DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GENETICS

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

The Program in Genetics is the main interdisciplinary Ph.D. 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 scientist 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, over 300 PhD and 200 MS degrees have been awarded in Genetics.

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 graduate research. It is anticipated that most students have decided on a research laboratory by the start of the second semester. During the second and third terms, 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 publish the work, followed by the thesis defense. The Ph.D. 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 Ph.D. 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.

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

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 for Graduate and Professional Studies 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 Office of Graduate and Professional
Studies.

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 Office of Graduate and Professional
Studies 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://
ogsdpss.tamu.edu (http://ogsdpss.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).

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 Office of Graduate and Professional
Studies.

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 OGAPS 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.
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
institute 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
workcourse 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 Office of Graduate and
Professional Studies.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included
in computing the GPR. 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 Office of
Graduate and Professional Studies 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. mastery of the subject matter of all fields in the program;

b. an adequate knowledge of the literature in these fields and an ability to carry out bibliographical research;

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, each advisory committee member will provide a pass or fail evaluation decision.

Only one advisory committee substitution is allowed to provide an evaluation decision for a student’s preliminary exam, and it cannot be the committee chair.

If a student is required to take, as a part of the preliminary examination, a written component administered by a department or interdisciplinary degree program, the department or interdisciplinary degree program faculty must:

a. offer the examination at least once every six months. The departmental or interdisciplinary degree program examination should be announced at least 30 days prior to the scheduled examination date.

b. assume the responsibility for marking the examination satisfactory or unsatisfactory, or otherwise graded, and in the case of unsatisfactory, stating specifically the reasons for such a mark.

c. forward the marked examination to the chair of the student’s advisory committee within one week after the examination.

Preliminary Examination Scheduling

Prior to commencing any component of the preliminary examination, a departmental representative or the advisory committee chair will review the eligibility criteria with the student, using the Preliminary Examination Checklist to ensure the student is eligible for the preliminary examination. The following list of eligibility requirements applies.

• Student is registered at Texas A&M University for a minimum of one semester credit hour in the long semester or summer term during which any component of the preliminary examination is held. If the entire examination is held between semesters, then the student must be registered for the term immediately preceding the examination.

• An approved degree plan is on file with the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies prior to commencing the first component of the examination.

• Student’s cumulative GPR is at least 3.000.

• Student’s degree plan GPR is at least 3.000.

• At the end of the semester in which at least the first component of the exam is given, there are no more than 6 hours of coursework remaining 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 head of the student’s department (or Chair of the Interdisciplinary Degree Program, if applicable) has the authority to approve a waiver of this criterion.

Report of Preliminary Examination

Credit for the preliminary examination is not transferable in cases where a student changes degree programs after passing a preliminary exam.

If a written component precedes an oral component of the preliminary exam, the chair of the student’s examination committee is responsible for making all written examinations available to all members of the committee. A positive evaluation of the preliminary exam by all members of a student’s examination committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her preliminary exam.

The student’s department will promptly report the results of the Preliminary Examination to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies via the Report of Doctoral Preliminary Examination form. The Preliminary Examination checklist form must also be submitted. These forms should be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. The original signature of the department head is also required on the form.

After passing the required preliminary examination for the doctoral degree, the student must complete the final examination for the degree within four calendar years. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the preliminary examination.

Retake of Failed Preliminary Examination

Upon approval of the student's examination committee, with no more than one member dissenting, and approval of the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies, 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 retest 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 the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies Calendar each semester. The doctoral student is allowed only one opportunity to take the final examination.

No unabsolved 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date. Any changes to the degree plan must be approved by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies via the Report of Doctoral Final Examination form. These forms should be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies within 10 working days of completion of the final examination. The Office of Graduate and Professional Studies 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies.

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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. Guidelines for the preparation of the dissertation are available in the Thesis Manual, which is available online at http://ogaps.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://ogaps.tamu.edu. Additionally, a signed paper approval form with original signatures must be received by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies Calendar (see Time Limit statement). These dates also can be accessed via the website http://ogaps.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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies 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 Office of Graduate and Professional Studies. 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/registration-academic-status/)

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

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 calendar years. Otherwise, the student will be required to repeat the preliminary examination.

A final corrected version of the dissertation or record of study in electronic format as a single PDF file must be cleared by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies no later than one year after the final examination or within the 10-year time limit, whichever occurs first. 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/registration-academic-status/).

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 University 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 nonresident tuition to a resident doctoral student who has enrolled in 100 or more semester credit hours of doctoral coursework.

A doctoral student at Texas A&M has seven years to complete his/her 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 currently are charged tuition at the resident rate. This includes those doctoral students who hold GAT, GANT, and GAR appointments of 20 or more hours and recipients of competitive fellowships who receive more than $1,000 per semester. Doctoral students who, after seven years of study, have not accumulated 100 hours are eligible to pay in-state tuition if otherwise eligible.

For count purposes, a year is counted as three semesters, normally fall, spring and summer. Using this system, a student is allowed 21 semesters as a G8 student to complete the doctoral degree before being penalized with the higher tuition rate. Any semester in which a G8 student is enrolled for a doctoral level course is counted.

The following majors are exempt from the 99-Hour Cap on Doctoral Degrees:

- Biomedical Sciences
- Biochemistry
- Microbiology
- Genetics
- Toxicology
- Nutrition Sciences
- Community Clinical Psychology
- School Psychology
- Veterinary Pathobiology
- Clinical Psychology
- Counseling Psychology
- Medical Sciences
- Health Services Research
- Health Promotion and Community Health Sciences
- Epidemiology and Environmental Health
- Oral Biology

The hour limit for these majors is 130 doctoral hours

**Application for Degree**

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