Grad School Processes and Procedures

Disclaimer: Grad School Handbook and University Policies and Regulations provide definitive advice
Graduate Handbook


Rules, regulations and procedures of the Graduate School

It's your responsibility to know the requirements of your degree, the procedures, processes, rules and regulations that govern your progress.
Biomath Website

- [http://www.ncsu.edu/biomath](http://www.ncsu.edu/biomath)

- **Resources** page lists program’s degree requirements and has other information
University Rules and Regulations

- http://policies.ncsu.edu

- Code of Student Conduct
- Anti-discrimination and Anti-Harassment

- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)
  http://ncsu.edu/grad/rcr/requirements.html
  http://ncsu.edu/grad/rcr/programs.html

- If you’re supported on a research grant, you will need to complete an RCR course. You should get an email about this
The Players and Their Roles

• You
  Primarily responsible for progress and knowing process

• First Year Advisor
  Assisting you in finding research mentor
  Guiding course choices

• Research mentor(s) (committee chair/co-chairs)
  Guiding research program
  Guiding course choices
  Assisting you in assembling thesis committee, navigating process

• Committee members
  Variable responsibilities

• Director of Graduate Program (DGP)
  Backup guidance, dealing with issues, sign-off on forms, liaising with Graduate School, other admin
Initial Admin

- Submission of degree transcript(s)

- Patent agreement (one per degree)
  Can be issues if you have a research-related employer
  modified patent agreement might be needed
GSSP

- GSSP covers tuition (in-state and out-of-state) and health insurance
- Need to be on a qualifying appointment (TA/RA/fellowship)
- Need to be enrolled full-time [see upcoming slide]
- Time limited: covers tuition for expected duration of your degree (2 years for Masters; 5 years for PhD from BS; 4 years PhD from MS)
  Health insurance benefit continues even if you time out of tuition
- Summer tuition is not covered
- Health insurance typically continues over summer. Need to take some care if source of funding changes (e.g. RA/fellowship to/from TA)
  If you get an email saying that your health insurance is being terminated, let us know. Some admin might be needed. Insurance sometimes gets added retroactively

http://go.ncsu.edu/gssp for full details
GSSP: Residency

- For precise details on all this, see elsewhere… [http://go.ncsu.edu/ncres](http://go.ncsu.edu/ncres)

- Out of state students are encouraged to become NC residents

- For students who are eligible to become NC residents (basically, US people) GSSP will only cover out of state tuition from third semester onwards if you have made a **good faith residency application** by the appropriate deadline in that semester

- Residency application deadline is 10th day of classes (Fall/Spring)

- For good faith application, you need to have completed some residentiary acts one year before you apply: this essentially means by the end of your first August if you start in Fall. *Grad School is tightening up on this.*


(Take care if you register to vote by mail that your application was received!)
Health Insurance

- UNC System demands that students have health insurance
- GSSP takes care of this for most students
- Non-GSSP eligible students who have health insurance, or students who have other health insurance, need to complete online health insurance waiver or else will be enrolled in a standard student health insurance policy and be charged for it
Assistantship and Fellowship Payments

• Assistantship payments come through payroll system

• Fellowship payments come through financial aid system

• The two have separate processes for registering your bank details taxed differently (deducted automatically vs not), although both might be taxable

• Some wrinkles for fellowship holders: might not be able to pay for parking permit via payroll deduction
Other occasional wrinkles (e.g. travel authorization)… see us about these
Enrollment

• Full-time enrollment: usually 9 CR  **does not include audits**
  
  Rule changes for thesis/dissertation degrees when you are close to required number of credits:

  … full time if they take at least 9 CR/sem. until the sem. in which a course load of at least 3 CR will reach an accumulated total equal to the minimum number of hours required by their program. Will continue to be considered full time until complete thesis/dissertation, as long as they enroll for at least 3 CR.

