



**Plant Molecular  
and Cellular Biology**  
PROGRAM

2024-2025 Academic Year  
Student and Faculty  
Handbook

<http://pmcb.ifas.ufl.edu>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission and Values	page 01
PMCB General Information	page 01
Academic Honesty and Student Conduct Code	page 03
PMCB Graduate Degree Requirements	page 04
Faculty Advisor and Supervisory Committee	page 06
Oral Examinations and Advancement to Candidacy	page 07
Developing Communication Skills	page 08
Graduate Courses Offered by PMCB	page 09
Course Registration	page 09
Assistantships and Fellowships	page 11
Graduate Student Evaluations and IDP	page 12
Health Insurance	page 13
International Students	page 14
Obtaining Florida State Residency	page 14
Student Counseling & Support Services	page 14
UF Graduate School and PMCB	page 15
PMCB Deadline Checklist	page 16

## MISSION AND VALUES

Welcome to the Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology Program at the University of Florida. PMCB faculty members are deeply committed to helping students develop into successful biological scientists, capable of conducting independent fundamental and applied research. We value students that act conscientiously and conduct themselves as professionals, proactively developing the behavior, knowledge, skills, and leadership required for a successful career.

The goals of this handbook are to (1) assist PMCB graduate students in successfully fulfilling their requirements for their degree programs and meeting the deadlines as established by the University of Florida and the Graduate School and (2) provide official rules, policies, and regulations to be followed by both PMCB graduate students and faculty.

## PMCB GENERAL INFORMATION

PMCB is an intercollegiate and interdepartmental graduate degree program that emphasizes understanding the molecular and cellular mechanisms that mediate plant development, adaptation, and evolution.

PMCB currently has 52 faculty members (**TABLE 1**). They are based in the departments of Agronomy, Biology, Environmental Horticulture, School of Forest, Fisheries, & Geomatics Sciences, Horticultural Sciences, Microbiology and Cell Science, Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, and Plant Pathology within the Colleges of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Medicine.

