

American Museum of Natural History

Richard Gilder Graduate School:  
Handbook for Students and Faculty on  
Academic and Conduct Policies and  
Procedures

**Ph.D. in Comparative Biology**

1 January 2017

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# Administrative Staff Directory and Office Hours

<http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/contact-us>

Dean Dr. John Flynn <a href="mailto:dean-rggs@amnh.org">dean-rggs@amnh.org</a> 212-769-5055 Office Hours: By Appointment	Director of Administration <a href="mailto:directorofadministration-rggs@amnh.org">directorofadministration-rggs@amnh.org</a> 212-769-5143 Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9-5pm
Assistant Director for Student Affairs and Fellowships Ms. Maria Rios <a href="mailto:assistantdirector-rggs@amnh.org">assistantdirector-rggs@amnh.org</a> 212-769-5017 Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9-5pm	Departmental Administrator Ms. Anna Manuel <a href="mailto:administrativeassistant-rggs@amnh.org">administrativeassistant-rggs@amnh.org</a> 212-769-5055 Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9-5pm

## Reservation of Rights

This Handbook ("Handbook for Students and Faculty on Academic and Conduct Policies and Procedures") and the policies referenced herein are intended for the guidance of enrolled students and faculty in the Ph.D. Comparative Biology program. The Handbook and policies set forth in general the manner in which the Graduate School intends to proceed with respect to the matters addressed within, but the Graduate School and AMNH reserve the right to modify the terms of the Handbook and policies. For the avoidance of doubt, this Handbook and the related policies are not intended to be and **should not be regarded as a contract** between the Graduate School, AMNH and any student or other person. The faculty reserves the right to dismiss or to deny admission, registration, readmission, or graduation to any student who in the judgment of the faculty is determined to be unsuited for the study or practice of a Ph.D. in Comparative Biology.

This Handbook and the relevant policies may be revised or revoked, and other relevant policies and procedures, may supplement it, from time to time as necessary. Archival copies of this Handbook and relevant policies are retained in the Office of the Director of Administration. The current version is posted on the web site of the Richard Gilder Graduate School at [www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/amnh-ph.d.-program/resources-for-ph.d.-students-and-faculty](http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/amnh-ph.d.-program/resources-for-ph.d.-students-and-faculty)

## **Academic Program Information**

### ***Degree Programs and Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) Information***

Program name:	Comparative Biology
Degrees to be awarded:	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)
HEGIS #:	0499.00, Biological Sciences, Other
CIP #:	26.9999 Biological Sciences, Other

The Richard Gilder Graduate School also offers a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree, and Honorary Doctorate degrees.

### ***Accreditation***

The Richard Gilder Graduate School is accredited by the New York State Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education. Contact information regarding accreditation: New York State Education Department, New York State Education Building, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234, (518) 486-3633.

### ***Mission of the American Museum of Natural History***

To discover, interpret, and disseminate—through scientific research and education—knowledge about human cultures, the natural world, and the universe.

### ***Mission of the Richard Gilder Graduate School***

The Richard Gilder Graduate School of the American Museum of Natural History oversees post-secondary training activities at the Museum in the graduate fields of study embraced by the institution's mission. The Richard Gilder Graduate School embraces graduate training, post-doctoral fellowships, and undergraduate training programs at the Museum, through both independent activities and partnerships with universities.

### ***Mission of the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology***

The mission of the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology is to train the next generation of biologists through an approach that focuses on the history and interactions among species, and that takes advantage of the American Museum of Natural History's unique and unparalleled resources, including its world-renowned collections; a legacy of excellence in field discovery and theoretical advances; and a public mission in science education.

## **Instructional Policy and Expectations of Student Effort**

The curriculum of the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology provides students with the environment, tools, and experiences to be scientists, educators, or civic leaders who can contribute at the highest levels. The curriculum is intensive, immersive, flexible, and field-, lab-, and collections-based. The courses students take will range from traditional lecture, to lab courses, to field-work, to immersive independent studies with key faculty. Students will have a demanding and intensive educational schedule during their four years in the program. Students should be independent workers and be able to manage their work and personal time effectively. All courses are conducted at a rigorous-level indicative of the advanced nature of the program.

## **Learning Goals of the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program**

Students are required to complete a minimum of 62 credits. Upon completion of the program, successful students should be able to demonstrate the following abilities:

- Adhere to the highest standards of professional and scientific ethics.
- Articulate orally and in writing a mastery of the key concepts of the field.
- Maintain independent and creative research programs in her or his area of specialization.
- Teach the subject at post-secondary and graduate levels and/or contribute to public education at the K–12 level and for general audiences.
- Make substantive contributions to the field through grantsmanship, publications, professional and public communication, and service in scientific organizations.

## **Orientation**

Incoming students participate in an orientation prior to the start of classes in the fall semester. These activities typically include:

- Introduction to the Graduate School and its policies, programs and partnerships;
- Overview of AMNH offices and policies by the office of Human Resources;
- Tours of the collections and facilities of AMNH's scientific divisions, the Research Library, public education areas, and the Exhibition Department;
- Safety training relevant to work in AMNH collections and laboratories; and
- Assistance with living in New York City and taking advantage of these resources.

Orientation also includes gatherings for students, faculty, and staff.

## ***Maps and Plans***

American Museum of Natural History <http://www.amnh.org/>



## ***Directions and Parking***

Information on reaching AMNH by subway, bus, or automobile is available at <http://www.amnh.org/>. Discount parking is available for Graduate School students and affiliates in the AMNH parking garage entered at 81<sup>st</sup> Street between Central Park West and Columbus Avenue and the hours of operation are 8:00 AM–11:00 PM.

## ***Guides***

New York City <http://www.nycvisit.com/>

New York City Government <http://www.nyc.gov/>

## ***Academic Calendar***

Available online:

<http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/amnh-ph.d.-program/resources-for-students-and-faculty>

## ***Emergency Procedures***

In an emergency, follow these instructions:

- **Dial x2222**, if you see or experience an emergency at AMNH (Dial 911, if outside AMNH);
- Listen to public address system announcements;
- Follow instructions;
- Know your evacuation warden;
- Know your evacuation route;
- Keep the Graduate School informed of any changes in your personal or departmental information, to ensure up-to-date emergency contact information.

## ***Adverse Travel Conditions***

If AMNH is open during inclement weather or other adverse travel conditions, students are expected to plan for alternate transportation and allow for longer transportation time. Students may call the general AMNH number, (212) 769-5899, or visit the [AMNH website](#), to determine whether AMNH (and the Graduate School) has closed. Radio and television news also usually reports whether AMNH has decided to close.

## **Financial Information (See also: Fellowships, External Grants, and Financial Aid)**

### ***Costs of Attendance***

The following is an estimated monthly budget for one person; you may also wish to use the site <http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/> to calculate your specific budget

Books and Supplies .....	\$151
Clothing** .....	\$115
Electricity (if not included in rent)* .....	\$87
Entertainment.....	\$120
Food.....	\$580
Furnishings and Household Items** .....	\$85
Healthcare (deductibles, co-payments, immunizations, medications, and supplies)**.....	\$80
Incidentals .....	\$115
Laundry .....	\$40
Relocation and Transportation (local and long-distance)** .....	\$175
Rent* .....	\$1,295
Telephone and Internet*.....	\$125
TOTAL ESTIMATED MONTHLY PERSONAL EXPENSES.....	\$ 2968
TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL PERSONAL EXPENSES .....	\$ 35,616
Additional estimated family budget items:	
Childcare (per child) .....	\$350
School Supplies.....	\$30
Health Insurance (spouse) .....	\$190
Health Insurance (child).....	\$190
Healthcare (immunizations, etc.)** .....	\$60

\*Usually requires a refundable deposit of up to one month

\*\*Pro-rated, up-front expense

**NB:** Further savings may be made by comparison shopping, sharing accommodations and childcare, and living in lower-cost neighborhoods.

## ***Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number***

All students, including non-United States citizens, must obtain a Social Security Number (SSN) or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) before matriculating. ITINs are required for all international students and their dependents. The SSN or ITIN must be reported at matriculation and is required for distribution of any payments (e.g., fellowships and other financial assistance). It is very important to start the application process as soon as possible, since it can take from two weeks to several months to receive an SSN or ITIN. Either number can be used by unauthorized persons for fraudulent or illegal purposes, such as identity theft, so it must be kept secure and confidential and only used for those purposes for which it is intended. For more information, consult the Social Security Administration at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov>.

## ***Student Accounts***

Most Graduate School students have their tuition (and other fees) fully-funded by the Graduate School and account statements are not typically issued. Students who make tuition and fee payments or have such payments made on their behalf by third parties

may request a statement that itemizes charges and credits, including tuition and other fees, personal payments, loans, grants and other third-party payments made on their behalf.

### ***Stipend Checks, Direct Deposit, and Check Cashing***

Each student must arrange for direct deposit of fellowship stipend or other RGGGS payments by completing the form provided by the Human Resources department. AMNH provides regular check-cashing services.

### ***Deferment of U.S. Federal Loans***

During a period of full-time study in an approved graduate program, students may be able to defer repayments on their outstanding U.S. federal student loans (e.g., direct loans, Perkins loans, FFEL loans; see <http://studentaid.ed.gov/repay-loans/deferment-forbearance> for more information). The RGGGS Director of Administration can provide registered students in the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program with evidence of the Museum's authorization for deferment, which may be required by your lender. Contact your lender(s) directly and ask for a Deferment Request Form. Provide the form to the RGGGS Director of Administration, with information about where the completed form should be faxed, mailed, or emailed.

The Museum and the Graduate School do not otherwise participate in federal financial aid programs.

### ***Housing***

There is a wide variety of housing options in the greater New York City area. The RGGGS Assistant Director for Student Affairs and Fellowships can provide housing referral services, listing searches, and placement assistance (including short-term) to assist students in securing adequate and affordable housing. Good places to start are Craigslist (<http://www.craigslist.com/>), which lists apartments and apartment shares and International House of New York (<http://www.ihouse-nyc.org/>), a graduate student residence open to U.S. and foreign citizens. The Graduate School has arrangements assuring housing availability at International House for incoming Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program students for their first two years; the housing plans and costs to students are available at the International House web site. Incoming students receive a list of recommended search engine websites to assist them in finding apartments. When renting an apartment, realtors and landlords will require proof of your student status (current enrollment) and Fellowship. You may request an official letter to that effect from the RGGGS Assistant Director of Student Affairs and Fellowships, with as much lead time as possible.

### ***Laptop Computer Purchase***

Each Comparative Biology Program Ph.D. student is provided with a laptop computer with limited warranty and some software programs upon matriculation. During their

term at the Graduate School students also will have access to shared printers, relevant software, and other peripherals in order to connect with AMNH databases, computing clusters, and the Internet for pursuing graduate studies and research. Students will be expected to be responsible for replacing or repairing their laptop computers if they are damaged (not covered under the extended warranty) or lost during their RGGGS Ph.D. enrollment. All students must adhere to AMNH policies on acceptable use of information technology equipment, networks, and resources. Consistent with best practices, students are further reminded to back up all of their files and work regularly on drives or systems stored separately from their computers.

## **NY State Immunization Requirements**

New York State public health law requires that all college and university students taking classes on campus, regardless of credit load, provide documentation of immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) before their first term of study. Students must submit completed immunization documentation for MMR at least 30 days prior to the first day of classes. In addition, New York State public health law requires students to receive information about the meningococcal meningitis vaccine, and document that they either have received the meningitis vaccine or have declined to receive it, also prior to their first term of study. Students also should consider immunization against hepatitis B (three-dose series), varicella (chicken pox), tetanus and diphtheria, in addition to routine childhood immunizations.

Incoming Comparative Biology Ph.D. students receive detailed information about required immunizations and protocols for their compliance well in advance of starting their first term, and will return the necessary forms and information to the RGGGS Departmental Administrator. Immunization information can also be found under New Student Resources on this page: <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/amnh-ph.d.-program/resources-for-students-and-faculty>.

For extramural partner university students, the Richard Gilder Graduate School will enroll them in courses based on their having matriculated to a New York State institution and already having followed these rules.

## **Insurance**

### ***Health Insurance***

All registered, full-time Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program students provided with an RGGGS tuition waiver and fellowship, and who are in good standing in the Program, will be offered individual health insurance coverage which will be paid for by the Graduate School or a student's extramural fellowship. For students receiving extramural fellowship support that provides partial coverage for health insurance, RGGGS will provide supplemental funding as needed toward individual health insurance coverage. Information for enrolled students being provided with health insurance coverage can be

found online at <https://connect.werally.com/> via login with the student's "MyUHC.com" information.

### ***Travel Insurance***

Any student participating in an official RGGGS course or Graduate School or AMNH activity involving domestic or foreign travel is covered under the AMNH travel insurance, upon completion and prior approval of an AMNH travel form.

## **Fellowships, External Grants, and Financial Aid**

### ***Comparative Biology Ph.D. Fellowships***

The Richard Gilder Graduate School typically provides fellowship support in the form of tuition remission, a stipend, health insurance, and a student research expense account. The Museum provides this commitment through a combination of generous philanthropic support, as well as foundation and governmental training grants made to the institution or individual students. We expect our students to apply for and be highly competitive for foundation-based fellowships, U.S. federal or New York State fellowships and grants, or international governmental support; if awarded, these fellowships will be used in lieu of RGGGS support, and will be augmented if necessary to reach standard levels of RGGGS support.

RGGGS Fellowships are provided for four years of study, if the student remains in good standing, or until a student completes their degree if earlier than four years (e.g., through advanced standing). If, under extraordinary circumstances, a student and his or her Dissertation Committee agree that additional time might be required after four years, and that the student will be able to complete the program during the fifth year, the student may petition the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee for an extension during the Fall semester of their fourth year. Fifth-year support from the RGGGS requires that the student participate in developing and teaching an elective course.

A student may use funds from the student research expense account provided in Years 1-4 for such things as travel, conferences, and fieldwork related to her or his graduate studies. An additional annual advisor-guided and approved research budget typically is provided in Years 1-4, specifically to help further support student lab, field and museum travel research work. Each student is responsible for maintaining his or her own spreadsheet of expenditures and to always be aware of their remaining research expense balance. A bi-annual budget plan is required to be submitted to, and approved by, the Director of Administration of the Graduate School prior to spending these funds. To access these research funds, the student must submit the appropriate expense voucher form and receipts; travel requires advance completion and approval of the AMNH travel form. Consult the Director of Administration about what expenses are acceptable before making any financial commitment or purchase. Under Museum policy, equipment purchased using the RGGGS research budgets remains the property of RGGGS

and all items are to be returned to the School at the end of the student's last semester, unless determined otherwise by the Director of Administration.

### ***External Support***

RGGGS requires all students to make every effort to secure external fellowship funding, as well as additional support for student research. Applying for external fellowships and grants is an important part of graduate education and career preparation. Such fellowships and grants offer a student the opportunity to hone grant-writing skills, enhance her or his curriculum vitae, and make invaluable contacts for the future. Learning how to identify and apply for external support is taught in the required first-year core course, *Grantsmanship, Ethics and Communication*.

All eligible students (U.S. citizens, nationals, and permanent residents) are expected to apply for National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships, Ford Foundation Fellowships, etc. Students who do not meet the citizenship requirements for those fellowships are expected to apply for congruent external fellowships for which they may be eligible. When extramural fellowship funding is secured, it is applied first to offset the student's RGGGS fellowship and educational program costs. External fellowships are desirable even when the announced stipend is less than the RGGGS fellowship rate—if external funding is lower than RGGGS support, RGGGS will supplement the extramural funding to equal RGGGS fellowship and tuition scholarship levels. External fellowships and grants not only enhance each student's career preparation and professional reputation, they also provide valuable recognition and support for the Graduate School.

In the second year (and third, if relevant), after advancing to candidacy, all eligible students are expected to apply to the National Science Foundation for Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants (DDIG), <http://www.nsf.gov/> or <http://www.grants.gov/>, and to other research grant programs.

Each student should consult with her or his advisor, the Director of Administration, and the Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School about such opportunities to participate in private or government competitive grants and the associated responsibilities and procedures. There is a formal process for the submission and administration of institutional grants laid out in the AMNH Grant Manual, which can be found at <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/supportedprograms/grantsmanual.php>; this information also can be obtained from the RGGGS Director of Administration.

### ***Deferral and Termination of Comparative Biology Ph.D. Fellowship***

Deferral of a student's AMNH fellowship is not permitted, unless the student is undertaking approved externally supported research or other training away from AMNH, or is on an approved leave of absence. When a student holding a Comparative Biology Ph.D. fellowship is suspended, withdraws from the program, is dismissed, or otherwise becomes ineligible, her or his fellowship award and other Graduate School funding or support terminates on the day such change of status goes into effect.

## Visas and Immigration

The Richard Gilder Graduate School provides information—through advising, email and the web—concerning current immigration issues, travel and re-entry and current federal policies and regulations that affect F and J visa holders. These updates are important for international students and scholars and can help to minimize difficulties around travel, work authorization, and maintaining valid visa status.

As visa sponsor for F-1 students in the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program, the Richard Gilder Graduate School has specific legal obligations. Students in F-1 non-immigrant status must maintain legal status as defined by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Director of Administration of the Richard Gilder Graduate School is available to assist international students in obtaining and maintaining their immigration status. There currently are eight regulations that students must follow to maintain legal status, which are summarized here:

- Keep passport valid;
- Maintain full-time enrollment and normal progress toward the degree;
- Accept no employment without prior written approval from the Director of Administration of the Richard Gilder Graduate School or DHS;
- Notify the RGGGS Director of Administration in writing of any address change within 10 days of moving;
- Maintain health insurance;
- Obtain extensions of permission to stay in the U.S. as needed;
- Meet DHS eligibility requirements when transferring to another school; and
- Leave the U.S. or change to another immigration status once studies and any authorized practical or academic training are complete

Students on F-1 visas *must* remain aware of the latest updates to immigration and visa policies. Further information on visa and immigration issues for students and their families is presented at the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (the main site is <http://uscis.gov/>; rules for maintaining F-1 visa status can be found here: <https://studyinthestates.dhs.gov/maintaining-your-status>). F-1 visa holders are advised to check the visa and immigration rules at least once each semester, or more regularly if traveling into or out of the U.S..

## Student Access to Facilities

Ph.D. students have 24 hours/day and 7 days/week access to the RGGGS Graduate Student Center via the 77<sup>th</sup> Street elevators or other 5<sup>th</sup> floor access, using their ID badge. (RGGGS Ph.D. graduates working as AMNH postdoctoral fellows may be allowed continued access to the student center with prior approval of the Director of Administration.) Outside of regular Museum hours, students must enter and sign in at an entrance open to staff members, such as the Central Park West 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Security Desk, via ID badge card swipe. In December of each year, students receive an updated

year sticker to affix to their ID badges. Students have access to the library during its normal business hours. If a student requires access to other areas, they should contact the RGGGS administrative office.

Access to scientific collections and laboratory spaces is controlled by each department in which the facility is located (please see reference to the **Collections Access Policy** later in this document, or the full policy on the AMNH Intranet). Students should work with their Advisor to get access to those areas.

*Teaching Laboratory (7am-10pm 7 days/week)*

- Only faculty teaching courses in the laboratory and students registered for classes in the laboratory, or otherwise granted permission in advance by RGGGS, shall have access to the Teaching Laboratory.

*Lecture Hall (Class periods or prior arrangement)*

- Only faculty teaching courses in the lecture hall and students registered for classes in the lecture hall, or otherwise granted permission in advance by RGGGS, shall have access to the lecture hall.

In addition, the following policies are in place for use of the RGGGS Graduate Student Center:

*Student Guest Access:* Student's may bring guests to the Museum. Guests are allowed in the Graduate Student center with their Ph.D. student host, but they must be respectful of other students working and may be asked to leave if they become a disturbance. Students are asked to limit the number of their guests at any one time (more permitted, if family). After the Museum closes, guests must be approved in advance by RGGGS administrative staff, with the following provisos: no one under 21 years of age without parental consent, no signs of intoxication, specific location must be identified, and no entering the closed public halls, or taking photos without advance permission from the RGGGS or pertinent administrative unit. All guests and their hosts must abide by Museum rules for visitors, and must follow all direction from Museum security, safety, or other pertinent staff members.

