



uOttawa

OTTAWA-CARLETON INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGY

GUIDE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS AT

University of Ottawa

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Preface

This guide is meant to answer frequently asked questions about the M.Sc. and Ph.D. Programs within the Ottawa-Carleton Institute of Biology (OCIB, or 'the Institute'), and to give some helpful guidance on graduate studies in general. The OCIB includes two Biology Departments that have chosen to combine their programs at the graduate level only. The physical infrastructure of the OCIB is located on either campus in the form of their respective Departments of Biology.

Key sources for information:

The OCIB web site: <http://www.ocib.ca>

The Biology Graduate Students Association web site: <http://web5.uottawa.ca/bgsa/>

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies web site: <http://www.grad.uottawa.ca>

The uOttawa Department of Biology web site: <http://www.biology.uottawa.ca>

The Carleton University Department of Biology web site: <http://www.carleton.ca/biology>

University of Ottawa campus map: <http://www.uottawa.ca/maps/maincampus.html>

Carleton University campus map: <http://www2.carleton.ca/campus/>

There is a free shuttle bus that links the two campuses. It does not normally run during the summer. The shuttle schedule is here:

http://www.carleton.ca/infocarleton/shuttle_bus.htm

1. Registration and Funding

Students are admitted to the Institute after:

1. They have met the academic requirements listed by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies:
<http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=2001&moncontrol=AfficheExigencesSpecific&Prog=BIOHNA>
2. A professor (or professors) agrees to supervise the applicant's research.
3. Funding at the \$18,500/year has been arranged. The minimum stipend cannot be waived for full time students. There is no minimum stipend for part time students.
4. Final acceptance is granted ONLY by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, but this step is usually automatic unless there is something controversial about the student's application (such as a grade point average (GPA) that is lower than the admission threshold).

The minimum grade point average for applicants to the University of Ottawa side of the Ottawa-Carleton Institute of Biology is 6.0 (B). Higher is better, as students right at the threshold may have more difficulty convincing a supervisor of their potential. Even with this standing, competition for available funding may mean that a B+ student is not admitted. Funding is normally made up from two sources: a Full or Half Teaching Assistantship (TA) (paid for demonstrating undergraduate laboratories; a full TA involves 10 hours of work per week in the Fall and Winter terms) and a Research Assistantship (RA) paid from the Supervisor's Research Grants. Scholarships (either internal or from external sources, like OGS, NSERC, and FQAR) can also help make up a graduate student's minimum stipend, or to exceed it. Scholarship holders do not usually receive an RA, but may hold a full TA. External scholarship holders will normally receive additional scholarships from the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies to cover their tuition. Also, students with high (8.0 (A-) or higher) will normally receive an entrance scholarship from the FGPS, and there are additional incentives to transfer to the Ph.D. quickly. Further scholarships may be awarded later if students complete their studies within 6 semesters (MSc) or 12 semesters (PhD), but these do not count toward annual stipends.

Scholarship information changes periodically; check the FGPS web site for current details: <http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1459>

Teaching assistantships (TAs) are provided under quite specific terms and rules agreed with CUPE.

Graduate studies requires dedication and commitment and is a full-time job. You will be expected to focus hard on your research, teaching assistance duties, and course work. Should you wish to take on part-time work outside your graduate studies, you should discuss this issue with your supervisor. Note also that scholarships typically have hard limits on the number of hours you can spend on activities other than graduate studies.

Refer to the Graduate Calendar for information on registration procedures and deadlines.

2. Advisory Committee

As soon as possible and no later than 4 months after registration, an Advisory Committee must be appointed and have an initial meeting to guide the candidate's research throughout her/his program. You will be expected to meet with you committee at least once a year after this.

The Advisory Committee consists of at least three members, including the candidate's supervisor (and any co-supervisor) and one or two advisors normally chosen in consultation with the student. One advisor will be from the other campus, unless the supervisor determines that there is no appropriate advisor on the other campus. Committee membership will not normally change after the committee is formed. The supervisor and student will consult with the Advisory Committee on course selections.

Committees advise students on how to advance their research goals effectively and the student's progress through time is noted and stored in their file.

It is the student's responsibility to arrange his/her Advisory Committee Meetings.

