



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Biology MS Graduate Program Handbook

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Biology MS

Together, the [Graduate Student Handbook](#) and your graduate program handbook should serve as your main guide throughout your graduate career. The Graduate Student Handbook includes university information, policies, requirements and guidance for all graduate students. Your program handbook describes the details about graduate study and requirements in your specific program. While both of these handbooks are wonderful resources, know that you are always welcome to talk with faculty and staff in your program and in the Graduate College.

The central activities and missions of a university rest upon the fundamental assumption that all members of the university community conduct themselves in accordance with a strict adherence to academic and scholarly integrity. As a graduate student and member of the university community, you are expected to display the highest standards of academic and personal integrity.

Here are some resources to help you better understand your responsibilities:

- [Academic Honesty](#)
- [Academic Integrity Training](#) - Open to all graduate students at no cost
- [Plagiarism](#)

Curriculum

Please visit the [Graduate Catalog](#) to see the current curriculum for our program.

Timeline for Completion

Degree Plan of Study

Students will finalize their plan of study with their advisory committee by the completion of 9 credit hours in the program. The plan of study will follow the GPS audit available to students through the MyUCF portal. Once your Plan of Study has been signed by all of your thesis committee members, it moves on for additional approvals by Graduate Program Coordinator and the College of Graduate Studies. The approved Plan of Study is essentially a contract between you and the Department and can only be modified by mutual agreement, followed by the filing of revised forms. The plan of study cannot be altered solely due to poor academic performance of the student.

All students must meet at least annually with their committees to assess progress toward graduation. More frequent meetings are encouraged. An annual report, assessing progress and activities for the academic year, must be on file with the Program Coordinator for each student by the end of the summer semester, using the "Annual Progress Evaluation Form".

MS students have a maximum of five years to complete the program. At least 21 credit hours must be taken at UCF.

Transfer of Credits

Undergraduate coursework is allowed in a master's program, but only if the Plan of Study meets the following requirements:

- The Plan of Study includes at least 30 credit hours of 5000-level courses or higher, which must be taken as part of an approved graduate Plan of Study. No more than 6 hours of Directed Research/Independent Studies will be permitted.
- At least half of the Plan of Study is at the 6000 level.
- Courses transferred into the Plan of Study include graduate-level courses with a grade of "B-" or higher. No undergraduate courses may be transferred. For the definition of transfer courses, see the Master's Program Policies section in the Graduate Catalog.
- For the thesis option, at least 24 semester hours of course work earned is exclusive of thesis.
- The total hours required for the degree program is more than 30 hours. Master's degree programs that require only 30 hours cannot have undergraduate courses in the Plan of Study.
- The undergraduate course was taken while in the graduate degree program. Important!
- Undergraduate courses taken prior to admission into the master's degree that you are currently pursuing cannot apply toward the degree.

Example: A 36 hour Plan of Study can consist of the following: 18 hours of 6000-level courses, 12 hours of 5000-level courses, and 6 hours of undergraduate courses taken while in the master's program. Eighteen hours of 6000-level and 12 hours of 5000-level equals 30. This meets the 30 hrs at 5000 or higher requirement and the 18 hours meets the 50% of POS at 6000 level requirement. However, these 6 hours of undergraduate courses could not apply if they were taken prior to admission to the master's program because they would be considered transfer courses and undergraduate courses cannot transfer into a master's program.

Important! In order to understand the 4000 level policy and apply it, you must know the definition of transfer courses.

Master's transfer credits typically consist of hours completed at an accredited institution (including UCF) BEFORE a student is given graduate status in his/her master's program at UCF.

Only graduate-level or higher courses may be accepted as transfer credits. Similarly, only courses with a grade of "B-" or higher may be transferred into a plan of study. Except as noted in the bullets below, no more than a combined total of nine semester hours of credits may generally be transferred into a master's plan of study. For policy details see: catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=204 > Transfer of Credit.

- Graduate programs are permitted to accept up to nine hours of graduate course work taken at UCF while an undergraduate student was enrolled in an undergraduate plan of study.
- Up to nine semester hours of graduate course work, but no undergraduate course work, may be transferred into a graduate program from other regionally accredited institutions.
- No more than nine semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred into the graduate program from UCF post-baccalaureate work (5000 level or higher of graduate courses taken while in non-degree status). Similarly, no more than nine semester hours of graduate course work may be transferred into the graduate program from courses taken as part of another graduate degree earned at UCF. For those students who may have completed graduate-level courses taken while in graduate status in another major at UCF where a degree was not earned, up to 9 hours of graduate course work may be credited toward a new degree program with the consent of the new program.

Students who wish to take graduate course work elsewhere while enrolled as a student at UCF must apply and be accepted as a "Traveling Scholar". Graduate credits earned as a Traveling Scholar are considered "resident" credits that are earned at UCF and are applicable to the plan of study without being subject to the nine-hour limit.

The decision as to which courses transfer is made by the Departmental Graduate Committee upon a petition from

you. The Plan of Study must be approved by you, your Graduate Advisor, your Advisory Committee, the Graduate Program Coordinator, and the College of Graduate Studies.

Sample Plan of Study for the MS Thesis Track

1st Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCB 6095: Prof. Dev. I (1) • BSC 6XXX: Biology Seminar (1) • Elective Course (3) • Elective Course (4) • Form Advisory Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCB 6096: Prof. Dev. II (1) • BSC 6XXX: Biology Seminar (1) • STA 5175: Biometry (3) • Elective Courses (4) • File Plan of Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSC 6908: Independent Study • Thesis Proposal Defense
Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 6 credit hours

2nd Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elective Courses (6) • BSC 6908: Independent Study (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSC 6971: Thesis (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSC 6971: Thesis (3) • Thesis Defense
Semester Total: 9 credit hours	Semester Total: 3 credit hours	Semester Total: 3 credit hours

* Note: If a student is deemed to have adequate training in statistics for STA 5175, it could be replaced with STA 5206. Alternatively, the requirement could be waived or a more advanced statistics course substituted.

