# STUDENT HANDBOOK
# FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN
# ECOLOGY, EVOLUTION, AND CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

The Master of Arts in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology offers a comprehensive curriculum that combines advanced biological sciences with a seamless integration of environmental policy, project planning, and research experience. This distinctive interdisciplinary approach empowers students with a diverse array of opportunities to shape their future careers.

Graduates of the M.A. program are well-prepared to pursue further education through Ph.D. programs or to enter the job market directly, taking on roles as accomplished scientific researchers, educators, or administrators within NGOs or government agencies dedicated to the conservation of natural resources.

At E3B, the M.A. program is uniquely structured around a project-based framework, requiring all students to undertake a substantial project as a key component of their degree. This project offers two distinct pathways: the Research Thesis (hypothesis testing) and the Practical Thesis (applied innovation). This structure allows students to tailor their coursework in alignment with their individual interests and aspirations, while also providing a platform to cultivate supplementary skills and hands-on experience.

With the flexibility to shape their educational journey and develop specialized expertise with their capstone project, students at E3B not only receive a world-class education but also gain a competitive edge in their chosen fields.

## Table of Contents

## M.A. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To earn their M.A. degree students must complete:
2 Resident Units (A Resident Unit (RU) is equal to one semester at full-time tuition).
43 Points (Credits)

**All students must complete the following Core Courses:**

1. Fundamentals of Ecology (EEEB GR6112) **and** Fundamentals of Evolution (EEEB GR6110; 3 credits each)[1]
2. Conservation Biology (EEEB GR6905, 3 credits)
3. Four Semesters of Research Seminar (EEEB GR6300, 1 credit per semester)
4. Thesis development seminars (EEEB GR4850 and EEEB GR4851) for 3 credits each
5. Statistics (EEEB 5005/5015 or more advanced, with approval; 3 credits)

In addition to the core courses listed above, students must also take a balance of course electives as outlined below.

6. One or more Policy electives
7. One or more Ecology/Evolution/Behavior/Conservation Biology electives
8. Additional relevant electives to meet the 43-credit graduation requirement

A list of courses that meet these elective requirements will be created prior to each semester. Students must consult with the DMAP if they identify a course that they believe fulfills an elective requirement that isn't on the list of approved courses.

To fulfill the program requirements, students must complete the required credits with a combination of elective courses, directed readings and directed research. Students may not take more than 12 credits of Directed Readings and Directed Research throughout their tenure.

**Course planning**

The M.A. in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation Biology program is designed to offer students the flexibility to curate a personalized course lineup that aligns with their individual interests and goals. It is crucial to plan your academic journey thoughtfully to fulfill the degree's required courses. To ensure the best fit for your aspirations, collaborate closely with your advisor and the Director of the Masters Program (DMAP) to determine a well-suited combination of elective courses.

Please note that not all courses are available each academic year. It is essential to plan ahead to accommodate this variability. For information regarding the future availability of specific courses within E3B, you are encouraged to refer to the University's Directory of Course Offerings and Academic Calendar for comprehensive schedules across various Schools and Departments.

[1] A student can petition to place out of one or both of these requirements if significantly advanced training in ecology and/or evolution can be demonstrated. The petition is evaluated by the course instructor(s), the DMAP, and the student's advisor. Students that are granted a waiver will still need to meet the 43-credit degree requirement by taking additional elective courses.

**Minimum Grades**
In the context of our graduate program, it is expected that students maintain a *minimum grade of B* in their required core coursework (outlined above). While there exists the possibility for students to engage in discussions with their respective instructors to explore avenues for grade enhancement through supplementary efforts, such arrangements are not guaranteed, and any additional work must be concluded by the subsequent summer semester.

Students must uphold a minimum GPA of 3.00 each semester. In the case of part-time students, the GPA calculation is based on the completion of 12 credits. Failure to meet the GPA threshold will result in academic probation. Students who do not demonstrate improvement after one semester of probation will be referred to the faculty for further evaluation, which may potentially lead to dismissal from the program.

It's important to note that a GPA falling below 3.00 will render students ineligible for graduation, underscoring the significance of maintaining academic performance at or above this threshold throughout the program.

## THE THESIS PROJECT

The thesis is a culminating opportunity for students at E3B to design, participate in, and execute research, outreach, or educational activities. Flexibility is central to this project, enabling diverse exploration and outcomes. Collaborating with advisors, committees, and the DMAP, students identify a fitting project, which could be a Research (hypothesis testing) or Practical Thesis (applied innovation). By the end of the first year, committee and DMAP approval of a project proposal is a requirement. Final project decisions consider its alignment with the M.A. degree scope and study program of the student.

