

# Departmental Requirements and Procedures for Graduate Degrees in Physiology and Neurobiology

## PREFACE

The Department of Physiology and Neurobiology (PNB) offers Ph.D., Plan A (Thesis) and Plan B (Coursework) M.S. degrees with research in molecular, cellular, and systems level physiology and neurobiology. Graduate students work with their faculty advisors in discovery and have considerable latitude in designing their plans of study and benefit from a broad curriculum encompassing PNB and other departments.

This handbook provides a brief overview of the PNB graduate program, policies, and procedures. Additional details and information regarding the graduate school policies and procedures can be found in the Graduate Catalog ([catalog.uconn.edu/graduate](http://catalog.uconn.edu/graduate)). Students can also consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Affairs Committee with any questions or regarding any specific issues they encounter. Graduate students are employed under the conditions specified in the Graduate Employee contract (<https://www.uconngradunion.org/know-your-rights.html>).

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL PNB GRADUATE STUDENTS

### Major Advisor:

Every graduate student must have a major advisor (or, in certain circumstances, two co-advisors upon approval from the Graduate Affairs Committee) that is responsible for guiding the student through the program and overseeing the student's research project. Incoming Ph.D. students may have a temporary advisor, such as the Director of Graduate Studies, while they are in the process of identifying a permanent lab during laboratory rotations. In this case, once the student has identified a permanent laboratory home and will be under the guidance of that major advisor, the Change of Graduate Major Advisor form (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2017/08/Change-of-Major-Advisor.pdf>) should be completed and submitted to [degreeaudit@uconn.edu](mailto:degreeaudit@uconn.edu), and this change in advisor also reported to the PNB office. MS students are expected to be admitted to a specific laboratory under the guidance of that major advisor.

### Advisory Committee and Committee Meetings:

1. A student's Advisory Committee helps oversee their progress through the program, gives advice on research plans and assessment of research and programmatic progress, reviews and approves the student's Plan of Study, administers the General Examination, approves

the Dissertation Proposal and the Dissertation, and determines the outcome of the oral dissertation defense.

2. The Advisory Committee has latitude to make exceptions to some requirements as appropriate for individual students.
3. In the first year, every student selects an Advisory Committee in consultation with the major advisor. The Advisory Committee is initially made up of at least three faculty members from the graduate faculty (the student's major advisor from PNB and two or more associate advisors).
4. The first advisory committee meeting should happen before the end of the second semester and, at minimum, annually after that, though it is recommended to have advisory committee meetings twice per year. Each advisory committee meeting and its outcome should be documented on the PNB Advisory Committee Meeting form (<https://pnb.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3195/2018/09/COMMITTEE-MEETING-FORM.pdf>) that is to be submitted to the PNB office. In these advisory committee meetings, the student should present research progress and describe the next steps and future goals for the dissertation. The committee should give the student a clear assessment of past progress and future plans, which may include recommendations for additional experiments and (or) analyses.
5. The student must have at least one advisory committee meeting each year in order to secure financial support for the next year. This will be verified each spring before issuing support letters for Fall semester.
6. PhD students should add two additional members to create a five-member committee prior to the General Examination. At least three of the five members should be from PNB. The 5-member committee will conduct the General Examination as well as the Dissertation defense.
7. Assessment of whether the body of research is adequate for completion of the degree rests with the advisory committee. Students should consult with their advisory committee regarding the timeline for completion of their research. Note that prospective post-graduation employment start dates will not alter or truncate the scope of the research plan approved by the student's advisory committee.

#### First Year and Annual Performance Review

1. The Graduate Affairs committee will conduct a first-year review of all PNB graduate students at the end of their first year in the PNB Graduate Program.
2. The Graduate Affairs Committee will evaluate the student's performances in research, teaching and course work and will make a final recommendation to the Director of Graduate Studies.

