

The Biological Sciences Graduate PhD Program requirements "at a glance"

Mentors and students should be aware of all requirements. Important deadlines are **highlighted**.

First year

- Coursework: 2-3 academic courses/semester, plus required Pre-Research Seminar (Fall). Start using the Tier worksheet to keep track of coursework and grades; students should consult a co-DGS if a grade of less than B is received in any course.
- Rotations: Fall, mid-Sept – mid-Dec; Winter, *no later than* Jan 8 – Mar 31; Spring, Apr 1 – June 30. The expectations are that 50%-80% effort is spent in the lab depending on the amount of coursework for the rotation period. Students and rotation mentors should discuss expectations and experimental goals at the start of the rotation, and will depend on the nature of the work and culture of the laboratory.
- **Lab choice: Commit no earlier than May 15; start in thesis lab by July 1.**

Second year

- Coursework: complete, or make a plan to complete, remaining academic course requirements, plus required Ethics (Fall) and Writing (Spring) courses.
- **Qualifying Exam (QE): complete by June 30.** Committee must contain two Program members.
- Teach/TA at least one semester.
- Submit MA application by December 1.

MA requirements must be completed by May of second year:

- 12 credits of coursework with minimum GPA of 3.0.
- 1 year of research in thesis lab.

Third year

- **First thesis committee meeting to be held six months after QE.** An out-of-program member may be added at this time.
- First written progress report **six months** later (1 year from QE).
- Complete Teaching/TA requirement of 2 semesters.
- If MPhil requirements are complete, fill MPhil Worksheet, Check list and Application to submit to Sarah.
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Fourth year

- Second committee meeting to be held **1 year** after first thesis committee meeting.
- Second written progress report **six months** later.

MPhil requirements must be completed by May of the fourth year, as per GSAS rules:

- All required coursework with minimum GPA of 3.0. See Tier worksheet.
- Two semesters of Teaching/TA.
- Passed QE.
- MPhil Worksheet, Check list and Application to submit to Sarah by 10 am first Friday in May.

Fifth year and beyond

- Thesis committee meetings every six months.
- Thesis defense committees must conform to GSAS requirements.

More details

- Program Handbook: <https://biology.columbia.edu/content/graduate-student-handbook>
- Tier Worksheet: <https://biology.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/forms%20and%20files/Worksheet-tier-credit-requirements.pdf>
- MPhil Worksheet: <https://biology.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/forms%20and%20files/MPhil-checklist.pdf>
- GSAS Policies: <https://www.gsas.columbia.edu/content/policy-handbook>
- MA, MPhil, Qual, Committee meeting forms: <https://biology.columbia.edu/content/forms-phd>