DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GENETICS AND GENOMICS

Website: https://genetics.tamu.edu/

The Program in Genetics is the main interdisciplinary PhD program in the Natural Sciences at Texas A&M University and offers research opportunities in a diverse range of Specialties: Bioinformatics and Genomics; Conservation and Population Genetics; Medical Genetics; Microbial Genetics; Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Genetics; and Plant Genetics. Our goal is to provide research opportunities to aspiring scientists to become creative and resourceful, supporting their development of transferable skills and advancement to careers in academia, national laboratories, industry, science policy, entrepreneurship, and many more. Since the first graduate degree in Genetics was awarded in 1914 at Texas A&M University, more than 300 PhD and 200 MS degrees have been awarded in Genetics. The Interdisciplinary Faculty of Genetics, composed of 98 members representing 20 departments and 6 colleges, administers and teaches in the graduate program.

Admissions
Admission is based on undergraduate record (coursework, laboratory experience, and grades), letters of recommendation, resume and statement of purpose. Applicants whose native language is not English should plan to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Applicants to the Genetics Program undergo a holistic evaluation by our Admissions committee. In addition to overall academic achievement (GPA), the committee considers factors including, but not limited to, the rigor and relevance of completed coursework (courses in Genetics, Genomics, Molecular Biology, Biochemistry or similar areas are highly recommended), experience in laboratory research, scholarly outputs (presentations, publications), awards, leadership experience, faculty references, and scientific maturity. Applicants with unique experiences or circumstances are encouraged to describe those in their applications, as we are particularly interested in recruiting a diverse array of outstanding students.

Curriculum and Graduation Timeline
In the fall of the first year, the students perform laboratory rotations and start their graduate courses. The laboratory rotations provide an opportunity to evaluate suitable laboratory environments for their research project. It is anticipated that most students have decided on a research laboratory by the start of the second semester. During the second and third semesters, students provide teaching assistance to Undergraduates in Genetics to gain teaching skills. However, the main focus is on getting a research project started, with the assistance of the thesis advisor and three additional faculty, who form the thesis committee. This period is also the time when students will prepare for their preliminary examination, to be taken by fall of the third year. The third, fourth and fifth year are dedicated to continuing and completing the thesis project, presenting data at conferences and publishing the work, followed by the thesis defense. The PhD degree is awarded principally on demonstrated ability to conduct significant and original scientific research.

Our students are expected to present their research at national and international conferences and publish in established, high-impact peer-reviewed journals, and their teaching experience provides an additional valuable asset for future job opportunities. Our PhD graduates have been successful in obtaining faculty positions in top research universities, teaching colleges, as well as companies in the fields of biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and agriculture.

Career Preparation
We prepare our students to succeed in the current interdisciplinary workforce by providing adequate education on modern and diverse scientific career opportunities in genetics. In addition to the strong scientific curriculum, our PhD students may choose to diversify through graduate certificate programs with an emphasis in teaching, business, science, law and public policy. Our students can also experience the industry or science policy paths through external internships. Advice on diverse careers options is provided via a monthly Career Club. Recent visitors have represented areas including gene testing companies, national labs, medical science liaisons, pharma, biotechs, angel investors, science communications, and life science consultancies. Career Club also provides training in areas such as job searching, networking, and other soft skills. To provide a community of scholars, the Genetics Graduate Student Association (GGSA) provides a social community with regular meetings, social events, and advocates for genetics training.

Steps to Fulfill a Doctoral Program (http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#steps-tosucceedinadegree/program-text)

Program Requirements

Program Requirements

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Student’s Advisory Committee
After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling, the student will consult with the head of his or her major or administrative department (or chair of the intercollegiate faculty) concerning appointment of the chair of the advisory committee. The student’s advisory committee will consist of no fewer than four members of the graduate faculty representative of the student’s several fields of study and research, where the chair or co-chair must be from the student’s department (or intercollegiate faculty, if applicable), and at least one or more of the members must have an appointment to a department other than the student’s major department. The outside member for a student in an interdisciplinary degree program must be from a department different from the chair of the student’s committee.
The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student’s advisory committee. Other Texas A&M University graduate faculty members located off-campus may serve as a member or co-chair (but not chair), with a member as the chair.

