# GRADUATE DEGREE PLAN – Ph.D. Program

First Semester

* Meet with your research advisor to define coursework plan and research project.
* Start research in coordination with your research advisor.
* Register for and complete appropriate coursework; email Graduate Administrative Assistant for permission courses.

Second Semester

* Continue research in coordination with your research advisor.
* Register for and complete appropriate coursework.
* Form doctoral committee, complete [Dissertation Committee Approval](https://www.niu.edu/grad/_pdf/thesis/forms/dissertation-committee-approval-form.pdf) form, obtain signatures, forward to Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Third Semester

* Continue research in coordination with your research advisor.
* Register for and complete appropriate coursework.
* Begin preparing research proposal.
* Complete [Request for Appointment of Committee to Conduct a Doctoral Candidacy](https://www.niu.edu/grad/_pdf/thesis/forms/candidacy-examination-committee-appointment-form.pdf) [Examination,](https://www.niu.edu/grad/_pdf/thesis/forms/candidacy-examination-committee-appointment-form.pdf) forward to Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Fourth Semester

* Continue research in coordination with your research advisor.
* Register for and complete appropriate coursework.
* Complete candidacy exam and send [Report on Graduate Student Examination](https://www.niu.edu/grad/_pdf/examination-report.pdf) to Graduate Administrative Assistant.
* Complete [Assessment of Annual Progress,](https://www.niu.edu/clas/biology/_pdfs/AnnualProgressForm.pdf) send to Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Fifth Semester

* Continue research in coordination with your research advisor.
* Register for and complete appropriate coursework.
* Begin writing of dissertation.

Sixth Semester – Ninth Semester

* Continue research in coordination with your research advisor.
* Register for and complete appropriate coursework.
* Continue writing of dissertation.
* In sixth and eighth semesters, complete [Assessment of Annual Progress](https://www.niu.edu/clas/biology/_pdfs/AnnualProgressForm.pdf) form and send to Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Tenth Semester

* Complete the graduation application form [Apply to Graduat](https://www.niu.edu/registration-records/graduation/index.shtml)e .
* Finish research and writing of dissertation in coordination with research advisor.
* Schedule dissertation defense seminar and exam at least three weeks prior to exam; [complete Request for Oral Defense of](https://www.niu.edu/grad/_pdf/thesis/forms/oral-defense-dissertation-request.pdf) Dissertation form, forward to Graduate Administrative Assistant.
* Send dissertation to committee members two weeks prior to defense date.
* Defend dissertation and complete [Results of Oral Defense](https://www.niu.edu/grad/_pdf/thesis/forms/oral-defense-thesis-dissertation-results.pdf) form, send to Graduate Administrative Assistant.
* Submit final dissertation via ProQuest (see IMPORTANT DEADLINES below)

# IMPORTANT GRADUATE SCHOOL DEADLINES:

Graduation Deadlines; Graduate School