

FAQ - Beginning of Year Memo – First Year of the EEB Graduate Program

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June 2023

Use with: Grad guide ([pdf](#)) | tips for grad school ([pdf](#)) | mentoring guidelines ([pdf](#))

Dear First Year Students in EEB,

The academic year has begun! What should you be doing this year? Here are some thoughts for keeping on track with EEB program requirements (see also Table 1 and relevant pages of the Graduate Program Guide [\[pdf\]](#) – particularly sections I (1) and (2); see also the EEB checklist [\[doc\]](#)).

1. You're required to meet with your Advisor 6-8 weeks into the semester.

In practice, people are housed in their advisor's labs, and this is easy to do. But, for those with advisors on sabbatical overseas, be sure to begin appropriately regular dialogue (i.e., many hold weekly meetings).

2. Begin to form an advisor – mentor relationship, and join a lab, by the end of Spring.

In EEB, you have the flexibility to rotate among labs. In most cases, most students have settled on a lab by the end of their first year. It is still OK to rotate in your second year. Some students use L501 credits during rotations to substitute for classes (following the '4 and 6' rule – see the Graduate Program Guide [\[pdf\]](#) and relevant [faq](#)). See also our FAQ on being a graduate student ([pdf](#)) and mentoring guidelines ([pdf](#)).

3. Form an Advisory Committee Meeting:

By the end of the Spring semester, you should hold a committee meeting (and see format guidelines for how they run: [faq](#)). The first committee formed is an "Advisory" Committee. See Box 3 of the Graduate Program Guide ([pdf](#)) for more details. Your advisor must write up a committee meeting report ([form](#)) and file it in your personal Sharepoint folder ([link](#)).

- [form](#) for reports (email to the [Grad Advisor](#) and [EEB GPD](#)), upload to individual Sharepoint folders ([link](#))
- format for EEB committee meetings ([faq](#)) – read it to learn about format, the advisor-free portion at the end, etc.
- form for individualized development plan (IDP) – complete it and distribute before your meeting, then be prepared to discuss it ([form](#)).

4. Submit the "Appointment of Advisory Committee" form:

Submit the online form nominating your Advisory Committee's membership to the College Grad Office. From [this webpage](#), you can submit the form after CAS login.

More information: General requirements for PhD Advisory Committee (from UGS: [link](#)) | eDoc for Advisory Committee & eDoc for Change of Advisory Committee (if you need to add/remove members) – start [here](#)

5. Begin coursework and establish a plan to complete courses in two years:

(A) **Plan on two years:** Establish a plan to complete coursework in two years, ideally.

(B) **Meet all requirements:** This planning requires balancing a 20 credit EEB 'major', a 6-12 credit minor, and a 3 credit statistics requirement. See Graduate Program Guide ([pdf](#)) and UGS Bulletin entry for EEB ([link](#)).

(C) **How to plan:** The EEB Graduate Program Director provides best-guess guidance as to EEB courses for the next two years via email.

- Please refer closely to section (1) of the Graduate Program Guide for details.
- Remember to pick an area of concentration (the '2 and 1 rule') and, if you take L500/L501/Z620 Journal clubs, follow the '6 and 1 rule' ([faq](#) | [form](#) for L500/L501 credit).
- Remember also that your Advisory Committee and your GPD can readily approve classes for the 'major' that are outside those listed in the Program Guide, and outside of Biology. Just make a plan and pitch it to your committee.

(D) **What are research credits (L800)?** Remember to sign up for 12 total credits each semester (course + research) – if you take X formal course credits, take 12 – X credits of L800 Research. Never enroll in L500 or L501 unless you have received permission from the GPD first.

(E) **Brown bag:** Most 1st year students take at least one semester of 'brown bag' (L570 Seminar in Ecology and Env. Bio - each student must take two semesters) – first year is a good time to knock out this requirement.

(F) **Track your own progress:** Please keep track of your coursework on the 'EEB Checklist' ([doc](#)) and keep it in your individual Sharepoint folder ([link](#)) so we can look it over at the end of the year.

6. Teaching requirement?

Many 1st year students also teach at least one semester of their first year. Each student must teach at least one semester at IU.

7. Application to Fellowships, Grants, etc.:

While not a formal 'requirement', it is an expectation that first, second, and third year students apply to any external, competitive fellowships that they are eligible for (outside of the University). Some examples of NSF GRFPs, IAS, Sigma Xi, etc., can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions about first year requirements, the graduate program, etc., please do not hesitate to contact us.