If the chair of a student’s advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role, the student is responsible for securing a current member of the University Graduate Faculty, from the student’s academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. The Department Head or Chair of Intercollegiate faculty may request in writing to the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School that a faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence or has voluntarily separated from the university, be allowed to continue to serve in the role of chair of a student’s advisory committee without a co-chair for up to one year. The students should be near completion of the degree. Extensions beyond the one year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

The committee members’ signatures on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign en masse. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student’s research and dissertation or record of study, has the responsibility for calling all meetings of the committee. The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal, the preliminary examination, the dissertation or record of study and the final examination. In addition, the committee, as a group and as individual members, is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Graduate and Professional School.

Degree Plan

The student’s advisory committee will evaluate the student’s previous education and degree objectives. The committee, in consultation with the student, will develop a proposed degree plan and outline a research problem which, when completed, as indicated by the dissertation (or its equivalent for the degree of Doctor of Education or the degree of Doctor of Engineering), will constitute the basic requirements for the degree. The degree plan must be filed with the Graduate and Professional School prior to the deadline imposed by the student’s college and no later than 90 days prior to the preliminary examination.

This proposed degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System located on the website http://ogsdpsst.tamu.edu (http://ogsdpsst.tamu.edu/). A minimum of 64 hours is required on the degree plan for the Doctor of Philosophy for a student who has completed a master’s degree. A student who has completed a DDS/DMD, DVM or a MD at a U.S. institution is also required to complete a minimum of 64 hours. A student who has completed a baccalaureate degree but not a master’s degree will be required to complete a 96-hour degree plan. Completion of a DDS/DMD, DVM or MD degree at a foreign institution requires completion of a minimum of 96 hours for the Doctor of Philosophy. A field of study may be primarily in one department or in a combination of departments. A degree plan must carry a reasonable amount of 691 (research). A maximum of 9 hours of 400-level undergraduate courses may be used toward meeting credit-hour requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy.

Additional coursework may be added by petition to the approved degree plan by the student’s advisory committee if it is deemed necessary to correct deficiencies in the student’s academic preparation. No changes can be made to the degree plan once the student’s Request for Final Examination is approved by the Graduate and Professional School.

Approval to enroll in any professional course (900-level) should be obtained from the head of the department (or Chair of the intercollegiate faculty, if applicable) in which the course will be offered before including such a course on a degree plan.

No credit may be obtained by correspondence study, by extension or for any course of fewer than three weeks duration.

For non-distance degree programs, no more than four courses may be taken by distance education without approval of the Graduate and Professional School and no more than 50 percent of the non-research credit hours required for the program may be completed through distance education courses.

To receive a graduate degree from Texas A&M University, students must earn one-third or more of the credits through the institution’s own direct instruction. This limitation also applies to joint degree programs.

Transfer of Credit

Courses for which transfer credits are sought must have been completed with a grade of B or greater and must be approved by the student’s advisory committee and the Graduate and Professional School. These courses must not have been used previously for another degree. Except for officially approved cooperative doctoral programs, credit for thesis or dissertation research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for “internship” coursework in any form is not transferable. Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater will be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Credit for coursework taken by extension is not transferable. Coursework in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours, or equated to semester credit hours.

Courses used toward a degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPA. An official transcript from the university at which transfer courses are taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Research Proposal

The general field of research to be used for the dissertation should be agreed on by the student and the advisory committee at their first meeting, as a basis for selecting the proper courses to support the proposed research.
As soon thereafter as the research project can be outlined in reasonable
detail, the dissertation research proposal should be completed. The
research proposal should be approved at a meeting of the student’s
advisory committee, at which time the feasibility of the proposed
research and the adequacy of available facilities should be reviewed.
The approved proposal, signed by all members of the student’s advisory
committee, the head of the student’s major department (or chair of the
intercollegiate faculty, if applicable), must be submitted to the Graduate
and Professional School at least 20 working days prior to the submission
of the Request for the Final Examination.

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is
performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious
biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student involved in these types
of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and
Biosafety at (979) 458-1467 to address questions about all research
compliance responsibilities. Additional information can also be obtained
on the website http://rcb.tamu.edu.

