

UTA Biology Department Master of Science Handbook

(Starting 2026 Academic Year)

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Welcome to the Master of Science in Biology Program

Welcome to the Master of Science in Biology program at The University of Texas at Arlington.

Whether you are pursuing the Master of Science Thesis (MST) or Master of Science Non-Thesis (MSNT) option, you are joining a community of scholars committed to advancing biological knowledge, developing scientific expertise, and preparing for careers in research, education, healthcare, industry, government, and other professional fields.

Graduate education is both challenging and rewarding. Success requires intellectual curiosity, initiative, professionalism, and a commitment to lifelong learning. You will work closely with faculty mentors and fellow students, develop advanced knowledge and skills in the biological sciences, and grow as a scientist and professional.

This handbook is intended to help you navigate the program by outlining degree requirements, academic policies, and departmental expectations. It also identifies resources available to support your success throughout your graduate studies. We encourage you to become familiar with the information in this handbook and to consult your faculty advisor or the Graduate Advisor whenever questions arise.

On behalf of the Department of Biology, we wish you every success as you pursue your graduate education at UTA.

- Dr. Clay Clark, *Professor and Chair of the Department of Biology*
- Dr. Melissa Walsh, *Professor of Instruction, Associate Chair of the Department of Biology, MS Faculty Advisor*

Program Overview

The Master of Science (M.S.) in Biology is designed to prepare students to pursue careers in research, science education, industry, and government. Courses are taught by award winning, nationally recognized research and teaching faculty and cover a range of essential topics in contemporary biology. Our Biology Department offers two distinct Master of Science programs: the Master of Science with Thesis option (MST), and the online Master of Science without a thesis, or “Non-Thesis,” option (MSNT- Online).

About This Handbook

The handbook will be updated when and if major changes to the program occur. You are expected to complete the graduation requirements described in the UTA Graduate Catalog and the Biology Graduate Handbook for the year you began your program. If you wish to follow the requirements of a more recent catalog and handbook, you can ask permission from the Graduate Program Faculty Advisor.

If you have questions not answered in this handbook, please email askbiology@uta.edu (prospective students) or contact a graduate advisor with any remaining questions you have about the Master’s degree program in biology. Applicants who have applied should include their UTA student ID # or application number in the email.

General Expectations for All MS Students

Graduate study is fundamentally different from undergraduate education. Students in the Master of Science program are expected to take increasing responsibility for their learning, communicate professionally, and actively engage in their academic and professional development. The policies below apply to all students enrolled in the M.S. in Biology program, regardless of whether they are pursuing the Master of Science Thesis (MST) or Master of Science Non-Thesis (MSNT) option.

Professionalism and Conduct

Graduate students are expected to conduct themselves professionally in all interactions with faculty, staff, fellow students, research collaborators, and members of the public. Students are ambassadors of the Biology Department and The University of Texas at Arlington and are expected to contribute to a respectful, collaborative, and inclusive academic environment.

Students must comply with all applicable University policies, including the UTA Student Code of Conduct, policies regarding academic integrity, discrimination and harassment, responsible conduct of research, laboratory safety, and other applicable University regulations.

Conduct that violates University policy or substantially interferes with the educational, research, or professional mission of the graduate program may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the graduate program, in accordance with University policies and procedures.

Academic Integrity and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence

Graduate students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and scientific

integrity in all coursework, research, and scholarly activities. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with University policies regarding academic misconduct, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, and other forms of academic dishonesty.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools must comply with University policies, instructor expectations, and accepted standards of scholarly and scientific conduct. Unless explicitly permitted, AI-generated work may not be submitted as the student's own work. Students remain responsible for ensuring the accuracy, originality, and integrity of all submitted assignments, research products, and scholarly communications.

Professional Communication

Professional communication is an essential component of graduate education. Students are expected to communicate respectfully and professionally with faculty, staff, fellow students, and research collaborators in person, by email, and through other University communication platforms. Students should respond to requests for information or meetings in a timely manner and are expected to notify instructors, advisors, or supervisors promptly when circumstances may affect their academic progress or participation in program activities.

