

Start to Finish: Timeline/Requirements/Events

1st year

First-year BBSP meeting group

Three research rotations

Deadlines:

Select a dissertation advisor (choose a lab) (~April)

Take preliminary qualifying exam (written/oral exam) in ~August beginning 2nd year at UNC

Form a preliminary dissertation committee within -6 months after passing the qualifying exam (some flexibility here; individual thesis committee composition (members) can be changed at any time)

Year 2

Courses:

Required:

- Communicating Science (presentation skills “P class”) (NBIO/CBPH 750, Fall)
- Statistics (**BBSP 710**, Fall (most commonly taken)) **OR** (a stat or programming based stat or modeling class, bioinformatics, Comp. Sci., Neuroanalytics (NBIO750) etc.) (neuroanalytics can also be taken as an elective but not both requirement and elective)
- **NBIO 893** Neuroscience Seminars-attend 75%+ seminars (in **both** Years 2 and 3)

Electives: **2 required** can take at any time, typically starting Spring of Year 2, but completely flexible when

Deadlines:

Form a full dissertation committee within 6-9 months after passing the preliminary qualifying exam. The committee is there not just to "test" you but also help you with science, career advice, and personal lab or work issues that may arise. If you form a committee early, they can help you if problems arise before the thesis proposal defense.

Not required but helpful: submit NRSA type funding proposal (e.g. NIH, NSF, etc.); not required but summer submission after year 2 is optimal timing (can re-use for basis of Thesis Proposal defense in Fall of year 3)

Optional: Your thesis committee should be there to help you, not just "test" you. In year 2 (Spring semester) a "meet and greet" committee meeting can be held if desired. You can introduce yourself to your committee at this meeting and go over about ideas and directions your thesis might take. You will need to explain to your committee you are not being tested if you have a "meet and greet"; most students do not do this but the option exists if you want it!

Year 3

Courses:

Electives (if still necessary) need 2 (+ stats (Yr2) + P class (yr2))

Required: NBIO 893 Neuroscience Seminars-attend 75%+ seminars

Deadlines:

By the end of Fall Semester third year the Oral qualifying exam (thesis proposal defense) should have been passed; This *can* occur in Spring of year 3 but do not delay simply because you want more data. This exam is as much or more about thinking, defending ideas and rationale as it is about data. Most students successfully defend by the end of the Fall semester year 3. You are welcome to use any grants as a template that YOU have submitted.

Years 4-5 (very rare past 6)

Requirements:

Fall Year 4, Responsible conduct of Research (RCR) Refresher course (currently **CBPH895**). Currently 6 Fridays in Sept.-October at 2PM, 1.5 contact hours each). Discussion based-interactive class on topics relevant to RCR. Follow up from 1st Year BBSP RCR.

Any electives to complete (0 to 2)

Meet with your committee at least once per year, preferably twice per year at times (depending on pace of progress).

Write and publish at least one first-author journal article. (first author original research in press or accepted or published required to graduate)

Write and defend thesis dissertation.

Get a good job! **Allow 1 year minimum for career planning.** Your thesis committee should have lots of insight and advice on your specific situation! Hopefully you have been discussing this with your committee individually or at meetings.

Deadlines:

It is expected that the time it takes to graduate in Neurobiology is 5 years (including 1st year BBSP).

Currently, ~5 ½ years is the average time to graduation in Neuroscience. Do not forget to go into ConnectCarolina VERY early in the semester/session you intend to graduate. The self-service section has an intend to graduate button to click on that **only the student can do**. Deadlines to file your thesis for a semester/session you intend to file are also early in the semester. These dates change every year. You must be registered in the semester/session you defend your thesis; however, the thesis filing can be done the semester after defending while no longer registered as a student. Most students file the thesis and defend it in the same semester/session. The University considers the thesis filing semester/session the "graduation" date. If you defend but do not file the thesis UNC considers you as not graduating.

Deadline dates here:

<https://gradschool.unc.edu/academics/resources/graddeadlines.html>