** Note: If a student is on payroll and they have not passed their proposal defense they must be enrolled for 9 hours fall/spring or 6 hours in the summer. Students must be enrolled the semester they are intending to graduate. If a student is on a graduate teaching assistantship beyond four semesters, there must be a petition filed with the graduate committee.

Sample Plan of Study for the MS Non-thesis Track *

1st Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group A Elective (3-4)• BSC 6XXX: Biology Seminar (1)• PCB 6095: Prof. Dev. I (1)• Group C Elective (optional) (3)• Plan of Study Filed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group A Requirement (3-4)• Group C Elective (3-4)• BSC 6XXX: Biology Seminar (1)• PCB 6096: Prof. Dev. II (1)• Group C Elective (optional) (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group C Elective (optional) (3-4)
Semester Total: 8-9 credit hours	Semester Total: 11-13 credit hours	Semester Total: 3-4 credit hours

2nd Year of Graduate Training

Fall	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group A Requirement (3-4)• Group C Elective (3-4)• Group C Elective (3-4)• Oral Comprehensive Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group C Elective (3-4)• Group C Elective (3-4)• BSC 6909: Research Report (2)• Research Report Filed
Semester Total: 9-12 credit hours	Semester Total: 8-10 credit hours

* Note: Non-thesis students are not eligible for tuition support through graduate employment unless given an exception from the Biology Graduate Committee.

Non-Thesis Track Advising and Mentoring

Non-thesis Track Advising and Mentoring

For students entering the non-thesis degree program, the Graduate Program Coordinator becomes your Academic Advisor and two other Advisory Committee members are selected from the Biology Graduate faculty primarily for their role in the Oral Comprehensive Exam. All Degree Requirements apply with the exceptions that non-thesis students write a Research Report in place of a thesis and non-thesis students take an Oral Comprehensive Examination in place of the Thesis Proposal Defense. This oral comprehensive examination is based on courses taken and your knowledge of general biology.

Oral Comprehensive Exam

An oral comprehensive examination is required of all students in the Non-thesis Track. If a student fails the comprehensive examination, a minimum of four weeks must pass before reexamination. The comprehensive exam may be taken a maximum of two times. Students preparing for the comprehensive exam should consult with each committee member about the general areas of Biology that will be stressed on the examination.

Students should schedule their examination at least two weeks ahead of time with the Graduate Program Administrator to ensure room scheduling and filing of appropriate paperwork.

Thesis Requirements

A thesis is optional for this program; the following information is intended for those choosing to complete a thesis.

University Dissertation Requirements

The College of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation page](#) contains information on the university's requirements for dissertation formatting, format review, defenses, final submission, and more. A step-by-step completion guide is also available on [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) Site.

All university deadlines are listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). Your program or college may have other earlier deadlines; please check with your program and college staff for additional deadlines.

The following requirements must be met by dissertation students in their final term:

- Submit a properly formatted file for initial format review by the format review deadline
- Submit the Thesis and Dissertation Release Option form well before the defense
- Defend by the defense deadline
- Receive format approval (if not granted upon initial review)
- Submit signed approval form by final submission deadline
- Submit final dissertation document by final submission deadline

Students must format their dissertation according to the standards outlined in [Thesis and Dissertation Webcourse](#). Formatting questions or issues can be submitted to the Format Help page in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. Format reviews and final submission must be completed in the [Thesis and Dissertation Services](#) site. The Dissertation Approval Form is also available in the Thesis and Dissertation Services site.

The College of Graduate Studies offers several thesis and dissertation [Workshops](#) each term. Students are highly encouraged to attend these workshops early in the dissertation process to fully understand the above policies and procedures.

The College of Graduate Studies thesis and dissertation office is best reached by email at editor@ucf.edu.

Thesis Track Advising and Mentoring

Prior to admission as a thesis-track student, you and your advisor agreed that you would work together on issues related to research, funding, professional guidance, and other areas of academic and professional interest. In other words, you have agreed to work together closely for several years. Your advisor did not consider this commitment lightly and nor should you. However, graduate students and initial advisors sometimes part ways: if you should decide it is best to do so, you should first talk about it with your advisor. This change can occur amicably, especially if done early (especially before the thesis proposal stage).

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Let's assume you and your advisor develop an idea for your thesis as a result of regular conversations and your literature research. You will need to form an advisory committee (in your first semester) as you develop your research ideas. Talk with your advisor about potential faculty to serve on this committee. Having selected candidates, schedule a time to talk with each of them to explain what your thesis topic will be and to ask if they will serve on your advisory committee. Below are the rules about that committee, including its structure and responsibilities.

Masters Thesis Advisory Committee

Your Graduate Advisor or Chair (or at minimum a Co-Chair) must be a member of the Department of Biology in a tenure-earning position. For example, if your advisor is an Emeritus faculty member, you will also need a co-Chair currently active in the Department. A Graduate Advisory Committee must be formed before 9 credit hours of graduate work have been completed (i.e., by the end of the first or second semester, depending upon your course load), but it is advantageous for you to appoint this committee sooner so they can be involved in creating your Plan of Study. The Advisory Committee is selected by mutual agreement between you, your Graduate Advisor, and respective faculty members. The Committee should include faculty who can contribute advice and give direction to your research project. You must take the initiative in contacting potential committee members. The Plan of Study (POS), which is determined by the Graduate Advisor and the Advisory Committee and approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator and College, must be in place prior to the second term of full-time enrollment or by completion of the 9th hour in the program. See the section in the catalog pertaining to this policy at: catalog.ucf.edu/content.php?catoid=4&navoid=204.

