

Requirements for Completing a Senior Thesis

After approval is given by the department for you to enroll in BIOL 701, you are encouraged to work closely with your committee in the further development of your research. You will be required to complete four steps before receiving grades for your thesis work. (See "[Deadlines](#)" page for dates):

1. *At the start of the final thesis semester have a meeting with your thesis committee.* At this meeting discuss the nature of the final written thesis, so all committee members have shared expectations of that final product. Also discuss how your project fits into previous work in your lab. Science is inherently collaborative while the thesis is an individual project. So it is important that the committee members understand what is your work compared to work that has already been done in the lab.
2. *Write the results of your study as a final thesis.* The final paper most likely should be written in the format of the journal to which the work would be most appropriately submitted. You and your advisor will decide on a format, but it will generally follow the form of a published paper on that topic. A copy of your thesis must be submitted to each of your committee members no later than three days prior to the first thesis presentation. Deadlines for submission of earlier drafts to committee members for comment should be worked out with your advisor. Your committee will read your thesis prior to your presentation and prepare questions/comments accordingly. Theses from previous years are in the display case across from MBH 342. You are encouraged to look through them to get an idea of what constitutes a written thesis. The Biology coordinator can loan you the key.
3. *During the final two weeks of classes in the semester you will make a public presentation of your results.* These presentations normally take place at 12:30 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. You will have 20-30 minutes to present your results and to answer questions from the audience concerning your research. See [Deadlines](#) page for when you must do this.
4. *Following the public presentation, you must defend your research before your Committee.* Your defense need not occur immediately after your public presentation, but in planning your defense, be sure to give yourself adequate time after your defense to make necessary changes to the final version of your thesis. During your defense you will be asked questions primarily about your research and other biological topics that relate to the theme of your work. However, faculty are free to ask any questions they want, and you are encouraged to talk to your Committee about your defense well in advance. The defense usually takes about an hour, but schedule 1.5 hours to make sure there is enough time.
5. *Finally, you must submit the final version of your thesis,* revised according to your committee's comments on the submitted version, your public presentation, and your defense, to each member of your committee for final approval by the Friday of the 1st week of final exams (for Febs, by the last day of Winter Term).

6. *Once you have received final approval from your committee turn in a final version to the Biology Coordinator. [Follow these instructions](#).* This must be done no later than noon on the last day of exams.

The final grade for your senior thesis is decided by your committee based on your effort and progress throughout the term, your public presentation, your defense, your final paper, your adherence to all specified deadlines, and any other criteria that they have established.