

# **Graduate Program in Cell, Molecular and Developmental Biology University of California, Riverside**

## **STUDENT AND FACULTY HANDBOOK**



**RIVERSIDE**

Cell, Molecular, and  
Developmental Biology  
Graduate Program

COLLEGE OF NATURAL & AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

### **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook is designed to provide you with information that will be helpful to you as a participant in the Cell, Molecular and Developmental Biology graduate program in the Dept. of Molecular, Cell and Systems Biology at UCR. We hope that you will read it carefully and consult with it as needed when you have questions about the program. In addition, please feel free to contact the Director, Department Chair, Graduate Advisors, and Graduate Student Affairs Officer for additional information or clarification.

The handbook provides an overview of the academic objectives and requirements of the program, and time-tables for the completion of degree objectives. It also contains information to help orient new students to the campus and it describes special features of our program and resources of our campus.

The CMDB program provides a very broad framework for interactions and learning in the area of Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology. We hope that you will take full advantage of the opportunities that our program has to offer while you are at UCR.

Additional information about our Program and Faculty is available at our website: [cmdb.ucr.edu](http://cmdb.ucr.edu).

## **CURRENT PROGRAM OFFICERS**

Program Director – Dr. Weifeng Gu. Represents the chair to manage the CMDDB program. Please contact Weifeng Gu for routine CMDDB related issues. Biological Sciences Building Rm. 1117; E-mail [weifeng.gu@ucr.edu](mailto:weifeng.gu@ucr.edu), x2-3600.

Department Chair, Dr. Michael Adams. In charge of the MCSB department including the CMDDB program. Biological Sciences 3107; E-mail: [michael.adams@ucr.edu](mailto:michael.adams@ucr.edu); (951) 827-4746

Graduate Advisor for Recruitment – **Dr. Nicole Zur Nieden** (1113 Biological Sciences Building) is responsible for overseeing the recruitment of new students and processing of graduate student applications. Chair of the Admissions Committee. E-mail [nicole.zurnieden@ucr.edu](mailto:nicole.zurnieden@ucr.edu), x2-3818

Graduate Advisor for Continuing Students Pre-candidacy – **Dr. Jeffrey Bachant** (2113 Biological Sciences Building) supports pre-candidacy continuing graduate students. E-mail [jeffbach@ucr.edu](mailto:jeffbach@ucr.edu), x2-6473

Graduate Student Services Advisor – **Christopher Brown** maintains graduate student files and advises students on administrative and personal aspects of graduate studies. E-mail [christopher.brown@ucr.edu](mailto:christopher.brown@ucr.edu)

*The other staff in the **CNAS Graduate Student Affairs Center** (1140 Batchelor Hall) can also assist you when Christopher Brown is not available.*

## CMDB ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students who have not completed all of these requirements prior to admission may be required to fulfill deficiencies during the program. For more information contact the Graduate Advisor or Student Affairs Officer:

- \_\_\_\_ 1 SEM or 2 QTRS Calculus (MATH 9A-B or equiv.)
- \_\_\_\_ 1 YR Physics (PHYS 2 A-C or equiv.)
- \_\_\_\_ 1 YR Inorganic Chemistry (CHEM 1A-C or equiv.)
- \_\_\_\_ 1 YR Organic Chemistry (CHEM 112 A-C or equiv.)
- \_\_\_\_ 1 YR Introductory Biology (BIOL 5A-C or equiv.)
- \_\_\_\_ 1 COURSE Biochemistry (BCH 100 or BCH 110A or B or C or equiv.)
- \_\_\_\_ 1 COURSE Genetics (BIOL 102 or equiv.)
- \_\_\_\_ 1 COURSE Statistics (STAT 100A or equiv.)
- \_\_\_\_ 2 upper division COURSES in cell, molecular or developmental biology (BPSC 135 or BIOL 111 or BIOL 107 or BCH 110C or equiv.)

Graduate Advisor Notes:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## CMDB Degree Requirement List 2024-2025

### REQUIREMENT I

\_\_\_ CMDB 203

**REQUIREMENT II:** All students are required to take one graduate level course in each of the three categories:

#### CELL BIOLOGY

At least one course from the following:

- \_\_\_ BPSC 237 –Plant Cell Biology (4) (Fall)
- \_\_\_ CMDB 200 –Cell Biology (4) (Winter)
- \_\_\_ NRSC 200A –Fundamentals of Neuroscience (3) (Fall)

#### MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

At least one course from the following:

- \_\_\_ BCH 211 –Molecular Biology (3) (Fall)
- \_\_\_ BPSC 231 –The Plant Genome (4) (Winter)
- \_\_\_ CMDB 201 –Molecular Biology (4) (Fall)
- \_\_\_ NRSC 200B –Fundamentals of Neuroscience (3) (Winter)

#### DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY

At least one course from the following:

- \_\_\_ BPSC 232 -Plant Development (4) (Spring)
- \_\_\_ CMDB 202 -Developmental Biology (4) (Spring)

### REQUIREMENT III

Ph.D. students only are required to take at least one of the following 3-or 4-unit courses or two of the 2-unit courses from the menu below. Alternatively, any course from the list above (other than the three used to fulfill Requirement II) may be taken. Courses not on either list can be approved on a case by case basis by permission of the Graduate Advisor.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ___ BCH 210 -Biochemistry of Macromolecules               | ___ CMDB 220 – Chem Genomics Design Studio (2 units)        |
| ___ BCH 212 -Signal Transduction & Biochemical Regulation | ___ CS 235 -Data Mining Techniques                          |
| ___ BIEN 233- Computational Modeling of Biomolecules      | ___ CS 238 -Algorithmic Techniques in Computational Biology |
| ___ BIEN 245- Optical Methods in BIOL, CHEM, and ENGR     | ___ GEN 241-Advances in Bioinformatics and Genomics         |
| ___ BIOL 221/MCBL221 -Microbial Genetics                  | ___ GEN 242-Data Analysis in Genome Biology                 |
| ___ BPSC 201EZ -Methods in Plant Biology (1-2 units)      | ___ ENTM201-Core Areas of ENTM, Sub Cellular/Cellular       |
| ___ BPSC 210 -Methods in Arabidopsis Research             | ___ ENTX 202 -Mechanisms of Toxicity                        |
| ___ BPSC 234 -Statistical Genomics                        | ___ MCBL 202-Microbial Pathogenesis and Physiology          |
| ___ BPSC 239 –Adv. Plant Physiology                       | ___ PHYS 265-DNA Computation (2 units)                      |
| ___ CHEM 284 –Biological Mass Spectrometry (2 units)      | ___ PHYS 283-Techniques in Microscopy (2 units)             |
| ___ CMDB 204 –Genome Maintenance & Stability              | ___ PLPA 207 –Bacterial and Viral Diseases of Plants        |
| ___ CMDB 206 - Gene Silencing                             | ___ PLPA 219 -Molecular Plant Virology                      |
| ___ CMDB 207 – Stem Cell Biology and Disease              | ___ OTHER (with consent of Graduate Advisor)                |
| ___ CMDB 209 - Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) Biology             |   |
| ___ CMDB 210 – Molecular Bio of Human Disease Vectors     |   |

### REQUIREMENT IV

All students are required to take the Graduate Seminar (257) in *Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology* each quarter offered in residence.

\_\_\_ CMDB 257

In addition, if a laboratory holds regular lab meetings, students should enroll in 1-2 units of CMDB 250 per quarter. Please note that students are only allowed to enroll in one class per quarter which provides credit for lab meetings (for example, you may not take CMDB 250 and BCH 240 at the same time).

### REQUIREMENT V

All Students are required to take one graduate seminar course in his/her area of specialization.