3. Degree Requirements

3.1. M.Sc. program

The M.Sc. degree will be conferred upon a candidate who has fulfilled the following requirements:

- 1) Completion of the graduate courses specified by the admissions committee and the student's advisory committee: normally 2 half (i.e. one term) courses, but the student's advisory committee may also direct the student to take or to audit additional courses. The passing grade for all required courses is 70% or equivalent and the student is not allowed a supplemental examination. Failure will normally be cause to ask a student to leave the graduate program.
- 2) Normally completion of at least two terms as a full-time student resident at one of the two universities. Programs for part-time students may be arranged.
- 3) Enrollment in the seminar course (**BIO5900**) that involves the presentation of a seminar and regular attendance at the departmental seminars.
- 4) Completion of a thesis (**BIO7999**) incorporating the results of original research carried out under the direct supervision of an approved Faculty member.
- 5) Successful oral defense of the thesis before an examination board of at least three faculty members, normally drawn from both universities.

3.2. Requirements for the Ph.D. program

The Ph.D. degree will be conferred upon a candidate who has fulfilled the following requirements:

- 1) Completion of the graduate courses specified by the admissions and advisory committees: normally NOT LESS than TWO half courses (i.e. 3 credit courses, typically one semester in duration) if the student has a MSc, otherwise 4 half courses. The passing grade for all required courses is 70% and the student is not allowed a supplemental examination. The Institute Committee or the student's advisory committee may also direct the student to take or to audit additional courses. There is no regulation limiting the number of courses a student can take, but it is essential to recognize that the Ph.D. is a research-oriented, not course-oriented, program.
- 2) Scheduling, and passing, of an oral qualifying examination normally within 12 months of entry into the program with the examination normally taking place within 18 months of entry into the program. This examination will cover the candidate's area of research and related topics. *See below (Section 4) for details on how the comprehensive exam normally proceeds and its requirements.*

- 3) Enrollment in the seminar course (**BIO8900**), which involves the presentation of seminars and the regular attendance at the seminars presented by the Department
- 4) A thesis (**BIO9999**) incorporating the results of original research carried out under the direct supervision of an approved Faculty member.
- 5) Normally, the completion of at least nine semesters as a full-time student resident at one of the two universities (or six terms if admitted without an M.Sc.). Under
- 6) Exceptional conditions programs may be arranged for part-time students but the arrangement MUST be acceptable to the thesis supervisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and not involve compromises on research quality or completion of any other requirement for the degree.
- 7) Successful oral defense of the thesis before an examination board of at least five faculty members, with representation from both universities. The defense committee will include the supervisory committee members (the supervisor plus two additional OCIB professors), an “internal external” who is from the OCIB but outside the discipline of the student’s thesis (e.g. a physiology thesis requires that this examiner be from Cell/Molecular or Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics), and including an external examiner from outside the two universities who is an authority on the thesis research area.

3.4. Transfer from M.Sc. to Ph.D.

Outstanding students enrolled in the MSc program may be allowed to transfer to the PhD program without being required to write a master’s thesis provided they meet the following conditions, which are established by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies:

1. Completion of two graduate courses (six credits) with a grade of A- or better in each;
2. Satisfactory progress in the research program;
3. Written recommendation by the supervisor and the advisory committee;
4. Approval by the graduate studies committee;

The transfer must take place within sixteen months of initial registration in the M.Sc.

If a student meets these requirements, the *Comprehensive Examination* must be completed successfully, also within the 16 month period following initial registration. To accomplish this goal requires planning, focus, and accomplishment from the time graduate studies first begin. Students who transfer to the Ph.D. program must still complete 2 half (3 credit) courses IN ADDITION TO the two 3 credit courses completed prior to the transfer to the Ph.D. By the time a student’s Ph.D. is completed, they must have completed 12 credits of course work (four half courses OR 2 full courses, OR two half courses and one full course) in addition to required courses within the program (e.g. seminar, thesis). No exceptions.

3.5. Residency Regulations

M.Sc. - Normally, completion of at least 3 semesters as a full-time student resident at one of the two universities.

There is no FGPS regulation that requires all master's students to complete their program, or at least part of it, full-time. However, a student who is admitted as a full-time student and who registers full-time in the first session must complete 3 sessions full-time. A student who is accepted into the master's as a part-time student can complete the entire program part-time or, if the need arises towards the end for a session of full-time registration to complete the thesis, they are allowed to register full-time.

In 2009, the Department of Biology at University of Ottawa adopted the following guideline regarding part-time studies at the Master's level:

Under special circumstances, the Department of Biology will allow students to complete their graduate studies entirely as part-time students. Permission to do so will require authorization from both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chair of Biology, or their authorized designees. This provision may not be exercised to avoid normal stipend requirements and is intended to accommodate potential students with career or personal obligations that would make full-time study difficult or impossible. Degree requirements are identical to regular full-time study but may be fulfilled over a longer period, subject to FGPS limitations on duration of study.

Ph.D. – The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has a regulation requiring completion of at least 6 semesters as a full-time student at University of Ottawa (Carleton regulations are not identical in this area) or 9 semesters for students who have transferred from the M.Sc. It is NOT possible to complete a Ph.D. entirely as a part-time student.

Students involved in lengthy field work may require a letter from the Director confirming that absence from the campus is essential to their thesis.

Note: Do not let your registration at the University lapse - ever. Always maintain at least part-time registration! If your registration lapses you will be considered to have withdrawn and you will have to re-apply for admission.

3.6. Time Limits for Program Completion

These limits are published in the General Regulations section of the Graduate Calendar. If you go over these limits you will not be able to register until you have obtained an extension. An extension may be granted provided a letter from the supervisor, outlining the reasons for the program delay and plans for completing the thesis and the defense, is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology. This letter and a recommendation from the Associate Chair are reviewed by FGPS. Extensions are rare and, even if granted, will not extend for long. The absolute limit is one year.

Time limits for degree completion are set at the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies level. A candidate for the master's degree must complete all degree requirements

within four years of the date of initial registration in the master's program. A candidate for the Ph.D. program must submit the thesis within six years of initial registration or seven years in the case of a transfer from the M.Sc. However, supervisors and graduate committees, as well as the Department of Biology, may specify shorter time requirements. Programs of study are intended to be completed in a timely way and thesis advisory committees are intended to assist with achieving this goal.

3.7. The Seminar Requirement

A seminar must be presented before the thesis defense. The seminar should be arranged by the student and supervisor well in advance of the thesis defense, and the date, time and venue should be given to the Graduate Administrator so that he/she can prepare the announcement for the whole department. The announcement will be circulated to all faculty and students at least two weeks in advance of the seminar.

4. Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

All students enrolled in the Ph.D. program are required to complete successfully an Oral Qualifying Examination: **BIO9998**. Normally the candidate will take the exam within the first 12 months of registration.

Qualifying examination regulations may be obtained from the Graduate Administrator in the Room 181, ground floor of Gendron in the Biosciences complex but they are repeated here.

At the first meeting of the Advisory Committee the student's research project and Qualifying Exam will be discussed. This discussion is intended to help prepare students for the exam. Based on these discussions, the student prepares a Ph.D. Research Proposal.

4.1. The Research Proposal

There is no one-size-fits-all method for preparing this uniquely important document. Generally speaking, it can be approximately 3,000 words long, must be typewritten and double-spaced, and should include (roughly) the following sections:

- a) Title page which also gives the composition of the Advisory Committee and the date of submission.
- b) An introduction giving the scientific basis for the study, a review of the current literature, and presenting the hypothesis(es) that form the basis for the research.
- c) A statement of the scientific value of this research and the rationale for performing it.
- d) The specific objective(s) of the study and the underlying logic.
- e) The proposed methodology including a statement of how the data will be analyzed.
- f) A carefully considered timetable for successful completion of all research.
- g) Research completed to date (this section is optional).
- h) References.

4.2. Purpose

The comprehensive examination has two main goals:

1. By reference to the thesis proposal, to assess the candidate's ability to produce new knowledge in the chosen topic of research, and
2. To assess the candidate's abilities and preparation both in the research specialty and in broader topics that logically support and provide conceptual perspective for the research proposal. The examination is NOT normally intended to rule on the acceptability of the research project, which is instead determined by the supervisor and student with appropriate support from the supervisory committee.

4.3. Examining Board

The examining board will include no fewer than 5 members who will be full-time faculty or adjunct professors or members of the candidate's Advisory Committee. In addition to the chairperson, the Board will normally comprise the supervisor, the members of the candidate's Thesis Advisory Committee, and 1 other Member of the Institute whose research is outside the candidates field (e.g. a student working in Comparative Physiology could ask that a professor working in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation serve in this role).

4.4. Scheduling

The student and supervisor(s) consult the Thesis Advisory Committee and agree upon a date, time and place suitable to all. The student and supervisor(s) then recruit two additional members of the Institute; one as an examiner and one to chair the exam. At least four weeks before the scheduled date, the student notifies the Graduate Administrator of the agreed upon date, time and place, and of the names of the board members. One copy of the Research Proposal for every board member (usually 5) plus one copy for the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research are submitted to the Graduate Administrator at this time. Last minute submissions of research proposals will not generally be accepted. Advance preparation and planning is essential to protect the integrity of the examination process and to maintain academic standards.

4.5. Format of Examination

- a) The candidate will introduce the proposed research with a brief presentation (15 minutes; longer presentations may be halted before completion) based on the research proposal and focusing on the significance and the logic of the investigation.
- b) The individual examiners will conduct a series of dialogues with the candidate that, taken together, will constitute an organized assessment with equal emphasis on the two main goals of the examination (see Purpose, above).

The examination normally will not normally be longer than 3 hours.

4.6. The chairperson's responsibilities include:

- a) Collecting the student's file from the Departmental office.
- b) Conducting the examination within these guidelines.
- c) Ensuring completion of requirements of the department, the Institute, and FGPS.
- d) Ensuring the thoroughness of the assessment of the candidate according to the Purpose of the examination as set out above.
- d) Providing an appropriate written report of the examination for the candidate's file, using the forms provided.

In the best judgement of the chairperson, these assessments are to be:

- i) Performed in a strictly professional manner.
- ii) Performed at an intellectual level which is appropriate to our Ph.D. program.

The chairperson may also participate as an examiner.

It is within the mandate of the chairperson to:

- i) Recess or postpone and reconvene the examination for purposes of attaining an appropriate level of questioning;
- ii) Intervene in the questioning if needed to maintain the appropriate level of conduct of the examination;
- iii) Intervene in the discussion and assessment by examiners if the vote or consensus is not, in the chairperson's opinion, accurately reflecting the results of the questioning during the examination;
- iv) Deny the privilege of voting or forming consensus to any member of the board who was absent from any part of the examination considered significant by the chairperson;
- v) Recess or postpone and reconvene the examination if conditions under which it must be conducted are inappropriate;
- vi) Report in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies any unusual conditions or actions taken in the conduct of the examination. The Director of Graduate Studies may then consider this report in approving, or withholding approval for, the outcome of the comprehensive examination.

4.6. Performance

A candidate's performance on the qualifying examination will be placed in one of three categories:

- a) Pass with Distinction: the candidate has demonstrated a highly advanced level of understanding of the relevant field of research and has a broad conceptual perspective that would be expected of a professional scientist working in the field.
- b) Pass: the candidate has fulfilled the qualifying requirements of the Ph.D. program, as described under Purpose above, to the satisfaction of the examining committee. The committee may recommend additional coursework or literature research to improve the candidate's knowledge in specific areas relevant to the research proposal.
- c) Pass with conditions: the candidate could meet the examination standard but fulfilling specified additional requirements, that may include completion of a written assignment,

analysis, review, or similar objective or objectives, which will normally be specified by the committee. The examination committee may designate an individual present (including the thesis advisor) in the examination to supervise satisfactory completion of any assigned objective.

c) Fail: the candidate's performance did not meet the required standard and he/she must resign from the Ph.D. program. If the candidate has never had a re-examination (see below), the candidate may request one to be taken within 6 months of the first examination. If no re-examination is requested within 30 days of the first examination or if the re-examination is failed, the candidate must resign from the Ph.D. program.

Under exceptional circumstances the examining committee may specify a Deferred judgement with major conditions; this means that the board has identified important flaws in the candidate's qualifications and will recommend corrective measures. Assignments and their time deadlines will be transmitted to the candidate in writing and must be met before the assessments of the qualifying exam can be completed. Normally, the same examining board will judge the candidate's success in meeting these conditions and in order to make that judgement, may ask for a re-examination within 6 months of the first examination. If the re-examination is failed, the candidate must resign from the Ph.D. program.