The Thesis Project, it its various forms, includes: 1) Substantial independent critical thinking and analysis in the field; 2) A conclusive written summary; and 3) A presentation during a special research seminar in the final semester. Projects with publishable potential in peer-reviewed journal are encouraged, especially for aspiring researchers. Archiving the final work in Columbia Academic Commons, an open access repository, is recommended.

**Research Thesis**
A Research Thesis involves original data collection and analysis components and can be based on field, laboratory, and pre-existing data. Research-based Capstone Projects demand substantial time commitment for research leading to the final thesis. Research typically aligns with ongoing E3B or partner institution activities. Exploring external projects is feasible if they meet degree, program, and mentoring criteria, with approval from an Advisor and DMAP. Students should be able to conduct their research work within an external project as long as (a) the research is considered suitable for a Master degree thesis, (b) it is in line with the study program of the student and (c) there is a suitable Advisor willing to mentor the student.

**Practical Thesis**
The Practical Thesis showcases the application of ecology, evolution, and/or conservation biology to real-world issues. It integrates research, academic knowledge, and practical skills into a coherent outcome. Original data collection isn't mandatory, but a significant scholarly contribution to a well-designed final product is essential. Collaboration with stakeholders or practitioners is encouraged, and the project committee should include relevant members. Practical Thesis examples include, but are not limited to design of and/ or significant work in:

- Educational activities (courses, curricula, exhibits, outreach programs – including innovative media, science communication)

- Software, web-based, or other forms of innovative analytical, research, or educational tools
- Integration of art and ecology, evolution, and conservation, e.g. photo essay of climate change, review and exploration of environmental art

**Research and Practical Thesis Formatting Guidelines**
The M.A. Thesis, traditionally shorter than a Ph.D. dissertation, upholds publishable quality. The guidelines for formatting adheres to Ph.D. dissertation guidelines, which are available online: https://www.gsas.columbia.edu/content/formatting-guidelines-and-dissertation-template. If a student intends to submit their thesis for publication, they may follow the Author Guidelines for dissemination. Research Theses often follow a journal manuscript format, including introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion sections. Early coordination with the committee establishes thesis formatting expectations prior to final submission.

## ADVISORS AND COMMITTEES

The formation of a comprehensive committee is a crucial step in the capstone project process. Each student is required to assemble a committee comprising three members, with specific criteria in mind. This committee configuration necessitates a project advisor, along with two additional committee members. Among these, at least one must be affiliated with E3B (Earth Institute Center for Environmental Sustainability), and it is essential to include a core E3B faculty member.

Selecting a project advisor is a priority, with this decision ideally solidified within the first semester of enrollment. Project advisors, who must be E3B/ faculty members[2], assume a pivotal role in guiding and directing MA students throughout their capstone project journey. This encompasses delineating project scope, study design, logistical aspects, data analysis, and the writing process. To ensure a harmonious and effective advisor-student relationship, it is advisable to discuss and mutually agree upon guidelines that establish expectations and practices for both parties, in conjunction with all committee members.

The remaining two committee members should be chosen following discussions with the project advisor and coordination with the DMAP. It is imperative that these committee members possess expertise pertinent to specific facets of the project, contributing by furnishing tailored resources, critical assessments, and career guidance as needed to bolster the student's training and project completion.

While the ideal timeline for committee member identification spans the Fall term, circumstances may dictate the need for flexibility. *At the very least, students should have identified two committee members by the conclusion of the Add/Drop period in the Spring term*, typically taking place around the initial week of February. Any modifications or updates to the committee composition should be promptly conveyed to DMAP. This meticulous committee formation process lays the foundation for a robust and well-supported capstone project experience.

[2] If you are uncertain of a faculty member's status, check with the Director of Administration and Finance (DIRECTOR A&F), the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), or the Director of the MA Program (DMAP).

## SCHEDULING FIELD WORK

Fieldwork is typically conducted during the summer between the first and second year. To gain up to 12 credits for their fieldwork, students should enroll in Directed Research during the Fall of their second year. Recognizing the challenges of completing all field research within a single summer, research thesis-based M.A. students may request a Research semester. This permits one of their four semesters to be spent conducting research in the field, alongside the summer period.