Examinations

Preliminary Examination for Doctoral Students
The student’s major department (or chair of the interdisciplinary degree
program faculty, if applicable) and his or her advisory committee may
require qualifying, cumulative or other types of examinations at any time
deemed desirable. These examinations are entirely at the discretion of
the department and the student’s advisory committee.

The preliminary examination is required. The preliminary examination
for a doctoral student shall be given no earlier than a date at which the
student is within 6 credit hours of completion of the formal coursework
on the degree plan (i.e., all coursework on the degree plan except
681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 693, 695, 697, 791, or other graduate courses
specifically designated as S/U in the course catalog). The student
should complete the Preliminary Examination no later than the end of
the semester following the completion of the formal coursework on the
degree plan.

Preliminary Examination Format
The objective of preliminary examination is to evaluate whether the
student has demonstrated the following qualifications:

a. a mastery of the subject matter of all fields in the program;
b. an adequate knowledge of the literature in these fields and an ability
c. an understanding of the research problem and the appropriate
methodological approaches.

The format of the preliminary examination shall be determined by the
student’s department (or interdisciplinary degree program, if applicable)
and advisory committee, and communicated to the student in advance
of the examination. The exam may consist of a written component, oral
component, or combination of written and oral components.

The preliminary exam may be administered by the advisory committee
or a departmental committee; herein referred to as the examination
committee.

Regardless of exam format, a student will receive an overall preliminary
exam result of pass or fail. The department (or interdisciplinary degree
program, if applicable) will determine how the overall pass or fail result
is determined based on the exam structure and internal department
procedures. If the exam is administered by the advisory committee,
Examination checklist form must also be submitted. These forms should be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School within 10 working days of completion of the preliminary examination.

The Report of the Preliminary Examination form must be submitted with original signatures of the approved examination committee members. If an approved examination committee member substitution (one only) has been made, that signature must also be included, in place of the committee member, on the form submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. The original signature of the department head is also required on the form.

After passing the required preliminary oral and written examinations for a doctoral degree, the student must complete the final examination within four years of the semester in which the preliminary exam is taken. Exams taken in between terms will expire at the end of the term that ended prior to the exam. For example, a preliminary exam taken and passed during the fall 2019 semester will expire at the end of the fall 2023 semester. A preliminary exam taken in the time between the summer and fall 2019 semesters will expire at the end of the summer 2023 semester.

Retake of Failed Preliminary Examination
Upon approval of the student’s examination committee, with no more than one member dissenting, and approval of the Graduate and Professional School, a student who has failed the preliminary examination may be given one re-examination. Adequate time must be given to permit the student to address the inadequacies emerging from the first preliminary examination. The examination committee must agree upon and communicate in writing to the student, an adequate time-frame from the first examination (normally six months) to retest, as well as a detailed explanation of the inadequacies emerging from the examination. The student and the committee should jointly negotiate a mutually acceptable date for this retest. When providing feedback on inadequacies, the committee should clearly document expected improvements that the student must be able to exhibit in order to retake the exam. The examination committee will document and communicate the time-frame and feedback within 10 working days of the exam that was not passed.

Final Examination for Doctoral Students
The candidate for the doctoral degree must pass a final examination by deadline dates announced in the “Graduate and Professional School Calendar” each semester. The doctoral student is allowed only one opportunity to take the final examination.

No unabsoludes grades of D, F, or U for any course can be listed on the degree plan. The student must be registered for any remaining hours of 681, 684, 690, 691, 692, 791 or other graduate courses specifically designated as S/U in the course catalog during the semester of the final exam. No student may be given a final examination until they have been admitted to candidacy and their current official cumulative and degree plan GPAs are 3.00 or better.

To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have:

1. completed all formal coursework on the degree plan with the exception of any remaining 681, 684, 690 and 691, 692 (Professional Study), or 791 hours,
2. a 3.0 Graduate GPA and a Degree Plan GPA of at least 3.0 with no grade lower than C in any course on the degree plan,
3. passed the preliminary examination,
4. submitted an approved dissertation proposal,
5. met the residence requirements.

The request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date. Any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the Graduate and Professional School prior to the submission of the request for final examination.

The student’s advisory committee will conduct this examination. The final examination is not to be administered until the dissertation or record of study is available in substantially final form to the student’s advisory committee, and all concerned have had adequate time to review the document. Whereas the final examination may cover the broad field of the candidate’s training, it is presumed that the major portion of the time will be devoted to the dissertation and closely allied topics. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the chair of the advisory committee, be invited to attend a final examination for an advanced degree. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her exam. A department can have a stricter requirement provided there is consistency within all degree programs within a department. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings.

Report of Final Examination
The student’s department will promptly report the results of the Final Examination to the Graduate and Professional School via the Report of Doctoral Final Examination form. These forms should be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School within 10 working days of completion of the final examination. The Graduate and Professional School must be notified in writing of any cancellations.

A positive evaluation of the final exam by all members of a student’s advisory committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her final exam. The Report of the Final Examination Form must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the Graduate and Professional School. If necessary, multiple copies of the form may be submitted with different committee member original signatures. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must be included on the form submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

Dissertation
The ability to perform independent research must be demonstrated by the dissertation, which must be the original work of the candidate. Whereas acceptance of the dissertation is based primarily on its scholarly merit, it must also exhibit creditable literary workmanship. The format of the dissertation must be acceptable to the Graduate and Professional School. Guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation are available in the Thesis Manual, which is available online at http://grad.tamu.edu.

After successful defense and approval by the student’s advisory committee and the head of the student’s major department (or chair of the intercollegiate faculty, if applicable), a student must submit his/her dissertation in electronic format as a single PDF file. The PDF file must be uploaded to the website, http://grad.tamu.edu. Additionally, a signed paper approval form with original signatures must be received by the Graduate and Professional School. Both the PDF file and the signed approval form are required by the deadline.

Deadline dates for submitting are announced each semester or summer term in the Graduate and Professional School Calendar (see Time Limit
statement). These dates also can be accessed via the website http://grad.tamu.edu.

Each student who submits a document for review is assessed a one-time thesis/dissertation processing fee through Student Business Services. This processing fee is for the thesis/dissertation services provided. After commencement, dissertations are digitally stored and made available through the Texas A&M Libraries.

A dissertation that is deemed unacceptable by the Graduate and Professional School because of excessive corrections will be returned to the student's department head or chair of the intercollegiate faculty. The manuscript must be resubmitted as a new document, and the entire review process must begin anew. All original submittal deadlines must be met during the resubmittal process in order to graduate.

**Additional Requirements**

**Additional Requirements**

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**Residence**

A student who enters the doctoral degree program with a baccalaureate degree must spend one academic year plus one semester in resident study at Texas A&M University. A student who holds master's degree when he/she enters doctoral degree program must spend one academic year in resident study. One academic year may include two adjacent regular semesters or one regular semester and one adjacent 10-week summer semester. The third semester is not required to be adjacent to the one year. Enrollment for each semester must be a minimum of 9 credit hours each to satisfy the residence requirement.

To satisfy the residence requirement, the student must complete a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester or 10-week summer semester in resident study at Texas A&M University for the required period. A student who enters a doctoral degree program with a baccalaureate degree may fulfill residence requirements in excess of one academic year (18 credit hours) by registration during summer sessions or by completion of a less-than-full course load (in this context a full course load is considered 9 credit hours per semester).

Students who are employed full-time while completing their degree may fulfill total residence requirements by completion of less-than-full time course loads each semester. In order to be considered for this, the student is required to submit a Petition for Waivers and Exceptions along with verification of his/her employment to the Graduate and Professional School. An employee should submit verification of his/her employment at the time he/she submits the degree plan. See Registration. (http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#registrationandacademicstatustext)

See Residence Requirements (http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#degreerequirementstext).

**Time Limit**

All requirements for doctoral degrees must be completed within a period of ten consecutive calendar years for the degree to be granted. A course will be considered valid until 10 years after the end of the semester in which it is taken. Graduate credit for coursework more than ten calendar years old at the time of the final oral examination may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

After passing the required preliminary oral and written examinations for a doctoral degree, the student must complete the final examination within four years of the semester in which the preliminary exam is taken. Exams taken in between terms will expire at the end of the term that ended prior to the exam. For example, a preliminary exam taken and passed during the fall 2019 semester will expire at the end of the fall 2023 semester. A preliminary exam taken in the time between the summer and fall 2019 semesters will expire at the end of the summer 2023 semester.

A final corrected version of the dissertation or record of study in electronic format as a single PDF file must be cleared by the Graduate and Professional School within one year of the semester in which the final exam is taken. Exams taken in between terms will expire at the end of the term that ended prior to the exam. For example, a final exam taken and passed during the fall 2022 semester will expire at the end of the fall 2023 semester. A final exam taken in the time between the summer and fall 2022 semesters will expire at the end of the summer 2023 semester. Failure to do so will result in the degree not being awarded.

**Continuous Registration**

A student in a program leading to a Doctor of Philosophy who has completed all coursework on his/her degree plan other than 691 (research) are required to be in continuous registration until all requirements for the degree have been completed. See Continuous Registration Requirements (http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#registrationandacademicstatustext).

**Admission to Candidacy**

To be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree, a student must have:

1. completed all formal coursework on the degree plan with the exception of any remaining 681, 684, 690 and 691 or 791.
2. a 3.0 Graduate GPA and a Degree Plan GPA of at least 3.0 with no grade lower than C in any course on the degree plan,
3. passed the preliminary examination (written and oral portions),
4. submitted an approved dissertation proposal,
5. met the residence requirements. The final examination will not be authorized for any doctoral student who has not been admitted to candidacy.

**Languages**

A student is required to possess a competent command of English. For English language proficiency requirements, see the Admissions section of this catalog. The doctoral (PhD) foreign language requirement at Texas A&M University is a departmental option, to be administered and monitored by the individual departments of academic instruction.

**99-Hour Cap on Doctoral Degrees**

In Texas, public colleges and universities are funded by the state according to the number of students enrolled. In accordance with legislation passed by the Texas Legislature, the number of hours for which state universities may receive subvention funding at the doctoral
rate for any individual is limited to 99 hours. Texas A&M and other universities will not receive subvention for hours in excess of the limit.

Institutions of higher education are allowed to charge the equivalent of non-resident tuition to a resident doctoral student who has enrolled in 100 or more semester credit hours of doctoral coursework.

Doctoral students at Texas A&M have seven years to complete their degree before being charged out-of-state tuition. A doctoral student who, after seven years of study, has accumulated 100 or more doctoral hours will be charged tuition at a rate equivalent to out-of-state tuition. Please note that the tuition increases will apply to Texas residents as well as students from other states and countries who are currently charged tuition at the resident rate. This includes those doctoral students who hold GAT, GANT, and GAR appointments or recipients of competitive fellowships who receive more than $1,000 per semester. Doctoral students who have not accumulated 100 hours after seven years of study are eligible to pay in-state tuition if otherwise eligible.

Doctoral students who exceed the credit limit will receive notification from the Graduate and Professional School during the semester in which they are enrolled and exceeding the limit in their current degree program. The notification will explain that the State of Texas does not provide funding for any additional hours in which a student is enrolled in excess of 99 hours. Texas A&M University will recover the lost funds by requiring students in excess of 99 hours to pay tuition at the non-funded, non-resident rate. This non-funded, non-resident tuition rate status will be updated for the following semester and in all subsequent semesters until receipt of a doctoral degree. Please see the Tuition Calculator (https://tuition.tamu.edu/) at the non-resident rate for an example of potential charges.

The following majors are exempt from the 99-Hour Cap on Doctoral Degrees and have a limit of 130 doctoral hours:

- Biochemistry
- Biomedical Sciences
- Clinical Psychology
- Counseling Psychology
- Epidemiology and Environmental Health
- Genetics and Genomics
- Health Services Research
- Medical Sciences
- Microbiology
- Neurosciences (School of Medicine)
- Nutrition
- Oral and Craniofacial Biomedical Sciences
- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Public Health Sciences
- School Psychology
- Toxicology

Application for Degree

For information on applying for your degree, please visit the Graduation (http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#degreerequirementstext) section.