Constructive dialogue, respectful disagreement, and timely communication are important aspects of a professional scientific environment. Students are encouraged to seek clarification, ask questions, and communicate concerns early so that issues can be addressed before they become significant barriers to success.

Email is the University's official means of communication. Students are responsible for monitoring their UTA email account regularly and responding to University and departmental communications in a timely manner. Microsoft Teams is the department's primary platform for virtual meetings and collaboration. Students are expected to maintain access to their UTA Microsoft Teams account and participate in meetings when requested by faculty or staff.

Students are responsible for keeping their contact information current in MyMav and for remaining informed of University and departmental announcements.

Student Concerns and Grievances

Open and professional communication is an essential part of graduate education. Students are encouraged to discuss questions or concerns directly with the appropriate faculty member whenever possible.

If a concern cannot be resolved informally, students should contact the Graduate Advisor, who can provide guidance, facilitate communication, and help identify appropriate next steps. Faculty advisors are likewise encouraged to communicate concerns regarding a student's academic progress, research performance, or professional conduct to the Graduate Advisor as early as possible so that issues may be addressed before they become barriers to student success.

Students also have access to the Department's formal grievance procedures and other campus resources when appropriate. Information regarding Department grievance procedures can be found in course syllabi and the Department of Biology website.

Academic Standing and Course Repeats

Students are expected to remain in good academic standing as defined by the UTA Graduate School and to make satisfactory progress toward completion of their degree requirements.

Graduate students may repeat courses only as permitted under current University policies, including the University's grade replacement policy. The Biology Department will not approve additional course repeats beyond those permitted by the University.

Students should recognize that repeating coursework does not alter other program requirements or expected timelines for degree completion. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the Graduate Advisor as soon as academic difficulties arise.

Previous Graduate Coursework

Students are required to complete 30 graduate credit hours while enrolled in the Master of Science in Biology program at UTA.

Graduate coursework completed prior to admission to the program, whether at UTA or another institution, does not reduce the total number of credit hours required for the degree. However, with written approval from the Graduate Advisor and when appropriate, a previously completed graduate course may be accepted as satisfying a specific degree requirement if it is determined to be substantially equivalent in content and rigor to the corresponding UTA course.

Approval of an equivalent course waives the specific course requirement only and does not reduce the minimum 30 graduate credit hours required to earn the M.S. degree. Students granted such an equivalency must complete additional approved graduate coursework to satisfy the 30-credit-hour degree requirement.

Students seeking course equivalencies should consult the Graduate Advisor as early as possible after admission.

Responsibility for Knowing University Policies

This handbook is intended to supplement, not replace, the official policies and regulations of The University of Texas at Arlington and the UTA Graduate School. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with applicable University policies, Graduate School regulations, and degree requirements, including those published in the UTA Graduate Catalog and other official University publications.

In the event of a conflict between this handbook and official University policies, the University policies and Graduate Catalog shall govern.

Master of Science Non-Thesis Option (MSNT) Online

The Master of Science in Biology Non-Thesis option is an online, asynchronous Master's degree program. The requirements include a 3-credit capstone course and 27 additional hours of 5000 level lecture courses (see below). Students can be part-time or full-time. Full-time status requires that students enroll in at least nine credit hours each in Fall and Spring semesters. Taking courses in the summer is not required. Students can begin the MSNT in fall, spring, or summer. Students are expected to graduate within 2 years of enrollment, regardless of full or part time status.

The non-thesis option is intended to meet the needs of students looking to advance in their careers, for biology teachers wishing to expand their knowledge or be qualified to teach dual credit, or those seeking additional preparation for professional or health science programs. The MSNT program does not involve laboratory research and is not a research degree. Students interested in research should consider applying to the MST (MS Thesis track) or PhD program. Students who are admitted into the MSNT program cannot switch to the MST or the PhD. Those are different programs with different admissions requirements and applicant evaluation processes.

All MSNT students are required to complete a Capstone course in their final semester. The Capstone course gives students the opportunity to develop skills and materials that will help in preparing for next steps in education or career.