5. M.Sc. and Ph.D. Thesis Defenses

Pay careful attention to the section in the Graduate Calendar entitled "Thesis Requirements", especially to the convocation deadlines and the thesis specifications. M.Sc. thesis abstracts are limited to 150 words; Ph.D. abstracts to 350 words. The Institute allows theses to be organized in the form of chapters that represent published or publishable papers; however these chapters should be preceded by an introductory overview and literature review of the topic, and followed by a concluding chapter. An effort should also be made to avoid unnecessary repetition that may result from using the publishable paper format. This means that the thesis should not consist merely of a series of reprints from journal articles that have been stapled together. Instead, it must be edited to a uniform standard. References should be contained in one section at the end of the thesis. Appendices are acceptable.

Six unbound copies of the thesis are required.

Notify the supervisor at least two weeks in advance of the date that you expect to finish writing the last draft of the thesis. At this time the student and supervisor should consult with the advisory committee and agree on a suitable date, time and place for the thesis defense. Allow at least six weeks preparation time (see the University regulations below).

For Ph.D. defenses, a suitable external examiner should be identified early in the preparations for the defense. The external examiner should be contacted informally by the supervisor at this time and asked to participate in the defense. The external examiner is the key person on the defense committee and should be chosen for his/her expertise

and impartiality. It is wise to have another examiner in mind as a replacement should this be necessary. The Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has budgetary constraints on supporting external examiner's travel and accommodation, so it is unlikely that examiners will be flown here from other continents, however impressive they may be.

At least four weeks (for M.Sc. theses), or six weeks (for Ph.D. theses) before the agreed upon defense date the Supervisor must submit a letter to the Graduate Administrator indicating:

1. the name of the student and the thesis title.
2. the proposed date, time and place of the defense.
3. the Advisory Committee members, who have agreed to the above.
4. and for M.Sc. defenses:
5. names of one additional members of the Institute to act as an examiner who has agreed to the defense date and time.

For Ph.D. defenses:

1. The name of the suggested external examiner, including email and physical address, telephone number and fax number. The external examiner should already have been contacted informally and should have agreed to the defense date and time. Inadequate planning around finding an external examiner is a frequent cause of delays for Ph.D. defenses. It's really important to plan this carefully and well in advance of proposed defense dates.
2. The name of a member of the Institute, or a professor outside the Institute with significant expertise, who has agreed to the defense date and time.

The following is a brief guide to examining committee structures:

	M.Sc. defense	Ph.D. defense	Qualifying exam
Supervisor	X	X	X
Committee Member (Carleton)	X	X	X
Committee Member (uOttawa)	X	X	X
Member of the Institute outside the candidate's field			X
Member of the Institute	X	X	
External examiner		X	
Chair	X	X	X

At least four weeks (for M.Sc. theses), or six weeks (for Ph.D. theses), before the agreed defense date the student must submit the list of committee members, the date, time and location of the defense, and 6 copies of the thesis to the Graduate Administrator. The Graduate Administrator will transmit the information concerning the defense and the

thesis copies to each committee member and to FGSR. The defense will be formally announced at least two weeks in advance of the M.Sc. defense, and four weeks in advance of the Ph.D. defense. These times are University regulations, which cannot be waived.

The thesis defense is conducted according to FGPS guidelines and these should be re-read carefully before the defense. At the outset, the Chair will ask the student to withdraw while the members of the examining committee review the reports from all examiners and discuss the order and the nature of the questioning. The student will then be asked to present a brief (15 minute) overview of the major findings of the research. Brevity is the soul of wit: longer presentations may be stopped before completion. The chairman will then instruct the committee to proceed with the examination.

5.1 Accelerate the defense process

Sometimes, there have been significant delays in the time between submitting a thesis and defending it. The following guidelines have been provided by the Dean of Graduate Studies to help students AND their supervisors minimize unnecessary delays. The guidelines were prepared for Ph.D. students in particular, but are relevant to all graduate students.

10 TIPS TO HELP ACCELERATE THE PHD THESIS EVALUATION PROCESS

1. Present a list of the examiners to the FGPS at least one month prior to the submission of the thesis.
2. Verify that the proposed external examiners (at least 2) will be available, should the FGPS choose them.
3. Ensure that the proposed external examiners are not in conflict of interest.
4. Choose external examiners from two different North American institutions.
5. Submit complete CVs and list of publications for each of the proposed external examiners.
6. Ensure that the internal examiners are members of the FGPS and that they accept to read the thesis.
7. Examiners must submit their report within the deadline established by the FGPS.
8. Examiners must write a clear and substantial report.
9. The thesis supervisor must make sure that the thesis is acceptable before allowing it to be submitted.
10. Help the FGPS personnel in finding a time slot to hold the defence.