**TABLE 1. LIST OF PMCB GRADUATE FACULTY**

<b>PMCB Graduate Faculty</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Altpeter, Fredy	Agronomy	(352) 392-1823	<a href="mailto:altpeter@ufl.edu">altpeter@ufl.edu</a>
Barbazuk, Brad	Biology	(352) 273-8624	<a href="mailto:bbarbazuk@ufl.edu">bbarbazuk@ufl.edu</a>
Basset, Gilles	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4808	<a href="mailto:gbasset@ufl.edu">gbasset@ufl.edu</a>
Bassil, Elias	Tropical REC, Horticultural Sciences	(786) 217-9289	<a href="mailto:ebassil@ufl.edu">ebassil@ufl.edu</a>
Begcy, Kevin Padilla	Environmental Horticulture	(352) 273-4528	<a href="mailto:kbegcy.padilla@ufl.edu">kbegcy.padilla@ufl.edu</a>
Burleigh, Gordon	Biology	(352) 392-2776	<a href="mailto:gburleigh@ufl.edu">gburleigh@ufl.edu</a>
Chambers, Alan	Tropical REC, Horticultural Sciences	(786) 217-9252	<a href="mailto:ac@ufl.edu">ac@ufl.edu</a>
Clark, David	Environmental Horticulture	(352) 273-4577	<a href="mailto:geranium@ufl.edu">geranium@ufl.edu</a>
Colquhoun, Thomas	Environmental Horticulture	(352) 273-4584	<a href="mailto:ucntcme1@ufl.edu">ucntcme1@ufl.edu</a>
Davis, John	Forest Res. & Conservation	(352) 846-0879	<a href="mailto:jmdavis@ufl.edu">jmdavis@ufl.edu</a>
Durham, Bryndan	Biology	(352) 294-6312	<a href="mailto:b.durham@ufl.edu">b.durham@ufl.edu</a>
Ferl, Robert	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4822	<a href="mailto:robferl@ufl.edu">robferl@ufl.edu</a>
Fernandez, Jessie	Microbiology and Cell Science	(352) 294-9167	<a href="mailto:jessie.fernandez@ufl.edu">jessie.fernandez@ufl.edu</a>
Folimonova, Svetlana	Plant Pathology	(352) 273-6455	<a href="mailto:svetlana@ufl.edu">svetlana@ufl.edu</a>
Folta, Kevin	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4812	<a href="mailto:kfolta@ufl.edu">kfolta@ufl.edu</a>
Gabriel, Dean	Plant Pathology	(352) 392-7239	<a href="mailto:gabriel@ufl.edu">gabriel@ufl.edu</a>
Gmitter, Fred	Citrus REC, Horticultural Sciences	(863) 956-1151	<a href="mailto:fgmitter@ufl.edu">fgmitter@ufl.edu</a>
Gurley, William	Microbiology and Cell Science	(352) 392-1568	<a href="mailto:wgurley@ufl.edu">wgurley@ufl.edu</a>
Hannah, Curt	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 392-6957	<a href="mailto:lchannah@ufl.edu">lchannah@ufl.edu</a>
Hanson, Andrew	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4856	<a href="mailto:adha@ufl.edu">adha@ufl.edu</a>
Hauser, Bernard	Biology	(352) 392-0009	<a href="mailto:bdhauser@ufl.edu">bdhauser@ufl.edu</a>
Jones, Jeffrey	Plant Pathology	(352) 392-7244	<a href="mailto:jbjones@ufl.edu">jbjones@ufl.edu</a>
Kim, Jeongim	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4779	<a href="mailto:jkim6@ufl.edu">jkim6@ufl.edu</a>
Kirst, Matias	Forest Resources & Conservation	(352) 846-0900	<a href="mailto:mkirst@ufl.edu">mkirst@ufl.edu</a>
Koch, Karen	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4833	<a href="mailto:kekoch@ufl.edu">kekoch@ufl.edu</a>
Lee, Seonghee	Gulf Coast REC, Horticultural Scs.	(813) 419-6611	<a href="mailto:seonghee105@ufl.edu">seonghee105@ufl.edu</a>
Lee, Tong Geon	Gulf Coast REC, Horticultural Scs.	(813) 419-6612	<a href="mailto:tonggeonlee@ufl.edu">tonggeonlee@ufl.edu</a>
Levy, Amit	Citrus Research and Education	(863) 956.8704	<a href="mailto:amitlevy@ufl.edu">amitlevy@ufl.edu</a>
Liu, Tie	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 846-2638	<a href="mailto:tieliu@ufl.edu">tieliu@ufl.edu</a>
Martins, Samuel	Plant Pathology	(352) 273-4649	<a href="mailto:sj.martins@ufl.edu">sj.martins@ufl.edu</a>
McCarty, Donald	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4846	<a href="mailto:drm@ufl.edu">drm@ufl.edu</a>
McDaniel, Stuart	Biology	(352) 273-0123	<a href="mailto:stuartmcdaniel@ufl.edu">stuartmcdaniel@ufl.edu</a>
McIntyre, Lauren	Molec .Genetics & Microbiology	(352) 273-8024	<a href="mailto:mcintyre@ufl.edu">mcintyre@ufl.edu</a>
Meru, Geoffrey	Tropical REC, Horticultural Sciences	(786) 217-9287	<a href="mailto:gmeru@ufl.edu">gmeru@ufl.edu</a>
Mou, Zhonglin	Microbiology and Cell Science	(352) 392-0285	<a href="mailto:zhlmou@ufl.edu">zhlmou@ufl.edu</a>
Munoz, Patricio	Agronomy	(352) 392-6180	<a href="mailto:p.munoz@ufl.edu">p.munoz@ufl.edu</a>
Nadakuduti, S. Swathi	Environmental Horticulture	(352) 273-4575	<a href="mailto:s.nadakuduti@ufl.edu">s.nadakuduti@ufl.edu</a>
Paul, Anna-Lisa	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4855	<a href="mailto:alp@ufl.edu">alp@ufl.edu</a>
Peter, Gary	Forest Res. & Conservation	(352) 846-0896	<a href="mailto:gfpeter@ufl.edu">gfpeter@ufl.edu</a>
Rathinasabapathi, Bala 'Saba'	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4847	<a href="mailto:brath@ufl.edu">brath@ufl.edu</a>
Resende, Marcio F. R.	Horticultural Sciences	352) 273-4772	<a href="mailto:mresende@ufl.edu">mresende@ufl.edu</a>
Rollins, Jeffrey	Plant Pathology	(352) 392-9241	<a href="mailto:rollinsj@ufl.edu">rollinsj@ufl.edu</a>
Soltis, Doug	Biology	(352) 273-1963	<a href="mailto:dsoltis@ufl.edu">dsoltis@ufl.edu</a>
Soltis, Pamela	Biology	(352) 273-1964	<a href="mailto:psoltis@ufl.edu">psoltis@ufl.edu</a>
Song, WenYuan	Plant Pathology	(352) 392-7231	<a href="mailto:wsong@ifas.ufl.edu">wsong@ifas.ufl.edu</a>

Suzuki, Masaharu	Horticultural Sciences	(352)273-4854	<a href="mailto:masaharu@ufl.edu">masaharu@ufl.edu</a>
Tieman, Denise	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 846-2490	<a href="mailto:dtieman@ufl.edu">dtieman@ufl.edu</a>
Vallejos, Eduardo	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4845	<a href="mailto:vallejos@ufl.edu">vallejos@ufl.edu</a>
Vermerris, Wilfred	Microbiology and Cell Science	(352) 273-8162	<a href="mailto:wev@ufl.edu">wev@ufl.edu</a>
Voiniciuc, Cătălin	Horticultural Sciences	(352) 273-4782	<a href="mailto:cvoinicuc@ufl.edu">cvoinicuc@ufl.edu</a>
Wang, Jianping	Agronomy	(352) 273-8104	<a href="mailto:wangj@ufl.edu">wangj@ufl.edu</a>
Wang, Nian	Citrus REC, Microb. & Cell Science	(863) 956-8828	<a href="mailto:nianwang@ufl.edu">nianwang@ufl.edu</a>
Wang, Ying	Plant Pathology	(352) 273-4674	<a href="mailto:ying.wang1@ufl.edu">ying.wang1@ufl.edu</a>
Zhao, Meixa	Microbiology and Cell Science	(352) 273-3715	<a href="mailto:meixiazhao@ufl.edu">meixiazhao@ufl.edu</a>

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

In 1995 the University of Florida student body enacted an Honor Code and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the University of Florida, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students.