\_\_\_ BCH 230 or BIOL/CMDB 281 or BPSC 240 or NRSC 289 \_\_\_ OTHER (with consent of Graduate Advisor)

### REQUIREMENT VI (Ph.D. Only)

Ph.D. students must fulfill a two quarter teaching requirement

Course/Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ Course/Quarter \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUIREMENT VII:** All students are required to take one course in professional development training (1 unit: may be taken any time prior to graduation). \_\_\_ GDIV 403 (Research and Scholarship Ethics)

## **PROCEDURES FOR WAIVING OR SUBSTITUTING COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS**

Enrolled students asking for exemption from program coursework must submit a General Petition to the CMDB Graduate Advisor with a statement of justification and supply documentation (transcripts, course syllabi, etc). Some requests may require Executive Committee review. Please access the general petition form in the link below:

[R'Grad \(ucr.edu\)](https://ucr.edu/RGrad)

---

## **GRADUATE DIVISION REQUIREMENTS**

For information on specific Graduate Division requirements, please refer to the UCR Graduate Division Website, <https://graduate.ucr.edu/regulations-and-procedures> and to the UCR General Catalog, <https://registrar.ucr.edu/registering/catalog>

## ANNUAL RESEARCH PROGRESS EVALUATION (ARPE)

Each CMDB student is required, by both the Graduate Division and the CMDB Program, to have an Annual Research Progress Evaluation (ARPE). This will allow determination of whether the student is making normal and acceptable progress towards completion of her/his Ph.D. dissertation or MS thesis. Each student must hold an annual ARPE meeting with all the members of her/his Advisory /Dissertation by the end of each year the student is enrolled. During or following the meeting, the student's Guidance Committee must prepare a written evaluation using the CMDB ARPE Committee Report to be reviewed and signed by the student and all the Committee members.

**It is strongly recommended that students aim to complete the ARPE meeting and report by the date in the email that will be sent to students with instructions.** Students who do not complete the ARPE process by the assigned deadline may be declared "not in good standing" and be ineligible to continue in the program. These students will have a hold placed on their fall quarter enrollment and must schedule a meeting with the Graduate Advisor and propose a plan to fulfill their ARPE requirement in a prompt manner. Students who remain classified as "not in good standing" will also not be eligible for Teaching Assistant appointment or for financial support from the CMDB Program. Once the Graduate Advisor is satisfied that the ARPE requirement has been met, a recommendation will be made to the Director to restore the student to "good standing" within the program.

After review of the student's ARPE report by the appropriate CMDB Graduate Advisor, the CMDB Student Affairs office will forward the report to the Graduate Division.

### **General Protocol for ARPE:**

The ARPE will be initiated by the student preparing a written report (see details below), and completing the online ARPE form whose URL will be sent to all students by email every spring quarter.

Students are also responsible for scheduling, several weeks in advance, a time, date and location for the meeting of her/his Guidance/ Dissertation/Thesis committee. The report must be attached to the online ARPE form. The student and the major professor will receive a copy of the student's submission and report which can then be distributed to the rest of the committee.

The meeting will be chaired by the student's major professor. At the meeting, the student will make a 25 - 45 minute oral presentation, augmented by slides or other visual aids, if necessary, and answer questions raised by the Committee. The last phase of the meeting will be a private discussion of the Committee members to evaluate the student's annual research progress. The meeting will be concluded by the Committee sharing its conclusions and the CMDB ARPE Committee Report with the student.

Note that **any planned deviation from the above procedure must be approved by the appropriate CMDB graduate advisor.**

**Student's Annual Written Research Report (this is required to be submitted with the ARPE Online form):** The student's written research report should not be simply a recapitulation of the student's oral presentation to her/his Advisory Committee. The written research report is a formal document that should be prepared according to the guidelines provided in the paragraphs below. It must be comprehensive and allow for being understood by a reader who would not attend the student's Advisory Committee presentation. Each student's Annual Research Progress Evaluation written report will be reviewed by the appropriate Graduate Advisor.

**Page #1 Background and Introduction:** There should be no more than 1 page of Introduction that will allow the reader to understand the context and starting point for this year's research evaluation; literature citations are not needed. The Introduction should conclude with an enumeration of 2-3 key research questions (goals) that will be covered in this year's evaluation.

**Pages #2-6 Research Data:** Summarize the key results (both positive and negative) as Figures and Tables using experimental data obtained over the past 12 months. Each Figure and Table should have a title and a legend that will permit the reader to understand the experiment; the extent of legend detail should be similar to that utilized by the Journal of Cell Biology. Also, under each legend, one or two sentences explaining the purpose of the experiment should be provided. The written report is limited to no more than 5 pages of data presentation; additional results may be included in the student's verbal presentation. No narrative of the results, discussion or reference citations should be included in the report.

**Page #7 Major Points:** Following the Research Data pages, a list of the significant conclusions revealed or supported by the experimental data should be written. Each conclusion or point should be limited to no more than two sentences. These points may be verbally and graphically amplified and discussed in the student's oral presentation. Collectively, they should answer the question "What have you learned in the past 12 months?" This page should be concluded with an enumeration of 2-4 research goals for the following year.

**Page #8 Additional Information on the Student:** All information solicited here pertains to the previous 12 months. Provide the following information on a page titled "Additional Student Information". (a) List the courses you completed with their grades. (b) Indicate whether you completed your written qualifying exam (date) or oral qualifying exam (date). (c) List any scientific papers or abstracts that you authored or co-authored that were formally published; provide a complete citation using the reference style of the Journal of Cell Biology. (d) List any scientific meetings that you attended; list the name of the meeting and where it was held, the approximate number of attendees and describe your contribution(s) (platform talk, poster, observer, etc.). (e) List any awards you have received.

#### **Instructions for Student Preparation of the ARPE Report**

The ARPE document should be typed in 11-point or 12-point font 11 or 12 with each page numbered in the lower right corner. A Header for each page should list the students first and last name and the scheduled date and location of the Advisory/Dissertation Committee meeting. **The student is required to attach the ARPE Report to the Online ARPE form.** Once submitted, the student and major professor will receive a copy of his/ her online submission and the report in an e-mail which needs to be forwarded to the rest of the committee at least one week before the scheduled meeting. The student is responsible for scheduling the ARPE meeting and reserving a room for the meeting. Also the student should send an e-mail reminder to each Committee member 24 hours in advance.

#### **ARPE Guidance Committee Report**

The student's Major Professor, acting as Chair of the Guidance/Dissertation Committee, is responsible for preparing the required formal written report concerning the student's Annual Research Progress Evaluation. The form will be fulfilled via Wufoo and DocuSign to all major professors with the ARPE call each spring. The form is typically completed at the end of the ARPE meeting and signed by all the Committee members as well as the student.

## **THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM (M.S.)**

*To help you plan your program and monitor your progress, a **Timetable Checklist for the M.S. Degree** appears at the back of this section.*

The M.S. degree is a research degree that requires the completion of a thesis. The CMDB Graduate Program does not offer a “coursework” M.S. degree. M.S. students generally concentrate on formal coursework during the first year and on research the second year.

The degree requires completion of 36 units of coursework. Twenty-four units must be in appropriate graduate courses (200 series), a maximum of 12 of 290-299 may count toward the degree. The remaining 12 units can be taken either in the 100 or 200 series. Students must take four CMDB core courses, the Seminar in Cell, Molecular; Developmental Biology (257) & the Graduate Student Seminar in CMDB (258) each quarter they are offered; plus one graduate seminar (see checklist for course requirements in Section 1 of the handbook).

CMDB 257 (a series of seminars presented by distinguished outside speakers) every quarter in conjunction with the Graduate Programs in GGB and MCBL. **Students are required to register for CMDB 257 each quarter it is offered.**

CMDB 250 Special Topics in Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology provides students with a way to earn course credit for organized laboratory meetings. Students may enroll in 1-2 units per quarter. Please note that students are only allowed to enroll in one class per quarter which provides credit for lab meetings (for example, you may not take CMDB 250 and BCH 240 at the same time).