3. The advisory committee (or major advisor) should submit an evaluation of the student's performance in research to the Graduate Affairs Committee at the end of their second semester.
4. The student's performance as a teaching assistant will be assessed by the course supervisor.
5. The outcome of the first-year review is the following: 1) Pass, 2) Probation, or 3) Dismissal. If a student is determined to fall into either of the last two categories, the Director of Graduate Studies will meet with the student to provide review feedback, recommend steps for a course correction, recommend probationary status for the following semester, or outline the dismissal procedure.
6. After the first year, the student's advisory committee will conduct an annual review of student progress in a format similar to the first year review regarding all phases of the student's graduate performance.

### Teaching Requirement

While not required, it is strongly recommended that students complete at least one semester of teaching as a TA.

### Credit Load

1. Graduate Students should generally take 6-9 credits/semester. The Graduate School requires a minimum of 6 credits/semester if the student is on a graduate assistantship to be eligible for the tuition waiver and other benefits and to be considered a full-time student. Students that are not on an assistantship need to enroll in nine or more credits to be considered full time students.
2. PhD students should aim to complete 30 credits, including research credits, by the end of their second year.

## ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Dismissal Procedures

1. The Termination of Status and Academic Dismissal procedures are outlined in the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalog.uconn.edu/graduate/academic-regulations/termination-status-academic-dismissal/>).

### Changing Labs/Major Advisors

1. Prior to changing major advisors, students must receive approval from the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Advisory Committee.

2. Once the student has changed labs, the Change of Graduate Major Advisor form (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2017/08/Change-of-Major-Advisor.pdf>) should be completed and submitted to the Registrar.
3. The student must alert the PNB office of the change in labs.
4. Students enrolled in the PNB program can join laboratories outside of PNB only in exceptional cases when approved by the Graduate Affairs Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. The laboratory outside of PNB should assume responsibility for the financial support for the student, as students that join laboratories outside PNB will not be guaranteed a graduate assistantship from PNB.
5. If a professor resigns as a student's major advisor, the student, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies or Department Chair, has 30 business days to identify a new major advisor.

#### Switching from PhD to MS

1. Students that wish to convert from the PhD track to the MS track should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies will contact the Registrar to initiate the change of track. The student must specify whether they are switching to a Plan A or Plan B MS.
2. The student should also inform the department office of the change in track.

#### Switching from MS to PhD

1. Students that wish to convert from the MS track to the PhD track must seek approval from the Graduate Affairs Committee.
2. Students wishing to change track must have completed at least two semesters in the program.
3. The Graduate Affairs Committee will review the recommendation of the advisory committee that the student be converted to the PhD track. If the recommendation is accepted, the Graduate Affairs Committee will conduct an interview of the student similar to that for a student that has applied directly to the PhD program.
4. The Graduate Affairs Committee will then either accept or deny the request for a change of track. Upon approval of the Graduate Affairs Committee, the student must reapply to the PhD program via the online application system.

#### TA/RA Distribution Policy

1. A student's financial support, as available, is decided on a semester-by-semester basis and is decided by your major advisor in conjunction with the department.
2. The amount of financial support is the same regardless of whether the student is an RA or a TA.

## Dual Degree Policy

Students enrolled in the PNB graduate program are not permitted to be enrolled in any other degree programs. They may not enroll in courses that do not specifically contribute to their PNB degree without permission from their advisor and advisory committee.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Graduate students will be financially supported as available resources allow. Financial support is assigned on a semester-by-semester basis by the major advisor for the academic year for domestic students and on an academic year basis for international students.