MSNT Required Coursework

- BIOL 5392: Master's Non-Thesis Capstone (taken in the last semester)
- Additional courses needed to meet the minimum required 30 credits (see the current course catalog)

*Subject to written approval by the Graduate Advisor and within the limitations stated in the General Graduate School Regulations, a MST or MSNT student may take up to nine hours of coursework from courses listed under Biology at the 3000 or 4000 levels in support of career goals.

Master of Science Thesis Option (MST)

The Master of Science in Biology Thesis option is a full time, research-focused degree, intended to prepare students for careers in research and industry or for PhD programs. MST students obtain skills such as the collection and analysis of data, evaluation of primary literature, and essential laboratory techniques. MST students have the option to conduct research leading to a thesis in a variety of specializations, including aquatic biology, ecology, genetics, evolutionary biology, genomics, microbiology, and cell biology. Students are matched with a faculty member conducting research in the student's area of interest (the "concentration"). Students will declare their concentration during the application process and, if admitted, be matched with an appropriate lab.

All MST students will complete a Master's thesis under the guidance of their faculty advisor ("Principal Investigator"), and complete 30 credit-hours of advanced biology coursework. The MST degree is not a prerequisite for admission to the PhD program. Students who are interested in a PhD should apply directly to that program. Students cannot switch from the MST to the PhD.

Time Commitment and Expectations for Graduate Research

The Master of Science Thesis (MST) is a full-time, research-intensive graduate program that is completed in two years (four long semesters). While coursework provides the scientific foundation for the degree, research is the primary focus of the program.

Students are expected to devote the equivalent of a full-time professional work schedule to graduate education. This includes coursework, laboratory, field, or computational research; reading and evaluating scientific literature; data analysis; scholarly writing; meetings with their supervising professor and committee; and participation in other research and professional development activities. Those who are working or looking for a more flexible program should apply to the online MSNT program. MST students are only admitted for a fall start. It is not possible to begin the thesis program in the spring or summer.

Graduate research is fundamentally different from undergraduate courses. Rather than following predetermined procedures to obtain known results, graduate research seeks to answer questions for which the outcome is unknown. As a result, experiments may not work as planned, hypotheses may evolve, and projects often require troubleshooting, critical thinking, persistence, and repeated refinement.

Students are expected to take increasing ownership of their research throughout the program. Faculty mentors provide guidance and training, but students are expected to prepare for meetings, read the scientific literature independently, propose ideas, troubleshoot research challenges, maintain accurate research records, incorporate feedback, and communicate regularly with their supervising professor. Developing independence as a scientist is an important learning outcome of the MST program.

Graduate research rarely follows a predictable schedule. Experiments may require work outside of traditional business hours, fieldwork may be seasonally dependent, and research often involves adapting to unexpected results or revising research approaches. Students should anticipate that the time required for research will vary throughout the program.

Because the MST is an intensive research degree, employment outside the University may substantially limit a student's ability to make satisfactory progress toward completion of the degree. Students who anticipate working full-time or who require a flexible schedule should carefully consider whether the Master of Science Non-Thesis (MSNT) program is a better fit for their professional and educational goals.

Students are expected to maintain regular communication with their supervising professor regarding research progress and work schedules. Specific expectations for laboratory, field, or computational research activities will vary among research groups and should be established in consultation with the supervising professor.

Satisfactory Progress

Students in the Master of Science Thesis (MST) program are expected to make steady progress toward completion of all degree requirements and are expected to graduate within the program's two-year timeline. Satisfactory progress is evaluated by the student's Principal Investigator (PI), supervisory committee, and the Graduate Advisor based on the student's overall academic performance, research progress, and professional development.

Indicators of satisfactory progress include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining good academic standing with the UTA Graduate School;
- Successfully completing required coursework and other degree requirements;
- Demonstrating consistent engagement in research activities;
- Making measurable progress toward completion of the approved research project;
- Meeting established program milestones, including the proposal meeting and thesis defense;
- Maintaining regular communication with the PI and supervisory committee;
- Demonstrating professionalism, initiative, and ethical conduct in research and academic activities; and
- Completing the degree within the expected program timeline.