The following is a timeline guide for students pursuing the M.S. degree:

- 1) **Meet with the Graduate Advisor as soon as possible** in your initial quarter of study. He/She will work with you to design an appropriate academic course of study for your degree plan and will help you select an appropriate major professor. You may undertake two research rotations during your first quarter of study. Once you have chosen a major professor, you will choose a Guidance Committee (3 member committee that includes your Major Professor) in consultation with your major professor and the Graduate Advisor.
- 2) **In the first year, take basic coursework** and complete the core requirements for the program. Students who are admitted to graduate standing lacking CMDB entrance requirement courses may be required to take appropriate undergraduate courses.
- 3) **Select a Guidance Committee** in consultation with your chosen Major Professor by the end of your second quarter. Use this form to nominate the committee: [CMDB Guidance Committee Nomination Form \(wufoo.com\)](http://wufoo.com)



- 4) **Plan and begin a research project during the second quarter**, select a major professor and prepare a brief description of the proposed research to present to your Guidance Committee.
- 5) **Make substantive progress on your research during the third quarter**. By the end of your first year of graduate school, your research project should be well planned and substantially underway.
- 6) **Meet with your Guidance Committee** during your third quarter in residence, to discuss your progress in the program and complete the [Annual Research Progress Evaluation \(ARPE\)](#).
- 7) **Carry out your Thesis Research during the summer and the second year**. Confer with your Major Professor regarding the format of your thesis. The format is somewhat flexible, but must meet with the approval of the Thesis Committee and the Graduate Division. Choose your Thesis Committee (3 member committee that includes your major Professor) in consultation with your major professor and the Graduate Advisor. Use the following form to nominate your committee: Located in [R'Grad \(ucr.edu\)](#) "Application for Candidacy for Master's Degree." Your Thesis Committee may be the same as your Guidance Committee. Once approved by CMDB, you may enter it on your Advancement to Candidacy form.
- 8) **IMPORTANT information about how to submit your Thesis:** [Dissertation and Thesis Submission | Graduate Division \(ucr.edu\)](#)
- 9) **File an Application for Candidacy for Master of Science Form the quarter you expect to graduate**. Use the electronic form accessible at R'grad [R'Grad \(ucr.edu\)](#). This form may require a portion to be completed by you and your Major Professor and another portion to be completed by Christopher Brown and the Graduate Advisor. Please read: [https://graduate.ucr.edu/regulations-and-procedures#advancement\\_to\\_candidacy](https://graduate.ucr.edu/regulations-and-procedures#advancement_to_candidacy)
- 10) **Have your Thesis Committee review a draft of your thesis.**
- 11) **Defend your thesis. Make sure to complete the** [R'Grad \(ucr.edu\)](#)
  - a. More information: [https://graduate.ucr.edu/regulations-and-procedures#final\\_defense\\_for\\_masters\\_degree](https://graduate.ucr.edu/regulations-and-procedures#final_defense_for_masters_degree)
- 12) **Complete post-thesis requirements as required by the Graduate Division.**
  - a. [R'Grad \(ucr.edu\)](#)
    - i. **Final Defense MS Petition**
    - ii. **Signature Approval Page (Dissertation or Thesis) Petition**
    - iii. **For Announcement: Please complete this form:**  
  
<https://ucrbgsac.wufoo.com/forms/rg4e1lp1nztvu8/>

## **CONTINUING FROM THE MASTER'S TO THE DOCTORATE**

Students who are enrolled in the M.S. program may petition to pursue the Ph.D. degree. To do so, they must have the recommendation of the Executive Committee. Approval by the Executive Committee is not automatic; the Committee determines on a case-by-case basis whether a student has the academic potential to succeed in the Ph.D. program. For further information on the process of petitioning to the Ph.D. program, please see the Graduate Student Services Advisor.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress**

Normative time to the M.S. degree in CMDDB is two years (six quarters). Normative time is defined as the period of full-time registration required to earn the degree, assuming that the student enters with a bachelor's degree and has no course deficiencies or need to take any remedial work. As stated above, in the CMDDB Program, the individual student's program of study is planned first in consultation with the Director and Graduate Advisor, then in consultation with his or her Guidance Committee, which supervises the student's progress prior to the appointment of the Thesis Committee. The Thesis Committee oversees the student's progress in the final stages of his or her degree program.

For all students, evaluations of progress are carried out each spring/summer. Students meet with their Guidance or Thesis Committee, and the student's Major Professor submits the Annual Research Progress Evaluation to the Graduate Advisor summarizing the discussion of the Committee. The Graduate Advisor is then responsible for making specific recommendations to the Graduate Division concerning the student's progress. The Graduate Advisor may also approve exceptions to the normal time schedule occasioned by unusual circumstances. Students are provided with a copy of the annual evaluation, and copies are forwarded to the Graduate Division.

### **Unsatisfactory Academic Progress**

It is expected that students will make good progress in the CMDDB degree program. The Graduate Division will block registration of students who fail to perform satisfactorily. In addition, unsatisfactory academic progress severely limits opportunities for receiving funding through the Program. Students are considered to be making unacceptable progress when:

- They fail to fulfill program requirements in a timely and satisfactory manner
- The overall GPA drops below the minimum level of 3.00
- They have 12 or more units of "I" grades
- The Major Professor feels that the student is not making normal progress in the laboratory

## TIME TABLE CHECKLIST FOR M.S. DEGREE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter entered degree program: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Guidance Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Members of Guidance Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Target Date  
Date  
Completed:

### Year 1

Meet with Director and Graduate Advisor	1st quarter	_____
Select a Major Professor	2nd quarter	_____
Select a Guidance Committee	2nd quarter	_____
Plan and initiate research project	2nd quarter	_____
Meet with Guidance Committee	3rd quarter	_____
Annual Research Progress Evaluation	3rd quarter/summer	_____

### Year 2

Name Thesis Committee	4th quarter	_____
Submit thesis to Committee	5th or 6th quarter	_____
Meet with Thesis Committee	6th quarter	_____
Annual Research Progress Evaluation	6th quarter/summer	_____
File advancement to candidacy paperwork	6th quarter	_____
Present research results at Research Symposium	Spring Quarter	_____
Defend thesis	final quarter	_____

## **THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM (PH.D.)**

*To help you plan your program and monitor your progress, a Time Table checklist is located in the back of this section. The following list provides more detailed information on the steps you need to take to advance to candidacy.*

The main goal of our program is to enable students to acquire modern perspectives and technical skills in Cell, Molecular and Developmental Biology and to foster initiative and imagination that will lead to productive careers in academia, government, and industry following graduation. The Ph.D. degree requires demonstration of broad knowledge in the area of Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology and substantive ability in original research.

The recommended normative time for completion of the Ph.D. degree requirements is fifteen quarters (5 years). During the first two years, emphasis is on coursework and completion of the qualifying examinations, as well as research. The remaining three years are devoted primarily to research and to the writing and defense of the dissertation, although students continue to participate in graduate seminars and may take additional coursework during this period.

**Briefly, you are expected to achieve the following major goals during your time in the program: (1) complete core course work by the end of your 1st year (see Section 1 for course checklist for Ph.D.), (2) prepare a research proposal, pass the Written and Oral Qualifying Examinations, and advance to candidacy by the start of the seventh quarter, and (3) produce and file your dissertation by the end of your fifteenth quarter.**

The following is a guide to achieving these goals:

1. **Schedule a meeting with the Graduate Advisor soon after arriving at UCR.** The Graduate Advisor will help you to design a course of study which will: (a) make up any course deficiencies; (b) meet the Program's course requirements and (c) prepare you for research in your chosen area of specialization. The Graduate Advisor will also assist you in the selection of rotations, which lead to your identification of an appropriate Major Professor. **The Major Professor will serve as Chair of your Guidance and Dissertation Committees and has the critical role of mentoring your scientific development.** The Major Professor provides the research facilities and the intellectual guidance required to complete the dissertation. Students may select a Major Professor any time during the 1st three quarters of enrollment.
2. **Begin research rotations.** Students are strongly urged to complete at least two rotations during their first academic year at UCR. Rotations provide you with an opportunity to explore different research areas under CMDDB faculty. In consultation with individual faculty members and the Graduate advisor, you will determine a rotation plan. Rotations can be flexible; most are either 5 or 10 weeks in length. During each rotation, you will work on a research project under the guidance of a faculty member and others in the lab. The goal of a rotation is to learn about the lab so that you can understand the experimental system, the research questions, and the lab culture. Rotations give you an opportunity to learn new approaches and techniques. Perhaps most importantly, rotations

allow you to learn about the faculty member's mentoring style and determine how well you it suits you. In turn, the faculty advisor uses the rotation to evaluate qualities such as your work ethic, enthusiasm, experimental skills, and whether the research topic seems like a good fit for you. In addition, he/she will assess how well you will fit into the lab culture and will ultimately decide if he/she can work with you for to direct your dissertation research. It is essential that you understand the expectations of each faculty member you are rotating with. You should discuss this with them at the beginning of each rotation. Your performance in each rotation will be evaluated by the faculty member.

