

## 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.

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), 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 Form**
  - ✓ Committee on Studies form on file;
- **Intent to Graduate form**
  - ✓ Submit by the last day of the semester before comps;
- **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; three core courses, at least 18 credit hours of BIOL courses
- **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 2024-2025 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 II program within the identified deadline dates (described below);
2. Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher;
3. Have a Program of Studies approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies;
4. Complete at least 50% of required course work after admission to the graduate program, unless further limited by the graduate program;
5. 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.
6. Pass the PhD Comprehensive Exams
7. Meet the time limit for completion of degree requirements.

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