

Graduate Studies
Department of Biological Science
Florida State University

Quick Guide to Bio Grad Database

Faculty Version

The Biology Grad Database (http://bio.fsu.edu/gradbeta) gives the graduate students and faculty access to the tracking information collected by the Graduate Office. The Graduate Office uses this information to ensure that students meet the departmental guidelines for their degree, and that we comply with College and University requirements. In making their own information visible to students, our goals are to

- help students and their mentors track their own progress,
- clarify the departmental requirements and expectations for when students should reach degree checkpoints, and
- recruit the students themselves to help keep our records complete and up to date.

Feedback and suggestions are welcome!

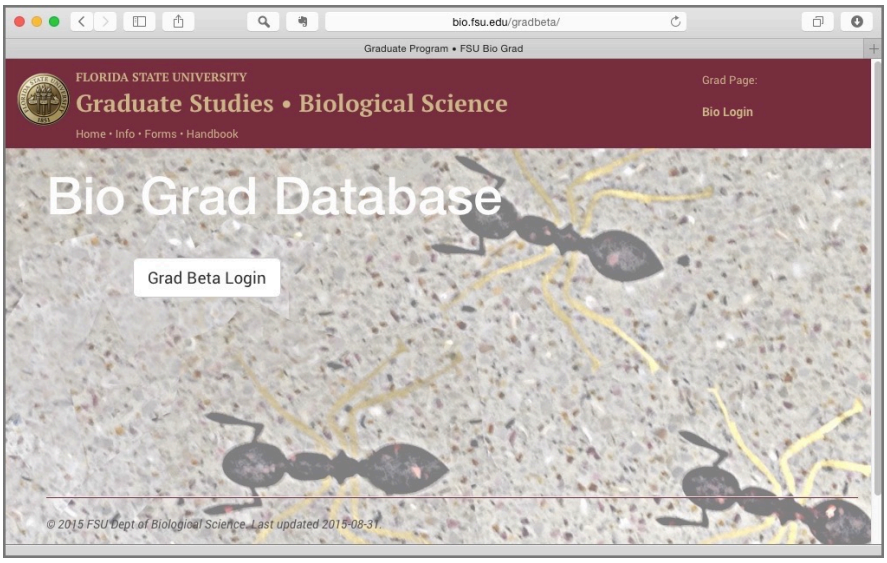
Current Limitations

Note that over the next couple of weeks, we will be updating and proofing the information displayed. So expect some initial omissions or inaccuracies that should be resolved in the near future.

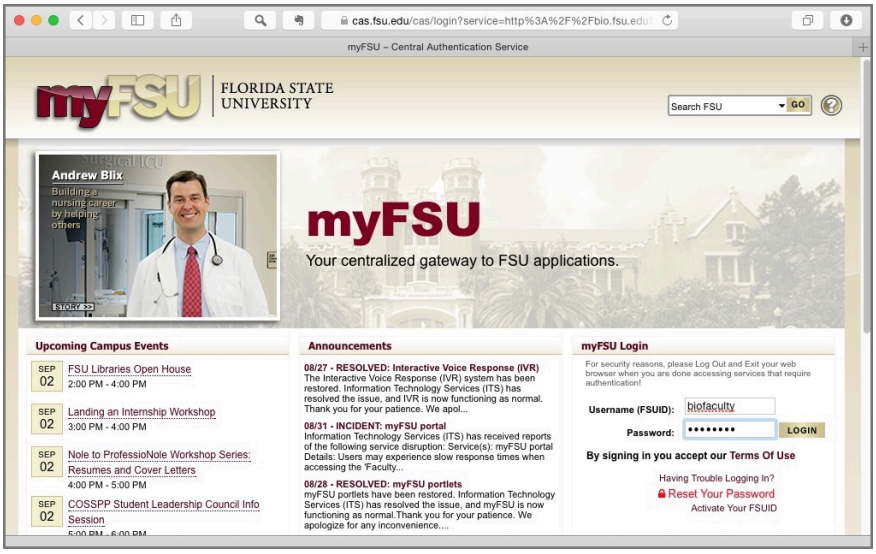
The overall progress of students who are pursuing (or have completed) an “in-flight” MS is not well-displayed on the current pages (e.g., you can’t currently tell if a PhD student has also done an MS degree from their timeline).

Login

You log in to the Gradbeta database by going to http://bio.fsu.edu/gradbeta, and clicking on the "Login" button.



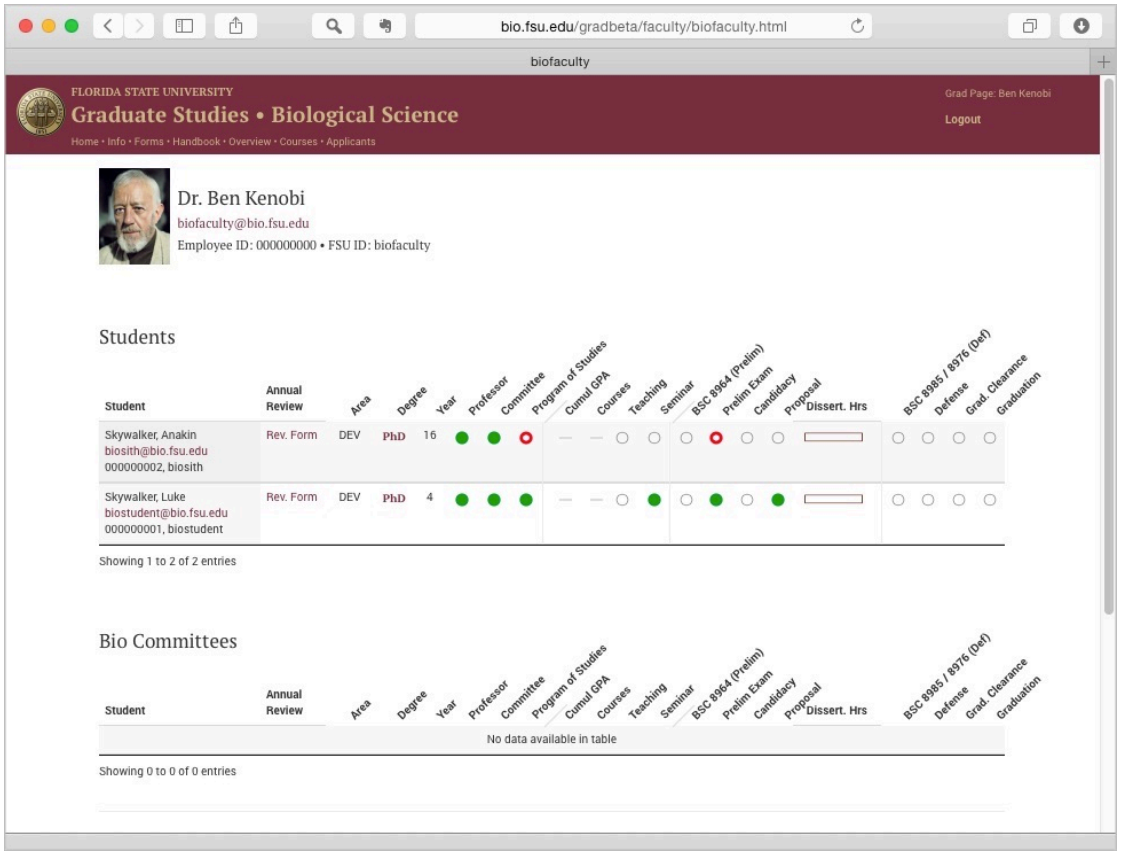
Then log in with your fsuid and password (the same login as for Blackboard). The FSU "central authentication service" verifies your login identity independent of Gradbeta or the bio servers.



If you see a page stating that you are not authorized to view the page, or pictures of Cassowaries, then contact me (houpt@bio.fsu.edu). I probably entered your fsuid incorrectly into the user list.

Faculty Page

Once you are logged in, you will see your Faculty page. This page lists your current students, and any graduate committees on which you serve. (Just Biology committees, of course). A listing of your lab alumni will be added in the near future, as we work back through the files.



Each student is listed with a summary of their progress meeting the various checkpoints towards their degrees. Here we see Dr. Kenobi's two students, Anakin and Luke:



Progress is indicated with a series of color-coded dots. "Green" indicates that a requirement has been met (or more exactly, has been recorded by the Graduate Office). "Yellow" indicates that a requirement is about to become due (e.g., prelims should be scheduled at the end of the second year). "Red" indicates that a requirement is missing or overdue (e.g. no "program of studies" has been filed with the graduate office after 2 years).

You can interrogate the status dots by hovering the mouse cursor over the dot. Here we see that Anakin has not filed his Program of Studies, despite being in the program for 16 years:

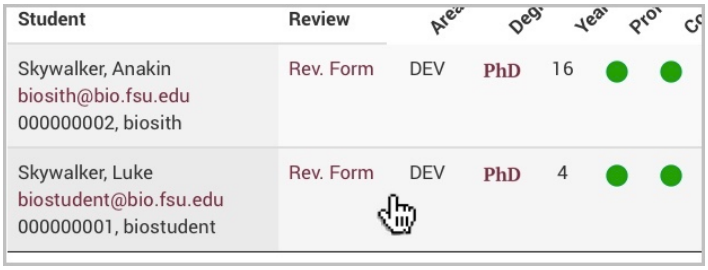


Luke, however, filed his Program of Studies on time, on September 6, 2013:

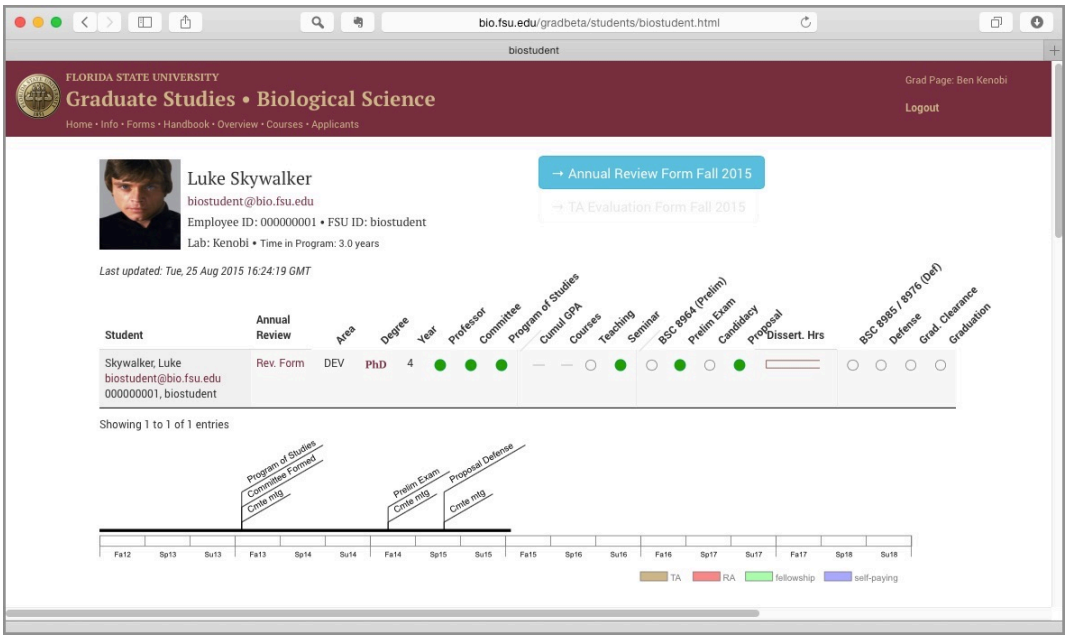


Student Profile Page

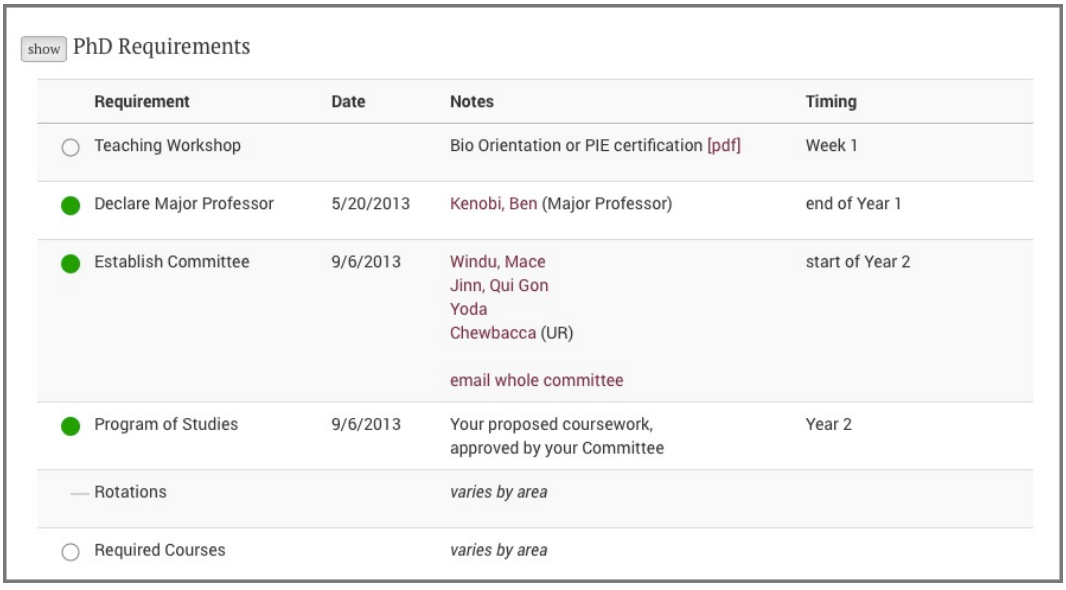
Each student has their own more comprehensive profile page. To access the student profile page, just click anywhere on the student's status row:



This will open the student profile page (This is the page a graduate student will see when they log into Gradbeta.) At the top of the page is some summary information, a status row, and a timeline of committee meetings and significant checkpoints:



Further down are several sections of information. The most relevant is the "PhD [or MS] Requirements" section, which lists in chronological order each requirement (according the the Bio Graduate Handbook), the completion status of each requirement, and the suggested timing of completion.



For each requirement, a link is provided to the appropriate memo, which should be filed with the Graduate Office to certify completion. For items which have been completed, the date of completion is displayed.

○	Teaching Requirement	Memo	TA in 2 different courses: 1. 2.	
○	Seminar Requirement	Memo	3 seminars—at least 1 departmental: 1. 2. 3.	
○	Register for BSC 8964		You must register for this course in the term in which you hold your Preliminary Examination	start of Prelim Exam term
●	Preliminary Exam	Memo	Register for BSC8964	before Year 3
○	Admitted to Candidacy		Filed by Graduate Office after Prelims passed	before Year 3
○	Proposal Defense	Memo	Submit to Graduate Office	before Year 4 within 6 m of Prelim Exam 12 m before Defense
○	Dissertation Hours		Register for BSC6980 minimum of 24 hours	taken after Prelim Exam
○	Register for BSC 8985		You must register for this course in the term in which you hold your dissertation defense	start of Defense term
○	Defense Announcement	online form		2 weeks before Defense
○	Dissertation Defense	Paperwork	Register for BSC8985	within 5 yr of Prelim Exam

A useful feature is that the student's committee is listed (clicking on the names will open an email.) The entire committee can be emailed at once by clicking on "email whole committee":

●	Establish Committee	9/6/2013	Windu, Mace Jinn, Qui Gon Yoda Chewbacca (UR) email whole committee

Other Links

Other areas of the Gradbeta site can be accessed via links at the top of the window:

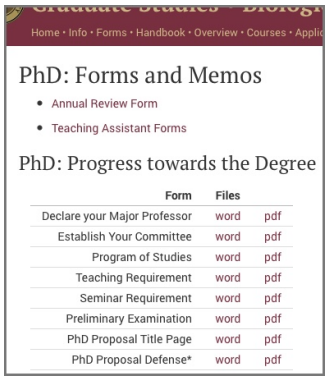


Info

An assortment of links and useful info for quick look up.

Forms

A listing of forms and memos required by MS and PhD students, which can be downloaded as either word or pdf documents. (Note that the Bio department memos are provided pre-formatted, but they can and should be tailored to the needs of the individual student and their committee.)