3. **Select a Guidance Committee** in consultation with your chosen Major Professor by the end of your second quarter. Use this form for nominating the committee:  
[CMDB Guidance Committee Nomination Form \(wufoo.com\)](http://wufoo.com)
4. **Complete course requirements.** These include 4 core courses and 1 elective, plus one additional 2-unit graduate special topics seminars (from an approved list). CMDB 257 (a series of seminars presented by distinguished outside speakers) is offered every quarter and is combined with the Graduate Programs in MCBL and GGB. Students are required to register in CMDB 257 each quarter it is offered.
5. **Complete your teaching requirement.** A minimum of two quarters of service as a Teaching Assistant in cell, molecular, developmental or related-area courses is required regardless of whether financial support comes from Fellowship or Research Assistantships, etc. Teaching may be done at any time but it is recommended that it be done in the **third** or **fourth** years. All students are required to complete TA Training through the Teaching Assistant Development Program (TADP). Please see the TADP website for more information <http://www.tadp.ucr.edu>
6. **Complete the Qualifying Examinations.** The qualifying examination consists of three parts: research proposal, written, and oral. (See protocols on following pages)

### **CMDB Graduate Program - Ph.D. Qualifying Examination**

#### **The CMDB Ph.D. Qualifying Examination consists of three parts:**

1. **The Research Proposal:** An NSF or NIH style research proposal describing their Dissertation Research Project. The student is expected to write the proposal themselves. The Major Professor can provide some guidance. The Major Professor must approve the proposal and sign the front page. The proposal must be distributed to the Qualifying Exam Committee at least 4 weeks before the start of the Written Examination. Please include Christopher Brown ([christopher.brown@ucr.edu](mailto:christopher.brown@ucr.edu)) on the email of your Research Proposal submission to the Chair of the examination committee.


Preparing the written proposal takes time. Students should plan to spend at least two months working on it.

2. **The Written Examination:** Consists of closed-book questions written by the Qualifying Examination Committee members. The CMDDB committee members will submit their questions to the Chair of the committee, who will supervise the student, allowing up to three hours for each set of questions from each committee member. Typically, the written exam is completed over several days. The outside committee member has the option of providing questions for the written examination as well.

**The Qualifying Exam Committee determines if the student passes the written exam, at which point they may proceed to the Oral Exam. Immediately after the results are provided, they must be reported using the ‘Report Exam or Degree Requirement petition’ petition. Following the submission of the ‘Qualifying Examination Committee Nomination Form’ (Grad Division deadline two weeks before the exam).**

3. **The Oral Examination:** An oral examination where the student makes a 45 – 60 minute PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Dissertation Research Project, followed by questions from the committee. The oral exam is typically 2.5 – 3 hours long and can occur 2.5 – 3 (+) weeks after the written exam. The oral exam will typically take place in person; however, allowances can be made for a hybrid modality (see the UCR Catalog).

#### Nomination for Oral Qualifying Exam Committee

Access via R'Grad which can be found in your R'web menu  
(<http://rweb.ucr.edu>) 

Nominate the oral qualifying exam committee at least 2 weeks prior to the exam.

*DEADLINE: At least two weeks (preferably one month) prior to the Oral Qualifying Exam date.*

[Petitions and Forms | Graduate Division \(ucr.edu\)](#)

4. **Reporting your examinations to clear the requirement on your degree (Below)**  
**Immediately after the exam, the student must initiate the Report via R'Grad by visiting this [LINK](#).**
  - Written Exam: Report Exam or Degree Requirement petition (For written exam).
  - Oral Qualifying Exam: Report of Oral Qualifying Exam petition



The form will ask to fill in the name of the Chair of the student's Dissertation Committee. If you have the information on the entire dissertation committee, they

can be entered by selecting “Add Member”. The form will require at least the chair of the dissertation, but it is recommended to enter the entire committee if the information is available.

- Please note that the chair of the qualifying exam cannot be the same as the dissertation chair.
- Select “Save,” and you should be able to route to the next committee member.
- [Regulations and Procedures | Graduate Division \(ucr.edu\)](#)

Dissertation Committee Selection: [Regulations and Procedures | Graduate Division \(ucr.edu\)](#); the steps are under “The Dissertation Committee” tab under The Doctoral Degree area.

### Ph.D. Qualifying Exam Committee

The PhD Qualifying Examination normally occurs near the end of the second year of the student’s graduate program. Students who fail to schedule a qualifying exam within a three-year period will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Graduate Advisor for continuation in the program.

The PhD Qualifying Exam Committee should be formed at least three months before the anticipated written exam date. This provides adequate time for study and arrangement of dates for written and oral exams. The written and oral exams should be separated by 2.5 – 3 weeks to allow the committee members time to grade and discuss the exam results with the student.

The student, working in consultation with the Major Professor, chooses five members to nominate for their CMDB Oral Qualifying Exam committee. Four committee members will be from the CMDB program (one is the Chair), and the fifth member will be from outside the program. The major advisor will not be part of the committee. The student must speak to each faculty member nominated for the Qualifying Examination Committee and confirm their willingness to serve in this capacity.

Once the written exam has been passed, the student will complete the online Qualifying Examination Committee Nomination Form at R'grad <https://rgrad.ucr.edu/> 2-3 weeks prior to the oral exam.

### Scheduling the Exams

Once the Qualifying Exam Committee is approved, the student consults with the members of the Qualifying Examination Committee to establish specific dates for the written and oral examinations. Students should be aware that it is often difficult to find dates for the oral and written exams due to the busy travel schedules of faculty. An early commitment to exam dates helps to avoid scheduling difficulties. The student (in consultation with the Committee Chair) is responsible for identifying and reserving rooms for the written and oral exams. The CMDB Graduate Student Services Advisor will help with room scheduling if needed.

The student notifies the Committee members of the date and location by e-mail as soon as they are established. Students should set study plans with committee members approximately 3-4 months prior to the exam. The expected time dedicated to preparation for the exam should be discussed with the student's major professor. **At least 4 weeks prior to the Written Qualifying Examination, the student is required to provide a hard copy of the research proposal to each member of the Qualifying Examination Committee.**

### **The Written Examination**

All of the Qualifying Examination Committee Members except the Outside member must submit questions for the written portion of the examination to the Chair of the Qualifying Examination. The Outside member has the option to contribute questions for the written examination.

Each Committee Member submits questions that the student is expected to answer over a maximum three hour period. Most Committee members require the student to answer the Written Exam questions without the aid of notes, books, Internet, or other resources. Each Qualifying Committee Member may waive some or all of these conditions. Cell phones or any other device that can access information are not permitted unless specifically approved by the committee member whose set of questions is being answered.

The student has two options for recording their answers to the written examination questions. They may write their answers on paper or use a departmental computer that lacks internet access. If drawings, tables or graphs are needed to answer a question, they will need to be hand drawn and referred to in the text.

On each morning of the Written Examinations, the student should go to the Committee Chair's office. The student will choose the order of the exams. The Chair will bring the student to the examination room and ensure that only admissible items enter the room. After the student completes the first exam, the student returns the answers to the Chair. The student will then take a break and arrange for a time to begin the second exam. The Chair will let the student know the outcome of the exams and direct the student to speak with Committee members. A course of action to remedy any deficiencies in the Written Exam should be discussed with the student.

Students "Pass" or "Fail" this exam; there is no "qualified" pass or fail.

