ECOLOGY, EVOLUTION, &
CONSERVATION BIOLOGY, PHD

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Ecology, Evolution &
Conservation Biology

head of department: Angela Kent
department website: http://sib.illinois.edu/peec/
school website: https://sib.illinois.edu/

overview of grad college admissions & requirements: https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply (https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/)
college website: https://las.illinois.edu/
department office: 320 Morrill Hall, 505 South Goodwin Avenue,
Urbana, IL 61801
phone: (217) 333-2910
e-mail: PEEC-Support@illinois.edu

Graduate Degree Programs in Ecology, Evolution &
Conservation Biology

Ecology, Evolution & Conservation Biology, MS (http://
catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/ecology-evolution-
conservation-biology-ms/)
Ecology, Evolution & Conservation Biology, PhD (p. 1)
The Program in Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology (PEEC)
is an interdepartmental program designed to provide individualized
training in preparation for careers in these disciplines. Because of
the breadth of fields covered by this program, there will be no fixed
course requirements other than attendance at the program’s seminar
series and annual graduate student symposium. Courses taken by a
student and the student’s Advisory Committee generally will come from
multiple departments. The goal of the program’s regulations is to allow
maximum flexibility while providing close supervision, with the outcome
of producing scientists who are broadly educated and technically
competent in ecology, evolutionary biology and associated disciplines.
The program offers M.S. and Ph.D. degrees.

Admission
Prospective candidates must meet the requirements for admission set by
the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
Only applicants who have graduated from an accredited college or
university and who hold or will be granted a baccalaureate degree (or its
equivalent) comparable in content and completed credit hours to that
graduated by the University of Illinois will be considered. Applicants must
have a minimum grade-point average of 3.0 (A = 4.0) computed from the
last two years of undergraduate (and any graduate) work completed.
The program will give preference to candidates who hold a degree in
biology or a closely related discipline and show promise of excellence
in research and teaching. Typically, only students with strong letters of
recommendation and a GPA well above the minimum stated above will be
admitted. Demonstration of academic excellence by other means (e.g.,
extensive field or laboratory research experience) will also be considered.
The Admissions Committee will make decisions concerning admission.
For students whose native language is not English, the Program requires
a minimum paper-based TOEFL score of 613 (257 on the computer-based
test or 103-104 on the web-based test).

Financial Aid
Students admitted to the Program are typically offered two years of
support for the M.S. degree and five years of support for the Ph.D.
Support consists of fellowships, teaching assistantships or research
assistantships. Such support typically comes with a waiver of tuition,
service fees, or both. Continued offers of assistantships or fellowships
each academic year will depend on an evaluation of satisfactory progress
by the Director of the Program. Students who require more than two years
to complete the M.S. degree or five years to complete the Ph.D. degree
must submit a written petition to the Director of the Program, supported
by their Advisor, to be considered for an additional year of support.

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Ecology, Evolution &
Conservation Biology

All students must register for and attend the weekly PEEC seminar series
(IB 546A) each semester in residence. The Director of the Program must
approve excuses because of conflicts. An orientation seminar (IB 546B)
must be taken the first fall semester in residence.

No later than their second semester in the program, the student in
consultation with their Major Advisor will select members of the student’s
Doctoral Committee, which will meet annually with the student to plan
coursework and research and to review and facilitate progress toward
the degree. Students will prepare a short written report of their activities
during the previous year for consideration by the Doctoral Committee.
The Doctoral Committee will thoroughly consider all aspects of the
student’s activities, after which the Major Advisor will provide a written
report of progress to the Director of the Program.

The faculty constituting a student’s Doctoral Committee must come from
two or more departments, comprise a minimum of four members
(including the Major Advisor), be familiar with the student’s area of
research interest, and be approved by the Director of the Program.
The chair of the Doctoral Committee is typically the Major Advisor, provided
that the advisor is both a member of the University’s Graduate Faculty
and the Program in Ecology, Evolutionary and Conservation Biology. If
this is not the case, the Director of the Program will appoint a chairperson
who fulfills these requirements from among the committee membership.
The Doctoral Committee will be responsible for administering the
necessary examinations. No later than their sixth semester in the
program, and preferably in their fifth semester before the deadline for
submission of a proposal for an NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant
(typically, the third Friday in November), doctoral students must take
a Preliminary Examination. For this exam, a member of the Doctoral
Committee other than the major advisor will be appointed chair by the
Director of the Program. The first part of the three-hour oral exam will be
general and cover the student’s three core areas of emphasis. The second
part of the exam will be a defense of the research proposal. Two weeks
prior to the exam, the student must present to the Doctoral Committee
a proposal prepared in the format of a proposal for an NSF Dissertation
Improvement Grant. It should describe the objectives of the research
project, the experimental plan and rationale, the results of pilot studies,
a budget, and a tentative timetable for its completion. The student will
present evidence of feasibility and significance of the proposal, but the
main research for the dissertation shall not have been performed prior to
the Preliminary Examination. A detailed report of the exam and a copy of
the research proposal shall be submitted to the Director of the Program.
A passing grade qualifies the student as a Ph.D. candidate. A failing grade
will require the student to take a second preliminary examination no later

Information listed in this catalog is current as of 02/2021
than the following semester. A second failure will result in dismissal from the program.

Upon completion of a dissertation and the other requirements of the program, the student shall be subject to a Final Examination, which shall consist of a defense of the dissertation. Copies of the completed dissertation, approved by the Major Advisor, should be submitted to the Doctoral Committee at least two weeks prior to the Final Examination. The thesis will be judged in relation to published scholarly work in the field, and students will be encouraged to begin publishing their results before taking their Final Examination. Passing this exam and presentation of the dissertation by the student at a public seminar sponsored by the program qualify the student for the Ph.D. degree. Failure will require the student to conduct additional research and to repeat the Final Examination.

**Entering with approved M.S./M.A. degree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IB 546</td>
<td>Topics in Ecology &amp; Evolution (Section A to be taken each semester of enrollment. Section B if not taken in MS program)</td>
<td>1-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thesis Hours Required (8 min applied toward degree) (Credit in rubrics other than BIOL, NRES, PBIO or ENT must be petitioned to apply): 8

Total Hours 64

**Other Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other requirements may overlap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students must complete at least two semesters of favorably evaluated teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course work in three core areas with grades no lower than B or S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifying Exam Required:</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Exam Required:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam/Dissertation Defense Required:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disertation Deposit Required:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum GPA:</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 For additional details and requirements refer to the Program’s graduate handbook (http://sib.illinois.edu/peec/current/) and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/).

**Entering with B.S./B.A. degree**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IB 546</td>
<td>Topics in Ecology &amp; Evolution (Sections A &amp; B. Section A to be taken each semester of enrollment.)</td>
<td>1-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thesis Hours Required (8 min applied toward degree) (Credit in rubrics other than BIOL, NRES, PBIO or ENT must be petitioned to apply): 8

Total Hours 96

Information listed in this catalog is current as of 02/2021