*Graduate Student Center Food and Beverage Policy:* Food and non-alcoholic beverages are permitted in the Graduate Student Center, but they are not permitted in laboratories or classrooms without RGGGS consent. The student center refrigerator may be used to store items for short periods of time, but items will be disposed of on a weekly basis (except for unopened containers, such as soda cans).

*Use of Alcohol:* Students may not bring alcoholic beverages into the Graduate Student Center except for gatherings approved by the Director of Administration in advance. No one under 21 may be served or consume alcohol. Please see the Alcohol Policy in the AMNH Employee Handbook, under "1013 Liquor in the Workplace" (for enrolled students, the online handbook is at: <http://museum.internal.amnh.org/Human-Resources/Employee-Handbook/Employee-Handbook>, or as PDF at: <http://museum.internal.amnh.org/content/download/1673/7058/Employee+Handbook.pdf>; see also the summary later in this document) for further details.



# **Leaves of Absence & Voluntary Withdrawal**

## ***Approved Leave of Absence***

A student in good standing may petition the Director of Administration of the Richard Gilder Graduate School for a leave of absence of up to one year for medical leave, childcare leave, family leave, bereavement leave, or any other non-academic reason for which the student requests review for an approved leave. The Director of Administration and Comparative Biology Ph. D. Program Committee will make a recommendation to the Dean who will make a final determination on the petition. Generally, a student on approved leave does not receive financial support. While on leave, the student may not access facilities or attend courses, unless otherwise approved in advance by the Director of Administration, after consultation with the Dean.

An approved leave of absence is the only mechanism that can “stop the clock” on the expected schedule for degree completion of the Ph.D. degree. Readmission to the program is automatic within the approved leave period (typically at the beginning of the next semester), following student submittal of a written request to the Dean, with full privileges (including fellowship) being restored and documented in the student’s permanent record at that time.

Under extraordinary circumstances, a student may request an extension of the approved leave of absence from the Dean at the end of the leave period, for up to one additional year. This request must be in writing and must be submitted at least 1 term before the student was scheduled to re-join the school. Re-admission will still be automatic, as long as the extension request has been approved in advance by the Dean.

## ***National Service***

A student who is drafted to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States, or who is called to active duty from the U.S. Armed Forces Reserves for extended periods or participates in other forms of U.S. National Service, is granted an approved leave of absence for the required period of service, following submission of a completed Leave of Absence Checklist and Approval Form and documentation from the pertinent U.S. National Service. Such leave “stops the clock” on the expected schedule for degree completion, but does not reduce the total time allowed to complete the Ph.D. degree. While on leave, policies outlined above in Approved Leaves of Absence regarding financial support, health benefits, facilities and courses, apply. A student who wishes to return to the Richard Gilder Graduate School after this period in the U.S. Armed Forces or other approved National Service is readmitted automatically, following student submission of a request in writing to the Director of Administration at least 1 term before the student was scheduled to re-join the school.

## ***Jury Duty***

A student may be called for jury duty, which may last from one day to several weeks. A call to jury duty is a legal responsibility of all U.S. citizens and should not be ignored or taken lightly. If called, a student should consult with the Director of Administration and the office of the Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School about how to avoid disruption of the academic program and whether either a deferral or an approved leave of absence may be warranted.

## ***Unapproved Leave of Absence and Voluntary Withdrawal***

An unapproved leave of absence is one that has not been approved by the Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School. Any student who voluntarily withdraws or fails to register for a fall, winter, spring or summer term, without an approved leave of absence from the Dean in advance of the leave is considered to have withdrawn from the Richard Gilder Graduate School. This may lead to loss of fellowship and other funding and a record of unsatisfactory academic performance. Under certain circumstances, a student may petition the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, who in turn may make a recommendation to the Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School to change an unapproved leave absence to an approved leave of absence, but the decision of the Dean is final.

A student who takes an unapproved leave or has voluntarily withdrawn and who seeks readmission must apply for re-admission to the Graduate School. If the absence was less than 1 term long, the student must formally petition the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee in writing for re-admission, who will make a recommendation to the Dean. The Graduate School reserves the right to deny any petition for readmission, and the Dean's decision will be final. If the leave is 1 term or more, the student must re-apply to the Graduate School using the Graduate School's new student admissions process and comply with new admission and program requirements, if any. In this case, the admission decision will be final.

## **Religious Accommodations**

It is AMNH Richard Gilder Graduate School policy to respect its students' religious beliefs. In compliance with New York State law, the RGGGS accommodates the religious observances and practices of its students. Administrators and instructors should avoid conflicts in scheduling with religious holidays as much as possible. Any student who is absent from school, because of her or his religious beliefs, will be given an equivalent opportunity to register for classes or make up any examination, study, or work requirements that she or he may have missed because of such absences on any particular day or days. If a student has additional concerns, he or she may consult with the Director of Administration of the Richard Gilder Graduate School for assistance.

## **Disability Accommodations**

The Graduate School provides an environment that is supportive of students with disabilities and those requiring accommodations for medical conditions. A student who requires reasonable accommodations in connection with her or his studies and graduate program at the Richard Gilder Graduate School should discuss her or his needs with a faculty member or the RGGGS Director of Administration. The student and the Graduate School will then work with the Museum's Department of Human Resources to assess the student's disability, and engage in an iterative process with the student to identify and implement reasonable accommodations.

The disability request and accommodation process, and related medical information, will be held in strict confidence by the Department of Human Resources and will be shared with RGGGS faculty and administrators only on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with state and federal privacy laws. Students are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns about the process or about confidentiality with the Department of Human Resources, the Director of Administration of the Graduate School, or the Dean of the Graduate School.

## **Ph.D. Comparative Biology Program Structure and Degree Requirements**

### ***Credits***

Students must earn a minimum of 62 credits in order to graduate, as detailed below.

### ***Course Work***

#### **Core Courses (11 credits)**

Core courses are typically scheduled at least once per year. Completion of these core courses are required of all students in the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology, regardless of any other previous coursework or experience. Students may also take Elective courses at the same time as Core courses, provided that they have satisfied any prerequisite requirements for the Elective course.

Core Courses:

*Evolution*: 4 credits

*Systematics and Biogeography*: 4 credits

*Grantsmanship, Ethics, and Communication*: 3 credits

#### **Elective Courses (15 credits)**

These courses are offered for a variety of credits. Some Elective courses may be offered in short, intensive terms not corresponding to the academic calendar, or they may be offered by special arrangement. Fifteen Elective course credits are to be completed during the student's tenure, to qualify for the Ph.D. degree.

First year students should select elective courses based on their individual research interests and to broaden and deepen their experience. These courses are selected through consultation with their academic principal advisor, and approval by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee.

After their first year, all students in candidacy should consult with their Advisor(s) and Dissertation Committee on which elective courses to take.

Up to six credits of independent study Elective course work, approved in advance by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, may apply toward the fifteen credit Elective course requirement.

## ***Teaching and Symposia (All Required)***

### **Teaching Assistantship (6 credits)**

Students must participate in teaching two different AMNH courses, AMNH-approved courses at partner institutions, or comparable pre-approved AMNH Museum-based teaching experiences during the course of study. The total teaching load must be equivalent to 6 RGGGS course credits, and at least one of these teaching experiences must be in formal university-level course. Before acting as a teaching assistant in a formal, university-level course, students are required to attend an RGGGS-approved teaching workshop, such as the RGGGS Scientific Teaching Workshop, or those offered at partner universities.

### **Weekly Museum Seminar Series (2 credits)**

First-year students are required to attend the scheduled weekly Museum Seminar Series (Comparative Biology) events, and will receive 1 credit per semester for two semesters. Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to attend these seminars beyond their first year as well, although their attendance will not earn additional credits after the first year.

### **Student Symposium (1 credit)**

Second-year students organize and present a symposium on their research interests/activities, generally under the supervision of faculty members who have taught in the Museum Seminar Series.

## ***Directed Research (27 Credits)***

Research is directed by individual faculty members, or groups of faculty, at the RGGGS, or at another institution with prior approval.

*Directed Research, Year 1:* The aim of Directed Research in Year 1 is for the student, working with his/her advisors, to identify and refine a research area(s) for the dissertation proposal, including techniques to be used; field, collections, and laboratory components; identification of potential funding sources and preparation of grant proposals, with submission as a tangible outcome; and undertaking related pilot research. Specific supervised research opportunities include: experimental or project design, formulation of hypotheses and research questions, development of tests for

specific hypotheses, acquisition of new techniques, generation and analysis of data, interpretation and discussion of results. Development of a written project is encouraged.

*Directed Research, Years 2-4:* The aim of Directed Research in Years 2-4 is for the student, working with faculty members, to carry out research on the chosen dissertation topic. Directed research work can include but is not limited to pilot analyses, development of expanded analytical data sets, transforming course projects/papers or directed research analyses into dissertation chapters and/or manuscripts to be submitted for publication. Specific supervised research opportunities include: experimental design, formulation of hypotheses and research questions, development of tests for specific hypotheses, acquisition of new techniques, generation and analysis of data, interpretation and discussion of results. Development of a written project is encouraged. Emphasis is placed on producing high quality dissertation chapters, suitable for publication, and development and submission of grant proposals.

### ***Qualifying Examination***

At the beginning of the second year, students will be required to take a comprehensive Qualifying Examination. The goal of this exam is to assess the student's depth of knowledge and expertise both in general and specific knowledge to his or her research interests. Satisfactory completion of the Qualifying Examination, in combination with passing grades in all of the Core Courses, will establish a student's doctoral candidacy in the second year. The procedures for the exam are detailed in a later section.

### ***Dissertation***

Reflecting and describing the student's individual research—approach, methods, and conclusions—the dissertation is the ultimate focus of a student's graduate training, representing a fundamental part of the credentialed attainment of expertise in the chosen area of research. It is expected to be an original scientific contribution, worthy of publication(s). This is the culmination of the Ph.D. and requires working closely with the Advisor and Dissertation Committee to come up with a suitable topic and to carry it to successful completion. The formal stages of this process are:

- 1) Writing a proposal and having it accepted by the Dissertation Committee, as part of successful completion of the Dissertation Proposal Examination.
- 2) Writing the dissertation per the standards set forth in this document, and procedures detailed in administrative documents available from the RGGGS Director of Administration.
- 3) Oral defense of the dissertation.

In addition, the Richard Gilder Graduate School strongly encourages students to publish during their graduate training. Although not required, a major element of graduate training therefore can be seen to include chapters of the dissertation as already-published papers. While these may include papers with multiple authors, the student must issue a statement of her or his particular input and effort into each piece of work.

Full details on dissertation formatting and related publication standards are provided in the *RGGGS Dissertation Guidelines*, available from RGGGS administrative staff.

## **Definition and Maintenance of Full-Time Status**

Full-time status is defined as the registration in all terms for core and elective course, directed research, teaching, and/or symposia credits, as well as residency units, as approved by the student's Principal Advisor or Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC), and the RGGGS administration, in sufficient number to facilitate all program requirements and degree completion in 4 years. Students work extremely closely with and have their progress assessed by their Advisors and the CBPPC during the first year, and their Advisor(s) and Dissertation Committees in subsequent years, to ensure that they are on track for timely program completion, and their registration and satisfactory progress is reviewed and approved regularly by the RGGGS administration. Students must register for a "residency unit" in each semester, which RGGGS uses to track full-time status and calculate tuition or tuition waiver. Although these units do not bear academic course credit, they are an essential element of full-time status designation, and students must have at least twelve consecutive (other than when on an approved leave of absence) residency units to graduate. One intent of the residency requirement is to ensure that students stay integrally involved in the intellectual life of the Graduate School and the Museum throughout the doctoral program. Students who have completed their coursework, when not in the field, on collection study trips, research visits to other labs approved by their advisors/committees, or attending professional conferences, are still expected to be present at and actively engaged in academic and collegial activities at the AMNH, participating in workshops, attending seminars, symposia, dissertation defenses and special events, interacting or collaborating with other students and colleagues, and contributing their effort and expertise to the RGGGS and the Museum when called upon (e.g., presentations to the Board of Trustees, AMNH Junior Council, public programs, etc.). Students are required to maintain full-time status and registration for residency units throughout their entire academic career at RGGGS, and are not permitted to drop below full-time status without the prior approval of the Dean. Due to U.S. visa regulations, international students are never allowed to drop below full-time status; in extenuating circumstances, such as an RGGGS-approved medical leave, the student may be permitted to return to the Ph.D. program (following procedures detailed in this Handbook, and reissuance of a visa).

### ***Residency Units***

Residency units are used to maintain full time status and to form the basis for calculating tuition, but are not credit bearing. Students maintain full time status by being registered for one (1) residency unit every term, including Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer. Students need at least 12 consecutive residency units to graduate. For students on an approved leave of absence, residency units are considered consecutive prior to and upon return from the approved leave of absence.

## ***Advanced Standing***

Any time before the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Ph.D., a student with prior, relevant graduate coursework at a regionally accredited U.S. higher education institution (or the international equivalent) who desires to accelerate their progress in the program may petition the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee for award of up to 15 elective credits toward an RGGGS Ph.D. degree. The Committee will make a recommendation on Advanced Standing to the Dean, whose decision will be final. In seeking such credits, the student should first speak to his or her dissertation advisor(s), who can give input to the Committee and the Dean. Advanced standing does not exempt a student from any core course or other curricular requirement, including but not limited to the Museum Seminar, Directed Research, Student Symposium, Teaching Assistantship or 3 years of Residency Units requirements. A student who is granted 15 elective credits will have shortened the time to the degree by one year and will simultaneously have their funding reduced by an equal amount; the degree residency and funding level for students who seek advanced standing for fewer credits will be determined by the RGGGS Administration, if Advanced Standing is granted.

## ***Time Limit in Program***

The RGGGS Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology is designed for students to complete their degrees in continuous, full-time residency and matriculation during a period of four years. The minimum matriculation for a RGGGS Ph.D. is three years. Students may continue to work on their research and dissertation up to the eighth year, though such a long term will be strongly discouraged, and funding is not guaranteed and generally will not be provided by the RGGGS. Regardless of the source of funding, no degree will be awarded past the end of the eighth year of matriculation, exclusive of approved leaves of absence.

## ***Extension Into a Fifth Year of Funding***

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if, under extraordinary circumstances, a student and his or her Dissertation Committee agree that any additional time beyond four years may be required, the student may petition the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee and the Dean for an extension. If approved, the student typically will be required to undertake a more comprehensive teaching or educational assignment (such as developing and teaching an entire elective course, or designing and implementing a Museum public education program or project). Students should consult the Director of Administration about the petition process in advance. Any student considering petitioning for an extension must submit a complete petition form to the Director of Administration no later than December 31st of the student's 4th year.

## ***Certification of Full-Time Enrollment Status***

Upon request, the Director of Administration of the Richard Gilder Graduate School will formally certify that a student meets the full-time enrollment guidelines set forth in this document.

## ***Full-Time Status and Outside Income***

All students in the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program are full-time during the entire calendar year for each year in which they are enrolled in good standing. As such, they may not hold other positions or engage in employment of any kind without the prior written consent of the Dean of the RGGGS. Students who are found in violation of this policy may forfeit their stipend, tuition benefits or any other fellowship income and benefits from the RGGGS, and will face dismissal.

Students with questions about what constitutes outside income are encouraged to contact the Director of Administration before agreeing to any outside work that may result in additional income, so that they may avoid any potential problems during their academic career.

## **RGGGS Course Registration Procedure**

### ***Adding Courses***

#### **First Year**

First Year students will automatically be enrolled in the Core Courses, as well as the Seminar Series. Additional enrollment in elective courses will be up to each individual first year student, in consultation with their advisors and based on the dates and criteria detailed below.

### **Registration Procedure for RGGGS Elective Courses (including Independent Studies), RGGGS Directed Research Credits, and Extramural Elective Courses**

Every term, specific RGGGS or Extramural Elective courses will be offered for open enrollment. Students may also create their own RGGGS Independent Study elective courses, after agreement from the instructor and review (students may be required to submit revised proposals based on that review) and approval by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, using the form available from MyRGGGS.

Submission dates for RGGGS Independent Study Elective Course proposals are:

Fall: July 1

Winter: November 1

Spring: December 1

Summer: March 1

Students must get the approval of their Principal Advisor to register for Elective courses (including independent studies) or extramural classes (for more details on registering for extramural courses, see below) and Directed Research credits. It is the student's responsibility to have a confirmation email from the Principal Advisor sent to the Director of Administration's office before the last day of registration. Failure to do so may result in non-registration or non-enrollment.



For Directed Research credits, students use MyRGGGS to download and complete the form by the registration period for the given term. After the student completes the form, the Principal Advisor must electronically sign it and email it to the Director of Administration to complete the registration process.

Three outstanding obligations will prevent a student from registering or changing their courses:

- A financial obligation;
- An academic or disciplinary issue; or
- Lack of immunization compliance.

Only the Director of Administration of the Graduate School or the Dean may apply or remove any registration holds.

Failure to register for the appropriate number of credits per term may jeopardize student full-time enrollment, good-standing, funding or visa status. Students must make every effort to comply with the registration dates and procedures in this section or email the Director of Administration well in advance of the date with a request for assistance and informing the Director of Administration of the student’s potential inability to meet the registration deadline. The Director of Administration will work with each request on a case-by-case basis.

### **Registration Periods for Elective Courses (RGGGS and Extramural) and RGGGS Research Credits**

Students should register for courses before these dates. Any request for registration after these dates should include a reason for the late registration request, and will be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Administration. Please note that partner universities may have different, and sometimes much earlier, registration and drop deadlines for extramural Elective courses – students are responsible for submitting necessary forms to the Director of Administration for extramural registrations well in advance of partner university deadlines.

Term	Start of Registration	Last Day to Add a Course	Last Day to Drop a Course
Fall	September 1	October 1	November 1
Winter	November 1	January 1	January 1
Spring	January 1	February 1	March 15
Summer	May 1	June 1	July 15

### ***Dropping Courses at the Richard Gilder Graduate School***

Students may drop a class up to 50% of the way through the course, with no mark appearing on their transcript. They may do so by email, with the consent of their Principal Advisor.

If a student wishes to drop a course after 50% of the course has been completed, they must have their Principal Advisor approve the dropping of the course by email. A grade of W will be placed on their transcript for that class.

No student may drop below Full Time status, as defined in this Handbook, without the prior written consent of the Dean.

### ***Extramural Course Registration Procedure***

Although the RGGGS graduate faculty teaches its own core and elective courses, with prior approval by the RGGGS, students seeking or needing to take courses in topics or areas not offered at the RGGGS may register for elective courses at other universities. Agreements between the AMNH and collaborative universities may enable RGGGS students to take an array of courses offered by those partner universities. The RGGGS Administration maintains a list of generally approved courses offered by the partner universities, but specific extramural elective course enrollments must be approved in advance by the student's Principal Advisor or Dissertation Committee Chair, as well as the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee. Formal enrollment in an extramural course requires completion of a form to be signed by both the RGGGS Director of Administration and the Registrar of the partner university offering the extramural course (forms are available from the RGGGS Administrative offices). In addition to the RGGGS enrollment deadlines, students must be aware of and meet the registration deadlines of the host university for an extramural course – which may differ from RGGGS registration dates – leaving sufficient time for RGGGS review and approval, and for completing the cross-registration process between the RGGGS Registrar and the Registrar of the institution offering the extramural course.

When dropping an extramural course, students must notify both the Richard Gilder Graduate School and the collaborating university according to their own policies (see above and specific collaborating university). Failure to notify either institution could result in a grade of "F".

### ***Tuition Refund Policy***

Students who receive tuition support from any extramural fellowships, or other non-RGGGS sources, covering tuition for enrollment in Richard Gilder Graduate School courses or the Graduate Program in Comparative Biology, either in part or in full, are subject to the RGGGS Refund Policy. The Policy applies only to the extent of the external funding directly received by and/or processed by the RGGGS.

Refunds will be made only at the specific request of the student and the discretion of the Dean, in accordance with this Policy, and only to the party from which the original payment was received.

Students are responsible for understanding the terms of their external funding, including if and when a refund is required to be made to the external funder. Students receiving a refund are responsible for remitting such refund to their external funding

source(s), if they are required to do so under the terms of their funding agreement(s) with that source.

**Refunds for Dropping Individual Courses:**

The RGGGS Graduate Program is comprehensive and not designed to accommodate students on a course-by-course basis. In the unusual circumstance where a student is enrolled in and pays tuition to RGGGS for individual courses, requests to withdraw and seeks a refund, the refund will be handled at the discretion of the Dean and in accordance with the schedule below.

