

**Ecology and Evolutionary Biology**  
**Interdepartmental Graduate Major**  
**Governance Document**

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## **OVERVIEW**

The Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) Interdepartmental Graduate Major provides training and research opportunities leading to the M.S. and Ph.D degrees in EEB. The EEB major is designed for students interested in the study of mechanisms controlling the composition, structure, and functional processes of ecological systems and the mechanisms that regulate the pattern and rate of evolutionary change within and among species.

Cooperating departments offer courses on a wide range of topics that are relevant to these disciplines. In addition, interdisciplinary ecology and evolutionary courses are offered, including a special topics course, a seminar, and an extended field trip. The curriculum is designed to provide a diverse background while allowing flexibility in designing individual programs of study. Students majoring in EEB may prepare themselves for careers focused on basic or applied ecology and evolutionary biology in a variety of settings, including academia, government, industry, and private organizations.

Throughout this document, and unless stated otherwise, “approval” by the Supervisory Committee shall constitute a majority of the members of that committee and “approval” by the EEB faculty shall constitute a majority of votes cast in a greater than 50% quorum. Abstentions will count toward this quorum but will not count as a vote for or against. The graduate student representative to the EEB Supervisory Committee or their proxy shall be a voting member of the Supervisory Committee except on matters involving specific graduate students, and will serve as a voting member at general EEB faculty meetings.

## **COOPERATING DEPARTMENTS**

Departments wishing to join the major must submit a written application to the EEB Program Chair. The EEB Supervisory Committee will review the application and submit a recommendation to the EEB faculty, which shall vote (in the procedure specified under FACULTY, below) whether to accept the application.

## **CHAIR**

The Chair of EEB is in charge of the budget and general administration of the major, including all matters regarding official actions of the program (POS forms, graduation forms, etc.). These responsibilities include serving as the Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) for the EEB Program and, in consultation with the EEB Graduate Admissions Committee, approval of graduate admissions. The Chair acts as the main liaison between the major and the Department Executive Officers of participating departments, as well as the Deans of the Graduate, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Agriculture and Life Sciences Colleges. The Chair is responsible for calling and chairing a meeting of the EEB faculty at least once a year and for chairing the EEB Supervisory Committee. The Chair is also responsible for soliciting nominations (including self-nominations) to fill any vacancies on EEB committees.

## **SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

The EEB Supervisory Committee consists of the chairs of the EEB Graduate Admissions Committee and the EEB Curriculum Committee, three at-large EEB faculty members, one EEB graduate student representative designated each year by GREBE (Graduate Research in Evolutionary Biology and Ecology), and the EEB Chair. The three at-large members must come from three different cooperating departments.

The EEB Supervisory Committee is responsible for administration of the major and makes recommendations to the EEB faculty as a whole. This responsibility includes supervision and coordination of EEB course offerings (in consultation with appropriate Departmental Executive Officers and EEB Curriculum Committee), recruitment of graduate students, review of programs

of study in relation to EEB requirements, and preparation of suggested revisions of the EEB core curriculum and EEB governance document. The committee also reviews applications from faculty and departments that may wish to join the major and makes recommendations to the EEB faculty whether to accept such applications. Members of the Supervisory Committee serve as representatives of the EEB Faculty, whose approval must be sought for any substantial changes in the academic structure or nature of the EEB major.

### **GRADUATE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE**

The EEB Graduate Admissions Committee consists of five faculty members from the EEB faculty. The five members select their own committee chairperson; this person will serve on the EEB Supervisory Committee as well.

The Graduate Admissions Committee will review each complete application received and, in conjunction with the EEB Program Coordinator, circulate to the EEB faculty those files of students who meet our basic admission standards. The Graduate Admissions Committee will recommend to the DOGE those applicants who should be offered admission to EEB, and will rank applicants for any competitive graduate fellowship(s) after the student has been nominated for such fellowship(s) by a current EEB faculty member. The DOGE may consult with the Supervisory Committee on any application.

### **CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

The EEB Curriculum Committee consists of four faculty members from the EEB faculty plus a graduate student representative designated annually by GREBE. The members select their own faculty committee chairperson for a two-year term; this person will serve on the EEB Supervisory Committee as well.

The Curriculum Committee will solicit faculty interested in leading the EEB field trips, EEB seminars, and special topics courses. All proposals for field trips and seminars made by EEB faculty will be made to the Curriculum Committee. The Curriculum Committee will approve the offering of EEB seminars and special topics classes in a manner to maintain the proper number of courses offered each year. In the case of the EEB field trip, the Curriculum Committee will make a recommendation to the Supervisory Committee, which must approve the field trips because of their budgetary implications. Any graduate student requesting a waiver of any EEB requirement must make a request in writing to the Curriculum Committee, which has authority to approve or disapprove curriculum waivers.

The Curriculum Committee will prepare suggested revisions to the EEB Core Curriculum and list of courses approved for EEB credit. The Curriculum Committee will make recommendations for changes in the EEB core curriculum to the EEB Supervisory Committee and, after their approval, to the EEB faculty, which must approve all such curriculum revisions.

### **RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE**

The EEB Recruitment Committee consists of the program coordinator, up to two faculty members from the EEB faculty, and a graduate student representative designated annually by the graduate student organization, GREBE. The program coordinator will serve as the committee chairperson and will advise the EEB Supervisory Committee on recruitment activities.

The Recruitment Committee is responsible for identifying ways to market the EEB graduate program to potential graduate students, organizing the annual EEB recruitment weekend, and working with EEB faculty and students during the recruitment period. When appropriate, the

Recruitment Committee will interface with other campus entities to coordinate recruitment efforts.

The EEB recruitment weekend includes activities showcasing the breadth of the program to prospective students and a research symposium presented by GREBE. The Recruitment Committee will function as a conduit to increase communication between EEB faculty and students when planning and executing recruitment weekend activities, including the symposium. The Recruitment Committee will provide institutional memory for faculty and student organizers of both events. Finally, the Recruitment Committee will work with EEB faculty in the process of recruiting students and encourage faculty participation in recruitment weekend activities.

After the annual EEB recruitment weekend, the Recruitment Committee will solicit comments from participating faculty and students to continue to improve upon recruiting efforts. These results will be presented to the Supervisory Committee.

## **ELECTIONS**

Election of the EEB Chair of the major and all EEB committee members is normally for a term of three-years, with eligibility for reelection any number of times. Candidates for the Chair of the major, the at-large faculty members of the Supervisory Committee, and faculty members of the Graduate Admissions and the Curriculum Committees require approval by vote of the EEB Faculty as a whole.

In the last spring semester of the term for any elected position, the Supervisory Committee shall solicit nominations from each department of any member of the EEB faculty (as a whole) for the position. Additionally, any individual member of the EEB faculty may forward one or more nominations, including self-nominations, to the Supervisory Committee. In all cases, nominators must determine that a nominee is willing to serve before nominating someone for the position.

The Supervisory Committee shall prepare a confidential voting ballot that is distributed to all EEB faculty. Approval is by majority of the votes cast. If no candidate for a specified position receives a majority, a runoff election of the two candidates receiving the most votes shall be held. The result of the election for Chair of the major shall be forwarded to the Graduate College for confirmation. Initially the terms of committee members will be set at one to three years, in order to achieve a staggered rotation of new members onto the committees. Procedure for this will be specified by the Supervisory Committee.

If a committee member is not able to serve out his/her term, the EEB Chair will solicit a replacement, whose nomination will be acted upon according to the procedures outlined above. If a committee member is absent for an extended (but not indefinite) period of time, the EEB Chair may appoint another member to serve during their absence. This will include times when the Chair is absent. In such cases, the Chair will notify the members of EEB of any Acting Chair appointments, before departure.

## **FACULTY**

Membership in the EEB faculty is granted for a term of five-years. Applications for initial membership or renewal of membership must be submitted to the EEB Chair. Renewal applications should be submitted during the fall semester of the final year of a member's current term. The EEB Supervisory Committee will review each application and distribute appropriate materials to the EEB faculty for consideration, with or without a recommendation for acceptance or rejection. The Supervisory Committee will then mail ballots to all EEB faculty. Membership requires approval by a simple majority of the ballots cast, with abstentions not counting as ballots cast. The Supervisory Committee will count the ballots and the Chair will inform the applicant and the applicant's Department Executive Officer of the outcome.

Criteria for determining membership on the EEB faculty are:

1. membership in the Graduate Faculty of Iowa State,
2. a publication record demonstrating research interests in ecology or evolutionary biology,
3. an active, high-quality research program involving some aspect of ecology or evolutionary biology,
4. a commitment to recruit, support, and train students majoring in EEB,
5. willingness to participate actively in the activities of the EEB major which may include teaching one or more of the EEB courses and
6. a commitment from the faculty member's department to serve as a cooperating administrative unit for EEB majors.

Faculty who would like to participate in the EEB major, but are outside the participating departments that offer the major, can do so by obtaining joint appointments in one of the cooperating departments.

