

GRADUATE HANDBOOK  
FOR  
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES



DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES  
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING  
TECHNOLOGY  
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Revised Fall 2020

## GRADUATE STUDENT CONTRACT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have received a copy of the Graduate Handbook from the Department of Biological Sciences. I understand that I am expected to abide by all policies, deadlines, and time lines set forth both in this handbook and those found in the Graduate Catalog, Schedule of Classes, and Thesis Requirements. I also acknowledge that it is **my** responsibility, and not the Graduate Coordinator nor members of my advisory committee, to see that I meet these obligations and deadlines. Additionally, I agree that my admission status as well as any financial support by the Department of Biological Sciences and College of Science and Engineering Technology may be withdrawn should it be found that I have not followed these policies in good faith.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Graduation (Semester, Year): \_\_\_\_\_

### Contact Information:

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Local Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## GRADUATE DATA CONTRACT

I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to regularly back up on multiple hard drives my data, prospectus, thesis, Powerpoints, etc. I acknowledge that the loss of my data will not be accepted as a valid excuse for failing to meet the deadlines outlined in the Graduate Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

## APPLICATION / ACCEPTANCE PROCEDURES

**Regular Admission.** Requirements for regular admission to the graduate school are set forth in the Graduate Catalog and are summarized below (see the Graduate Catalog for more detailed information):

### A. Program Admission Requirements

1. A minimum undergraduate GPA, from the baccalaureate granting institution, of 2.5 (on a 4 point scale).
2. Applicants from non-English speaking countries must present a score of at least 78 on the Internet-based (iBT), 550 on the paper version (PBT), or 213 on the computer version (CBT) of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

### B. MS Program in Biological Sciences

1. Meet program admission requirements as listed above.
2. An undergraduate degree in biology or closely related field. Those applicants having an undergraduate degree in a discipline other than biology or a closely related field must successfully complete ecology (BIOL 3409) and genetics (BIOL 3450) or equivalent courses prior to being considered for regular admission. An undergraduate minor in the biological sciences, including ecology and genetics, is strongly recommended. The requirement for ecology and genetics will be waived if a student scores 70% or better on the genetics and ecology sections of the MFAT exam. This exam must be taken within the first two weeks of entering the graduate program.
3. For regular admission to the graduate program, applicants must also have a GRE score and undergraduate GPA in concordance with the following formula:  $\{[(200 * \text{GPA}) + \text{Averaged GRE \% ranking}] > 300\}$ . For a final admission decision, GRE scores and undergraduate GPA do not constitute the primary criteria to end consideration of an applicant. Applicants with a composite score of less than 300 using the above formula may still be considered for admission based on all pertinent information provided to the committee.
4. Two letters of recommendation from faculty in the undergraduate major field of study.

**\*Conditional Admission.** An applicant whose records are incomplete may be granted conditional admission. Such students will be classified as conditional graduate students until all records are complete and all regular admission requirements are fulfilled. Conditional admission allows for the completion of **no more than six hours** of graduate credit and is valid for only **one semester**. All requirements for regular admission must be met prior to enrollment for more than six hours graduate credit.

**\*Probationary Admission.** An applicant whose records are complete but who did not qualify for regular admission can be granted **probationary admission** with department recommendation and approval from the Dean of the College of Science and Engineering Technology. The student is allowed to enroll in graduate courses (maximum 12 hours) to demonstrate he/she can perform at the graduate level. Students must earn a grade of “B” or better in each course taken under probationary status in order to be considered for regular admission. The student may be required to retake the GRE on the advisement of the Graduate Committee.

**\*Preparatory Admission.** A degree-seeking applicant that does not qualify for regular admission and needs to complete one or more stem courses may be granted preparatory admission.

\*Please note that conditional, probationary and preparatory admission does not guarantee regular admission once deficiencies are met. Only regularly admitted students are eligible for College of Science and Engineering Technology Teaching Assistantship positions.

**Post Baccalaureate Admission or Non-Degree Admission.** **Post baccalaureate classification** is assigned to students possessing a Baccalaureate Degree and that have not been regularly admitted or conditionally admitted into a graduate program, and could be classified as non-degree seeking. **Non-degree admission** may be granted to a student who does not intend to pursue a graduate degree but who wishes to take courses for professional advancement, licensure, certification, or self-education purposes, and who holds a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited university.

**International students** must meet the same requirements for admission and candidacy as students from the United States, including GRE scores. In addition, an original evaluation of foreign education credentials is required (formal transcript evaluation), as well as proof of financial support. International students are eligible only for regular admission status.

**Transfer Credit.** A total of nine (9) credit hours may be transferred to SHSU from another accredited graduate program at the discretion of the Graduate Coordinator and the Dean. Transfer credit is not automatically conferred and must be requested by the Graduate Coordinator using a form found on the Office of Graduate Studies website. Only courses with an earned grade of “B” or better may be used as transfer credit. Transferred courses must adhere to the six-year time frame (i.e. courses may not be older than six years at the time of completion of the degree). Exceptions to the six-year rule require approval by the Graduate Coordinator, Dean of the college, and Dean of Graduate Studies.

## TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Teaching Assistantships are available through the Department of Biological Sciences in conjunction with the College of Science and Engineering Technology and the Office of Graduate Studies. They are limited in number and awarded on a competitive basis. An Application for Teaching Assistantship should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator at the time of application into the program. Applications are available from Ms. Ericka Dupclay in the Department of Biological Sciences main office (LSB 105). Assistantships are typically awarded for a total of four semesters. A fifth semester of support is possible with approval by the Graduate Committee and Dean. In order to be eligible for a fifth semester of support the student must have turned in their prospectus by their third semester and completed their comprehensive exam by their fourth semester. Students must make satisfactory progress and adhere to all deadlines or risk losing their teaching assistantship. All assistantship awards will be made on a competitive basis by approval of the Graduate Committee. Students that are awarded assistantships will receive a letter from the COSET Dean and notification from the Biological Sciences Graduate Coordinator. Those students awarded assistantships are required to submit additional paperwork to Ms. Ericka Dupclay in the Department of Biological Sciences main office (LSB 105).

In addition, the office of the Dean of the College of Science and Engineering Technology offers a one-time scholarship for first-time master's students which is only paid out in conjunction with a Teaching Assistantship. These cannot be separated. First-time master's students awarded an assistantship for the fall semester are given \$2,000 that is split between the fall and spring semester. This is the only time we will automatically award this scholarship. First-time master's students awarded an assistantship for the spring semester are given \$1,000 that is split awarded in the spring semester. This is the only time we will automatically award this scholarship.

Failure to adhere to departmental policy may result in termination of the teaching assistantship based on noncompliance.

**All students who have been awarded a Teaching Assistantship are required to attend the Office of Graduate Studies New Graduate Student Orientation during their first semester in the program, as well as the Department of Biological Sciences TA Training held at the beginning of each fall and spring semester.**

## HOURLY TEACHING POSITIONS

Students not awarded Teaching Assistantships may still be eligible to teach laboratories on an hourly basis. Students interested in hourly teaching positions should contact Ms. Lori Rose, the freshman laboratory coordinator in the Department of Biological Sciences (bio\_lah@shsu.edu, LSB 200B).

## SCHOLARSHIPS

The College of Science and Engineering Technology (COSET) **Graduate Recruitment Scholarship** is a \$1000 competitive scholarship awarded to outstanding students entering their first semester of a COSET master's program at SHSU and who have not been awarded a graduate assistantship.

To be considered for the COSET Graduate Recruitment Scholarship, a student must be accepted into a master's program in the College of Science and Engineering Technology, be entering their first semester in the program, and plan to be a full-time student. Nominations for the scholarship will be accepted from SHSU faculty, or students may self-nominate. An international student applying for the scholarship must have a transcript evaluation on file with the COSET Dean's office (transcript evaluations by qualified SHSU faculty are acceptable). Applicants will be evaluated by their cumulative GPA and GRE scores.

*An application can be found [here](#), and applications must be scanned and emailed to Ms. Shellie Armstrong at [sda006@shsu.edu](mailto:sda006@shsu.edu) by 5:00 pm on the day of the deadline. Paper applications will not be accepted.*

The **Graduate Achievement Scholarship** is a \$1000 competitive scholarship awarded to students demonstrating outstanding academic progress in a COSET master's program. To be considered for the COSET Graduate Achievement Scholarship, a student must be enrolled full-time in a master's program in the College of Science and Engineering Technology and have an SHSU graduate GPA. Students in their first year of a COSET graduate program who have been awarded a graduate assistantship are not eligible for the scholarship.

Complete applications require:

- 1) a personal statement from the applicant describing their academic progress toward the degree, including planned graduation date, and progress on the thesis or capstone project (where applicable), and
- 2) a letter of evaluation from the applicant's major advisor or graduate program coordinator describing the applicant's progress toward the degree and overall performance in the graduate program.

**Applicants must email their personal statement to Anne Gaillard ([argaillard@shsu.edu](mailto:argaillard@shsu.edu)) with Graduate Achievement Scholarship in the subject line by 5:00 pm on the day of the deadline.**

**The letter of evaluation must be emailed directly from the applicant's major advisor or graduate program coordinator to Anne Gaillard ([argaillard@shsu.edu](mailto:argaillard@shsu.edu)) by 5:00 pm on the day of the deadline.**

The application deadline for the Fall scholarship is **July 1<sup>st</sup>**, and the application deadline for the Spring scholarship is **December 1<sup>st</sup>**.

In addition, the Office of Graduate Studies offers a \$1000 scholarship each fall, spring, and summer semester. Application information can be found on the Office of Graduate Studies website.

The Department of Biological Sciences also has scholarships available to graduate students. Students should complete an application via Scholarships4Kats to apply.

## **HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE**

Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants employed half-time (20 hours per week) are eligible to receive a 50% discount on health insurance through the university. Students should contact Human Resources for more information.

## **TRAVEL SUPPORT FOR SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS**

The Office of Graduate Studies has funds available to support travel to scientific meetings. To be eligible, students must be traveling to an event sponsored by a professional organization and must be presenting their research in the form of an oral or poster presentation. Travel funds are limited and are awarded on a competitive basis. Contact the Graduate Coordinator and the Office of Graduate Studies for more information.

## **BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION**

The role of the Biological Sciences Graduate Student Organization (BSGSO) is to foster the interests of the graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences, to promote and support academic and social activities of interest to graduate students, and to serve as a liaison between the graduate students, faculty, staff, and other organizations. Membership in the BSGSO is free and is automatic with acceptance into the graduate program in the Department of Biological Sciences, but participation is voluntary.

