

FAQ on Use of L500, L501, and Z620 Journal Clubs | FAQ on Minors

Created by: Spencer Hall, EEB GPD, eebgpd@indiana.edu, March 2023

Purpose: EEB students often have questions about the '4 & 6 rule' for their EEB major, and about 'outside' minors. The purpose of this FAQ is to provide guidance and suggestions for use of these two components as your progress towards Candidacy.

Target Audience: Pre-candidate EEB students still taking classes, and the faculty who advise them

Use with: Grad Guide ([pdf](#)) | L500 / L501 form ([doc](#)) | Sharepoint folder ([link](#))

1. What is the '4 & 6 rule'? How can I use it to meet the requirements of my 20 credit EEB major?

- **To read more:** The EEB Grad Guide (Handbook) talks about it, pg. 3 ([pdf](#)).

- **Description of the rule:** Each graduate student must complete 20 course credits in EEB and related classes. Six of those credits can come from L500 Independent Study, L501 Research Rotations, and Z620 Journal Clubs¹. Not more than four can come from any one source, though (e.g., you could take three credits of L500 and three of Z620 journal clubs, but not five of L500 and one of Z620 journal club (only four of L500 could count)).

2. What is involved with taking L500 and L501 credits?

- **What the registration block means:** We currently maintain a 'registration hold' on both. You cannot register without permission.

- **How to receive permission:** When you are ready to register for either, contact the grad advisor (biogrdav@indiana.edu) and the EEB GPD (eebgpd@indiana.edu). The GPD will ask you to outline your plans for the credits – a plan that should have been worked out in advance with the faculty member grading you. It should specify:

- * rationale for registration
- * a general sense of what each weeks of research will entail
- * a justification for the number of credits used (plan on 1 credit = about 3+ hours of work per week).

The GPD will review and then grant permission for registration.

- **Documentation involved:** In order for L500 / L501 to count for credit towards the major, you must complete the **L500/L501 form** ([doc](#)). Your Advisor and Advisory Committee must approve of the work and that it will count towards your major. Send the completed and approved form to the EEB GPD and store it in your individual EEB Student Sharepoint Folder ([link](#))

¹ These should not be confused with Z620 formal classes.

3. What is involved in setting up a Z620 Journal Club?

- **Scope:** Typically, these are one credit, and students meet once per week for one hour. Many clubs focus on reading journal articles or work through a book, but the format is flexible.

- **Faculty-created and run clubs:** Sometimes faculty run regular journal clubs (e.g., Community Ecology, the Behavior Group's club). When offered, students can readily enroll for that credit. (Presently faculty do not receive teaching credit for these journal clubs). Faculty should compose a simple syllabus. They may wish to share principles for inclusive discussion as summarized in our inclusive teaching FAQ.

- **Student-created and run clubs:** EEB would like to encourage students to create their own journal clubs, comprised of enrolled students but also post-Candidacy students who want to participate. The leader(s) of the group need only approach to a faculty member willing to be 'instructor of record'. That faculty member requests (via the ACT / Biology Scheduler) to create a one credit Z60 journal club and creates an arrangement with the student leader of the club a grading policy.

4. What is the Minor? How do I learn more about it? How do I fulfill it?

- **Requirement:** All PhD students at IUB are required to take an 'outside' minor, adding 6-15 credits to the 20 credit major. Minors are offered by PhD programs that are not EEB. The purpose is to broaden the training and thinking skills outside of the specific discipline of interest.

- **Role on Committee and Qualifying Exam:** In EEB, students declare a minor and recruit a Minor Advisor as member of their four-person Advisory Committee. That Minor Advisor writes one of the four questions on the student's qualifying part #1 exam. That Minor advisor also guides your paperwork, if needed, towards minor completion with their home PhD program. (Programs may differ, but the EEB GPD and the EEB Program do not govern how those minors work).

- **Selecting an 'outside minor:**

* **Intra-Biology options:** EEB students can currently choose from four, six-credit, internal Biology minors:

- Genetics (offered out of GCDB but including [legally] various genetic-oriented evolution courses. This is a "path of least resistance" for many in EEB.

- Microbiology offers a more general Micro minor, but also more specialized bacteriology and virology ones.

* **External options:** EEB students can also select from a variety of other 6+ credit minors.

- *How do I learn about options?* Minors are described in each program's entry in the UGS Graduate Bulletin. Just look up the program and find the description.

- *What are some of them?* These include, in alphabetical order (but are not limited to): Animal Behavior, Bioinformatics, BioStats (in SPH), Epidemiology, Environmental Science, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Science Journalism, Science Ethics (one of the only other 6 credit options out of HPSM), Science Pedagogy (etc. from School of Ed, several options), Statistics (we waive our three-credit tool kit, which can help shrink requirements).

- *How do you choose?* Talk to your Advisor, first and foremost. Develop a plan. Your Advisory Committee can help, and you can form it any time².

² Meaning: you have to form it by spring of your first year, but you can start the process earlier if you seek that guidance on minor selection earlier.

* *Considerations:*

- Larger minors mean more classes which can slow down your research progress.
- Outside minors offer unique opportunities to learn certain skills / learn new things. It is a unique opportunity not offered at many programs, but could lead to development of outside interests. We have had students write a science pedagogy chapter of their dissertation, too (typically involving a manipulation of a method or mode of teaching in classrooms at IU).
- Those interested in pedagogy can also consider CITL's certificate programs.
- The EEB major is flexible by design. For those wishing to minor in Genetics, you can take an Epidemiology class and wrap it into your major if that makes sense to your Advisory Committee (i.e., you study disease and need that training). We encourage those of you planning to have a teaching component to your future job to consider taking a Science Pedagogy class.