

## MS and PhD First Year Guidance Committee Procedures

During the first six weeks of a new student's first semester, a guidance committee of at least three faculty members will examine a student's past course record (from undergraduate and past graduate work) and devise a program of coursework for that student. Responsibility for convening these meetings falls on the advisor. However, the Graduate Director and Graduate Assistant will aid in the scheduling of these meetings and, if needed, will intervene to ensure they occur on schedule. These committees and their meeting should be shaped by these considerations:

1. The committee should be composed of the primary advisor and at least two other faculty members. While the rules are that one of these people will be assigned by the grad committee, it is typically most fruitful for the advisor to propose three members to the Graduate Director, and have the GC then suggest any changes needed. In general, the idea would be to have two members with interests close to that of the student, and a third who is in a different field, but hopefully with some interests or expertise that would make them useful in thinking about how to guide the student. Also, note that while 3 members is the requirement, if you feel that more would be better for a particular student, you can suggest a larger number.
2. Before the committee meeting, the student should provide the committee with a brief written overview of his or her intellectual interests and provide an assessment of his or her own weaknesses and strengths in training.
3. The committee, working with the student, should devise a list of both suggested and mandated courses.
  - a. Coursework can be specified as either a single course or type of course (e.g., 'a course covering the use of multivariate statistics' as opposed to a specific course number). In addition, the committee can suggest that the student TA certain classes as another way of exposing a student to particular fields (although any such suggestions should consider the feasibility of the student actually being able to TA such a course).
  - b. The assigned course work should provide the student with depth of understanding in their research field or fields and also to ensure that the student has some breadth of training or experience in one or more other aspects of environmental studies.
  - c. While the number of classes suggested or mandated will vary depending on each student's past training and research plans, a typical list of required classes for a PhD student should generally not exceed six such classes.
  - d. For some areas of the program, groups of faculty have coordinated on a common set of classes for their students to take.
4. After the meetings, the advisor should complete the Guidance Committee Meeting Report and return it to the Graduate Director. After this meeting, this guidance committee's work is finished, with no requirement that the members be on subsequent committees for a student.

**FIRST SEMESTER GRADUATE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT**

**This form should be filled out by a student and their advisor after a student's first semester guidance committee meeting. The advisor should then send this form to the Grad Director and the Grad Assistant.**

Date Meeting Held: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Program: MS PhD

Advisory Committee:

- 1) Major Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Member \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Member \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Member \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Member \_\_\_\_\_

Required Courses (list either course names or type of course, depending on the recommendation):

Recommended Courses (list either course names or type of course, depending on the recommendation):

Other Suggested Training Activities, such as TAing of courses, short courses, internships: