

First year assessment of graduate students

At the first committee meeting for each graduate student, which is to be held before the fall semester of Year 2, the student's committee will be responsible for determining if the student should continue in the Biology Department's graduate program. The following skills will be evaluated by examining the student's performance in courses, teaching assignments, research, and by the student's performance during the committee meeting.

1. Motivation
2. Logic and critical thinking (analysis of data, logical conclusions)
3. Ability to develop a testable hypothesis and design scientific studies.
4. General knowledge (general biology, areas specific to the student's research area, ability to retain information)
5. Ability to communicate

After the meeting, the student will leave the room and each committee member will fill out an assessment form to indicate if they find the student's performance in each of the 5 areas acceptable or unacceptable. These forms must be turned into the Graduate Advising Office after the meeting.

Of the 20 judgments (4 committee members \times 5 areas) for a Ph.D. student or 15 judgments (3 committee members \times 5 areas) for an MS student, 6 unacceptable ratings (counting no more than three unacceptable ratings from any one committee member) constitute a failure. In the case of a failure, the committee will provide a summary letter that describes the concerns of the committee

and measures needed to correct these deficiencies to the student and the Graduate Advisor within one month of the committee meeting.

If the student fails in their first attempt, he or she may request a second assessment meeting to be held within 6 months of the first or choose to leave the program. The second assessment meeting will require the same assessment forms as the first, but the committee may choose to focus on only certain areas.

A Ph.D. student with 6/20 unacceptable ratings (counting no more than three unacceptable ratings from any one committee member) on the 2nd try may, at the discretion of the committee, be allowed to change to a Masters degree or will be required to leave the program. A Masters student with 6/15 unacceptable ratings (counting no more than three unacceptable ratings from any one committee member) on the 2nd try will be required to leave the program. The student may appeal the decision through the Graduate Advisor to the Department Head.