Courses

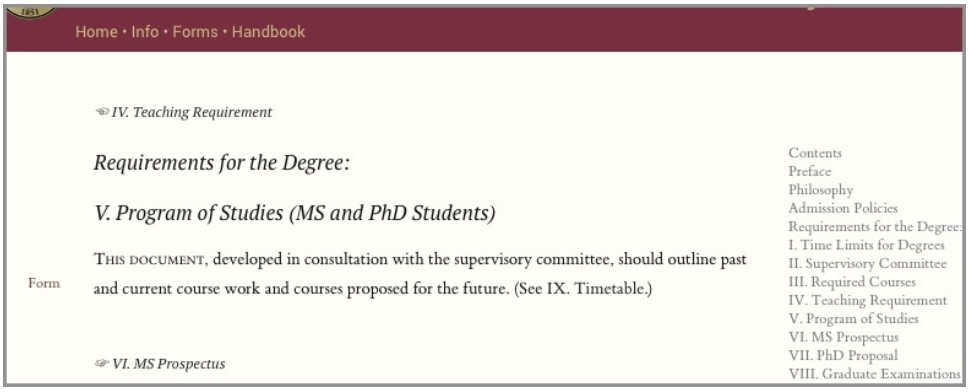
A list of departmental undergraduate courses for the current semester, and a list of TA assignments. (This list currently contains only those courses with graduate student TAs. The designation of “service” is my notation -- TAH.)

Applicants

A list of PhD and thesis-MS applicants (currently displaying last years applicants.) More details will be provided later in the semester as the recruitment season matures.

Handbook

A draft reformatting of the Bio Grad Handbook, with updated links and links to download memos mentioned in the text.



Overview

Tables summarizing departmental graduate enrollment, graduations, etc. for the current term, and comparing this academic year to last year.

Enrollment

Fall 2015

	All	CMB	NS	E&E	*ML*
PhD	93	47	10	36	*6*
abs	*5*	*2*	*0*	*3*	*1*
MS	12	3	0	9	*2*
abs	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
cbMS	1	1	0	0	*0*
Total	**106**	**51**	**10**	**45**	***8***

absentia broken out of PhD total

Support

Fall 2015

	All	CMB	NS	E&E	*ML*
TA	75	41	5	29	*2*
RA	19	6	2	11	*5*
FS	4	1	3	0	*0*
NFR	8	3	0	5	*1*
Total	**106**	**51**	**10**	**45**	***8***
% TA	*70.8*	*80.4*	*50.0*	*64.4*	*25.0*

Technical Notes

The Bio Grad Database resides in a MongoDB database, with ancillary data in several spreadsheets maintained by the Graduate Office, or periodically downloaded from central databases such as the Grad School's GST system, or the FSU Admissions portal.

The Gradbeta site consists of static pages generated by a Jekyll-Liquid framework. The advantage of a static site is fast display of prebuilt pages. Because the student tracking data does not change in realtime, the student profiles and statistical tables can be pre-populated and pre-calculated on the Gradbeta website. The pages are generated whenever there is a change in the database or new data files are uploaded, with a latency of only a few minutes. Subsequently, when a user visits the site, the pages can be displayed immediately without having to wait for data retrieval from the database server.

The online Annual Review and TA Evaluation forms are backed by a Firebase database which provides almost instant synchronization across multiple views of the same form by different faculty and students.

A series of custom Clojure, Javascript, and PHP programs glues everything together and provides a custom interface.

Security

The Database itself is stored on a separate secure server which can only be accessed from within the King building network by the Graduate Office (Ben, Rita, and Tom); it is protected by the King firewall from outside access.

The Gradbeta site is generated on the secure server and then uploaded to the bio.fsu.edu server for student and faculty access. Although some portions of the site are publicly accessible (e.g. the handbook), most pages can only be accessed by faculty or students. Users are authenticated by the FSU central authentication server (CAS), aka Blackboard/fsuid login, which verifies identity without Gradbeta needing to see the user's password. Using the fsuid system also makes it easy for outside committee members to login to their student's page.

Individual student pages are only accessible to the student and their committee. A custom server-side security program, Cassowary, mediates between the FSU CAS and Gradbeta to restrict page access based on user fsuid.

T.A. Houpt
C.E. Houpt