How to Graduate: Outline to Biology Masters Programs
Spring 2014

Timeline

Plan A
- End of 1st semester: Complete Program of Study in SIS
- End of 1st year: contact potential members of exam committee (advisor + 2)
- By end of 3rd semester: report to chair of CGA to schedule the examination
  - Email chair of CGA (cc Graduate Coordinator) the following info:
    - Area of concentration
    - Title of thesis project
    - Names and departments of members of the exam committee
    - Designated PI
- Receive an assigned CGA representative and documentation that your exam committee was approved prior to pre-exam meeting
- Apply for graduation in SIS
- Up to date and approved Planned Program of Study
- 1 month prior to exam: meet with committee and CGA representative to organize and schedule the oral exam (bring all relevant paperwork to meeting for signatures)
- 2 weeks prior to defense: send copy of proposal to exam committee members

Plan B: As of 3/17/2011, no longer has a final paper requirement, only an oral exam
- End of 1st semester: Complete Program of Study in SIS
- End of 1st year: contact potential members of exam committee (3)
- By end of 3rd semester: report to chair of CGA to schedule the examination
  - Email chair of CGA (cc Graduate Coordinator) the following info:
    - Area of concentration
    - Names and departments of members of the committee
- Receive an assigned CGA representative and documentation that your exam committee was approved prior to pre-exam meeting
- Apply for graduation in SIS
- Up to date and approved Planned Program of Study
- 1 month prior to exam: meet with committee and CGA representative to organize and schedule the oral exam (bring all relevant paperwork to meeting for signatures)

Part-time
Use the guideline above based on credits earned

Important Online Resources
http://www.case.edu/artsci/biol/academics/forms/?nw_view=1399919240&
http://www.case.edu/biology/academics/grad.html
http://www.case.edu/biology/academics/faq.html

Important Contacts
Julia Brown, Biology Graduate Coordinator
jab12@case.edu
Robin Snyder, Chair of the Committee of Graduate Affairs
res29@case.edu
Kristen Shimmel, BGSO Resource Committee
Kms183@case.edu
Details from a former student who got it right:

- Pick an examination committee by the end of the first year.
- Contact each person, explain what your thesis project is, and ask if they would serve on you committee. The committee members should have something to do with the student's interests or research area.
- Once committee members agree, send an e-mail to the chair of the CGA (Robin Snyder right now). In the e-mail list area of concentration, the title (or at least the general idea of) the thesis project, and the names and departments of all the members of the committee, and which was going to serve as the P.I. Copy Julia Brown on this e-mail.
- Once the CGA approves your committee, they should assign you a CGA representative to serve on your examination committee and document your committee was approved.
- In the beginning to middle of your last semester, contact the CGA again to figure out what needs to be done next (paperwork, documentation, etc). Then, schedule a meeting with your committee and CGA representative. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.
- The committee meeting is for the student's benefit. The CGA rep will explain how the exam works (both parts), and what is expected of you. The student then asks each committee member to describe what areas they will be examining them on. The committee might be very specific and provide reading lists and/or lists of topics, or they might be vague. It is the student's responsibility to understand everything they are saying, and to ask for clarification if anything is unclear. TAKE NOTES. This is also the time to schedule the actual exam and defense. Everyone is together with their calendars. Take advantage of this opportunity.
- After the meeting, send an e-mail to the entire committee (including the CGA rep) thanking them for their time. Write out your understanding of what each member said they would examine you on, and ask if that is correct. Make sure you heard what they meant to say and everyone is on the same page. Remind them all of the date and time that was set up for the defense.
- Let Julia know that you had this meeting, and you have scheduled your defense. Keep an eye on the academic calendar for important dates and deadlines. Julia will send you all the forms required for graduation (or you can print them from the grad studies website).
- Apply for graduation through SIS.
- Write and study. Finish writing the thesis and distribute it to the entire committee (not the CGA rep) no later than 2 weeks prior to the defense.
- To study for my oral exam, work from all the info that the committee members give you. Use the primary literature for the more vague topics and soak up as much info as possible. If anything is unclear or you just don't understand something that you are going to be examined on, ASK SOMEONE!
- DAY OF DEFENSE: Don't panic. It's a scary and intimidating experience, but you got this! You have been working on the thesis project for over a year, so you should know it better than anyone. You've been studying for weeks, and all that information is stuck somewhere in your head, and it'll come out when you need it to. They aren't generally quizzing you on facts, they don't want you to regurgitate everything you read. They want...
to know that you can use what you've learned to solve problems or apply it to other situations.

- Don't forget to bring all the paperwork to the defense for signatures. Again, everyone is in the same place at the same time, so get them while you can.