

## Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What are my requirements to graduate? How do I monitor my progress to graduate? What additional courses I need to take to graduate?

- a. Run **degree audit** in PAWS ([www.eiu.edu/paws/](http://www.eiu.edu/paws/)) to monitor completion of requirements.
- b. Use Thesis Option **Study Plan/Checklist**, Non-thesis Study Plan/Checklist, or Internship Study Plan/Checklist to create a “roadmap” to graduate.
- c. **Apply for graduation** - [https://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students\\_graduation.php](https://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students_graduation.php)

Apply for the semester in which you will have all requirements complete (even if you do not plan on participating in the commencement ceremony). Students who fail to apply by the published deadline are not eligible for graduation or certificate completion

until the next semester or term. The deadline is published in the Class Schedule each semester. Currently, all applications for graduation must be submitted through PAWS. The application for graduation or certificate completion automatically initiates a graduate degree or graduate certificate audit by the certification officer in the Graduate School. **Candidates will be alerted to any deficiencies** that must be completed in order to meet the requirements for the degree or certificate. **Please e-mail questions to Lana Beasley (Certification Officer)** at The Graduate School or phone him at 217-581-2220.

## 2. Is there a website for commonly used forms?

Yes! Please click link below for **commonly used forms**.

[http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students\\_resources\\_and\\_forms.php](http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students_resources_and_forms.php)

## 3. How many hours I need to take to be considered academically full-time?

**Domestic Graduate students** are considered academically full-time during the fall, spring, and summer terms and meet the full-time enrollment requirements for student loan deferments and good student discounts when enrolled for **nine semester hours (Fall/Spring)** of course work that may include any combination of undergraduate or graduate courses. All courses in which the student registers apply including graduate courses (4750 or higher), undergraduate courses (below 4750), audited courses, and continuing education courses. **Summer enrollment is optional**.

**International graduate students** are considered academically full-time during the fall and spring semesters and meet full-time enrollment requirements to maintain F-1 immigration status when enrolled for **nine semester hours (Fall/Spring)**. **Summer enrollment is optional** if the international candidate was full-time during the fall and spring terms and is returning for the next academic year. If the admit is during Summer (as the starting semester), then International students have to take 9 hours (of which a maximum of 3 hours can be online). All courses in which the international student registers apply, including graduate courses (4750 or higher), undergraduate courses (below 4750), audited courses, and continuing education courses.

## 4. What is the maximum number of hours I can enroll in a semester?

Graduate students may enroll for a maximum of **16 semester hours (Fall/Spring)** of graduate courses (courses numbered 4750 or higher) during the fall or spring term. Graduate students may enroll for a maximum of **13 semester hours (Summer)** of graduate courses (courses numbered 4750 or higher) during the summer term. Graduate credit on- and off-campus continuing education courses are included in the limitation. The

enrollment limitation for graduate courses may not be waived or appealed. If a student wants to enroll more than 16 hours per semester then submit the waiver form: (<http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/forms/policywaiver.html>).

#### 5. What are the enrollment requirements for Graduate (Teaching) Assistants?

Graduate assistants fulfill the terms of their assistantship contracts during the fall and spring terms when enrolled for **a minimum of nine semester hours (Fall/Spring)** or a maximum of sixteen semester hours of graduate courses (courses numbered 4750 or higher) or required prerequisites. Graduate assistants are advised to consult the section of the Graduate Catalog titled “Graduate Assistantships” and to consult the Graduate Assistantship Regulations for a full review of policies governing assistantships. Graduate assistants on summer contracts (like, Summer research assistantship) fulfill the terms of their assistantship contracts when enrolled for **a minimum of three semester hours (Summer)** or a maximum of thirteen semester hours of graduate courses (courses numbered 4750 or higher) or required prerequisites during the summer term; however, enrollment in nine semester hours is required to be certified as academically full-time for student loan deferments and good student discounts. The following link provides a copy of the Graduate Assistantship Regulations: [http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students\\_assistantships.php](http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students_assistantships.php)

#### 6. I was a graduate (teaching) assistant during Fall and Spring. Would my summer tuition be waived?

Graduate (teaching) assistants wanting to use their summer tuition waiver must complete the summer tuition waiver application form and submit it by due date mentioned in the form <http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/summerwaiver.php>

Please remember you are only allowed one summer tuition waiver per 9-month contract. The graduate school will only contact you regarding the tuition waiver if you are NOT eligible for the waiver once you submit it. You are always welcome to contact the graduate school to see if it was approved but please remember the graduate school cannot verify eligibility until after grades post at the end of the spring semester as GPA is one of the requirements.

If you will be working as a **research** assistant over the summer term, you will not need to complete this form. You must meet the eligibility requirements listed on the application form as well.

#### 7. Can I take Independent Study (BIO 5990)?

**Non-thesis option** – Students in Non-thesis option may apply a [maximum of three semester hours](#) of credit toward the graduate degree by performing independent research with a faculty mentor in the Bio department. Please contact your faculty research mentor to sign up for BIO 5990 as you will not be able to self-register on PAWS.

**Thesis/Internship options** – Credit earned from BIO 5990 will not be counted toward your degree.

#### 8. How do I change my “Provisionally Admitted” status to “Fully Admitted” status?

You have been given “Provisional Admission” since your undergraduate GPA is below the required 2.75 for “Full admission”. The provisional status will clear once you earn a GPA of over 3.0 in 12 hours of graduate courses at Eastern Illinois University. During provisional status, you will not qualify for financial aid.

#### 9. Are there any award available to graduate students?

Yes! There are many awards available. Please click on the link below for more information.

[http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students\\_awards\\_competitivestudent.php](http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/students_awards_competitivestudent.php)

#### 10. Is there a time limit for graduation?

Students must fulfill all of the requirements for graduate degrees within six consecutive years. The six-year time limit ensures that the degree and/or certificate represent a well-sequenced, cohesive body of current knowledge that progresses over consecutive semesters of study. All the requirements in the Degree Audit Report including transfer credit, field experience, independent study, research, thesis, and internships, must be completed within the six-year time limit. The earliest term in which a course listed in the Degree Audit Report marks the beginning of the six-year time period. Exceptions may be requested through the Graduate School Waiver and Appeals Process when progress toward completion of the degree or certificate is interrupted by obligations or circumstances which are beyond the control of the student.

<http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/forms/policywaiver.html>

#### 11. I am done with all my course work, except for thesis. I need access to buildings, labs, or services. What should I do?

Please enroll in BIO 5951 - Non-credit Thesis (0-0-0). The purpose of this course is to allow a graduate student to remain continuously enrolled and access services required to

complete the thesis after completing the maximum number of hours of credit for thesis [5950], research [5900], and independent study [5990] in a thesis option.

#### 12. How do I register for BIO 5900/5950/5990?

Request your faculty (research) mentor to register you using the link below:

<https://www.eiu.edu/biology/machform/view.php?id=5521>

#### 13. How do I change from one graduate program to another?

Fill the change of status form below:

[http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/forms\\_statuschange.php](http://www.eiu.edu/graduate/forms_statuschange.php)

#### 14. I am an International Student and would like to extend my stay in USA to finish research. What should I do?

If you would like to extend your program to finish research, please fill these two forms and get signatures from your advisor:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~interntl/docs/CertificationAdvisorextension.pdf> - Form to extend I-20. This may take a few weeks.

<https://www.eiu.edu/international/docs/Part-Time-Enrollment-Form.pdf> -

International students are allowed to drop down below course level only on their last semester. You can take anywhere below 9 credits on your last semester to stay in status.

#### 15. Are there any scholarship for International students?

Yes! Please click link below for more information.

<http://www.eiu.edu/interntl/internationalscholarship.php>

#### 16. Can I take courses outside Biology discipline (courses without BIO prefix)?

##### **Thesis Option Study Plan**

- A minimum of 30 hours of coursework in Biological Sciences. With the permission of thesis committee and the Graduate Coordinator, students are allowed to take courses offered in Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Sociology, and Geographic Information Sciences (GIS).
- No more than 12 hours of courses 4750-4999
- Seminar (BIO 5150) 1-2 hours
- Graduate Research (BIO 5900) 6 hours
- Graduate Thesis (BIO 5950) 3 hours

##### **Non-thesis Option Study Plan**

- A minimum of 32 hours of coursework, of which at least 20 hours should be with BIO course prefix. The rest of the course work should be from courses offered in Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Sociology, and Geographic Information Sciences (GIS).

- No more than 12 hours of courses 4750-4999. The rest of the courses should be at the 5000 level.
- Seminar (BIO 5150) 1-2 hours