For more information see BSGSO on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/640644636006531/>



## CREDIT HOUR RESTRICTIONS

**The normal course load** (to be a full-time student) is 9-12 credit hours per full semester and 6 credit hours in the summer. Increased academic loads must be approved by the Dean. Other limitations include:

1. University Teaching Assistants and Research Assistants employed half-time (20 hours per week): The required academic load is 6 to 9 credit hours per semester for fall and spring semester.\*
2. Financial aid requires students to be enrolled in 18 hours per calendar year and at least 6 hours during each regular (fall and spring) semester.

\* Students who enroll in BIOL 6398 or BIOL 6099 for the summer should enroll in the 10-week sections of those courses in order to maintain full-time student status for the summer.

3. Students who wish to use university resources, including access to the library and research facilities, during the summer must be enrolled in at least one credit hour for the summer or be employed by SHSU for the summer.

## BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR MASTERS OF SCIENCE DEGREE

**Graduate Coordinator.** Dr. James Harper, LSB 300E, [jmharper@shsu.edu](mailto:jmharper@shsu.edu), serves as the Graduate Coordinator for all students seeking an MS degree in the Department of Biological Sciences. The Graduate Coordinator oversees the official academic records of all graduate students. The Graduate Coordinator is also the contact person for graduate students submitting any official paperwork. It is recommended that you report to the Graduate Coordinator each time you need to file a document. The Graduate Coordinator will assist you with course selection until you have chosen your major advisor and advisory committee.

**Program Requirements.** Students must complete BIOL 5301 and 5302 within their first two semesters of course work. BIOL 5301 should be taken first.

**Students are required to attend the weekly Departmental Seminar Series.** A checklist/sign-in sheet will be maintained to monitor graduate student attendance at seminar unless otherwise indicated.

**Adherence to program procedures and deadlines, and satisfactory progress is necessary for continuance of teaching assistantship support and enrollment in the graduate program.**

Failure to adhere to departmental policy may result in termination based on noncompliance. An official checklist will be kept in each student's graduate file. At the end of each semester, the Graduate Committee will meet to review graduate student compliance with program policies. Should any student be discovered to be non-compliant, a disciplinary hearing for the student will be held with the Graduate Committee to determine a course of action.

**Degree Documentation.** Each student is responsible for submitting the necessary paperwork to the Graduate Coordinator in a timely manner. The attached time-table and checklist should be used for reference. Please note that deadlines for the Department of Biological Sciences be earlier than the deadlines in the Graduate Catalog, Schedule of Classes, or Dean's office in some cases.

**Graduate Student Evaluation.** Each graduate student is required to complete a Graduate Student Evaluation form every semester enrolled. It is to be turned in to the Graduate Coordinator by the 11<sup>th</sup> week of every semester. It requires an evaluation by the student as well as the advisor and TA supervisor (when applicable). Failure to complete and file this form will result in the committee's inability to provide additional TA support if requested.

**Major Advisor.** Each student is to choose a faculty member from the Department of Biological Sciences at SHSU as a Major Advisor (see Appendix for Advisor – Student Agreement form), **by the end of the first semester**, to guide him or her in their graduate program. The identification of a Major Advisor is not required for admittance. The Major Advisor will serve as the chairperson of the student's Advisory Committee and will be responsible for advising the student on course choices and research efforts. A signature from the Major Advisor or the Graduate Coordinator is required on all official paperwork. Per University policy, the Major Advisor must have Master's level graduate faculty status or higher. Should the student's Major Advisor change, a revised Advisor-Student Agreement form (see Appendix) should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator. The former Major Advisor must be notified of this change by the student, and permission must be granted by the former advisor for the student to use any intellectual property belonging to the former advisor.

**Advisory Committee.** With the assistance of the Major Advisor, the student will select a minimum of two other faculty members from the Department of Biological Sciences at SHSU to comprise their Advisory Committee. A fourth member of the Advisory Committee may be selected if desired; this faculty member may be outside of the department or University. If the Committee member is outside of the University, that member must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies to serve on the committee (see the Office of Graduate Studies website to complete a form to request approval). Per University policy, Advisory Committee members must have Associate level graduate faculty status or higher. The Advisory Committee must be selected **by the end of the second semester** and an Advisory Committee form must be submitted at this time. It is the role of the Advisory Committee, working in concert with the student, to establish an appropriate course sequence and plan of research to attain the student's goals. The student **must** meet with their Advisory Committee **bi-annually** (approximately every six months) and prepare a progress report for committee approval. A Record of Bi-Annual Committee Meeting form (see Appendix) should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator following each meeting. Should the student's Advisory Committee change, a revised Advisory Committee form should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.

**Course Requirements.** A list of appropriate courses is found in the Graduate Catalog. However, each Master's program may be tailored to fit the needs and interests of each individual student. The degree requires 30 hours of course work, which includes 6 hours of thesis credit. Should a student elect to include a minor, the degree includes 36 hours of course work (12 hours are taken in the minor field). **Q-drops are not permitted for graduate students in the Biological Sciences.**

Students may petition to have courses outside of the degree plan be applied toward their MS Biology degree. Students should petition in writing to the Graduate Coordinator, providing justification as to why the course is important for the student's thesis project/academic goals/career goals, etc. A decision regarding the student's petition will be made by the Graduate Committee, and approval is also required of both the Department Chair and Dean of the College of Science and Engineering Technology.

