these grants will be emailed to all graduate students in the winter or early spring of each year. Typically the Program awards 4-8 research grants ranging from $1000 to $3500. Grant applications are reviewed by a faculty committee, who also provide feedback to the student on the application. All graduate students are encouraged to apply for these grants in each year, as they are an excellent source of funding support for your research, and a good way to develop your grant-writing skills.

Sources of Funding Outside the EE Program

An important component of your graduate career is obtaining funding for your research, and in the case of fellowship funding, for yourself as a researcher. Sources here at Rutgers that can help you in this effort are:

- The **GradFund** office at Rutgers was developed to assist students in acquiring outside funding, i.e, funding from sources external to Rutgers University. GradFund lists over 3000 sources in its database: http://chaser.rutgers.edu Please see the contact information (page 4) for **Teresa Delcorso-Ellmann** if you would like specific guidance or more information. Remember that the larger external grants and fellowships can require an additional step of University approval for submission and thus must be submitted

through **ORSP,** the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP). Their website is http://orsp.rutgers.edu. In general, grants that pay overhead to Rutgers need to go through ORSP, and this requires ORSP approval several weeks in advance of the grant deadline. If you are uncertain whether a grant needs to be submitted through ORSP, Teresa Delcorso-Ellmann would be able to advise you.

- The **School of Graduate Studies (SGS)** funds several graduate awards which are listed at https://grad.rutgers.edu/funding . These awards include the **Bevier Fellowship**, which is offered annually to support 5th-year Ph.D students who are writing up their dissertation https://gsnb.rutgers.edu/awards/bevier, and **Conference Travel Awards** https://grad.rutgers.edu/funding/conference-travel-funding

Timeline for Ph.D Students

*Please note that before each milestone (Quals, Prelims, Thesis and PhD Defense), you must contact the Senior Program Administrator, Shaneika Nelson (s.nelson@rutgers.edu) to inform her of your plans.

First Year

- Begin taking Core Course Requirements. Advanced Ecology 601 (fall) and Advanced Evolution 602 (spring) is required of all first-year students. All first-year students should take a quantitative reasoning / analysis / mathematical modeling course; as of 2026, the Program recommends either Math/Computational Methods in Theoretical Biology (Bonachela) or Analytical Methods in EENR (Wiedenmann).
- Select your qualifying committee. In consultation with your advisor, a 4-person committee should be selected that includes your advisor (who is also the committee chair) plus three other Ecology and Evolution faculty members who have research expertise in areas relevant to your planned PhD. Your qualifying committee will administer your qualifying exam.
- Work with your advisor to identify your research topic. Generally, this will require working through several potential topics (reading, getting feedback on your ideas) during the fall and spring semesters. Many students conduct a pilot study on their topic during the summer.

Second Year

- Qualifying exam completed. Qualifying exams must be completed by the end of the second year. See the Program Administrator when you are ready to schedule your quals exam to obtain the necessary paperwork.
- Generally the research topic is refined in the second year, having been informed by analysis of the pilot data.

Third Year

- Select a Preliminary Exam Committee. The prelim exam committee again consists of four people, but typically students replace one of their quals committee members with a new, required, 'outside' member. Thus, your prelims committee consists of your advisor,

two Rutgers EE faculty members, and an outside member who can be from Rutgers (but is not a member of the EE grad program), or from another institution. The outside member does not have to be university faculty (though most often they are) but s/he does need to hold a Ph.D. See the Program Administrator when you are ready to schedule your quals exam to obtain the necessary paperwork.

- The preliminary exam should be scheduled for the third year or at the latest, the fall of the fourth year.

Fourth Year

- Focus on research, analysis, and dissertation writing

Fifth Year

- Dissertation writing.

Rutgers guarantees funding support for 5 years and many graduate students complete their Ph.D in 5 years. The student and the advisor must come up with funding support for the 6th year, if a 6th year is desired, as 6th year funding is not guaranteed by Rutgers, and in recent years has not been available (e.g., TA positions have not been allocated to 6th year students). The SGS will allow seven years after initial registration before they question your progress. At the beginning of your seventh year, you are required to apply for a one-year extension to be approved by the Scholastic Review Committee, the Program Director and the Dean of the Graduate School. The SGS will not allow a student to register after 9 years.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

It is important to note that the Ecology and Evolution Graduate Program requirements for Ph.D. and Master's students are more stringent than the School of Graduate Studies requirements. You must adhere to those of the E&E Program.

Completion Dates: These are the dates by which students must submit their final, revised-after-the-defense version of their dissertation, in order to receive their degree by one of the three annual 'degree dates.' These dates vary slightly with the calendar, but the general rule of thumb is:

April 1, for a May dated degree
October 1, for an October dated degree
January 6, for a January dated degree

The most up to date information regarding degree dates and other degree completion information can be found on the SGS website under Degree Application Checklists:
https://grad.rutgers.edu/academics/graduation

Credits

- **72 total credits** are required.
  30 or more Course and 24 or more Research. The combined total must be 72 to 75.
- No more than 12 credits of undergraduate level (300 and 400) total and no more than 6 of those 12 at the 300 level.

- Only one course with a grade of "C" will be counted toward your degree.
- All research credits must have a grade of "S".

GPA

- You must maintain a GPA of **3.0**

Transfer of Credits

- Credits can only be transferred after 9 matriculated credits have been completed successfully at Rutgers.
- Maximum 21 credits required for the Ph.D. can be transferred after completing the required 9 at Rutgers.
- A maximum of 12 credits from non-matriculated course work at Rutgers may be transferred.
- Only courses with a grade of "B" or better will be considered for transfer.
- Courses must meet the standards of graduate courses and cannot have been taken more than 6 years earlier.
- Approval must be obtained from the Program Director and the Dean of the SGS. You can email the Senior Program Administrator (Shaneika Nelson) to obtain the required form.
- Approval will be granted only for those courses pertinent to your field.

Core Course Requirements

- All students must complete Advanced Ecology (16:215:601) and Advanced Evolution 16:215:602 in their first year. In their first or second year, all students should take at least one quantitative reasoning / analysis / mathematical modeling course; as of 2026, the EE Program recommends either Math/Computational Methods in Theoretical Biology (Bonachela, 16:215:600:02) or Analytical Methods in EENR (Wiedenmann, 16:215:599:05). Additional courses meeting this requirement are expected to be offered starting in 2027 by incoming faculty D Klinges, and J Cohen.

Qualifying Examination (Quals)

To test the basic knowledge of ecology, evolution, and other fields pertinent to your anticipated area of specialization.

- The qualifying exam will over the course content for Advanced Ecology (601) and Advanced Evolution (602) as well as the quantitative course you elected to take.
- Additional subject areas will also be covered, depending on your committee members. Areas to be covered should be discussed with your committee at least 3 months prior to your exam.
- The Senior Program Administrator (Shaneika Nelson) must be notified in advance of your planned qualifying exam date. The Program Administrator can assist with providing the required form and reserving a room for the exam.
- The Qualifying Exam form can be found HERE. You may also contact the Program Administrator to request a fillable PDF of the form.
- Prior to your qualifying exam please complete the required form (Page 1 only). Do not sign the form. Your signature will be collected electronically. Submit the completed form to the Program Administrator. Electronic signatures are required. The Program Administrator will circulate the form to the appropriate committee members to obtain the required signatures. When submitting the form, please include the names and email

addresses of all qualifying exam committee members.

- Once you pass your qualifying exam, your advisor will notify the Program Administrator, who will then obtain the required signatures from you and your committee members. After all signatures have been collected, the Program Administrator will submit the form to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and notify you once it has been processed. At that point, you will officially transition from a PhD student to a PhD candidate.
- The qualifying exam in EE is typically an oral exam, but it can be written, or both oral and written; this is at the discretion of the chair of your committee.
- The committee consists of your advisor and three other members of the E&E graduate program faculty.
- A failed Qualifying Exam may be retaken once, at the discretion of your committee. A second failure will terminate your candidacy for your Ph.D.
- If the exam is held in person, you will need to communicate with the Program Administrator well in advance to reserve a suitable room for the exam.