Your Graduate Advisor serves as the Chair of your Advisory Committee. Your Advisory Committee must consist of at least the Chair plus two faculty members (including courtesy appointments), and at least two of the total membership must be from the Department of Biology. You may have more than three committee members, although it can be cumbersome to have too many (scheduling meetings, for example). Faculty members in departments outside Biology or qualified individuals from other institutions or from the community may be members of the Committee. Curriculum Vitae of potential off-campus committee members are reviewed by the Biology Graduate Committee for suitability, and your Advisory Committee members must be approved by the Graduate Program Coordinator (see the Thesis Committee Approval Form). Accepted individuals are given courtesy appointments for the duration of their service to the Department.

Thesis Proposal Defense

A thesis proposal defense is required of all students in the Thesis Track. The purpose of the proposal defense is to publicly present the planned research and its foundations as a seminar to an interested audience of one's peers and the student's Advisory Committee. The proposal should be distributed to Advisory Committee members two weeks in advance of the defense, and the proposal defense should be advertised (contact the Graduate Program Assistant two weeks in advance). Typically, public attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions and comment following the seminar, after which the committee meets in closed session with the student to further defend the proposal. The Advisory Committee must then vote to accept or reject the proposal. The Thesis Proposal Defense must be passed a minimum of one semester preceding the Oral Thesis Defense (i.e., the Proposal Defense and Thesis Defense cannot occur in the same semester).

Oral Thesis Defense

In addition to the Thesis Proposal Defense, an Oral Thesis Defense is required for students in the Thesis Track. The Thesis Proposal Defense must be passed a minimum of one semester preceding the Oral Thesis Defense. Students, faculty, staff, and other interested parties are strongly encouraged to attend thesis final defense sessions. Notices providing date, time, and location of such meetings must be distributed to all academic departments and this must be arranged through the Graduate Program Assistant at least 2 weeks prior to the

defense date. The Oral Thesis Defense will consist of a 30-40 minute public presentation of the thesis, emphasizing results and conclusions followed by a period where visitors may ask questions. At the conclusion of the public question period, the committee Chair will ask the visitors to excuse themselves and the advisory committee will then examine the candidate privately and deliberate on the merits of the body of work. Thesis defenses will be approved by a majority vote of the Thesis Advisory Committee. Thesis committee members who do not approve of the thesis may choose not to sign the thesis approval sheet. Further approval is required from the Dean or Dean designee and the UCF College of Graduate Studies before final acceptance of the thesis in fulfilling degree requirements.

Thesis Proposal

The Department of Biology requires a thesis proposal be on file with the Graduate Program Administrator from all MS thesis option students by the **end of the second academic semester**, summer excluded. Failure to comply may result in the loss of teaching assistantship and any accompanying tuition waiver. Also, if the project involves research on vertebrates, an official Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) protocol must be approved prior to any research commencing and be on file with the Graduate Program Administrator. If the project involves human subjects, approval must be received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Thesis (BSC 6971) Registration Requirement

Students taking the Thesis Option, after completion of regular course work, are required to enroll in three credit hours of BSC 6971 every semester, including summer, for the duration of the MS program. Non-compliance with this rule may result in a graduate student being reverted to post-baccalaureate status.

Thesis Formatting

The thesis can either be in the “traditional” format or in a format appropriate for publication.

The Thesis and Dissertation Manual provides specific guidelines for preparing, formatting and submitting your thesis. It is the student's and their advisor's responsibility to make certain that the document is scientifically defensible and uses proper grammar and scientific style. The major role of the student's advisory committee is to offer guidance on study design and interpretation of results. It is not the committee's responsibility to edit careless writing. Committee members have the right to reject documents that fail to meet these guidelines.

A “polished” draft must be delivered to the advisory committee for review after the student and major advisor have agreed upon editorial changes; this should occur well before the anticipated date of the final defense. Ideally, committee members should be given at least 2 weeks to review the draft before the student attempts to schedule the final defense. The final defense is to be scheduled only after the advisory committee agrees that the thesis is ready for defense. Committee members should return the corrected thesis to the student two weeks after receipt and the student should check with committee members to ensure they have the time to review the document. If the student delivers the final draft to the committee one month prior to the proposed defense date, that would allow two weeks before the scheduled defense date for the student to make recommended changes. Students should schedule their defense at least two weeks ahead of time with the Graduate Program Administrator to ensure room scheduling, filing of appropriate paperwork, and advertising the defense time/date.

Review for Original Work

The university requires all students submitting a thesis as part of their graduate degree requirements to first submit their electronic documents through iThenticate.com for advisement purposes and for review of originality. The thesis chair is responsible for scheduling this submission to iThenticate.com and for reviewing the results

from iThenticate.com with the student's advisory committee. The advisory committee uses the results appropriately to assist the student in the preparation of their thesis or dissertation. Before the student may be approved for final submission to the university, the thesis chair must indicate completion of the iThenticate.com requirement by signing the Thesis Approval form.

Thesis Dissemination

While UCF respects the wishes of students who would like to publish their work and/or apply for patents, it is essential for scholarly research conducted at a university to be available for dissemination. While several options are available for the release of an ETD, it is the goal of the university that all thesis be available through the UCF Libraries catalog. Upon uploading the final ETD to the UCF Libraries ETD website, students, in some cases with their advisers, must choose one of the options for the availability of their ETD through UCF.