BIOL 6398 and 6099. At least **six credit hours** (but more is permissible) of the degree must be dedicated to thesis research hours, with at least 3 credit hours taken in 6398 and at least three taken in 6099. Graduate students may not enroll in thesis hours until the prospectus has been approved by the thesis committee and submitted to the COSET Dean's office. Once the requirement of six credit hours has been reached, the student **must enroll** in one credit hour of BIOL 6099 every semester until graduation. PLEASE NOTE: Students must maintain at least a half-time enrollment status (or six credit hours) to receive federal financial aid or receive a teaching assistantship. Exceptions to this rule for the teaching assistantship may be requested in writing to the Dean's office. **Enrollment in thesis courses requires approval by the Graduate Coordinator**, and permission should be requested by completing an Instructor's Approval for Enrollment in a Thesis Course form, available in the Department's main office.

**Thesis Prospectus.** The candidate, in consultation with the Major Advisor, will select a subject of investigation and determine the availability of the required sources, facilities, materials, and equipment for the research and the writing of the thesis. The student will prepare a thesis prospectus which will specify the thesis topic, detail the purpose of the proposed investigation, describe the proposed method(s) of investigation, indicate the relationship of study to relevant research and findings of scholars in the student's area of concentration, and provide a commentary on source materials and/or facilities available for the successful completion of the research.

The thesis prospectus shall be submitted to the thesis committee for approval. After the committee has approved and signed the prospectus, it is submitted to the COSET Dean's office for final approval. Any subsequent changes in topic or the proposed method of investigation must be approved in writing by the thesis committee and submitted for approval to the COSET Dean's office. **The thesis prospectus must be submitted for final approval no later than the end of the student's first year in the graduate program.** See Appendix for Thesis Prospectus Guidelines.

**Bi-Annual committee meetings.** Students are expected to hold meetings with their Advisory Committee at least bi-annually. Students should bring the **Record of Bi-Annual Committee**

**Meeting** form to the meeting and have the committee members complete the form at the end of the meeting. The signed form should be turned in to the Graduate Coordinator.

**Continuous enrollment requirement.** Per University policy, once a student enrolls in a thesis course (BIOL 6398 or BIOL 6099), the student **must** continue to enroll in a thesis course each semester until the student graduates. For example, once a student enrolls in BIO 6398, the student must enroll in BIO 6099 the following semester, and continue to enroll in at least once credit of BIOL 6099 every semester until graduation. Note that the student may opt to select the 1-credit hour section of BIOL 6099 only after a 3-credit hour section of BIOL 6099 has been completed. Students should enroll in the 10-week offering of BIOL 6398 or BIOL 6099 during the summer semester to maintain full-time status over the entire summer. Students may not enroll in a thesis course until an approved thesis prospectus is on file with the Graduate Coordinator. **To register for BIOL 6398 or BIOL 6099, a blue Approval for Enrollment in a Thesis Course form must be completed and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.** This form may be obtained from the Biological Sciences main office (LSB 105).

**Comprehensive Exam.** All MS degree candidates must pass a Comprehensive Exam, written and/or oral, over the graduate course work of their degree program. The Comprehensive Exam will be administered by the Comprehensive Examination Committee, which is the same as the student's Advisory Committee. The comprehensive exam should be completed **no later than the third long semester** in the graduate program, and may not occur in the same semester as graduation. The content to be covered for the comprehensive exam is at the discretion of the Advisory Committee.

**Thesis.** The thesis requirement consists of an original written document over the student's research findings completed in compliance with the project's prospectus. In addition, the student must give public thesis presentation that is performed publically during working hours. Finally, the student is subject to a thesis defense wherein the candidate for the degree of Masters of Science defends their research hypothesis, research methods, and research results to their Advisory Committee.

Thesis guidelines are available from <https://shsulibraryguides.org/thesisguide/homepage>. The One to One program is also available to master's students engaged in thesis research to aid with utilizing library resources: <https://library.shsu.edu/services/onetoone/index.html>. Assistance with writing and formatting can be obtained via the Academic Success Center (ACE): <https://www.shsu.edu/centers/academic-success-center/>.

The student will **submit their final thesis in electronic form using the Vireo Electronic Submittal System**. Although the thesis is submitted electronically, the Department of **Biological Sciences requires that the student have at least two copies of their thesis professionally printed and bound**, one copy for the Departmental Thesis Library and one copy for the student's Major Advisor. Students sometimes have additional copies printed for the remaining members of their Advisory Committee, but this is not required. It is recommended that you ask your committee members if they desire a copy. The Vireo Electronic Submittal System provides the student with several different services by which they can request a printed and bound copy.

**One semester prior to the semester of expected graduation:** The student must file a degree application in the Registrar's Office (see current Deadlines for Graduation in the Appendix).

**During the semester in which graduation is expected:** MS candidates must be enrolled in BIOL 6099 the semester of graduation. If the student fails to graduate that semester, he or she will have to continue to enroll in BIOL 6099 each semester until graduation. **There are no exceptions to this Office of Graduate Studies policy.** An approved final copy of the thesis must be submitted to the Dean of the College of Science and Engineering Technology by the date specified by the College. The student's Advisory Committee and the Department Chair must approve the thesis prior to submission to the Dean. Additional deadlines may be put in place by each Advisory Committee so that adequate time is available for review and corrections.

Once the thesis has been approved by all Advisory Committee members, an electronic route sheet should be started. This route sheet is available on the library's Thesis and Dissertation website: <https://shslibraryguides.org/thesisguide>. At the same time, a copy of the Advisory Committee thesis page with signatures of all Advisory Committee members must be submitted to the COSET Dean's office, along with an electronic copy of the student's thesis. **The COSET Dean's office will not approve the route sheet until all items have been submitted.** The completed route sheet serves as proof to the Registrar that the thesis has been completed and that all thesis requirements have been met for graduation.

The student should **schedule a public seminar with defense** to follow. As a general rule, a reasonable final draft of the thesis should be submitted to the student's Advisory Committee **no later than two weeks prior** to the scheduled public seminar and defense to allow ample time for the committee to read and edit the thesis. Graduate students must obtain approval from **all** thesis committee members prior to scheduling their thesis defense.

A **Report of Thesis Examination** form (available on the COSET website) should be filled out by MS candidates after the thesis defense and submitted to the Dean's office. The student should bring the form to the defense. A copy of this form should also be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.

Students participating in **Commencement Ceremonies** must arrange for a cap and gown at the University Bookstore at least two months before expected graduation.

All MS degree candidates will be required to give a **public seminar** of their research. An oral defense of the research with the Advisory Committee will follow the public seminar. An announcement for the public seminar must be posted publicly in the Department **at least two weeks in advance of the seminar. An announcement must be posted on the front door to the main office (LSB 105), and an e-mail must be sent to all faculty members informing them of the date, time, and location of the seminar.** The seminar can take place during the fall, spring or summer semesters, while classes are in session, and is to be given during the student's last semester in the program.

## TIME TABLE OF PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

### **First regular (i.e. fall or spring) semester:**

- 1) Enroll in BIOL 5301
- 2) Submit Major Advisor and Advisory Committee forms to the Graduate Coordinator for review and approval (see Appendix and the COSET website, respectively, for forms).

### **Second regular semester:**

- 1) After completion of 6 graduate credit hours, all non-regular admission students must apply for regular admission and must have removed all conditional requirements.
- 2) Enroll in BIOL 5302
- 3) Work toward completion of the Prospectus (see Appendix for Prospectus Guidelines).
- 4) **Prior to the submission of the prospectus and conducting research:** projects that involves vertebrate animal or human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC, animal research) and/or the Institution Review Board (IRB, human subjects) as appropriate. Forms and information may be obtained from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (OSRP) website: <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/office-of-research-and-sponsored-programs/>. Contact Sharla Miles ([sharla\\_miles@shsu.edu](mailto:sharla_miles@shsu.edu)) for additional information.
- 5) **Before the start of the third semester,** the thesis prospectus must be approved by the Advisory Committee, Department Chair, and Academic Dean (see COSET website for the Thesis Prospectus Approval form). The approved thesis prospectus should be filed with the Graduate Coordinator.

### **Third regular semester:**

- 1) Successfully complete Comprehensive Exam. **The Comprehensive Exam should be completed during the third semester.** After the exam, the **Report of Comprehensive Examination** form (see COSET website) should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.
- 2) Continue research and coursework for appropriate degree plan

### **Fourth - Sixth regular semesters:**

Continue research and coursework for appropriate degree plan

Many research projects will involve a fifth and in some cases a sixth semester for completion. The student and the student's Major Advisor may together petition the Graduate Committee in writing for a fifth semester of teaching assistantship support, although support is not guaranteed.

### **Summer semesters:**

- 1) Students should take any available classes pertinent to the discipline.
- 2) Students should be heavily involved in their research.

## GRADUATE COURSES

See the most recent Graduate Catalog for up-to-date information about graduate courses offered.

## RESEARCH FUNDING SOURCES

There are many sources available to support costs associated with graduate student research. Listed below are a few sources. Students are encouraged to consult with their Major Advisors regarding other potential funding sources in their particular disciplines.

### **1) Joey Harrison Student Research Award**

Funds graduate and undergraduate research

Deadline: Variable, once per academic year

Administered by: Department of Biological Sciences

Amount: \$500 to \$1000

Contact: The Chair of the Joey Harrison Student Research Award Committee for application requirements

### **2) Graduate Studies Conference Travel Funds**

Please see Travel Support for Scientific Meetings in this handbook for more information.

### **3) Texas Academy of Sciences Student Research Awards**

Funds graduate and undergraduate student research in all areas of science

Deadline: Usually December or January

Amount: Up to \$2000

Restrictions: Must attend meeting to receive award and agree to present research at the meeting the following year

See website for more information: <https://www.texasacademyofscience.org/research-awards>

### **4) Grants-in-Aid of Research Program**

Funds graduate and undergraduate student research in all areas of science

Administered by Sigma Xi

Deadline: March 15 and October 1 annually

Amount: up to \$1000

Restrictions: Student, major advisor or a committee member should be a Sigma Xi member. See website for more information: <https://www.sigmaxi.org/programs/grants-in-aid/apply>