Determining the suitability of extending fieldwork involves a thoughtful decision-making process, engaging the student's committee and the DMAP. Requests for a research semester should be submitted to the DMAP by the end of the summer between the first and second years, supported by clear motivation aligned with research and course plans. A comprehensive assessment of any remaining core requirements is undertaken before approving a Research semester. During the fieldwork semester, students are exempted from registering for the Research Seminar.

## THESIS COMPLETION

**The final thesis must be submitted to the department 5 days before degree conferral.**

The Degree Conferral form (Appendix V) requires signatures from the advisor and committee members to approve the Capstone Project and recommend the student for degree conferment. This form is due ten days before degree conferral. *Securing all signatures is the student's responsibility*. If a committee member is abroad, advance arrangements should be made.

Completing capstone projects demands considerable time. *A working final draft should ideally be submitted to the committee by mid-March*, granting members ample time for revision suggestions. A minimum 14-day review period is expected; requesting a shorter duration is an exceptional courtesy and not always feasible due to faculty commitments.

Submission entails the signed Degree Conferral Form and the Capstone Project saved as a PDF and Word doc using the students last name in all caps + MA Capstone + _Date (e.g. BRODIE MA Capstone_5May23). The documents are then emailed to DMAP and DAAF.

Archiving data and submitting work to the Columbia Academic Commons is encouraged, potentially leading to public access through the E3B website.

## GRADUATION

Students MUST apply to graduate by the applicable deadline for their desired commencement ceremony. See the Registrar's website for up-to-date graduation application dates.

## MA AWARDS

Each Academic year, two MA graduates are nominated and voted on by E3B faculty and affiliate faculty for awards:
1) **The Eleanor Sterling Award:** Recognizing achievements in conservation, systems thinking, and/ or community-based thesis ($500.00)
2) **The Alfred Wallace Award:** Celebrating significant achievements in the field and/ or outstanding contributions for science communication ($500.00).

To be eligible for these awards, the student must be in good standing and have submitted their thesis (or draft thesis, e.g. sections submitted in Thesis Development II) to the DMAP before the May convocation. Students conferring their degree after May, e.g. October and February, will not be eligible in the following May. Award recipients are announced at the E3B Graduation Celebration.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

MA students are required to arrange a meeting with the DMAP each semester to assess progress and explore future directions. While these meetings maintain an informal tone, they serve as valuable checkpoints for students to stay aligned with their academic trajectory. These discussions enable faculty to periodically gauge student advancement and intervene if challenges or complications arise, benefiting both students and the graduate program.

An annual letter will be provided to students, outlining their achievements, and pending tasks essential for adhering to the graduation timetable.

## READING ASSISTANTSHIP

M.A. students have the option of registering with the Department for paid Reading Assistantship (synonymous with Teaching Assistantship) in undergraduate courses. Reading Assistants support a course instructor throughout a semester, e.g. Teaching Assistant. The Reading Assistantship will allow students to develop additional skills for a variety of professional directions that they may choose to follow. Reading Assistantships are voluntary and limited in number based on the needs of the department and allocations from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The DAAF or DAAF will send out a request during the spring semester for interested students to indicate their availability during the following academic year.

## INTERNSHIPS FOR M.A. STUDENTS

Pending consultation with and approval of the DMAP, students may use internships as substitutions for elective coursework. Registration for Directed Research ensures that credit will be given for the work.

## DIRECTED READINGS and DIRECTED RESEARCH

Students have the option to collaborate extensively with a faculty member in a specialized course of their choosing. As part of this, they can opt to replace one of the ecology or conservation science electives with a directed reading or directed research module. To facilitate this substitution, prior endorsement is essential and can be sought through the Directed Readings and Directed Research forms (Appendix III and IV, respectively).

Directed reading is typically used for (as the name suggests) a quasi-course to work on something like a literature review with your advisor. It has also been used in the past for semi-structured courses for groups of students. However, it's important to note that the policy elective cannot be satisfied through Directed Readings. Approval for such substitutions hinges on showcasing that Directed Readings offers a distinct learning experience unattainable in standard course formats. It's worth mentioning that Directed Readings focused on thesis work cannot be utilized as a substitute for an elective course.

Directed Research is to account for *some* of the time you spend working on your thesis research. Students can receive up to 12 credits toward their degree for their thesis research (although this rarely accounts for all of the time that they spend). These ‘count’ toward your 43 credit minimum to graduate.

