

**UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY
GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

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Introduction

The primary goal of graduate studies in the Department of Botany at the University of Wyoming is the education of highly qualified individuals for productive careers in academic or non-academic professions, including teaching, research, industry, government, environmental management or other applications of plant biology¹. The foundation for professional training is built upon achieving a high level of intellectual development and scholarly research. Two advanced degrees are offered to accomplish this goal: the M.S. degree with a thesis and the Ph.D. degree (discontinued in May 2025). Regardless of the degree program or professional direction, students educated in the Department of Botany will achieve a breadth of knowledge about plant biology and will be accomplished in their ability to extend knowledge through scholarly research. Students will be skilled in conveying knowledge in both academic and non-academic settings and will understand the value and practice of scientific service activities.

Programs of graduate study are based on courses, seminars, readings and research, and normally utilize some materials and human resources from other parts of the university or other centers of scholarship. It is expected that each student will work closely with a faculty advisor from the Department of Botany and that this association will determine the exact nature of the individual's professional growth.

While the development of every degree program is individualistic, there are some common requirements that are established by the School for Graduate Education and the Department of Botany. Each of these represents a policy founded on an educational or administrative purpose. University-wide regulations and policies are located in the University of Wyoming Catalog (2026-2027 version [here](#)). This Department of Botany document is our collective statement of policy and purpose, and is intended to serve as a guide for planning advanced degree programs. Suggestions for improving this document are encouraged. Questions not addressed herein should be directed to the Department Head, the Graduate Coordinator, or other members of the faculty.

¹ We take a broad and integrative view of the scope of plant biology to include processes that operate from molecular to the global spatial scales and that encompass time scales ranging from rapid physiological processes to evolutionary change over the history of life. Organisms studied by plant biologists include plants, fungi, photosynthetic protists and photosynthetic prokaryotes.

I. Administration of the Department of Botany Graduate Program

A. The Dean of the School of Graduate Education

The Dean has ultimate authority over graduate programs at the University of Wyoming and the programs of individual students. Committee appointments and programmatic recommendations are made by the Departmental Head to the Dean.

B. The Head of the Department

The Department Head is responsible for the graduate program at the departmental level. He or she must ensure that the program is responsive to new and special needs, that academic and teaching standards are upheld, and that student needs are met expeditiously.

C. The Graduate Program Coordinator

The Head delegates the day-to-day operation of the graduate program to the Graduate Program Coordinator. This officer is appointed by the Head from among the faculty, with approval by the faculty, to: 1) carry out advertisement of the program, 2) coordinate evaluation and recruitment of prospective students, 3) coordinate evaluation of current students, and 4) advise the head on the condition and needs of the graduate program.

D. Directors of Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Programs

Some Botany faculty members serve as Faculty Advisor for graduate students in interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs, including the Program in Ecology and Evolution, Hydrologic Science Program, and the Molecular and Cellular Life Sciences Program. The Directors of Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Programs are responsible for upholding academic and teaching standards for their programs and ensuring that student needs are met expeditiously. Ph.D. students enrolled in an interdisciplinary program should have all paperwork signed by their Director, not the Head of the Botany Department.

II. Graduate Student Advising

A. The Faculty Advisor

As part of the Department of Botany's graduate student application process, students are required to contact faculty members whose research interests match their own and inquire about opportunities in their lab group. If the faculty member is recruiting new graduate students and the prospective student might be a good fit, then the prospective student should be encouraged to apply to the M.S. or Ph.D. program. The faculty member is responsible for presenting the application to the faculty, providing a plan for funding the student for their entire degree program, and requesting a vote by the entire faculty on the application; by doing so, they are stating their willingness to serve as the student's Faculty Advisor. Once the student matriculates, this faculty member is officially appointed as the Faculty Advisor. Students who wish to change Faculty Advisors midway through their degree program should meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator or the Department Head. Students cannot be admitted to the department without acceptance by a Faculty Advisor.

B. The Graduate Committee

Each Graduate Student, in consultation with their Faculty Advisor, will construct an advisory graduate committee to guide their degree progress. The proposed graduate committee must be approved by the Department Head/Interdisciplinary Program Director, College Dean, and Graduate School Dean, which is obtained via the online “[Committee Assignment](#)” form (see Section XXII). The details for composition of the committee are given under the specific requirements for each degree (see section III) and must be compliant with [UW Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure](#) (see also [Faculty Senate Resolution 495](#)). The committee will advise the Graduate Student on a curriculum plan for achieving the background necessary to satisfy degree requirements and professional goals. The Graduate Committee is also responsible for determining the outcome of preliminary examinations (Ph.D. program only) and conducting the final defense examination. All committee members hold full voting rights in preliminary and final examinations.

III. General Requirements for the Degrees

This section presents the general requirements for the graduate degree programs in botany. It is meant to be used in conjunction with details provided in the [UW Graduate Student Regulations and Policies](#). Students enrolled in interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs should refer to the handbooks and by-laws for their programs and degree requirements.

The Department of Botany is relatively liberal in accepting a wide range of degree programs. The following statement, however, describes departmental philosophy for all advanced degrees:

Regardless of field of specialization, all candidates will be held responsible for basic information in the following areas of plant biology: genetics, physiology, morphology, and evolutionary and environmental botany. Knowledge of chemistry (including organic and elementary biochemistry), physics, calculus and statistics may be required.

The Student's Graduate Committee is responsible for assessing the fulfillment of the plant biology breadth requirements and other deficiencies in designing the program of each student.

A. Master of Science Degree

1. Purpose of the M.S. Degree

The M.S. Degree is designed to provide advanced knowledge and research capability in plant biology through graduate courses and experience in research. Research experience is achieved through the planning and execution of a thesis that can be reasonably accomplished in approximately a two-year period and the results of which could be a contribution to the science of plant biology through publication. The M.S. may be a culminating degree for direct entry to employment or may be a step toward the Ph.D.

2. Graduate Committee for the M.S. Degree

Normally the Graduate Committee is selected by the Graduate Student in consultation with the Faculty Advisor. The committee's membership must meet the approval of the Department Head, College Dean, and Dean of the Graduate School, which is obtained via the online “[Committee Assignment](#)” form (due by the end of the second semester in residency; see

Section XIII). The graduate committee will consist of at least one member from the Department of Botany as chairperson, a second faculty member from Botany, and a faculty member from outside the department (the Outside Member). Non-UW personnel may serve on graduate committees as external committee members; they will be required to upload their CV when they electronically approve the Committee Assignment form. Ordinarily, the Graduate Committee will have three members and not more than five. The Graduate Committee is responsible for advising the candidate concerning course work for the program and research requirements. The graduate committee is also responsible for administering the final examination. Other faculty members often are helpful, whether or not they are on a student's committee, and are welcome to participate in advising and the final exam.

3. Program for the M.S. Degree

No later than the beginning of the student's third semester, or second summer session, a program listing the curricular plan fulfilling the course and credit requirements should be submitted for approval by the Department Head and College Dean. The "[Program of Study](#)" form can only be submitted after the Committee Assignment form is approved and on file with the Office of the Registrar. The M.S. program must include a minimum of 26 semester hours of graduate credit course work plus a minimum of 4 hours of thesis research. The required courses are not predetermined by the department, but the student is reminded to review the general degree expectations cited under III (General Requirements for the Degree).

The curricular program is usually first outlined by the Graduate Student and Faculty Advisor, presented to the Graduate Committee for discussion, and then revised to the satisfaction of all parties. The program form must carry the approval of the Graduate Committee and Department Head before being submitted to the College Dean. Any changes in the program must be submitted on a "[Request for Change in Graduate Program](#)" form to be approved by the Faculty Advisor, the Department Head, and the College Dean.

Grade requirements for program fulfillment are reviewed in section VII.

As early as possible in the term you plan to graduate, Graduate Students should declare their graduation date via [WyoRecords](#). Upon receipt of information, a Degree Analyst will verify that all course requirements have been met. Any change in graduation date should be reported in writing immediately to the Degree Analyst.

M.S. Students have six calendar years to complete their degrees from the beginning of the first course taken and listed on the Program of Study. If this does not occur, the student must [petition](#) to use coursework older than six years.

4. Research

A thesis of the scope defined in III-A-1 is required for this degree. The Student should submit a written thesis to members of the Graduate Committee at least two weeks prior to the final examination. The thesis must be compliant with the [UW Thesis Guide](#).

5. Teaching (see section IV)

6. Seminars (see section V)

7. The Annual Update (see section VIII)

8. Final Examination (a.k.a. The Defense)

The purpose of the final examination is to determine whether the degree should be conferred. It shall not be held until after the beginning of the semester in which the student's course work is completed and should be held at least 10 calendar days before the end of the term of graduation (last day of finals). The date and time of the exam are established by mutual agreement between the Student, Faculty Advisor, and Committee Members. The student must procure the "[Report of Final Examination](#)" form and bring it to the defense. Normally, the final examination is preceded by the presentation of a departmental seminar of 50 minutes duration. This seminar will be followed (not necessarily on the same day) by a two-hour or longer as necessary, final examination by the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee is responsible for:

- 1) testing of the candidate's general knowledge of plant biology as defined in guidelines expressed under III (General Requirements for the Degree),
- 2) evaluating the degree of knowledge and understanding of subject fields related to the student's research, and
- 3) evaluating the adequacy of the thesis.

The final examination is open to the public. A public announcement of the date, time and place of the examination is to be made public two weeks before the exam.

Normally, examination protocol will consist of:

- 1) assembly of the Student and Committee at the appointed time and date;
- 2) temporary dismissal of the Student at which time the Committee Chair describes the Student's program and reiterates the purpose of the exam to members of the Committee;
- 3) recall of the Student and execution of the exam;
- 4) excusal of the Student for deliberation by the Committee and document signing, if appropriate, by committee members; and
- 5) recall of the Student for an explanation of the outcome of the exam.

