

# Guide to Matriculation through Advancement to Candidacy in the Graduate Group in Ecology (GGE)

## A Glossary of Terms:

- Course Entrance Requirement – courses that the program requires prior to admission.  
*Note: completion of entrance requirements is not required prior to applying for admission.*
- Program Requirements – courses that are taken to satisfy degree requirements in Ecology at UC Davis.

## Step 1: Course entrance requirement review

- A review of course entrance requirements is conducted during the processing of an application for admission. The review is conducted by GGE program staff. Notification of missing entrance requirements takes place after admission and prior to orientation in the fall. Notification will be sent directly to the entering student the summer prior to matriculation in the form of an e-mailed letter. The students' major professor will be copied. The letter will only address course entrance requirements that have not been completed and are noted as a deficiency.
- Students may request to have previously taken courses considered to cover entrance deficiencies any time prior to matriculation, and no later than the fall deadline mentioned below. Students should submit a course description (with URL) or a syllabus. It is the students' responsibility to request reconsideration of entrance deficiencies if they feel that they have fulfilled a requirement with previously taken course work.
- Students may request to fulfill remaining entrance deficiencies with external course work (e.g., taking course work at a community college or a pre-approved on-line course). It is the student's responsibility to notify the GGE program staff, via e-mail prior to enrollment, to ensure that the course meets GGE requirements for entrance deficiency fulfillment.
- Authority to approve proposed courses to satisfy entrance deficiencies rests with the GGE Chair. In order to assure consistency and timeliness of response, these requests will be accepted through the close of business on the last business day in October each fall term. **If a student does not submit a request by the annual deadline, the student will be required to complete the default required course. The request to count other coursework should include a plan and timeline for course completion, and must be approved prior to meeting with the students' guidance committee.**

- All entrance deficiencies must be taken for a letter grade when a letter grade is offered (effective for fall 2009 students).

### Step 2: Submitting the guidance committee (GC) Form

- The GC form is the curriculum plan for students. It identifies proposed required course work to fulfill graduate group program requirements as well as topic areas required for individual students' program of study. Defining topic areas, and the course work that support topic areas chosen by students, are under the jurisdiction of the GC. However, the GC form must be approved by the GGE Chair (see Step 3).
- A request to satisfy entrance deficiencies, evolution or field course program requirement with previously taken or external courses will be reviewed by the GGE Chair. The GC does not have the authority to approve substitutions for program requirements. The student will be notified as soon as a decision has been made via e-mail, in as timely a manner as possible. If a previously taken course is not approved for Evolution, EVE 100 will be required. For the field course, an appropriate alternative will be required. A list of approved alternatives is included on the GC form.

### Step 3: Review and acceptance of the guidance committee form

- The authority to approve the GC form course requirements rests with the GGE Chair. GC forms are initially reviewed by the GGE program staff to clear any potential issues.
- Each GC form is reviewed by the GGE Chair, to assure compliance with requirements and policies of the GGE. This review entails the following:
  - The three topic areas identified (for PhD students) represent distinct focal areas (e.g., plant ecology, forest ecology, and tree biology would not be approved).
  - That each focal area is supported by two courses. Courses must be either upper division undergraduate or graduate level. Undergraduate, lower division level courses are not appropriate. Topic areas may be covered by courses taken at other institutions. The preference is for students to take lecture or field courses over seminar style classes to demonstrate depth in a topic area),
  - The proposed courses are likely to be offered to ensure timely completion of coursework requirements.
- Each student will be notified via e-mail when the GC form has been approved by the GGE Chair. Approved GC forms are kept in the student's GGE file.
- Once the GC form is approved by the GGE Chair, this plan represents a minimum course work requirement unless changes are pre-approved.

#### Step 4: Revisions to the GC form

- Students are allowed to change the GC form at any time during their progress toward advancement to candidacy.
- Although additional courses may be taken without further approval, it is the students' responsibility to make any changes as soon as it becomes evident that changes to the GC form are necessary. Changing the GC form after an unplanned course has been taken does not guarantee that the course will be approved by the GC or the GGE Chair to fulfill GC requirements. Courses listed on the GC form must be taken for a letter grade, when a letter grade option is available. Exploratory courses not directly related to the degree, and not required by the GC form, may be taken pass no pass. Graduate Council regulations will be followed for this option, and this process requires the approval of the GGE Chair and the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- To change the GC form the student should obtain their original GC form from the GGE program staff. Changes can be made on the original form, then initialed and dated by the GC.
- Resubmit the GC form to the GGE program staff after the GC has approved the changes. The changes will then be reviewed by the GGE Chair. GGE program staff will notify the student when the changes are approved by the GGE Chair.

#### Step 5: Coursework completion and Qualifying Exam (QE) audit

- MS students may advance to candidacy when at least half (18 units) of the 36 required units have been completed at UC Davis. When the MS student is ready to Advance to Candidacy, the student should meet with the GGE program staff to determine if required coursework has been documented.
- When the PhD student is ready to schedule the QE, the student should meet with the GGE graduate program staff to determine if required coursework has been completed, and to obtain the GGE QE petition. Students do not have to wait to complete this step to schedule the date of the exam. However, all courses must be completed prior to the exam taking place. It is strongly advised that students complete this review well in advance of their intended exam target date so that any unforeseen issues are identified and resolved early.