Graduate research is inherently unpredictable, and research progress is not measured solely by the number of completed experiments or the amount of data collected. Supervisory committees recognize that research projects may evolve as new findings emerge and that setbacks, troubleshooting, and refinement of research methods are normal components of the scientific process. Evaluations of progress will therefore consider the student's overall effort, scientific development, responsiveness to feedback, and likelihood of successfully completing the degree within the established timeframe.

Students experiencing academic or research difficulties are encouraged to discuss concerns with their PI as early as possible. When appropriate, the Graduate Advisor may work with the student and supervisory committee to identify strategies for returning the student to satisfactory progress.

Failure to maintain satisfactory progress may result in additional committee meetings, a written remediation plan, changes to the student's degree plan, transition to the Master of Science Non-Thesis (MSNT) option as described in this handbook, or dismissal from the graduate program in accordance with University policies.

MS Thesis Required Coursework

The Master of Science Thesis (MST) degree requires a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours, including required coursework, research credits, and a master's thesis. Students work with their supervising professor and supervisory committee to develop a degree plan that supports their research interests while satisfying University and departmental degree requirements.

- BIOL 5314: Biometry (3 credits)
- BIOL 5340: Bioinformatics (3 credits)
- BIOL 537X: Thesis Research in the chosen concentration (3 credits, may be repeated)
- BIOL 5698: Thesis (6 credits, taken in the last semester)
- Additional courses needed to meet the minimum required 30 credits (see the current course catalog)

Students must also complete additional graduate-level biology coursework to satisfy the minimum 30-credit-hour degree requirement. Course selection should be made in consultation with the supervising professor and supervisory committee and should support the student's research and professional goals.

Subject to written approval by the Graduate Advisor and within the limitations established by the UTA Graduate School, students may apply up to nine credit hours of approved 3000- or 4000-level Biology coursework toward the degree when such coursework supports the student's educational objectives.

Students are expected to enroll primarily in face-to-face courses and research experiences. Enrollment in online course sections requires approval from both the supervising professor and the Graduate Advisor. Students cannot enroll in only online courses in any given semester and cannot take more than 4 online courses total during the degree.

A student in the thesis option program must be enrolled for six hours of thesis (Biology 5698) in the semester in which the final master's examination is held. Once enrolled for thesis, continuous enrollment must be maintained until graduation. An Application for Graduation must be filed electronically on MyMav and the diploma fee paid according to the deadlines in the applicable semester.

Research Credit Enrollment

Research credit hours (BIOL 537X) are intended to reflect active participation in the student's research program and should be taken throughout the degree as appropriate to support the student's research activities. Enrollment in research credits is not based on the number of hours spent in the laboratory each week but on meaningful progress toward the completion of the thesis under the supervision of the Principal Investigator.

Supervising Professor (Principal Investigator) and Supervisory Committee

Each MST student is assigned a supervising professor, also referred to as the Principal Investigator (PI), who serves as the student's primary research mentor. The PI oversees the student's research program, provides scientific and professional mentorship, and guides the student toward successful completion of the Master's degree.

In consultation with the PI, two additional faculty members from the Department of Biology are selected to serve on the student's supervisory committee. The supervisory committee provides guidance regarding coursework and research, evaluates the student's academic and research progress, determines whether the student is making satisfactory progress toward timely degree completion, and conducts the final oral examination for the thesis.

The supervisory committee must be established no later than the end of the student's second semester in the program. If changes to the committee become necessary after it has been established, the Graduate Advisor must be notified no later than one long semester before the anticipated thesis defense.

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator

The PI serves as the student's primary mentor throughout the graduate program and is expected to:

- provide guidance in developing a feasible and scientifically rigorous research project;
- mentor the student in research methods, experimental design, data analysis, scientific writing, and professional development;
- meet with the student regularly to discuss research progress and provide constructive feedback;
- establish clear expectations for laboratory, field, or computational research activities;
- assist the student in selecting appropriate coursework and supervisory committee members;
- determine when the student's thesis is sufficiently developed to be distributed to the supervisory committee for review; and
- support the student's preparation for the thesis defense and timely completion of the degree.