- **Designate the semester you did/ or will do the work:** You should fill out your Directed Research form for any summer work to *retroactively* receive credit the following Fall. For the Fall and Spring semesters, you should fill out your form proactively by predicting the number of hours you will work that upcoming semester. This means that students often turn in 2 Directed Research forms in the Fall, one for their completed summer work, and one for their planned Fall work. Grades for both of those courses will be issued at the end of the Fall semester. It is important that in the box that says 'Semester', you fill in the semester in which you did the work (so for summer, write summer!).
- **Calculating credits**: On the form, you will be asked to justify the number of credits you are registering for, each academic credit requires a minimum of three hours work each week in a 14-week semester (if you're calculating your time over the summer, 1 credit= 42 hours total, so 6 credits= 6 weeks of full time work).

For both Directed Readings and Directed Research, you are limited to a **maximum of 6 credits** per semester and **12 credits throughout your tenure** as a MA student. Additionally, if your supervisor is from outside of our faculty, the DMAP (Bekka Brodie) will become the de-facto paper-based 'instructor', although your primary advisor for that work will still need to sign the form and will be the person assessing the quality of your work for your final grade in the course.

**Any Directed Research/Reading forms are due to the DMAP (Bekka Brodie) AND Maire Keane by the end of the day on 1 week before the last day to add classes. (Check the University Academic Calendar).**

Once the DMAP approves the forms, Maire will set up a section of the correct course for you to enroll in and *will email you with specific instructions*. Follow these instructions carefully! You should be certain that you enroll in the correct number of credits AND the correct section number for the course.

## FUNDING

### E3B MA Student Research Grant

Students can seek financial support through E3B MA Student Research Grant (Appendix I), potentially securing up to $2,000 to bolster their thesis project (pending fund availability). Typically pursued in the second semester of the program, grant applications necessitate a comprehensive project description and budget. Allocated funds are designated for the outlined purposes in the application. For additional backing, students are encouraged to apply for the GSAS Matching Grant, offering up to $300 once they have secured the E3B Grant.

### E3B MA Student Conference Fund

Students can seek financial support through the E3B MA Student Conference Fund (Appendix II), potentially securing up to $750 (pending availability) in support of travel to a scientific meeting (approved by the DMAP) any time after their 1st year in the program. In most cases, students are likely to attend meetings in their second year, when they have the greatest chance of presenting their own research (which is required for funding!). Current students are also encouraged to apply for matching funds from GSAS for conference attendance, offering up to $300 once they have secured the E3B Fund. MA students are no longer eligible for this fund after degree conferral.

Reimbursements for travel and business expenses will be made **AFTER** the trip has occurred. Lodging, travel expenses and registration fees can be reimbursed. To receive reimbursement, you must:

- provide documentation that you attended the conference (e.g. a registration receipt).
- submit your Travel Business Expense reports within 2 weeks of arriving back to the USA.
- fill out your forms online from the E3B website at: http://e3b.columbia.edu/resources/
- Submit original receipts. If you pay with a credit card, you will also need to submit a credit card statement showing the expense(s) in question.
- if you make purchases in a foreign country, you must get the currency conversion for the exact dollar amount. Use http://www.oanda.com/ this is the only site Accounts Payable will honor.

**E3B MA Research Support Bonus**

The Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology (E3B) offers an External Funds Research Support Bonus Program, which provides financial support of up to $1,000.00 to MA students who have been awarded external, non-Columbia funding in the form of a research grant, scholarship, or fellowship. To be eligible for this program, students must be currently enrolled in the E3B MA program and maintain good academic and administrative standing.

The student will receive funds as a stipend. *Please discuss with financial aid to understand the details of the payout.*

The breakdown for the bonus is 10% up to $1000:

| External Award | E3B Support Bonus |
|---|---|
| $1,000 | $100 |
| $2,500 | $250 |
| $5,000 | $500 |
| $7,500 | $750 |
| $1,000 | $1000 |

Application Process:

To apply for the E3B MA Research Support Bonus, students should follow these steps:

1. Submission of Materials: Students are required to submit the following documents to the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology's Program Manager (Bekka Brodie, email: bb3117@columbia.edu) and Departmental Administrator (Kyle Bukhari, email: kb2337@columbia.edu):

- Name of the external scholarship, fellowship, or grant for which they have applied.
- Application materials submitted for the external award.
- The Notice of Award (NOA) confirming the external funding.

2. Evaluation: The Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology's Program Manager (DMAP) and Departmental Administrator (DAF) will evaluate the merit and significance of the external funding award. Based on their assessment, they will determine the amount of E3B internal funding that the department is prepared to match.

Please note that the E3B MA Research Support Bonus is not guaranteed, and each MA student is limited to receiving one award during their enrollment at Columbia University. If approved, the bonus will be disbursed in the form of a stipend.

We encourage our MA students to take advantage of this opportunity to leverage external funding sources for their research and academic endeavors. For any questions or further information, please do not hesitate to contact the DMAP.

## TIPS FOR REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

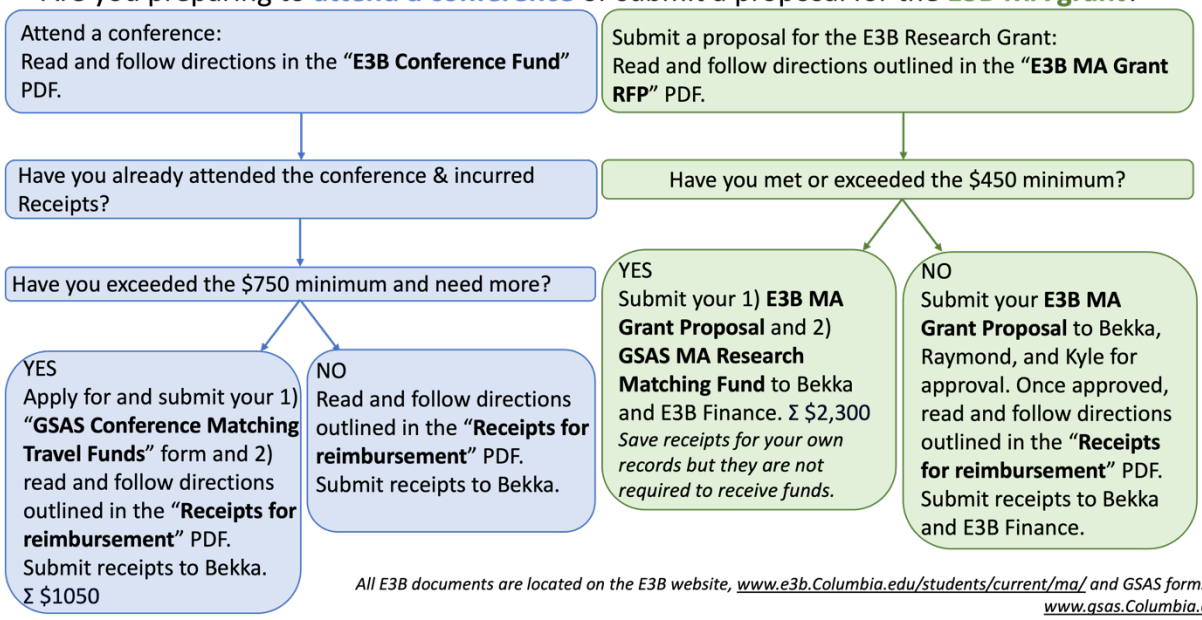
Advance planning is critical: inform yourself in advance of the expenses that can be covered, and how to process the paperwork to get a reimbursement. The DAAF or the Administrative Assistant can help you here. If established procedures are not followed, your account with the University may be jeopardized (you may not get reimbursed), especially since these transactions may be audited by the IRS (Internal Revenue Service). Since reimbursements modalities (receipts for reimbursement document) and funding sources may vary, please carefully review the MA student required documents roadmap below).

It takes about *two weeks* for the University to process payments after submission of documentation. During the summer, be aware that June 30 is the end of the fiscal year. If you attended a conference before June 10, be sure to present your paperwork for reimbursement by June 10 at the latest. **When you travel, always keep all your original receipts. They are essential.**

To receive direct deposit of funds, follow the directions provided at Student Financial Services, www.sfs.columbia.edu/direct-deposit. You will need your bank routing number and your savings/checking account number. If you do not enroll in direct deposit, a check will be sent to the address in SSOL.

# MA Student Required Funding Documents Roadmap

Are you preparing to **attend a conference** or submit a proposal for the **E3B MA grant**?




