

# OEB Fifth-Year Master's Program

The Organismic and Evolutionary Biology Graduate Program offers an accelerated, 5th Year Masters Program to BS graduates from UMass or any other of the Five Colleges. The program is designed to augment the research and training of academically strong students in preparation for the workplace or additional professional studies.

## Eligibility

The program is open to UMass or Five College undergraduates with majors in the life sciences and a minimum grade point average of 3.0. Applicants should have well-established research projects in the lab of an OEB faculty member, which they intend to develop into a Master's degree.

Interested students should meet with their academic and research advisors to discuss this option (ideally before the end of their junior year). Admission will require the consent of the research advisor.

## Application process

Students must apply for the Fifth-Year Master's Program through the [Graduate School](#). The standard Graduate School application must be completed by December 1, and must include two letters of recommendation. One of the letters must be from the research advisor with whom the student intends to work. OEB does not require GREs for admission to this program.

## Financial support

Master's students accepted into the Program are responsible for tuition and other costs and are not guaranteed funding. Any financial support for the research project is to be arranged between the student and research advisor.

## Program Requirements

### Graduate School Requirements

A minimum of 30 credits is required for completion of a Master's Degree. Students should refer to the Graduate School Bulletin for additional information about general requirements. Graduate level courses used to fulfill the requirements for a B.S. degree cannot be used for the M.S. degree.

### Program Specific Requirements

1. "Core" courses - 15 credits
  - Up to 6 may be transferred from undergraduate studies (provided they did not count toward a B.S. degree).
  - Up to 6 may be independent study.
  - Course work may be tailored to each student's training needs, but ideally should cover the three core OEB foci - Evolution, Ecology, and Quantitative skills.
  
3. Journal Club - 1 credit (the OEB proseminar satisfies this requirement)
  
4. OEB Seminar - 2 credits (fall and spring semester; 1 credit each).
  
5. Master's Thesis - 12 credits (typically 6 fall + 6 spring).
  
6. M.S. Committee - Selection of a thesis/exam committee should occur at the beginning of the fall semester. The committee will consist of the research advisor as chair, and two additional members of the OEB faculty. One member will be from outside the research advisor's home department. The student should aim to assemble a broad committee that can assist and guide the student in their subject area, including relevant coursework, and to ensure that the thesis topic is a good fit for the student.
  
7. Thesis - M.S. degree students will complete a research project and write an M.S. thesis document in accordance with the format set by the Graduate School. The thesis will be defended in front of the M.S. committee after they have read and tentatively approved the thesis. An outline of the thesis is to be presented to the Thesis Committee at least four months prior to the intended date of the thesis defense. Students are encouraged to present their M.S. thesis research to the OEB community ahead of their defense.
  
8. Students need to attend at least one OPD event before graduating. Click here for a list of OPD events and workshops.

## Duration

Students are expected to complete the M.S. degree by the end of the summer following the academic year.