Department of Microbiology and Immunology
Graduate Student Guidelines

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

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and
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these Guidelines is to inform all Department of Microbiology and Immunology graduate students of the Department's student policies. Each student is responsible for knowing and abiding by the policies contained herein.

Some of the material presented here consists of summaries of certain information contained in the Graduate College Bulletin, which the student is urged to consult for greater detail.

Should any discrepancy exist between the information presented here and that contained in the Graduate College Bulletin, the latter shall be the final authority. If requirements for a degree exceed those in the Graduate Bulletin, the Departmental requirement will prevail.

If the student cannot find a rule or guideline in these sources to solve their particular problem or need, they should consult the Department Graduate Student Liaison (GSL), Department Chair, or the Graduate College Dean.
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I. ACADEMIC MATTERS

Ph.D. Degree
This program prepares students for academic and research careers in microbiology and immunology. For admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, the student must satisfactorily complete the prescribed formal course work and pass the Qualifying Examination.

Students may be admitted into the Department in two basic ways. The first way is via acceptance into either the Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences (GPiBS) or the M.D/Ph.D. program. The second way is by direct admission into the Department. Students in the latter category have typically established a working relationship with their Mentor and do not need to do laboratory rotations.

M.D./Ph.D. Degree
The M.D./Ph.D. student in Microbiology and Immunology will have the same requirements and follow the same curriculum as other Ph.D. students in the Department except for the first year of graduate courses. Twenty hours of graduate course credit is given for M.D./Ph.D. students who successfully complete the following courses in medical school with a grade of Pass or Honors: Immunology, Microbiology, and Integument (5 hours) and other preclinical courses that the student chooses.

Terminal Master’s (M.S.) Degree
After a doctoral student has successfully passed their Qualifying Examination, they may request to change their major to a terminal master’s degree. Matriculated doctoral students changing to a terminal master’s degree must complete the requirements for a thesis master’s degree, as described in the Masters Programs portion of the Graduate College Bulletin, in order to be awarded a master’s degree. Students changing to a terminal master’s degree may not enter the same doctoral program at a later date.

Students must complete 30 hours of course work, six of which may be Research for the master’s degree. Course work must include Integrity in Scientific Research. Students may also elect to take courses from other departments that will benefit their program of study. Courses from the departments of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Pathology, Cell Biology, Biostatistics and Epidemiology, and Pharmaceutical Sciences are available. Students must write and defend a Master’s Thesis.
Mentor, Advisory Committee, and Doctoral Committee
The Department faculty recognize the importance of active faculty participation in graduate education. Therefore, both the Mentor and Committee should play an active role in advising, counseling, and directing the graduate student in their scientific and academic development.

Mentor
The Mentor will be selected by the student and the faculty member so selected must express a willingness to serve. The student and Mentor must both sign a Letter of Expectations, generated by the Mentor.

Please note: The Department Chair must approve the Mentor.

Ordinarily the Mentor provides funds to support the student’s research. In the case where an adjunct faculty member serves as Mentor, all financial support must be obtained from the adjunct faculty member unless some of the support for the student comes from a training grant or other similar mechanism.

Advisory Committee
The function of the Advisory Committee is to advise and monitor student’s academic progress prior to successful completion of the Qualifying Exam. The members of the Advisory Committee will be recommended for approval to the Department Chair by the student and their Mentor. The GSL will serve as an ad hoc member of this Committee until the Doctoral Advisory Conference Report has been filed with the Graduate College.

Please note: The Department Chair must review and approve the Committee candidates before faculty are approached to serve on the Committee.

The Committee must consist of at least five graduate faculty members, three of which must be full-time members of the Department.

The Committee may be comprised of one of the following options:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor: Full-time Department faculty</td>
<td>Mentor: Adjunct Department faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two full-time Department faculty</td>
<td>Three full-time Department faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One full-time faculty member from an outside department (Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Pathology, Physiology, Pharmacology, etc.)</td>
<td>One full-time faculty member from an outside department (Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Pathology, Physiology, Pharmacology, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fifth member may be any full-time faculty member with a Graduate Faculty appointment</td>
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Once the Department Chair approves the Committee members, the student is responsible for reaching out to the candidates to confirm their willingness to serve. Once faculty
members have agreed to serve, the student must complete the Request for Approval of Advisory Committee form. The GSL will notify the Graduate College.

**Doctoral Committee**

The student’s permanent Doctoral Committee, which is usually the same as the student’s Advisory Committee, monitors research progress, supervises preparation of the dissertation, and conducts the final oral examination (defense of dissertation). This Committee is established after the student has successfully completed the Qualifying Examination.

**Changing Mentor/Advisory Committee Membership**

Changes to the Committee are accomplished by the same procedures described above and may be initiated by the student, the Mentor, or the Department Chair. If the student’s Committee members change at any point before successful completion of the Qualifying Exam, the Graduate College should be notified. Students must complete the Change of Supervisory Committee Form, found on the Graduate College website.

**Changing Doctoral Committee Membership**

Membership of the Doctoral Committee remains the same throughout the program unless the Mentor requests a change in writing. This change must be first approved by the Department Chair with final approval given by the Graduate College Dean.
## Curriculum Overview

### Year 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molecular systems I (BMSC 6012)</td>
<td>Basic immunology (MI 6032)</td>
<td>Applied Statistics (BMSC 5011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molecular systems II (BMSC 6023)</td>
<td>Basic bacteriology (MI 5320)</td>
<td>Animal use (BMSC 5031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular systems I (BMSC 6052)</td>
<td>Basic microbiology (MI 6301)</td>
<td>2hrs Special Studies (MI 5980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular systems II (BMSC 6053)</td>
<td>Immunity in disease (MI 6111)</td>
<td>Orientation to Microbiology &amp; Immunology Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Club (BMSC 5221)</td>
<td>Molecular microbiology (MI 6501)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab rotations (BMSC 6100) not required for direct admit</td>
<td>Molecular virology (MI 6321)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity in Scientific Research (BMSC 5001)</td>
<td>Lab rotations (BMSC 6100) not required for direct admit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Studies for direct admit only</td>
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### Year 2

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<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced immunology (MI 6843)</td>
<td>5hrs Special Studies (MI 5980)</td>
<td>3hrs of either Special Studies (MI 5980) or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced microbial pathogenesis (MI 6853)</td>
<td>Scientific Writing (MI 6601)*</td>
<td>Doctoral Dissertation (MI 6980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2hrs Special Studies (MI 5980)</td>
<td>Qualifying Exam (no credit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Club (MI 6601)</td>
<td>Attend Journal Club</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Department Seminars</td>
<td>Attend Department Seminars</td>
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### Years 3-7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6hrs Doctoral Dissertation (MI 6980)**</td>
<td>6hrs Doctoral Dissertation (MI 6980)**</td>
<td>3hrs Doctoral Dissertation (MI 6980)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Journal Club</td>
<td>Attend Journal Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present one Department Seminar per calendar year &amp; attend all</td>
<td>Attend Department Seminars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminars (MI 5971)</td>
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### Graduation time limits

**Please note:** (per the Graduate College Bulletin) A doctoral candidate is normally expected to complete all the degree requirements within five years after admission to candidacy. Extensions greater than one year need the approval of the Graduate Dean and will require that the department or program unit involved certify that the student's knowledge will be current and appropriate to the degree at the time the degree is awarded. The procedure to be used for this determination must be approved by the Graduate Dean.

*This course begins the first Friday in January, immediately following the Winter Break*

**More hours may be taken to complete the 90-hour requirement**
Research Course (MI 5980) and Doctoral Dissertation (MI 6980)
Each student must maintain continuous enrollment in either MI 5980 or MI 6980 during each semester until the requirement for the degree is completed or the degree candidacy program is discontinued. Ph.D. candidates cannot enroll in MI 6980 until they have successfully completed the Qualifying Examination.