**Refunds for Withdrawing from the Graduate Program:**

Students who withdraw from the RGGGS Graduate Program after the start of a term, have paid tuition, and request a refund that is approved by the Dean, are refunded non-RGGGS tuition according the schedule below. A student is considered “registered” until the date on which written notice of withdrawal from the Graduate Program is received by the Richard Gilder Graduate School (must be sent to the Director of Administration: [directorofadministration-rggs@amnh.org](mailto:directorofadministration-rggs@amnh.org)).

**Refund Rate for Withdrawal:**

**Fall, Spring, and Summer Terms**

**Through the end of the first calendar week of the term**

100% non-RGGGS funded tuition refunded

**Second calendar week of the term**

70% non-RGGGS funded tuition refunded

**Third calendar week of the term**

55% non-RGGGS funded tuition refunded

**Fourth calendar week of the term**

25% non-RGGGS funded tuition refunded

**After the fourth calendar week of the term**

NO REFUND

**Winter Term**

**Through the end of the first calendar week of the term**

100% non-RGGGS funded tuition refunded

**After the first calendar week of the term**

NO REFUND

# Grading

## ***RGGS Course Grading***

Evaluation in Core and Elective courses is either by means of traditional examination, structured take-home examination, research paper, or other means as appropriate to the subject matter, as determined by the instructor(s), and as approved by the pertinent RGGS faculty, committees and administration. Schedules for these evaluations (if they are research papers or take-home exams) may extend beyond the term of formal instruction.

The following grades are used for RGGS Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program students:

P	Pass
F	Fail
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawal After 50% of Course Taken
R	Progress (for a course that continues into the following term)
NC	No Credit

Only courses with a passing grade may be counted for residency, course credit, or progress toward an RGGS degree. A change in the type of grade to be awarded in a course must be approved by the instructor, and, after the change period, by the Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School as well.

The grade of Pass means that the student mastered the course objectives and satisfactorily completed all of the course assignments with a distinguished level of overall achievement.

## ***Extramural Students' Grading Scale***

Partner university students enrolled in RGGS courses through formal cross-enrollment agreements and registration processes can be assigned letter grades using the grading scale of their home university. The following scale reflects some of the potential grades for CUNY and Columbia students, following current scales of those partner programs:

A-, A or A+	Excellent
B-, B or B+	Good
C-, C or C+	Fair
D-, D or D+	Passing but poor
F	Failure
I	Incomplete
W	Official Withdrawal After Up to 50% of Course Taken
Y and YC	Progress (for a course that continues into the following term)
UW	Unofficial Withdrawal

## ***Extramural Elective Course Grading for RGGGS Students***

Only grades of B or better will be accepted for credit for any approved courses taken outside of RGGGS, and will be assigned a Pass (P) grade at the RGGGS.

## ***Incomplete Grades***

When an instructor and student agree that the assigned work cannot be completed by the end of the course's term, an instructor may elect to assign a grade of I (Incomplete). If the work is not completed within one subsequent term (including winter and summer terms), the Richard Gilder Graduate School will change the grade from I to F (Fail). In extraordinary circumstances, the student may petition the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC) for an extension for a completion deadline no greater than one year; the CBPPC may consult with the student and instructor as needed.

## ***Grade and Evaluation Appeals***

A student who believes that an assigned grade or evaluation is incorrect should discuss the assignment of the grade or the evaluation with the course instructor. A student who does not agree that the problem has been resolved in this manner should address the concern or submit an appeal in writing (email or paper) to the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (via the Director of Administration), which will seek to resolve the matter with the instructor and student. If no agreement can be reached, then the matter will be referred to the Dean, who may refer it to the Academic Affairs and Fellowships Committee or to an ad hoc committee for review. The ultimate decision of the Dean is final and all grade appeals will be resolved within 90 days of the official complaint being received by the Director of Administration. This appeal process is restricted solely to the class, assignment or examination in question, and will not prejudice the student's status in any other facet of the Graduate School.

## **Transcripts**

A transcript is the official record of a student's coursework and grades listed by term. Other information on the transcript includes the student's name as it appears in the Richard Gilder Graduate School records, degree, degree conferral date, and honors earned. Transcripts cannot be produced for anyone whose record has been put on hold for an outstanding AMNH obligation. A student or alumna/us may request an official transcript by signed, written request (in person, by fax or by mail), including the student's name, social security number, approximate dates of attendance, number of copies requested, and the address to which the transcript(s) should be sent.

## **Personal Information Changes**

It is the responsibility of students to keep their personal, address, and contact information current with the RGGGS at all times. Students may use the student portal to

update their personal information at any time (<https://myrggs.amnh.org>). International students must register with the Director of Administration each term under the rules of the F-1 visa, and also must notify the RGGGS via the Director of Administration of any address changes within 10 days, or sooner if required by U.S. visa regulations.

## **Academic Certification**

An academic certification is an official document provided by the Director of Administration of the Richard Gilder Graduate School that verifies full-time student status by term and degrees(s) earned.

## **Course Evaluations**

Students must complete anonymous course evaluations as a requirement of the course, prior to assignment of a final grade. These evaluations will be conducted on-line before the final exam, final project, or final course grade is due.

Course Evaluations assess the content of the course, the course materials and the instructor's ability to engage and teach students. Course Evaluations always are anonymous and the primary evaluations may only be reviewed by the Provost, Dean, Director of Administration, Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, and the specific instructor(s) who taught the course. Summary reports may be prepared from all the evaluations of any individual course, and these can be made available to students upon request.

Course Evaluations assist the administration and faculty members in evaluating the effectiveness of course material and presentations in meeting the needs of the students and broader academic programs of the RGGGS, and assist faculty by giving valuable feedback on their teaching practices.

## **Assessment of Student Achievement**

The Richard Gilder Graduate School is committed to fostering the success of all students accepted into the program, and faculty are encouraged to provide exceptional guidance and support throughout all students' enrollment in the program. The Graduate School facilitates students' progress through and successful completion of the program through careful monitoring and mentoring, and extensive support for student dissertation research from the earliest stages of their graduate program. There is a program-long student assessment process, implemented throughout each student's enrollment in the doctoral program, detailed in the Individual Student Mentoring/Assessment Plan. Every year, each student in the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology must provide a progress report and self-evaluation during both the fall and spring terms, which are reviewed and assessed by their Advisors/Dissertation Committee members, as well as the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC) and the Dean. The CBPPC is responsible for academic oversight of and advising the Dean on the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology (and consideration of award of an M.Phil. degree), including recruitment, admissions and accompanying fellowship support; advising; dissertations;

qualifying exams; other specific program requirements; and the role of program faculty. If these periodic reports, or other faculty, committee or administrative assessments at any time in the academic year, identify issues that might substantively delay or hinder a student's progress, the Advisor(s) and Dissertation Committee members, Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, and/or the Dean work together to draw up a plan to assist the student in getting back on track for timely completion of the doctoral program.

## **Appointment of Advisors**

### **Academic Advisors**

At the center of student advisement is formal academic advising from faculty. Upon entry to the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology, each student is assigned a **Principal Advisor** and a **Co-Advisor** selected by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee and the Dean taking into account student preferences and based on a close alignment of research interests between student and advisors.

- The **Principal Advisor** must be a Richard Gilder Graduate School faculty member with a professorial and curatorial appointment (a ranked Curator).
- The **Co-Advisor** may be another curatorial faculty member or an Affiliated Faculty member (Affiliated Faculty are professional staff member appointed to the faculty by the Provost upon recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Fellowships Committee).
- Students are expected to meet with their **Principal Advisor** and **Co-Advisor** on a frequent basis to discuss coursework and research progress.
- The students may retain these first-year advisors throughout their course of study and these advisors may make up part of the dissertation committee, or others may be requested during formation of the Dissertation Committee.

### **Non-Academic Mentors and Student Affairs Facilitator**

In addition to formal academic advisors, students are provided with non-academic mentors, who serve as informal role models and sources of information about a range of matters. Each of these mentors is an American Museum of Natural History staff member, including Directors of a variety of major AMNH programs and other Museum staff.

All students have access to the support of a Student Affairs Facilitator (described further, below), who serves as an unofficial ombuds-like facilitator or intermediary, acting with confidentiality (if requested and permitted by AMNH policies) and neutrality. The role of the Student Affairs Facilitator is to provide informal advice to the students, especially in personal and non-academic matters, and to help resolve problems or informal complaints related to their training (but as a facilitator, not an arbiter).

# Academic Advising and Mentoring Procedures

## Year 1: Additional Advising

During the first year, students are further advised by the Dean and faculty members of the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, in addition to mentoring from their Principal and Co-Advisors. The Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee and the Dean have two formal advising interactions with the students and Principal and Co-Advisors throughout the academic year at one **Fall Meeting** and one **Spring Meeting**.

Prior to every confidential meeting, each first-year student submits a progress report to their Principal and Co-Advisors, who check that the student is making satisfactory progress and adds additional comments if desired. The reports cover:

- Student Self-Assessment
  - Progress made to degree, including research accomplishments and courses completed
  - Degree requirements the student expects to complete during the next semester/academic year
  - External fellowships and/or grants applied for
  - Papers and abstracts published, submitted for publication, and/or in preparation for submission
  - Awards and/or noteworthy accomplishments
  - Collection study trips and/or field work completed and/or planned
  - Accomplishments in broader impacts (to science, education and society)
  - Courses taught
  - Courses the student is interested in being considered for a teaching assistantship
  - Any issues encountered that might slow progress to completion of the degree in the four-year program timetable
  - Additional comments
  - Confidential comments to the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee and Dean (not to be shared with the student's Advisor and Co-Advisor).
- Principal Advisor and Co-Advisor evaluation of the student's self-report and progress (check box progress, comments encouraged)
  - Is the student making satisfactory progress to degree completion?
  - Are the student's academic and research goals satisfactory?
  - Is the student's timetable for completing degree requirements reasonable?
  - Any issues that might slow the student's progress to completion of the degree in the four-year program timetable?
  - Additional confidential comments for the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee and the Dean (not to be shared with the student).

This combined report is then sent to the Director of Administration for distribution to the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee prior to the formal meeting.

During the **Fall Meeting** term each student meets privately with the Dean and the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, without their Advisors, to discuss:



- Course work
- Research interests/directions (general)
- Advising/Mentoring (Advisors not included in the meeting, so as to foster open discussion and raising of any concerns)

This Fall term meeting allows the Dean, Committee and student to identify and address any questions or concerns about advisement early, so that the student's progress toward degree completion is not delayed.

During the **Spring Meeting**, the Dean and Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee meet with each student and their Principal Advisor and Co-Advisor. (NB: If a student's Principal Advisor is on the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee that faculty member is recused from the discussions for that student, and serves instead in their role as faculty mentor for this meeting.) This meeting is:

- More research focused
- Occurs as part of the **Annual Progress Review** (see below)
- Occurs after the Student Self-Evaluation and the Principal and Co-Advisor Evaluation have been completed and submitted to the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee and Dean.

### **Years 2-4: Advising**

By the end of the spring term of the first year, students must select a Dissertation Committee, which is reviewed and approved by the Dean. Requests for external members must be reviewed and approved first by the Dean, before being invited to serve on the Committee. After the Committee is formed, it takes the place of the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee in terms of advisement.

- The Dissertation Committee will meet with the student as needed for the student to progress in their dissertation work and program requirements; they also meet formally twice a year with the student to evaluate the student's progress report and self-assessment, with the objective of issuing a report of satisfactory progress on the program and dissertation to the Dean. In addition to focusing on the student's progress with dissertation research, fulfilling degree requirements, and other scholarly activities, the meetings should address possible post-Ph.D. employment opportunities, particularly in the third and fourth year meetings.
- During this time the student may also seek advisement from the Dean, any faculty member, or non-academic mentors or the Student Affairs Facilitator as needed.

### ***Academic Advising During Candidacy***

By the end of the Spring Term of the First Year, the student will select a **Chair of their Dissertation Committee**. This selection must be approved by the Dean. Typically the **Chair of their Dissertation Committee** will be the same faculty member as the **Principal Advisor**. In cases where this may not be the same, see the section below on Changing an Advisor.

## ***Changing a Principal or Co-Advisor or Dissertation Committee Member***

There are many reasons why a student may wish to change a **Principal or Co-Advisor or Dissertation Committee member** such as change in academic focus, personal or professional conflict, or because **an Advisor or Dissertation Committee member** left the graduate school. In all cases, the student or **an Advisor or Dissertation Committee member** should notify a member of the Graduate School administration, a member of the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, or the Dean of a potential issue or prospective change. To formally request a change of Advisor or to the Dissertation Committee membership, application should be made in writing to the Director of Administration, using the *Change to Dissertation Committee* form available from the Director. The Dean will confer with the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee for their recommendation, and Dean's approval is required for any change. (See also, below: Dissertation Committee Formation and Composition).

The CBPPC or the Dean can consult with or request information from the student, and may convene a meeting with the student and/or **the Advisor or Dissertation Committee member**, either separately or together, to help construct a solution that keeps the student's academic career on track and resolves the issue for the student. A change in **an Advisor or Dissertation Committee member** will in no way prejudice the student to any member of the faculty or graduate school. In any event, any change to the Dissertation Committee requires final approval and appointment by the Dean, after consultation with the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, and agreement of the proposed new Advisor or Dissertation Committee member(s).

## ***Career Counseling and Professional Development Opportunities***

The Director of Administration of the Graduate School and other RGGGS administrative staff assist students and alumni in exploring career options, clarifying the connections between skills and career opportunities; adjusting to the different stages of graduate study; navigating their programs; and achieving short- and long-term goals. Consultation is provided about both academic and non-academic careers, and professional development workshops and programs are offered regularly. The Comparative Biology Ph.D. program prepares graduates to pursue careers in a wide variety of settings including universities, museums, governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

The faculty Advisor(s) and the Dissertation Committee provide individual career counseling. Career placement information (job announcements, information on funding opportunities, grant support functions) and a listing of job boards and other career resources ([Job Boards and Career Resources](#)), are maintained by the RGGGS Administration and made available to all students.

There is a diverse array of career opportunities for doctoral graduates from the RGGGS Ph.D. program in Comparative Biology, from traditional academic careers at undergraduate colleges, research universities, museums, zoos, botanical gardens, and aquaria, to employment by government agencies and non-governmental organizations or by the private sector. Private sector opportunities include the fields of biotechnology, food industry, and health. For those trained primarily in the molecular aspects of evidence gathering, there are paths for industry-related positions, such as pharmaceutical research and development, phylogenetically-informed searches for origins, vaccine development for existing diseases, environmental consulting, and bio-defense.

Graduates may also find opportunities open in public advocacy and research policy organizations, private foundations, and think tanks as well as through global efforts. Additional careers include aquaculture, genetic engineering and biotechnology, environmental law, science writing and journalism, teacher-training and other public education initiatives, and high school teaching. Some biologists hold public outreach positions such as interpretive naturalists for environmental education centers and national parks. The need in the field internationally continues to grow. More and more, governments and non-government agencies, particularly in the developing world, require in-country expertise and students from those countries can choose fundamental systematics studies to prepare them to conduct the biotic surveys and biogeographic studies necessary to biodiversity conservation.

## **Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress**

A student must remain in academic “good standing” to be eligible for continuing in the RGGGS Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology, holding RGGGS and other RGGGS-administered fellowships and grants, and requesting copies of transcripts and other documents (not covered under FERPA).

Each year, every student’s academic progress will be assessed through a self-evaluation, as well as advisor input and other metrics and review by the Comparative Biology Ph.D Program Committee, and the Dean will confer a status of either Satisfactory Progress, Satisfactory Progress with Conditions, or Unsatisfactory Progress. While the first two statuses connote “good standing,” the status of Unsatisfactory may result in dismissal from the Program unless other mitigating factors exist. Re-assessment of “good standing” and satisfactory/unsatisfactory progress may be made at any time of the year, should circumstances warrant it (e.g., non-performance of program requirements, disciplinary issues, etc.).

Each student, after their first year, will receive an email confirming their standing, generally no later than September 15 of that calendar year. This letter will be emailed to the student’s AMNH email address. A copy will also be placed in the student’s file located in the Dean’s Office.

## **Satisfactory Progress**

Satisfactory Progress in the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program is made up of many variables, some of which include:

- Student has maintained full-time registration status or full-time residency for the previous academic year unless approved by the Dean;
- Student has passed all classes for which they were registered;
- Student has timely completed and submitted annual self-evaluations for review and approval by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee or the student's Dissertation Committee;
- Student has enrolled in sufficient courses to complete the Ph.D. degree in the intended timetable; and
- Student had demonstrated sufficient skills and abilities to undertake and complete independent scientific research.

## **Satisfactory Progress with Conditions**

If progress is deemed to have some deficiencies, the Dean will issue a review of Satisfactory Progress with certain conditions that must be remedied, which will be formally communicated to the student in writing. The student's Dissertation Committee Chair is responsible for supervising the implementation of remedial efforts and providing a report to the Dean by the end of the Fall Term on the student's subsequent progress. In the event that remedial efforts are unsuccessful, the Dean and the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee will meet to determine appropriate action, which can range from more remediation to dismissal.

## **Unsatisfactory Progress**

The Richard Gilder Graduate School defines unsatisfactory academic performance as:

- Receipt of a grade F (Fail) or any grade other than a P (Pass) in any Richard Gilder Graduate School course, or less than a B grade in any extramural course (unless the student had successfully petitioned the Richard Gilder Graduate School) in an academic year;
- Receipt of more than one Incomplete in a semester;
- Failure to clear an Incomplete by the end of the following semester, or by the end of an extended time period previously approved by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee after petition and review;
- Accumulation of a second Incomplete in the same academic year;
- Failure in program examinations (Qualifying Examination, Dissertation Proposal and Examination);
- Failure to make satisfactory progress towards timely completion of the degree, including but not limited to fulfillment of degree requirements such as teaching assistantships, coursework, examinations, completion of dissertation chapters, or completion of progress reports; and/or
- Other academic performance issues deemed unsatisfactory.

A student whose academic performance is deemed unsatisfactory will be dismissed from the program or put on probation, pursuant to the procedure described below.

## **Academic Probation and Dismissal**

### ***Academic Probation***

A student may be placed on academic probation in the case of unsatisfactory academic progress or multiple incomplete grades. Such academic probation may last up to a maximum of two semesters before the student is dismissed from the Richard Gilder Graduate School.

During the first semester of academic probation, the student must meet weekly with her/his academic advisor to set goals and review progress. During this term, the student must receive no failing grades and must reduce the number of incompletes on his or her record to fewer than two. During the probation, the student will not be allowed to take incompletes in any courses without permission from the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee.

A student can appeal this decision to the Dean, whose decision is final. If the student satisfies all of these requirements, the Dean will evaluate all the pertinent information and may rescind the probation by sending a formal letter to the student's mailing address and placing a copy of the letter in the student's file. A student who fails to meet these conditions will be placed on probation for a second term.

The same requirements for the second term apply as for the first term. If the student satisfies all of the requirements for this second term, the Dean will rescind the probation by sending a formal letter to the student's mailing address and placing a copy of the letter in the student's file.

Any student who has been on academic probation for any two terms will be dismissed from the program and the RGGS if they are in academic probation for a third term, and may appeal using the procedure in this Handbook.

### ***Academic Dismissal and Recourse***

Dismissal for academic reasons is determined by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee or other appropriate committees, as well as the Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School. Reasons for such dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Unsatisfactory academic performance;
- Violation of academic policies;
- Unethical conduct or violation of other conduct rules.

A student may petition to have this determination reviewed within 30 days by the Provost; who may appoint an ad hoc committee from among appropriate staff, deans or officers to review the matter and make recommendations, otherwise, the decision of the Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School is final. During this process, the student

will be considered withdrawn, and will not have access to AMNH facilities or attend classes. The student must return all AMNH property, including computer(s), software, library materials, and ID badge and keys; all AMNH IT access also will be revoked. Any fellowship or other AMNH support will be suspended until a final determination is made.

## **Dean's Discipline**

A student charged with a disciplinary infraction subject to "Dean's Discipline" is entitled to notice of the charges, an opportunity to be heard and an opportunity to appeal a disciplinary decision to the Provost.