- For those with no patent or copyright concerns:
 - Immediate worldwide dissemination with no restrictions.
- For those who have patent issues, dissemination options must be discussed and agreed to with your adviser. Choices are:
 - Pending dissemination of the entire work for six months for patent or other proprietary issues, with an additional six months extension available. Once the patent and proprietary issues are resolved, then immediate worldwide dissemination with no restrictions.
 - Pending dissemination of the entire work for six months for patent or other proprietary issues, with an additional six months extension available. Once the patent and proprietary issues are resolved, choosing this option allows the student to make the thesis available to the university community for a period of 1, 3 or 5 years, and then for it to be distributed via the Web beyond that time.
- For those who have copyright concerns, dissemination options are a student decision within the guidelines of individual departments that may have requirements for dissemination. If a department has no guidelines for dissemination, then students are free to choose one of the options below. In general, those in the sciences and engineering will choose one year while students in the arts and humanities may choose longer. Choosing this option allows the student to make the thesis available to the university community for a period of 1, 3 or 5 years, and then for it to be distributed via the Web beyond that time.

MS Thesis Track Publications

Candidates for the Biology MS degree, thesis track, are expected to produce a body of work that could lead to at least one publication in a peer-reviewed journal and they are strongly encouraged to submit a manuscript prior to graduation or very soon thereafter.

Graduate Research

For a list of research areas in the Biology discipline, including a faculty listing, visit the [Research Focal Areas webpage](#) on the College of Sciences Homepage. Also, visit the [UCF Biology Facilities webpage](#) for a listing of research facilities available to graduate Studies in the Biology program.

Human Subjects

If the student chooses to conduct research that involves human subjects (i.e. surveys, interviews, etc.), he or she must gain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to beginning the study. For access to the IRB submission form and sample consent forms, please visit the Office of Research website: research.ucf.edu/ >

Compliance > UCF IRB Webpage > UCFIRB Principal Investigator's Manual. An approved copy of this protocol must be on file with the Program Graduate Coordinator.

Animal Subjects

If the student chooses to conduct research that involves animal subjects, he or she must gain Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval prior to beginning the study.

For access to the IACUC submission forms, please visit the Office of Research website: research.ucf.edu/ > Compliance > UCF IACUC Webpage > Animal Use Approval Form. Note there are different forms for captive animals and wildlife studies. An approved copy of this protocol must be on file with the Graduate Program Administrator.

Ethics in Research

Researchers in every discipline have a responsibility for ethical awareness as the status of the profession rests with each individual researcher. The ethical collection and use of information includes, but is by no means limited to, the following: confidentiality, accuracy, relevance, self-responsibility, honesty, and awareness of conflict of interest. The University of Arizona's Code of Research Ethics provides our students with guidelines for responsible practice in research. This code of ethics can be found here: rgw.arizona.edu/compliance/home. Students guilty of academic dishonesty or improper ethical behavior will be dismissed from the program.

Patent and Invention Policy

UCF has three fundamental responsibilities with regard to graduate student research. They are to:

- (1) support an academic environment that stimulates the spirit of inquiry, (2) develop the intellectual property stemming from research, and to
- (3) disseminate the intellectual property to the general public. UCF owns the intellectual property developed using university resources. The graduate student, as inventor, will, according to this policy, share in the proceeds of the invention. The full policy is available online from the Graduate Catalog: catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4 > Policies > General Policies > Patent and Invention Policy

Thesis Information

The [Thesis and Dissertation site](#) provides the ultimate guidelines for preparing, formatting and submitting your thesis.

Laboratory Safety

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety is in charge of holding classes and workshops detailing proper laboratory procedures at the university. All graduate teaching assistants and research assistants are required to take their course on laboratory and chemical safety. Registration for the courses is done online (ehs.ucf.edu/). All students are expected to exhibit behavior consummate to a professional setting in all campus laboratories.

Financial Support

Hiring on Graduate Lines

General Information

Contingent on available departmental funding and tuition waivers, in-program MS students can expect up to 4 semesters of academic year GTA support with a tuition waiver. Non-thesis track students are not guaranteed GTA support. This support will be maintained as long as adequate progress is made toward completion of their degree (including timely formation of advisory committee, filing of POS, and defense of proposal) and performance assessments of teaching remain positive. Extensions to these time limits can be made, by majority vote of the Graduate Committee, if the student's graduate advisor and advisory committee feel that adequate progress is being made to graduation. Requests for such extensions for the subsequent academic year may be requested by petition, signed by a majority of the Advisory Committee members, and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator by January 30.

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) positions, and their associated tuition waivers, are funded off a faculty member's grant account. Students must be enrolled full time in order to receive a tuition waiver (9 hours fall/spring, 6 hours in the summer; 3 hours after the student passes candidacy).

The current payroll schedule may be found both on the BGSA website and also the graduate section of the biology webpage. Time sheets are due the Wednesday prior the Friday the student will be paid. Failure to turn timesheets in on the correct day will delay payment to the student.

Students must enroll as soon as possible to assure that tuition waivers and contracts are processed in a timely manner. Failure to be registered full time will result in the tuition waiver being revoked from the student (9 hours fall and spring, 6 summer; after candidacy 3 hours each semester). Emails will be sent informing students when contracts need to be signed to ensure correct processing. If the student does not sign and turn in their contract by the specified deadline, payment will likely be delayed. Contracts must be approved at three levels before the student will be granted payment.

Assistantships and Tuition Waivers

For complete information about university assistantship and tuition waivers, please see the UCF Graduate Catalogue: catalog.ucf.edu/index.php?catoid=4 > Financial Information

Students are offered GTA and GRA positions through their academic advisor. Students in their first and second years are typically offered GTA positions then offered GRA positions to complete their thesis work if additional years are required. Students who are offered Presidential, Provost and Trustees Fellowship recipients are eligible to receive GTA or GRA awards to supplement their funding. While all students will be considered for these awards when they apply to the MS program, applicant evaluations are generally made in January.

To be employed and to maintain employment in a graduate position, the student must be:

- In good academic standing
- Enrolled full time

To be awarded and continue receipt of a tuition waiver, the student must be:

- In good academic standing
- Enrolled full time

- Employed on a graduate line (GTA, GRA), receiving a University fellowship, or (if employed off-campus) employed where payroll is processed through the College of Graduate Studies

GTA Training Requirements

Graduate students may be appointed as graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) to carry out responsibilities as classroom teachers (instructors of record), co-teachers or classroom assistants, graders, lab assistants, or other roles directly related to classroom instruction. Mandatory training requirements must be met for a student to be hired in the position of Graduate Teaching Associate, Assistant or Grader. The training, offered by UCF's Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, covers course design, learning theories, ethics, and other topics relevant to preparing GTAs for their responsibilities. See graduate.ucf.edu/students/ > Student Finances > GTA Information for training requirements and registration instructions.

Students who are non-native speakers of English and do not have a degree from a U.S. institution must pass the SPEAK test before they will be permitted to teach as Graduate Teaching Associates (position code 9183) or Graduate Teaching Assistants (position code 9184). The SPEAK test is not required for students who will be appointed as a Graduate Teaching Grader (position code 9187). Additional information including how to register for the test can be accessed through the GTA Information section of the College of Graduate Studies student website.

GTA Performance Assessment

At the completion of each semester in which a student is employed as a GTA, the student's performance will be evaluated by the faculty course instructor. These assessments will be used to review strengths and weaknesses in the student's performance in preparation for future employment.

International Students

Several types of employment are available to international students, including on-campus employment. For more information about the types of employment available to international students, and the requirements and restrictions based on visa-type, please see the International Services Center's website: global.ucf.edu/ > Current Students > Employment.

Graduate Teaching Assistant Lines

New Graduate Teaching Assistants and Graduate Teaching Associates are required to attend the UCF Graduate Teaching Workshop held yearly, before teaching classes at the university. These workshops are presented by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL). Graduate students with access to student records must maintain the confidentiality of all student records and information. Any violation of this will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

a) Graduate Teaching Assistant - 9184 (Teaching Assistant)

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): Graduate Teaching Assistants are students who have completed less than 18 hours of course work in the discipline or who are assigned to assist a faculty member with teaching-related duties. In order to qualify for employment in this job code, students must have completed the Graduate Teaching Workshop given by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL). In addition, International students may only be hired as a Graduate Teaching Assistant after obtaining a score of at least 50 on the SPEAK exam. Because of their level, these students may be paid at a lower rate than Graduate Teaching Associates; however, this is not a requirement of the job code. These students are typically paid from E&G funds and hired on a salaried, contractual basis.

Graduate students employed as Graduate Teaching Assistants (9184) must not be assigned as an instructor of record or to teach independently. Students employed as an instructor of record must have at least 18 hours of course work in the major and must be hired in the Graduate Teaching Associate (9183) job code. They should receive a letter, with a copy of their official file, signed by the department chair indicating their eligibility to teach based on this rule.

b) Graduate Teaching Assistant - 9187 (Grader)

Graduate Teaching Assistant - Graders are masters or doctoral students who are assigned to assist a faculty member with grading and other teaching-related duties that require no contact with students. These students may not have instructional responsibilities. In order to qualify for employment in this job code, students must have completed the Graduate Teaching Training given by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL). International students may be assigned to this job code without taking the SPEAK test. Because of their level, these students may be paid at a lower rate than Graduate Teaching Associates; however, this is not a requirement of the job code. These students are typically paid from E&G funds and hired on a salaried contractual basis.

Graduate Research Assistant Lines

Graduate Research Assistant - 9182

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA): Graduate Research Assistants are MS students who are assigned research duties. These students are typically paid from C&G funds and hired on a salaried, contractual basis.

Graduate Assistant Lines (no tuition waiver)

a) Graduate Assistant - 9185 (no contract)

Students hired on this job code may be assigned general duties related to research, clerical, or other employment activities. These students are paid on an hourly basis. These students may be paid from E&G or C&G funds.

b) Graduate Assistant - 9186 (contract)

Students hired on this job code may be assigned general duties related to research, clerical, or other typical employment activities. These students are paid on a salaried, contractual basis. These students may be paid from C&G or E&G funds.

Health and Housing Services

Student Health Insurance

The College of Graduate Studies will be providing health insurance coverage for all university fellows and graduate assistants with appointments totaling 20 hours per week. Students with qualifying assistantships and fellowships in the fall term will receive fall coverage, running from August 15 through December 31. Students with qualifying assistantships and fellowships in the spring term will receive coverage for the remainder of the year, running from January 1 through August 14. Students can enroll their spouse and/or children in UnitedHealthcare insurance as dependents on the Gallagher Student Health and Special Risk website for an additional charge. More information can be found at graduate.ucf.edu/health-insurance/.

Students who are not receiving health insurance as part of a qualifying graduate assistantship or university fellowship may purchase voluntary coverage with UnitedHealthcare through the [Gallagher Student Health and Special Risk website](#).

Your personal health and wellbeing are critical elements of academic success. The Student Health Center is a wonderful resource for students, but students must be prepared to pay for some services.

Student health insurance can help with some of the costs of services incurred at health care providers.

All students should be covered by a good health insurance plan. The state of Florida requires international students to have health insurance coverage. Some students have health insurance from their employers; those who do not have health insurance should consider purchasing a plan.

The university offers a health insurance plan and there are independent companies that offer student plans.

Research Support/Fellowships

UCF Biology Graduate Student Research Enhancement Awards

The Biology Graduate Committee will consider proposals to fund graduate student research following the guidelines listed below. The maximum Graduate Student Research Enhancement Award per student will be \$1,000. Absolute number of awards offered in a given year will vary as a function of Departmental budgetary constraints. Only one award per student is permitted and monies must be spent by the end of the spring semester. At the time of application, the candidate must have passed their Proposal Defense exam, and their proposal and plan of study must be on file with the Graduate Program Administrator. Also, if the project involves research on vertebrates, an official IACUC protocol must already be submitted to or approved by the UCF IACUC committee (see below for details). By submitting a proposal, you agree to include the following statement in all theses, publications, reports and presentations supported by a GSREA: "This project was supported, in part, by a Graduate Research Enhancement Award from the UCF Department of Biology."