**Preamble:** In adopting this Honor Code, UF students recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the honor code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the honor code is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education depends on community acceptance and enforcement of the honor code.

**The Honor Pledge:** *We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.*

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

The University requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the University will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior.

**Student responsibility:** Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean or Student Honor Court.

**Faculty responsibility:** Faculty members have a duty to promote honest behavior and to avoid practices and environments that foster cheating in their classes. Teachers should encourage students to bring negative conditions or incidents of dishonesty to their attention. In their own work, teachers should practice the same high standards they expect from their students.

**Administration responsibility:** As highly visible members of our academic community, administrators should be ever vigilant to promote academic honesty and conduct their lives in an ethically exemplary manner.

## **STUDENT HONOR CODE and STUDENT CONDUCT CODE**

Students enjoy the rights and privileges that accrue to membership in a University community and are subject to the responsibilities that accompany that membership. For a system of effective campus governance, it is incumbent upon all members of the campus community to notify appropriate officials of any violations of regulations and to assist in their enforcement.

This is the student's first phase of career development and the faculty believes that students need to behave as professionals, conscientiously following commonly accepted norms and meeting deadlines. The University of Florida Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code are available [here](#). Questions can be directed to the [Dean of Students Office](#).

**A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism is considered a violation of the Student Honor Code. Students must exercise great care with regard to plagiarism. *Plagiarism is defined as the act of using the language and/or thoughts of another author, without crediting them, and representing the work as your own.* In other words, your writing must be original and cannot directly copy sections of text published elsewhere. There are different cultural tolerances for "borrowing" text from published sources. It is important to understand that in written assignments no published text may be directly installed into your own work. If necessary, small phrases may be copied directly, but they must be offset by quotation marks or italic font, and the source must be directly cited.

## **PMCB GRADUATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The program offers a Ph.D. degree in Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology. All students complete core courses in Advanced Genetics, Plant Molecular Biology and Genomics, Plant Cellular and Developmental Biology, and Plant Biochemistry. In addition to the core classes, students can select from a variety of courses in biochemistry, molecular biology, physiology, plant breeding, genetics, statistics, evolution, microbiology, and plant pathology. A course of study is designed by each student's graduate committee to reflect individual professional goals and research interests.

The PMCB Ph.D. degree requires a minimum of 90 credit hours beyond the Bachelor of Science degree. Four PMCB core courses are required: PCB 5065 Advanced Genetics, PCB 5530 Plant Molecular Biology and Genomics, PCB 6528 Plant Cellular and Developmental Biology and HOS 6932 Plant Biochemistry for a total of 14 credits. Ph.D. track students must achieve a grade of B or greater in each core course or repeat the course (and obtain at least a B grade). An additional 6 credit hours (minimum) of course work are required and the courses taken will be selected in consultation with the advisor and supervisory committee. Journal Colloquium enrollment is required in spring and fall semesters. A minimum of 6 credits is required from the Journal Colloquium topics for a student to graduate with a Ph.D. degree. However,

Ph.D. students are required to enroll in one journal colloquium topic **every** spring and fall semesters until graduation from the program. No more than 6 credits of PCB 6971 Masters Research can be transferred from an M.S. degree awarded by UF. For more details on classes, please refer to page 9, Graduate Courses Offered by the PMCB Program section.

Each year, the program awards a limited number of rotation assistantships to students seeking a Ph.D. degree. For these students, the PMCB Program Director and Graduate Coordinator will serve as the first year supervisory committee and function primarily to ensure that students are guided in basic course work and given the opportunity to explore different areas of research. Non-rotating students (also called 'direct admits') must identify a major professor willing to supervise and support their program of study before gaining admission to the program.

For completion of the Ph.D. degree, all doctoral students should preferably have **at least one first author publication accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal in their research field before defending their dissertations.**

## **ROTATIONS**

All pre-doctoral students supported by the PMCB Program in their first two semesters will do rotations through at least three labs. This exposes students to different laboratory philosophies, technologies, and projects. Students are responsible for arranging their own rotations and are expected to keep the Academic Program Assistant informed about which faculty labs they are rotating in. Each rotation will occupy approximately ten weeks.

At the end of the spring of their first two semesters, pre-doctoral students on rotation will no longer be financially supported by PMCB. This means it is the student's responsibility to find a lab and advisor with sufficient funds to cover tuition, stipend and health insurance unless these are already covered by an international, national, college or PMCB program-level assistantship. **By the end of the spring semester of their first year, all new PMCB students are expected to have selected a major professor unless prior arrangements have been made to extend this period.**

## **RESEARCH PROGRESS TALKS** (or 'Rotation' Talks)

Graduate students in PMCB are expected to be able to read, interpret and critically assess the primary literature in the field of plant biology as well as to communicate effectively using scientific writing and oral presentations skills. Therefore, all first-year students, regardless of whether rotating or directly admitted to a lab, will present a 10 -15-minute seminar to communicate their research results and what they have learned. The PMCB rotations and the PMCB Research Progress talks will follow a preset schedule, as shown in **TABLE 2** below:

**TABLE 2. ROTATION SCHEDULE FOR FALL 2024 – SPRING 2025**

Ongoing until Aug. 22, 2024	Find lab rotations
Aug. 22 to Nov. 1, 2024	First rotation
October 23, 2024	<b>Seminar day</b>
Nov. 4, 2024 to Feb. 7, 2025	Second rotation
February 5, 2025	<b>Seminar day</b>
Feb. 10 to April 25, 2025	Third rotation
April, 16 2025	<b>Seminar day</b>

### **FACULTY ADVISOR AND SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

#### **Ph.D. DEGREE:**

**FACULTY ADVISOR:** It is the responsibility of the student to find a major advisor by the end of their three rotations. The major advisor must have graduate faculty status within the PMCB Program. The major advisor is the main contact for information regarding graduate education and will serve as the chair of the student’s supervisory committee, oversee the dissertation research and provide day-to-day guidance on research, and help with course selections.

**SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:** The supervisory committee is designed to serve as a guide to the student’s research and program of study. **The deadline to have a supervisory committee assembled is by the mid-point of the fourth semester.** PMCB highly recommends that students have a supervisory committee selected by the end of the third semester. Please note that if a committee is not established by mid fall, a hold will be placed on the student’s records. The major advisor will assist in determining who the other members of the committee will be.

All Graduate School requirements regarding committee composition and appointment will apply, with one exception: for the Ph.D. program, at least two members, in addition to the chairperson, shall be from within the PMCB graduate faculty, and at least one must be from outside (external) the PMCB graduate faculty. This person would be known as the ‘external member.’ All members of the committee must have graduate faculty status at UF unless special appointment approval is granted.

In summary, the minimum Ph.D. supervisory committee should have:

- 1. Chair** (must have graduate faculty status in PMCB)
- 2. Member** (must have graduate faculty status in PMCB)
- 3. Member** (must have graduate faculty status in PMCB)
- 4. External member** (must have graduate faculty status in any department except PMCB)

**CO-CHAIR:** It is possible to have a committee with a Chair and a Co-chair if both are PMCB faculty. This is most common when a student's dissertation project is joint between two labs, and both individuals contribute to the funding of the student and the research. The Graduate School requires designation of which faculty member is Chair and Co-chair, and the Co-chair can take the place of one of the 'regular' committee members.

**EXTERNAL MEMBER:** The external member must be a member of graduate faculty and have graduate faculty status with the UF Graduate School. Faculty holding joint, affiliate, courtesy, or adjunct graduate faculty appointments in PMCB cannot be external members on student committees. **If the external member joins the PMCB faculty, the student will need to select a new external member for the committee.** Special appointments to supervisory committees may not serve as external committee members.

**SPECIAL MEMBER:** Special member appointments are usually individuals from outside of UF with specific expertise which will contribute to a graduate student's program of study; tenure-track faculty who have not yet qualified for graduate faculty status; and non-tenure-track faculty or staff at UF who do not qualify for graduate faculty status. **Special members may not serve as a supervisory committee chair, co-chair, external member, or minor representative.** Special members count over and above the minimum required four members, not toward it (they are "guest experts").

To have a special member added to a supervisory committee, please obtain the Special Appointment Form with the Academic Coordinator. Changes in the supervisory committee can be made up until the semester in which the student is graduating. To make changes to a committee, students must contact the Graduate or Academic Coordinator.

Refer to the [UF Graduate School – Graduate Catalog](#) website for more information on Ph.D. requirements. The UF Graduate Catalog is the University of Florida's official record of graduate policies, critical dates, deadlines, course descriptions and faculty members.

## **ORAL EXAMINATIONS AND ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY**

The oral candidacy exam, also known as the qualifying exam or prelim, is required to be completed by Ph.D. students **before the end of the Fall semester of their second year**. However, since our data show that the time to graduation is impacted by the timing of the candidacy exam, we strongly recommend students complete this exam well in advance. The summer semester of the second year is a convenient time to prepare for this exam (see below), with the actual exam taking place sometime between mid-June and mid-September.

In preparation for the exam, the student must write and disseminate to committee members a detailed, NSF- or USDA-style grant proposal describing their proposed dissertation research. In addition to the exam, students have to present a public seminar in which they describe their current progress and research plans. The seminar is followed by an oral exam with the committee.



The students are required to send the proposal to the committee a minimum of two weeks before the exam date. The students also need to alert the PMCB Program Assistant as soon as an exam date has been selected, so the seminar can be announced. Students are also required to obtain the “Admission to Candidacy” form with the Academic Program Assistant. The form needs to be signed by **all** the committee members **at the end of your oral exams** and turned in to the Academic Program Assistant for submission to the Graduate School. Failure to do so will prevent students from registering for PCB 7980 Doctoral Research (research credits to be taken **after** you pass your qualifying exam).