Ordinarily, a disciplinary proceeding begins with a written communication from the Office of the Dean requiring the student to attend a disciplinary hearing to respond to a specified charge. (In rare cases, the proceeding may begin with an oral communication requiring the presence of the student at a hearing.) The hearing is held before the Dean and two other members of the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee appointed by the Dean. The hearing is a fact-finding, not an adversarial courtroom-type, proceeding; the student need not be present to hear other witnesses and there is no formal cross-examination of witnesses or objecting to evidence. In addition, although students are always free to consult an attorney, they may not have an attorney present during a disciplinary hearing or at any appeal.

The student is informed of the evidence that led to the charges against him or her and asked to respond. The student may offer his or her own evidence. This includes the student's own appearance at the hearing and may include the appearance by others (witnesses) on his or her behalf and any written submission or relevant documents the student may wish to submit. After the Dean and the representatives of the Committee have heard the student and others and considered all the evidence, it reaches a determination and notifies the student in writing of that decision. If the student is found to have committed a disciplinary infraction, the penalty can include censure, probation, suspension and dismissal.

The student has the right to appeal a decision that results from a disciplinary hearing to the Provost who may appoint two members of the Faculty to advise him in the matter. The appeal must be made to the Provost in writing within seven days of the time the student is notified of the decision, and it must clearly state the grounds for appeal. Normally, on such an appeal, the Provost relies solely upon the written record and does not conduct a new factual investigation. The Provost focuses upon whether, in the Provost's view, the decision made and the discipline imposed are reasonable under all of the circumstances of the case. There is no further appeal within the Graduate School.

## **Self-Evaluation Procedures**

One of the main inputs in determining academic standing is the student's annual self-evaluation. Each student must complete a progress report and self-evaluation by the end of the spring term.

The report must include updates on:

- completion of coursework
- internships
- teaching responsibilities
- research planning and progress
- fieldwork
- funding
- presentations and publications

This report is first submitted to the student's Principal Advisor or Dissertation Committee Chair, who will sign-off on it and send it to the Director of Administration who will forward it to the appropriate committee:

- First year students will be evaluated by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee.
- Students beyond the first year will be evaluated by their Dissertation Committee.

The report, along with the progress assessment and comments provided by the Principal Advisor, Dissertation Committee Chair and Committees, is reviewed by the Comparative Ph.D. Program Committee, and by the Dean during his or her annual review of students' progress.

# Academic Advisement and Planning Chart

**Instructions:** This form can be used as a student advisement tool and degree progress tool. Faculty members are encouraged to compare their advisee's progress against this chart and work out advisement plans to assure student achievement and success in the program. You may replace the course work or other milestones with actual accomplishments for better advisement.

<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>Advising and Mentoring</b> Regular meetings between <b>Principal Advisor, Co-Advisor</b> and student	<b>Core Courses and Seminar 13 Credits total</b>	<b>Elective Course Work 15 Credits total</b>	<b>Research Progress &amp; Research Credits 27 Credits total</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Presentations/ Publications</b>	<b>Other Degree Requirements</b>
<b>Fall 1</b> Registration Deadline Sep 1	<b>Fall Progress Review</b> 1) Student Annual Fall Progress Report to Advisor and Director of Administration 2) Advisor Report to Director of Administration 3) Student and Advisor Reports to Dean and CBPPC 4) Individual student meeting with the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC)	2 Core Courses  Seminar Part 1  <b>Automatically registered</b>  8 credits total	Optional elective credits.  Principal Advisor approves courses	Identify research area, techniques, field components required	Apply for NSF fellowship or other fellowship funding (in Grantsmanship Core Course)		Residency Unit, Full-time status
<b>Winter 1</b> Registration Deadline Jan 1			Optional elective credits  Principal Advisor approves courses	Refine research area; learn techniques, field components required.  Register for 1 research credit  Principal Advisor approves prospectus (student download from MyRGGS)			Residency Unit, Full-time status
<b>Spring 1</b> Registration Deadline Jan 1	<b>Formal Annual Progress Review of Student consisting of:</b> 1) Student Annual Spring Progress Report to Advisor and Director of Administration 2) Advisor Report to Director of Administration 3) Student and Advisor Reports to Dean and CBPPC 4) Individual student and advisor meeting with the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee and Dean. 5) Dean Memo on Progress	1 Core course  Seminar Part 2  <b>Automatically registered</b>  5 Credits total	3-6 elective credits <b>min.</b>  Principal Advisor approves courses	Thesis research topic identified; develop overall strategic plan for research including goals and funding needs through the end of the program.  Register for 2 research credits  Principal Advisor approves prospectus (student download from MyRGGS)			Residency Unit, Full-time status  <b>Dissertation Committee Formation</b> Form dissertation committee and register for PhD Qualifying exam via MyRGGS ( <b>Apr-1</b> )
<b>Summer 1</b> Registration Deadline June 1		<b>13 CREDITS FROM CORE COURSES AND SEMINAR MUST BE COMPLETE</b>	Optional elective credits  Principal Advisor approves courses	Complete first fieldwork experience  Register for 3 research credits  Principal Advisor approves prospectus (student download from MyRGGS)		Publish or present first paper  Prepare for student symposium  Write draft DDIG	Residency Unit, Full-time status  <b>Qualifying exams-preparation/begin.</b>



<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>Advising and Mentoring</b> Regular meetings between <b>Dissertation Committee</b> & student	<b>Elective Course Work 15 Credits total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Required Teaching 6 Credits total</b>	<b>Research Progress &amp; Research Credits 27 Credits total</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Presentations/ Publications</b>	<b>Other Degree Requirements</b>
<b>Fall 2</b> Registration Deadline Sep 1	At least 1 formal meeting between Dissertation Committee and Student to provide feedback to Dean.  <b>Fall Progress Review:</b> 1) Student Annual Fall Progress Report to Dissertation Committee and Director of Administration 2) Dissertation Committee Meeting 3) Chair Report to Director of Administration 4) Student and Chair Reports to Dean and CBPPC	3-6 elective credits <b>min.</b> Register for 2 research credits  Dissertation Committee Chair approves courses	1st teaching option  Student assigned to courses by Director of Administration with input from Dean and Diss. Committee as needed	Thesis research  Register for 2 research credits  Dissertation Committee Chair approves prospectus (student download from MyRGGS)	Receive GRFP Funding, or apply if did not in Yr. 1  1st Application for NSF DDIG	Participate in student symposium (1 credit)	Residency Unit, Full-time status  <b>Qualifying exams.</b> Take home format.  Four questions based on Core courses and individual research topics.  Passing grade required to advance to candidacy.
<b>Winter 2</b> Registration Deadline Jan 1		Optional elective credits  Dissertation Committee Chair approves courses		Thesis research  Register for 1 research credit  Dissertation Committee Chair approves prospectus (student download from MyRGGS)			Residency Unit, Full- time status
<b>Spring 2</b> Registration Deadline Jan 1	At least 1 formal meeting between Dissertation Committee and Student to provide feedback to Dean.  <b>Formal Annual Progress Review of Student consisting of:</b> 1) Student Annual Spring Progress Report to Dissertation Comm 2) Dissertation Committee Meeting 3) Chair Report to Director of Administration 4) Student and Chair Reports to Dean and CBPPC 5) Dean Memo on Progress	3-6 elective credits <b>min.</b>  Dissertation Committee Chair approves courses	2nd teaching option (fall or spring)	Thesis research Register for 2 research credits  Dissertation Committee Chair approves prospectus (student download from MyRGGS)			Residency Unit, Full- time status  <b>Dissertation Proposal and Examination:</b> Submit proposal to MyRGGS ( <b>Feb-1</b> ) Conduct examination ( <b>no later than Mar-1</b> ) Committee reports results to Dean ( <b>no later than Mar-15</b> )
<b>Summer 2</b> Registration Deadline June 1		Complete elective credits if necessary  Dissertation Committee Chair approves courses		Thesis research; second field season  Register for 3 research credits  Dissertation Committee Chair approves prospectus (student download from MyRGGS)		Publish second paper; present preliminary research results at conference in field	Residency Unit, Full-time status

<sup>1</sup> Core courses & seminar done in year 1

## See Details on specific advising and sign-off requirements in Year 2

<b>YEARS 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>Advising and Mentoring</b> Regular meetings between <b>Dissertation Committee</b> and student	<b>Elective Course Work 15 Credits total<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Required Teaching 6 Credits total</b>	<b>Research Progress &amp; Research Credits 27 Credits total</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Presentations/ Publications</b>	<b>Other Degree Requirements</b>
Fall 3 Sep 1	At least 1 formal meeting between Dissertation Committee and Student to provide feedback to Dean.  <b>Fall Progress Review:</b> 1) Student Annual Fall Progress Report to Dissertation Committee and Director of Administration 2) Dissertation Committee Meeting 3) Chair Report to Director of Administration 4) Student and Chair Reports to Dean and CBPPC	Complete elective credits if necessary.	3rd teaching option	Register for 2 research credits.	Receive 1st attempt NSF-DDIG funding (2nd Application for NSF DDIG)		Residency Unit, Full-time status
Winter 3 Jan 1				Register for 1 research credit			Residency Unit, Full-time status
Spring 3 Jan 1	At least 1 formal meeting between Dissertation Committee and Student to provide feedback to Dean.  <b>Formal Annual Progress Review of Student consisting of:</b> 1) Student Annual Spring Progress Report to Dissertation Committee 2) Dissertation Committee Meeting 3) Chair Report to Director of Administration 4) Student and Chair Reports to Dean and CBPPC 5) Dean Memo on Progress	<b>15 ELECTIVE CREDITS SHOULD BE COMPLETE</b>	4th teaching option	Register for 2 research credits		Publication/Presentation of initial work	Residency Unit, Full-time status
Summer 3 Jun 1				Register for 3 research credits			Residency Unit, Full-time status

<sup>2</sup> Core courses & seminar done in year 1

<p>Fall 4 Sep 1</p>	<p>At least 1 formal meeting between Dissertation Committee and Student to provide feedback to Dean.</p> <p><b>Fall Progress Review:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Student Annual Fall Progress Report to Dissertation Committee and Director of Administration</li> <li>2) Dissertation Committee Meeting</li> <li>3) Chair Report to Director of Administration</li> <li>4) Student and Chair Reports to Dean and CBPPC</li> </ol>		<p>5<sup>th</sup> teaching option</p>	<p>Register for 2 research credits</p>	<p>Receive 2nd attempt NSF-DDIG funding</p>	<p>Publication/Presentation of thesis research components</p>	<p>Residency Unit, Full-time status</p> <p>In extenuating circumstances, if relevant, submit petition for 5<sup>th</sup> year of support to Director of Administration <b>(by Dec-31)</b></p> <p>Review of request by CBPPC and Dean and Approval/Denial <b>(after review, during Winter-Spring term)</b></p>
<p>Winter 4 Jan 1</p>			<p><b>6 TEACHING CREDITS SHOULD BE COMPLETE</b></p>	<p>Register for 1 research credit.</p>			<p>Residency Unit, Full-time status</p>
<p>Spring 4 Jan 1</p>	<p>At least 1 formal meeting between Dissertation Committee and Student to provide feedback to the CBPPC and Dean.</p> <p><b>Formal Annual Progress Review of Student consisting of:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Student Annual Spring Progress Report to Dissertation Committee</li> <li>2) Dissertation Committee Meeting</li> <li>3) Chair Report to Director of Administration</li> <li>4) Student and Chair Reports to Dean and CBPPC</li> <li>5) Dean Memo on Progress</li> </ol>			<p>Register for 2 research credits</p>			<p>Residency Unit, Full-time status</p> <p>Registrar Degree Audit &amp; Approval for Graduation <b>(during Spring term or by Aug-1)</b></p>
<p>Summer 4 Jun 1</p>				<p><b>27 RESEARCH CREDITS SHOULD BE COMPLETE</b></p>			<p>Residency Unit, Full-time status</p> <p>Public Dissertation Examination <b>(by July-31)</b></p> <p>Deposit thesis <b>(by Aug-31)</b></p> <p><b>Commencement in the Fall!</b></p>

<b>Year 5 (partial/full, if necessary &amp; approved)</b>	<b>Advising and Mentoring</b>	<b>Required ADDITIONAL Teaching or Course Development ~6 Credits total</b>	<b>Research Progress</b>	<b>Presentations/Publications</b>	<b>Progress to Degree</b>
Fall 5 Sep 1	Regular meetings between dissertation committee and student.	Teaching/course development mandatory Dean will assign course	Thesis research/writing	Publication/Presentation of thesis research components	Residency Unit, Full-time status  Complete detailed work and request continuation into next term if necessary <b>(Oct-1)</b>  Submit application for graduation, registrar degree audit and approval for graduation in January, dissertation examination, submit thesis (consult with Director of Administration for timing)
Winter 5 Jan 1	Regular meetings between dissertation committee and student.	Teaching/course development mandatory Dean will assign course	Thesis research/writing	Publication/Presentation of thesis research components	Residency Unit, Full-time status  Complete detailed work and request continuation into next term if necessary <b>(Jan-1)</b>
Spring 5 Jan 1	Regular meetings between dissertation committee and student	Teaching/course development mandatory Dean will assign course	Thesis research/writing	Publication/Presentation of thesis research components	Residency Unit, Full-time status  Submit application for graduation <b>(Feb-1)</b>  Registrar Degree Audit & Approval for Graduation <b>(Mar-1)</b>  Public Dissertation Examination <b>(May-1)</b>  Submit thesis <b>(May-15)</b>
Summer 5 to End of Program	Regular meetings between dissertation committee and student				Residency Unit and Full-time status, if pertinent  Complete detailed work and request continuation into next term if necessary <b>(Oct-1, Jan-1, Jun-1 every year)</b>

## **Doctoral Candidacy**

Students are expected to apply for candidacy no later than April 1 at the end of their first year. The application process is the submission and approval of the *Dissertation Committee Form and Application to Candidacy*. After this application, students must attain candidacy no later than November 30 of their second year, or request in writing an extension from the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC).

### ***Candidacy Application Requirements***

In order to apply for candidacy students must:

- Pass all three core courses, the two first-year seminar courses, and the first-year fall semester symposium;
- Achieve "Pass" (or equivalent) grades in all courses;
- Form a Dissertation Committee; and
- Pass the Qualifying Examination.

To apply for candidacy, students must complete the *Dissertation Committee Form and Application to Candidacy*, have their advisor sign it, and return it to the Director of Administration.

### ***Dissertation Committee Formation and Composition***

Students should begin to form their Dissertation Committee and have it approved by the Dean as early as possible, and no later than the end of the Spring Term of their first year.

The Dissertation Committee will comprise at least three core members, consisting of:

- The student's Principal Advisor, from the RGGGS Curatorial Professorial Faculty, will serve as the Committee Chair;
- Two additional committee members from the RGGGS Curatorial or Affiliated Professorial Faculty (may include a Co-Advisor).

In addition to the three "core members," if approved by the Dean in advance, the Dissertation Committee may include up to two additional members from the following:

- RGGGS Curatorial, Affiliated, or Adjunct Faculty;
- An expert from outside the AMNH (typically holding the rank of adjunct, assistant, associate or full professor or curator from an accredited university or other approved institution).

At least 50% of the Dissertation Committee members must be RGGGS Curatorial Faculty.

A Dissertation Committee generally will not have more than five members. In cases where there is a tied vote in a dissertation examination, the case will be referred to the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC) for evaluation and a recommendation to the Dean, who will make the final decision.

The student must complete the *Dissertation Committee Form and Application to Candidacy*, have each of the Dissertation Committee members sign the form, and return the form to the Director of Administration. Additional supporting documentation may be required prior to the Dean's approval of the composition of the Dissertation Committee. The student will be notified in writing once the Dissertation Committee structure is approved.

To request a change to the Dissertation Committee (adding or changing a member, changing advisor, etc.), application should be made in writing to the Director of Administration, using the *Change to Dissertation Committee* form available from the Director. The Dean will confer with the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC) on all requested changes other than to add a member. The Dean's approval is required in all cases. If a member of the CBPPC is closely tied to the issues at hand, the Dean may ask the member to be recused. If the issue is with the Dean, the Provost may ask the Dean to be recused. After review of the requests, a decision will be transmitted to the Director of Administration, who will convey the decision to the student and update RGGGS administrative records.

## ***Qualifying Examination***

### **Qualifying Examination Process**

Near the beginning of the fall term of the second year, students will be required to take a comprehensive qualifying examination; dates for the exam each year will be provided to students by the Director of Administration. The goal of this exam is to assess the student's depth of knowledge and expertise both in general knowledge and knowledge specific to his or her research interests. Satisfactory completion of the qualifying exam, in combination with passing grades in all of the Core Courses, will establish a student's doctoral candidacy in the second year.

### **Qualifying Exam Committees (QEC)**

- In the Spring or Summer Term of each year the Director of Administration will form the QECs; one for each student taking the Qualifying Examination.
- QECs will consist of:
  - 4 **unique** members
    - 1 from each Core Course (2 total)
    - 1 Dissertation Chair/Principal Advisor
    - 1 Dissertation Committee Representative
- The members of the QEC design, review and grade questions for the student.
- The QEC will only meet in the event of an oral exam which will consist of above Committee members as well as a 5th member assigned by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC) to chair the meeting.
- The Core Course instructors will be randomly assigned to the QEC by the Director of Administration using the random number generator at random.org (per procedures outlined below). Past and current Core Course instructors may serve as QEC examiners, but will not sit on more than 2 Committees for an individual core course.

- Order of assignments
  - The Director of Administration will contact each Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor and ask them to name in writing an additional Dissertation Committee member to the QEC.
  - If the additional member is also a Core Course Instructor, they will not be eligible to serve on the QEC for that student as a Core Course Examiner, hence they will not be in the random pool for that student.
  - For each Core Course Examiner:
    - Each instructor for each course will each be assigned a range of numbers: 1-10, 11-20, 21-30; alphabetically by last name in odd years and reverse alphabetically in even years
    - The Director of Administration will first assign the *Systematics and Biogeography* instructors and next the *Evolution* instructors in odd numbered years and the reverse order in even numbered years
    - For each assignment the Director of Administration will press the random number generator button after setting the appropriate values (such as 1-30, based on the number of instructors). The assignments to Committees will be in alphabetical order by student last name in odd years and reverse alphabetically in even years
    - If the random generator picks an instructor already serving on the QEC in another capacity, the Director of Administration will hit the button again until another member is chosen
    - If the random generator picks a core course instructor already serving on another QEC for that same course, the Director of Administration will hit the button again until another member is chosen. If necessary because other membership requirements (e.g., service as an Advisor/Dissertation Committee member examiner) limit the pool of eligible instructors, a core course instructor may serve on a second QEC
    - The Director of Administration will record in the RGGS files when multiple pushes were needed and for which students

#### Questions (4)

- There will be two types of questions: **Core Course Related** and **Student's Research Related**
  - **Core Course Related** questions cover topics or themes related to those courses and may also be related to the student's research interests, and will include:
    - 1 from the *Systematics and Biogeography* Core Course examiner
    - 1 from the *Evolution* Core Course examiner
      - Core course questions will be designed by instructors randomly chosen by the Director of Administration (see process above); these two core course examiners should

review each other's questions to ensure that they differ sufficiently.

- **Student's Research Related** questions are specifically designed to test the student's readiness to perform research in their stated area of interest, and will include:
  - 1 from the student's Principal Advisor/Dissertation Chair
  - 1 from a representative of the student's Dissertation Committee
    - Research related questions will be designed individually, but dissertation committee examiners should review each other's questions to ensure that they differ sufficiently.
- 5 page maximum length (inclusive of text answers, figures, references, etc.) answer per question, following the [NSF Proposal Guidelines](#).
- Written, "take-home" format

### Question Development

- The Qualifying Exam Committee (QEC) should construct the exam questions for the student and copies of the questions should be submitted in writing to the Director of Administration by the deadline indicated by the Director.
  - 1 from the *Systematics and Biogeography* Core Course examiner (geared towards each student's areas of research interests)
  - 1 from the *Evolution* Core Course examiner (geared towards each student's areas of research interests)
  - 1 from the student's advisor
  - 1 from the student's Dissertation Committee member
  - For each question, there should be a short set of points/objectives that the questioner is looking for in the answer; this will be provided to the pertinent QEC examiners.
- Questions on the **Core Courses** should be based on the scope of the course material covered in the core courses taken by that student, and should take the student's research interests into consideration.
  - Syllabi from the Core Courses taken by the student will be provided to the QEC examiners.
  - Research interest information from the student's thesis committee form will be provided to the QEC examiners, who also may ask the student about their research to help design the question.
  - Core course examiners may elect to design questions individually or together with co-instructors in the Core Course.
  - All questions, including any group-developed questions, should be answerable in part through the student's current research and interests.

