



## **IUP Graduate Handbook**

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### **M.S. in Biology**

Department of Biology

Handbook Updated 2022-2023

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# **M.S. in Biology**

Department of Biology  
975 Oakland Ave  
114 Weyandt Hall

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## Introduction

Welcome to the M.S. in Biology program! Expanding your career opportunities is an inherent part of our graduate program. Many destinations await you in medicine, private industry, government, and higher education. Your M.S. experience may provide a ladder to doctoral studies. Our 19 full-time biology graduate research faculty bring a breadth of scholarly knowledge and practical experience. Deeply committed to educating their students, these professors conduct a wide variety of research and service programs associated with the

## IUP's Civility Statement

As a university of different peoples and perspectives, IUP aspires to promote the growth of all people in their academic, professional the

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## Department of Biology

The BIOL-MS is a two-year program that builds on your core knowledge and allows you to explore advanced topics in your chosen field. A Master's degree can help secure a higher-level job or pursue a PhD. We have two options for completing your degree: a thesis or non-thesis option. For those planning to continue working in research or pursue a PhD, a thesis will be best for you. Here, you will work closely with a faculty research advisor to complete an in-depth and independent research project. Those who are looking into non-research careers may want to consider a non-thesis option. This option combines additional course work with a less intensive research experience. Our program will help you pursue advanced topics in biology, gain hands-on research experience, become an independent scientist, and gain teaching experience.

## Mission Statement and Program Objectives

From biomolecules to biomes, this is the place to study biology. Our department has the academic size and diversity to offer opportunities found at larger research institutions, yet maintain the personal and intimate learning community found at smaller liberal arts colleges.

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## Faculty and Staff

Departmental Secretary  
Ms. Kristina Fulton  
[kfulton@iup.edu](mailto:kfulton@iup.edu)

With 19 graduate research faculty, students have the opportunity to work with a diverse group of



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Office of Social Equity: [www.iup.edu/social-equity/](http://www.iup.edu/social-equity/)  
IUP Campus Library: [www.iup.edu/library/](http://www.iup.edu/library/)



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intended to provide the student with a well-rounde



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## Evaluation of Students

For information regarding School of Graduate Studies and Research policies on grading, view the Graduate Catalog: [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

### Comprehensive/Candidacy Examinations

#### Competency Exam (non-thesis)

Students pursuing a non-thesis option are required to take and pass a competency exam administered by the candidate's supervisory committee (advisor plus two biology faculty). The purpose of this examination is to assure that all graduates have a broad-based knowledge of biology, as well as a mastery of the subject matter pertaining directly or indirectly to their research project. The examination may be written, oral, or both and is not necessarily limited to areas in which the candidate has taken course work.

This examination should be scheduled after completion of 19 credits but before completion of 25 credits. Students will receive written feedback on the exam from their advisor, including recommendations on how to improve if the exam results are not satisfactory. If a student fails this exam, a second exam will be administered which, at the discretion of the committee, can be oral, written, or both. This exam must be taken within a four-month period following the first exam. Failure of the second exam will result in dismissal from the program.

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- 4) Schedule thesis defense

### **Deadlines for degree completion**

For more information, view the Graduate Catalog: [www.iup.edu/gradcatalog](http://www.iup.edu/gradcatalog)

#### **For a May Graduation**

December 15: Master's candidates have filed their RTAF.

March 1: Draft of thesis has been provided to all committee members to review ahead of the defense (Biology departmental deadline).

March 15: Master's candidates have successfully defended thesis (Biology departmental deadline).

April 1: Master's candidates have successfully defended thesis (SGSR deadline).

April 1: Draft copy of thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research ([grad-research@iup.edu](mailto:grad-research@iup.edu)) for review.

April 1: Copies of signed thesis signature pages and necessary forms submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

April 15: Electronic thesis/dissertation submitted to ProQuest.

April 30: Master's candidates have applied for graduation through MyIUP.

#### **For an August Graduation**

May 15: Master's candidates have filed their RTAF.

June 1: Draft of thesis has been provided to all committee members to review ahead of the defense (Biology departmental deadline).

June 15: Master's candidates have successfully defended thesis (Biology departmental deadline).

July 1: Master's candidates have successfully defended thesis (SGSR deadline).

July 1: Draft copy of thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research ([grad-research@iup.edu](mailto:grad-research@iup.edu)) for review.

July 1: Copies of signed thesis signature pages and necessary forms submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

July 15: Electronic thesis submitted to ProQuest.

August 1: Master's candidates have applied for graduation through URSA.

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**For a December Graduation**

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## Evaluation Outcome for Thesis

At completion of the thesis defense, the advisor and committee members will evaluate the defense using a rubric emphasizing the areas of research conduct, thesis quality, presentation quality, responses to questioning, ethic and integrity, and diversity. Students will receive oral and written feedback on the exam from their advisor and committee members, including recommendations on how to improve if the results of the defense are not satisfactory. The defense may be evaluated as pass, pass with revisions, revise and resubmit, or fail. If a student fails in his or her defense, a second defense will be scheduled with the committee after criticisms and deficiencies have been addressed. Failure of the second defense will result in removal from the thesis option. The student will still be eligible to pursue a non-thesis degree. In the case of dissenting committee members, students should first speak with their thesis advisor and then, if needed, seek the advice of the graduate coordinator to help achieve an agreeable solution.

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## University Policies and Procedures

**University policy is the baseline policy.** Programs may have policy that is more stringent than the University baseline policy; however, not less stringent than the University baseline policy. For questions regarding this statement, please contact [Program Coordinator] or the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

### **Academic Calendar**

View the IUP Academic Calendar: [www.iup.edu/news-events/calendar/academic/](http://www.iup.edu/news-events/calendar/academic/)



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## Signature Page

My signature below indicates that I am responsible for reading and understanding the information provided and referenced in this department/program student handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_[please initial] I understand my program coordinator may share this document with the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Submit to Dr. Diep (cdiep@iup.edu) by 12/1/2022.**

**The Department of Biology will keep this signed document on file.**