1. Teaching Assistantship
  - a. The student will commit up to 20 hrs/week to a teaching assistantship and will devote their additional time to their dissertation research.
2. Research Assistantship
  - a. The student will commit 20 hrs/week for sponsor-related research activity and the remaining time to their dissertation research.
3. The [GEU-UAW Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) has further information on work load expectations.
4. Tuition is waived for students on a graduate assistantship. However, there are University fees that the student is expected to cover. Information on fees can be found here: <https://bursar.uconn.edu/tuition-fees/graduate/2024-2025/>
5. Summer Support
  - a. Summer support will be provided by the student's major advisor. For most students, the support will come from their advisor's research grant.
  - b. During the end of the fiscal year (June of each calendar year) there may be a lag in pay due to the transition between the end of one fiscal year and the start of the next. Please prepare in advance.**
6. Additional Employment
  - a. In accordance with [the Graduate School](#), "Graduate Assistants seeking on-campus employment or wishing to hold an internship in addition to a full-time (20 hour) GA appointment during the semester must complete the online Supplemental Employment Approval form (<https://grad.uconn.edu/forms/>), which requires their advisor's approval and is submitted to The Graduate School for final approval. International students on UConn-sponsored visas are not able to work above 20

hours per week during the semester.”

7. Summer Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship

- a. PhD students in their final year are encouraged to apply for a [one-time \\$2,000 summer fellowship](#) through the Graduate School that is intended to aid in the completion of the dissertation.

8. Graduate School Conference Participation Award

- a. The Graduate School will provide one-time support for PhD students who present research results in-person at scientific meetings and symposia.
- b. This program will support student cost of travel up to \$750.
- c. The application can be found here: <https://grad.uconn.edu/2024/05/31/fall-2024-conference-participation-award/>
- d. Note that there is a narrow window of time each year for applications, so check the application dates and mark your calendars!

9. PNB Departmental Travel Funds for PhD students

- a. The PNB Department will, as funds allow, provide each PhD student up to \$1,000 to help pay for travel, lodging, and registration for a scientific conference/meeting each year.
- b. Each PhD student can request travel funds once per year up to three times during their career in PNB department, but must be a presenter (not co-author) for two of the three trips
- c. The Travel Fund request can be made online; please request the link from the PNB Office.

10. Additional Departmental Support

- a. PNB department will cover 50% of publication costs of peer-reviewed manuscripts with PNB graduate student as first author and PNB faculty as senior author.
- b. PNB department will cover trainee annual membership dues for professional organizations, up to 2 total during their career in PNB.

## ETHICAL CONDUCT

All PNB students are required to abide by the [Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code](#) that outlines expectations for student code of conduct and with the University policies on Scholarly Integrity and Misconduct (see <https://catalog.uconn.edu/graduate/scholarly-integrity-misconduct/>).

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE Ph.D. DEGREE

### 1) Summary

- a. **Course Credits:** Students must have at least 44 credits with at least 15 of those credits coming from GRAD 6950.
- b. **Courses:** Students should typically take PNB 5001 and 5002 and 2 additional advanced PNB courses and 2 outside courses, though there is some flexibility on the number of PNB vs. outside courses as decided by the student and Advisory Committee and specified on the Plan of Study.
- c. **Plan of Study:** Students should complete this under advisement of their PI and Advisory Committee by the time they complete 18 credits.
- d. **General Exam:** Students must pass the General Exam (both written and oral portions). This should be completed by the end of their third year.
- e. **Dissertation Proposal:** Students must complete a written Dissertation Proposal and submit it to the Graduate School. The written document from the General Exam can be used for the Dissertation Proposal. The Dissertation proposal must be approved by the Department Head and include approval pages from relevant compliance offices (such as IACUC or IRB).
- f. **Publication requirement:** Students must have a minimum of one original first-author peer-reviewed research article accepted for publication (for example, a BioRxiv submission does not meet the requirement).
- g. **Dissertation:** Students must complete a written dissertation describing a body of work that makes a significant contribution to the field of study as evaluated by the advisory committee. The student should seek Advisory Committee approval before scheduling the oral defense.

