The Open Graduate Program at Brown allows current PhD students to pursue a master's degree in a field outside of their primary field of study, with the goal of fostering interdisciplinary research. Students currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Brown can apply for a secondary master's in EEB in February, and the EEB Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) completes a recommendation for admission that addresses the suitability of the candidate based on their background, the appropriateness of the secondary field of study given the student's career plans, and the chance of success of the dual course of study. The duration and timing of the master's course of study is flexible, but participation in the program should not extend the student's graduate study beyond a total of 6 years. The student is supported by the graduate school during the period of master's study.

Application and Requirements
Students are asked to develop a course of study for their EEB master's in the application process, with the advice of their proposed EEB advisor, their home department advisor, and home DGS. The program will be reviewed by the EEB DGS at the time of application.

Students in the Open Graduate Program Master's in EEB are required to complete a minimum of eight courses and a master's thesis in an area related to EEB. Up to six of these courses may be graduate independent study (BIOL2980), usually with a focus on planning and executing the master's research project and writing the thesis. The research project should typically be focused primarily in an EEB field, i.e. a disciplinary rather than an interdisciplinary thesis, toward the goal of interdisciplinary work in the future.

All courses may be enrolled SAT/NC, and BIOL2980 (graduate independent study) and BIOL2430/2440 (EEB graduate seminars) must be enrolled SAT/NC. In any given semester, students may enroll in more than one credit of BIOL2980, if they expect to spend more than one course-equivalent of effort on their EEB master's work for that semester.

Students entering the program are expected to have completed at least one undergraduate course, or equivalent, in four of five core areas: Ecology; Evolution; Organismal-Comparative Biology; Cell and Molecular Biology; and Statistics. Students who need to take undergraduate courses to meet this requirement may take them as part of the eight course plan (not in addition to the eight).
In addition to coursework, students are expected to attend either the EEB visiting speaker seminar series OR the EEB brown bag seminar series for a total of three semesters. These are weekly, 1-hour colloquia that are held at the noon hour. Students should include plans for attending one or the other of these in the study plan, and are encouraged to attend other EEB seminars of particular interest or relevance to their EEB master’s research. Open master’s students are also invited and encouraged to attend the EEB annual retreat at the start of each year, and the weekly EEB Friday Social (4 PM on Fridays during term-time).

**Advising and Program Administration**

In the summer before starting the program, students will meet with their EEB advisor and the EEB DGS to update the study plan that was developed during the application process. The student will then submit a revised study plan and timeline to the EEB advisor and DGS no later than the first day of classes in the Fall. This study plan should include a list of the eight courses planned, a brief description of research to be undertaken during the graduate independent study courses (BIOL2980), and a timeline for courses, research, and semesters of planned attendance at the EEB visiting speaker or brown bag colloquia.

Open Program students are encouraged to complete their EEB master’s within two years after starting in EEB. Timelines that extend beyond two years should be explained and justified in the study plan.

After the first year, the students will meet with their EEB advisor and the EEB DGS every summer before the start of classes. It is recommended that this meeting be scheduled in August, and it is the student’s responsibility to arrange this meeting. The student will then submit an annual report to the EEB advisor and the EEB DGS no later than the first day of classes in the Fall. This annual report should include the study plan from the prior year, a report of coursework and research completed in the past year, and a revised study plan for the coming year.

Students completing a master’s thesis will give a public presentation to the EEB Department before the end of classes in May of the year of expected degree.

Once all requirements are met, the student must apply to receive the master’s degree. It will not be granted automatically. Degrees are granted only in May each year, so the student should pay attention to graduate school deadlines for degree applications.