### Time Limit & Time Line

- 1 week (7 days).
- The exam will be emailed by the Director of Administration to each student.



- Students will return the completed exam by email to the Director of Administration, by the deadline indicated.
- This exam is, like all exams, subject to the Academic Integrity Policy which means in part that all work on the examination questions is to be independent and that the student may consult inanimate sources.
- The student may not consult or collaborate with anyone about the exam questions, but may submit a request to the Director of Administration for clarification on the meaning of any question. The Director of Administration will consult the examiner(s) and respond with the answer(s) to the student. Since the exam duration is fixed, any questions should be submitted early in the exam process.

### **Examination Grading**

- The Director of Administration will email the completed exams to the QEC, typically by noon of the day following the end of the exam.
- The QEC members will review and grade the exam, and communicate the grades in writing to the Director of Administration, within one week.
- Each question will be independently reviewed by 2 Committee members.
  - For both of the Core course questions, the Core instructors will review the answers to each question.
  - For the Advisor and Dissertation Committee member questions, those examiners will review the answers to each of their two questions.
  - A final grade will be given by consensus for each question by the pertinent pair of QEC examiners.
- A student must pass all four questions unanimously, or follow the Oral Exam Component process below.
- The Director of Administration will communicate the examination results to the students in writing.

### **Remediation Process**

- A 60-minute oral exam will be required if a student does not pass one or more exam questions.
  - For a single question not passed, the student will be examined on topics, methods and areas related to the original question.
  - The same question that the student did not pass may be part of the exam, but cannot be its exclusive focus.
  - If a student did not pass more than one question, the student may be questioned on any topic in comparative biology and its relationship to the student's research field, but the exam should generally focus on topics, methods, and areas related to the original questions not passed, and their relationship to the student's research field.
- The entire QEC will be present for the exam, including an Oral Exam Chair assigned by the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC). In

extenuating circumstances, a replacement examiner may be arranged by the Director of Administration, in consultation with the Dean.

- The Oral Exam Chair will participate in the questioning and grading by vote.
- The Oral Exam Chair will call for a secret grading ballot (voting options are *Pass [P]* or *Non-Pass [NP]*) . The Chair should vote in secret along with the other members.
- The Chair will tally the results.
- There will be one grade of *Pass* or *Non-Pass* for the oral exam, based on the results of the secret ballot. A majority is required for a grade of Pass or Non-Pass.
- The Oral Exam Chair will notify the Director of Administration in writing of the student's grade by 5pm the next day, using the *Oral Exam Results Form* furnished by the Director of Administration in advance of the exam.
- In case of a Non-Pass, the student must appear before the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC) by November 15 for an oral examination of 60 minutes.
- The same procedure as above will be followed for the oral examination by the CBPPC.
- The Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee will notify the Director of Administration in writing of the student's grade by 5pm the next day using the *Oral Exam Results Form* furnished by the Director of Administration in advance of the oral exam.
- In case of Non-Pass grades on both of the oral exams, the student is assigned a grade of Fail for the Qualifying Examination, and the student may be dismissed from the program.

### **Appeals Process**

- A student may appeal a failure of the qualifying exam in writing to the Director of Administration within 10 days of the oral exam with the CBPPC. The Dean may form a committee to investigate. The Dean will reach a final decision within 90 days of submittal of an appeal. The Dean's decision will be final and not subject to further appeal.
- The Dean may uphold the Qualifying exam Fail grade or direct the student to complete other remedial measures within a specified time frame, as determined by the Dean in consultation with the CBPPC. In the case of remedial measures, the Dean and CBPPC will review remediation efforts and determine if they have been satisfactorily completed, within the specified time frame; if they have not, then the student will be dismissed from the program.

# ***Dissertation Proposal and Proposal Examination Procedures***

## **Overview**

By February 1 of the second year, candidates are expected to present a proposal of their dissertation research to their Dissertation Committee. This includes a written proposal, with an elaboration of preliminary research results documenting work during the first two years in the program and justification of proposed dissertation research plan and methods.

By March 1 candidates will be questioned and examined by the Dissertation Committee on the merit and feasibility of the proposed study, as well as on their preparedness to achieve their outlined goals. In addition to examination, the Dissertation Committee may make suggestions for enhancement of the proposed research plan.

By March 15 a report summarizing the results of this examination will be submitted to the Dean's office.

Requests for exceptions to this timetable may be made only under extenuating circumstances (e.g., emergency situations, or unavoidable scheduling conflicts, such as fieldwork travel), and must be submitted in advance in writing to the Director of Administration for review and decision.

## **Dissertation Proposal Format and Procedures**

- Written proposal of five to eight pages;
- The page limit should include all text, figures, and tables (citations may be appended separately if following the eight-page limit and guidelines for an NSF DDIG) and should be written according to NSF proposal margin and spacing requirements (students will receive the NSF guidelines from RGGGS);
- Completed by February 1 and uploaded to MyRGGGS.

## **Examination Scheduling**

It is each student's responsibility to schedule the examination with his or her Dissertation Committee before March 1 and notify the RGGGS Departmental Administrator of the date and time. The examination generally will take place in the dean's conference room. The student should reserve the room with the RGGGS Departmental Administrator.

RGGGS requires all Core members of the Dissertation Committee (the first three members on the dissertation form, including chair/advisor, from the RGGGS faculty as defined in this Handbook) to be present for the examination. RGGGS encourages the examination to include all members of the Dissertation Committee, with outside members participating by teleconference if necessary. It is each student's responsibility to confirm, in December, the availability of their three core Committee Members for the in-person, on-site dissertation proposal exam that is to be held before March 1. If any core Dissertation Committee Member's schedule precludes them from participating in

the Exam in February, the student must submit a Petition for an Exam Extension in writing to the Director of Administration. That petition, which must propose a new Exam date and include an email from each core Dissertation Committee Member agreeing to the proposed change of date, is due to the Director of Administration no later than January 7 for review and determination. That Petition can only request postponing the exam, not postponement of the February 1 deadline for the student to submit the Dissertation Proposal.

If a student is unable to schedule an exam meeting after several attempts, the student should request scheduling assistance by contacting the RGGGS Departmental Administrator.

### **Examination Format (up to 2 hours total)**

The student must prepare and present a 20-30 minute talk based on their dissertation proposal. The Dissertation Committee will then have 90-100 minutes to question the student. After the questioning, the Dissertation Committee will confer, with each member discussing performance on the exam, and then complete and submit the Dissertation Exam Report to the Director of Administration.

### **Outcomes of the Examination**

At the end of the examination, the student leaves the room, and the Dissertation Committee members conduct a secret written ballot grading the student's proposal and examination performance. Points are based on a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (high), using integers only. The points represent the examiner's assessment of the quality of the student's written proposal, presentation, and how the student answered questions. The points will be averaged by the Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor, the final averaged score indicating one of three possible outcomes:

- >2: **Pass**
- 1.6 to 2: **Conditional Pass**; Pass upon completion of specific condition(s)
- <1.6: **Fail**

Once the exam vote is tallied, a discussion is required among the Dissertation Committee members (still in closed session) to determine if any additional recommendations (informal, for those with a Pass) or required conditions (for those with a Conditional Pass), such as course work, modifications to a research paper or the dissertation prospectus, etc., should be satisfied by the student, regardless of the average score. Ideally a consensus should be reached about any required conditions (i.e., those required by a grade of Conditional Pass), but if consensus is not reached, required conditions must be approved by a supermajority (at least 60%) of the Dissertation Committee members present (i.e.: 2/3, 3/4, 3/5).

Once the Dissertation Committee determines the outcome of the Proposal Exam, the student is called back into the room, informed of the examiners' decision and provided a reasonable verbal summary of his/her performance by the Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor, and Dissertation Committee members as appropriate.

If the vote is a grade of **Pass** (average of >2 points) the Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor will report this passing grade in writing to the Director of Administration. Any additional conditions or recommendations are informal, between the student and Dissertation Committee only, and do not need to be reported to the Director of Administration.

If the vote is a grade of **Conditional Pass** (average of 1.6 to 2 points), the Dissertation Committee must determine conditions that must be met via a proscribed plan. The completion date to fulfill these conditions should be no later than September 30 of that year, to be re-evaluated and approved by the Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor will report this initial grade of **Conditional Pass** in writing to the Director of Administration and provide a copy of the student's conditions and timetable. At the end of the re-evaluation time period, the Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor will notify the Director of Administration in writing if the grade should be changed to **Pass** (if the conditions are met) or **Fail** (if the conditions are not met).

Any **Conditional Pass** left unchanged after December 31 of the year in which the exam took place automatically will be changed to a **Fail**. In this case a student will be dismissed from the program following the procedures in this Handbook.

If the vote is for an exam grade of **Fail** (average of <1.6 points), the student may leave immediately, but must leave by the end of the current academic year (June 30).

### **Dissertation Examination Report**

There is a standardized form for the report that will be distributed to the Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor prior to the meeting. The report form requests the student's name, list of Dissertation Committee Members present at the exam, subject or working title of the dissertation, averaged score from the exam, and room for commentary from each examiner (which is optional for a grade of Pass, but mandatory for a grade of Conditional Pass or Fail). The Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor should also attach a copy of the proposal to the report and a summary of the deliberations of the Dissertation Committee. The report should be emailed to the Director of Administration for submission to the Dean no later than March 15, or 10 days after the exam date for an approved Exam Extension.

### **Petition for Extension to the Dissertation Proposal Timetable**

Due to the accelerated nature of the program, students should endeavor to stay on the proscribed timetable for the dissertation proposal and exam. Only in exceptional circumstances may a student petition, in writing, for an extension of this timetable. Such exceptional circumstances may include active military service or other pre-approved leave of absence covering this time frame (pre-approved by the Dean), emergency medical conditions confirmed by a physician, or pre-arranged field- or off-site work which is essential to the student's overall research agenda. In this last case,

the necessity of the work must be documented and first approved by their Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor, who should indicate that the off-site work is necessary and practical only during this time and cannot or should not be delayed or moved forward so as to remove scheduling conflict with this examination. In all cases, the petition (and Dissertation Committee Chair/Principal Advisor approval, if pertinent) must be transmitted by email to the Director of Administration, who will bring it to the CBPPC for recommendation to the Dean. The Dean will have final and absolute decision-making authority. Note that this same petition process may be used to request an extension of Conditional Pass timetables.

## ***Dissertation Requirements***

Award of the AMNH Ph.D. degree in Comparative Biology requires a written dissertation, a scholarly treatise that substantiates one or more specific points of view based on and as a result of original research conducted by the candidate during the candidate's graduate study, which must be approved by the Principal Advisor and the Dissertation Committee. The candidate must present their dissertation research in an open public seminar conducted by the Dissertation Committee, and then present a defense of the dissertation in an oral examination before a closed session of the Dissertation Committee. Prior to deposit, the Director of Administration must review and approve the style and formatting of the dissertation. The final review is by the Dean, who must certify the dissertation's compliance with RGGs doctoral program guidelines and policies.

## **Style and Formatting**

Final deposit of the dissertation and copies must follow certain guidelines as outline in the *Procedures and Guidelines for Preparation and Filing of the Doctoral Dissertation*. Candidates have the option of submitting as part of the dissertation an organized series of relatively independent chapters consisting of papers that have been published, have been submitted, or will be submitted for publication to journals, books, or other scholarly publications in the field. Published papers included in the dissertation should be presented in the format of the journal in which they are to be published. While these may include papers with multiple authors, the candidate must issue a statement of her or his particular input and effort into each piece of work, and its relationship to the student's research; such statement(s) should be incorporated into the introduction to the dissertation or an introductory chapter. Understanding that there are a range of dissertation and publishing models in academic scholarship, and recognizing that the doctoral dissertation demonstrates the student's scholarly leadership and independence, the student would typically be encouraged to be sole or first author on the majority of any papers included as part of the dissertation; at a minimum, the student must be the first author on at least one of the papers. The student should work closely with their Dissertation Committee to determine the appropriateness of any papers to be included in the dissertation. Unpublished papers should be formatted for the target journal to which that chapter is to be submitted. As a consequence, different chapters within a single dissertation may have different formats.

The dissertation must include an introduction (or introductory chapter) that should prepare the reader for what follows by stating the specific problem(s) or question(s) studied and the research strategy(ies) used. It may delineate the boundaries of the problem(s) or question(s), and it may review studies pertinent to the dissertation. It should also relate how any published or submitted papers included within the dissertation relate to the overall research objectives of the candidate, and elaborate upon the candidate's particular input and effort into each piece of work. The final chapter of the dissertation must provide a discussion of the student's research results, findings, and conclusions. Individual chapters, even if not yet submitted, can be formatted generically as they would be for journal submittal (i.e., with its own abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, references, etc.). The Director of Administration will provide more detailed rules and guidelines for dissertation preparation to students during a meeting in the Fall term of their fourth year, or by student request.

### **Dissertation Defense Clearance Approvals**

In consultation with the candidate, the Dissertation Committee Chair will make a preliminary determination that the dissertation is considered "defensible." An intended defense date should be identified to take place no less than four weeks following this determination. The defense then can be formally scheduled and announced by the RGGGS Administrative Office. The candidate must provide copies of the dissertation to each member of his/her Dissertation Committee at least one month prior to the intended defense date.

In the unlikely event that the Dissertation Committee Chair and the student are unable to reach agreement that the dissertation is "defensible," the student may seek advice and facilitation to resolve the disagreement through consultation with the RGGGS Student Affairs Facilitator (see pertinent section of this Handbook), or through consultation with the RGGGS Administration or Dean's office. If such facilitation does not result in resolution of the disagreement, the three core members of the student's Dissertation Committee shall promptly review the dissertation and decide the issue within 30 days via a majority of the core members, who must favorably affirm that the dissertation is "defensible." The intended defense date should be identified to take place no less than four weeks following a favorable determination that the dissertation is "defensible."

### **Dissertation Defense Submittals**

At least two weeks prior to the intended defense date, the *Dissertation Reviewers Report Form* must be completed by the core members of the candidate's Dissertation Committee and submitted by the Dissertation Committee Chair to the Director of Administration. Using this report form, the candidate's Dissertation Committee core members must certify by consensus that the doctoral dissertation is "ready for defense" and that there is a reasonable expectation both that the candidate will be able to address any questions about or shortcomings in the doctoral dissertation, and that only minor to moderate revisions to the written dissertation might be required following the

oral defense. The approval of the dissertation as “defensible” by the Dissertation Committee does not imply that the dissertation will be passed by the full examining committee during the final oral defense, or that major revisions to the dissertation might not be required.

### **Scheduling the Final Oral Defense**

A final oral defense of the written doctoral dissertation is required, and must be scheduled to take place no less than two weeks prior to the pertinent dissertation deadline for that term. Once all faculty and Dissertation Committee approvals have been completed and the *Dissertation Reviewers Report Form* has been submitted, the defense will be formally scheduled by the RGGGS Administrative Office. An electronic copy of the doctoral dissertation must be submitted to the Director of Administration at least two weeks prior to the defense date. The scheduled defense will be announced publicly, and copy of the dissertation will be available for public review within the RGGGS Administrative Office (the copy of the dissertation cannot be removed from the office, and cannot be copied).

### **Final Oral Defense of the Doctoral Dissertation**

The doctoral dissertation defense will be chaired by the candidate’s Dissertation Committee Chair. The Dissertation Defense Committee will consist of the previously approved members of the student’s full Dissertation Committee. The student’s entire Dissertation Committee is expected to attend and participate in the defense; procedures for dealing with extenuating circumstances are detailed below.

### **Remote Participation in a Dissertation Defense**

The Dissertation Committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire dissertation defense and during the Committee’s private deliberations following the examination. In cases of emergency or other extreme and unexpected circumstances, the RGGGS Administrative Office will try to facilitate participation by the absent member via video teleconferencing, but if that is not possible, the Dissertation Committee may convene and proceed with the defense in the physical absence of one Committee member, other than the Chair, as elaborated below. Remote participation by video teleconferencing (or telephone in exceptional circumstances) is permitted under the following conditions:

- The Dissertation Chair must submit a written request to the Director of Administration no less than one week prior to the scheduled defense date for permission to conduct a remote-participation defense;
- Only one remote site may be used during the defense;
- The candidate and the Dissertation Committee Chair must be present in the examination room; neither may be at a remote location;
- Emergency requests (less than 1 week in advance of the defense) for remote participation of a Committee member other than the chair will only be considered to the extent that making appropriate technical arrangements in a timely manner are feasible, and that any potential technical difficulties will not hinder the



defense proceeding as scheduled; otherwise, the defense will proceed without that member, as noted above;

- The Dissertation Committee member participating remotely will continue to participate in the closed defense Committee deliberations after the candidate's open defense; the Dissertation Chair may sign the Dissertation Defense Report on behalf of the remote participant.

### **Emergency Substitution Procedure**

The RGGGS Administrative Office is aware that emergencies can prevent a Committee member from attending a scheduled dissertation examination in person or via pre-approved teleconferencing (or telephone), and will work with the Chair of the Dissertation Committee to make a last-minute substitution in Committee membership to allow the examination to take place as scheduled.

- The request must be sent as soon as possible in writing by the Dissertation Committee Chair to the Director of Administration; fax or e-mail requests are acceptable. A telephone call to the Director of Administration explaining that an emergency request is forthcoming will facilitate the process.
- The proposed substitute must be a member of the RGGGS Curatorial or Affiliated Professorial Faculty consistent with the rules for Committee membership.
- Once the written request has been received, the substitution request will be reviewed by the Dean and approved as quickly as possible, provided that the revised Committee meets the requirements for Committee membership.
- When the substitution has been made, a written confirmation, in the same format that the request was received (fax or e-mail) will be sent out, along with a telephone confirmation. The substitution is not official until written confirmation has been received and acknowledged by the Dissertation Committee Chair.
- A defense may not proceed with a substitute Committee member that has not been approved by the Dean.
- A copy of the written request and the written confirmation must be placed in the candidate's file for future reference.

Under extenuating circumstances, the Dean may authorize the defense to proceed in the absence of one Committee member. At least 50% of the Committee members participating in the defense must be RGGGS Curatorial Faculty.

The final oral defense must be conducted in English and follow this 2-phase format and suggested timing:

**Phase I: Open Defense** - this portion is open to any interested member of the public

**TIMING:** The total time allotted for the Open Defense, including questioning, generally should not exceed 75 minutes, and is typically organized as follows:

- Introduction of the Dissertation Committee Chair by the Director of Administration (approximately 1 minute)

- Introduction of the members of the Dissertation Committee and the candidate by the Dissertation Committee Chair (up to 5 minutes)
- Presentation of doctoral dissertation research by the candidate (up to 50 minutes)
- Questions from those in attendance at the defense (up to 20 minutes)
- The Committee Chair adjourns the open defense portion of the examination.

**Phase II: Closed Defense** - this portion is limited to the candidate and his/her Dissertation Committee and should typically occur immediately following the Open Defense. If scheduling or other circumstances do not permit the Closed Defense to immediately follow the Open Defense, the Dissertation Committee Chair may petition the Director of Administration in writing for the Closed Defense to take place at a later time. It is strongly encouraged that the Closed Defense take place within one day of the Open Defense, but not more than one week following the Open Defense.

**TIMING:** The total time allotted for the Closed Defense, including Committee deliberation, typically should not exceed 135 minutes – generally, every Committee member is allocated up to 15 minutes for questioning, followed by open questioning which can continue for up to an additional 30 minutes, supervised by the Dissertation Committee Chair.

- Prior to the session, examiners typically will prepare points they wish to discuss and provide them to the candidate at the beginning of the session. These points are either substantial or editorial. Examiners should give their marked-up dissertation draft or sheets of notes on these matters to the candidate, leaving time to examine matters of substance.
- When all examiners have finished their questioning, the Chair asks the candidate to step outside and wait for a signal to return. The Committee completes their discussion, deliberation, and formal vote as follows:
  - Each Committee member must be given an opportunity to briefly present their opinion, if desired, prior to voting.
  - The Committee will consider any questions, comments, or discussion from the Open Defense phase of the oral examination.
  - The Dissertation Committee Chair will call for a ballot and tally the decisions; each individual vote will be recorded on the *Dissertation Defense Report Form*.
  - In the unusual case where there is a tied vote or no simple majority vote (for decisions of PASS, INCOMPLETE, or FAIL), a second vote should be called for, following a round of additional discussion. If the second vote again results in a tied vote or no simple majority vote, the case will be referred to the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC) for evaluation and a recommendation to the Dean, who will make the final determination.

- The three possible dissertation defense decisions are:

1. PASS

The candidate will be considered to have passed the doctoral dissertation defense when the Dissertation Committee certifies by majority vote that the defense was "successful" or a "pass"; that is, the dissertation requires no changes or is subject to only minor revisions. The Committee Chair will be solely responsible for certifying that any requested minor revisions have been satisfactorily made. If the candidate has passed the defense, all members of the Committee (except the Chair, if minor revisions are required) may sign the *Dissertation Approval Form* immediately following the defense. If minor revisions are required, the Committee Chair will not sign the form until after she/he has verified that all requested revisions have been completed. The completed *Dissertation Approval Form* must be submitted to the Director of Administration once all signatures of the entire Dissertation Committee have been obtained. The final review is by the Dean who must certify the examination result, and approve satisfactory completion of the defense.

2. INCOMPLETE

A result of incomplete by majority vote deems the dissertation acceptable, subject to major revisions. When the student has completed the major revisions, he or she must submit the revised dissertation to each member of the Dissertation Committee as soon as it is feasible, in consultation with the Committee Chair, typically within three months, but no later than one year. Each member of the Committee must submit in writing to the Dissertation Chair the outcome of their review of the dissertation (either "accepted" or "not accepted") in writing to the Committee Chair. If the revised dissertation is accepted by a majority of the Dissertation Committee, each member of the Committee will sign the *Dissertation Approval Form*. The completed *Dissertation Approval Form* must be submitted to the Director of Administration once all signatures of the entire Dissertation Committee have been obtained, at which time the Director of Administration changes the outcome of the dissertation defense from "Incomplete" to "Pass," and the candidate may deposit the dissertation.

3. FAIL

The candidate fails if the dissertation and defense is deemed unacceptable by majority vote of "fail". A member of the Dissertation Committee other than the Committee Chair, in consultation with the Dissertation Committee, must write a letter specifying why the dissertation is deemed unacceptable via a vote of "fail", to be submitted to the Director of Administration. The individual who will write the letter will be selected by

the Dissertation Committee Chair. If the student fails, a decision is made by the Dean as to whether or not a second defense is permitted. The Dean may consult with either the Dissertation Committee Chair, Dissertation Committee members, and/or the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee (CBPPC). If a second defense is permitted, the written dissertation must be substantially modified, with input from the Dissertation Committee, and must follow the same procedures noted above for review and scheduling of another defense. If a second defense is not permitted by the Dean, the candidate will be dismissed from the program without the doctoral degree. The second defense consists only of a Closed Defense; a public Open Defense is not required. The candidate fails the second defense if the dissertation and defense is deemed unacceptable by majority vote of "fail." A member of the Dissertation Committee other than the Committee Chair, in consultation with the Dissertation Committee, must write a letter specifying why the dissertation still is deemed unacceptable via a vote of "fail", to be submitted to the Director of Administration. The individual who will write the letter will be selected by the Dissertation Committee Chair. Candidates who fail the defense of the dissertation for the second time will be dismissed from the Program without the doctoral degree. Under certain circumstances, awarding an M.Phil. degree may be considered.

- Following the vote, the candidate is invited back into the room for announcement of the outcome of the Committee's final deliberation. Typically, if the candidate has passed, the members of the Committee should all be standing when the candidate enters the room, which by tradition now recognizes the candidate as an "equal." If the candidate has been given an incomplete or failed, members of the Committee should remain seated.
- The Dissertation Committee's recommendation is subject to the required reviews and final decision by the Dean.
- Appeals  
A candidate may appeal the failure to pass the dissertation defense exam by filing an appeal with the Director of Administration. The appeal must be filed within 14 days of receipt of the decision being appealed. The appeal must identify the adverse decision that is the subject of the appeal and the grounds for the appeal. Grounds could be procedural errors or special circumstances believed to be mitigating. Disagreement over evaluation of academic quality will not be considered an appropriate basis of appeal unless the evaluation is found to be patently unreasonable. The appeal shall be forwarded to the Provost who shall promptly convene an ad hoc committee of two to four RGGGS Curatorial Faculty who did not participate in the decision that is the subject of the appeal; the Provost shall chair the ad hoc committee and participate as a voting member of the committee. Within 30 days of the filing of the appeal, the ad hoc committee shall provide the candidate the opportunity for a personal hearing and

presentation of any reasons and supporting material the candidate believes should be considered. The majority decision of the ad hoc committee shall be rendered within 60 days of the filing of the appeal and shall be final.

## **Degree Conferral Requirements**

Before the candidate can be cleared for graduation, the Dissertation Committee must submit the results of the doctoral dissertation defense to the Director of Administration by the Dissertation Committee Chair on a *Dissertation Defense Report Form*.

A final copy of the dissertation, complete with all required revisions (revisions requested by the Dissertation Committee, as well as formatting revisions requested by the RGGGS Director of Administration) and signed by the full Dissertation Committee, must be delivered to and accepted by the Director of Administration. It is then converted to a PDF and submitted for approval by the Dean before the student is given final approval for graduation.

Successful defense of the dissertation, and deposit of the approved dissertation, must take place before the Dean is able to certify completion of all Ph.D. requirements (see below). The candidate may then be given or sent a letter of completion by the Dean.

Students are advised that degrees are officially conferred only after the process detailed above is concluded, and all program requirements have been certified as fulfilled. A student, for example, who defends his or her dissertation in June but does not submit the final revised dissertation until October, will not have a June degree and should expect a later degree conferral date. Students with concerns or questions about conferral dates should contact the Director of Administration.

## ***Financial and Administrative Obligations Clearance***

All financial and administrative obligations to AMNH must be cleared before the candidate can graduate. Failure to resolve outstanding obligations will result in holds being placed on diplomas, transcripts, and other student records (not covered under FERPA). Only the Director of Administration or Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School may apply or remove such holds.

## ***Registration***

The candidate must meet residency and/or registration requirements through the term in which she or he receives the degree.

## ***Survey of Earned Doctorates***

A graduating Ph.D. candidate must complete the U.S. National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) form and submit it to the RGGGS Director of Administration prior to clearance for degree conferral. The Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) began in 1958 to collect data continuously on the number and characteristics of individuals receiving research doctoral degrees from U.S. institutions. The results of the

survey are used to assess characteristics and trends in doctorate education and degrees.

### ***Dissertation Electronic Release Agreement***

All RGGGS Ph.D. graduates must complete an *Electronic Dissertation Release Form* granting the Richard Gilder Graduate School and the American Museum of Natural History and its agents, assigns and licenses the non-exclusive, worldwide right to reproduce, distribute, display and transmit the dissertation in such tangible and electronic formats as may be in existence now or developed in the future. The graduate retains all ownership rights to the copyright of the dissertation, including the right to use it in whole or in part in future works. Graduates also have the option of submitting a *Dissertation Embargo Request Form*, should there be reason to delay public access to the dissertation for a short period of time (due to such circumstances as a pending patent application, sensitive or confidential information contained in the dissertation, or material in the dissertation that has been submitted for publication to a journal/publisher with a restrictive pre-publication policy). Electronic release and embargo procedures and guidelines are available from the Director of Administration.

### ***Conferral of Degrees***

Conferral of degrees for approved students is made three times annually, during the fall, winter, and spring terms. Commencement ceremonies are held annually, typically early in the fall term.

### ***Diplomas***

A diploma will be given to each graduate at the commencement ceremony, or mailed to each graduate's permanent address after the commencement ceremony and deposit of their dissertation. The graduate's name will be printed exactly as it appears on the graduate's transcript. The candidate should check her or his transcript before filing an application for degree conferral. See "Personal Information Changes" for directions if a change must be made. To request a replacement diploma, the graduate must complete and submit an application for a replacement diploma, with necessary administrative fees, to the Director of Administration. The replacement diploma will include the original graduation date and the signature of the current Chairman of the Board of Trustees, President, Provost, and Dean, and can take up to 2 months to be produced.

### **Master of Philosophy Degree**

The American Museum of Natural History Graduate School does not offer matriculation to students seeking the M.Phil. degree independent of the Ph.D. degree. Under special circumstances, however, the RGGGS may elect to award or Comparative Biology Ph.D. program students may petition the School to award the M.Phil. degree. This degree can be awarded only if the student has 1) been in residence at RGGGS for a minimum of three full years (having earned 12 residency units); 2) has successfully reached the candidacy phase; 3) has met all of the requirements for the Ph.D. except for writing the

dissertation (that includes successful completion of all Core Courses, the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Seminar, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Student Symposium, at least 15 elective credits, two teaching assistantships, and at least 22 credits of Directed Research), and an earned passing grade on the Dissertation Proposal and Examination; and 4) has successfully completed a final written product based on work undertaken during study at RGGGS, such as a published paper, a completed dissertation chapter, or a written project specifically designed in consultation with the student's Advisor, the CBPPC and Dean.-The awarding of the M.Phil. degree must be approved by the Dean upon recommendation of the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee. The *M.Phil. Petition Form* is available on <https://myrggs.amnh.org>.

## **AMNH Code of Ethical Practices**

All students at the AMNH, regardless of their home institution or other external affiliation, as well as all faculty and staff at the Museum and the Richard Gilder Graduate School, are bound by the AMNH *Code of Ethical Practices*, as approved by the AMNH Board of Trustees. For enrolled students, it may be found at the following link: [http://museum.internal.amnh.org/content/download/811/3582/AMNH Code of Ethical Practices 2007.pdf](http://museum.internal.amnh.org/content/download/811/3582/AMNH_Code_of_Ethical_Practices_2007.pdf).

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

Each graduate student bears the responsibility to observe traditional canons of scholarly discourse, scientific research, and academic honesty. Students as well as faculty are expected to exhibit the high level of personal and academic integrity required of members of an academic community. Plagiarism, cheating, and fraud in research will not be tolerated.

The following examples illustrate some of the different forms that academic fraud or misconduct can take:

- Cheating on examinations or tests;
- Fabrication of data or results;
- Plagiarism, the failure to acknowledge adequately the ideas, language, or research of others in papers, essays, dissertations or other work;
- Knowingly assisting others in plagiarism by making one's papers, essays, or written work available for such use;
- Misstatement or misrepresentation in connection with an academic matter, such as in an application for admission or financial aid or during a formal inquiry by AMNH officials;
- Misuse, alteration, or fabrication of AMNH documents, records, and credentials, including transcripts and identification cards; and
- Misconduct in carrying out teaching or research responsibilities.
- Submitting the same or only slightly modified paper for more than one assignment or course.

This policy applies to all courses, programs, and learning contexts in which academic credit is offered, while a student is enrolled in one of the three RGGGS graduate programs, or in residence at the AMNH. If an instructor or faculty member finds that a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy, the appropriate initial sanction is at the instructor's discretion. However, the instructor must report the violation to the Director of Administration who will record it in the student's permanent file.

Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the Richard Gilder Graduate School or the American Museum of Natural History from taking further action, including dismissal from the Richard Gilder Graduate School. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could also result in criminal or civil prosecution.

## **Provost's Statement of Policies Regarding Research, Scholarship, and Teaching**

All students additionally are bound by the AMNH *Provost's Statement of Policies Regarding Research, Scholarship, and Teaching*. It is the responsibility of all students to read and understand all of these policies, which are available to them on-line via this link: <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/provost/policies.html>.

### ***Academic Freedom***

AMNH's core functions of research, scholarship, and teaching depend upon an atmosphere in which freedom of inquiry, thought, expression, publication and peaceable assembly are given full protection. Accordingly, the Scientific Staff and Richard Gilder Graduate School community are entitled to freedom in the classroom and academic venues in discussing their subjects; freedom in research and in the publication of its results and other scholarly activities; and freedom in the expression of opinions or in associations in their private or civic capacity, while remaining mindful of their responsibilities arising from their position in the academic community. Expression of a wide range of viewpoints should be encouraged, free from internal or external coercion or institutional association.

In furtherance of these general principles, decisions concerning:

1. the search for, and appointment and promotion of, tenure-track positions;
2. the assignment of teaching and other primarily academic responsibilities;
3. the allocation of research and teaching space, facilities, funds, and other resources;
4. the support and sponsorship of scholarly research; and
5. student examination, assessment and grading shall be based on the scholarly and educational merits and shall be made without regard to a person's political, social, or other views not directly related to academic values or to the assumption of academic responsibilities; and in compliance with the AMNH equal employment and affirmative action policies.



## ***Integrity and Quality in Research and Scholarship***

AMNH believes in fundamental values of integrity and quality in scientific research and scholarship. In the scientific research enterprise of AMNH, researchers and scholars are guided by a deep conviction of the value and dignity of the advancement of knowledge and by a sense of intellectual honesty. They are open to new scientific contributions and participate in the ongoing process of questioning, reviewing and revising by which ideas are collectively judged, sorted, and gradually emerge into accepted scientific knowledge.

Researchers and scholars at AMNH comprise a diverse academic community, yet it is one that holds in common the ideals of trust and freedom of inquiry, where hard work and achievement are appropriately recognized. Researchers and scholars at AMNH:

- accept the responsibility, in carrying out the work, to adhere to AMNH policies, procedures, and practices with personal integrity in relationships with each other and in associations with collaborating institutions, government, sponsors, donors, suppliers, and vendors
- are guided by professional practices and ethical standards in their respective fields, value the public trust in science, and do not allow subsidiary interests or the desire to be collegial outweigh our shared responsibility for ethical research and scholarship
- are committed to participating in the informal exchange of ideas, of presentations at seminars and conferences, of submittal of research theories, methods and results of research to peer reviewed journals, of discussions and deliberation.

Acceptance of research results by the scientific and lay communities is based on the reputation and integrity of the scientist and institution presenting them, and everyone involved in the research process must uphold the standards on which the reputation of AMNH and its staff are based. Accordingly, researchers are expected to understand and apply the following principles:

- Plagiarism, deception, or the fabrication or falsification of results is regarded as a serious disciplinary offense.
- Researchers are required to report any instance of suspected academic fraud or misconduct to the Provost, and to do so in a responsible and appropriate manner.

AMNH has established policies and procedures for responding to allegations of research misconduct or academic fraud and for conducting resulting inquiries and investigations. Researchers at AMNH are required to cooperate fully in any inquiry or formal investigation of such allegations, *e.g.*, by providing all required documents and information. See the AMNH policy *Protocol for Responding to Allegations of Scientific Misconduct in Research* which for enrolled students can be found at the following site: <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/provost/policies.html>.

## ***Publication of Research Results and Authorship Responsibilities***

AMNH encourages the responsible publication of and dissemination of results of high quality research. Researchers (including RGGGS students) should take into account the following guidance when publishing or disseminating their research or research findings including any plans they may have to publish or publicize research at conferences or on web sites:

- Generally researchers should make sound effort to have the research peer reviewed prior to it being published, publicized or disseminated.
- All funding sources should be acknowledged in publications and publicity, except where proper confidentiality conditions or publisher restrictions apply.
- It is understood that an author must be truthful in presenting methods, data or conclusions of his or her research as his or her own, and that an author must provide acknowledgement to the methods, data and conclusions from others upon which the author has relied.

Principal investigators, curators, faculty, laboratory directors or expedition leaders are expected to give appropriate recognition to participants in a project, whether professionals or students, and to sponsors. Such recognition should fairly and accurately represent the level of contribution and involvement in the project, and may range from the designation of authorship to formal acknowledgement in resultant publications.

However, the allocation of responsibility for research or scholarly work can become complex when it involves multi-investigator research teams that consist of colleagues from different disciplines and institutions who perform different, specialized functions. It is possible for participants to have little knowledge or understanding of parts of the work performed by their colleagues. Sometimes, there is no single person who understands all the research.

With this in mind, the following guidelines for scholarly manuscripts apply to all scholarly collaborations and research projects in which multiple-authorship is anticipated.

- Anyone listed as an author should accept responsibility that he or she is familiar with the contents of the paper and can identify his or her contribution to it. The practice of honorary authorship is not acceptable practice.
- Principal investigators and senior Scientific Staff have special responsibilities to make a good faith, diligent effort to assure the validity and the overall cohesiveness of the publications on which they appear as coauthors.
- All authors in a group effort have a shared responsibility for the published result and should have the opportunity to review all sample preparation procedures and data, as well as all data acquisition and analysis procedures.

- Senior authorship should only be conveyed in cases where such status is warranted by the author's primary and active role as a researcher, team leader or invested author.
- Authors must consider and meet obligations to external research sponsors.
- Publications where authorship is designated as a named organization (e.g. "The Sea Urchin Gene Sequencing Project", or "The Committee on Biodiversity Loss") are becoming more frequent and are now regularly cited by major scientific journals. The name of such an authorship entity should be subject to review and approval of all authors and each author should have the option to choose between conventional individual attribution and the proposed organizational name.
- Each author in a group effort should have access to the manuscript prior to its being submitted for publication, and should agree in writing to his or her inclusion as a coauthor. All the participants in the program should know that the paper is being prepared for publication.
- All authors of a publication have a shared responsibility in complying with requirements of the publisher regarding 1) the embargo on information prior to publication and 2) copyright policy of the publisher. *See below with regard to Research Data Retention Access.*

### ***Scientific Research Data Retention and Access***

Once results have been published, AMNH expects researchers (again, including RGGG students) to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers, provided this is consistent with any ethical approvals and consents which cover the data and materials, and the intellectual property rights in them.

Researchers should establish at the outset of the research program clarity as to ownership, custody, access and use of data and specimens collected, created or used in the course of the research. The responsibilities and procedures for the storage and disposal of data and samples should be made clear at the commencement of any project. Any research collaboration should establish agreement describing any necessary arrangements. This includes electronically stored and shared data (for example websites).

Deliberately sharing or permitting access to pre-publication research data and results developed by a research team with outside investigators without the consent or knowledge of the research team is a serious ethical offense and one that jeopardizes both the effectiveness and integrity of the given research effort. Such unauthorized dissemination may also prevent the warranted recognition, attribution, and ownership of investigators who have contributed significant effort, time, and original research to the project. Researchers that enter into an agreement with collaborators are expected to comply with the appropriate rules of confidentiality and managed access of pre-publication information agreed upon by resolution of the research team, as long as such

protocols are not in conflict with the provisions required by the participating institutions or funding agencies.

Researchers should keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed and the approvals granted during the research process, including records of the interim results obtained as well as of the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained. Properly maintained notebooks may be used in evidence when establishing ownership of inventions in the US under their "first to invent" patenting system.

AMNH requires that Principal Investigators maintain custody, retention and access to scientific research data sufficient to:

- provide a secure basis for ownership and acquisition of intellectual property rights
- comply with the terms of awards from sponsors funding the research
- protect the right of access of co-PIs, postdoctoral scholars, and students to data from research in which they participated
- enable a scientist to respond to potential claims of scientific misconduct or errors in research
- comply with laws and regulations governing the conduct of the research and appropriate use of animals, human subjects, biohazardous agents, and radioactive materials.

In particular, AMNH requires that all documents related to federally sponsored projects, including primary research data, be available to federal auditors for the period specified by federal regulation – in most cases, a period of three years from the filing of the final financial report. AMNH expects staff to retain all research data, whether resulting from federal sponsorship or not, in their laboratories or other bona fide research locations, and to provide access to the data when requested to do so by authorized institutional officials for so long as it is retained.

Early in each project, each research group should define appropriate practices to comply with the AMNH research policy on data retention and access. Requests from sponsors for access to research data, as well as subpoenas for research data, must be forwarded to the Provost or to the Office of General Counsel for review before a response is made. See the AMNH policy "**Scientific Research Data Custody, Retention, and Access**", for enrolled students located at the following site: <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/provost/policies.html>.

## ***Ethical Protocols in Research***

Human Subjects: AMNH investigators conducting human subject research, whether or not funded by a federal sponsor, must submit a proposed research plan to the appropriate AMNH institutional review board (IRB) for review. In addition, investigators who participate in human subject research must complete training in human subject

research, and otherwise must comply with IRB policies and procedures. Research may not begin until the IRB has fully approved the research plan and all related consent documents, and the required training has been completed. For further information, see AMNH "**Policy and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research,**" available to enrolled students at the following site: <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/provost/policies.html>.