Preliminary Examination (Prelims)

- To present a detailed written research proposal of your Ph.D. research for approval to your dissertation committee. This proposal should be presented to your committee **at least three weeks prior** to your exam date.
- At the beginning of your prelim proposal, you must have section title "Statement of AI Use." Please state in this section (1) what generative AI tools were used in preparation of the thesis, and (2) for what specific purpose(s) AI tools were used. Please address both writing- and coding-facing use of AI. For example, possible purposes might include: literature review or summary, brainstorming ideas, writing first draft, editing and revising written draft, de-bugging code, generating code. This statement can be short - one to a few sentences. If no AI tools were used, state that explicitly rather than omitting this section.
- Your dissertation committee consists of **your advisor, two other members of the E&E faculty and one person from outside the E&E program faculty**. This person can be from within Rutgers or from another institution entirely. The outside member must hold a Ph.D.
- The Senior Program Administrator (Shaneika Nelson) must be notified of your plan to take your qualifying exam in advance of the exam date. The administrator can assist you with getting the necessary forms signed, and with reserving a room for your exam.
- The proposal cannot be approved if there is more than 1 dissenting vote from the committee members.
- The outside member of your dissertation committee does not need to be present at your prelim exam but must approve the document.
- Committee members may be changed with the approval of your chair and the Program Director.
- Before your Preliminary Dissertation Examination, please email the Program Administrator to request a copy of the department's Preliminary Exam Form. Complete the appropriate sections of the form, including your name, advisor, proposal presentation date, committee members, and committee decision, and return it to the Program Administrator by email. Please include the names and email addresses of your committee members, as well as the institutional affiliation, professional title and Professional address of your outside committee member.

Students normally take their qualifying exam first and their preliminary exam at a later date. However, if your committee feels that you are advanced in your research, they may advise taking the preliminary exam first. This allows them to constructively assess your research before too much time has passed.

Dissertation

- **The actual dissertation must be in accordance with the School of Graduate Studies regulations**. Before drafting the document, get a copy of the style guide from the SGS online.
- The SGS holds workshops every semester on dissertation preparation. It is to your advantage to attend one of these workshops in the year before you plan to defend.
- Immediately after the Acknowledgements section in your submitted dissertation, you must have section title "Statement of AI Use." Please state in this section (1) what generative AI tools were used in preparation of the thesis, and (2) for what specific purpose(s) AI tools were used. Please address both writing- and coding-facing use of AI. For example, possible purposes might include: literature review or summary, brainstorming ideas, writing first draft, editing and revising written draft, de-bugging code, generating code. This statement can be short - one to a few sentences. If no AI tools were used, state that explicitly rather than omitting this section.
- A final draft should be presented to your **dissertation committee and the Program Director (cc to the Program Administrator) at least three weeks prior** to your defense. **If the committee or Program Director deems that the draft is not complete enough to defend, your defense will be postponed**.
- SGS must verify the format of the dissertation and any necessary changes must be made. If your committee wants more changes at the time of the defense, these changes must be incorporated into the final document.
- The final revised "perfect" dissertation must be turned in to the SGS on, or preferably before, the completion dates of early April, October 1 and January 6. The April and January dates may change yearly, so please check the SGS website for the current year. https://gsnb.rutgers.edu/academics/how-apply-degrees
- At least three months before your planned dissertation defense, please contact the Program Administrator to begin the defense process. The Program Administrator will send you a final defense email outlining the administrative steps and information needed to prepare for your defense. This will include, but is not limited to, the following:
    - Confirming the date and time of your public and closed-door defense.
    - Determining whether you need assistance reserving a room for the public and closed-door meetings.
    - Providing the information needed to prepare the defense announcement.
    - Reviewing your research and coursework requirements.
    - Provide the Final Defense Form, which you will need to complete and return to the program Administrator in advance of your defense, along with your dissertation title page.
- The Program Administrator will obtain the required committee signatures electronically. Once the form and title page has been signed, a copy of the completed signed documents will be sent to you so that you can submit your final documents to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS).
- Electronic submission of the dissertation is mandatory. The submission site is located on

the SGS website under Current Students. May degrees **must** be submitted by the April deadline.

- The Program Administrator can assist with questions as you navigate the final phase of your degree. Please keep the Program Administrator informed of your defense timeline so that the administrator can help you plan ahead and address any academic or administrative issues before they arise.
- You should follow the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) checklist as you complete the final steps toward your degree.

