PROGRAM IN BIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Faculty Expectations for Independent Research and Thesis Support

: 2200 Biological Sciences Bldg. (BSB)
: https://lsa.umich.edu/biology
: lsa-biology-advising@umich.edu
: 734-763-7984

Overview of Responsibilities

	PiB Sponsor (PI)	PiB Co-Sponsor
BIO 200 **EEB 300/400** **MCDB 300/400**	• Decide on hours in lab and work outside of lab • Determine how the student will be graded • Check in with student or assign person in lab for "check-in"	• Ensure that the student's work qualifies for independent research in the department • Check in with student periodically • Determine how the student will be assigned a grade
Honors Thesis or Biology Research thesis	• Make sure student applies before deadline* • Check if student is using the thesis for ULWR and fills out form • Determine format • Determine presentation	• Make sure project meets the criteria for a thesis in their major • Make sure student applies before deadline* • Check if student is using thesis for ULWR and fills out form • Check in with student periodically on progress and back-up support for PI

Non-biology faculty serving as sponsors

- Check in with co-sponsor periodically
- Make sure student applies before deadline*
- Check if student is using thesis for ULWR and fills out form
- Determine format of thesis
- Determine presentation

* Applications are due by the add/drop deadline of the semester before students plan to submit their thesis (e.g., Fall term if a student plans to graduate in May.)

Please see the Thesis & Independent Research Sponsor/Co-Sponsor/Reader Guide for lists of PiB faculty approved to serve as sponsors, co-sponsors, & thesis readers.

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Thesis Support FAQs

- **How and when do students select a thesis sponsor?**

  Prospective Honors Students should choose a sponsor by the end of their sophomore year. **If the chosen research sponsor (PI) is not an approved faculty member in the student's major department(s), they will need to identify a "co-sponsor" from within the program.** The co-sponsor will evaluate the student's research proposal to ensure it is appropriate for the field.

- **What are the independent research requirements for students pursuing Honors?**

  It is *recommended* that students pursuing Honors complete a minimum of two terms of independent research (usually via MCDB or EEB 300/400 or MICRO 399, depending on the field of study). Most students register for three or four terms of independent research, but a specific number of research credits is not required. **If an independent research sponsor is out-of-unit, the student will register for research credit under a co-sponsor's research section.**

- **Who evaluates a student's thesis?**

  The sponsor and co-sponsor (if applicable) will evaluate the student's thesis. If the student does not have a co-sponsor, they will need to identify two faculty members *in their major* department with an understanding of the research topic to serve as readers. **Students need a total of three faculty members to review their thesis.**

- **How is a student's thesis evaluated?**

  Readers will receive an email notification prompting them to submit their evaluation of the student's thesis. **All readers must agree to turn in their evaluations within 10 days of the thesis due date (April 10, August 10, or December 10 for winter, summer, or fall).**

- **What is the Biology Research Thesis Option?**

  The Biology Research Thesis Option has rules identical to the honors thesis, except that:

  - There is no minimum GPA (an honors thesis requires a GPA of 3.4 or better, both overall and in the major)
  - The diploma will not indicate that a non-honors thesis was successfully completed (but the transcript will indicate a grade for MCDB 461).

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