*All E3B documents are located on the E3B website, www.e3b.Columbia.edu/students/current/ma/ and GSAS forms at www.gsas.Columbia.edu*

# APPENDICES

## Appendix I. E3B MA Student Research Grant

The purpose of the MA Student Research Grant is to provide funding support for students to carry out the fieldwork, lab work, or analyses required for their thesis projects. The funding is not a guarantee for all students, and students must provide a clear demonstration of how the grant will fit into their proposed thesis project. The grant is limited to $2,000 and *cannot be combine with conference funding*. Students are strongly encouraged to apply for the GSAS matching grant (up to $300) for their work once they have received the E3B grant.

### REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS

#### Cover Page

- Your name
- The title of your project
- Your project committee members and their affiliations

#### Abstract (Limit 300 words)

The abstract should provide a brief description of the problem or need, how your project will address the need, and how your project will fit into the larger literature in your field and/or conservation purpose. Briefly describe the methods you will use and the likely outcomes of the project.

#### Background (Limit 1,000 words)

Explain why your project is needed and how it will address a critical gap in knowledge in your field. Provide a **brief** overview of the current knowledge in your field and articulate your overall thesis goal, the overall objective of this application, your central hypothesis, and the rationale behind it.

#### Objectives

Write out a numbered list of objectives that your project will address. Each objective should be a statement describing what you intend to achieve. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.

#### Materials and Methods

*For each objective*, describe in writing (this is not a numbered/ bulleted list) the project experimental design materials, project site, and data analysis. Include sufficient detail so that reviewers can determine if the approach(es) will achieve the objectives. Describe likely problems or challenges you may encounter (e.g. in collecting a certain type of data) and how you will still accomplish meaningful work if this prevents you from achieving all of your objectives.

Include all required permits and permissions for your project, when you did (or will) apply for them, and when you expect to have received them by. Examples of permits/permissions may include (but are not limited to) Federal/State/City collecting permits, IACUC, IRB.

#### Literature Cited

Complete reference for each of the in-text citations used in your proposal (APA style)

**Budget and Justification**

Provide a complete budget for your proposed thesis project, and a **clear breakdown of which components of the project will be covered by this grant** and what other sources you will seek funding from if your full budget cannot be covered by the E3B grant. Your budget narrative and project description should include information on how you will complete your project if additional funding is required (including a contingency for how you will modify your project if you cannot secure additional funding).

| | Vendor | Total cost | Funding Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personnel | | | |
| | | | |
| Travel | | | |
| | | | |
| Materials and supplies | | | |
| | | | |
| Other direct costs | | | |
| | | | |
| **Project Total** | | | |
| **Total requested from THIS grant:** | | | |

Provide a justification for the costs outlined above, including the purpose of each line item, the estimated amount needed. *For any items over $500, include a quote from the vendor and will be purchased by our E3B Admin team*. All students must adhere to the E3B travel advance, purchasing and reporting guidelines.

**Timeline of Project Proposal**

Prepare a detailed Gannt Chart with SMART objectives and key components. There are four important items to consider as you craft the timeline for your project. They include major events, dependent or minor events, reporting requirements, and internal deadlines.

**Letter of Support**

Include a letter of support from your research advisor. An example letter is included here. (See below)

Example letter of support. Note that an email from your advisor with similar content is also acceptable:

DATE

Dear Review Committee:

I am writing in support of [STUDENT'S NAME'S] application for an E3B MA Student Research Grant for their project entitled "NAME OF PROJECT". I have read the enclosed proposal and agree that the proposed budget is appropriate for the project.

**SUBMIT APPLICATION MATERIALS**

Completed applications should be emailed to Bekka Brodie (bb3117@columbia.edu) and E3B Finance (E3BFinance@columbia.edu). Grant funding will be available by February 1 and must be used within the first year (for full time students).

**APPLY FOR GSAS MA RESEARCH MATCHING FUNDS**

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences provides up to $400 in match funding for research and travel. Additional information can be found on the GSAS website (https://www.gsas.columbia.edu/content/ma-research-matching-funds). If you meet or exceed the $750 minimum (review funding documents "roadmap") submit your Departmental Research Grant and the GSAS 'Application for Research Matching Funds' form, and submit it via email to the DMAP (Bekka Brodie) and E3B Admin (E3Badmin@columbia.edu). DO NOT INCLUDE GSAS matching funds on your budget and justification.

- GSAS will consider applications in the order they are received, until GSAS funds for that academic year and following summer are exhausted or the final application deadline of May 1 is reached (whichever occurs earlier).

**RECEIVING FUNDS**

To receive direct deposit of funds, follow the directions provided at Student Financial Services, www.sfs.columbia.edu/direct-deposit. You will need your bank routing number and your savings/checking account number. If you do not enroll in direct deposit, a check will be sent to the address in SSOL.

If you met or exceeded the $750 minimum for the E3B grant and have applied for GSAS MA Research Matching Funds, you will receive a lump sum reimbursement. If you did not meet the $450 minimum then, once approved, read and follow directions outlined in the "Receipts for reimbursement" PDF document located on the E3B website: http:www.e3b.columbia.edu/students/current/ma/

## Appendix II. E3B MA Student Conference Fund

The Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology (E3B) department is pleased to offer conference funding opportunities for MA students. In their second academic year, Master's (MA) students within the E3B department are eligible for up to $750 in conference travel funds to present their work.

Should students require additional financial support beyond the E3B conference fund, they are strongly encouraged to explore further opportunities. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) offers an additional funding option of $300 specifically designated for conference travel. By combining the E3B conference fund with the GSAS funds, eligible students have the potential to access a total of $1050 in financial assistance for attending their chosen scientific conference.

It's important to note that the E3B $750 conference travel funds are accessible to MA students during their second academic year, commencing from the first day of the Fall semester. This flexible time frame provides MA students with ample opportunity to make the most of this financial support by attending a scientific conference that aligns with their research interests and academic goals.

We encourage all eligible E3B department MA students to take advantage of these conference funding opportunities and contribute to the dissemination of knowledge within the field of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology. Your participation at scientific conferences is an essential component of advancing research and promoting meaningful collaboration.

Table 1. Quick information about conference travel funds.

| Year | Amount | Use | Availability |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | $0 | - | - |
| 2 | $1050 ($750 E3B* + $300 GSAS) | To attend and present at any one scientific conference | Second academic year (typically first day of Fall semester) through until 6 months post-graduation |

** To be eligible for the full $750 from E3B in their second year, students are required to apply for the GSAS matching grant for their conference once they have applied for and received the E3B Conference Fund.*

## PLANNING TO ATTEND A SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

1. **Talk to your advisor:** You should keep your advisor/committee informed about your conference plans **at every step** in this process. Discuss which conferences you might want to attend in the first year of your program and look up the likely abstract deadlines (most conferences are held annually and announce their locations and dates ~2 years in advance). Your advisor can give you advice on writing your abstract, and on things like authorship for the presentation you give.

2. **Submit an abstract**: Students must be presenting at the conference, e.g. poster or oral presentation, to be eligible for funding. You should talk to your advisor about conferences they would recommend, and you should be prepared to submit an abstract prior to the submission deadline for your conference(s) of choice. You can submit abstracts to multiple conferences, but the E3B conference fund will only cover attendance at a single conference. For most conferences, you do not have to pay to submit an abstract or guarantee your attendance at the time of abstract submission. Carefully read

the instructions for abstract submission on the conference website and talk to your advisor for advice on what to include. Abstracts are often due 6 months (or more!) BEFORE the actual conference.

3. **Create a budget:** Explore the conference website for information about registration fees and accommodation. We recommend you also estimate the cost of travel to the conference venue. Meals to be reimbursed should be estimated, excluding tips and tax, according to Columbia Travel & Expense: $25 for breakfast, $35 for lunch, $75 for dinner.

   Explore volunteer opportunities- which often come with a reduced registration fee. If you can't find information about student volunteers on the conference website, you should email the organizers to ask if there will be opportunities.

| **Category** | Vendor | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| **Conference Registration** | | $ |
| **Accommodation** (X nights @ Y dollars/night including taxes and fees) | | $ |
| **Travel (airfare)** | | $ |
| **Travel (ground transportation)** | | $ |
| **Meals (expected costs)** | | $ |
| | **Total** | $ |
| | **Total "initial amount" requested from E3B** | $ |
| | **Total requested from GSAS** | $ |
| | **Total "secondary amount" requested from E3B** | |

**SUBMIT APPLICATION MATERIALS**

Students must provide a conference flyer, proof of presentation (in the form of the conference schedule or email invitation), budget (using above template!), and other supporting documentation with their reimbursement paperwork. These materials should be emailed to the DMAP, Bekka Brodie (bb3117@columbia.edu). Once approved by the DMAP and AFTER the conference, submit to the E3B Admin team (e3badmin@columbia.edu).