### Typical Timeline and Time Limits

#### 1. **Year 1:**

- a. Rotate through two labs to select a laboratory for dissertation research (this does not apply to international students who are RA-funded by a specific lab).
- b. Complete PNB 5001 and 5002
- c. Register for PNB 6405 (Journal Club), and PNB 5395 (Research Seminar) each semester
- d. Begin research. Register for PNB 5396 (Research) for research credits
- e. Aim to complete about 15 credits in the first year
- f. Establish an advisory committee of PI plus two additional faculty and have first committee meeting before the end of the second semester

#### 2. **Year 2:**

- a. Complete remaining advanced PNB courses

- b. In years 2 and 3, take ~6 credits of related area content from outside PNB.
- c. Continue dissertation research (PNB 5396) to generate preliminary results for general examination.
- d. Starting this year, meet with advisory committee at minimum once/year. Two times/year is recommended.
- e. Fill out the Plan of Study for approval by advisory committee by the time 18 credits are completed. The Plan of Study must be approved prior to taking the General Exam.

### 3. Year 3:

- a. **Complete the General Exam by the end of year 3.** Write a research proposal (see details below), give an oral presentation of the proposal, and successfully defend the proposal to your advisory committee to complete the General Exam. The student should add two more members to your committee from either inside or outside of PNB for your General Exam (at least three of the five committee members should be from PNB). *The written proposal can function as your Dissertation Proposal.*
- b. Take any additional graduate-level courses as prescribed by the Plan of Study
- c. Continue work on dissertation research
- d. Meet with advisory committee at least once a year

### 4. Years 4 until completion:

- a. Complete dissertation research
- b. Complete at least 44 credits total (15 credits must be GRAD 6950 (Research) taken in the latter part of the student's program)
- c. Dissertation Proposal: A written Dissertation Proposal must be approved by the advisory committee and submitted to the Graduate School by the time you have completed your 9th credit of GRAD 6950. *Your proposal for the General Exam can function as your Dissertation Proposal.*
- d. The scheduling of the defense and conferral of the degree is based on the judgment by the Advisory Committee that the student has met the standard of scholarship and research productivity in the chosen field. Completion of the degree is *not* solely dependent on completion of required credits.
- e. Present a written dissertation to the advisory committee at least two weeks prior to the public oral defense.
- f. Give oral defense of dissertation
- g. When planning for graduation, edit Plan of Study as necessary and apply for graduation through the Student Admin site at the beginning of the final semester.
- h. All requirements must be completed within 8 years

## 2) Required Courses

- a) In the first two to three years of the program, PhD students must complete a set of advanced coursework, typically comprised of the following: 1) PNB 5001 and 5002 (Principles of Physiology and Neurobiology I and II) in their first year; 2) two additional 2-to-3-credit graduate level PNB courses; and 3) two additional 3-credit courses outside of PNB and that are approved by the advisory committee. The courses taken outside of the department are typically graduate level, but up to 6 credits may be 3000- or 4000-level with approval of the advisory committee.
- b) Each student is expected to pass all PNB courses with a grade of “B-” or better and maintain an overall GPA over 3.0. C grades (including C+ or C-) are only acceptable for the Plan of Study in courses outside of PNB. Grades of D or below may not be counted on the Plan of Study and will trigger a review by the students advisory committee of the student’s eligibility to continue enrollment as a graduate student.
- c) Students typically also enroll each semester in PNB Seminar (PNB 5395) and are to enroll, participate, and, after their first year, present in the Departmental Research in Progress talks (PNB 6405).
- d) Additional credit requirements should come from Research (PNB 5396 or GRAD 6950).

### 3) First-Year Rotation

- a) Students entering the Ph.D. program typically will rotate through two laboratories in their first semester before choosing a laboratory for dissertation research. The Director of Graduate Studies, with the advice of the Graduate Affairs Committee, will coordinate rotation placement.
- b) Students should complete two rotations in the first semester as 2 credits of research (PNB 5396).
- c) If additional rotations are necessary, the student should coordinate with the Director of Graduate Studies.

