

# Grad School

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VANCOUVER ISLAND  
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# Graduate Degrees in Biology

- Master's ~2+ years (average: 2.5 yrs)
  - Course-based master's
    - ~1 year worth of course; ~1 year worth of thesis
  - Thesis-based master's (most common)
    - Mostly research, minimal course work
      - E.g., UBC: 12 credits
- Ph.D. ~4+ years (average: 5.5 yrs)
  - Thesis-based; minimal course work
  - Must pass a “comprehensive exam”
- “Fast-Track” system
  - Master's to Ph.D. transfer



# Applying for Grad School

- Be proactive! Start early!
  - Identify / choose potential supervisor
    - Research your field of interest – literature, websites
    - Suggestions / references from your profs
    - Get in touch, arrange to meet
    - Meet current / past students
    - Some positions are advertised
- Example timeline
  - Fall: initiate contacts, scholarship applications
  - Spring: graduate school application
    - Many schools require prior supervisor agreement
  - Summer / Fall: start program



# Applying for Grad School

- Application requirements (Master's)
  - A bachelor's degree
  - Sufficient academic background to carry out graduate work in a chosen field
  - Grades: ~B or higher in last 1-2 years of degree (varies with schools)
  - Supervisor agreement (highly recommended)
    - Often makes application “a formality”
- USA
  - GRE – Graduate Record Examination



# Money Matters

- Like a job! You get paid!
  - Minimum salary expectation: ~\$18-22K / year
- Sources of funding
  - Scholarships / fellowships
    - E.g., internal, NSERC, CIHR
  - Teaching assistantship (TA)
    - Teaching labs, seminars, marking
  - Graduate research assistantship (GRA)
    - Stipend from your supervisor's grants
  - Usually a combination

# Grad School Experience

- Most of the time is focussed on your research
  - Substantial amount of independence
  - Overall process similar to VIU BIOL 491  
Proposal → Execution → Thesis write-up → Defense
- Graduate committee (3+ members)
  - Annual meetings





# Grad School Experience

- Learning is fun!
- Interact with researchers and fellow graduate students
- Attend conferences
- Intellectual freedom
- You get to teach
- Scientific publications
- Enhanced employability