1. Written Exam - A Pass: To proceed to the oral exam, a student may fail no more than one of the written exams.
2. Written Exam - A Failure: If the student fails two or more exams, the Qualifying Examination Committee will determine if the student should be allowed to retake the Written Examination. The Committee will recommend a timeframe for the second attempt. Based on the overall performance, the Qualifying Examination Committee will decide how many and which of the exams will be retaken. A student may retake the Written Exam once.

### **The Research Proposal**

The focus of the Oral Examination will be a Research Proposal written by the student that s/he proposes to carry out for her/his Ph. D. dissertation. This document serves as a basis for examination and assessment by the Oral Qualifying Examination Committee of the following:



(a) the ability of the student to write a concise and clearly written research proposal, (b) the student's fundamental knowledge in the area of her/his research, (c) the student's ability to identify a meaningful research project, (d) the student's ability to design and carry out productive meaningful research, and (e) the student's sophistication in describing the scientific literature germane to the proposed project.

The role of the PhD advisor. The student is expected to write the entire proposal. They are also expected to consult regularly with their PhD advisor to be sure that good progress is being made, and to allow the advisor to make suggestions for improvement, particularly as it concerns the presentation of preliminary data, the testing of hypotheses, the interpretation of possible results, and alternative approaches. The advisor may also explain general concepts of grantsmanship and identify additional research areas and/or methods that the student will need to study.

Proposal structure. The Proposal should not exceed 12 pages not counting the Title Page and the Literature Cited section. The space required for all figures and Tables is included in the 12 page limitation. The entire document should be typed single spaced in a 11-point or 12-point font.

#### The Title Page

The following Statement must be placed at the top of the Title page: Research Proposal for CMDDB Qualifying Examination on 'month', 'day', 'year'. This should be followed by the following items, spaced neatly down the Title page.

- a) An informative title that captures the essence of the proposed research project
- b) The official UCR name of the Candidate.
- c) The statement 'Major Professor' followed by the name of the candidate's Major Professor, followed by a signature line. Underneath the signature line the following should be typed "Approved for distribution".
- d) The full name and departmental affiliation of each of the five members of the Oral Qualifying Examination Committee.

#### Section A: HYPOTHESIS AND SPECIFIC AIMS.

An Abstract (limited to 400 words) that includes the following:

- a) A concise articulation of the dissertation's overall objectives and the specific goal(s) of the research proposed, e.g., to create a novel experimental design, to solve a specific problem, or to address a specific barrier in your field. You may choose to formulate your own hypothesis. This information is then immediately followed on the same page by the following;
- b) An explicit listing of the titles of the Specific Aims in Section D of your Research Proposal. These titles should exactly match (word for word) the wording that is contained in Section D of the research proposal.

#### Section B: BACKGROUND

This section is limited to no more than three pages. This section should provide the following background information to the proposed Research Proposal.

- a) A brief review of the literature that is appropriate to bring the Committee members up to speed with the 'state of the art' of recent research in the general area of your research proposal.
- b) Appropriate citation of the available literature in this area. See comments on the bibliography formatting below.

c) This section may include figures and tables as are deemed to be helpful; their area must be included in the 5 pages allowable for this section.

d) All Figures and Tables should be separately numbered, in sequence, throughout the entire document.

e) Each Figure and Table must have a title, and, if needed, a legend that provides appropriate further description to assist the reader in understanding the figure/table; e.g. reference to experimental methodology, that may or may not require reference citation(s).

### Section C: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

This section can be up to one page in length. In this section, the Candidate should include the following:

- a) A concise description of the background leading up to the Research Proposal,
- b) A critical evaluation of existing knowledge and identification of the gaps that the project is intended to fill.
- c) A description of the importance of the proposed research by relating the Specific Aims to the long-term direction of research in the field.

### Section D: RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESULTS OBTAINED TO DATE

This section may be up to seven pages in length. It should include a layout in a logical fashion of the method of prosecution of the overall research objective being proposed for your Ph.D. dissertation and, also, it should include the preliminary data you have already obtained. The section should contain the following.

- a) This section should be subdivided into as many primary sub-sections as the Specific Aims that were listed in section A.
- b) Each primary Specific Aim may be broken down into as many or few secondary sub-Specific Aims as the candidate feels appropriate or necessary for the experiments being proposed.
- c) Each Aim and sub- Aim should provide some kind of Rationale statement, followed by a brief introduction and then a section titled Experimental design(s).
- d) The presentation of Preliminary Data should include appropriate Tables with titles and brief legends and Figures and with figure titles followed by informative succinct legends.
- e) Remember that all figures and all tables should be separately numbered sequentially throughout the entire proposal.

### Section E: LITERATURE CITED

The pages of this section are not included in the page limitation of 12 pages.

Citations and references may be formatted either in a numbered sequence or alphabetically. Scientific journals can provide examples of these styles, and students are encouraged to use programs such as Endnote to begin to learn to manage their references.

### Other information

The following standard sections of NSF and NIH grants should not be included in the candidate's Research Proposal: Table of Contents; Budget Information, Biographical Sketches; Available space and equipment; Animal use assurances; Checklist, and Appendix.

Approval of Research Proposal by your Major Professor.

Prior to distribution of your Research Proposal to your Committee, you must obtain your Major Professor's signature on the Title Page indicating that it is "Approved for distribution".

#### Distribution of final Research Proposal

After signature approval has been obtained, a hard copy of your proposal should be given to all members of the Qualifying Exam Committee at least four weeks (30 days) before the scheduled written examination. Also, send one scanned electronic copy of your Proposal to Christopher Brown ([christopher.brown@ucr.edu](mailto:christopher.brown@ucr.edu)) in the CNAS Graduate Student Affairs Center at this time.

At least one week before the Written Qualifying Examination the chair of the committee will poll the committee members to determine if the quality of the submitted Research Proposal is of sufficient quality to allow the examination to proceed as scheduled. If there are concerns, then the chair will communicate these to the students and their Major Professor and they will reschedule the examination. The revised Research Proposal must then be resubmitted using the same schedule as described above. Students are only allowed one revision of the Research Proposal following which the Oral Exam will be held.

#### The Oral Examination

The Oral Examination must be held on a single day. All members of the Examination committee must be present for the entire exam. The student begins with a presentation of 45-60 minutes on his/her Dissertation Research Proposal. During and/or following the presentation, the committee asks the student questions about the research proposal and his/her dissertation research. The student should also be prepared to answer questions on broader topics in the field of cell, molecular, and developmental biology, especially if any particular area of concern arising from the Written Qualifying Examination has been identified by a member of the Oral Qualifying Examination Committee.

A "Pass" requires that no more than a single Committee member vote to fail. If a student fails the Oral Qualifying Examination, the Committee is required to make a recommendation either for or against a second examination. Ordinarily a second exam is not administered until at least three months have elapsed and within six months of the original exam. A third examination is not permitted. A student who does not pass the oral qualifying exam may be dismissed from the program or may be allowed to complete a M.S. degree. The CMDDB Executive committee, in consultation with the student's Oral Qualifying Examination Committee, will determine if transfer to the M.S. program is recommended.

More information about the Graduate Council policies concerning Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations may be found in the Graduate Advisor's Handbook published on the Graduate Division website.

**Please Complete Dissertation requirements as required by the Graduate Division. These petitions will be completed after the Defense is completed (the same day):**

- b. [R'Grad \(ucr.edu\)](http://R'Grad.ucr.edu)
  - i. Final Defense PHD Petition
  - ii. Signature Approval Page (Dissertation or Thesis) Petition

iii. **For Announcement: Please complete this form 2 weeks prior your defense:**

<https://ucrbgsac.wufoo.com/forms/rg4e1lp1nztvu8/>

## **APPEAL PROCEDURES**

The Graduate Division lists its Regulations and Procedures online (see <https://graduate.ucr.edu/regulations-and-procedures>). If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of any decision originating in the CMDDB graduate program or its faculty (e.g. the outcome of a qualifying exam or course), they should contact a graduate advisor or the program director. The program will attempt to reach an Informal Resolution, however it may be possible that a Formal Appeal will need to be initiated. The guidelines are described on the Graduate Division website under *Appeal Procedures for Graduate Students > 3. Appeal at the Program Level*.