If the examination is successfully passed, members of the committee will sign the Report of Final Examination form. The Committee Chair may delay signature until all necessary changes to the thesis have been made and approved. The Report of Final Examination form must be approved by the Department Head and College Dean prior to submission to the Office of the Registrar. Note that requests for an embargo agreement must also be approved by the School of Graduate Education and the Research Office.

The examination may be retaken once in accordance with the university regulations. The exam must be retaken after a minimum of one and not more than three semesters have elapsed, to allow the student to address any deficiencies identified by the committee during initial testing.

9. Post-exam Completion of Requirements

The deadline for submission of all graduate student graduation paperwork (including uploading to ProQuest completed thesis) is the last day of classes for the semester.

After submission of the Report of Final Examination Results form, indicating all changes/revisions have been made and the thesis is approved for final submission, the Student will submit the document for format review and final electronic publication to [ProQuest](#). The Student will be advised if additional corrections are required. For those looking to embargo their thesis (an intentional delay in the publication of its results), an embargo request must be included with compelling written justification and a proposed embargo period not to exceed one year. All embargo requests are subject to approval by the School of Graduate Education and the Office of Research and Economic Development.

Within a few days after declaring the graduation date in WyoRecords, a charge will appear on the Student's account for the graduation fee, which can be paid as any other charges.

B. Ph.D. Degree

The Ph.D. in Botany was eliminated in May 2025 by the Board of Trustees. Students currently enrolled in the program may complete their degrees, but no new students are being accepted. Students interested in pursuing a PhD under the mentorship of a Botany faculty member should apply to an interdisciplinary PhD program (PiEE or Hydrologic Science).

1. Admission for the Degree

The purpose of the Ph.D. program is to provide the attainment of independent and comprehensive scholarship in plant biology. Unlike the M.S. degree, the Ph.D. is unequivocally a research degree. Because of this research emphasis, admission is granted only to those students who show high promise of sustained effort and lifetime dedication to the pursuit of knowledge in plant science. The Ph.D. degree consists of course work, involvement in seminars and the intellectual life of the department and the University, but most centrally it involves the development of research skills required to pursue independent research as a career objective.

Normally, students accepted to the botany graduate program without advanced degrees will pursue an M.S. degree before pursuing the Ph.D., but this intermediate degree may be bypassed if the student and advisor can provide convincing arguments for this step to the student's graduate committee, and then, with the committee's support, to the botany faculty. For new students having an M.S. degree in another discipline (e.g., zoology or geography), the program will accept that M.S. degree in lieu of a botany M.S. degree and the student normally may pursue the Ph.D. directly.

2. Graduate Committee for the Ph.D. Degree

The Graduate Committee, which is selected by the Graduate Student in consultation with the Faculty Advisor, will consist of at least four members including the Faculty Advisor. Not less than three members, nor more than four, will be from the Department of Botany. One UW faculty member from outside the department (the Outside Member) must be on each committee. Non-UW personnel may serve on graduate committees as external committee members; they will be required to upload their CV when they electronically approve the Committee Assignment form. The committee's membership must meet the approval of the Department Head, College Dean, and Dean of the Graduate School, which is obtained via the Committee Assignment form (due by the end of the second semester in residency; see Section XIII). For additional

information on committee formation, see the [UW Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure on Graduate Committee Formation](#) and [Faculty Senate Resolution 495](#).

The Graduate Committee will serve in an advisory capacity for development of the Student's course work and research programs, and must approve the official program filed with the Registrar. It will also be responsible for determining pass or fail on the preliminary examination, approving or disapproving the dissertation and conducting the final examination. Changes in committee membership or major professor assignment can be made at any time using the Change in Committee form.

3. Program for the Ph.D. Degree

The Student and the Faculty Advisor shall prepare a formal program of course work to be presented to the Graduate Committee for review, discussion, and approval. This [Program of Study](#) constitutes an agreement among the Student, the Faculty Advisor, the Graduate Committee, and the Dean wherein the *minimum* course work requirements for the Student's Ph.D. degree are established. The Program of Study should be submitted by the beginning of the Student's third semester, and can only be submitted after the Committee Assignment form is approved and on file with the Office of the Registrar.

The Ph.D. program must include a minimum of 72 semester hours of credit at the 4000-level or above from UW or equivalent levels from another approved university. This 72-hour requirement may include graduate credits earned while working toward the master's degree in the same area. At least 42 hours must be earned in formal course work. Additional credits toward the 72-hour requirement may include additional formal course credits, UW dissertation research credits, or UW 5990 internship credits. Any changes in the program must be submitted on a "[Request for Change in Graduate Program](#)" form to be approved by the Faculty Advisor, the Department Head, and the College Dean. The Program of Study must be on file with the graduate school before the preliminary examination can be scheduled.