### **APPLICATION AND ADMISSION OF NEW STUDENTS**

Information for prospective students, instructions for the application process, links to necessary forms, addresses for submission, and due date, are supplied on the EEB web page. The Graduate Record Exam is required. A short summary of each applicant's record (previous schools, GPA, GRE, etc.) and interests is created and routed to all EEB faculty. This summary is intended to alert faculty to any applicants whom they might be interested in training, as well as to inform faculty of the nature of our applicant pool. Faculty may request to see complete application materials for students they are considering.

Students are admitted to the EEB Interdepartmental Graduate Major after the EEB Graduate Admissions Committee has examined the application materials, including a nominating memo from an EEB Faculty member, and found the student to be acceptable. Offers are made only when there is a reasonable plan from the major professor and associated home department that provides for continuing stipend support for the student. This support does not need to be in hand, necessarily, but there needs to be a reasonable expectation that support will be available throughout the tenure of the student's degree program.

Students in EEB must also be admitted to a home department that is one of the cooperating departments administering EEB. Because interdepartmental graduate majors are full members of the graduate student body of the home department, the admission policy for interdepartmental graduate majors into the home department is determined by that department. The letter of acceptance from EEB will state the home department and faculty advisor for the student and will be signed by a representative of the home department (such as the department head or DOGE), as well as by the Chair of the EEB program. By doing so, the home department is making a commitment to provide access to departmental resources that are available to all their graduate students (e.g., space; access to office services such as mail boxes, copy machines; equitable access to TA/RA support as defined by the policy statement of the home department; etc.).

Research assistantships provided by the Graduate College to the EEB Program are awarded and administered by the Supervisory Committee. These assistantships are provided to enable recruitment of the best, most talented graduate students. The Supervisory Committee considers all new graduate students who have been nominated by a faculty member and awards the assistantships to those applicants with the best academic records and greatest promise for success at the graduate level.

## **Procedures for PhD Track Students and Major Transfers**

Students currently pursuing a MS degree program in EEB at ISU may be considered for admission into the EEB Ph.D. program (Ph.D. Track students) either before or after completing their MS degree. MS and Ph.D. students currently majoring in other graduate programs at ISU may also be considered for transfer into the EEB MS and/or Ph.D. programs. Transfer students may either declare EEB as their sole major or request to co-major in more than one area of study (see below).

For both Ph.D. Track students and Major Transfers, the applicant must provide a statement of interest, a recent resume, and two letters of recommendation, one of which should come from the student's current advisor. Other procedures and requirements are stipulated in the Graduate College Handbook section on Changes in Graduate Program or Status. Applications will be considered by the EEB Graduate Admissions Committee and Supervisory Committee. Admission of all Ph.D. Track students and Major Transfers into the EEB program must be approved by the home department as well.

## **Co-Majors for Masters or PhD Degree**

A co-major is a program of study for a single degree in which the requirements for two separate majors are met. Normally students are admitted into one degree program, and later apply for co-major status in a second major. Students wishing to co-major in EEB and another major should provide a statement to the EEB Graduate Admissions Committee that indicates how the co-major will allow the student to achieve his/her academic objectives. A single degree is granted when the student fulfills the requirements of both majors.

The Program of Study (POS) Committee will include co-chairs, each of whom represents one of the co-majors. Both co-chairs must be members of the graduate faculty. In the case of Ph.D. POS Committees, the same faculty member cannot serve as the major professor for both the EEB major and the other major. A preliminary oral examination and research work for the Ph.D. degree should be related to both majors. Students declaring co-majors must satisfy requirements established by each major as monitored by the representatives on the POS Committee and the DOGEs of the two majors. In the case of PhD students, a co-major cannot be added after the preliminary oral examination has been taken.

## **CURRICULUM**

Policies regarding graduate degrees, curricular requirements, POS Committees, and the responsibilities of students are available in the EEB Student Handbook. A current version of this document shall be maintained in the EEB office, posted on the EEB web site, and provided to all incoming EEB students.

## **AMENDMENT OF THE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT**

Proposals to amend the EEB Governance Document may be submitted by any EEB faculty member at any time to the Supervisory Committee for consideration. The Supervisory Committee will compile biannually all proposed amendments for distribution to the EEB faculty. Upon approval by the Supervisory Committee, the proposed amendment(s) and its description shall be distributed to the EEB faculty, along with an electronic ballot. Amendments to the Governance Document will be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast. A current version of the Governance Document shall be maintained in the EEB office and posted on the EEB web site.