Dissertation Defense

- The dissertation defense is the public presentation, in the form of a 45-minute academic seminar talk, of the student's Ph.D dissertation research. Traditionally, EE students hold their defense in the Alampi Room of the Marine & Coastal Sciences Building.
- Right after the defense, the student and their committee hold a 'closed door session', generally in ENR 145, during which the committee discusses the content of the dissertation defense with the student. At the conclusion of this discussion, required revisions to the dissertation are agreed upon.
- Ideally, the committee chair and the defending student must be physically present at the final examination. All voting members of the committee must be present at and participate in final examinations (remote defenses are permissible if all committee members are present and synchronous over videoconference). As a crucial milestone in a student's doctoral experience at Rutgers and a significant event within the campus scholarly community, the final examination should ideally occur on campus. Final examinations are oral and open to the public.
- Obviously, you must schedule the defense at a time convenient for your committee members. Plan ahead, these people are very busy. "**Plan ahead**" means **months** not weeks in advance. **This cannot be stressed enough**.
- Submit the name and professional address (affiliation) of the outside member to the Program Administrator and the SGS for approval.
- Contact the Program Administrator for assistance with **scheduling a room** for your seminar and a room for your actual defense. The Program Administrator can help with this. Keep in mind that rooms book quickly at the end of the semester as people rush to defend, so **plan ahead**.
- It is ultimately up to the committee members to decide if they will allow a defense to be scheduled during the summer break. Scheduling your defense over the summer break is not encouraged by the program.

Master's Requirements

There are two options in the Master's Program.

Master's with Thesis

Credits

- **30 total credits** are required.
  24 course and **6 research**
- No more than 12 credits of undergraduate level courses (300 and 400) total and no more than 6 of those 12 at the 300 level.
- Only one course with a grade of "C" will be counted toward your degree.
- All research credits must have a grade of "S" (satisfactory)

GPA

- You must maintain a GPA of **3.0.**

Transfer of credits

- 9 credits must be completed (matriculated) at Rutgers before outside credits can be transferred.
- Maximum 40% of the total credits may be transferred from another institution or from non-matriculated course work at Rutgers.
- Only courses with a grade of "B" or better will be considered.
- Courses must meet the standards of graduate courses and cannot have been taken more than 6 years earlier.
- If you would like to transfer credits into the program, please contact the Program Administrator to discuss your plans after you have completed 9 credits in the program. The Program Administrator can review the available options with you and provide guidance on the transfer process, including any steps you need to take or additional information that may be required. The Program Administrator can also provide the appropriate transfer credit form and assist with obtaining any required program approvals and submitting the request to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) for review. Once a decision has been made, the Program Administrator will notify you of the outcome and, if the transfer is approved, let you know when the credits have been added to your academic record.
- Approval will be granted only for those courses pertinent to your field.

Core Course Requirements

- Advanced Ecology (601) and Advanced Evolution (602) are required of all first-year students.
- Also required is one quantitative reasoning / analysis / mathematical modeling

course; as of 2026, the EE Program recommends either Math/Computational Methods in Theoretical Biology (Bonachela, 16:215:600:02) or Analytical Methods in EENR (Wiedenmann, 16:215:599:05). Additional courses meeting this requirement are expected to be offered starting in 2027 by incoming faculty D Klinges, and J Cohen.

- Members of the students committee may require remedial course work, as they deem necessary. These may include classes that cannot be counted towards the degree.

Thesis and Committee

- The thesis committee consists of at **least three members of the E&E Program Faculty,** including your advisor**.**
- One extra committee member may be appointed from outside the faculty but is not necessary.
- Formatting guide can be found online.
- The Master's Degree Application can be found online at the SGS website under Current Students; Forms.
- Electronic submission of the thesis is mandatory. The final revised "perfect" thesis must be turned into the SGS on, or preferably before, the completion dates of early April, October 1 and January 6. The April and January dates may change yearly so please check the SGS website for the current year. https://gsnb.rutgers.edu/academics/how-apply-degrees
- The rules for completion of the degree can be found on the SGS website: https://gsnb.rutgers.edu/academics/how-apply-degrees. Please follow the directions on the top of the Master's form.
- Immediately after the Acknowledgements section in your submitted thesis, you must have section title "Statement of AI Use." Please state in this section (1) what generative AI tools were used in preparation of the thesis, and (2) for what specific purpose(s) AI tools were used. For example, possible purposes might include: literature review or summary, brainstorming ideas, writing first draft, editing and revising written draft, de-bugging code, generating code. If no AI tools were used, state that explicitly rather than omitting this section.