## **SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Normative time to the Ph.D. degree in Cell, Molecular and Developmental Biology is fifteen quarters (five years). Normative time is defined as the period of full-time registration required to earn the degree, assuming that the student enters with a bachelor's degree and has no course deficiencies or need to take any remedial work. As stated above, in the CMDDB Program, the individual student's program of study is planned in consultation with his or her Guidance Committee, which supervises the student's progress prior to the appointment of the Dissertation Committee. After the student advances to candidacy, the Dissertation Committee oversees the student's progress in the final stages of his or her degree program.

For all students, evaluations of progress are carried out each spring. Students meet with their Guidance or Dissertation Committee and the student's Major Professor submits the Annual Research Progress Evaluation (ARPE). This process is critical for both the student and the Major Professor. Copies of every ARPE Committee Report are sent to Graduate Division as required by Graduate Council policy.

## **UNSATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

It is expected that students will make good progress in the CMDDB degree program. The Graduate Division will block registration of students who fail to perform satisfactorily. In addition, unsatisfactory academic progress severely limits opportunities for receiving funding through the Program. Students are considered to be making unacceptable progress when:

- They fail to fulfill program requirements such as exams or research in a timely and satisfactory manner.
- The overall GPA drops below the minimum level of 3.0
- They have 12 or more units of "I" grades.
- The Major Professor feels that the student is not making normal progress in the laboratory.

## TIME TABLE CHECKLIST FOR Ph.D. DEGREE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter entered degree program: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Guidance Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Members of Guidance Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Target Date Completed:

### Year 1

Meet with the Director and Graduate Advisor      1st quarter      \_\_\_\_\_

Do Rotations      1st – 2nd qtr      \_\_\_\_\_

Select Major Professor and establish  
Guidance Committee      1st – 2nd qtr      \_\_\_\_\_  
(Form available at <http://cmdb.ucr.edu/current-students.html>)

Meet with Guidance Committee  
(Annual Research Progress Evaluation)      Spring      \_\_\_\_\_

### Year 2

Nominate Oral Qualifying Exam Committee      Fall or Winter Qtr.      \_\_\_\_\_  
(Form available at <http://cmdb.ucr.edu/current-students.html>)

Research Proposal to Committee      Spring or Summer      \_\_\_\_\_

Take written qualifying exam      Spring or Summer      \_\_\_\_\_

\*Take oral qualifying exam      Before the 7<sup>th</sup> quarter      \_\_\_\_\_

Meet with Guidance/Dissertation Committee  
(Annual Research Progress Evaluation)      Spring /Summer      \_\_\_\_\_

### Year 3

Meet with Guidance/Dissertation Committee  
(Annual Research Progress Evaluation)      Spring      \_\_\_\_\_

### Year 4

Meet with Guidance/Dissertation Committee  
(Annual Research Progress Evaluation)      Spring      \_\_\_\_\_

### Year 5

Write Dissertation      All quarters      \_\_\_\_\_

Meet with Guidance/Dissertation Committee  
(Annual Research Progress Evaluation)      Spring      \_\_\_\_\_

Publicly Defend Dissertation      Final Quarter      \_\_\_\_\_

## IMPORTANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

**The CMDB Graduate Student Association (CMDB-GSA):** Every CMDB graduate student is automatically a member of the CMDB Graduate Student Association (CMDB-GSA). The CMDB-GSA serves several purposes, such as promoting interactions among the graduate students, providing information about the program and the university to the graduate students, and representing graduate student concerns to the faculty and other campus organizations. Students become better acquainted with each other and with the CMDB faculty during social events that the CMDB-GSA organizes. CMDB-GSA is governed by an elected student advisory committee, which is composed of one representative from the first year students, one from the second year students, and three from the students third year and up. One student from this committee serves as the chair, and acts as a liaison between the faculty and the graduate students, both by disseminating information to the students and by soliciting student opinions regarding programmatic issues and policies. The CMDB-GSA facilitates unified action of the graduate students regarding issues that affect them. Issues of interest to our students are discussed during meetings held at least once per quarter, and these concerns are brought to the faculty's attention when appropriate. The CMDB-GSA also sends representatives to Graduate Student Association (GSA) meetings, who then report back to the other members.

**Keys:** When you have selected a Major Professor, you will be able to obtain keys to access the building and rooms which you will be using. Your Major Professor will help you with this process.

**Mailboxes:** Graduate students are typically assigned mailboxes in their Major Professor's mailroom. If a student is rotating, their mailbox will be in the BNN Mailroom in Life Sciences by the second week of the fall term and will be moved once they are settled in a lab. Please see the Student Affairs Officer in CNAS Grad Student Affairs to locate your mailbox. The mail is delivered twice a day, in the morning and afternoon. It is important to check your box regularly.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Students admitted to the Ph.D. typically receive financial support for 5 years. During the first year, the main sources of graduate student support are Fellowships and Graduate Student Research Assistantships obtained through the Program. After the first year, the majority of a student's financial support comes from Graduate Student Research Assistantships obtained through research grants awarded to the Major Professor, and Teaching Assistantships. Students who enter the Ph.D. program with strong undergraduate records are encouraged to apply for National Science Foundation, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, or other extramural fellowships. Students who have Advanced to Candidacy are also encouraged to pursue extramural fellowship funding. Other support is available through a variety of University, State, and Federal sources.

**Graduate Student Research Assistantships (GSRs):** These positions are supported either with funds that come from the Program or from the Major Professor's grant. Students with GSRs receive a partial remission of fees and payment of the Graduate Student Health Insurance Program Fee.

**Teaching Assistantships (TAs):** The type of work involved in being a TA varies according to the class assigned. When a student is appointed as a TA, they receive a detailed letter explaining the duties for the position. Students with Teaching Assistantships receive a partial remission of fees and payment of the Graduate Student Health Insurance Program Fee.

**NOTE:** TAs and GSRs must be making acceptable progress toward their degree objective, must be advanced to candidacy within 12 quarters after entry, and must have fewer than 8 units of Incomplete grades. (There may be additional GPA requirements; check with the CMDB representative to the TA Allocation Committee (TAAC), Prof. Maduro.)

**Summer support:** Students in the Program are normally supported by their Major Professor during the summer.

### **Graduate Research Mentoring Program and Dissertation Year Program Awards**

The Graduate Research Mentoring Program (GRMP) award is intended to enhance the mentoring of domestic PhD students entering their 3rd, 4th, or 5th years of graduate school who are actively engaged in research. The Dissertation Year Program (DYP) Award is intended for MFA or PhD students who expect to complete their degree program the year in which the award is received. A single application may be used for both awards which provide stipends and cover fees from 1 to 3 quarters. Eligible students can receive up to three quarters each of the DYP and GRMP fellowships and may reapply if they have not reached this max. You can download the application from the web at <https://graduate.ucr.edu/funding>

**Graduate Student Association (GSA) Mini grants** help to pay the travel expenses of students who have been invited to present scholarly papers or posters at regional and national professional conferences. The program is administered by the Graduate Student Association and requires that Departments or Graduate Programs agree to provide matching funds. Contact the GSA, at

x83740 or <https://gsa.ucr.edu/>, or the Graduate Student Affairs Officer, for mini-grant applications.

### **EXTRAMURAL SUPPORT**

In addition to the fellowships, assistantships, grants, and loans administered by the University, graduate students may also be eligible for other types of support provided by federal agencies and private foundations. Organizations that have awarded fellowships and research support to UCR students include the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Education, Fulbright Program, Phi Beta Kappa Alumni Scholarships for International Scholars, and Sigma Xi. If students wish to explore these sources of support for study, they should consult the *Annual Register of Grant Support* and other similar directories either at the reference department of the library or through the Financial Support section in the Graduate Division. There are also many sites on the Web devoted to various sources of aid for graduate students.