• Half time: 4.5 CR [important if you have outstanding student loans]

• Need not enroll for summer sessions **unless** you plan on taking final exam over the summer or submit thesis/dissertation (BMA 696/896)

• **CRUCIAL** to be properly enrolled on Census Day (10\textsuperscript{th} day of classes during Fall/Spring) or else GSSP eligibility will be affected

• Can drop classes after Census Day, but need to stay full-time
  
  We used to be able to switch people to research credits after Census Day, but they are looking more carefully at this.

  **Drop day is roughly 2 months in**
Enrollment

- Enrollment deadline and late enrollment fine/fee

- 10 year time limit (PhD); 6 year time limit (Masters)

- Need to maintain enrollment or else your program is terminated, unless you take a leave of absence (up to one year on one occasion)

- There is some maternity leave provision (perhaps family leave?)

- Leave of absence must be requested ahead of time

- Possibility of withdrawing from semester in case of major crisis

- Leave of absence doesn’t stop 10/6 year time clock
Thesis Advisory Committee

- PhD committee has at least 4 members (3 for Masters):
  - Committee chair (research advisor)
    Has to be a full member of Biomath Graduate Faculty
    (might only be clear when you try entering your committee)
    We do have some options, so come and see me about this
  - Minor representative: if you plan on taking a minor
    Faculty can serve dual roles
  - Regular member
    Variable responsibilities
    might be included because of particular expertise
  - Graduate school representative
    Impartial member, to make sure process (e.g. exams) are fair
  - Local institutions; external members; some other oddities
    might need to see me about these
PhD Coursework

- Short version:
  4 Biomath courses (771, 772, 773*, 774)
  3 Biology courses
  Statistics course (ST 512R* or 511/512)
  3 Mathematical Sciences courses
  Seminar for credit 3 times
  (but attendance expected every semester)

These are a minimum: advisor/committee may require more

72 CR (incoming Bachelor’s), 54 CR (incoming Master’s)

Remainder of credit hours come from research credit: typically sign up for BMA 893 (variable credit from 1 to 9 CR/semester)
Masters Coursework

- Short version:
  3 Biomath courses (771, 772, 773*, 774)
  2 Biology courses
  Statistics course (ST 512R* or 511/512)
  2 Mathematical Sciences courses
  Seminar for credit 2 times
    (but attendance expected every semester)

These are a minimum: advisor/committee may require more

At least 30 CR

MS: written thesis; MBMA: project plus additional course

Remainder of credit hours come from research credit: typically sign up for BMA 693 (variable credit from 1 to 9 CR/semester)

Can be taken “enroute” to the PhD; can extend Masters to PhD
PhD Process

NC STATE
The Graduate School

Timeline for Doctoral Student Success
Brought to you by Thesis and Dissertation Support Services (TDSS)
go.ncsu.edu/tdss

Coursework
More dependent work
- Meet faculty in your program
- Attend "Forming an Advisory Committee" seminar
- Attend orientation
- Complete your Graduate Plan of Work

Preliminary Exams
- Attend "Communicating Effectively with Your Committee" seminar
- Attend "Dissertation 101" seminar
- Take preliminary exams (written and/or oral)
- Attend "Dissertation Proposal" workshop

Dissertation
More independent work
- Attend dissertation proposal approved
- Attend Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) workshop
- Attend "Writing Your Dissertation in 15 Minutes a Day" workshop
- Attend "Planning for Your Dissertation Defense" seminar
- Get dissertation proposal approved
- Attend "Writing Your Dissertation Proposal" seminar

Committee and ETD revisions
- Attend Dissertation Institute
- Attend Dissertation Defense seminar
- Join the Dissertation Completion Community
- Join a dissertation support group
- Attend Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) workshop

Dissertation defense
- Attend Dissertation defense
- Attend "Communicating Effectively with Your Committee" seminar
- Attend "Planning for Your Dissertation Defense" seminar
- Attend "Writing Your Dissertation in 15 Minutes a Day" workshop
- Attend "Dissertation Proposal" workshop

Please note: This timeline is offered as a suggested guideline for doctoral student success, and all milestones are approximate. Each doctoral program has different requirements and timelines, so be sure to consult and follow the specific ones of your own program.
Timeline for Doctoral Student Success