Responsibilities of the Student

Graduate research is a collaborative mentoring relationship that requires active participation from both the student and the PI. Students are expected to:

- take increasing ownership of their research project throughout the program;
- maintain regular communication with the PI regarding research progress, challenges, and timelines;
- prepare for meetings by reviewing relevant literature, analyzing data, and identifying questions or proposed next steps;
- maintain accurate and complete research records;
- seek assistance promptly when research challenges arise rather than allowing problems to persist;
- incorporate feedback from the PI and supervisory committee into subsequent research activities;
- schedule committee meetings and ensure that committee members receive required materials in advance of meetings and the thesis defense; and
- make steady progress toward completion of the thesis within the expected program timeline.

Research rarely proceeds exactly as planned. Students should expect to encounter setbacks, unsuccessful experiments, equipment failures, or the need to modify research approaches. Learning to troubleshoot problems, critically evaluate results, and adapt research plans is an essential part of graduate education. Students are expected to demonstrate initiative, perseverance, and a willingness

to learn from these challenges while seeking guidance from their PI and supervisory committee when appropriate.

Mentoring Relationship

The student and PI share responsibility for maintaining a productive mentoring relationship. Regular communication, mutual respect, timely feedback, and clearly communicated expectations are essential to successful graduate education.

Students should discuss concerns regarding research expectations, mentoring, or laboratory practices directly with their PI whenever possible. Likewise, PIs are encouraged to communicate concerns regarding student performance or progress early so that issues can be addressed before they become barriers to degree completion.

If concerns cannot be resolved informally, either the student or the PI should contact the Graduate Advisor for guidance and assistance.

Committee Meetings and Milestones

The supervisory committee plays an important role in guiding the student's academic and research progress throughout the MST program. Committee meetings provide opportunities to evaluate the feasibility of the research project, monitor progress toward degree completion, provide scientific feedback, and ensure that students remain on track to graduate within the expected two-year timeline.

At a minimum, MST students are expected to complete the following committee milestones.

1. Proposal Meeting (Spring, Year 1)

The proposal meeting must be held no later than the end of the student's second semester in the program. Prior to the meeting, the student should provide committee members with a written proposal or research outline describing the proposed research objectives, relevant background literature, methodology, anticipated timeline, and expected outcomes.

During the meeting, the student will present the proposed research project and receive feedback from the supervisory committee. The committee will evaluate the scientific merit, feasibility, scope, and timeline of the project before approving the student to proceed with the proposed research.

Following the meeting, the student should incorporate the committee's recommendations into the research plan.

2. Progress Meeting (Recommended – Fall, Year 2)

Students are strongly encouraged to schedule a committee meeting during the fall semester of the second year.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- review research progress;

- discuss preliminary results and remaining work;
- identify scientific or logistical challenges;
- receive feedback on data analysis and thesis preparation; and
- evaluate whether the project remains on schedule for completion within the expected program timeline.

Although this meeting is not required, students who hold a progress meeting often identify potential concerns early enough to make adjustments before the final semester.

3. Final Committee Meeting (Required – Spring or Summer, Year 2)

The final committee meeting normally consists of the student's oral thesis defense.

Students who are prepared to complete their research and defend their thesis during the spring semester should schedule the thesis defense in accordance with University and Library deadlines and in consultation with the supervising professor and the committee members.

Students who anticipate completing their thesis during the summer semester must demonstrate sufficient progress to support successful completion by the end of the summer. No later than the last day of classes during the student's fourth long semester, the supervisory committee shall determine whether the student is making satisfactory progress and whether the thesis is reasonably expected to be completed and successfully defended by the end of the immediately following summer semester.

If the committee determines that completion by the end of the summer is achievable, the student may continue in the thesis option and defend the thesis during the summer semester.