Live Vertebrate Animals: The study of live vertebrate animals is regulated by legal, state, and federal agencies. Staff contemplating using live vertebrate animals in research, scholarship, teaching, or testing should refer to the AMNH Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Work with live vertebrate animals may not begin until all required training and approvals are obtained. For further information, see the AMNH "**Protocol and Policy: Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee**".

### ***Safety Policies and Procedures in Research***

Safety of staff and the public is a priority at AMNH. AMNH has established a safety office and committees to manage compliance with the occupational safety and health laws and regulations and to provide safe and sanitary working facilities and equipment. AMNH also employs staff, architects and construction managers to comply with building safety and fire codes and to provide safe work and public areas. AMNH expects that all members of the AMNH community will cooperate fully with the AMNH safety programs and requirements.

Biohazards: AMNH has established an Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) that is charged with the responsibility for review, approval and surveillance of all research protocols and standards at AMNH molecular biology labs involving the use of biohazards including recombinant DNA. The IBC is charged with adopting such standards and procedures as required to carry out the purposes of this policy. All AMNH lab activity and research at the labs involving biohazards, regardless of source of financial support, must conform to AMNH policies and IBC procedures and administration. For further information, see the "**Institutional Biosafety Policy**" located at the following site for enrolled students: [Institutional Biosafety Policy](#).

Other Hazardous Materials: AMNH has also developed guidelines and procedures for handling radioactive materials, hazardous chemicals, and controlled substances, as well as for other aspects of research relating to occupational and environmental safety. These policies are found in the "**Lab Safety Manual**" and are generally administered by the Museum's Director of Safety and Environmental Health. Any investigator planning to use such materials must consult with the Safety Office for guidance on required training, proper handling, state and federal safety regulations, proper procedures in the event of spillage, etc., prior to initiating a study or bringing such materials into a laboratory. In most instances, a laboratory must be inspected and approved by the Director of Safety and Environmental Health before bringing hazardous substances to that location at AMNH.

Dive Safety: AMNH has developed a Scientific Diving Program for scientists from interdisciplinary fields who are using scuba diving in their research. Anyone diving with the support of AMNH funds or sponsored funds must meet the requirements of AMNH set out in the "**Scientific Diving Manual**". AMNH scientific diving may only be conducted by active status scientific divers, pending submission of, among other items, a dive plan for approval by AMNH and performance of a check-out dive with the Dive Safety Officer or designee.

## ***Field Collecting and Temporary Custody of Research Materials***

Many objects and specimens come into AMNH on a temporary or provisional basis, mostly awaiting completion of research with a later determination that the specimen be accessioned into the collection, or in cases of joint collecting with a foreign or other US institution, the specimens await research and a later agreement on allocation of the specimens collected from an expedition. Other objects come in for authentication, or on loan, or to be examined and considered for purchase or exchange.

Each science division must identify who has authority to accept objects and specimens into custody and the required documentation and legal compliance. For example, a 3-177 declaration form must be filed with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for any animal or animal part that is imported to or exported from the United States, even if the specimen has been in a museum collection. Specimens of protected species must be brought in through a designated port unless prior arrangements are made with US Fish and Wildlife Service. CITES requires special permits to move a specimen or part of a specimen on the CITES list across an international border. In addition, the US prohibits the importation of a specimen or object collected in violation of the laws of a foreign country.

Accordingly, each division's procedures must require documentation to comply with any applicable laws and regulations as well as AMNH policy that AMNH shall not knowingly and willfully take custody of any object or specimen that was illegally exported from the country of origin, or illegally imported into the United States, or that was collected or recovered under circumstances that would support or encourage irresponsible damage to or destruction of biota, collecting sites, cultural monuments, or human burial places. However, AMNH may take custody of objects or specimens that have been legally confiscated and offered to AMNH by government authorities.

## ***Works of Authorship and Copyright***

Copyright is a bundle of legal rights which protects original works of authorship. Examples of original works of authorship include:

- works of art or authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression, in any form, whether in writings; books; film; video; musical compositions and performances; lyrics; sound recordings; multimedia; computer software; digital media; instruction manuals; pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works;

architectural plans and drawings, maps, renderings; and other works of design; and the physical property thereof;

- media produced at the direction of AMNH, including public relations materials, marketing and promotion materials, education and exhibition products and materials, archival audio and video recordings, and AMNH digital and web media; and
- content contributed to a work of art or authorship jointly created with others and intended to be merged with the work of others as part of an integrated whole.

This policy, **“Works of Authorship and Copyright,”** (located at the following site for enrolled students: <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/provost/policies.html>) provides that AMNH shall own in the USA and throughout the world all works of authorship created as “institutional works.” An institutional work is:

- 1) a work of authorship that is commissioned by AMNH;
- 2) a work supported by a direct allocation of AMNH or AMNH sponsor funds for the pursuit of a specific project; or
- 3) a “work-made-for-hire.”

A “work made for hire” is a work of authorship prepared by a member of AMNH staff within the scope of his or her responsibilities to AMNH. Examples include education courses, programs and products, as well as exhibitions, exhibition elements and exhibition catalogues specifically requested by AMNH, that are created by the staff of Education, Exhibition, or by Scientific Staff, including courses taught and courseware that is developed for teaching at AMNH.

In accord with academic tradition, and current practice, AMNH does not claim ownership to scholarly, pedagogical, or artistic works of authorship, popular nonfiction, novels, textbooks, poems, musical compositions, or other works of authorship of artistic imagination, regardless of their form of expression, which are not institutional works. Such works of authorship include those of students created in the course of their education, such as dissertations, papers and articles, as well as books written by curators that have not been commissioned by AMNH.

### ***Inventions, Patents, Licensing***

“Invention” is used broadly in the AMNH policy, **“Inventions, Patents, Licensing”** (located at the following site for enrolled students: <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/provost/policies.html>). It includes any invention, discovery, idea, confidential and proprietary information, trade secret, know how, process, schematic, database, formula, drawings, prototype, model, design, scientific or technological development, research data, tangible research property, and software. It includes any improvements to any of the above, regardless of whether subject to protection under patent, copyright, trade secret, or other laws.

The policy provides that all inventions conceived or first reduced to practice in whole or in part by individuals “in the course of their AMNH responsibilities” or “with more than incidental use of AMNH resources,” shall be owned by AMNH, subject to a sharing of royalty income with staff creating the invention as provided in the policy “**Distribution of Royalties from Inventions**” (located at the following site for enrolled students: <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/provost/policies.html>). That policy provides first for recovery of expenses by AMNH, and then for 50% of the royalties to be paid to the inventor(s).

An invention will be considered to arise “in the course of AMNH responsibilities,” unless the invention is unrelated to the inventor’s work at AMNH. “More than incidental use of AMNH resources” includes, without limitation, the use of specialized computer systems, laboratories, or production facilities, use of AMNH funds or other AMNH staff. This policy is subject to the terms of AMNH sponsor grants and contracts which may require open source or other commitments.

Because disclosure of inventions prior to filing for patent protection can result in a loss of patent protection, the policy also requires advance disclosure to AMNH of any potential invention that may be within a proposed publication or lecture. The policy also requires an expeditious response by AMNH, so as not to unduly delay or interfere with the ability of the staff to pursue their research, collaborate with other investigators, or freely present their ideas to their colleagues, students, and world at large through publications and through presentations at scientific meetings.

All participating researchers, including graduate and undergraduate students, postdoctoral fellows and visiting scholars must sign the AMNH Patent and Copyright Agreement before the commencement of any research activities confirming their acceptance of these policies and committing to disclose and assign to AMNH any inventions conceived at AMNH and any copyrightable material to which AMNH takes title under these policies. When disclosing a particular invention or certain copyrighted materials, researchers also must execute an assignment to AMNH of their interest in such inventions and in those certain copyrights. Such assignments are the basis for commercialization of inventions and copyrights and for sharing with researchers the royalty revenues received by AMNH from commercial licensees.

In some instances, distribution of intellectual property may be aided by or depend upon access to the physical or tangible embodiment of the intellectual property such as biological organisms, chemical compounds, or computer software. The policy “**Tangible Research Property**” treats ownership of research material the same as inventions. The ‘**Tangible Research Property**’ policy is located at the following site for enrolled students: <http://museum-v1.internal.amnh.org/provost/policies.html>.

### ***Use of AMNH Resources, Computer and Network Usage***

AMNH resources — including property, facilities, and funds — may only be used for their appropriate and intended purposes, specifically to further the scientific, educational, and administrative goals of the institution. They are not to be used for



anyone's personal benefit or for the benefit of a for-profit enterprise or another non-profit or governmental organization without proper approval.

Staff is expected to use AMNH resources with care and prudence, with a recognition of responsibility to contributors to AMNH, including federal, state, and local governments and in compliance with all underlying restrictions, as well as all laws and regulations, and consistent with best practices. Their conduct should reflect the recognition of a special obligation to use AMNH resources responsibly and consistent with the tax-exempt status conferred on AMNH in light of its educational and research mission.

AMNH has an "**Acceptable Use of Computing Resources Policy**" which translates the AMNH general business practices into the electronic domain and conforms to federal, state, and local law as well as existing AMNH policy. This policy defines the appropriate usage of computers and networks with respect to intellectual property rights, privacy issues concerning information belonging to others, access to email, and restrictions on use to maintain the security and integrity of information resources, and is located at the following site for enrolled students: [Acceptable Use of Computing Resources](#).

AMNH computing resources may only be used for their appropriate and intended purposes, specifically to further the scientific, educational, and administrative goals of the institution. Users are entitled to access only those elements of the computing resources that are consistent with their jobs and authorizations. Occasional appropriate and limited personal use is permitted provided that, in addition to the constraints and conditions of this policy, such use does not: a) interfere with the AMNH operation of its computing resources, b) interfere with the user's employment or other obligations to AMNH, or c) burden AMNH with more than insignificant incremental costs.

### ***Use of AMNH Property and Property Removal***

Students are expected to exercise care in the use of AMNH property. Negligence in the care and use of AMNH property, or unauthorized removal or personal use of AMNH property, may be cause for discipline. When AMNH property is loaned to students, AMNH expects that students will return the borrowed equipment as soon as possible and in the same condition it was in when it was borrowed. If AMNH property is not returned, the student will be charged the value of the property. AMNH property may only be removed from the premises with a property pass signed by an authorized person of the department that owns the property and from which the property is being removed.

## **Maintaining a Safe Educational Environment**

### ***Alcohol Policy***

AMNH has a longstanding commitment to providing a safe and productive work and learning environment consistent with the standards of the community in which it operates. When abused, alcohol use poses a risk to the health and safety of AMNH

students and employees, and to the security of our staff, visitors, equipment, and facilities. AMNH requires therefore, that those who wish to occasionally include alcohol as part of their hospitality activities do so responsibly and lawfully. AMNH prohibits any action or situation which involves the forced consumption of alcohol or drugs for the purpose of initiation into or affiliation with any organization or group.

Alcohol consumption is permitted on Museum premises at authorized events held in authorized spaces. Alcohol consumption is not permitted in laboratories or collection areas.

When consumption of alcohol on Museum premises is authorized, the following are required:

- Those served alcohol must be at least 21 years old, the legal drinking age.
- Supervisors of underage staff, interns, students and volunteers must monitor the event to ensure that those under legal drinking age are not served alcohol.
- Permits must be acquired for outdoor events.
- Alcohol shall be limited to avoid intoxication, and staff shall contact Security if in the event a staff member or guest becomes intoxicated and such intoxication becomes a risk to the individual, other people, or the AMNH premises or property.
- Exiting the Museum premises with open containers, and drinking alcohol in park areas or on public streets or sidewalks is prohibited.
- Payments for alcohol and related taxes and tips may not be charged to a government-sponsored account or activity.
- Reimbursement for alcohol is limited to occasional, business hospitality with non-staff guests.

### *Drug-Free Environment*

AMNH policy prohibits anyone from using, manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, or possessing a controlled substance (except for your own personal use, as prescribed by a physician) while on the AMNH premises or while participating in official AMNH activities off-premises. AMNH premises include AMNH offices, work locations, labs, classrooms, desks, parking lots, Roosevelt Park, and any vehicle engaged in an AMNH operation.

### ***Crime Prevention & Reporting Information***

**If you have been the victim of or witness to a crime, or if you are injured please call 911 immediately. Please also alert Museum Security at 212-769-2222 (or x2222 from within the Museum) and tell them the NYPD/EMS is on the way, so they can help direct them when they arrive. Museum Security is available 365 days a week, 24 hours a day.**

Once Security, or any other RGGGS or Museum staff member receives a report of a crime, they must immediately notify the Vice President of Human Resources (212-769-

5109; dscheiner@amnh.org) and the Office of General Counsel (212-769-5961; ltully@amnh.org) by both phone and email. This will initiate the Museum's Investigation Plan, which begins with an interview of the alleged victim and/or the individual reporting the alleged crime, within 24 hours of the Museum becoming aware of the incident, to collect the following information and to ensure the alleged victim has the support and resources he or she needs immediately following the incident:

- Alleged victim's name and relationship to the Museum or RGGGS;
- Date, time (if available) and location of the alleged crime;
- Other individuals involved, to the extent they are known by the alleged victim or the party reporting the crime;
- Narrative description of the alleged crime using specific, concise, objective language;
- The means by which the alleged victim can be contacted for follow up (phone, email, or "do not contact me"); and
- Any relevant supporting documentation and evidence, such as security footage, swipe-card access, emails or text transcripts, photographs, etc., to the extent these are immediately available.

The General Counsel, in consultation with the Vice President of Human Resources and the Senior Director of Security and Safety, will determine if it is necessary, under New York law or because of the safety of the Museum community, to notify the local precinct of the New York Police Department (the 20th Precinct is located at 120 West 82nd Street, (212) 580-6411). If such a report is necessary, it will be done promptly and, in the case of a violent felony, within 24 hours of the Museum learning of the alleged incident.

In addition, as necessary and appropriate, the Office of General Counsel, Department of Human Resources and the Safety and Security Department will continue their investigation and take any necessary steps to ensure the safety of the Museum and RGGGS community. If it is determined by the Security Department that an ongoing threat exists for the Museum community, or on request of the Office of General Counsel, the Security Department will post notices at appropriate locations around the campus and/or the Graduate School will notify students and faculty by email. The individuals noted above will be fully informed regarding the nature and status of the investigation and will use the voicemail and email systems to inform the community, as appropriate.

The following is some additional information about the nature of certain offenses and the resources available to victims:

#### A. Bias-Related Crimes and Violent Felony Offenses

Bias-related crimes are behaviors which constitute an expression of hostility, against the person or property of another because of the targeted person's race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, or disability. Examples may include, but are not limited to: threatening phone calls, hate mail (including electronic mail), physical assaults, vandalism, destruction of property, and fire bombings. The penalties

for commission of bias-related crimes have terms of imprisonment ranging up to 20 years.

Violent felony offenses are defined under New York Law include, but are not limited to, murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, rape, sodomy, aggravated sexual abuse, assault, burglary, robbery, arson and criminal possession of a dangerous weapon.

#### B. Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Exploitation, Gender-Based Harassment, Stalking, Domestic Violence, and Dating Violence

Information for students on how to report these offenses can be found in the Richard Gilder Graduate School's Gender-Based Misconduct Policy Involving Students Policy, [available here](#). The Policy includes procedures for responding to complaints of gender-based misconduct by and against students, and provides a resource guide for counseling, health, law enforcement and advocacy services for students involved in gender-based misconduct.

In addition, NY State Penal Law Article 130 addresses sexual offenses, which are punishable by up to 25 years imprisonment. Stalking violations are covered in NY State Penal Law Article 130 as well as Article 120, Sections 120.45, 120.50, 120.55, or 120.60. Domestic Violence issues are covered in NY State Penal Law Articles 130 and 120.

#### C. Student Bill of Rights

RGGS has adopted the following Student Bill of Rights pursuant to New York Education Law Article 129-B, Section 6443. All students have the right to:

1. Make a report to local law enforcement and/or state police;
2. Have disclosures of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual assault treated seriously;
3. Make a decision about whether or not to disclose a crime or violation and participate in the judicial or conduct process and/or criminal justice process free from pressure by the institution;
4. Participate in a process that is fair, impartial, and provides adequate notice and a meaningful opportunity to be heard;
5. Be treated with dignity and to receive from the institution courteous, fair, and respectful health care and counseling services, where available;
6. Be free from any suggestion that the reporting individual is at fault when these crimes and violations are committed, or should have acted in a different manner to avoid such crimes or violations;
7. Describe the incident to as few institution representatives as practicable and not be required to unnecessarily repeat a description of the incident;
8. Be protected from retaliation by the institution, any student, the accused and/or the respondent, and/or their friends, family and acquaintances within the jurisdiction of the institution;
9. Access to at least one level of appeal of a determination;

10. Be accompanied by an advisor of choice who may assist and advise a reporting individual, accused, or respondent throughout the judicial or conduct process including during all meetings and hearings related to such process; and
11. Exercise civil rights and practice of religion without interference by the investigative, criminal justice, or judicial or conduct process of the institution.

Students will additionally be given access to any other process or resources to which they are entitled under New York Education Law 129-B or other applicable federal or state law.

#### D. Counseling Resources

The department of Human Resources is available to assist survivors of the crimes outlined above obtain counseling. Please contact the Richard Gilder Graduate School Director of Administration (212-769-5143) or Human Resources (212-769-5106) directly if you wish to set up an appointment.

Free, confidential counseling is available at the Crime Victims Treatment Center (the "CVTC") at Mt. Sinai St. Luke's and Roosevelt Hospitals. Call 212-523-4728 or visit [www.cvtcnyc.org](http://www.cvtcnyc.org). The CVTC can help victims of Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking and other crimes get treatment, therapy, report a crime, seek an order of protection, and offers other resources as well.

Rebecca Wemyss Carman, LCSW, is a licensed social worker with experience counseling victims of sexual assault, who has been engaged by the Museum to provide assistance to students and staff on a confidential basis. She can be reached at 917-751-8803 and at [www.RebeccaWCarman.com](http://www.RebeccaWCarman.com), to schedule an appointment.

The United Healthcare insurance plan provided by RGGGS to Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program students covers mental health services. The plan also offers immediate access to a Student Assistance Program that provides counseling by licensed clinicians. For information, visit: <http://www.gallagherstudent.com/amnhrggs>.

Students may also use the Museum's contracted employee assistance program, the Lincoln Financial EmployeeConnect program. EmployeeConnect offers confidential guidance and resources to students and their immediate household members; in-person help for short-term issues; up to four sessions with a counselor per person, per issue, per year; toll-free phone and web access 24/7. To access these services (and to learn about additional assistance available), contact the Lincoln Financial EmployeeConnect program as follows:

##### Lincoln Financial EmployeeConnect program

- Specialist Support Hotline: 888-628-4824
- Website: [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com)
  - o Username: LFGsupport
  - o Password: LFGsupport1

Additional off-campus advocacy, counseling and health service resources are appended to the Gender-Based Misconduct Policy Involving Students, available at: <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/resources-for-ph.d.-students-and-faculty>.

Note: Contacting the CVTC, Rebecca Wemyss Carman, United Healthcare clinicians or the EmployeeConnect program is not a mechanism for reporting crimes to RGGGS or to the Museum. Rather, these are resources for individuals seeking assistance, including fully confidential counseling and other services.

## ***Harassment: Racial, Ethnic, Sexual and Other Forms***

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

AMNH is committed to providing an environment free from harassment or discrimination in the treatment of individuals with respect to employment, admission or access to AMNH facilities, programs or activities, including educational programs, and therefore does not permit harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, marital status, partnership status, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, pregnancy, alienage or citizenship status, current or former participation in the uniformed services, status as a veteran, or national or ethnic origin, or on account of any other basis prohibited by applicable City, State, or Federal law. Additional protections are afforded in employment based on arrest or conviction record, status as a victim of domestic violence, stalking and sex offenses, unemployment status, and credit history, in each case to the extent provided by law.

### **Harassment**

Harassment consists of ethnic or racial slurs, or other general harassment, verbal or physical conduct or gestures that relate to any of the bases listed above (race, creed, etc.). It includes objectionable conduct or comments that interfere with work or academic performance - such as threats, bullying, coercing, assault, taunting, ostracizing, and malicious gestures.