Please note: If a student is a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) and supported by a stipend, they must enroll in a minimum of six hours during the fall/spring semesters and three hours during the summer session. If a student is self-supported, they must enroll in a minimum of two hours each semester (fall/spring/summer).

Department Seminar (MI 5971)
Department Seminars are designed to provide students with experience in teaching, public speaking, and communicating scientific thought and data. Each student is required to present one Seminar per calendar year, beginning the semester following successful completion of the Qualifying Examination, until completion of the dissertation (the Dissertation Seminar counts for the required annual presentation). The Seminar syllabus and evaluation form are available on the Department website.

Students only enroll in Seminar when they present a seminar (once a year, either fall or spring semester).

An abstract covering the seminar topic must be prepared and distributed one week prior to the seminar presentation.

In addition, students are required to attend a predetermined number of luncheons with invited speakers. The frequency of attendance will be determined each year, once the Seminar schedule has been finalized.

Department Journal Club (MI 6601)
If a student is on an NIH training grant, they must enroll in Journal Club every fall and spring semester. All other students may enroll in this course just once during their graduate career.

Please note: Whether enrolled for credit or not, attendance at Department Seminars, Journal Club, and selected luncheons is mandatory for all graduate students, unless excused by the GSL. Failure to regularly attend and participate in these activities constitutes unprofessional behavior and will result in a Professionalism Concerns Report being filed with the Graduate College. The Department may also put the student on probation until the student has taken corrective action. Failure to remediate unprofessional behavior may result in probation or dismissal from the Department.
Qualifying Examination (QE)
The QE includes the written pre-proposal, written proposal, and oral defense of the proposal. The written portion of the QE is completed as a grant proposal covering the research the student expects to complete as part of the requirements for the Ph.D. degree. The topic is approved by the student’s Exam Committee during the pre-proposal phase of the QE. The Exam Committee, comprised of the Advisory Committee excluding the Mentor, will administer the QE. The Chair of the Exam Committee is appointed by the Department Chair.

Students must convince their Exam Committee that they can design well-controlled experiments and, in the oral defense, they will be expected to explain the principles of the proposed techniques. The student’s ability to properly interpret data, as well as understand the limitations of proposed techniques and studies, will be evaluated by the Committee. Therefore, the student should outline expected results, anticipated problems, and alternative experimental approaches in the proposal. Finally, because an outstanding proposal contains creative ideas and imaginative solutions to experimental problems, students will not be penalized for proposing experiments supported by risky scientific strategies to achieve specific research objectives.

Typical Time Frame
1. Year 2 Fall: start rough draft of pre-proposal to bring to Scientific Writing course
2. Year 2 Spring: enroll in Scientific Writing course and actively participate
3. Year 2 Spring: Pre-proposal: Submit one week after completing the first eight weeks of the Scientific Writing course
4. Year 2 Spring: Proposal: Due six weeks after Committee approves topic and specific aims of pre-proposal
5. Year 2 Summer: Oral: Schedule and complete, following approval of written proposal

Pre-proposal
During the fall semester of Year 2, the student should begin formulating their title, research hypothesis and specific aims in preparation for the Scientific Writing course in the spring. Students must bring a rough draft of their pre-proposal to the first class period of Scientific Writing. The student is encouraged to seek feedback from their Mentor, Committee members, and/or other scientists during the development of their pre-proposal. The pre-proposal must be distributed to all members of the Exam Committee no later than one week following completion of the first half of the Scientific Writing course. The pre-proposal should be no longer than 3 pages (double spaced) and should include the project’s title, specific aims and rationale (including background) for the proposed studies.