If the committee determines that completion of the thesis by the end of the summer is unlikely, the student will complete the requirements for the Master of Science Non-Thesis (MSNT) degree by enrolling in BIOL 5392: Master's Non-Thesis Capstone during the summer semester. The student must enroll in BIOL 5392: Master's Non-Thesis Capstone during the summer semester to satisfy the remaining degree requirements and graduate with the MSNT degree. Additional extensions beyond the summer semester are not normally granted.

Proposal of Research Plans

Each student in the MST program must present a proposal or research outline to the supervisory committee no later than the end of the second semester in the program.

The proposal should describe the scientific question(s) being investigated, summarize relevant background literature, outline the proposed research methods, identify anticipated outcomes, and provide a tentative timeline for completion of the project. The proposal should contain sufficient detail to allow the supervisory committee to evaluate the scientific merit, feasibility, and scope of the proposed research.

Following the proposal presentation, the supervisory committee may recommend revisions to the research plan before approving the student to proceed with the project. Students are expected to incorporate committee feedback into the design and execution of the research.

The proposal meeting is intended to ensure that the research project is scientifically sound, achievable within the expected program timeline, and appropriate for a Master's thesis.

Master's Thesis

The Master's thesis is the culminating scholarly product of the MST program and represents the student's ability to conduct and communicate original biological research. The thesis should present the research objectives, methods, results, interpretation, and conclusions in a clear and scientifically rigorous manner.

A satisfactory thesis is determined by the quality of the completed research and the student's ability to demonstrate independent scientific thinking—not by the number of research credit hours completed or the amount of time spent conducting research.

Students should work closely with their Principal Investigator (PI) throughout the writing process and are encouraged to begin drafting sections of the thesis well before completion of the research. The PI must approve the thesis before it is distributed to the supervisory committee.

Students are responsible for meeting all Graduate School deadlines for graduation, thesis submission, formatting review, and other required milestones. Current deadlines, formatting requirements, and thesis templates are available through the UTA Graduate School and the UTA Libraries.

Students must be enrolled in BIOL 5698 – Thesis during the semester in which the final oral examination is held. Once enrolled in thesis, students must maintain continuous enrollment until all degree requirements have been completed, in accordance with University policy.

Thesis Defense

The thesis defense is the final oral examination for the Master of Science Thesis degree and provides the student with an opportunity to present and defend the completed research before the supervisory committee.

Students must provide a complete draft of the thesis to each member of the supervisory committee at least two weeks before the scheduled defense. The defense will be publicly announced and consists of a presentation by the student followed by questions from the audience and the supervisory committee.

Following the public presentation, the supervisory committee will meet privately with the student to evaluate the quality of the research, the written thesis, the oral presentation, and the student's ability to discuss and defend the work. The supervisory committee will determine whether the student has:

- passed without conditions;
- passed subject to specified revisions or additional requirements;
- failed, with permission to repeat the examination after a period specified by the committee;
- or
- failed, with the recommendation that the student not continue in the program.

Students are responsible for completing all revisions required by the supervisory committee and for submitting the final approved thesis and all required University forms by the applicable Graduate School deadlines.

Resources for Master's Students

Helpful Websites

General Degree Requirements

<https://catalog.uta.edu/academicregulations/degree requirements/graduate/#linkstext>

Graduate School Master's Guidance

<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/gradschool/navigating-your-degree/masters>

UTA Library Thesis and Dissertation Page

<https://libraries.uta.edu/services/thesis-dissertation>

Applying for Graduation

<https://www.uta.edu/administration/registrar/students/graduation/applying>

UTA Graduate School Funding

<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/gradschool/funding/internal>

Financial Support

MSNT and MST students are not eligible for graduate teaching assistantships (GTA) but are potentially eligible for other scholarships and campus work-study opportunities. Students are encouraged to apply for appropriate College of Science, Department of Biology, and University scholarships and should reach out to the UTA Financial Aid Office for questions about aid options.