Funds will be granted to support research expenses only, including supplies and travel in direct support of research efforts. Travel to scientific meetings to present research results are not eligible for GREA funds. The purchase of equipment, whose total cost exceeds \$1,000, is possible if the source of funds to cover the remaining costs is stated. If it will come from a funded project, the budget page of the previously awarded proposal must be submitted. Please do not list yourself as a source of funds for the remaining equipment costs. All unexpended supplies and equipment purchased with UCF Biology GREA funds will become the property of the Department of Biology when the student completes his or her research. Grants to supplement travel costs to meetings are also occasionally available from UCF Graduate Studies and the Student Government Association.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Center for Environmental Research

EPA Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Fellowships for Graduate Environmental Study
epa.gov/ncer/rfa

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as part of its Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program, is offering Graduate Fellowships for masters and doctoral level students in environmental fields of study. The deadline for receipt of pre-applications is generally in mid-October. Master's level students may receive support for a maximum of two years. Doctoral students may be supported for a maximum of three years, usable over a period of four years. The fellowship program provides up to \$37,000 per year of support per fellowship.

Award Information:

Anticipated Type of Award: Fellowship

Estimated Number of Awards: Approximately 100 awards

Anticipated Funding Amount: Approximately \$9.8 million for all awards

Potential Funding per Fellowship: \$37,000 per year per fellowship. Master's level students may receive support for a maximum of two years. Doctoral students may be supported for a maximum of three years, usable over a period of four years.

Eligibility Information: Applicants must attend a fully accredited U.S. college or university (located in the U.S. or its territories). Applicants must also be citizens of the United States or its territories or possessions, or be lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence. Resident aliens must include their green card number in their pre-application (you must have your green card at the time of application to be eligible for this Fellowship opportunity). EPA may verify this number with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service of the Department of Homeland Security.

Pre-Application Materials: You may submit either a paper pre-application or an electronic pre-application but not both for this announcement. The necessary forms for submitting a STAR paper pre-application will be found on the NCER web site, epa.gov/research-grants.

To apply electronically, you must use the pre-application package available at <https://www.grants.gov/> (see "Submission Instructions for Electronic Pre-Applications"). See Section IV for further information on application submission procedures.

Agency Contacts: Further information, if needed, may be obtained from the EPA/NCER resources listed below. To obtain information most quickly, consult the "Guidance & FAQs." If your question is not covered, then call the toll-free telephone number or send a query through the web-based query form. You will receive a personal response through a return telephone call or email. Information regarding this RFA obtained from sources other than those indicated below may not be accurate.

Guidance and FAQs: epa.gov/home/frequent-questions-specific-epa-programsttopics

Toll-free telephone number: 1-800-490-9194

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

dhs.gov/

Qualified students are encouraged to apply for scholarships and fellowships in the following programs: physical, biological, social, and behavioral sciences, engineering, mathematics, and computer science.

Award: Stipend for graduate students, including tuition allowances (check website for details)

The National Academies - Fellowship Opportunities

Website: nationalacademies.org/grantprograms/index.html

E-mail: infofell@nas.edu

Phone: (202) 334-2872

The Fellowship Office of Policy and Global Affairs administers predoctoral, dissertation, and postdoctoral fellowship programs in research-based fields of study. The office currently administers the following programs: Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships for Achieving Excellence in College and University Teaching, the Resident Research Associateship Programs, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Urban Scholars Postdoctoral Fellowships, the U.S. Department of State Jefferson Science Fellows Program, and the Vietnam Education Foundation Fellowships.

Ford Fellowship: This fellowship opportunity for minorities offers predoctoral, doctoral, and postdoctoral fellowships to increase the presence of underrepresented minorities on the nation's college and university faculties, to enhance diversity on campuses, and to address the persisting effects of past discrimination. Applicant must be a U.S. citizen. Those minorities included are: Native American Indian, Mexican

American/Chicana/Chicano, Alaska Native (Eskimo or Aleut), Native Pacific Islander (Polynesian or Micronesian), Black/African American or Puerto Rican.

Award: \$16,000 to \$34,000 depending on the award plus tuition, travel, or other expenses.

Smithsonian Institution Fellowship Program

si.edu/ofi

Graduate Student Fellowships: These fellowships allow students to conduct research for ten-week periods in association with Smithsonian research staff members. Applicants must be formally enrolled in a graduate plan of study, must have completed at least one semester, and must not yet have been advanced to candidacy in a doctoral program.

Stipends:

Graduate Students - \$4,500

Deadline: January 15 (postmark) for awards to begin on or after June 1

For more information see the previous section 'Information for Applying to the Smithsonian Institution Fellowship Program.'

Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce, Florida Fellowship: The Smithsonian Marine Station is located in Fort Pierce on the east coast of central Florida. It is situated in a biographical transitional zone where there is access to both tropical and temperate biota, and the Gulf Stream is easily accessible with its abundance of long-distance larvae and rich plankton. A diverse fauna is found in the variety of habitats from the mangroves, seagrass beds, and mud flats of the Indian River Lagoon to the sandy beaches and worm reefs of the oceanic coast and the various substrata of the offshore continental shelf including conquinoid limestone ledges, oculinid coral reefs, and shell hash plains.