Pre-proposal assessment
The Exam Committee will have up to two weeks to review and summarize their comments. After they reach a decision, the Exam Committee Chair will meet with the student to discuss the pre-proposal and provide the Committee’s written comments and recommendations. Both the Exam Committee Chair and the student must sign this document; the student will upload it to D2L.
Possible outcome of pre-proposal

a. If the pre-proposal is accepted, the student may begin the written exam (proposal).

b. If the pre-proposal has significant deficiencies that must be addressed before beginning the written exam, the student will have one week to submit a revised pre-proposal. The Committee will then have one week to review and make their recommendations. If the revised pre-proposal is acceptable, the student may begin the written exam. If the pre-proposal is still not satisfactory, proceed to step c.

c. If the Committee deems the proposed project unfeasible and beyond improvement despite further revisions, they may recommend that the student develop an entirely new pre-proposal. The Committee has the discretion to place a new deadline on submission of a new pre-proposal and the process will be repeated as described above for the new pre-proposal. **Please note:** Failure to submit an acceptable pre-proposal constitutes a grade of “U” in the Scientific Writing course and the student must repeat the course the following year. The QE will be delayed until remediation of the course is completed.

Written proposal

Once the Committee agrees that the concepts and ideas of the pre-proposal are suitable, then the student can begin preparing the written proposal.

Written proposal advice and assistance

In preparing the written proposal, the student may seek editing feedback only from their fellow second-year students or from the Student Writing Center. It is worth emphasizing this is an exam and, as such, the student cannot receive scientific assistance with the written proposal. If the student has any questions regarding advice and assistance, they should contact their Exam Committee Chair.

Written proposal format

The proposal must be well written and properly organized. The student should use proper English, check spelling, critically edit their writing, and be concise. Adding spaces between paragraphs and section headings will make reading the document easier. The proposal must be limited to 10 pages, single-spaced, 11-point font, justified on both margins, and with 0.5-inch margins on all sides (the 10 page limitation excludes the title page, abstract page, and references). Please include line numbering for ease of reference. Additional guidelines are listed:

1. Cover page providing the title of the proposal and the name of the student.
3. Specific aims (one page is recommended).
4. Background and Significance (two pages are recommended).
5. Preliminary results: the student may include their own preliminary data or use data that has been published by others (two pages are recommended).
6. Research Design and Methods: discuss the rationale and feasibility for proposed experiments, the expected results, potential problems that may arise, and alternate
approaches (although no specific number of pages is recommended for this section, the total proposal [excluding title page, abstract page and references] is limited to 10 pages).

7. References: Complete references with titles must be included at the end of the proposal.

Written proposal assessment
The Exam Committee will have three weeks to review the proposal and write their critiques. The critique that will be shared with the student by the Exam Chair will include a composite from all Committee members on their assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal.

Possible outcome of written proposal
Three possible scores may be assigned to the proposal: Pass, Revise, or Fail.

a. If the student passes the written proposal, they will move forward to the oral defense.

b. If the student receives a Revise score, they will have two weeks to revise the proposal by addressing comments provided in the written critique. The revised proposal should have a section, “Response to the Critique” (1-2 pages), added to the front of the proposal in which the student indicates where each point in the critique has been addressed. In addition, changes to the proposal should be indicated either by a change in font or by the addition of bolding or underlining.

c. If the student fails the written proposal, they will have one month to submit a revised proposal to their Committee, using the written critique to prepare the revised proposal. The same guidelines stated above for Revise will apply. A grade of Fail must be reported to the Graduate Dean and the student must receive a grade of Pass on the second attempt. Please note: If the student does not Pass on the second attempt, they will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program.

Oral defense of proposal
The oral defense, normally 2-3 hours in length, will begin with the student giving a 20 minute presentation summarizing the main points of the proposal. Following the presentation, the student will be questioned by their Exam Committee on the proposal and related areas pertinent to the topic of the proposal. If the student fails the oral portion of the exam, and did not receive a failure on the written exam, they will have a second chance to pass the oral exam. Please note: Students who initially failed the written exam must pass the oral exam on the first try in order to remain in the Ph.D. program.