### **Procedures**

Any student with a complaint of harassment on the basis of sex or sexual orientation (including Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Exploitation, Gender-Based Harassment, Stalking, Domestic Violence, and Dating Violence) can report these complaints or find additional resources in the Richard Gilder Graduate School's Gender-Based Misconduct Policy Involving Students Policy, available at <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/amnh-ph.d.-program/resources-for-ph.d.-students-and-faculty>.

Any student with a harassment complaint based on any other basis should bring it to the attention of at least one of the following: the RGGGS Director of Administration, the

Dean of the RGGGS, a faculty advisor, the Vice President of Human Resources or other Human Resources staff, any officer of the Museum, or report it confidentially and/or anonymously to the Museum's Whistleblower Hotline by calling 1-800-620-5571.

The Museum does not permit retaliation in any form against any individual for bringing a complaint for harassment.

## **Consensual Relationships**

No member of the Museum community shall request or accept sexual favors from, engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with, or have any sexual contact with any student, intern or mentee at the undergraduate level in any general education or internship program at the Museum, whether or not such favors, relationship or conduct are consensual. Further, no member of the Museum community shall request or accept sexual favors from, engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with, or have any sexual contact with any graduate student, intern or mentee who is enrolled in a course taught by that member of the Museum community or who is otherwise subject to that individual's academic supervision. Academic supervision includes teaching, advising on or committee membership for a thesis or dissertation, supervising research or educational activities, grading and mentoring. RGGGS graduate and undergraduate students with concerns about compliance by others with this policy, including perceived instances of favoritism on the basis of consensual intimate relationships, may report their concerns to the Dean of RGGGS or Director(s) of the MAT Program. Staff with concerns about compliance by others may report to Human Resources.

## **Helpline**

AMNH has a Compliance Helpline operated by an independent company that can receive calls anonymously (if you desire) and with the caller's confidentiality fully protected. The Helpline toll-free telephone number is 800-620-5571 and it is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Calls to the Helpline are neither recorded nor traced. This line is available to report activities that are suspect, such as:

- Theft of cash or property
- Fraudulent activity
- Kickbacks from vendors or contractors
- Irregularities in accounting, auditing, or internal controls
- Vandalism or sabotage
- Falsification of time sheets, expense reports, or other records
- Fraudulent insurance or benefit claims
- Forgery
- Undisclosed conflicts of interest
- Use or sale of illegal drugs
- Violations of law or government compliance regulations
- Violations of Museum or RGGGS policy

All reports will be directed to senior management of AMNH. No effort will be made to ascertain the identity of the person reporting, nor retaliation taken against any individual who, in good faith, reports a violation or provides assistance to an investigation, whether to AMNH representatives or to any governmental body investigating the report.

The AMNH and Richard Gilder Graduate School administration and staff will regularly work to meet the needs of students, faculty and staff; meet the New York State Board of Regents and Commissioner requirements; and fulfill the requirements of any other jurisdiction to which the AMNH and the Richard Gilder Graduate School are subject. The AMNH and Richard Gilder Graduate School will continually monitor these complaint policies and make changes as needs and situations warrant, or after new evidence becomes available. Consistent with both legal obligations and ethical standards, complaints made to the AMNH or Richard Gilder Graduate School staff or faculty will be handled in a professional, confidential and in a non-retaliatory way.

### ***Losses and Theft***

Losses and thefts of AMNH property or personal items must be reported to Security immediately upon discovery. Lost and found items may be reported and retrieved at the first-floor security desk.

### ***Security Investigations***

All students are required to respond fully and truthfully in any investigations AMNH carries out in response to reports or acts of workplace misconduct or violence. As always, AMNH will do its best to maintain confidentiality and to protect students from retaliation as a result of their cooperation in an investigation.

### ***Local, State, and Federal Law Violations, Investigations, and Prosecutions***

Students must obey local, state, federal and international laws, and those who commit infractions of these laws may be referred to the appropriate authorities. Such referral does not preclude disciplinary action within AMNH when it would serve the best interest of the academic community.

### ***Violence***

AMNH does not tolerate violence or any other action or situation which recklessly or intentionally endangers mental or physical health on its premises, whether carried out by coworkers, visitors, former employees, students, or other individuals. AMNH expressly prohibits violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior on its property. Violence or threatening behavior can include (but is not limited to) physical acts of violence, gestures, intimidating presence, oral or written statements, sexual assaults, and weapons possession. AMNH will initiate appropriate action in response to reports of such incidents, which may include, but is not limited to,



immediate removal from AMNH property, suspension, dismissal, and/or referral for criminal prosecution.

## ***Weapons***

AMNH expressly prohibits the use, possession, or sale of any weapon, other than as expressly authorized by AMNH, by any persons or students while on AMNH property and/or while conducting business on behalf of AMNH, even if an individual has a legal permit to carry the weapon. Weapons prohibited include but are not limited to knives and firearms.

## **Security Procedure Updates**

The Richard Gilder Graduate School or AMNH will send out email notifications to update students about security procedures on an as-needed basis.

## **AMNH Access**

### ***Key Card Access***

Students are issued a picture identification key-card ("ID badge") by the AMNH Security Department. This card provides a student with access to AMNH as authorized by the Graduate School. This identification card must be displayed upon entry and be readily available for display or worn within AMNH. Identification cards are AMNH property. They must not be duplicated, and must be returned to the Director of Administration of the Graduate School upon end of registered student status.

Students must comply with restricted access requirements for secure areas and facilities of AMNH, such as electrical panels, server rooms, science research labs, collection areas, the research library, cash handling areas, or other secured areas. Should an identification card fail to work, the student should see or telephone the Director of Administration of the Graduate School or AMNH Security. Students are responsible for the care and safeguarding of their identification cards. Lost or stolen cards must be immediately reported to Security. Lost or physically damaged cards will be replaced once without charge.

### ***Collections Access***

Curators are responsible and accountable for the use, care, and conservation of the collections, a responsibility delegated to them by the Trustees. It is important that proper procedures to be followed at all times; each Science division or department provides its own detailed regulations. AMNH graduate students are granted access privileges to those materials and facilities relevant to their research and study activities, and all students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the AMNH Collections policy (<http://museum.internal.amnh.org/Media/Files/Provost-s-Office/Pdfs/collections-policy>) and pertinent divisional, departmental or other collections policies and procedures. Such collections access is not automatic, however. Students requiring access can apply to the Director of Administration of the Graduate School for

assistance in arranging keys or access to divisional/departmental and collections areas. All doors and cabinets must be kept locked at all times. Unannounced or unsupervised visitors are not permitted. Students not currently enrolled (e.g., on leave of absence) are not given student collections access privileges. Report any suspicious activity or policy violations immediately to Security. Additional information on Collections Access is available in the AMNH Collections policy, from the office of the AMNH Dean of Science, or from divisional/departmental collections staff.

## **Ethical, Communications, and Regulatory Requirements**

AMNH recognizes that students have the same personal interest in the decisions and policies of the government, as do other citizens. When AMNH students speak out on a public issue with a personal opinion, it is important to avoid the appearance of speaking or acting in an official capacity or on AMNH's behalf.

### ***Communicating with the Press***

Students are not authorized to speak on behalf of AMNH or RGGS or to give access AMNH premises or property to representatives of the news media. All communications with the news media should be directed to the Museum's Communications Department, which has established procedures for responding to news media requests and for obtaining approval for public statements. If an activity merits or requires public disclosure, its release will be cleared and coordinated through the AMNH Communications Department.

### ***Gambling and Lotteries***

While on AMNH premises or involved in official AMNH activities off-site, students shall not participate in any gambling activity, including, but not limited to, a game for money or property, or selling or purchasing a numbers slip or ticket.

### ***Partisan Political Activity***

The law restricts the use of AMNH funds in connection with political campaigns. While students may make voluntary personal contributions to any lawful political causes, parties, or candidates, they may not obtain reimbursement from the AMNH for personal contributions or represent that such contributions were made by AMNH. The cost of fund-raising tickets for political functions are considered political contributions, and, therefore, the cost of any such fund-raising dinner may not be reimbursed as an expense, even if AMNH business is, in fact, discussed.

No student may use the AMNH name; property; facilities; materials (including letterhead); supplies; or equipment (including telephones or e-mail) in connection with partisan political activity. Examples of prohibited political activity would be using AMNH administrative time to send invitations for political fund-raising events, using AMNH telephones or computers to make politically motivated solicitations, allowing a candidate

to use AMNH facilities (such as meeting rooms) for political purposes, or loaning AMNH property to anyone for use in connection with a political campaign. Writing letters on AMNH stationery in support of candidates or taking a position on political issues is prohibited.

AMNH students may volunteer their services for political purposes, but such services must be rendered on their own time. Therefore, students may not solicit votes or campaign contributions while on AMNH premises.

## ***Lobbying***

In general, lobbying includes contacting government officials at any level of government (local, state, and federal or a foreign government) on the formation or adoption of laws or regulations, and on nominations of officials. In an attempt to maintain the integrity of the process by which the federal government makes awards, legislation has been enacted over the past few years limiting and requiring disclosure of lobbying efforts. To comply with these laws, the AMNH's Government Relations office coordinates lobbying activities, and the AMNH Finance department tracks charges made in regard to lobbying.

## ***Gifts***

Every government unit limits gifts that may be given to government officials. The political process has become highly regulated, and any student who has any question about what is or is not proper should consult with the AMNH's offices of Government Relations or General Counsel before doing anything that could be construed as involving AMNH in any political activity at the federal, state, or local levels, or in any foreign country.

## ***Personal Business Activity***

Students who supplement their earnings by the promotion or sale of products and services do so entirely on their own initiative and without implied approval or endorsement by AMNH. All such activity, including sampling, soliciting orders, and deliveries, must be conducted entirely outside of working hours and entirely outside of AMNH property.

## ***Stationery***

AMNH stationery, forms, business cards, or other materials are intended for AMNH business only and must not be used by students for personal or non-AMNH correspondence.

Similarly, email using the **amnh.org** address is for use in furtherance of your study and research at AMNH and is the electronic equivalent to a letter on AMNH stationery. Student emails from amnh.org and communications using AMNH letterhead should not contain any personal or private information that a student would not want read by his or her advisor, by other members of faculty, or by a third party. Students wishing to

send personal email should use personal email accounts (i.e., gmail.com, yahoo.com, aol.com, etc.) which may be accessed through the internet service provided by AMNH.

### ***Use of AMNH Property***

Students are expected to exercise care in the use of AMNH property. Negligence in the care and use of AMNH property, or unauthorized removal or personal use of AMNH property, may be cause for discipline. AMNH property issued to students, including but not limited to software, hardware, laptops, manuals, laboratory equipment, office equipment and proprietary information, must be returned upon separation from AMNH. If AMNH property is not returned, that student will be charged the value of the property. Students are also responsible for compliance with all regulations of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) governing hazardous materials, insofar as they affect borrowed AMNH equipment. Removal of AMNH property from the premises requires written permission from the supervisor or department head responsible for the property in question to pass Security. AMNH expects that students will return borrowed equipment as soon as possible and in the same condition it was in when it was borrowed.

### ***Prohibition on the Marketing of Credit Cards***

The American Museum of Natural History and the Richard Gilder Graduate School prohibits the advertising, marketing, or merchandising of credit cards on campus to students.

## **Student Complaints**

The AMNH endeavors to maintain a professional, collegial and safe learning environment where all faculty, staff and students may work and learn together with mutual respect and will be evaluated fairly on the basis of their contributions to the AMNH academic and professional community. Accordingly, several policies regarding student complaints have been developed, each structured to deal with differing types and severity of possible complaints. In all cases, the student is assured that no action will be taken against them through the act of filing a complaint. Action on the complaint will be taken following the mechanisms detailed in these policies and procedures.

### ***Informal Complaints***

To help resolve potential problems before they become intractable, and provide an extensive informal support network for students, we have implemented a variety of informal mentoring, advice, consul and complaint resolution procedures. Essentially, an informal complaint process starts with the student seeking to collegially resolve the complaint with the help of their principal advisor, with other faculty or staff members of their choice, or directly with the source of the complaint themselves.

The Richard Gilder Graduate School also has a Student Affairs Facilitator, currently Dr. Peter Whiteley. Dr. Whiteley serves as an unofficial ombuds-like facilitator or intermediary for RGGGS Ph.D. students, acting with confidentiality (if requested) and

neutrality. His role is to provide informal advice to the students, especially in personal and non-academic matters, and to help resolve problems or complaints (but as a facilitator, not an arbiter). As a Curator/Full Professor with tenure, he will also be able to act as a facilitator in bringing student issues to the administration and other faculty, if requested by the student, or provide feedback to the Dean on academic trends, issues, and practices without breaching confidentiality or anonymity. Dr. Whitely also has served on the RGGGS Academic Affairs and Fellowships Committee.

Note that the Student Affairs Facilitator may not be able to honor requests for confidentiality in the case of matters of sexual or gender misconduct. Students seeking completely confidential counseling services should please refer to the Counseling Resources listed in the "Maintaining a Safe Educational Environment" section of this Handbook.

If this informal method does not adequately resolve the situation for the student, then the student may elect to file a formal complaint, following procedures herein.

### ***Academic Complaints***

Students are encouraged to define and resolve academic concerns as quickly as possible. A student with an academic concern about their graduate training typically should first take this concern to his or her Principal Advisor, a non-academic mentor, or course instructor as appropriate. The student may also wish to discuss the matter with her or his Dissertation Committee, or the Comparative Biology Ph.D. Program Committee, or any of their members individually. Additionally, the student may wish to present the concern to the Director of Administration or Dean of the Richard Gilder Graduate School.

If the student's concerns have not been addressed to the student's satisfaction, the student may involve the Dean's Office by submitting a formal complaint in writing or via email to the Dean or Director of Administration. Based on the information in the complaint, the Dean shall then refer the issue to an ad hoc committee whose membership will be established by the Dean and Provost and will consist of faculty, staff and administrators as appropriate to the complaint. The student will have the right to attend the committee meeting and bring documents or witnesses before the committee as appropriate. The committee will convene based on scheduled availability for all pertinent participants, but usually within 90 days of the formal complaint. Students will be formally advised by the committee chair as to the outcome of the complaint generally within 90 days of the committee meeting.

No action will be taken against the student for the act of filing a complaint made in good faith. In accordance with New York State law, all documentation of the handling of all formal complaints will be maintained for at least six years after the final disposition of the complaint.

## **Annual Notification of Rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), commonly known as the "Buckley Amendment," of 1974 affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

*(A) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the AMNH receives a request for access.*

"Education records" is a defined term in the federal regulations that implement FERPA, and among the documents it does not include are:

1. Personal files of members of the faculty and administration;
2. Medical records;
3. Security files not available for review by individuals other than security officers and other local law enforcement officials;
4. Employment records that relate exclusively to the individual's capacity as an employee;
5. Records containing only information concerning a person's activities after graduation or withdrawal from the AMNH Graduate School;
6. Materials relating to the financial status of parents, which is contained in any record, maintained by AMNH;
7. Confidential letters of recommendation placed in a student's education record prior to January 1975; and
8. Confidential letters of recommendation, to which a student has waived his or her right of access.

Student education records are located primarily in the office of the Richard Gilder Graduate School and the offices of the various academic advisors. A student may request from the Director of Administration of the Richard Gilder Graduate School access to his or her education records by filing a written request with the person who is responsible for maintaining the record that the student wants to review. The request must identify the particular record(s) that the student wishes to inspect. The Director of Administration of the Richard Gilder Graduate School will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the Director of Administration does not maintain the records, that person will advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.

*(B) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate or misleading.*

Students may ask AMNH to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the AMNH official responsible for the record, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If AMNH decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, AMNH will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.

*(C) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosures without consent.*

FERPA contains various exceptions to the general rule that AMNH shall not have a practice of disclosing personally identifiable information contained in a student's education records without seeking the prior written consent of the student. The following circumstances are representative of those in which such information may be disclosed without the student's prior written consent:

1. Directory Information may include, but is not limited to, information such as the student's name, addresses (including e-mail addresses), telephone number, date of birth, major, year of school, dates of attendance at the Richard Gilder Graduate School, full or part-time status, participation in officially recognized activities, photographs (including identification pictures), videos depicting and/or concerning Richard Gilder Graduate School life, degrees and awards received, and previous educational institution(s) attended may be disclosed without restriction unless the student objects in writing within 30 days after enrollment.
2. Faculty members and other officials of AMNH who have a legitimate educational interest in a student's education record may be permitted to review it. An AMNH official is a person employed by AMNH in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the AMNH has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another AMNH official in performing his or her tasks. An AMNH official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
3. AMNH will disclose information to government agencies entitled to it by law.
4. AMNH may disclose information to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student unless the student has filed a statement certifying that he or she is not financially dependent as defined by the federal income tax laws.
5. After trying to notify the student involved, AMNH will disclose information in response to a lawfully issued subpoena.
6. AMNH may disclose information when necessary to determine the student's eligibility for financial aid or to enforce the terms or conditions of financial aid that a student has received.

7. AMNH may disclose information to an organization conducting a study if the organization certifies that the study will not be conducted in a way that will permit the personal identification of the students and that the information will be destroyed when the study is completed.
8. Upon request, AMNH has the right to disclose education records without a student's prior consent to officials of another institution in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. However, AMNH encourages its departments and offices, at the minimum, to make a reasonable attempt to advise the student of the disclosure either before or after it occurs.
9. AMNH will disclose information to a third party that has been granted permission by the student to request such information. When the student has given written permission for disclosure of information to a third party and subsequent events materially affect the accuracy of the AMNH's original reporting, permission for the reporting of such additional information is understood in order to make the original reporting accurate.

*(D) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures of AMNH to comply with the requirements of FERPA.*

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
600 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

## **Faculty List**

See the Richard Gilder Graduate School website for the most current information:

<http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/faculty>

### ***Definitions:***

*Curatorial Faculty:* The titles of professor, associate professor, assistant professor...will be awarded by the Dean to a curatorial faculty member [tenure ladder-ranked curator] during such time as he or she serves, or is anticipated to serve on a continuing basis, as an advisor to doctoral candidates in either the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Biology or in collaborative science programs between the Graduate School and participating universities, or within the Graduate School serves as a lecturer of courses, lab or field instructor, student advisor, member of school committees for the doctoral or MAT programs, sponsor or supervisor of postdoctoral fellows, or other significant contributions to the Graduate School. During the period of such service, a curator will receive the title of professor; an associate curator will receive the title of associate professor; and an assistant curator will receive the title of assistant professor.

*Affiliated Faculty:* Full-time professional employees of AMNH who are members of centers, institutes, research stations and programs that are part of the Museum's



science program or as may be established in future years and who have a Ph.D. relevant to the graduate program and whose scholarly interests align with any Graduate School science program may be proposed for appointment to the Graduate School affiliated faculty. Affiliated faculty are voting members of the RGGGS graduate faculty, and currently are titled as Affiliated Professors during the duration of their appointment.

*Adjunct Faculty:* Appointments to the adjunct faculty may be made from among external professionals or course lecturers. Adjunct faculty are non-voting members of the RGGGS graduate faculty and currently are titled as Adjunct Professors during the duration of their appointment. Lecturers appointed as term members (during the time they are teaching) of the adjunct faculty will be responsible for teaching either core or elective courses, but cannot serve as advisors.

*Graduate School Faculty:* All Curatorial Faculty, Affiliated Faculty and Adjunct Faculty of the Richard Gilder Graduate School. Non-curatorial members of the Graduate Faculty (i.e., Affiliated and Adjunct Faculty) may serve as co-principal advisors of doctoral candidates provided the principal advisor is a curatorial faculty member. Emeriti Faculty also may serve on RGGGS student committees, if approved during the Dissertation Committee process, and provide academic advice and assistance to students.

## **Faculty List**

See the Richard Gilder Graduate School website for the most current information:  
<http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/academics-and-research/research-labs-and-facilities>

## **RGGGS Ph.D. Program Course Catalog**

For current term offerings, see the Richard Gilder Graduate School website:  
<https://myrggs.amnh.org/Common/CourseSchedule.aspx>

For curriculum information see: <http://www.amnh.org/our-research/richard-gilder-graduate-school/amnh-ph.d.-program/our-curriculum>

Requests for archived course Catalogs can be made to the Director of Administration:  
([directorofadministration-rggs@amnh.org](mailto:directorofadministration-rggs@amnh.org))