Hours transferred from other institutions must carry a letter grade of B (3.0) or better (A = 4.0). Ph.D. candidates may transfer up to 48 hours, four of which may be comparable to thesis research.

The Ph.D. Student has four calendar years to complete his/her degree after successfully completing the preliminary exam, or [petition](#) to extend this timeline. Ph.D. students have eight calendar years to complete their degrees from the beginning of the first course taken and listed on the Program of Study. If this does not occur, the Student must [petition](#) to use coursework older than eight years.

See the UW School for Graduate Education website for residency, continuous registration and leave-of-absence policies (links to forms in Section XIIC below), as well as section VII of this document on the grade requirement.

As early as possible in the term you plan to graduate, Graduate Students should declare their graduation date via [WyoRecords](#). Upon receipt of information, a Degree Analyst will verify that all course requirements have been met. Any change in graduation date should be reported in writing immediately to the Degree Analyst.

4. Peripheral Skills

The University of Wyoming Graduate Bulletin refers to “peripheral skills.” Recognizing that certain degree objectives may require acquisition of skills outside of plant biology, the major professor and the graduate committee may advise and require attainment of such skills through appropriate means. These peripheral skills normally will be completed in the first two years of the student’s program.

5. Two-Year Progress Assessment

Student progress will be assessed before the end of the fourth semester and is required before additional state-supported funding is provided. The assessment will consist of a written evaluation by the Student’s Graduate Committee submitted to the Department Head. The evaluation will be based on (1) progress towards fulfilling Graduate Program requirements and (2) evaluation of a dissertation research Progress Report.

Graduate Program progress will be considered adequate if scheduled courses have been completed with a grade of B or better and with evidence of progress toward fulfillment of peripheral skills, if stipulated in the Program.

Research progress will be assessed based on committee review of a Progress Report, written by the student and submitted to committee members one week before a scheduled meeting. The Progress Report will include research objectives and justification, funding, research methods, appropriately analyzed results, summary of findings, future plans, and literature cited.

The Graduate Committee will vote on student progress and will prepare a written evaluation, which will be submitted to the Department Head with a copy to the Student. Financial support may be terminated by the Department Head, if the committee has determined that student progress is inadequate. A second assessment by the end of the fifth semester will be possible under some circumstances, as determined by the Department Head in consultation with the Graduate Committee.

6. Preliminary Examination

The purpose of the Ph.D. preliminary examination is to test the student for competence at the Ph.D. level for general knowledge of plant biology and specific knowledge in the area of expertise. The area of expertise is defined in the individual case by the program, peripheral skills, and dissertation subject. When the Faculty Advisor believes the Student is ready for the preliminary examination, he or she will authorize the Student to arrange for the time and date with his or her committee members. This examination will be held at least 15 weeks prior to the final examination, and may not be given before:

- a) the research tool requirements have been met as certified by the Faculty Advisor,
- b) at least 30 hours of course work have been completed, and
- c) the Program of Study form is on file at the Office of the Registrar.

The examination shall be an oral exam with the same basic protocols as described for the M.S. final examination but delimited to the subject matter defined above. The results of the examination must be provided to the Office of the Registrar on the form "[Report on Preliminary Examination for Admission to Candidacy](#)" including the indication of pass or fail by each member of the Graduate Committee. The favorable vote of the majority of the Student's graduate

committee members will be accepted as passing. In case of failure, the Student may attempt the examination once more, after 120 days have passed but not more than four semesters have elapsed. Upon successful completion of the preliminary examination, the Student is considered admitted to candidacy.

7. The Dissertation

A dedication to research is expected of each graduate student. Initially, the Student will work closely with the Faculty Advisor and will follow guidelines developed in consultation with that professor. It is a goal of the Ph.D. program, however, that the Student be able to conduct research independently. Thus, as progress on the dissertation ensues, the work will become increasingly the product of student judgment and creativity.

Ultimately, each Student must present a dissertation describing and interpreting the results of original research. The dissertation must show by its form and organization the ability to write acceptably and to use the English language with precision and distinction. Its contents should show maturity of judgment, depth of scholarship, and familiarity with research methods in the field. No attempt will be made to evaluate the dissertation in terms of credit hours.

The dissertation shall be presented to the Graduate Committee at least two weeks prior to the final examination, and it must be approved by the Graduate Committee as part of the final examination. The dissertation must be compliant with the [UW Dissertation Guide](#). The dissertation must be available for inspection by any other member of the faculty who may care to examine it.

8. Teaching requirement (see Section IV)

9. Seminar requirements (see Section V)

10. The Annual Update (see Section VIII)

11. Final Examination (a.k.a. the Defense)

The purpose of this exam is to determine whether the degree should be conferred. Criteria shall be based on professional knowledge and understanding of the material involved in the dissertation; and of the soundness, originality and completeness of the dissertation itself as a body of scholarly work. The exam shall not be held until the opening of the semester or summer session in which the candidate plans to receive the degree, and should be held at least 10 calendar days before the end of the term of graduation (last day of finals). The date and time of the exam are established by mutual agreement between the Student, Advisor, and Committee Members. The date, time, and place of the exam must be announced to the public a minimum of two weeks before the examination is held. The student must procure the “[Report of Final Examination](#)” form and bring it to the defense.

Normally, this examination will be preceded by the presentation of a department seminar of approximately 50 minutes duration. This seminar will be followed (not necessarily on the same day) by a two-hour (or longer as necessary) oral defense of the dissertation before the Graduate Committee.

The Graduate Committee is responsible for the testing the Student's fulfillment of the

examination criteria as defined above. The examination is open to the public. Normally, examination protocol will consist of:

- 1) assembly of the Student and Committee;
- 2) temporary dismissal of the Student at which time the Committee Chair describes the Student's program and reiterates the purpose of the exam to members of the committee;
- 3) recall of the Student for the exam;
- 4) excusal of the Student for deliberation by the Committee and document signing, if appropriate, by committee members; and
- 5) recall of the Student for an explanation of the outcome of the exam.

The examination may be retaken once according to university regulations. The exam must be retaken after a minimum of one and not more than three semesters have elapsed, to allow the student to address any deficiencies identified by the committee during initial testing.

12. Post-Final Exam Completion of Requirements

The deadline for submission of all graduate student graduation paperwork (including uploading to ProQuest completed dissertation) is the last day of classes for the semester. All PhD students must submit the [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) on or before the last day of classes in the semester you plan to graduate.

After submission of the Report of Final Examination Results form, indicating all changes/revisions have been made and the dissertation is approved for final submission, the Student will submit the document for format review and final electronic publication to [ProQuest](#). The Student will be advised if additional corrections are required. For those looking to embargo their thesis (an intentional delay in the publication of its results), an embargo request must be included with compelling written justification and a proposed embargo period not to exceed one year. All embargo requests are subject to approval by the School of Graduate Education and the Office of Research and Economic Development.

Within a few days after declaring the graduation date in WyoRecords, a charge will appear on the Student's account for the graduation fee, which can be paid as any other charges.

IV. The Teaching Requirement

All students in the Ph.D. program regardless of their sources of support, must serve as a teaching assistant for at least one semester. Teaching experience at another institution will satisfy this requirement, which may be waived on an individual basis in special circumstances by the Department of Botany faculty. This requirement is intended to help develop communication and teaching skills. Dedication to this principle is such that the department agreed that it is not unreasonable to ask a student to fulfill the minimum teaching obligation (one lab section for one semester) even if the student is funded by a research assistantship (D.H. Knight memo, 25 August 1994, amended 30 March 2005).

All first time GTAs are required to register for a Graduate Teaching Assistant Learning Community (6-session, in-person program offered both fall and spring semesters). The learning community is designed to support active GTAs in the current semester and to introduce effective

ways of working with their students and dealing with issues they may face in the role of the teacher. Additional information can be found on the [School for Graduate Education website](#).

V. The Seminar Requirement

A. Purpose

Communication skills are among the most important requirements for a professional scientist. For this reason, the faculty critically evaluates the oral presentations made by students, as well as all written material submitted to them by students (letters, progress reports, term papers, proposals, theses, etc.). The faculty members believe that one of their greatest responsibilities is to help students improve their abilities to convey ideas in a logical and effective manner. Constructive criticism on communication skills is more acceptable and more easily obtained as a student than later as an employee.

In addition to regular class discussions, two special opportunities exist for students to improve their ability to communicate orally. One is as a laboratory teaching assistant, where occasional introductory lectures are required. The other opportunity is by participation in seminars. In both cases, students should be well prepared and should welcome faculty-student evaluations. Bad habits or ineffective presentations are frequently apparent only to the listener.

B. Seminar Requirement Fulfillment

1. Departmental seminars

The Department of Botany seminar series is held each semester during the academic year. Speakers include graduate students and faculty members from botany and other departments at the university as well as distinguished visitors from off campus. Graduate students are expected to attend this series and are encouraged to participate in the discussion following the presentation. Students should register for Graduate Seminar, Botany 5000 (sec. 1), only during the semester in which they are scheduled to give a presentation, usually degree seminars (see below).

2. Seminar courses

Graduate students are required to take at least two seminar courses each academic year. Some of these may be taken from appropriate departments outside of botany. All students, when in residence, shall take a seminar course every semester, or, if necessary, two seminar courses in one semester, so that two seminar courses (or degree seminars) are taken each year.

3. Degree seminars

Master's degree candidates shall normally present a Department of Botany seminar on their research during their last semester in conjunction with and prior to the final examination.

Doctoral students shall present two departmental seminars. The first normally will be presented during the second to fourth semester of their program and should focus on the scientific background of the student's topic including literature, objectives, hypotheses, preliminary data if possible, and the basic design and methods of the proposed research. The second Ph.D. seminar presents the final results of the dissertation research and should be

presented during the last semester in conjunction with and prior to the dissertation defense.

A special invitation should be extended by the Student to Committee Members to attend all degree seminars.

Degree seminars may be used to fulfill part of the seminar requirements mentioned in above (section V-2). Students should enroll in Graduate Seminar, BOT 5000 (sec. 1), during the appropriate semester to receive credit for these presentations.

VI. Terms of Financial Support

The terms of financial support are explicitly provided by Academic Affairs and typically change in some respect annually. The Student is advised to read the section on Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships in the current University of Wyoming Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure.

In addition to university-wide guidelines, the Botany Department has its own requirements. In general, Students on state-supported GA's (teaching or research) will be eligible for support for a maximum of two calendar years for M.S. degrees and five calendar years for Ph.D. degrees. An extension of support beyond those limits requires a petition from the Faculty Advisor and a vote of waiver by the faculty. Continuing support is dependent on making satisfactory progress. Satisfactory progress will be judged annually by the Graduate Committee.

If a Student is admitted to the program without financial support from State GA funds, the Department is under no obligation to guarantee GA support in future semesters regardless of satisfactory progress by the student. In such a case, the Student, although admitted and progressing through the program, must compete for available GA support along with candidates applying for initial admission. On the other hand, if a Student has been supported by a State-GA, drops that GA for other support, and then requests renewal at a later time, the Department will try to provide GA support if available and the same general rules about number of years of support shall apply.

A Student cannot normally expect a state-supported GA during the summer, and those receiving one should not expect more than one summer of support.

GA's based on research funds will not be counted towards the support limit described above. Those limits will be set by the faculty member managing the funds.

VII. Grades

A minimum 3.0 grade point average must be maintained. Moreover, any course in which a C (or below) or U is obtained cannot be counted toward the degree requirement and the Student may be required to repeat it. This is especially true for courses central to the Student's area of specialization. The determination of whether a student is required to repeat a course shall be made by the Faculty Advisor in consultation with the Graduate Committee and the Department Head.

A graduate student shall be placed on scholastic probation at the end of a semester when his or her cumulative GPA in 4000-level or higher courses at UW drops below 3.0 or if they have earned Unsatisfactory (U) grades in six or more graduate credit hours. A graduate student who fails to increase his or her cumulative GPA to 3.0 after one semester of probation will be suspended from the University. A suspended student may petition the Department of Botany for

reinstatement to the same degree program. A reinstated student will be on probation and may be subject to other performance criteria as specified by the Dean of the affected department. No student in their semester of probation will be employed as a graduate assistant on the UW campus.

VIII. The Annual Update

To be eligible for departmental funding (e.g., teaching assistantships, departmental awards, departmental travel or research funding), all students for whom Botany is their home department must complete an annual update as described below. Botany's annual review process is identical to PiEE's, and PiEE students should send their written update form to their committee, the PiEE Director, and the Botany Graduate Coordinator.

A. Format of the Annual Update

Graduate students will hold an annual committee meeting to discuss their degree progress, including coursework, research plans, teaching duties, and professional development activities. A majority of committee members must be in attendance, including the faculty advisor and the outside committee member. A written annual update form (see Section XIII) is required of all students and must be submitted to the Graduate Committee and the Graduate Coordinator one week before the meeting is held. Only activities that postdate the last annual update should be reported. In addition to providing the department with data on student accomplishments, this form provides an opportunity to reflect on what has been learned in the previous year, the successes, and the challenges. The Graduate Committee is expected to review the written report prior to the annual committee meeting.

Students are not expected to prepare a formal presentation for their annual committee meeting. The annual update should be treated as an opportunity to check in on progress, celebrate accomplishments, and discuss challenges and future plans.

At the end of the annual committee meeting, the Graduate Committee will complete an online Progress Report Form (see Section XIII). A link to this form will be provided each spring by the Graduate Coordinator, who is also responsible for reviewing submissions. If the Student's progress is deemed unsatisfactory by the majority of the Graduate Committee, the Student and the Committee Chair will meet with the Graduate Coordinator to decide on corrective measures, which will be documented. Students will have one semester to rectify inadequate progress. At the conclusion of that semester, the Student, Committee Chair, Graduate Coordinator, and Department Head will meet to discuss whether Student progress is either satisfactory and the student remains eligible for departmental funding, or whether the Student should no longer be eligible for departmental funding. See also Section IX.

Staggered deadlines help balance faculty workloads and facilitate scheduling meetings.