### 4) Plan of Study

- a) The student should complete a Plan of Study form (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2019/02/Plan-of-Study-Doctor-Philosophy.pdf>) by the end of their third semester.
- b) Doctoral students must submit the signed Plan of Study to the Registrar no later than completion of 18 credits have been completed, and it must be approved before the completion of the General Exam.
- c) The Plan of Study should include courses already taken and those planned for completion of the degree.
- d) For the Ph.D., a minimum of 44 credits is required with at least 15 credits completed in Graduate Research (GRAD 6950).
- e) The foreign language requirement is waived for PNB students.
- f) The signed Plan of Study should be submitted to the Registrar ([registrar@uconn.edu](mailto:registrar@uconn.edu)).

5) General Exam

- a) Ph.D. students must pass the qualifying exam by the end of their 3rd year in order to advance to PhD candidacy. The qualifying exam consists of two parts: the written proposal and oral defense.
- b) The written proposal should describe *the student's planned Ph.D. research that is necessary to complete the degree* and should be written in a format similar to a 12-page single-spaced NIH R01 grant application. The proposal will typically have 2 or 3 Specific Aims. The proposal should include the following sections: 1) Significance, 2) Innovation, and 3) Approach. This should encompass the scope of the student's project within the laboratory. The *Significance* section should include a background and scientific premise of the project (1-2 pages). In the *Approach* section, there should be a discussion on how results will be analyzed, what the expected results are, and alternative strategies if the proposed experiments do not work. Additionally, the student needs to discuss strategies to enhance rigor and reproducibility of their research. (See the NIH guidelines <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/pa-20-185.html>). Contact the Director of Graduate Studies for examples of the written qualifying exam.
- c) The oral defense on the proposal will occur in a closed session with the student's examination committee consisting of a major advisor and two associate advisors, at least two other associate advisors or examiners, and any interested faculty. The committee members and examiners will be given the proposal at least two weeks before the oral defense. The oral defense time and place should be posted to the department one week prior to the examination. The Report on the General Examination for the Doctoral Degree (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2018/02/Report-on-General-Exam-Doctoral.pdf>) must be submitted to the registrar ([registrar@uconn.edu](mailto:registrar@uconn.edu)).
- d) The outcome of the General Exam will be: Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. For conditional Pass, the advisory committee will provide specific instruction for meeting the criteria to Pass. All required changes should be completed within three months. All signatures should be obtained after the student passes the examination.
- e) PhD students may apply for a Plan B MS degree upon passing the General Exam, provided they have completed at least 30 credits of coursework (excluding GRAD 5950 or GRAD 6950) and it is recommended by their major advisor. Coursework for the MS degree can also be used for the PhD Plan of Study.

6) Dissertation Proposal Requirement

- a) A satisfactory approved written proposal from the General Examination may be used as the student's Dissertation Proposal.
- b) The Dissertation Proposal for Doctoral Degree form (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2018/02/Dissertation-Proposal-for-Doctoral-Degree.pdf>) should be completed and signed by the advisory committee. The Dissertation Proposal

form must also be signed by the Department Chair and then submitted to the registrar ([registrar@uconn.edu](mailto:registrar@uconn.edu)) along with approval pages for any applicable compliance offices, such as the IACUC or IRB.

7) Dissertation Defense

- a) The student must seek approval from their advisory committee before planning dissertation defense.
- b) The student must provide a written version of the dissertation to all members of the Advisory Committee at least two weeks prior to the defense date.
- c) Notice of the time and place of the public oral defense must be sent to the PNB Office to the Graduate School and must be announced publicly by means of the University's online Events Calendar at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the defense. Public notice must be also posted within the Department.
- d) The student will make a public presentation of their dissertation research.
- e) The Advisory Committee must have a minimum of five faculty members for approval of the dissertation and for the oral defense.
- f) The decision on the outcome of both the written dissertation and the oral defense must be unanimous and will either be Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. If the decision is Conditional Pass for either the written dissertation or the oral defense, the committee will give instruction to the student on what is needed to pass.
- g) After successful completion of the Dissertation Defense, the student must 1) Initiate the Online Defense and Final Thesis/Dissertation Approval at the weblink (<https://grad.uconn.edu/forms/>) that will be routed to all committee members for their approval; 2) submit the Dissertation in Submittable; and 3) complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates Completion Certificate and submit the receipt of survey submission to Jenn Horan ([jenn.horan@uconn.edu](mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu)) in the Registrar's office.