QE Evaluation Guidelines
To provide a uniform evaluation system, the Exam Committee will assess the student’s performance according to the evaluation guidelines outlined here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Proposal Evaluated by the Exam Committee</td>
<td>Proper Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of Writing</td>
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### Required Biannual Committee Meetings

Once the student has successfully completed the QE, they must meet with their Doctoral Committee **biannually** to assess progress and discuss any concerns.

The Committee meetings should focus on:
1. Discussion on the student’s progress toward a set of previously specified goals.
2. Identification and discussion of current hurdles and potential solutions to obstacles.

The following document must be completed at each biannual Committee meeting:
1. Committee Evaluation Report (completed and signed by each Committee member).

   **Please note:** The student must provide copies of the previous Committee Evaluation Reports at the following meeting, in order for Committee members to be able to effectively evaluate research progress.

The following documents must be completed **once annually** at one of the Committee meetings:
1. Research Progress (completed by the student and presented to their Committee).
2. Annual Student Evaluation (completed and signed by all Committee members).
3. Mentor Summary Report (completed by the Mentor, approved by the Committee, and signed by both the Mentor and student).

**Please note:** During the first Annual Student Evaluation following their QE, the student should be able to present an outline of a primary research publication (not a review article) to their
Committee and discuss the experiments needed to finish and submit the manuscript. *Failure to do this will raise concerns regarding the student’s progress on the project.* In subsequent Annual Evaluations, students must submit a Research Progress Report to their Committee. Details and format can be found in the Reports/Forms/to-dos section of this document. *Failure to submit a satisfactory Report may result in a “U” for the semester.*

**Preparation of Dissertation or Thesis**

The complete checklist of things to do in preparation for the Defense of a dissertation or thesis is found on page 18. *This checklist should be consulted well before the student plans to complete the dissertation or thesis.*

In preparing their dissertation or thesis, the student must submit to their Mentor and Committee first a writing plan, then a reading copy and, finally, defense copy.

**Writing plan**

Students must bring a writing plan to the Committee meeting where approval to write the dissertation will be considered. Students should discuss the timeline with their Mentor well in advance of this Committee meeting.

*The writing plan should consist of a title, a list of chapters with titles, and a proposed timeline for completion of each chapter.*

**Reading copy**

The reading copy should be in an acceptable format and must include all figures and tables, numbered pages, and complete bibliography. It should not contain grammatical or spelling errors. The reading copy must be found to meet generally accepted criteria for demonstrating that the student has made a significant contribution to the student’s discipline. Refer to the Guidelines for Preparation of Master’s Thesis and Doctoral Dissertation on the Graduate College website for further instructions.

*Students must submit a reading copy of the dissertation or thesis first to their Mentor for approval and then, once approved, to their Committee.*

Should the reading copy be found to be deficient by the Committee, the student will be given another opportunity to submit an acceptable dissertation/thesis to the Committee and bring two complete “defense” copies, with corrections included, to the defense.

**Defense copy**

The “defense” copy should incorporate all suggestions to that point and be in the final form required by the Graduate College.

*Please note: the “defense” copies should be prepared on common copier paper and not the cotton bond required by the Graduate College.* This allows for the Committee to determine
that changes suggested in the reading copies have been made and permits additional changes to be incorporated in the final text, should the defense identify additional concerns following examination and discussion.

**Once the Committee agrees that the student may proceed to the dissertation defense,** the student must complete the Committee Approval of Dissertation Date and collect signatures from all Committee members. Dissertation/thesis defenses are conducted after the dissertation or thesis has been read and approved.

**Dissertation Defense**  
The defense shall be conducted as described in the Graduate College Bulletin. Dissertation defenses are open to all faculty members, graduate students, and guests. