

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

Spencer Hall, EEB Graduate Program Director (eebgpd@indiana.edu)

Katie LaPadula, Advisor for Graduate Affairs, Biology (biogrdav@indiana.edu)

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Use with: Grad guide ([pdf](#)) | tips for grad school ([pdf](#)) | mentoring guidelines ([pdf](#)) | faq for prelim #2 ([pdf](#))

Dear Third Year Students in EEB,

The academic year has begun! What should you be doing this year? Here are some thoughts for keeping on track, this year, with EEB program requirements (see also Table 1 and relevant pages of the Graduate Program Handbook [[pdf](#)]).

1. You should have completed your coursework in your third year if not your second:

After you pass the Qualifying Exam Part #2, you will become a PhD candidate. Congrats! Prepare for that!

But: to become a candidate, you will also submit all of your coursework then for formal review by the University Graduate School (UGS).

Notes:

- **Meeting the EEB major:** It is important that your coursework meets all of the stated requirement of the EEB major (20 credit + 3 credit stats) described in section (1) of the Handbook ([pdf](#)). Otherwise, UGS will balk at your Candidacy. However, we routinely approve classes taken that are not on the official list. After your advisory committee approves, we just need to fill out paperwork (an exceptions edoc).
- **L500/L501:** Any L500 or L501 credits must be documented on the [form](#) for those credits, stored in your individual Sharepoint folder ([link](#)), and approved by your committee and the EEB GPD.
- **Outside minor:** In addition, your minor must meet its particular requirements, most likely described in UGS's Bulletin or in separate documentation provided by your minor advisor. (Minors are run outside of EEB: see [faq](#)).
- **Research credits:** Keep registering for L800 credits, 12 per semester, to get to 90 total credits (you must have 90 to graduate). If you are an SAA (as AI or RA), you must register for at least six credits of L800.

2. Take your Qualifying Exam, Part 2: 'Research Skills'

This 'proposal defense' is briefly described in section (4) of the Grad Handbook ([pdf](#)). Normally, you present a chapter's worth of data (or results from modeling, etc.) and a plan for the remaining chapters (see also [faq](#)).

Notes:

- **Expectations:** There are not many restrictions on the written format of this exam, so engage your Advisor and Committee on their expectations. It can be very helpful to see other successfully-defended proposals. Ask for those from others. (See also [faq](#)).
- **New committee member?** It is possible that you may have replaced your minor advisor with someone else for this exam – that is OK! See Box 3 of the Handbook ([pdf](#)) for more details.

- **Documentation:** Ensure that your advisor has documented completion of this exam on a committee meeting report form ([doc](#)). This must be stored in your individual Sharepoint folder ([link](#)).
- **Timing:** This exam should be completed successfully by the end of the 6th semester. (An oral defense by the 6th week allows for a retake option). You must have completed prelim II 8+ months before graduation.
- **Yes, IDP:** It is normal to discuss your IDP ([doc](#)) and have the advisor-free-portions of the committee meeting after your defense. (This committee meeting can run 2-3 hours: see [faq](#)).

3. Submit candidacy, then NORC paperwork:

Work with Biology's Advisor for Graduate Affairs on submission of your candidacy paperwork to UGS.

Then, after you [become a candidate](#), we encourage you to move forward on become a PhD Candidate with UGS (see [general requirements](#)). Just get this paperwork done!

- UGS's 'Nomination to Candidacy for PhD Degree Application' (find [here](#))

Once approved, you can [nominate your Research Committee](#). See Box 3 of the Program Handbook ([pdf](#)) for details about Research Committees.

See also:

- General requirements for dissertation research committees ([from UGS](#))
- UGS 'Nomination of Research Committee' edoc (find [here](#))
- UGS 'PhD Research Committee Change' edoc (find [here](#))

4. 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 third year requirements, the graduate program, etc., please do not hesitate to contact us.