**APPLY FOR GSAS CONFERENCE MATCHING FUNDS**

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences provides up to $300 in match funding for *attending and presenting* research at an academic or professional conference. Additional information can be found on the GSAS website here. When you have received your invitation to present at the conference of your choice, complete the GSAS 'Application for Conference Matching Travel Funds' form, finalize your budget, and submit it via email to the DMAP and DAAF. You must also CC your primary advisor on this email to confirm that they agree with your plans.

Application deadlines for the GSAS Matching Conference Travel Funds:

- July 3 — for conferences held May through August
- November 3 — for conferences held September through December
- March 3 — for conferences held January through April

**RECEIVING FUNDS**

To receive direct deposit of funds, follow the directions provided at Student Financial Services, www.sfs.columbia.edu/direct-deposit. You will need your bank routing number and your savings/checking account number. If you do not enroll in direct deposit, a check will be sent to the address in SSOL/ Vergil.

If you have already attended the conference and incurred receipts, and have been approved by the DMAP, read and follow directions outlined in the "Receipts for reimbursement" PDF document.

## Appendix III. E3B MA Directed Reading Form

**EEEB GR9509**

Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology

**Instructions:** Student should fill in all fields but the bottom six by editing the file on a computer. Supervisor should then sign the appropriate section below. Submit to the Director of the MA Program (DMAP) for evaluation and sign-off. After sign-off the form must be submitted to the Director of Administration & Finance. **Student should submit the form for final approval no later than two days before the end of the Add Period in the semester during which the work will be conducted**. Please remember to keep a copy for your records. If supervisors are not available to sign the form, an email to the MAPA from the supervisor indicating approval will be accepted.

**Do not register until you receive a section number from the Director of Academic Administration & Finance.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Student Name**: | **Date**: |
| **Student Email:** | **Semester / Number of Credits**:<br>/ |
| I wish to use this towards my (check one):<br>☐ Science electives or<br>☐ I WILL NOT USE IT as an elective | **Topic Title**: |
| **Course Content** (general subjects to be covered, emphasis to be explored – less than 100 words): | **Readings** (if specifics are not known, include number of journal articles, pages of text, and sources for both): |
| **Estimated Student Weekly Work Load** (in hours – justify the number of credits you included above): | **Requirements:** (meeting frequency between supervisor and student, papers or essays to be written, and other methods of student evaluation) |
| **Directed Reading Supervisor (print name)**: | **DMAP (print name)**: |
| **Directed Reading Supervisor (Email)** | **DMAP (signature & date)**: |
| **Directed Reading Supervisor (signature & date)**: | **Directed Readings Course Number/section:** |

## Appendix IV. E3B MA Directed Research Form

**EEEB GR9501, GR9502, GR9503**

Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology

**Instructions:** Student should fill in all fields but the bottom six by editing the file on a computer. Supervisor should then sign the appropriate section below. Submit to the Director of the Master's Program (DMAP) for evaluation and sign-off. After sign-off the form must be submitted to the Director of Academic Administration & Finance. **Student should submit the form for final approval no later than two days before the end of the Add Period in the semester during which the work will be conducted**. Please remember to keep a copy for your records. If supervisors are not available to sign the form, an email to the DMAP from the supervisor indicating approval will be accepted.

**Do not register until you receive a section number from the Director of Academic Administration & Finance.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Student Name**: | **Date**: |
| **Student Email:** | **Semester:** |
| **Topic Title**: | **Number of Credits**: |
| **Type of research to be done** (brief description of techniques to be learned, analyses to be done, etc.) | |
| **Estimated Student Weekly Work Load** (in hours – justify the number of credits you included above, each academic credit requires a minimum of three hours work each week in a 14-week semester): | **Requirements:** (meeting frequency between supervisor and student, methods of student evaluation, etc.) |
| **Directed Research Supervisor (print name)**: | **DMAP (print name)**: |
| **Directed Research Supervisor (Email):** | **DMAP (signature & date)**: |
| **Directed Research Supervisor (signature & date)**: | **Directed Research Course Number/section:** |

## Appendix V. E3B MA Degree Conferral Form

# M.A. Degree Conferral Form

Student Name:

Thesis Title:

This student has completed the M.A. thesis and is recommended for the M.A. degree conferral on [insert conferral date].

| Name (Print) | Signature | Date |
|---|---|---|
| (Advisor) | | |
| | | |
| | | |