The following is a list of some of the opportunities that may be available to Master's students and was current at the time this handbook was published. There may be other opportunities and students should visit the official website for UTA scholarships, Mav Scholarship (https://uta.scholarships.ngwebsolutions.com/CMXAdmin/Cmx_Content.aspx?cpId=1682), for a current list of opportunities. Students should also speak with their advisor regarding discipline-specific opportunities.

Note that Department and College awards and fellowships provide funds for the following semester. Master's students should apply in their first year to be eligible.

University Scholarships

- UTA EDGE Center Scholarship (<https://www.uta.edu/hr/edge-center/the-center/scholarship>)
- UTA Graduate School Internal Funding (<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/gradschool/funding/internal>)

College Scholarships

- Dean's Excellence Scholarship
- Alexander Scholarship
- Edward and Dorothy Perez Scholarship

Biology Department Awards and Fellowships

- Graduate Research Achievement Award
- Chad Watkins Memorial Award for Excellence in Graduate Mentorship of Undergraduate Research in Biology
- William F. Pyburn Award (Fellowship) – Award for one full-time graduate student (Master's or Doctoral) pursuing studies of Natural History, especially in the areas of systematics, ecology, or behavior.
- Biology Graduate Student Association- travel and small research grants provided

Department Organizations

- Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA):
<https://mavorgs.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/bgsa>
<https://www.instagram.com/bgsa.uta/>

National Organizations

- Sigma Xi: <https://www.sigmaxi.org>
 - These have typically been limited to a \$1000 maximum, including funds for travel and subsistence and supplies, but not for equipment or salary. The grant proposal includes a brief description of the proposed research and a detailed budget. Three letters of recommendation are also required. There are two deadlines each year for these grants (March 15 and November 15).

Department Information

Biology Graduate Program Staff Advisor – Stephanie Fenton (stephanie.fenton@uta.edu)

The Graduate Program Staff Advisor Supports graduate students from admissions to graduation and is the main point of contact.

Biology Graduate Program Faculty Advisor for the MST and MSNT programs and Associate Chair for Academics – Dr. Melissa Walsh (mjwalsh@uta.edu)

Head of MST/MSNT admissions. Works with the Graduate Program Staff Advisor to ensure that all students are enrolled each semester. Matches MST students with a faculty thesis mentor. Tracks progress of MSNT/MST students.

Biology Department Chair – Dr. Clay Clark: (clay.clark@uta.edu)

Oversees all department operations and supervises all faculty in the Biology Department.

Biology Head Departmental Administrative Services Officer – Steven Nickols
(steven.nickols@uta.edu)

Head accountant, and director of office staff.

Applying to the Master of Science in Biology Program

The following are minimal requirements for entrance into the graduate program in biology. However, satisfying or exceeding these requirements does not guarantee admission to the program. Admission to the program is determined solely by the Biology Graduate Studies Committee and the Graduate School and is based on an evaluation of all pertinent aspects of an applicant's record.

(see also [*The Department of Biology Graduate Catalog* page](#))

1. A bachelor's degree in biology or a bachelor's degree in some other discipline with at least 12 hours of advanced level coursework (junior or senior level courses) in biology.
2. An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or greater on a 4.0 scale, as calculated by the Graduate School. Applicants GPA in the Sciences will also be considered.
3. Evidence of previous research experience may also be considered for the MST program.
4. International students whose native language is not English must provide a score on the Test of Spoken English (TSE) of at least 45, a minimum score of 21 on the Speaking portion of the TOEFL iBT exam, a minimum score of 6.5 on the Speaking portion of the IELTS exam, or a minimum Duolingo score of 100. See the following website for complete details: <https://www.uta.edu/admissions/apply/international-graduate>

How To Apply

First, read the general instructions for applying to the graduate program and download the checklists available on the Office of Graduate Studies webpage: <https://www.uta.edu/admissions/apply/graduate>

See the Biology Department website for additional information about applying and an FAQ about these programs. <https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/science/departments/biology/graduate-programs/masters-program>

Questions?

Email askbiology@uta.edu with any remaining questions you have about the M.S. program in biology. Applicants who have applied should include their UTA student ID # or application number in the email.