Non-thesis Master's

Credits

- **30 total course credits,** no research credits.
- No more than 12 credits can be selected from undergraduate level courses (300-400) and only 6 of those 12 can be from the 300 level.
- Only one course with a grade of "C" will be counted toward your degree.

GPA

- Must maintain a GPA of **3.0**

Transfer of credits

- 9 credits must be completed (matriculated) at Rutgers before outside credits can be transferred.
- Maximum 40% of the total credits may be transferred from another institution or from non-matriculated course work at Rutgers.
- Only courses with a grade of "B" or better will be considered.
- Courses must meet the standards of graduate courses and cannot have been taken more than 6 years earlier.
- If you would like to transfer credits into the program, please contact the Program Administrator to discuss your plans after you have completed 9 credits in the program.

The Program Administrator can review the available options with you and provide guidance on the transfer process, including any steps you need to take or additional information that may be required. The Program Administrator can also provide the appropriate transfer credit form and assist with obtaining any required program approvals and submitting the request to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) for review. Once a decision has been made, the Program Administrator will notify you of the outcome and, if the transfer is approved, let you know when the credits have been added to your academic record.

- Approval will be granted only for those courses pertinent to your field.
  to your field.

Core Course Requirements

- Advanced Ecology (601) and Advanced Evolution (602) are required of all first-year students.
- Also required is one quantitative reasoning / analysis / mathematical modeling course; as of 2026, the EE Program recommends either Math/Computational Methods in Theoretical Biology (Bonachela, 16:215:600:02) or Analytical Methods in EENR (Wiedenmann, 16:215:599:05). Additional courses meeting this requirement are expected to be offered starting in 2027 by incoming faculty D Klinges, and J Cohen.
- Members of the students committee may require remedial course work, as they deem necessary. These may include classes that cannot be counted towards the degree.

Committee and Essay

- The committee consists of **at least three members of the E&E Program Faculty,** including your advisor.
- Typically, the Non-thesis master's requires an essay be written that is evaluated by the committee. This essay does **not** need to be turned into the SGS with your candidacy form.
- Candidacy forms for the master's degree can be found online at the SGS website under Current Students; Forms; Master's Degree Application.
- Electronic submission of the form is mandatory. The form must be turned in to the SGS on, or preferably before, the completion dates of early April, October 1 and early to mid-January. The April and January dates may change yearly so please check the SGS website for the current year. https://gsnb.rutgers.edu/academics/how-apply-degrees
- Title page must be signed in **black ink** if the committee meets in person.
- The rules for completion of the degree can be found on the SGS website: https://gsnb.rutgers.edu/academics/how-apply-degrees Please follow the directions on the top of the Master's form.

Non-thesis Master's should be completed within two consecutive calendar years and is considered a terminal degree.

A student wishing to complete a Ph.D. after a Non-thesis master's will have to re-apply for admission to the Program and satisfy all admissions requirements.

General Information That Applies to All Students Regardless of Degree Sought

Registration Information

- **Full-time** is **9** credits.
- **TA**s must register for **6E** credits: **16:215:877**
- **GA**s must register for **6E** credits: **16:215:866**
- **Fellowships** must register for **16:215:811 with 0 credits**. This allows your fellowship to be recorded on your transcript for future reference. There is no other way for anyone looking at your transcript to know that you were on a Fellowship. **This is important information in the future**.
- **You may register for up to 16 credits**. This 16 includes your 6E for a TA or a GA.
- If you are taking under 16 credits in total with your TA/GA and courses, you can take up to the 16 by registering for **research credits (16:215:701 or 702)** with your advisor. (See below before you deice to do this).
- You should plan to complete your Ph.D. with the required 72 and not over to 75 credits. This will require some planning on your part to space out your credits over the usual 5 to 6-year period.
- If you are taking a **300-400 level course for graduate credit**, be sure to use the **G** prefix.
- If you are taking a course **"not for credit**", use the **N** prefix. You will do all the work but will not take the final exam and you will receive an S or U grade.
- **"N"** allows the course to show on your transcripts.
- If you simply ask the professor to let you sit in on the course (**audit**) and do not register, it will not show on your transcripts.
- **Matriculation Continued** requires a Special Permission number and is only to be used by pre-qual PhD students and master's students. Master's students can only use this designation **if they are not at the thesis writing stage. You can register for Matriculation Continued for a maximum of two semesters.** If you are writing your thesis, you must register for at least one research credit whether you are on campus or not.
- Once you have completed 71 credits (any combination of course and at least 24 research) you need register for only 1 research credit to be considered full-time by the SGS. However, if you register for only 1 research credit, you are considered part-time for the purposes of the campus health centers and most student loan companies. Therefore, if you plan to use the campus health centers, or need to defer loans, **please contact the Program Administrator** to complete the correct forms for the situation.
- If you need to be full-time for any reason other than health and student loans, contact the Program Admin for the SGS form that will allow this.