8) Applying for Graduation

- a) Specific information on graduation can be found here: <https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/doctoral-degrees/>
- b) Graduate students must apply for graduation on Student Admin before the 4th week of their final semester. The exact dates can be found on the academic calendar on the Registrar's website (<https://registrar.uconn.edu/academic-calendar/>). They can confirm that they have applied by going to the Graduation Tile in their Student Center.
- c) Degrees are conferred in August, December, or May. Graduation ceremonies are only held in May.

9) Summary of Steps for Graduation for PhD students

<b>Doctoral Students with Dissertation Requirements</b>	
Deadline	Task
Before the Completion of 18 Credits	Students must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Submit their Plan of Study to Jenn Horan (<a href="mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu">jenn.horan@uconn.edu</a>) using the proper webform:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <a href="#">Doctor of Philosophy</a></li> </ul> </li> </ol>
A Foreign Language is NOT required for PNB PhD students	No report to the registrar is needed as PNB does not require a foreign language exam.
After Successful Completion of General Examination	Students must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Submit the <a href="#">Report on the General Examination for the Doctoral Degree</a> to Jenn Horan (<a href="mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu">jenn.horan@uconn.edu</a>)</li> </ol>
Submission of the Dissertation Proposal	Students must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Submit the <a href="#">Dissertation Proposal for Doctoral Degree</a> form to Jenn Horan (<a href="mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu">jenn.horan@uconn.edu</a>)</li> </ol>
Before the 4th Week of the Student's Final Semester (Exact date can be found on the Academic Calendar) (If not done by 4th week, go into Student Admin and apply ASAP)  For Spring 2025, this is: February 14, 2025 For Summer 2025, this is: March 1, 2025	Students must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Apply for graduation</a> on Student Admin.*</li> </ol> <p>* Students can confirm that they have applied by going to the graduation tile in their Student Center.</p>
Two Weeks Before Oral Defense	Students must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Announce their Oral Defense in the <a href="#">University Events Calendar</a></li> <li>2. Send a working copy of their dissertation to the members of their advisory committee</li> <li>3. Note: The Dissertation Proposal must be submitted to the registrar and approved before the announcement of the oral defense.</li> </ol>
After Successful Completion of Dissertation Defense and Revisions	Students must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiate the <a href="#">Defense and Final Thesis/Dissertation Approval Webform</a>. This form will route to all committee members to request approval.</li> <li>2. Submit their Dissertation in <a href="#">Submittable</a></li> </ol>

<p>For Spring 2025, this is: April 25, 2025  For Summer 2025, this is: August 10, 2025</p>	<p>3. Complete the <a href="#">Survey of Earned Doctorates Completion Certificate</a> and send receipt of survey submission to Jenn Horan (<a href="mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu">jenn.horan@uconn.edu</a>)</p>
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The Degree Audit team in the Office of the Registrar provides comprehensive information on each of the steps described above. Please review the information provided at the links below as you prepare to complete your degree.

Still have questions regarding graduate steps? For more assistance, please reach out to Jenn Horan ([jenn.horan@uconn.edu](mailto:jenn.horan@uconn.edu)) if you are a doctoral student.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RESEARCH (PLAN A) MASTER’S DEGREE

### 1) Timeline and Requirements

- a) Plan A MS students must complete at least 30 credits of research and course work made up of graduate level courses and up to 6 credits from 3000- or 4000-level courses. Not fewer than 9 of these credits should be Master’s Thesis Research (GRAD 5950)
- b) Select a laboratory for thesis research. MS students are typically admitted to specific labs and do not do rotations.
- c) Establish advisory committee of 3 PNB faculty by the end of first year.
- d) Complete four courses comprised of the following: PNB 5001 and 5002 and two additional courses, either in PNB or outside of PNB. Must earn a minimum grade of B- for each PNB course and maintain a 3.0 GPA.
- e) Register for PNB 6405 (Seminar in Research and Journal Presentations) and PNB 5395 (Research Seminar) each semester
- f) MS Plan A students must produce a body of research that is suitable for publication as determined by their advisory committee. *If this requirement is not met, the student will graduate as Masters Plan B.*
- g) Thesis defense: Must have a written thesis approved by an advisory committee and make a public presentation where they must successfully defend the research as determined by the thesis committee.

### 2) Plan of Study

- a) The student should complete a MS Plan of Study form (<https://registrar.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2019/03/Plan-of-Study-Masters.pdf>) and it must be submitted and approved by the fourth week of their final semester.
- b) The signed Plan of Study should be submitted to the Registrar ([registrar@uconn.edu](mailto:registrar@uconn.edu)).

### 3) Applying for graduation

- a) Specific information on completing the MS degree can be found here:  
<https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/masters-degrees/>
- b) Graduate students must apply for graduation on Student Admin before the fourth week of their final semester (the exact date can be found on the academic calendar on the Registrar website). They can confirm that they have applied by going to the Graduation Tile in their Student Center.
- c) The student must complete the Defense and Final Thesis/Dissertation Approval webform (<https://grad.uconn.edu/forms/>) at least two weeks before the end of their final semester.

4) Summary of steps to graduation

<b>Master's Plan A (Thesis)</b>	
Deadline	Task
Before the 4th Week of the Student's Final Semester (Exact date can be found on the Academic Calendar)  For Spring 2025, this is: February 14, 2025 For Summer 2025, this is: June 6, 2025	Students must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Apply for graduation</a> on Student Admin*</li> <li>2. Submit their <a href="#">Plan of Study</a> to Sandra Cyr (<a href="mailto:sandra.cyr@uconn.edu">sandra.cyr@uconn.edu</a>)</li> </ol> *Students can confirm that they have applied by going to the graduation tile in their Student Center
Two Weeks Before the End of the Student's Final Semester (Exact date can be found on the Academic Calendar)  For Spring 2025, this is: April 25, 2025 For Summer 2025, this is: August 10, 2025	Students must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review their Plan of Study. If their Plan of Study needs to be updated, they must submit a <a href="#">Request for Changes in Plan of Study</a> form to Sandra Cyr</li> <li>2. Initiate the <a href="#">Defense and Final Thesis/Dissertation Approval Webform</a>. This form will route to all committee members to request approval.</li> <li>3. Submit their Thesis in <a href="#">Submittable</a></li> </ol>

The Degree Audit team in the Office of the Registrar provides comprehensive information on each of the steps described above. Please review the information provided at the links below as you prepare to complete your degree. Still have questions after visiting these pages? For more assistance, please reach out to Sandra Cyr ([sandra.cyr@uconn.edu](mailto:sandra.cyr@uconn.edu)) if you are a Master's student.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE WORK (PLAN B) MASTER'S DEGREE**

1. Timeline and Requirements

- a) Plan B MS students must complete at least 30 credits of course work made up of graduate level courses and up to 6 credits 3000- or 4000-level courses.
- b) All MS Plan B students must take PNB 5001 and 5002 plus additional courses inside or outside of PNB. Plan B MS students do NOT take GRAD 5950 (Research) credits.
- c) Register for PNB 6405 (Seminar in Research and Journal Presentations) and PNB 5395 (Research Seminar) each semester
- d) Establish advisory committee of 3 PNB faculty by end of first semester
- e) Oral defense: Examination administered by the advisory committee consists of an oral defense of three approved research questions. The student should propose 3 different narrowly-defined topics related to physiology and neurobiology and seek approval from the committee for those topics before their final semester. The student will study those topics and make an oral defense of them without the use of Powerpoint or other similar visual aids.
- f) The advisory committee will determine the outcome of the defense: either Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail. They will provide feedback to the student and, for Conditional Pass, outline any remedies necessary to receive a Pass.

## 2. Plan of Study

- a) The student should complete a MS Plan of Study form (<https://registrar.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1604/2019/03/Plan-of-Study-Masters.pdf>) and it must be approved and signed by the advisory committee and submitted and approved by the registrar before the fourth week of their final semester.
- b) The signed Plan of Study should be submitted to the Registrar ([registrar@uconn.edu](mailto:registrar@uconn.edu)).

## 3. Applying for Graduation

- a) Specific information on completing the MS degree can be found here: <https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/masters-degrees/>
- b) Graduate students must apply for graduation on Student Admin before the fourth week of their final semester (the exact date can be found on the academic calendar on the Registrar website). They can confirm that they have applied by going to the Graduation Tile in their Student Center.
- c) The student must complete the Report on the Final Examination (Plan B Master's) form at the weblink (<https://grad.uconn.edu/forms/>).

## 4. Summary of Steps to Graduation

<b>Master's Plan B</b>
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Deadline	Task
<p>Before the 4th Week of the Student’s Final Semester (Exact date can be found on the Academic Calendar)</p> <p>For Spring 2025, this is: February 14, 2025 For Summer 2025, this is: June 6, 2025</p>	<p>Students must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <a href="#">Apply for graduation</a> on Student Admin*</li> <li>4. Submit their <a href="#">Plan of Study</a> to Sandra Cyr (<a href="mailto:sandra.cyr@uconn.edu">sandra.cyr@uconn.edu</a>)</li> </ol> <p>*Students can confirm that they have applied by going to the graduation tile in their Student Center</p>
<p>Two Weeks Before the End of the Student’s Final Semester (Exact date can be found on the Academic Calendar)</p> <p>For Spring 2025, this is: April 25, 2025 For Summer 2025, this is: August 10, 2025</p>	<p>Students must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Review their Plan of Study. If their Plan of Study needs to be updated, they must submit a <a href="#">Request for Changes in Plan of Study</a> form to Sandra Cyr</li> <li>5. Initiate the <a href="#">Report on the Final Examination (Plan B Master's)</a>. This form will route to all committee members to request approval.</li> </ol>

The Degree Audit team in the Office of the Registrar provides comprehensive information on each of the steps described above. Please review the information provided at the links below as you prepare to complete your degree this semester. If you are a Master’s Student, see this website: <https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/masters-degrees/>.

Still have questions about steps to graduation? For more assistance, please reach out to Sandra Cyr ([sandra.cyr@uconn.edu](mailto:sandra.cyr@uconn.edu)) if you are a Master’s student.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Health-related support and health insurance
  - a) UConn’s [Student Health and Wellness](#) can provide medical and primary care appointments as necessary.
  - b) Fees for Student Health and Wellness are [outlined here](#). Coverage can be via a personal insurance policy, a plan carried by the student’s parents or a group policy sponsored by the University, sold and administered through [Wellfleet-Cigna Health Plan](#).
  
2. Housing Information

Information regarding Graduate Housing is outlined on the [Residential Life website](#).

**USEFUL LINKS**

Graduate School forms (<https://grad.uconn.edu/forms/>)

The Degree Audit team in the Office of the Registrar provides comprehensive information on steps to graduation. Please review graduation information provided at the links below.

If you are a Master's Student, see this website: <https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/masters-degrees/>.

If you are a Doctoral Student, see this website: <https://registrar.uconn.edu/graduation/doctorsal-degrees/>.