Things to avoid

1. Contact between the thesis supervisors or the students and the thesis examiners before the end of the evaluation process. If the thesis

supervisor or the student needs to convey a message to the examiners, it must go through the thesis office at the FGPS. All direct contact could be interpreted as attempts to influence the final result of the evaluation, which could bring the FGPS to replace certain examiners.

2. Submit a list of external examiners without first consulting the student for any possible conflict of interest.
3. Propose external examiners who all belong to the same institution.
4. Expect that the evaluation and defence be held within a month after the submission of the thesis. It is only fair that examiners be given reasonable time to read the thesis. If the list of examiners has been approved at the time of the thesis submission, a delay of 8 to 12 weeks is reasonable to have the defence (for Ph.D. theses, less delay is expected for M.Sc. theses, which are usually far shorter).

5.2. Performance

M.Sc. Thesis Defense

The examining committee assesses both the acceptability of the thesis and the defense.

The categories for the thesis are:

- a) accepted as submitted
- b) acceptable after minor corrections and modifications
- c) acceptable after major modifications as outlined on the attached sheet
- d) rejected.

If category c) is indicated, the examining committee or a subcommittee as designated by the Chair must assess the modifications made to the thesis before it can be submitted to FGPS.

The examiners will decide if the thesis should be recommended for a prize at the Faculty level.

Ph.D. Thesis Defense

The examining committee assesses both the acceptability of the thesis and the defense.

The categories for the thesis are:

- a) accepted as submitted
- b) acceptable after minor corrections and modifications
- c) acceptable after major modifications as outlined on the attached sheet
- d) rejected.

If category c) is indicated, the examining committee or a subcommittee as designated by the Chair must assess the modifications made to the thesis before it can be submitted to FGPS.

Remember to have the External Examiner sign the original copy of the thesis acceptance page before he/she leaves the University!

Recommendations for thesis prizes should be made at the time of the defense, as these recommendations require supporting letters from the Chair of the Examining Board and the Member of the Institute (for M.Sc. defenses), or the External Examiner (for Ph.D. defenses).

5.3. Submission of the Final Thesis Copies

The External Examiner (for Ph.D. Theses) must sign the original copy of the thesis acceptance page, so make sure this is done before his/her departure.

Final thesis copies should carefully address all concerns raised orally or in written remarks by examiners. Obtain the required checklists and National Library microfilm forms from the Graduate Administrator so that he/she can sign them. The Graduate Administrator will do a quick check of the thesis copies to ensure that they comply with the FGPS regulations. Once this is complete, the student is to submit the paperwork to FGPS with the thesis copies.

Consult the Academic Schedule section of the Calendar for specific deadlines for submission of the final thesis copies. These deadlines must be met to avoid an additional term of registration in the program, and they also determine the date of the convocation for your graduation.

6.0 Troubleshooting

Most students enjoy a positive and successful research, teaching, and social experience during their graduate studies and find their work in the OCIB valuable in launching their careers. Sometimes, people run into difficulties, which can take many forms and vary in their severity. Because problems, and their solutions, can take many forms, it isn't possible to list them here. Part of the solution to most of the problems students have encountered in the past comes down to something simple: more effective communication, either with your thesis advisor (in the case of problems arising with research), with your academic advisory committee (in the case of problems arising with research if you are not able to solve the problem through your direct thesis advisor or that person is unavailable), or with personal advisors. Silence is often not a helpful way to solve an ongoing problem: issues addressed up front as they arise are less likely to develop into real crises. Get advice. Early.

The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible, in part, to defend the interests of graduate students. His/her door should always be open to graduate students who need help. If, for any reason, you do not wish to discuss a problem with any faculty member directly, then speak with a member of the Biology Graduate Students' Association

executive. That BGSA representative can then speak with the Director in confidence. We are here to help. Use us accordingly.

Conclusion

This guide is meant to answer the most frequently asked questions about the M.Sc. and Ph.D. Programs within the Institute of Biology. It is not the final word on program regulations. Graduate regulations are maintained by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: <http://www.grad.uottawa.ca>.

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