

**MS Student Thesis Option
Biology MS Graduate Student Program Progress Form**

Highly Advised: Before beginning any work, read through this form and the [Biology Graduate Program Handbook](#)

The thesis advisor and committee members will complete these forms during the course of the graduate student's thesis work. These forms will also be used by the graduate coordinator to track the student's progress. The graduate coordinator's signature in *Part 5: Completion of Thesis Research* section confirms that the student has completed the thesis work. Please address any questions to the Graduate Coordinator.

The following courses are required for the MS Thesis Option. [Please see graduate catalog for course details.](#)

BIO 608 Thesis Proposal (3 credits)

BIO 609 Thesis Research (3 credits)

BIO 610 Thesis and Defense (3 credits)

Part 1: Formation of a thesis committee and enrollment into BIO 608 Thesis Proposal

The thesis committee is formed in consultation with the thesis advisor and the graduate student. The thesis advisor and at least two other committee members must be from the Biology department. The graduate student, thesis committee members, and thesis advisor will meet to review the proposed project. If mutually agreed on, the thesis advisor and thesis committee members will sign and date the form below. The thesis advisor should then send a copy of this form to the graduate coordinator so the graduate student can be enrolled in BIO 608.

Signatures designate successful formation of the committee

Thesis advisor _____ Date _____

Committee member _____ Date _____

Committee member _____ Date _____

Committee member _____ Date _____

Attach any deficiencies/prerequisites to full matriculation.

Notes:

Part 2: Approval of BIO 608 Thesis Proposal and enrollment into BIO 609 Thesis Research

Approval of the thesis proposal is required for the student to complete BIO 608. The graduate student is expected to write the proposal and submit the proposal to the thesis advisor and committee to receive feedback. Then, the graduate student will present their proposal to the thesis advisor and committee. For more details on requirements of the thesis proposal, see the [Biology Graduate Program Handbook](#). The thesis advisor and thesis committee members will sign and date the form below to signify approval of the thesis proposal. The thesis advisor will send a copy of this form to the graduate coordinator so the graduate student can be enrolled in BIO 609.

Signatures designate successful completion of thesis proposal

Thesis Advisor _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Notes:

Part 3: BIO 609 Thesis Research progress and enrollment into BIO 610

At the end of BIO 609 Thesis Research, the graduate student should show sufficient research progress to prepare writing the thesis. It is recommended that the graduate student, thesis advisor and thesis committee meet to discuss the research progress prior to the start of BIO 610. The thesis advisor and thesis committee will sign and date the form below to signify approval of the thesis research to prepare writing the thesis. The thesis advisor should then send a copy of this form to the graduate coordinator so the graduate student can be enrolled in BIO 610.

Signatures designate significant thesis research progress to prepare the thesis.

Thesis Advisor _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Committee Member _____ Date _____

Notes:

Part 4: BIO 610 Thesis, Thesis Presentation and Thesis Defense Information

Thesis

The culmination of thesis research will be indicated by production of a written thesis, reviewed by the thesis advisor and committee, and a successful public oral thesis presentation and defense of the research. For more details on requirements of the thesis see the [Biology Graduate Student Program Handbook](#).

Prior to the Thesis Presentation and Defense

Early Semester

- Student should apply for graduation through the “Apply for Graduation link on myWCU”.
- Read through the Graduate School’s instructions on [formatting the Masters thesis](#):

1-2 weeks before the Thesis presentation and defense

- A thesis copy, already reviewed by the thesis advisor, should be given to each committee member at least one week in advance of the thesis presentation and defense.
- Each member of the committee should read the thesis and then expected to bring written comments on the manuscript to the presentation and defense and may use the manuscript as a basis for questions related to it.
- Coordinate the time/date/room of the thesis presentation and defense. Expected members at the thesis presentation and defense include:
 - The graduate student
 - The thesis advisor
 - All members of the thesis committee
 - The graduate coordinator or a designee of the graduate coordinator
- Advertise the time/date/room of the thesis presentation and defense to the Department of Biology faculty/staff and any other interested persons at least a week before the thesis presentation and defense.

Day of Presentation and Defense

- The thesis advisor will bring hard copies of the [MS Thesis Student Assessment by Faculty](#) to the thesis defense and follow the directions indicated on the assessment forms.

Thesis Presentation and Defense

- Thesis presentation should be around 50 minutes. The thesis presentation is public and questions from the audience should be encouraged.
- At the conclusion of the thesis presentation, the thesis defense follows. The thesis defense should only include the graduate student, the thesis advisor, members of the thesis committee and graduate coordinator or designee of the graduate coordinator. The thesis defense will serve to examine the graduate student on the research or on areas of biology supportive of the thesis topic.
- At the conclusion of the defense, the student will be asked to leave the room so the Committee members can discuss their views of the written thesis, thesis presentation and oral defense. See the [Biology Graduate Program Handbook](#) for details on outcomes of thesis defense.
- The graduate student will then be invited back to discuss the outcome with the committee.

At approval of thesis

- Complete the section below on this form. The thesis advisor should maintain either a hard or electronic copy of this document.
- Send the signed [MS Thesis Student Assessment by Faculty](#) to the graduate coordinator. Remember to also complete the electronic assessment (link provided in the MS Thesis Student Assessment form).
- Thesis advisor and Committee Members must sign the [Masters Thesis Approval Page](#)
- The thesis advisor sends the following to the graduate coordinator:
 - The final copy of the thesis with the signed Masters Thesis Approval Page
 - The completed and signed Graduate Student MS progress form (*this form)
 - The signed [MS Thesis Student Assessment by Faculty](#). Remember to also complete the electronic assessment (link provided in the MS Thesis Student Assessment form).
- Graduate student will need to follow the most current guidelines in terms of submitting the final thesis to the WCU Graduate School.

Part 5: Completion of Thesis Research (BIO 610)

Graduate Student _____
Defense Date _____

The graduate student has successfully defended a thesis to the Committee *entitled*:

Committee members in attendance:

Signature signifies completion of thesis defense:

Thesis Advisor _____ Date _____

Graduate Coordinator _____ Date _____

The defense normally results in one of the following outcomes:

1. If only minor changes are suggested to improve the thesis, the Committee may decide to leave the responsibility for making the changes with the Advisor. When satisfied, the Advisor signs the thesis, and forwards to the Committee members for their signatures.
2. If any Committee member request major changes, then the changes must be addressed in consultation with the Advisor and Committee. Signatures are then secured as before.
3. If a majority of the Committee feels that either the thesis is inadequate, or that the student showed a consistent lack of understanding of questions asked in the defense, recommendations for more research, courses or readings may be made by the Committee.

Attach any outcomes of the defense, including specific requirements which must be met the students, and indicating a probably date of completion of the thesis.