

Combined Degree (BS/MS) in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation

I. Student Commitments for WEC Combined Degree Program

“I am applying for the Combined Degree Program (BS/MS) in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (WEC), and have reviewed the requirements and information on Combined Degree Programs at UF ([link](#)) and in the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation ([link](#)), including financial aid considerations in Section II (below). I understand that:

- 1) I must have ≥ 3.2 GPA in my undergraduate courses and meet WEC Graduate Program Admission Requirements when I graduate ([link](#));
- 2) I need to apply to the UF Graduate School and complete/submit the UF Combined Degree Program Request Form ([link to pdf](#)) to the Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CAL S);
- 3) my admission into the MS in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Program is contingent upon approval of the UF Graduate School and CAL S and either a Research or Coursework advisor / mentor in WEC;
- 4) the courses on the attached UF Combined Degree Program Request Form will count towards both my BS and MS degrees.
- 5) I also understand that I must be clear on the financial consequences of this application before proceeding. Read and complete the financial section II (below) with your faculty mentor.

For the MS degree, I will pursue a: Thesis Non-Thesis (circle one)

Student - Printed Name

Signature

UFID

Date

II. Financial Planning for the WEC Combined Degree

(A) *If I choose the non-thesis option*, then I am responsible for paying all costs associated with the final year when graduate tuition rates apply (> 530 \$ / credit hour; [link](#)). UF does not provide assistantships or tuition waivers for non-thesis MS students. See non-thesis sections of this page ([link](#)) for application instructions prior to graduation with your BSc.

(B) *If you choose the thesis option*, then you and your Research advisor must select (\checkmark) an option below and then sign; once you have discussed the options thoroughly.

Option 1: Research advisor will provide full funding via a Graduate Assistantship, including tuition (~ 530 /credit) and stipend (0.25-0.50 FTE), for the final year of the 4+1 program. Advisor will also pay all expenses associated with conduct of research. See this page for stipend rates ([link](#)). _____

Option 2: Student will be responsible for all costs associated with both graduate tuition and research expenses during completion of the MS degree portion: research advisor (UF) will provide no funding. _____

Option 3: Advisor will provide funding for one or more of the following, and the student will be responsible for the remaining costs during the final graduate year of training.

Circle those items that advisor will fund in the final year: research expenses tuition stipend
Estimated costs **advisor** will pay: _____ \$ Estimated costs **student** will pay: _____ \$

Research Advisor - Printed Name

Signature

UFID

Date

Student – Printed Name

Signature

UFID

Date

III. Advisors for the WEC Combined Degree

Non-thesis mentoring: Students selecting the non-thesis MS option need a Coursework Adviser. Contact the WEC Grad Coordinator for help in finding one. The Coordinator will serve as the default non-thesis MS Coursework Advisor, but any faculty member can also serve. Students must obtain Advisor's agreement.

Thesis mentoring: Students seeking the thesis option will need a faculty member who will mentor the student in research design, data collection, analysis and thesis/paper writing as well as in choice of courses.

All advisors (coursework advisor for non-thesis option, research advisor for thesis option) must agree / sign:
"I agree to serve as Faculty Mentor for the degree option indicated in Section I (thesis or non-thesis) for this student during the MS portion of the program (senior year + 1 MS year). I approve the MS courses listed on the attached UF Combined Degree Program Request Form."

Faculty Advisor - Printed Name	Signature	UFID	Date
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IV. Coursework Approval by WEC Undergraduate Coordinator

The Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation approves the use of the courses on the attached UF Combined Degree Program Request Form towards the fulfillment of the requirements for the BS in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation degree.

Undergraduate Program Coordinator - Printed Name	Signature	UFID	Date
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V. Degree Approval by WEC Graduate Coordinator

The Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation approves the use of the courses described on the attached UF Combined Degree Program Request Form towards the fulfillment of the requirements for the MS in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation degree; supports the students' application to the UF Graduate School; and, if accepted by the UF Graduate School, will admit the student into the Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Graduate Program given the financial provisions agreed upon in Section II of this form.

GPC or Chair - Printed Name	Signature	UFID	Date
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This form and a copy of the UF Combined Degree Program Request Form must be submitted to the Academic Support Services Office of the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation (102 Newins-Ziegler Hall), and copies may accompany the UF Combined Degree Program Request Form to CALS and the UF Graduate School Application.

Which degree option is right for you (thesis or non-thesis)?

If you envision being a problem solver in research (in or outside of academia) involving technical approaches or a project manager overseeing research activities, then the thesis degree is a good choice. If research and independent leadership on writing proposals, grants and papers is less interesting than people management (outreach, education, team coordination, and networking), conservation action/activism, program assessment, human dimensions of conservation work, etc., then the non-thesis option might be best. It allows you to take more graded (content) courses than the thesis option. A large portion of the credits taken under the thesis option are research credits; which have no specific content, but they allow time in your schedule for doing the research and writing it up. Do you have more questions? Talk it over with your Faculty Mentor or either the Graduate or the Undergraduate Coordinator in WEC!