Research: Marine scientists of various units within the Smithsonian conduct research that emphasizes studies of life histories, systematics, and ecology of selected marine organisms of the Indian River Lagoon and nearby continental shelf. Ongoing research programs include the systematics, ecology, and functional morphology of algae; life histories of meiofaunal organisms, sipunculans, polychaetes, and gastropods; ecology of foraminiferans; systematics, reproduction, and ecology of several groups of echinoderms and crustacea; studies of nutrient recycling, and invertebrate parasite-host interactions. A resident science program concentrates on chemical ecology, assessment of marine ecosystems, and life histories of marine invertebrates.

Term: Graduate Student - 10 weeks and 12 weeks

Stipend: Predoctoral - \$20,000 plus allowances

Graduate Student - \$4,500

Deadline: Applications are available in October, and the deadline for submission is February 15th (postmark).

Contact:

Joan Kaminski, Administrative Officer
Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce
701 Seaway Drive
Fort Pierce, FL 34949-3140

Tel: 772/465-6630 x100 fax: 772/461-8154

E-mail: kaminski@sms.si.edu
sms.si.edu/

ForestGEO Research Grants Program: The Research Grants Program of the Forest Global Earth Observatory (ForestGEO) of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute is intended to provide opportunities for senior researchers, post-doctoral fellows, and graduate students to support research associated with the CTFS network of Forest Dynamics Plots. Anyone working directly in a Forest Dynamics Plot (FDP), analyzing data from a plot, or generating complementary data that strengthens FDP research programs is eligible to apply. Projects can be field-oriented, laboratory-based, or analytical, and scientifically, basic or applied in nature. Grants range from \$3,000-\$15,000, though a small number of post-doctoral grants (up to \$40,000) may be given.

The ForestGEO Grants Program will make awards for projects three months to three years in length.

Grant proposals should include a Research Proposal (not to exceed 1500 words), a list of collaborators, curriculum vitae, proposed referees, and a detailed budget.

E-mail: ctfslst@stridc.si.edu
Fax: 202.786.2819
forestgeo.si.edu/

Further information on grants may be found at: sciences.ucf.edu/graduate/funding/

Graduate Student Associations

Graduate Student Association

facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is UCF's graduate organization committed to enrich graduate students' personal, educational and professional experience. GSA also sponsors the Graduate Research Forum (Sponsored by the College of Graduate Studies), the Research Forum is an opportunity for students to showcase their research and creative projects and to receive valuable feedback from faculty judges. Awards for best poster and best oral presentation in each category will be given and all participants will receive recognition.

Biology Graduate Student Association

sciences.ucf.edu/biology/bgsa/

The UCF Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA) was established in 1997 to provide opportunities for UCF biology students to participate in extracurricular activities in biology.

- Regular seminars by visiting professors
- UCF faculty and grad student presentation sessions
- Active service organization, participating in both roadside and beach cleanup activities
- Social events (canoeing, nature walks, volunteer activities, social gatherings)
- Journal Club discussions of scientific publications in areas studied in the department

Sigma Xi

sigmaxi.org/

Sigma Xi sponsors/co-sponsors distinguished researchers and fund prizes for outstanding presentations to graduate students, undergraduates, and high school students. Membership in Sigma Xi is by invitation. Those who have shown potential as researchers are invited to join as associate members. Full membership is conferred upon those who have demonstrated noteworthy achievements in research. Each year the Society initiates nearly 5,000 new members. Over the course of the Society's distinguished history, nearly 200 members have won the Nobel Prize and many more have earned election to the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering.

While many Sigma Xi programs are administered directly through its chapters, some longstanding programs of the Society continue to be central to its overall mission. These include American Scientist magazine, the Grants-in-Aid of Research Program, a number of prestigious annual prizes and awards and the college of Distinguished Lecturers. The Sigma Xi Annual Meeting and Student Research Conference has become a dynamic gathering for hundreds of leading researchers and students, featuring workshops, research presentations, panel discussions and networking opportunities over several days. The growing portfolio of Sigma Xi programs also includes newer offerings that capitalize on the Society's unique strengths and characteristics, such as the Media Resource Service and the Sigma Xi Postdoc Survey.

UCF Faculty Contact: Dr. Linda J. Walters: Linda.walters@ucf.edu.

Professional Development

Travel Support

The College of Graduate Studies offers a Graduate Travel Award that provides funding for MS students to deliver a research paper or comparable creative activity at a professional meeting. Students must be the primary author and presenter.

graduate.ucf.edu/presentation-fellowship/

Graduate Students Travel Funding is available to pay transportation expenses for graduate students who are delivering a research paper or comparable creative activity at a professional meeting. Contact the Student Government Association at 407-823-5648 or [facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/UCFgsa/) for more information.

Instructor Training and Development

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) promotes excellence in all levels of teaching at the University of Central Florida. To that end, they offer several programs for the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants at UCF.

GTA Grader and Assistant Training (mandatory for employment as a GTA)

This training provides information and resources for students who will be instructors in an online format. The course covers a variety of topics, including course development, learning theories, lecturing, and academic freedom. Biology Graduate students should also register for the more advanced "GTA Associate" training which is done in a seminar format.

Preparing Tomorrow's Faculty Program

This certificate program (12-weeks) consists of group and individualized instruction by Faculty Center staff and experienced UCF professors. Textbooks and materials are provided.

For more information: fctl.ucf.edu/ > Events > GTA Programs or call 407-823-3544.

Pathways to Success Workshops

Coordinated by the College of Graduate Studies, the Pathways to Success program offers free development opportunities for graduate students including workshops in Academic Integrity, Graduate Grantsmanship, Graduate Teaching, Personal Development, Professional Development, and Research. For more information and how to register, please visit graduate.ucf.edu/pathways-to-success/.