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**Enrollment**
- Meet faculty in your program
- Attend orientation
- Attend “Forming an Advisory Committee” seminar
- Form an advisory committee

**Coursework**
- Explore resources on Thesis and Dissertation Support Services
- Attend “Dissertation 101” seminar
- Attend “Writing Your Dissertation Proposal” workshop
- Take preliminary exams (written and/or oral)
- Get dissertation proposal approved

**Research**
- Attend Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) workshop
- Join the Dissertation Completion Community
- Attend “Writing Your Dissertation in 15 Minutes a Day” workshop
- Attend “Planning for Your Dissertation Defense” seminar

**Dissertation**
- Attend Dissertation Institute
- Dissertation defense Committee
- Attend “Communicating Effectively with Your Committee” seminar
- Join a dissertation support group
- Attend orientation

**Legend**
- Student actions
- TDSS programming
- Other NC State resources

**Relevant information on BMA ‘Resources’ page:**

**Administration**

- **Progress Reports:** GSOARS (online academic report system) information, including a link to the GSOARS system.
- **Student Committees and Exams:** Information on the make-up of student (advisory/thesis) committees and the exam process
- **SIS/MyPackPortal Manual:** SIS manual for graduate students. (15 pages)
  - Contains information on how to enter your committee and plan of work online. Also gives instructions on how to apply for graduation.
Graduate Plan of Work (GPoW)

- You should have a plan for your coursework
don’t want to be taking courses randomly!
- Formalized via Graduate Plan of Work (PoW/GPoW)
- Entered online in MyPackPortal
- Select committee members
- Enter courses and indicate major/minor/etc
  - Can select from courses already taken/in progress or propose courses for future semesters
  - Include research credits to bring up to 72(54)+ CR
- Submit plan of work: **by time you have completed 18 CR (PhD)**
  - Committee members accept roles and sign off on PoW
  - DGP signs off, ST minor DGP signs off
  - Grad School signs off
- **Plan of work can be edited at a later date**
- “SIS manual” has information on how to do all this in the system
Graduate Plan of Work (GPoW)

- Grad School expects plan of work to be completed no later than when 18CR have been completed (PhD) or halfway to Masters.
- They have not enforced this rule, but looks like they will start doing so.
- At present, the first time they check is when you put in paperwork for exams. This is later than ideal, so it is a good idea to get a jump on this.
- Plan of work can be edited.
- Committee members can be added or substituted. Process is relatively straightforward, but does require a paper form.
Annual Progress Reports

- Graduate School requires annual progress reports be completed by students, signed-off by advisor and DGP

- They have not enforced this rule, but looks like they will start doing so

- Grad School has the GSOARS (Graduate Student Online Academic Reporting System) system

  MyPackPortal->Main Menu->Student Self Service->Student->Degree Progress/Graduation->GSOARS
  
  [http://ncsu.edu/grad/current-students/gsoars-students.html](http://ncsu.edu/grad/current-students/gsoars-students.html)
Exams (Masters)

- Master’s Oral Exam (for both MBMA and MS)
  - Pass/conditional pass*/fail
  - As with other exams, it’s up to you to make sure this happens, but consult advisor over timing
  - Format: oral presentation, questions from committee
    - Presentation may be open to others, if so, there would be a separate open question session
  - Need to schedule exam: arrange time with committee, find room

Paperwork to Grad School (via DGP)
Exams (PhD)

1. Written Preliminary Exam

   Pass/fail

   Taken roughly when coursework is complete (2 to 2.5 yrs)

   As with other exams, it’s up to you to make sure this happens, but consult advisor over timing

   Format: Each member of committee sets a question, taken in turn

   Questions: typically take 1-5 days each; could be coursework-based, lit. review, small research question, grant/project proposal…

   Committee member reviews answer, option to give feedback and ask for revisions; could fail you if unsatisfactory

   Advisor runs this process, reports outcome to DGP (Grad School not involved)
Exams (PhD)

• 2. Preliminary Oral Exam
  Pass/conditional pass*/fail [leave program]

  Format: oral presentation, questions from committee
  Presentation may be open to others, if so, there would be
  a separate open question session