For those examinations requiring that students meet with their supervisory committees (e.g., oral portions of qualifying examinations, final defense of the dissertation or thesis), PMCB has a strong preference that the Chair of the student’s advisory committee and the student are present in person on campus (including Gainesville campus and REC campuses depending on the location of the candidate). Under special circumstances, which include travel delays or the need to quarantine, the student and the members of the committee may attend remotely, provided that all participants are present synchronously, and that members’ questions are asked and answered in “real time.” With the support from other members, the Chair of the student’s advisory committee is responsible for ensuring the academic integrity of the evaluation; in particular, the Chair is responsible for ensuring that the student does not receive unauthorized assistance during the evaluation. Consistent with Graduate School guidelines, the external member is charged with assisting in this effort, ensuring that the evaluation is valid and fair, and that Graduate School policies are met.

## DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The development of strong communication skills is essential for a successful career. Thus, PMCB emphasizes the development of these skills by **requiring** students to participate in the following activities:

1. **Journal Colloquia:** Weekly discussion courses, which typically focus on analyzing the primary literature, will be organized each semester.
2. **Research Progress Seminars:** All first year students are required to present a seminar to PMCB at the end of each rotation (see section on Rotations for specific dates), regardless of whether they are rotating through three labs or have been admitted directly into a lab.
3. **Research Presentations:** As a precursor to their oral candidacy exams, Ph.D. students must present a research proposal in a seminar format with their preliminary findings and proposed future experiments. This gives students experience in publicly communicating research findings and a chance to receive input from PMCB faculty and students regarding the research direction and experimental approach.
4. **PMCB Workshop:** A workshop is held annually in May in which PMCB students are required to present their research results in 15-minute oral presentations.
5. **Exit Seminar:** All PMCB Students will present a public exit seminar prior to graduation.

In addition, PMCB students are **expected** to attend all faculty and student seminars organized by PMCB, including rotation talks, seminars that are part of the candidacy exam, and exit seminars. The attendance of departmental seminars is encouraged, and expectations are best discussed with your

advisor.

### GRADUATE COURSES OFFERED BY THE PMCB PROGRAM

Core course work will be composed of four one-semester courses in the areas of genetics, molecular biology, genomics, cell and developmental biology and plant biochemistry (**TABLE 3**). These are typically taken during the fall and spring of the first year.

In subsequent years a formal training track will be developed by the student and their advisor, in consultation with the supervisory committee, and will normally involve a minimum of 6 credits of additional (elective) courses.

**TABLE 3. LIST OF PMCB CORE AND RESEARCH COURSES**

Course	Title	Credits	Offered	Designation
PCB 5065	Advanced Genetics	4	Fall	Core course
PCB 5530	Plant Molecular & Cellular Biology	3	Fall	Core course
PCB 6528	Plant Molecular Biology	3	Spring	Core course
HOS 6932	Plant Biochemistry	4	Spring	Core course
PCB 6937	Special Topics in Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology	1-4	Any semester	Maximum of 8 credits
PCB 7922	Journal Colloquium in Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology	1	Fall & Spring	Required every Fall & Spring semesters until graduation (minimum of 6 credits)
PCB 7979	Advanced Research	variable	Taken <b>before</b> qualifying exams	
PCB 7980	Research for Doctoral Dissertation	variable	Taken <b>after</b> qualifying exams	

### COURSE REGISTRATION

Students are required to register for the four core courses (PCB 5065 and PCB 5530 during their first fall and PCB 6528 and HOS 6932 during their first spring semester). Elective courses (minimum of 6 credits) are selected by the student, advisor and committee in the student's research field and can be taken in subsequent semesters. There are numerous graduate courses offered by different academic units at UF, please check [Course Listings Search](#).

Any student who is on an assistantship or fellowship and receives a stipend must register as a full-time student. The required number of credits a student must register each semester depends on the type of appointment (**TABLE 4**).

**TABLE 4. REQUIRED NUMBER OF CREDITS BY SEMESTER AND TYPE OF APPOINTMENT**

Type of Appointment	Required Credits		
	Fall	Spring	Summer C
Assistantship	9	9	6
Fellowship*	12	12	8

\* Most appointments funded by PMCB are treated as graduate assistantships. Examples of fellowships are the McKnight Fellowship and NSF Fellowship.

Students register for classes using the online UF Student Self Service, also known as [ONE.UF](#). The system gives access to class schedules, transcripts, grades, fees, financial aid status, student holds among other important information. **Students are responsible for registering for their own classes and making sure they are registered for the correct number of credits every semester.** Students should also comply with [UF's dates and deadlines](#) for registration and payment of fees to avoid late fee penalties.

As mentioned above, students should self-register for all PMCB classes **except those with "DEPT" as the section number**. These are departmentally controlled classes and students must register through the PMCB Academic Program Assistant (email, phone or in-person). Examples are PCB 7979 Advanced Research and PCB 7980 Doctoral Research. To register for a course that is departmentally controlled by another department, the student must contact that department for registration assistance.

#### **GATORLINK EMAIL ACCOUNT**

Every University of Florida student is required to have a GatorLink email account and to keep up with it regularly. The GatorLink username and password serve as the log in for registering for classes with [ONE.UF](#). All official communications from the University of Florida, deadline reminders, cancelling of classes, or policy announcements, are sent straight to the GatorLink account. Click [here](#) to set up a GatorLink account.

#### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

UF requires an updated immunization record before new students can register for classes. Detailed information by the Student Health Care Center is provided [here](#).

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

All registering students are required to enter their emergency contact information to register for classes. Students can update their information by logging onto [ONE.UF](#) (click Student Self Service).

#### **REGISTRATION PREPARATION**

Every UF student is required to answer a series of questions related to their financial and academic responsibility every 4 months or so. Again, log onto [ONE.UF](#) and look for Registration Preparation.

## **GATOR 1 CARD**

The [Gator 1 Card](#) is the official University of Florida picture ID card. Many activities on campus are only available upon presentation of the Gator 1 Card, such as using the libraries, riding free on RTS buses, using all UF recreational facilities, among others.

## **ASSISTANTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

### **APPOINTMENTS**

PMCB students are appointed as graduate research assistants or fellows as part of their offer to join the PMCB Program. Upon acceptance, each student receives a *Letter of Appointment* and a *Letter of Offer*. **These letters are considered a formal contract between PMCB and the student** and stipulate the terms of these contracts, including title, FTE (full-time equivalent), annual and bi-weekly rate of pay, evaluation date, and duties and responsibilities. **It is important that you carefully review your Letter of Appointment before you sign, so that you understand what the expectations are.** For example, while uncommon, you may be expected to conduct research separate from your dissertation research in order to meet funding requirements. The Letter of Appointment will specify this.

Students who have a graduate assistantship are required to register for 9 credits each Spring and Fall semesters and 6 credits in Summer C. Students who have a fellowship are required to register for 12 credits each Spring and Fall semesters and 8 credits in Summer C. A complete list of registration requirements for Graduate Assistants (GAs) and Fellows can be found [here](#).

The letter of appointment will be renewed automatically each year, **pending (1)** satisfactory progress in the research program, as determined by the major advisor, **(2)** required registration (as mentioned above), **(3)** maintenance of an overall graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher, and **(4)** reasonable progress toward the student's degree, as determined by the graduate supervisory committee.

### **STIPEND**

Assistantships and fellowships include an annual salary (stipend) and a tuition waiver. Student's stipend is stated in the Letter of Appointment and will be paid bi-weekly through UF Direct Deposit system. In order to receive their stipend, students must be formally hired upon arrival in Gainesville. Students should contact the Academic Coordinator to complete the appropriate paperwork with the Fifield Shared Services Center - HR. This process may take 6 to 8 weeks for U.S. citizens and up to 12 weeks for international students. Students are required to open an account at a U.S. bank and provide PMCB with a void check upon hiring.

International students need to obtain a social security number (SSN) card in order to be hired by the PMCB Program and be on the University of Florida payroll system. Please see section International Students in the next pages for more information.

## **TUITION**

Students on research assistantships or fellowships have their tuition waived. That means that tuition is paid by either PMCB funds or an external grant funds from the advisor. In order to maintain an assistantship or fellowship, students must make satisfactory progress in their research program, be properly registered, maintain an overall graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher, and make reasonable progress toward their degree. Once again, assistantships and fellowships are contracts and are renewed every year, upon meeting the requirements specified above. Tuition waivers and appointments are processed every semester by the Academic Coordinator.

**NOTE:** if a student withdraws from the program or the appointment is terminated prior to the end of a semester, the tuition waiver will be revoked and the student will be financially responsible for the total tuition amount incurred for that semester.

## **FEE PAYMENT**

Student fees (health, athletic, activity and service fees) **are not** included in the tuition waiver and must be paid each semester. These fees are calculated on a per credit basis. Students should refer to their Letter of Offer to check if they are responsible for paying student fees. Students who are required to pay their portion of student fees must do so each semester regardless of the status of the tuition waiver. Check the [University Bursar](#) website to calculate the fee amount due.

## **GRADUATE STUDENT EVALUATIONS**

Written graduate student evaluations are administered once a year to review each student's progress in their research project and towards meeting their degree requirements. These evaluations are mandated by the UF Graduate School in order for continued employment as a graduate research assistant. They must be signed by the student and his/her advisor. First year rotating Ph.D. students will have their evaluations completed by their newly selected mentor, with input from the director and/or graduate coordinator if desired. PMCB evaluations are usually due in July.

These evaluations will assess the student's academic performance and job performance as a graduate assistant or fellow. The employment evaluation includes assessment of assigned duties and responsibilities appropriate to the assignment, including, but not limited to, employee's productivity, quality and quantity of work and research and other creative programs and contributions.

## **INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)**

All Ph.D. students, starting in Fall 2017 semester, must develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) with input from their major professor. The [Graduate School policy](#) explains the rationale for this requirement. Briefly, the goal of an IDP is for students to: 1.) reflect on their values, interests and professional goals, 2.) self-assess their competency in important professional skills, 3.) develop a plan to enhance those skills with input from their supervisor and other mentors, 4.) work through the plan utilizing resources provided

by advisors, the department, college, university or other sources, and 5.) review and revise the plan annually. Instructions will be provided during the new student orientation each fall semester. The plan template and resources to help students develop professional skills are located on the [College of Agricultural and Life Sciences website](#) and on the [Graduate School website](#). Evidence of a plan and an annual re-evaluation of the plan are due in the Graduate Coordinator's office by the end of the second semester and then each year by the end of the spring semester for the duration of your graduate program.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

The University of Florida has a mandatory health insurance requirement managed by the UF Health Compliance Office <https://healthcompliance.shcc.ufl.edu/>. All UF students, including newly admitted domestic and international students, are required to show proof of adequate health insurance. For details health insurance requirements and plans read [Health Insurance Requirements](#). Basically students may opt to either i) show proof of comparable insurance coverage, ii) purchase the UF mandatory health insurance plan administered by [UnitedHealthcare Student Resources](#), or iii) enroll in GatorGradCare.

[GatorGradCare](#) is the health insurance plan created specifically for University of Florida graduate assistants, teaching assistants, and research assistants appointed .25 FTE or greater. GatorGradCare coverage is based on the eligibility status of a graduate student. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in a graduate degree program, have an appointment through the University of Florida, be appropriately registered in classes and be appointed 0.25 FTE (full-time equivalent) or greater for a particular semester. PMCB students are typically appointed as graduate and/or research assistants and **therefore eligible to participate in the GatorGradCare health insurance plan**. If you enroll in GatorGradCare, this coverage meets the UF mandatory health insurance requirement.

For detailed information on GatorGradCare eligibility, enrollment, benefits, ID Cards, dependent coverage and more please visit the <https://gatorcare.org/gatorgradcare/> website or contact [gabenefits@admin.ufl.edu](mailto:gabenefits@admin.ufl.edu). Effective August 2018, there is a nominal monthly premium of \$10.00 for individual coverage. This premium will be collected through payroll deduction. GatorGradCare enrollees who include coverage for their dependent(s) on their online enrollment are responsible for the dependent premium.

**Enrollment in GatorGradCare is not automatic.** Current students need to enroll annually or every academic semester. Newly hired Graduate Assistants have 60 days from their date of hire to enroll in GatorGradCare if they want to participate. The enrollment portal in myUFL opens for newly hired GAs after the GA job appointment is entered and activated in the UF PeopleSoft/payroll system. To enroll go to <https://benefits.hr.ufl.edu/health/gatorgradcare/> under Enrollment.

Students who have health insurance, including GatorGradCare, must complete an **insurance waiver once a year** to opt out of the United Healthcare policy. The waiver must be completed online by Fee Payment Deadline (September 3, 2024). To submit a waiver go to [13](https://healthcompliance.shcc.ufl.edu/health-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

[insurance-requirement/gatorgradcare/](#). Completion of the waiver does **not** enroll you in GatorGradCare.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The [UF International Center](#) (UFIC) is responsible to assist all international students with required immigration documents to study in the United States and to ensure the integration of international students and families into the life of the University of Florida and the American culture. UFIC provides many resources and information for students seeking a [F-1 visa](#) or [J-1 visa](#). International students are urged to get familiar with these resources and expected to comply with policies, rules and regulations set forth by the UFIC. International students are also required to complete a **check-in procedure with the UFIC as soon as they arrive in Gainesville**. Check the F-1 check-in [here](#) and the J-1 check-in [here](#). A map to the HUB – UFIC can be found [here](#).

International students are mandated by law to have health coverage during the entire year, including annual breaks. **Enrollment in GatorGradCare annually will fulfill this requirement** (more at [UF International Students Services - Insurance](#)).

## OBTAINING FLORIDA STATE RESIDENCY

Graduate students who are United States citizens or permanent residents may apply to become in-state residents for tuition purposes. For more information click [here](#). With the current restrictions, this is an option for new students who are U.S. citizens, who move to Florida in the summer before the start of the academic year, and have a job (can include an hourly paid research position), and immediately obtain a Florida driver's license. Another option is to purchase a house or apartment.

## STUDENT COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICES

The University of Florida knows that the well-being of its students plays a major role in their academic, professional and personal success. With this in mind, UF provides its graduate students with a number of services that aid in maintaining a safe, healthy lifestyle and enriching personal life. A few of them are:

- [Counseling & Wellness Center](#)
- [U Matter We Care](#)
- [GatorWell](#)
- [Student Health Care Center](#)
- [Dean of Students Office](#)

## **UF GRADUATE SCHOOL and PMCB**

All graduate degrees at the University of Florida are conferred by the Graduate School. PMCB serves as a liaison between the student and the Graduate School. Students are required to follow the [Graduate Catalog](#) and comply with requirements, deadlines and procedures established by the Graduate School and PMCB. The Graduate School sends reminders of all critical dates to graduate student UF business e-mail accounts via the [Graduate Student Listserv](#). All graduate students are responsible for complying with the deadlines identified in these messages as well as those published in the [Academic Calendar](#). PMCB also provides a 2024-2025 deadline checklist at the end of this handbook and on its website. Students must make every effort to follow it closely, especially before starting PMCB, during their first and second years and during their final semester. The Graduate School also supports UF [graduate students' professional development](#) by creating programming, and collaborating with various units and colleagues across campus on a number of professional development opportunities available throughout the year.

## **PMCB PROGRAM ACADEMIC DEADLINE CHECKLIST**

PMCB students are required to follow the Graduate School and University of Florida's official critical dates, such as registration, graduation, fee and other deadlines. It is the student's and faculty's responsibility to follow and comply with these deadlines and requirements, available [here](#).

To aid students in meeting all these deadlines, the PMCB Program established a checklist, which can be found in the next two pages.



## 2024-2025 COHORT PMCB CHECKLIST

BEFORE STARTING PMCB	DETAILS	CHECK
1. a. If International Student b. If Domestic Student	a. Check in with UF International Center b. Skip to step 2	
2. Complete assistantship hiring paperwork	Fifield HR Shared Service Center, contact Emily McFalls, Academic Coordinator <a href="mailto:emurphy1@ufl.edu">emurphy1@ufl.edu</a> . For students located in RECs, please contact your major advisor.	
3. Set up Gatorlink account	<a href="http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/self-help/new-gator-resources/gatorlink">http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/self-help/new-gator-resources/gatorlink</a>	
4. Send Gatorlink email to add to PMCB email list	Emily McFalls, Academic Coordinator emurphy1@ufl.edu	
5. Enroll in GatorGradCare health insurance	<a href="http://hr.ufl.edu/benefits/health-insurance/gatorgradcare">http://hr.ufl.edu/benefits/health-insurance/gatorgradcare</a>	
6. Get UF Student ID card (Gator 1 Card)	<a href="http://www.bsd.ufl.edu/G1C/index.asp">http://www.bsd.ufl.edu/G1C/index.asp</a>	
7. Attend UF Graduate School Orientation	TBD - ALL new UF graduate students	
8. Attend hybrid PMCB Graduate Orientation	August 20th, 2024	
9. Clear holds on <a href="http://one.ufl.edu">ONE.UF</a> and register for classes	Ongoing - Aug. 20, 2024	

FIRST YEAR	DETAILS	CHECK
<b>FALL 2024</b>	Register for PCB 5065, PCB 5530, Journal Colloquium (1 credit) and request Emily to add 1 credit of research (PCB 7979) to your schedule	by August 21, 2024 ( <a href="http://one.ufl.edu">ONE.UF</a> )
	Classes Begin	August 22, 2024
	Determine Lab Rotations	Ongoing until Aug 21, 2023
	First Lab Rotation	Aug. 22 to Nov. 1, 2024
	First Rotation Seminar	October 23, 2024
	Second Lab Rotation	Nov. 4, 2024 to Feb. 7, 2025
<b>SPRING 2025</b>	Register for PCB 6528, HOS 6932 and 1 Journal Colloquium	by January 10, 2025 ( <a href="http://one.ufl.edu">ONE.UF</a> )
	Second Rotation Seminar	February 5, 2025
	Third Lab Rotation	Feb. 10 to April 25, 2025
	Third Rotation Seminar	April, 16 2025
<b>SUMMER 2025</b>	Establish Supervisory Committee	By the end of summer semester ( <b>Note: strongly recommended before end of summer</b> )

## 2024-2025 COHORT PMCB CHECKLIST continuation

SECOND YEAR		DETAILS	CHECK
FALL 2025	Register for Journal Colloquium, Elective and Research Courses	Aug 20, 2025 ( <a href="#">ONE.UF</a> )	
	Deadline to Establish Supervisory Committee ( <b>Note: if not established by mid Fall, a hold will be placed on student's records</b> )	Midpoint of Fall semester	
SPRING 2026	Register for Journal Colloquium and Research Courses	Jan 9, 2026 ( <a href="#">ONE.UF</a> )	
	Ph.D. Students Prepare for the Oral Exams	Ongoing	
	Ph.D. Students Complete Oral Exams ( <b>Note: if not completed by the end of Spring, students will not be able to register for the Summer semester</b> )	Mid May	

FINAL SEMESTER	DETAILS	CHECK
Register for required research credits and apply for degree ( <i>i.e., apply to graduate this semester</i> )	<a href="http://one.uf.edu">http://one.uf.edu</a>	
Comply with instructions and deadlines set forth by the Graduate School	<a href="http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/graduation">http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/graduation</a> <a href="http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/graduation/graduation-checklist">http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/graduation/graduation-checklist</a>	
Set up an appointment with the Editorial Office and follow their guidelines and deadlines	<a href="http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial">http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial</a> <a href="http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/graduation/graduation-checklist/#d.en.240936">http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/graduate-life/graduation/graduation-checklist/#d.en.240936</a>	
Schedule defense	Supervisory Committee	
Announce exit seminar to PMCB	Academic Coordinator (2 weeks before defense send date, time, location)	
Obtain these forms <b>BEFORE</b> your defense: 1. Transmittal Letter (signed & submitted <b>BEFORE</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> submission to Editorial Office) 2. ETD Signature Page 3. Final Exam Form 4. UF Publishing Agreement	Academic Coordinator	
Obtain signatures <b>AT THE DAY OF YOUR DEFENSE</b>	Committee Members	
Return these 3 forms – <b>SIGNED</b> – right after your defense	Academic Coordinator	
Send link of first author publication or letter of acceptance from peer-reviewed journal	Academic Coordinator	