1st year students: second Friday in April

2nd year students: second Friday in March

3rd and above year students: second Friday in February

B. Additional Directions:

- Students should not complete an annual evaluation during the academic year in which they plan to defend.
- The meeting should be no longer than an hour.
- In the year of the preliminary exam (PhD students only), the annual update will be incorporated into the preliminary exam process. The written form should be submitted to the committee and the Graduate Coordinator at least one week prior to the last activity in the preliminary exam (e.g., for PiEE students, this would be the oral exam). The result of the preliminary exam indicates whether or not satisfactory progress has occurred, and no progress report form is required.
- If a student receives an MS in Botany and then begins a PhD program with Botany as their home department, their time as an MS student is not included when determining class year and deadline. If a student switches from an MS to a PhD program without receiving an MS degree, then the year(s) spent as an MS student are included when determining the deadline.
- Note that the Botany faculty expects that some fields on the first page of the annual update form will be left blank (e.g., honors, publications), particularly for students who are in the first half of their degree program. We request this information to be able to compile department-wide statistics on the strength of our graduate students. Blank fields will not be viewed as unsatisfactory progress.

IX. Termination from the Program

This section applies only to students in the Botany M.S. degree program. Students in interdisciplinary Ph.D. programs should refer to the policies of their program.

In the vast majority of cases, termination from the program will be voluntarily achieved through successful attainment of the degree sought. Occasions may arise, however, when a Student may voluntarily choose to terminate his or her program because of a change in goals or interests, or when it becomes evident that goals are not achievable. In this case of voluntary termination, the Student can simply give written notice to the Faculty Advisor with copies to the Department Head and the Graduate Program Officer. The student then simply withdraws from the program at the graduate school.

There may also be a situation leading to involuntary termination. This can occur in two foreseeable scenarios: failure to maintain a graduate GPA of 3.0 (see VII. Grades), or failure to maintain adequate progress in the programs. Involuntary termination due to inadequate progress follows procedures established by the department according to the following graduate school rule:

“Students that do not meet the following guidelines for Satisfactory Academic Progress may be subject to dismissal by the academic degree-granting unit, contingent upon a joint review by the Department Head and Committee Chair. Dismissal of a student for lack of satisfactory academic progress requires that the student’s deficiencies are clearly documented and the potential dismissal documentation must be provided to the student for response. Once presented with the potential dismissal, the student must be allowed one academic semester to rectify inadequate progress. At the conclusion of that semester,

the Committee Chair and Department Head must jointly concur that the Student progress is either satisfactory for retention or that the student should be dismissed from the degree program. For the purposes of determining satisfactory progress, the Student must demonstrate successful performance of their duties and completion rates under a specific timeline (specified in the proposed dismissal document). If the Student cannot meet the maximum timeframe and completion rates below, they may receive a maximum of one 1-year extension of time to completion (specified in a document of retention), and only if the student holds academic standing to continue enrollment. Final decisions for dismissal or retention require agreement of both the Committee Chair and Department Head. Retention in the program requires that the Chair and Department Head document for the student all requirements for retention that clearly defines the path to successful degree completion within a specific time period. Retention requires that the student cannot drop or withdraw from any subsequent courses or enroll in coursework that is not identified in their Program of Study."

In the Department of Botany, the criteria for adequate progress are embodied in the Schedule (section X) of this document. As part of this Schedule, timely completion of coursework and consistent research progress are expected. Should a student fail to maintain this schedule or the majority of the Graduate Committee deems the Student's progress to be unsatisfactory in the Annual Update (section VIII), the Graduate Committee and Graduate Coordinator will bring the situation to the attention of the Head, who will then initiate the process described in the italicized text above.

X. Expected Schedule

A. M.S. Degree

Term	Activities
Semester 1	• Meet with Advisor to discuss research project and formation of the Graduate Committee • Coursework
Semester 2	• Submit "Committee Assignment" form • Select research project if not already done • Coursework • Research • Complete Annual Update by the 2nd Friday in April
Summer 1	Research
Semester 3	• Submit "Program of Study" form • Complete coursework • Research

Semester 4	• Write thesis • Defense
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B. Ph.D. Degree

Term	Activities
Semester 1	• Meet with Advisor to discuss research project and formation of the Graduate Committee • Coursework
Semester 2	• Submit “Committee Assignment” form • Select research project if not already done • Coursework • Research • Complete Annual Update by the 2nd Friday in April
Summer 1	Research
Semester 3	• Submit “Program of Study” form • Coursework • Research
Semester 4	• First opportunity for preliminary exam • Complete coursework • Research, write dissertation chapters • Complete Annual Update by the 2nd Friday in March
Summer 2	Research, write dissertation chapters
Semester 5	Research, write dissertation chapters
Semester 6	Research, write dissertation chapters Complete Annual Update by the 2 nd Friday in February
Summer 3	Research, write dissertation chapters
Semester 7	Research, write dissertation chapters
Semester 8	• Research, write dissertation chapters • Defense, if Student entered program with an M.S. degree • If not defending, complete Annual Update by the 2nd Friday in February
Summer 4	Research, write dissertation chapters
Semester 9	Research, write dissertation chapters
Semester 10	• Write dissertation chapters • Defense, if Student did not enter program with an M.S. degree

XI. Election of the Graduate Student Representative

Each year the graduate students will elect from among their number a representative to attend faculty meetings of the department. The Department Head will request that one of the senior graduate students implement this election in the first week of classes in the fall semester. The Graduate Student Representative will participate in discussion and votes on all issues except those pertaining to faculty and graduate student personnel issues. Involvement in marginally appropriate issues will be decided by the Head.