  Questions can be on presentation, but also broader
  might suggest need for additional coursework

  Usually have some written work for committee to see and a plan for
  progressing to completion (i.e. outline of dissertation chapters)
  Chance to make sure committee members are on same page

Timing varies: better not to leave it too late.
  Required courses must be completed

Need to schedule exam: arrange time with committee, find room
Paperwork to Grad School (via DGP)
Exams (PhD)

3. Final Oral Exam
   No less than 4 months after an unconditionally passed prelim
   Pass/conditional pass/fail [leave program]
   Format: as for prelim exam oral exam
   Presentation is open to others “from university community”,
   with a separate open question session
   Completed dissertation: university has required format
   Committee should be sent dissertation at least 2 weeks before exam

Need to schedule exam: arrange time with committee, find room
  **Paperwork to Grad School (via DGP)**
Need to be enrolled for semester in which you take exam : may require
  enrollment in special BMA 696/896 1CR summer course
ETD Review Process

4. After getting an unconditional pass on Final Oral Exam, submit dissertation online within 24 hours “initial ETD review”

This should be the version of dissertation that committee saw.

ETD review is purely a formatting check.

Once initial ETD review occurs, you need not enroll for future semesters.

You will have opportunity to submit final version (address formatting issues and make minor changes to content).

Committee then reviews and signs off on final version.
Timing of Exams and ETD

• Several deadlines:
  • Mid-semester deadline for initial ETD review if you want to graduate that semester
  • Day before new semester: deadline for initial ETD review to avoid having to register for new semester

• Timing of final oral exam typically governed by these deadlines (have exam a week or two before these… later at your peril!)

• Graduation deadlines:
  • Last date to apply to graduate
  • Last date for final ETD review
  • (Date for committee to sign off on ETD, etc)
Apply to Graduate

• One final piece of administration: apply to graduate

• Happens online, via MyPackPortal

• Do this ahead of time: you need not wait until you have received an unconditional pass

• Finally: graduate ceremonies (departmental and university)
  Departmental ceremony held with math in SAS Hall, DGP introduces BMA graduates
  University ceremony held at RBC Arena
# Grad School Checklist

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<th>Task</th>
<th>Non-Thesis Master's Student</th>
<th>Thesis Master's Student</th>
<th>Doctoral Student</th>
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<td>Submit degree-stated, official transcripts from universities and colleges attended</td>
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<td>Enrollment &amp; Coursework</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisory Committee selection (pg. 19)</td>
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<td>Check with Dept.</td>
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<td>Graduate Plan of Work submission (pg. 19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit request to schedule the Master's Oral Exam (pg. 19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request to schedule the Preliminary Oral Exam (pg. 19)</td>
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<td>Request to schedule the Final Oral Exam (pg. 19)</td>
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<td>Apply to Graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft submission of thesis or dissertation is due (pg. 22)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final, error-free, thesis or dissertation is due (pg. 22)</td>
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<td>Apply for Graduation</td>
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Traveling on University Business?

• Need to complete travel authorization (through MyPackPortal) two weeks in advance if you intend to get reimbursed by a university or grant source.

• Should complete travel authorization even if you don’t.

• Non-employees (i.e. non TA/RA, possibly fellow) will likely need to get GSC to complete authorization.
Advice

- Graduate School’s planner for new students has a lot of this information
- Graduate School has lots of resources to help you along your path

Graduate handbook and other links mentioned previously

Graduate calendar; Academic Calendar
http://registrar.ncsu.edu/calendars/academic/
http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/faculty-and-staff/academic-calendar.html

Thesis and Dissertation Support Services
http://www.ncsu.edu/grad/dss/

Preparing future leaders  http://pfl.grad.ncsu.edu
preparing the professoriate
Advice

- You need to take responsibility and control: be proactive

- Check through policies and regulations in Grad School Handbook
  check with advisor and/or DGP if anything is unclear

- Take care in finding advisor and research project
  needs to be of interest
  pair needs to be a good match

- Don’t let time slide by

- Advisor should be your first port of call; other students can often help

- Remember that DGP is here to help (for students and advisors)