Graduate Excellence Awards

Each year, students can submit a portfolio for nomination of College and University level awards of excellence. These are intended to showcase student excellence in academic achievement, teaching, research, leadership, and community service. These awards include the following:

Award for Excellence by a Graduate Teaching Assistant

For students who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher. This award focuses on the extent and quality of the assistance provided by the student to the lead instructor and the students in the class. (Not intended for students who are instructor of record)

Award for Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching

For students who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

Award for the Outstanding Thesis

To recognize MS students for excellence in the thesis. The focus of this award is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis. Excellence of the thesis may be demonstrated by evidences such as, but not limited to: publications in refereed journals, awards and recognitions from professional organizations, and praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field.

For more information about these awards, please see the College of Graduate Studies website: graduate.ucf.edu/awards-and-recognition/.

Job Search

Career Services and Experiential Learning

career.ucf.edu/

Graduate career development issues are unique and include evaluating academic and nonacademic career choices, discussing graduate school effect on career choices, as well as learning, evaluating, and refining networking and interviewing skills. Whatever your needs, the offices of Career Services and Experiential Learning offer services and resources to aid in the career exploration and job search of MS students in every academic discipline.

Forms

- [College of Graduate Studies Forms and References](#)
A complete listing of general forms and references for graduate students, with direct links, may be found here.
- [College of Sciences Commonly Used Forms](#)
A listing of commonly used forms for the College of Sciences.
- [Graduate Petition Form](#)
When unusual situations arise, petitions for exceptions to policy may be requested by the student. Depending on the type of appeal, the student should contact his/her program adviser to begin the petition process.
- [Traveling Scholar Form](#)
If a student would like to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on the home campus; for example, special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories and library collections, this form must be completed and approved.

Useful Links

- [Biology MS](#)
- [College of Sciences](#)
- [College of Graduate Studies](#)
- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Campus Map](#)
- [COS Graduate Services for Students](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Department of Biology](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Golden Rule Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Catalog](#)
- [Graduate Student Association](#)
- [Graduate Student Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Housing, off campus](#)
- [Knights Email](#)
- [Library](#)
- [NID Help](#)
- [Pathways to Success](#)
- [Recreation and Wellness Center](#)
- [Shuttles Parking Services](#)
- [Student Health Services](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation \(ETD\)](#)
- [UCF Global](#)
- [University Writing Center](#)

Grad Faculty

Asterisk = has previous committee experience, which qualifies the person to serve as chair, co-chair or vice chair.

Bohlen, Patrick *

College: College of Sciences
Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences
Contact Info: Patrick.Bohlen@ucf.edu

Chambers, Lisa*

College: College of Sciences
Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences
Contact Info: Lisa.Chambers@ucf.edu

Cook, Geoffrey*

College: College of Sciences
Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences
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Crampton, William *

College: College of Sciences
Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences
Research interests: Evolution Ecology, Neotropical Electric Fish, Amazon Aquatic Freshwater Speciation, Animal Communication
Contact Info: william.crampton@ucf.edu

de Bekker, Charissa*

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Doan, Tiffany

College: College of Sciences
Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences
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Fauth, John *

College: College of Sciences
Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences
Research interests: Amphibians, Corals, Herpetology, Marine Biology, Wetlands, Conservation Biology, Ecology, Evolution, Restoration Biology
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Gibson, Jane

College: College of Medicine

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

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Harris, Elizabeth *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

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Hinkle, Ross *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Plant Ecology, Applied Conservation Biology, Landscape Ecology, Ecosystem Processes and Services, Natural Resources Management, Climate Change

Contact Info: rhinkle@ucf.edu

Websites: <http://biology.cos.ucf.edu/faculty/ross-hinkle/>

Hoffman, Eric *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Population Genetics, Evolutionary Biology

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Jenkins, David *

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Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Aquatic Ecology, Metapopulation Ecology, Metacommunity Ecology, Organismal Dispersal

Contact Info: David.Jenkins@ucf.edu

Jewett, Mollie *

College: College of Graduate Studies

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Lyme Disease, Host Pathogen Interactions, Infectious Disease, Vector Borne Disease, Bacterial Genetics, Microbiology

Contact Info: Mollie.Jewett@ucf.edu

Websites: <http://www.biomed.ucf.edu/index>

King, Joshua *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

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Kuebler, Stephen *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Optical and Electronic Materials, Surface Chemistry, Nanotechnology, Micro- and Nano-Scale Fabrication, Multi-Photon Direct Laser Writing, Solar Energy Materials and Devices, Optical Beam Shaping

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Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences
Research interests: Conservation Biology, Landscape Ecology, Community Ecology, Population Ecology
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Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences
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Sharanowski, Barbara *

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Stern, Michael *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: FGF Signaling and Cell Migration Guidance Mechanisms in the Nematode C. Elegans, Computational Representation of Biological System Behavior

Contact Info: Michael.Stern@ucf.edu

Websites: http://biology.cos.ucf.edu/faculty_details.php?id=440

Tatulian, Suren *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Biological Physics, Proteins, Biological Membranes, Protein-Membrane Interactions, Phospholipase, A2, Interfacial Enzymology, Infrared Spectroscopy, Circular Dichroism, Fluorescence Spectroscopy

Contact Info: statulia@ucf.edu

Vajravelu, Rani *

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Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

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VonHolle, Betsy

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

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Vonkalm, Laurence *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Role of Serine Proteases in Development, Signal Transduction Involving Rho GTPases, Polyamine Transport

Contact Info: lvonkalm@ucf.edu

Websites: http://biology.cos.ucf.edu/faculty_vonKalm.php

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Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

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Weishampel, John *

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

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Worthy, Graham *

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Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Physiological Ecology, Feeding Ecology, Marine Mammal Biology

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Ye, Jingdong

College: College of Sciences

Disciplinary affiliations: Biological Sciences

Research interests: Biochemistry, RNA Structure, Crystallography

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