## **APPENDIX**

### **DEADLINES, FORMS, AND CHECKLISTS**



**GRADUATE DEADLINES**  
**Fall 2020**  
**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY**

<b>August 17</b>	First class day. Students may begin filing Degree applications in the Registrar's Office for December 2020.
<b>September 1</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> class Day. Last day to drop without a "Q" and receive a 100% refund.
<b>September 1</b>	Last day to submit a Graduate Certificate Completion form to The Graduate School.
<b>September 1</b>	Deadline to apply for December 2020 graduation to ensure that the students name will be included in the commencement program. Students who submit an application after September 1, 2020, will not have their names in the commencement program, and a late fee will be assessed. Please see the Registrar's Application for Degree webpage for fee details (Revised).
<b>*October 6</b>	Last day to submit draft thesis/dissertation to the Library for format and style review.
<b>October 13</b>	Last day to submit a Thesis Prospectus to the COSET Dean's Office for theses to be defended in the spring 2021 semester.
<b>October 23</b>	Last day to drop full-term courses with a "Q".
<b>*November 3</b>	Last day to complete a public defense of thesis/dissertation. The Report of Thesis Examination form must be signed and submitted to the COSET Dean's Office by 5:00 p.m. Last day to begin the Electronic Route Sheet. Last day to request a permanent embargo for thesis/dissertations must be submitted via formal letter to the Dean of The Graduate School.
<b>November 15</b>	Deadline for COSET Graduate Recruitment Scholarship applications for spring 2021.
<b>*November 17</b>	Last day to submit defended and approved thesis/dissertation to the Library for final draft review.
<b>*November 17</b>	Last day to submit Electronic Route Sheet to the COSET Dean's Office. The COSET Dean's Office requires students to submit an electronic copy of thesis and email notification of thesis approval from committee members to the Dean's Office by 5:00 p.m. (Revised).
<b>*November 30</b>	Last day to complete publication of thesis/dissertation through Vireo (or in print for permanent embargo students). Last day to submit Electronic Route Sheet to the Director of the Library.
<b>December 1</b>	Deadline for COSET Graduate Achievement Scholarship applications for spring 2021.
<b>December 2</b>	Last class day of the fall semester.
<b>December 2</b>	Last day to resign from full-term fall courses.
<b>*December 2</b>	Last day to submit Electronic Route Sheet to the Dean of The Graduate School.
<b>December 4-9</b>	Final examinations for the fall semester.
<b>December 9</b>	Last day to complete the <i>Oral/Written Comprehensive Exam</i> . The <i>Report of Comprehensive Exam</i> form must be signed and submitted to the COSET Dean's Office by <b>5:00 p.m.</b>
<b>December 10-12</b>	Commencement at Bernard G. Johnson Coliseum (Schedule TBD)
<b>December 14</b>	Deadline for filing grades with the Registrar's Office (12:00 noon).

**RESIGNATION NOTE:**

A resignation is when a student drops all of their currently enrolled courses. Students who resign before the 12th class day will not have any indication in their official transcript. Students who resign beginning the 13th class day until the deadline posted in the academic calendar will have a "W" grade. However, if a final exam has been given for any course or lab you will not be permitted to resign.

**GRADUATE DEADLINES**  
**Spring 2021**  
**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY**

<b>January 13</b>	First class day. Students may begin filing Degree applications in the Registrar's Office for May 2019.
<b>January 29</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> class Day. Last day to drop without a "Q" and receive a 100% refund.
<b>January 29</b>	Last day to submit a Graduate Certificate Completion form to the Office of Graduate Studies.
<b>January 29</b>	Deadline to apply for May 2021 graduation to ensure that the students name will be included in the commencement program. Students who submit an application after February 1, 2019, will not have their names in the commencement program, and a late fee will be assessed. Please see the Registrar's Application for Degree webpage for fee details.
<b>March 11</b>	Last day to submit draft thesis to Library for format and style review.
<b>March 18</b>	Last day to submit a Thesis Prospectus to the COSET Dean's Office for theses to be defended in the summer 2019 semester.
<b>March 26</b>	Last day to drop full-term courses with a "Q".
<b>April 8</b>	Last date to complete a public defense of thesis. The Report of Thesis Examination form must be signed and submitted to the COSET Dean's Office by 5:00 p.m.
<b>*April 22</b>	Last day to submit final thesis (complete, defended, and signed) and Electronic Route Sheet to the COSET Dean's Office. Students are asked to bring a paper Route Sheet to the COSET Dean's Office as well.
<b>*April 22</b>	Last day to submit defended and approved thesis/dissertation to the Library for final draft review.
<b>*May 3</b>	Last day to complete publication of thesis/dissertation through Vireo (or in print for permanent embargo students). Last day to submit Electronic Route Sheet to the Director of the Library.
<b>May 5</b>	Last class day of the spring semester.
<b>May 5</b>	Last day to resign from full-term fall courses
<b>*May 5</b>	Last day to submit Electronic Route Sheet to the Dean of The Graduate School.
<b>May 7-12</b>	Final examinations for the spring semester.
<b>May 12</b>	Last day to complete the <i><b>Oral Comprehensive Exam</b></i> ; The <i>Report of Comprehensive Exam</i> form must be signed and submitted to the COSET Dean's Office by <b>5:00 p.m.</b>
<b>May 13-15</b>	Commencement (Location and Schedule TBD)
<b>May 17</b>	Deadline for filing grades with the Registrar's Office (12:00 noon).
<b>July 1</b>	Deadline for COSET Graduate Achievement Scholarship applications for fall 2021.
<b>July 15</b>	Deadline for COSET Graduate Recruitment Scholarship applications for fall 2021

**RESIGNATION NOTE:**

A resignation is when a student drops all of their currently enrolled courses. Students who resign before the 12th class day will not have any indication in their official transcript. Students who resign beginning the 13th class day until the deadline posted in the academic calendar will have a "W" grade. However, if a final exam has been given for any course or lab you will not be permitted to resign.

**GRADUATE DEADLINES**  
**Summer 2021**  
**COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY**

<b>*May 22</b>	Submit draft thesis to Library for format and style review.
<b>May 27</b>	First class day of Summer I. Students may begin filing degree applications in the Registrar's Office for August 2019.
<b>June 2</b>	Last day to submit a Graduate Certificate Completion form to the Office of Graduate Studies.
<b>June 2</b>	Deadline to apply for August 2021 graduation to ensure that the students name will be included in the commencement program. Students who submit an application after June 2, 2021, will not have their names in the commencement program, and a late fee will be assessed.
<b>June 2</b>	Summer I - Fourth Class Day - Last Day to Drop Courses with a "Q" by 11:59 PM and Receive 100% Refund
<b>June 7</b>	Last day to submit a Thesis Prospectus to the COSET Dean's Office for theses to be defended in the fall 2021 semester.
<b>June 10</b>	Last Day to Submit Draft Theses/Dissertations to the Executive Director of the Library for Format and Style Review
<b>June 14</b>	10 Week - Twelfth Class Day - Last Day to Drop Without a "Q" by 11:59 PM and Receive 100% Refund
<b>June 16</b>	Summer I - Last Day to Drop Courses with a "Q" by 4:00 PM
<b>June 25</b>	Last class day of Summer I.
<b>June 28</b>	Final examinations for Summer I.
<b>*June 26</b>	Last day to submit final thesis (complete, defended, and signed) and Electronic Route Sheet to the COSET Dean's Office. Students are asked to bring a paper Route Sheet to the COSET Dean's Office as well.
<b>June 29</b>	Deadline for filing grades in the Registrar's Office for Summer I (12:00 noon).
<b>*June 30</b>	Last day to complete a public defense of thesis. The Report of Thesis Examination form must be signed and submitted to the COSET Dean's Office by 5:00 p.m.
<b>*June 30</b>	Last Day to Request a Permanent Embargo for a Thesis/Dissertation via Formal Letter to the Dean of The Graduate School.
<b>*June 30</b>	First class day of the Summer II session.
<b>*July 5</b>	Summer II - Fourth Class Day - Last Day to Drop Without a "Q" by 11:59 PM and Receive 100% Refund
<b>July 19</b>	Last day to drop a Summer II course or lab with a "Q".
<b>*July 26</b>	Last Day to Complete Publication of Theses/Dissertations through Vireo (or in Print for Permanent Embargo Students). Last Day to Submit the Electronic Route Sheet to the Executive Director of the Library.
<b>July 29</b>	Last class day of Summer II.
<b>July 30</b>	Final examinations for Summer II.
<b>July 30</b>	Last day to complete the <i>Oral Comprehensive Exam</i> ; The <i>Report of Comprehensive Exam</i> form must be signed and submitted to the COSET Dean's Office by <b>5:00 p.m.</b>
<b>July 31</b>	Commencement (Location and Schedule TBD).
<b>August 2</b>	Deadline for filing grades with the Registrar's Office (12:00 noon).

**RESIGNATION NOTE:**

A resignation is when a student drops all of their currently enrolled courses. Students who resign before the 12th class day will not have any indication in their official transcript. Students who resign beginning the 13th class day until the deadline posted in the academic calendar will have a "W" grade. However, if a final exam has been given for any course or lab you will not be permitted to resign.

**FORMS:**  
**who signs them and where they are submitted:**

Internal Documents to be submitted to Departmental Graduate Coordinator:

**1) GRADUATE STUDENT CONTRACT**

This form is to be signed by the student. It is due to the Graduate Coordinator at the beginning of the first semester.

**2) GRADUATE DATA CONTRACT**

This form is to be signed by the student and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator at the beginning of the first semester.

**3) ADVISOR – STUDENT AGREEMENT**

This form is to be signed by both the student and their Major Advisor. It is due to the Graduate Coordinator by the end of the first semester.

**4) RECORD OF BI-ANNUAL COMMITTEE MEETING**

This form is to be signed by both the Major Advisor and the remaining members of the student's Advisory Committee. It is due to the Graduate Coordinator after each committee meeting.

**5) SEMESTER GRADUATE STUDENT EVALUATION**

This form is to be filled out and signed by the student, advisor, and instructor of the classes the student TAs. It is due to the Graduate Coordinator at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> class week of each semester the student is enrolled.

External Documents to be submitted to the Dean's office:

All of the forms below can be found in PDF format on the College of Science and Engineering Technology website under the "Forms" and then "Forms for Graduate Students" links.

**1) ADVISORY COMMITTEE FORM**

This form is to be signed by the student, the Major Advisor, the remaining Advisory Committee members and the Graduate Coordinator. After the Graduate Coordinator has signed the form the student will then submit the form to the Dean's office. This form is due by the end of the second semester.

## **2) GRADUATE CREDIT FORM**

This form is to be signed by the student's Major Advisor, the Graduate Coordinator, the Department Chair, and the COSET Dean. This **form is only necessary if** the student decides to enroll in a 4000-level course and wishes to have it count toward their graduate degree. The form should be submitted prior to the semester in which the 4000-level course will be taken. The syllabus for the course must be attached to the form, and it must indicate additional assignments for graduate students.

## **3) THESIS PROSPECTUS APPROVAL FORM**

This form is to be signed by the Advisory Committee, the Department Chair, and the Dean of COSET. The Thesis Prospectus Approval Form must be submitted by the end of the student's first year in the graduate program. .

