

## MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GENERAL BIOLOGY (MSGB) GRADUATE HANDBOOK

This document includes selected excerpts from the Mississippi State University's Graduate Catalog along with specific degree program requirements. It is the individual student's responsibility to read and be familiar with the rules and regulations outlined in the [Graduate Catalog](#) that was in effect at their time of admission. In the case of any discrepancies between this document and the Graduate Catalog, the rules and regulations outlined in the Graduate Catalog will take precedence.

### Student Responsibility Disclaimer

"Each student is responsible for understanding and completing all requirements established for his or her degree by the University, college, and department. A student's advisor may not assume that responsibility. Any substitution, waiver, or exemption from established degree requirements may be accomplished only with the approval of the appropriate faculty, Academic Dean, and Dean of the Graduate School."

### ADMISSION

#### Regular and Provisional Admission

Applicants to the Master of Science in General Biology degree program may be approved for Regular or Provisional admission.

Students with Regular admission must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA or risk being placed on [Academic Probation](#). Receipt of a single failing grade (D or F) will also be grounds for being placed on Academic Probation. To continue in the program, the student must apply to retake the course for which the D or F grade was earned at its next offering. As only one course can be retaken per degree program, receipt of a second D or F grade will result in the Graduate Coordinator requesting that the student be dismissed from the graduate program for not being able to meet the [minimum degree completion requirements](#). A Probationary Warning will be issued to a student with a cumulative GPA of  $\geq 3.0$  but in receipt of a second or third C grade. Receipt of a fourth C grade, irrespective of a student's cumulative GPA, will result in the Graduate Coordinator requesting that the student be dismissed from the graduate program, unless one of the courses for which the C grade was earned is retaken.

Students with Provisional admission must obtain a 3.0 cumulative GPA on the first 9 credit hours of coursework completed within the MSGB program. A student that earns a single failing grade (D or F) within the 9-credit hour window will be allowed to retake that course at its next offering only if retaking the course could result in a cumulative GPA at or above the required 3.0. To retake a course, a 'Request to Retake a Course' form must be completed and approved by the Graduate Coordinator prior to the start of the semester in which the course retake will occur. The original grade and the grade earned in the retaking of the course will be used to determine the cumulative GPA, however no additional program credit hours will be earned on the repeated course. Enrollment in any additional courses over the 9-credit hour limit will not be allowed until the repeated course is completed and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 is earned. Successful completion of 9 credit hours of coursework with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher will result in the student attaining Regular admission status. Failure to obtain a 3.0 GPA on the first 9 credit hours of coursework will result in the Graduate Coordinator requesting the student's dismissal from the degree program.

### Deferral of Admission

“Students may defer enrollment for up to two semesters following an admission decision. Students must contact the Graduate School by email ([gradapps@grad.msstate.edu](mailto:gradapps@grad.msstate.edu)) to change the enrollment term. If the student does not enroll for three semesters, however, the student must submit a new application, statement of purpose, application fee, and other program-required documentation. If the student attended another university in the interim, transcripts may also be required.”

### Readmission

“Once enrolled in graduate study, a student who fails to meet the continuous enrollment requirement must complete an Application for Readmission to register for classes. If the student has attended another college or university during the absence, the student must submit an official transcript from that institution.”

“Approval for readmission must be obtained from the program Graduate Coordinator, Department Head (if applicable), and Academic Dean. The readmission decision is forwarded to the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School will review these cases and may consult the Academic Dean and program before a final readmission letter is sent to the student. Academic departments may set higher standards for readmission to specific programs. A student seeking readmission to an academic program should contact the Graduate Coordinator for specific departmental requirements prior to completing an application.”

“Students who have not been enrolled for a period of three years or longer and are in good academic standing, are eligible to reapply to through the Lapsed Student Program. Readmission is not guaranteed and must be approved by the Department Head, Academic Dean, and Dean of the Graduate School. Interested students or academic departments should contact the Graduate School for more information.”

### Continuous Enrollment Requirements

“Students are required to remain continuously enrolled from the start of their program. Continuous enrollment is defined as enrollment in two of three semester terms (Fall, Spring, or Summer) with Fall enrollment required. Except in cases wherein students secure an official leave of absence, students who fail to meet these requirements will be deemed inactive after the second semester.”

“To be readmitted, students must apply for readmission to the program in which they were enrolled and to the Graduate School. Readmission is not guaranteed and must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator, Department Head (if applicable), Academic Dean, and Dean of the Graduate School.”

“In order to fulfill the continuous enrollment requirement, students who are readmitted must register retroactively and pay tuition and registration fees at current rates for all semesters that have elapsed since they were last enrolled, up to a maximum of two semesters per academic year, and a total of eight.”

### Leave of Absence

“A student may be granted a leave of absence for medical reasons, family necessity or dependent care, military service, or other approved personal reasons. Students planning to discontinue enrollment for a semester or more must request approval for a leave of absence. Students may petition the Graduate School for a leave of absence for a maximum of twelve months during the entire program by

submitting a Leave of Absence form; however, the Graduate School may approve extensions to the twelve-month maximum leave of absence (e.g., for military service obligations extending beyond twelve months).”

“A petition for a leave of absence, signed by the Graduate Coordinator, Department Head (if applicable), and Academic Dean is forwarded to the Graduate School. The Graduate School may request appropriate documentation. The request must be filed and approved before the anticipated absence, unless the event occurs in the course of a semester in which case a student may apply as soon as possible. An approved leave of absence will enable students to re-enter their program without applying for readmission or owing retroactive tuition and registration fees. Students may return to their program prior to the anticipated return date if desired.”

“A student on a leave of absence is not required to pay fees, but in turn may not use Mississippi State University facilities, resources, or services intended only for enrolled students; receive a graduate assistantship, fellowship or financial aid from the University; or take any MSU courses.”

### **DEGREE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The MS in General Biology is a non-thesis degree program that requires the completion of 33 credit hours of course work to include 10 online courses (30 credit hours) and one on campus course (3 credit hours). The program does not accept for transfer credit coursework completed at a different institution or coursework completed as part of another program at Mississippi State University.

To remain in ‘Good Academic Standing’, a student must:

- maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher,
- not have earned a third course grade lower than a B, and
- not have earned a D or F grade on any course completed since admission to the program.

### **Registration**

Upon admission to the MSGB program, students should contact the graduate coordinator to request a release to register for upcoming classes. To prevent any late fees, students must register by the 5<sup>th</sup> class day during Fall and Spring semesters or the 3<sup>rd</sup> class day during the summer. Information on the last day to drop a course with a W grade, the last day to withdraw from the semester and the last day of class can be found using the [Academic Calendar](#) link.

### **Canvas Learning Management System (LMS)**

Course materials (lecture recordings, quizzes, homework assignments, etc.) are delivered through the Canvas LMS. These materials are maintained on the Canvas platform for a limited period of time following the close of the semester. In some cases, instructors may limit Canvas accessibility to the semester in which the course is offered. As these materials are likely to be helpful in preparing for the written comprehensive exam administered at the end of the program, it is recommended that students download and/or print out materials for review at a later date. It is recommended that this be done for each course before the last day of each semester as access to course materials after the semester has ended is not to be expected.

Accessing Canvas through 'myState':

1. Log into myState with your netID and password
2. Click the 'hamburger' icon (upper left-hand corner of the page) to open the myState menu. Select the 'Classroom' tab.
3. A new page will open that lists the courses for each semester.

Accessing Canvas directly:

1. Go to: [canvas.msstate.edu](https://canvas.msstate.edu). Log in with your netID and password
2. In the left-hand menu select the 'Dashboard' or 'Courses' option to reveal the courses available.

Additional information on how to use Canvas (Student Guides and Videos, Mobile Apps, etc.) can be found on the Center for Distance Learning's website: <https://online.msstate.edu/technical-assistance/>

### Course Proctoring Requirements

All courses in the MSGB program require third-party proctoring. Students enrolled in MSGB courses will be required to adhere to the requirements of the selected proctoring service which will include the payment of fees associated with the monitoring/recording of quiz/test sessions as well as the use of webcams, microphones, or other recording equipment. All fees associated with proctoring are paid directly to the third-party proctoring service and are not part of the tuition or fees assessed by Mississippi State University.

### Honor Code

The MSU Honor Code, adopted in 2007, states: "As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do." The policy, complete with associated definitions, rules, and programs, is available online at [www.honorcode.msstate.edu/](http://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/).

### Online Course Sequence

#### Completion in 2-years

Degree program requirements can be completed in as little as two years when courses are started in the Fall semester. The recommended course completion sequence is as follows:

	<b>Fall Courses</b>	<b>Spring Courses</b>	<b>Summer Courses</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	BIO6013 Genetics & Molecular Biology	BIO6023 Principles of Evolutionary Biology	BIO6033 Fundamentals of Biotechnology
	BIO8023 Modern Microbiology	BIO8033 Advanced Cell Biology	BIO8043 Ecology & the Environment
<b>Year 2</b>	BIO6043 Developmental & Repro. Biology	BIO8063 Comprehensive Study of Plants	BIO8183 Capstone in Modern Biology
	BIO8053 Comprehensive Study of Animals	BIO8093 Experimental Biology & Biostatistics	

### Completion in 4-years

Completing 1 course per semester will require a 4-year period to complete all degree requirements. A recommended course completion sequence is as follows:

	<b>Fall Courses</b>	<b>Spring Courses</b>	<b>Summer Courses</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	BIO6013 Genetics & Molecular Biology	BIO6023 Principles of Evolutionary Biology	BIO8043 Ecology & the Environment
<b>Year 2</b>	BIO8023 Modern Microbiology	BIO8033 Advanced Cell Biology	BIO6033 Fundamentals of Biotechnology
<b>Year 3</b>	BIO6043 Developmental & Repro. Biology	BIO8063 Comprehensive Study of Plants	No classes (Summer for Year 2 and Year 3 can be interchanged)
<b>Year 4</b>	BIO8053 Comprehensive Study of Animals	BIO8093 Experimental Biology & Biostatistics	BIO8183 Capstone in Modern Biology

### General Biology Graduate Certificate notation

For students interested in meeting the General Biology Graduate Certificate program requirements as soon as possible, an alternative course sequence can be followed. The courses that that are required as part of this certificate are indicated in italic font. With this course sequence, students can apply to have completion of the General Biology graduate certificate noted on their transcript after completion of 18 credit hours of coursework with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

	<b>Fall Courses</b>	<b>Spring Courses</b>	<b>Summer Courses</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	BIO6013 Genetics & Molecular Biology <i>BIO8053</i> <i>Comprehensive Study of Animals</i>	BIO8033 Advanced Cell Biology <i>BIO8063</i> <i>Comprehensive Study of Plants</i>	BIO6033 Fundamentals of Biotechnology BIO8043 Ecology & the Environment
<b>Year 2</b>	BIO6043 Developmental & Repro. Biology BIO8023 Modern Microbiology	BIO6023 Principles of Evolutionary Biology BIO8093 Experimental Biology & Biostatistics	BIO8183 Capstone in Modern Biology

Or

	<b>Fall Courses</b>	<b>Spring Courses</b>	<b>Summer Courses</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	<i>BIO8053</i> <i>Comprehensive Study of Animals</i>	<i>BIO8063</i> <i>Comprehensive Study of Plants</i>	BIO8043 Ecology & the Environment
<b>Year 2</b>	BIO6013 Genetics & Molecular Biology	BIO8033 Advanced Cell Biology	BIO6033 Fundamentals of Biotechnology
<b>Year 3</b>	BIO8023 Modern Microbiology	BIO6023 Principles of Evolutionary Biology	No classes (Summer for Year 2 and Year 3 can be interchanged)
<b>Year 4</b>	BIO6043 Developmental & Repro. Biology	BIO8093 Experimental Biology & Biostatistics	BIO8183 Capstone in Modern Biology

## **Capstone Course**

The last course, Capstone in Modern Biology (BIO 8183), requires that students come to Mississippi State University for approximately 11-12 days in the summer. This course has been scheduled for the last 2 weeks in June, but the dates are subject to change. The dates for the Capstone course are typically announced to students in mid to late February using the Announcement tool in the Pre-Capstone course. While on campus, students that have met the GPA requirement will complete a 4-hour written comprehensive exam that is typically given on the first morning of the first day of the Capstone course.

All students will conduct, and be graded on, various lab and field research exercises. BIO 8183 is scheduled during the 10-week summer term and the course may therefore include requirements/assignments that must be completed prior to coming to campus as well as after returning home from the on-campus component of the course. Students will receive a letter grade upon completion of the course which will be used in determining their final cumulative GPA. This grade will be based on a student's performance in all lab/field modules and will be weighted based on the number of contact hours associated with each module. Assessments for each module will vary and may include quizzes/exams, written lab reports, performance on laboratory practicals, participation, and/or attendance. Currently, a \$300 (subject to change) lab fee is associated with this course.

## **BIO 8191 (Seminar in General Biology)**

BIO 8191 is not a required course for students in the MS in General Biology degree program and students that pass their written exam in their first attempt during the Capstone event may never need to enroll in this course to meet program graduation requirements.

To complete a written comprehensive exam outside of BIO 8183 (Capstone in Modern Biology), students will need to enroll in BIO 8191. This one credit course fulfills the Office of the Graduate School rule requiring that students be enrolled in at least one credit hour of course work to sit for an exam. Students do not need to pass their Comprehensive exam to earn a satisfactory grade; completion of all course requirements by the required deadlines will result in a satisfactory grade for the course. Failure to meet the required deadlines may result in an unsatisfactory grade which will lead to a student being placed on academic probation for the subsequent semester. Graduate students on probation cannot take a Comprehensive exam in that semester. Students are encouraged to review the Graduate catalog in effect at the time of their admission for more details (<http://catalog.msstate.edu/archives/>).

## **Retaking a Course**

"A student may retake a course if his/her Request to Retake a Course form is approved by the student's major professor, Graduate Coordinator, Department Head if applicable, and Academic Dean if applicable. If a student does not have a major professor, the academic advisor signs as the major professor. Only one course per degree can be repeated, and this policy applies to any graduate course taken since the beginning of enrollment in the current program. The repeated course (or program approved equivalent) must be taken at MSU, unless otherwise approved by the Graduate Coordinator, Department Head and/or Academic Dean."

"If a student retakes a course, the grade earned in the second attempt is included on the student's program of study. Once the course is retaken, the original grade is no longer subject to the University criteria for academic dismissal or degree completion. However, a record of both courses taken will

remain on the permanent transcript, and both grades will be included in the computation of the final GPA. No additional program credit hours are generated from a repeated course.”

### Academic Dismissal

“A graduate student **shall** be dismissed from the University if one or more of the following conditions occur:

- He or she receives a second course grade of D or lower;
- He or she receives a fourth course grade of C or lower;
- He or she is found to be responsible for violating the Student Honor Code for a second time;
- He or she was placed on academic probation and failed to meet the requirements for release from probationary status;
- He or she failed a comprehensive examination or final thesis/dissertation defense two times in pursuit of an academic degree, unless the academic program has a different requirement; or
- He or she falls short of any standards established by his or her academic unit, and the department recommends dismissal with approval of the Department Head (if applicable) and the Academic Dean.”

“A student shall be dismissed by the Graduate School for failure to meet University requirements as stated above after the academic unit confirms that there are no extenuating circumstances. A student can also be dismissed if the student's academic department recommends dismissal by submitting a Recommendation for Academic Dismissal form (a letter may be attached) from the Graduate Coordinator, approved by the Department Head (if applicable) and the Academic Dean, clearly stating the departmental requirements the student failed to meet.”

“Upon review and approval of the reason(s) for dismissal, an official academic dismissal letter from the Dean of the Graduate School is sent to the student via email to the student's MSU account. The letter informs the student that any schedule of classes for the following semester(s) will be dropped, and the Graduate School places an academic dismissal hold on the student's record to prevent further enrollment. The student may refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for information regarding the appeals process (see [Academic Dismissal Appeal Procedure](#)). A student who has been dismissed from a graduate program and has not been reinstated via the appeal process cannot apply for readmission into that program, except by meeting the conditions necessary to request Academic Amnesty (see [Academic Amnesty](#)).”

### Incomplete Grades

See academic operating policy: [AOP12.12](#) for complete details.

“A grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be submitted in lieu of a final grade when the student, because of illness, death in his or her immediate family, or similar circumstances beyond his or her control, is unable to complete the course requirements or to take final examinations.”

“Graduate students who receive a grade of “I” must complete all work no later than the last day of class of the next semester (excluding summer) whether the student is enrolled or not. Failure of graduate students to remove an “I” grade during the specified time will result in an automatic grade of “F”. Once a grade of “I” has been converted to an “F” because of a student's failure to complete the necessary course work or a lapse of the allowable time, no additional grade change will be allowed except under extreme circumstance(s) as recommended by the relevant deans and approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President.”

## **Graduate Committee**

The graduate committee will consist of three faculty members identified by the graduate coordinator. The graduate coordinator will be one of the three faculty members and will function as the student's Major Professor and chair of the committee; the remaining two committee members will have either taught in the MSGB program or be familiar with the degree requirements of the program. All members of the Graduate Committee will weigh in on the student's performance on the written comprehensive exam.

The graduate committee members will be made known to the student no later than the semester in which they enroll to complete their written comprehensive exam. A Committee Request Form listing the graduate committee members will be made available to the student and the completed and signed form returned to the graduate coordinator for processing by the date provided. Failure to return the signed and completed form by the requested deadline may result in a delay in processing of the paperwork required for graduation.

## **Time Limit**

"Eight years is the time limit for completion of a master's degree. A Request for an Extension of Time form must be used to request an extension for up to two years if needed under well-justified, extenuating circumstances. The request must be approved by the major professor, Graduate Coordinator, Department Head (if applicable), and the Academic Dean and submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. In the rare circumstance that a second request is made, additional approvals are required, including approval of the Dean of the Graduate School and the Provost. This request must be made using the Request for Additional Extension of Time form."

## **Withdrawal**

After the deadline to drop an individual course has past (6<sup>th</sup> day of class for Fall or Spring semesters; 3<sup>rd</sup> day of class for 10-week summer term), students only have the option to drop all enrolled courses in a semester using the 'withdrawal request' option available in MyBanner under the Students Registration tab. Tuition and fee charges are prorated and the schedule is available at the following link: <https://www.registrar.msstate.edu/students/withdrawal-from-the-university/>

"The withdrawal approval date will be effective the date the student submits the withdrawal request, except in documented cases of serious illness or extreme hardship, in which case an earlier withdrawal date may be approved by the student's Academic Dean. It is the student's responsibility to provide that documentation to the Dean."

## **Graduation Requirements**

A graduate student cannot graduate under any of the following circumstances:

- A GPA lower than 3.00 for all courses attempted for graduate credit after admission to the degree program or
- A grade of D or lower for any courses attempted for graduate credit after admission to the degree program or
- A grade of I (Incomplete) on his/her transcript.
- Failure to pass their written comprehensive exam within two attempts.



## **Pre-Capstone Canvas Course**

To assist students in preparing to come to campus for the Capstone course (BIO8183), the graduate coordinator will arrange for the establishment of a “Pre-Capstone Canvas Course”. Typically, the Pre-Capstone course will be available in late January to early February of each year and only students on track to meet the graduation requirements for the upcoming Summer term will be sent an email invitation to join the site.

Information disseminated through this site may include:

- Instructor provided study guides
- Information about on campus housing (availability, cost, notification deadlines)
- Campus parking rules and regulations
- On campus dining options
- Dates for the Capstone event
- Any special Capstone course requirements (e.g. expect short hikes outside, lab requires long pants/close toed shoes be worn, etc.)
- General expectations for the written comprehensive exam (date of exam, total testing time, materials allowed, etc.)
- Required forms (Year and Instruction Identification, Assumption of Risk and Release, Emergency Contact, Grant of Consent, On campus Housing Reservation, etc.)

Students that do not receive an email invitation to join the Pre-Capstone course, but are on track to attend the Capstone course, should reach out to the graduate coordinator for assistance.

## **Written Comprehensive Exam**

To sit for the final written comprehensive exam, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Successfully completed all 10 online courses within the MSGB degree program
- Earned a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher on all coursework attempted for graduate credit after admission to the degree program
- Be enrolled in at least 1 hour of coursework in the semester the exam is administered
- Must be in good academic standing (i.e. not be on academic probation)

In most cases, completion of the written comprehensive exam will occur during the summer semester while students are on campus as part of BIO8183 (Capstone in Modern Biology). A student that meets all of the requirements except the mandatory 3.0 GPA, will be allowed to enroll in BIO8183 and complete all course activities and requirements but will not be permitted to sit for the comprehensive exam that semester. If, upon completion of BIO8183, the student reaches the 3.0 GPA threshold, the comprehensive exam can be taken as early as the next semester by enrolling in BIO8191 (Seminar in General Biology). A student that fails to attain a 3.0 GPA after completion of BIO8183 may be given the opportunity to retake a course within the degree program only if they have not already retaken a course and, if in retaking a course, a cumulative 3.0 GPA is mathematically possible. A student that has completed BIO8183 and has no remaining opportunities to earn the requisite 3.0 cumulative GPA, will be dismissed from the program as they will not be able to meet the requirements for earning a graduate degree.

A student that earns a failing grade for their first attempt of the comprehensive exam, can apply to schedule a second attempt at the exam no sooner than three months from the date of the first

attempt. Failing the comprehensive exam for a second time will result in the student's dismissal from the degree program as they will not meet the requirements to earn a master's degree.

The written comprehensive exam will test students understanding of material from all 10 courses within the degree program including:

BIO 6013 (Genetics & Molecular Biology)	BIO 8033 (Advanced Cell Biology)
BIO 6023 (Principles of Evolutionary Biology)	BIO 8043 (Ecology & the Environment)
BIO 6033 (Fundamentals of Biotechnology)	BIO 8053 (Comp. Study of Animals)
BIO 6043 (Dev. & Reproductive Biology)	BIO 8063 (Comp. Study of Plants)
BIO 8023 (Modern Microbiology)	BIO 8093 (Exp. Biology & Biostatistics)

Four hours will be allotted to complete the exam materials. When administered during the Capstone event, the exam is typically scheduled for the morning of the first day. Exam question format varies from instructor-to-instructor, course-to-course, and semester-to-semester. Students should therefore expect to be able to answer questions posed in Multiple Choice, True/False, Matching, Short Answer, and/or Essay format.

The Comprehensive Exam is scored on a pass/fail basis with each exam weighted equally (10%) when determining the student's final performance. There is no set 'cut-off' score for determining what constitutes a passing grade each semester. However, as a General Biology degree program, it is expected that students earn a passing score for each of the 10 exams. Because there is no 'set' passing grade, the cut-off may vary slightly from semester-to-semester based on the cohort's collective performance. Graduate faculty familiar with the MSGB degree program review student scores and discuss where the cut-off should be for each administration of the Comprehensive Exam. This means that the score needed to pass the exam taken in one semester is likely to be different than the score needed in a previous/later semester.

### **Registering for Graduation**

Students that have meet the degree requirements, which includes passing their Comprehensive Exam will be eligible to graduate. To graduate, students must apply to graduate by the deadlines posted in the [MSU Academic Calendar](#). Degree applications and application fees do not roll over from one semester to another. Therefore, if a student fails to graduate in the term for which they applied, they must reapply for graduation and repay fees associated with graduation for the later term. All students must pay account balances in full prior to the graduation ceremony.

There is no commencement ceremony for August graduates. However, August graduates can attend a December ceremony. Commencement information is typically available three weeks before graduation and can be found on the [Registrar's](#) page. Diplomas are mailed to the address provided in the graduation application 4-6 weeks after the degree has been cleared by the Registrar's office. Instructions for obtaining copies of your official transcript are provided at the following site: <http://www.registrar.msstate.edu/Students/transcripts.html>

### **General Biology Graduate Certificate Application**

Graduate students in the MS in General Biology degree program can apply to have a notation added to their transcript indicating that they have completed a graduate certificate in General Biology. Interested students will need to have completed BIO8053, BIO8063, and an additional 12 graduate

credit hours (from within the MS in General Biology degree program) with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. A completed application must be electronically submitted to the graduate coordinator for consideration. While this is an opportunity available to MS in General Biology degree candidates, completion of this application is not a requirement to earn a MS degree.

## **GENERAL ASSISTANCE**

### **ITS Help Desk**

For assistance accessing myBanner, setting up an MSU email account or two-factor authentication, or installing or troubleshooting [software](#) supported by the University, contact the ITS Help Desk:

- By email: [servicedesk@msstate.edu](mailto:servicedesk@msstate.edu)
- By phone: 662-325-0631 or 888-398-6394

### **MSU Library Resources**

The Mississippi State University Libraries maintains an online/distance learners portal that provides information on how off campus students can utilize MSU library resources. Complete information can be found at the following link: <https://guides.library.msstate.edu/distancelearners>

The current Distance Education Librarian, Blair Booker, can be reached:

- By email: [bbooker@library.msstate.edu](mailto:bbooker@library.msstate.edu)
- By phone: 662-325-0952

### **Distance Education**

The Center for Distance Education (CDE) maintains a "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)" page that provides answers to general questions related to:

- Online Student Services
- myState & Class Registration
- Obtaining Technical Support
- Tuition and Fees

Technical Assistance for students enrolled in distance courses can be obtained by:

- Calling: 662-325-0278
- Sending an email to: [help@online.msstate.edu](mailto:help@online.msstate.edu)
- Submitting an online form found here: <https://online.msstate.edu/technical-assistance/>

### **Third Party Proctoring**

The University is currently using Honorlock to proctor online assessments. Honorlock resources for students can be found at the following link: <https://online.msstate.edu/honorlock/>

To determine whether your current computer (operating system, browser version, and internet speed) meets the requirements to use Honorlock, a single-click system check test can be run:

<https://honorlock.com/support/>

Students will be notified in the Canvas site for their classes or by email from the graduate coordinator to any changes to the third party proctoring service provider used in any given semester.

## Contact Information for Current Administrative Faculty

MS in General Biology Graduate Coordinator

Donna M. Gordon, PhD

[gordon@biology.msstate.edu](mailto:gordon@biology.msstate.edu)

662-325-9337

Department of Biological Sciences Academic Coordinator

Martha Wilson

[mwilson@biology.msstate.edu](mailto:mwilson@biology.msstate.edu)

662-325-6853

Department of Biological Sciences Department Head

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College of Arts & Sciences Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Tommy Anderson, PhD

[tpanderson@english.msstate.edu](mailto:tpanderson@english.msstate.edu)

Provost and Executive Vice President

David Shaw, PhD

[provost@msstate.edu](mailto:provost@msstate.edu)

## FORMS

The following forms can be downloaded from the Graduate School website. Unless indicated otherwise, completed forms are to be submitted by email to the graduate coordinator for processing.

- Leave of Absence
- Extension of Time for Completion
- Request to Retake a Course
- Lapsed Student Re-Admission Application for Degree Completion
- Readmission Application

The following forms are to be obtained by directly contacting the graduate coordinator. Forms with an asterisk are also provided at the end of this handbook.

- Exam Notification\*
- Graduate Committee
- Course Instructor Year\*
- Graduate Certificate Application\*

# *General Biology Exam Notification Form*

Name			9-digit MSU ID	NetID
Last	First	Middle		

Degree:           Masters  
Major:            General Biology

Examination Type:   Written Comprehensive

Examination Information:	Date of Exam
	Time
	Location
	First Attempt            Second/Final Attempt

Typed/Printed Name	Signature
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Student

Graduate Coordinator

For Department of Biological Sciences Use: Checklist for approval

3.00 GPA since admission to MSGB	Date of admission to MSGB program
Currently enrolled	Within 8-year time limit
All coursework completed	Enrolled in last semester

Date received	Approved
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Must be submitted to the graduate coordinator at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled exam

# General Biology Course Instructor-Year Form

To assist us in identifying the correct version of an exam to administer as part of your written comprehensive examination, please indicate for each of the courses listed below the year that you completed the course. Where applicable, select the course instructor. If you have taken a listed course more than once, please provide this information for the most recently completed course.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ netID: \_\_\_\_\_

Course	Course name	Year completed	Course Instructor
BIO6013	Genetics & Molecular Biology		Dr. Vicky McCurdy
BIO6023	Principles of Evolutionary Biology		Dr. Mark Welch
BIO6033	Fundamentals of Biotechnology		Dr. Nancy Reichert Ms. Lindsey Harrison
BIO6043	Developmental & Reproductive Biology		Dr. David Chevalier
BIO8023	Modern Microbiology		Dr. Justin Thornton Dr. Brandy Roberts
BIO8033	Advanced Cell Biology		Dr. Donna Gordon
BIO8043	Ecology & the Environment		Dr. Rachel Jolley
BIO8053	Comprehensive Study of Animals		Dr. Jamie Stewart
BIO8063	Comprehensive Study of Plants		Dr. David Chevalier Dr. Cory Shoemaker
BIO8093	Experimental Biology & Biostatistics		Dr. Rachel Jolley

Please return a copy of this completed form to Dr. Gordon ([gordon@biology.msstate.edu](mailto:gordon@biology.msstate.edu)).

## Instructions for completing the “General Biology Certificate Application”

Download the “General Biology Certificate Application” to your computer and use Adobe Acrobat to fill in the following sections:

1. Name (last, first, and middle)
2. MSU 9-digit ID (this is **not** your social security number)
3. Graduate Program (MS in General Biology)
4. Enter in the Year and Letter Grade received for the two courses required of the Certificate program (BIO8053 and BIO8063)
5. Select 4 courses from the list and enter in the year the course was completed and the earned letter grade. The final GPA on the 18 credit hours must be 3.0 or higher to receive the General Biology certificate notation on your transcript.
6. At the bottom of the page add the date
7. Add your electronic signature on the Student Signature line

Do not complete the “Form reviewed by” or “Approved” sections of the document. Do not make any changes to the form once you have added your electronic signature as this will invalidate the signature.

If you are unable to complete this form electronically, print it out, clearly write in the requested sections listed above using blue ink, scan the document or take a photo to generate an electronic copy of the form (PDF is preferred, but JPEG is also an acceptable format).

# General Biology Certificate Application

The General Biology Certificate is open to students in good standing who are enrolled at the University as: a) an unclassified graduate student, or b) in any online graduate degree program. Graduate students must successfully complete 18 credit hours of graduate study in the Department of Biological Sciences with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (selecting from the coursework listed below). A maximum of 6 graduate credit hours may be transferred into the certificate program with approval.

To apply for the General Biology Certificate notation on your transcript, complete all sections of this form and send to Dr. Donna M. Gordon ([gordon@biology.msstate.edu](mailto:gordon@biology.msstate.edu)) for processing.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MSU ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate Program: \_\_\_\_\_

## Required Coursework (6 credit hours)

<u>Course</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Credit hrs</u>	<u>Semester</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
BIO 8053	Comprehensive Study of Animals	3	Fall		
BIO 8063	Comprehensive Study of Plants	3	Spring		

**Select 12 credit hours of coursework from the list below** (no more than 9 credit hours at the 6000-level)

<u>Course</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Credit hrs</u>	<u>Semester</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
BIO 6013	Genetics & Molecular Biology	3	Fall		
BIO 6023	Principles of Evolutionary Biology	3	Spring		
BIO 6033	Fundamentals of Biotechnology	3	Summer		
BIO 6043	Developmental & Reproductive Biology	3	Fall		
BIO 8023	Modern Microbiology	3	Fall		
BIO 8033	Advanced Cell Biology	3	Spring		
BIO 8043	Ecology & the Environment	3	Summer		
BIO 8093	Experimental Biology & Biostatistics	3	Spring		

## Transfer of graduate credit hours (6 hours maximum)

Additional material that may be requested for review purposes include: a) official academic transcripts, b) the course catalog description and/or a copy of the course syllabus, and c) completion of a Transfer Approval form (<https://www.grad.msstate.edu/students/forms>).

<u>University/College</u>	<u>Course information</u>	<u>Credit hrs</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
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By signing below, you indicate that all of the information provided above is correct and that at the time of form submission you are in good academic standing.

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Form reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Approved: Yes No