### **CMDB 257 Seminar Speakers**

The finalized list of speakers should be made available on the CMDB web site (<https://cmdb.ucr.edu/>) prior to the start of each quarter.



(1140 Batchelor Hall)

Housed in the College of Natural & Agricultural Sciences, the CNAS Graduate Student Affairs Center supports the majority of the graduate programs in the college. We assist you with all aspects of completing your graduate program (class registration, program requirements, Graduate Division policies, and fellowship and employment matters (TA/GSR)). We will often be your first stop when you need help or are just looking for a good listener. We work with Faculty Graduate Advisors and Major Professors to ensure your success. You usually see the staff member who supports your graduate program, but feel free to contact any Center staff when your Student Affairs Officer is unavailable.

## **CENTER STAFF MEMBERS (Blue and Gold Advising Teams)**

(view the most up-to-date information at the GSAC website:

<https://cnasgrad.ucr.edu/staff.html> )

**Kathy Redd**, Director and Student Services Advisor – oversees the operation of the Center and is the primary contact for the **Entomology** graduate program and **Staff Support for TA appointments in the Life Sciences**.

E-mail [kathy.redd@ucr.edu](mailto:kathy.redd@ucr.edu)

Phone: 951-827-5621

**Nikita McWells**, Director of Student Advising

E-mail [nikita.mcwells@ucr.edu](mailto:nikita.mcwells@ucr.edu)

Phone: (951) 827-6746

**Christopher Brown**, Student Services Advisor - is the primary contact for the **Cell, Molecular, and Development Biology; Biophysics; and Statistics** graduate programs.

E-mail [christopher.brown@ucr.edu](mailto:christopher.brown@ucr.edu)

## **GRADUATE DIVISION REQUIREMENTS**

For information on specific Graduate Division requirements, please refer to the Graduate Division web site: <https://graduate.ucr.edu/regulations-and-procedures> and to the UCR General Catalog: <https://registrar.ucr.edu/registering/catalog>

## **GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

All graduate students are automatically members of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), which seeks to represent their views and promote their interests with the faculty and administration, both at the campus level and system wide. They are responsible for negotiating and reviewing healthcare insurance coverage. Their Grievance Mediation Officer acts as an advocate on grievance matters. It also administers the Mini grant Program, to provide travel grants to graduate students who represent GSA at professional conferences. For a more detailed description of GSA activities and services, call (951) 827-3740 or visit their website at <https://gsa.ucr.edu/>

## **UCR GRADUATE COMMUNITY COURSE/ILEARN**

You will be enrolled in the UCR Graduate Community course through ILearn. This course is used to post announcements regarding funding opportunities, campus workshops and events pertinent to graduate students. The discussions boards are also available, including a "student exchange" where you can post items for sale or rooms for rent, etc. <https://ilearn.ucr.edu>

## **R'MAIL ACCOUNTS**

When you enroll at UCR you are automatically assigned a UCR R'Mail account on the student server. Along with your account you will also receive an electronic generated login name. You cannot change your login name; it will stay the same throughout your time at UCR. However, you may choose to change your password at your own discretion. (Changes in your password will not affect your email address nor will they alter the URL of your home page.) Your initial password is your Permanent PIN number. If you forget it you can go to the Registrar's Office. However, we strongly recommend that you change your password as soon as possible. Occasionally, passwords are stolen and the amount of damage that can be done from a stolen password is considerable. If your password is your Permanent PIN number, the amount of damage increases greatly, because your academic information and financial aid records may also be accessed.

**The University requires that you read your UCR web mail account regularly.** The University and Graduate Student Services Advisors use e-mail to remind students of upcoming deadlines and to pass on important messages.

## **MAILBOXES**

Ask your Student Services Advisor about the location of your mailbox and check it regularly.

## **COMPUTER ACCESS AND OFFICE SPACE**

Ask your Graduate Student Services Advisor about computer access. Some programs provide **offices** for their graduate students, some only **desk space** in a lab. If your program does not have a computer room, there are computer labs on campus that you are free to use. **Find out now what's available to you.**

## **LABORATORY SAFETY TRAINING**

As an employee of the University, you are required to attend Lab Safety Training provided by Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S). Please enroll in a session via their online website: <http://www.ehs.ucr.edu/>. If you have any questions or problems enrolling, please contact the EH&S office at 951-827-5528. Please attend this training as soon as possible. Some graduate students will need to attend additional training depending on their research project. It is very important that you maintain your own records of any training you take in addition to providing proof to your lab manager or faculty member. In the past, sometimes students have had to repeat training if they did not have their own proof that they completed it (unreliable computer records).

## **UCR IDENTIFICATION CARD**

The UCR Card is a multi-functional Campus ID card. It is the Official photo ID of UCR and it provides you with Library privileges as well as access to the Sports Recreation Complex.

Photos are taken at **the UCR Card office which is located at Bannockburn Village, Suite I-101** for a fee of \$25. The UCR Card office hours are from 9:00am – 4:00pm Monday through Friday. Bring a valid form of ID, such as a driver's license or passport. Appointments can be made, but are not necessary.

You can also upload a photo and then pick up the completed ID card. For more information please visit: <http://ucrcard.ucr.edu/rcardinfo/obtaining-rcard-students.html>.

Students: The cost of your card is billed directly to your campus (GROWL) student account, so you do not need to bring cash. For information on optional UCR card services see:

<http://www.ucrcard.ucr.edu/>

### **ESTABLISHING CALIFORNIA RESIDENCY**

*Domestic non-California resident students* must establish California residency by the second year of study. Students should start planning for this as soon as they arrive.

<https://registrar.ucr.edu/tuition-fees/residency-for-tuition>

For more information, please inquire with the Graduate Student Affairs Officer.

### **ENROLLMENT**

It is the student's responsibility to initially enroll in courses and to confirm course enrollment. Failure to enroll by scheduled deadlines may result in the lapse of student status or delay financial aid. The GROWL system is the web service for enrolling in courses. Using GROWL via the Web, students can enroll in classes, confirm course enrollment, view grades, check their financial aid, billing, degree progress, view their Student ID, change their address or PERM PIN number, update privacy restrictions, and get help via the web. On the internet go to <http://www.growl.ucr.edu> . To use GROWL you must enter your date of birth, Student ID number, and PERM PIN number.

### **THE PERMANENT PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER**

Your **PERM PIN** is a permanent six-digit number that is set by the Office of the Registrar once a student is admitted to the university. Your Perm Pin and Student ID number are located on your Admissions Confirmation Letter (sent to you via e-mail).

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Please keep your local address and phone number current. Let your Graduate Student Affairs Officer know when you move. **You must update your addresses (local, billing, next of kin) in GROWL.**

### **INFORMATION FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS (TAs)**

#### **Teaching Assistant Development Program**

UCR has a long history as a distinguished teaching campus and regards Teaching Assistant (TA) training as a crucial part of graduate instruction. TA orientation is required of TAs in all departments. It is offered every fall during the first week of the quarter. Focus workshops are required of all Teaching Assistants who scored a 4.0 or below on any single question on their Teaching Evaluations. Students who score low on their "overall effectiveness as a TA" question must be observed in class by a Mentor TA and prepare an Action Plan for improvement. Students who score low on their English language skills must attend a communication workshop and schedule six half hour sessions to use language software in the TADP Office. Registration is available on the TADP home page beginning Monday of the first full week of classes for the current quarter.

TADP provides services to the more experienced TA as well, including a teaching resource library, teaching portfolio development and assessment consultations, and seminars on professional development. Contact your department or TADP (951-827-3386, [tadp@ucr.edu](mailto:tadp@ucr.edu)) for further information on training requirements and upcoming seminars. You may also visit their website: <http://eldp.ucr.edu/>

### **The SPEAK EXAM (TOEFL Academic Speaking Test)**

To be appointed a TA, any student **whose native language is not English** must pass an English proficiency exam. This includes not only international students but also **any** student whose first language is not English. The SPEAK exam is scheduled by the International Education Programs in University Extension approximately two weeks before the beginning of every quarter.

