

UNM DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

Master's Degree en route to Ph.D.

A Biology Ph.D. student may earn a M.S. Plan II (without a thesis) degree when sitting for their comprehensive exam with permission from the department and the Committee on Studies. Both the comprehensive exam (comps) and the M.S. degree will be evaluated as separate tasks; however, only one oral meeting will be required. Students will not have to defend publicly the M.S. Plan II; however, they will need to satisfy the committee's expectation of a Master student. Additionally, the student will need to pass their PhD comp exam.

A student must take the M.S. degree exam prior to or at the same time they are taking their comps. A student who has passed their comps is ineligible.

According to Graduate Studies, students must complete the requirements of a Master's degree to take advantage of this option. It will be the responsibility of the student to ensure that all requirements are met at the time of the Ph.D. comprehensive exam. The UNM catalog entry is located [here](#), which also includes the general requirements for the Master's degree. In addition to these requirements, students must submit an Intent to Graduate Form, a Program of Studies (POS), Committee on Studies (three approved members), completed the tool skills (one set of two), Biology core (three of the four) (located on the Biology Graduate Program webpage) prior to the end of the semester *before* the comp exam. Example: if a student will be taking their comp exam in March (Spring semester), they must submit this form before the last day of the Fall semester.

Checklist:

- **Committee on Studies support**
 - ✓ Committee on Studies form on file;
- **Intent to Graduate form**
 - ✓ Submit the semester before the exams;
- **Program of Studies***
 - ✓ Must be submitted the semester *before* taking the exam (Fall: July 1; Spring: Oct 1; Summer: March 1). Listing the 30 required hours with no more than 50% of the course work with one instructor;
- **Tool Skills**
 - ✓ At least one set of the two skills completed. If all are completed, may use the Ph.D. form; otherwise use the M.S. form;
- **Core Classes**
 - ✓ Three of the four courses need to be completed; may use the completed Ph.D. form if already submitted and approved;
- **Announcement/Report of Exam***
 - ✓ Must submit one for the M.S. Plan II and one for the Ph.D. comp exam.

Most forms are available on the Biology Graduate Student forms page [here](#), however the forms marked with a * are located [here](#).

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[From the online 2023-2024 UNM Catalog in the Graduate Program "Master's en route to Ph.D." Section.](#)

Master's en route to Ph.D.

Students admitted directly to a Ph.D. without a master's degree may earn a master's degree en route to the Ph.D. (same major/subject code) by seeking approval from the doctoral program. The student must then follow the master's degree requirements as outlined in the Master's Degree: General Requirements section of this page. With prior approval by the program faculty and Graduate Studies, a doctoral comprehensive examination may serve as the master's examination for students pursuing a master's en route to the Ph.D. (same subject code). With prior approval by the program faculty and Graduate Studies, a doctoral qualifying examination may serve as the master's examination provided that the committee composition fulfills the requirements for the master's examination.

Master's Degree: General Requirements

To meet general requirements for a master's degree a student must:

1. Complete the course work requirements of a Plan I, II, or III program within the identified deadline dates (described below);
2. Fulfill any additional department or graduate unit requirements (e.g., foreign language or skill requirement, practicum, etc.);
3. Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher;
4. Have a Program of Studies approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies;
5. Complete at least 50% of required course work after admission to the graduate program, unless further limited by the graduate program;
6. No more than 6 credit hours of course work in which a grade of C (2.0), C+ (2.33) or CR (grading option selected by student) was earned may be credited toward a graduate degree. Courses offered only on a CR/NC basis and required by the graduate program are excluded from this limitation.
7. Pass the Master's Examination and/or Final Examination for Thesis except for the Plan III program, which is course work only;
8. Meet the time limit for completion of degree requirements.

Requirements specific to individual degree programs are described in the appropriate sections of this Catalog.