Continuous Registration

- You must remain registered every fall and spring semester, either with course and research credits or as Matriculation Continued as the situation warrants. **Summer session registration is not required.**
- **Matriculation Continued** is to be used only if you are on leave from your studies and are either a master's student or a pre-qualified Ph.D. Student. There is a two-semester limit on registering as Matriculation Continued.
- **One (1) research credit is** considered full-time by the SGS for all doctoral students who have completed 71 total degree credits in any combination.
- **Three (3) research credits** are required to be considered full-time by the SGS of students working at the University on dissertation or thesis-related research with less than 71 total credits.
- Any lapse in registration will require an Application for Re-admission form to be completed and approval of the Program Director and the Dean of the SGS, and the payment of a restoration fee.

Change of Status

- If you decide to change your degree status in any way, i.e., master's student to doctoral student or vice versa, a **Change of Status form must be sent to the SGS**.
- The form can be found online at the SGS website.
- It must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and the SGS.

Incomplete Grades

- Incomplete grades must be made up within one year (i.e., an incomplete in the fall semester must be completed by the end of the next fall semester). The SGS has become very strict about this policy so do not expect to be granted an extension.

DLS TA Information

- For all students that are applying for a DLS TA position for the next academic year, the required Endorsement Form **MUST** be signed by the **Graduate Program Director**. Instead of emailing the Graduate Program Director directly, please send your signed Endorsement Form via email to the Senior Program Administrator who will review the form and obtain the appropriate signature.

Annual Individual Development Plan

- An **IDP** must be completed by **ALL** students each year. The IDP is reviewed and approved by your advisor and the Graduate Program Director.
- Appropriate recommendations are made if requirements are not being met, if your GPA falls below 3.0, or other problems arise.
- Students may be placed on academic probation or dismissal from the program may be recommended based on the results of the IDP.

Advisory Committee/Qualifying Exam Committee Members

- Once your advisory committee has been decided upon, the names of the members should be given to the Program Administrator. In the case of Ph.D. students these faculty may or may not become your Qualifying Exam Committee. The Program Director must approve all committees. Please keep the Program Administrator apprised of any changes in your committee make-up. Those changes will be made known to the Graduate Program Director.

Change in Address, Phone or E-mail

- The Program Administrator should have your most current contact information at all times, both on and off campus. Please make it a priority to update the Program Administrator whenever your contact information changes.

Summer Research/Course Credits

- You may register for summer research or course credits. If you were a full-time TA in the previous two semesters (fall and spring) then you can register for up to 24 credits for the entire year. This will typically mean that you can register for 4 research or course credits over the summer and your TA tuition remission will cover these credits. This assumes you have registered for 10 course and research credits in each of the previous fall and spring semesters.
- If you are being supported as a **GA on an external grant** (NSF, NOAA, USDA etc) please check with your advisor and/or the business specialist handling your grant **BEFORE** registering for summer credits. The money for summer credits may not have been budgeted into the grant.
- One reason to register for summer research credits is that if you are planning on doing research or writing out-of-state after your qualifiers, you need to accrue as many research credits as possible (you will need 24 research credits to get your PhD) before you leave the state. Then you may register for 1 research credit while out-of-state, pay the student fees and the out-of-state tuition on one credit only. This could save you quite a bit of money. Your student fees are directly related to the number of credits you take, and your tuition is related to credits and whether you are in or out-of-state.
- You register for summer research credits through the summer session. If you do not see your advisor listed in the research section of the summer session, contact the Program Administrator for help.