

Graduate Affairs Committee

Chair: Appointed by the Biology Chair and confirmed with a majority vote from the committee

Purpose: In conjunction with the Biology Graduate Director, the Graduate Affairs Committee is responsible for the supervision of the MS in Biology degree program. The committee reviews and acts on applications and makes decisions about admissions. It oversees the graduate curriculum and reviews applications for graduate assistantships and fellowships and works with the Graduate Director to award these. In years when the department receives a dedicated budget line for graduate research funds, the committee evaluates reimbursement requests from graduate students for expenses incurred in carrying out research for their theses and makes a decisions about awarding funds.

Committee Description:

Faculty Membership Requirements

- Must be full-time faculty
- Must be tenure track
- Committee should be comprised of 5 members: 3 non-permanent members with Graduate Faculty status plus the Biology Graduate Director (permanent) and the Biology Department Chair (permanent)

Service Limits

- New committee members must serve a 3 year term (staggered)
- Consecutive terms are permitted

Policies:

Admissions: Applicants are admitted to the MS in Biology program by majority vote of the Graduate Affairs Committee. Applicants may be admitted fully, provisionally or after a specified delay at the discretion of the committee

Biology 601 as a prerequisite for other 600-level courses: It is the policy of the Graduate Admissions Committee that students admitted to the MS in Biology program should complete BIOL 601 with a grade of B or better before taking other 600-level courses with the exception of BIOL 605 (Bioethics). In exceptional cases the graduate director can waive this requirement with approval of the course instructor.

Formation of Thesis Committee: Students enrolled under the MS in Biology with thesis option must identify a thesis committee of three faculty members before enrolling in BIOL 696. Members of the thesis committee will include the student's faculty research advisor and two other members of the department who are full-time faculty with Graduate Faculty status. In addition, students may request additional committee members from outside the department of the institution. The Graduate Affairs Committee will review the credentials of and vote to approve any proposed thesis committee member who is not a full-time biology graduate faculty member. These individuals should have a combination of training and expertise which would normally be accepted for admission to graduate faculty status at Winthrop University. Proposed thesis committee members are expected to review the student's thesis proposal and indicate their willingness to serve on the committee by signing the Thesis Committee Formation form. The Graduate Director has responsibility for approving the constitution of the thesis committee and ensuring that the committee meets the department's and university's criteria.

Change of Thesis Committee Members: If unforeseen events require a change in the constitution of a student's thesis committee after the committee has been approved the student should immediately notify the Graduate Director in writing about the circumstances which require a change and the proposed new committee member. The graduate director will meet with the resigning member and the proposed new member to review the circumstances necessitating the change. Change in membership will require all committee members to affirm that they are aware of the change and the direction of the student's thesis research by signing a new Thesis Committee Formation form. *It is expected that such changes will only rarely be necessary.* Any change in committee membership within a month of the time a student intends to file the thesis will require the student and his/her advisor to meet with the graduate admissions committee to explain the circumstances.

Graduate Assistantships: Graduate assistantships are awarded to qualified applicants on a competitive basis by majority vote of the Graduate Admissions Committee. Graduate assistantships are usually awarded for an academic year and a student may retain the assistantship for up to four semesters as long as departmental resources permit and the student meets the following conditions

- Remains in good academic standing
- Makes appropriate progress toward the MS degree
- Receives satisfactory evaluations from supervising instructors and students
- The committee may award a whole assistantship or a portion of one as departmental needs and resources dictate

King Fellowship: The King Graduate Fellowship is awarded on a competitive basis by a majority vote of the Graduate Affairs Committee from among the pool of eligible graduate students who have applied. At the end of the first year a holder of the fellowship who wishes to be considered for a second year of support must write to the committee describing his/her academic and research activities during the first year and plans for the second year. The student's application for a second year of support must be supported by a letter to the committee from his/her thesis research advisor.