## **4) REPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION FORM**

This form is to be signed by the student's Major Advisor and the remaining members of the student's Advisory Committee. The form should be brought to the student's Comprehensive Examination. The form will be signed after the completion of the examination with the committee's recommendation to pass or fail the student. Once the committee members have signed the form, the student will take the completed form to the COSET Dean's office.

## **5) REPORT OF THESIS EXAMINATION FORM**

This form is to be signed by the student's Major Advisor and the remaining members of the student's Advisory Committee. The form should be brought to the student's thesis defense/examination. The form will be signed after the completion of the thesis examination with the committee's decision to pass or fail the student. Once the committee members have signed the form the student will take the completed form to the COSET Dean's office.

**ADVISOR – STUDENT AGREEMENT**  
(To be submitted to Biology Graduate Coordinator by the end of the  
Student's First Semester)

STUDENT NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

DEGREE SOUGHT:

MS

MS WITH MINOR

MINOR: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to be the major advisor to  
(print/type name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(print/type name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAJOR ADVISOR SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**Primary Responsibilities of Major Advisor:  
Student:**

1) Chair Advisory Committee  
with

2) Provide student with research guidance, i.e,  
topic selection, experimental design, prospectus,  
deadline grant proposals, thesis writing.

3) Return paperwork in a timely manner

**Primary Responsibilities of**

1) Communicate regularly

Major Advisor and Advisory  
Committee

2) Adhere to all program

3) Attend Departmental  
seminars

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DEGREE SOUGHT: MS MS WITH MINOR  
MINOR:

DATE ADMITTED: \_\_\_\_\_ EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PROGRESS TOWARD DEGREE: SATISFACTORY  
UNSATISFACTORY

### COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

ADVISORY COMMITTEE SIGNATURES:

Major Advisor

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**Sam Houston State University Department of Biological Sciences**  
**Semester Graduate Student Evaluation**

A completed copy of this form must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator  
by the 12<sup>th</sup> week of each semester enrolled.

Failure to complete and file this form will result in the committee's inability to provide additional TA support if requested.

**Section 1: Academic Progress (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT)**

Date this form is completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Graduate Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of advisor or co-advisors: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree sought: ☐ M.S.

Date of last advisory committee meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of semesters of graduate work at Sam Houston State University on this degree at the end of  
present semester: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of semesters on TA support at the end of the present semester?

Contract: \_\_\_\_\_ Hourly: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate each of the following that apply. Supply any helpful additional information.

Yes    No

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. The student has selected an advisor and filed form.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. The student has formed an advisory committee and filed form.          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. The student has completed and submitted the prospectus.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. The student has completed the comprehensive exam.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. The student regularly attends seminar.                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. The student regularly attends society meetings and presents research. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. The student has submitted any papers for publication.                 |



List all society meetings attended, all presentations (oral or poster) given, and all papers submitted for publication.

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List all outreach projects or other services performed.

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Please be specific and address any advancements or setbacks experienced during semester.

[illegible]

Graduate Student

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Advisor /Co-Advisor

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Instructor of teaching assistant

# THESIS PROSPECTUS GUIDELINES

**General guidelines:** The proposal should be double spaced, with 1 inch margins, 12 point font, and page numbers in the top right corner of each page. The length should be no more than 12 pages of text for sections A - E below.

**A. Introduction** - a thorough overview (4 – 5 pages) of the area of study including appropriate supporting literature citations. Include past and present research on your specific research topic.

**B. Hypotheses/Objectives** - discuss hypotheses you will test and their associated predictions. Clearly state the objectives of your study.

**C. Methods and Materials** - how, where, when the proposed research will be conducted. Describe methods in as much detail as possible. Include how the data will be analyzed statistically.

**D. Expected Results** - describe the expected outcome for the research activities based on literature and previous work.

**E. Significance of the Proposed Research** - general and/or specific significant results from the proposed study. “How will doing this research benefit us or improve the general knowledge of science?”

**F. Literature Cited** - a listing of sources of information cited in the proposal in a formal scientific format appropriate to the discipline.

**G. Budget** - Provide an itemized budget for your research. Indicate how the research will be funded and the facilities required for the research.

**CHECKLIST FOR MS CANDIDATES IN THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**  
**(TO BE KEPT IN STUDENT FILE)**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
1.	Obtain copy of Departmental Graduate Handbook	_____	_____
2.	Meet with Graduate Coordinator	_____	_____
3.	Major Advisor selected	_____	_____
4.	Advisory Committee established	_____	_____
6.	Submit forms for transfer/undergraduate credits	_____	_____
7.	Advisory Committee meeting 1 —year one	_____	_____
8.	Advisory Committee meeting 2 —year one	_____	_____
9.	Advisory Committee meeting 1 —year two	_____	_____
10.	Advisory Committee meeting 2 —year two	_____	_____
11.	File degree application for graduation	_____	_____
12.	Comprehensive exam scheduled	_____	_____
13.	Comprehensive exam completed	_____	_____
14.	IACUC or IRB Forms submitted (as needed)	_____	_____
15.	Thesis prospectus approved	_____	_____
16.	Enroll in BIO 6398	_____	_____
17.	Enroll in BIO 6099	_____	_____
18.	Public seminar of thesis research scheduled	_____	_____
19.	Thesis seminar and defense completed	_____	_____
20.	Thesis approved	_____	_____