Those who score a conditional pass can be appointed as a TA but are required to participate in the appropriate English language classes at the Extension Center and retake the test. Individuals in this range may be appointed as TAs for up to two quarters on a probationary basis with the approval of the Graduate Dean. For those students within the probationary range, a determination of their continuing eligibility to serve as TAs will be made by the Graduate Dean on the basis of:

- Departmental recommendation, including an assessment of the student's academic ability;
- Student teaching evaluations;
- Other evidence of commitment to/performance in teaching (e.g., faculty evaluations or statements of support, videotapes);
- Evidence of a good-faith effort to improve English skills; and Relative proximity to the level of competence represented by a clear pass

## **GRADUATE STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

### **Funding Sources**

Graduate Students are supported from a variety of sources. Here is information on the various types of funding and definitions of the commonly-used acronyms:

***Graduate Division Stipend:*** Usually awarded as part of a larger fellowship package, these dollars go directly from Graduate Division to the student through the Financial Aid System. The student receives a "pay check" at the beginning of each quarter starting in late September (for the October 1 stipend check).

***Graduate Student Researcher (GSR):*** An employment title for graduate students conducting research (either independent or directed). Students may not be appointed at more than 49% during the academic year. During academic breaks and the summer a student may be employed up to 100%.

GSR appointments at 25% or more during the academic year are entitled to GSHIP and PFR (see below). Financial support for GSR employees is provided by faculty extramural grants and departmental general funds. Students are paid in arrears (just like other university employees) and receive their first check after their first month of work. (I.e. a student who begins work in fall quarter does not get a check until November 1)

***Teaching Assistant (TA):*** Also known as ***Academic Student Employee (ASE)***. This employment title is for graduate students who are teaching part of a course (normally labs or discussion sections) under the guidance of a faculty member/instructor. Students may not be appointed at more than 50% during the academic year. If they are appointed at 25% or more time during an academic quarter, they are entitled to GSHIP and PFR (see below). There are many rules that are associated with this title now due to the employee contract. See the United Auto Workers Union Contract for more information. TA funds are distributed to the Departments by the CNAS Dean's Office. Students are paid in arrears (just like other university employees) and receive their first check after their first month of work (i.e. a student who starts work in fall quarter does not get a check until November 1).

***Partial Fee Remission (PFR):*** Students who are appointed at 25% or more time during an academic quarter as a GSR or TA are entitled to PFR. This entitlement pays part (but not all) of the students' mandatory university fees. The Graduate Student Services Advisor provides Graduate Division with the names of students who are eligible for this entitlement before the student bills are generated. If an award is placed on the system after bills are generated, the student's bill will not reflect the correct fees they owe.

***Graduate Student Health Insurance (GSHIP):*** Students who are appointed at 25% or more time during an academic quarter as a GSR or TA are entitled to have their GSHIP fees paid for them. The Graduate Student Services Advisor provides Graduate Division with a list of the students who are eligible for this entitlement before the student bills are generated. If an award is placed on the system after bills are generated, the student's bill will not reflect the correct fees they owe. The actual dollar amount of GSHIP changes as the insurance prices change from year to year. Students who have private Health Insurance comparable to the University's coverage can apply for waivers of the GSHIP fees. If a student has comparable health insurance coverage s/he may apply for an exemption of the GSHIP premium by filing the appropriate paperwork with the Health Center. Deadline dates for petitioning for exemption from

GSHIP are firm. Contact the Student Health Insurance coordinator at (951) 827-5683 or (951) 827-3031 for information.

***Non-Resident Tuition Remission (NRT or NRTR):*** Non-residents of California (either Domestic or International) who are appointed at 45% or more as a GSR are entitled to have their Non-Resident Tuition paid for them. The Graduate Student Services Advisor provides Graduate Division with a list of the students who are eligible for this entitlement before the student bills are generated. If an award is placed on the system after bills are generated, the student's bill will not reflect the correct fees they owe. International Students cannot establish residency and will owe Non-Resident Tuition for their entire student careers. (However, when a student Advances to Candidacy, his/her Non-Resident Tuition is reduced to 0% for a period of nine quarters, not including summer quarters.) Domestic non-resident students must establish California residency by the beginning of the second year of study. You must petition in person at the Office of the Registrar, Student Services Building, for a change of classification from nonresident to resident status. All changes of status MUST be initiated before the first day of classes for the term for which you intend to be classified as a resident. Students planning to file for residence status after their first year should talk with the Residence Deputy well before the appropriate residence determination date, preferably during their first few weeks in California.

***Fee Differential:*** The fee differential is the left-over university mandatory fee amount for a student with a PFR and GSHIP and NRTR entitlements. This covers the GSA, Recreation Center, and other miscellaneous fees. This dollar amount fluctuates as these fees change. Most students are required to pay this.

***Departmental Grant In Aid (DGIA):*** Departments or individual faculty members with unrestricted funds (many federal grants will not allow payment of student fees) can grant fellowship-like awards to individual students. This is most often used to pay the student's Fee Differential. The Graduate Student Services Advisor provides information to Graduate Division on the students who are to receive these awards, indicating the account and fund information. Graduate Division then pulls the money out of the account and awards it to the student through the Financial Aid System.

## **CAMPUS FUNDING**

### **UCR Graduate Division Fellowships**

#### ***Dissertation-Year Fellowships (DYP)***

The Dissertation-Year Fellowship Program provides financial support during the final year of dissertation work. Recipients must demonstrate high potential, promise and the desire for an academic career. Faculty mentors assist fellows in acquiring skills necessary to become candidates for faculty positions at major universities. Support is also provided to enable fellows to present their research at other UC and CSU (California State University) campuses.

#### ***Graduate Research Mentorship Programs (GRMP)***

The Graduate Research Mentorship Programs (GRMP) awards are intended to enhance the mentoring of doctoral students during their third, fourth, or fifth years of graduate study. Recipients are eligible for one, two, or three quarters of support to conduct their research (includes summers).

More information about these awards is available at: <https://graduate.ucr.edu/funding>

## **RESEARCH GRANTS**

### ***Dissertation Research Grants***

Dissertation Research Grants provide funds to doctoral candidates for research expenses associated with the dissertation. Applicants must be advanced to candidacy and plan to be registered during the period of the award. These funds may not be used for preparing the dissertation copy or as a stipend for personal support.

Deadlines to apply for Dissertation Research Grant funding are usually in October, January, and April. The Graduate Division sends announcements by email with deadlines and application instructions.

### **Graduate Student Association Mini-grants**

Graduate Student Association Mini-grants help to meet the financial needs of students who have been invited to present scholarly papers or posters at regional and national professional conferences. The program is administered by the Graduate Student Association and requires that departments agree to provide matching funds.

## **OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING**

- \* California Student Aid Commission Home Page: <http://www.csac.ca.gov/>
- \* Fellowship Office National Research Council:  
<http://www.nationalacademies.org/index.html>
- \* Financial Aid Information Page: <http://www.finaid.org>  
(check FASTWEB)
- \* National Science Foundation: <http://www.nsf.gov/>
- \* U.S. Department of Education Student Guide, Financial Aid:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/finaid/landing.jhtml>
- \* The Foundation Center's Home Page: <https://foundationcenter.org/>

For more information contact Karen Smith at ([karen.smith@ucr.edu](mailto:karen.smith@ucr.edu)) with the UCR Graduate Division.

### **Extramural Support**

There are many opportunities for Graduate Students from outside funding sources from federal agencies and private foundations. UCR subscribes to several searchable databases listed on the Office of Research Affairs web site at [www.ora.ucr.edu](http://www.ora.ucr.edu):

UCLA also offers a comprehensive database called GRAPES (Graduate and Postdoctoral Extramural Support). The web address is <https://grad.ucla.edu/funding/#>

## **TAX INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Teaching Assistantships, Research Assistantships, and Fellowships are considered taxable income. Refer to the UCR Graduate Student Handbook for more information. Each year the Rivera Library and the Graduate Division have IRS publication materials available to students. International students should visit the International Education Center website for information about tax workshops and filing help.