XII. Assignment of Graduate Assistants

Prior to the beginning of each semester, the Department Head will present a provisional assignment of graduate assistants (GAs) to teaching positions for approval by the faculty. Assignment will include consideration of student experience and educational needs as well as the instructional needs of the department.

XIII. Graduate School Forms for Degrees

Graduate student forms and guidelines are available here:

<https://www.uwyo.edu/registrar/graduate-students/graduate-student-forms.html>

The School for Graduate Education has put together a [checklist and deadlines](#) for graduate student degree completion.

All paperwork is due by the last day of classes in the semester the Student plans to graduate.

A. M.S. Degree Forms

- A. [Committee Assignment](#) – now completed online; due by the end of the second semester. The Graduate Committee Change form is now also completed online. To access digital forms, students should sign into WyoRecords and navigate to the Forms and Petitions landing page, located under Quick Links.
- B. [Program of Study](#) – due by the beginning of the third semester (or second Summer Session if enrolling only in summers); committee assignment form must be approved and on file with the Office of the Registrar.
 - If changes to the Program of Study are required, complete the [Request for Change in Graduate Program](#)
- C. Declare your graduation date on WyoRecords – submit as early in the term of graduation as possible.
- D. [Report of Final Examination Results](#) – prior to the defense, complete this form and take it to the defense. The deadline to submit is the last day of classes for the semester.

B. Ph.D. Degree Forms

- A. [Committee Assignment](#) – now completed online; due by the end of the second semester. The Graduate Committee Change form is now also completed online. To access digital forms,

students should sign into WyoRecords and navigate to the Forms and Petitions landing page, located under Quick Links.

- B. [Program of Study](#) – due by the beginning of the third semester (or second Summer Session if enrolling only in summers); committee assignment form must be approved and on file with the Office of the Registrar.
 - If changes to the Program of Study are required, complete the [Request for Change in Graduate Program](#)
- C. [Report on Preliminary Examination](#) for Admission to Candidacy; Program of Study must be approved and on file with the Office of the Registrar
- D. Declare your graduation date on WyoRecords – submit as early in the term of graduation as possible.
- E. [Report of Final Examination Results](#) – prior to the defense, complete this form and take it to the defense. The deadline to submit is the last day of classes for the semester.

C. Other Relevant Forms & Policies

- A. [Six-year Rule Petition](#): Completion of the Master's Degree within 6 years
- B. [Four-year Rule Petition](#): Completion of the Doctoral Degree within 4 years after passing the comprehensive exam
- C. [Eight-year Rule Petition](#): Completion of the Doctoral Degree within 8 years
- D. [Requesting a Graduate Student Appeal](#)
- E. The New Parent Accommodation policy and petition are currently under review and not available. If you have questions about the policy or petition, please contact the School of Graduate Education at (307) 766-6478 or GradEd@uwyo.edu.
- F. [Leave of Absence Petition](#)
- G. [Petition for Academic Reinstatement](#)

XIV. Department of Botany, Graduate Student Annual Update Form

Name:

Date:

Degree program:

Semester & year entered program: If you switched from the MS to PhD program without receiving an MS degree, include both the semester you began as an MS student and the semester you officially became a PhD student.

Date of previous annual update meeting:

Semester of preliminary exam (Ph.D. only):

Anticipated graduation date:

Members of graduate committee:

Chair:

Outside Member:

Member(s):

External Member(s):

Honors received: Please provide the name of any awards/grants/fellowships, month & year received, conferring organization, award/grant/fellowship duration, and dollar amount (if relevant).

Publications: Please provide citations published works (not in press or accepted); note if any are invited contributions.

Publications in preparation: Please provide citations for work submitted but not yet published. Specify whether each work is: *In press*, *Accepted*, *In revision*, or *In review*. Note if any are invited contributions

Papers or posters presented at professional meetings, symposia, workshops: Please provide the presentation authors, title, meeting/symposium/workshop name, meeting/symposium/workshop location, and whether this is an international, national, or regional event. Note if any presentations are invited.

Courses taught:

Other professional activities and accomplishments:

Narrative. Please provide a reflective narrative evaluating progress of your graduate research, teaching, program of study and professional development (limited to 1 page). If there is anything you would particularly like committee feedback on, be sure to include that here.

Department of Botany, Progress Report Form

An online version of this form should be completed by the Graduate Committee Chair (i.e. Advisor) on behalf of the committee following the annual committee meeting.

The Graduate Coordinator will provide a new link to the online form each academic year.

Student Name:		Degree Program:
Date:		
Student status:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Brief explanation of decision:		
Chair:		
Co-Chair:		
Outside member:		
Member:		
Member:		
Member:		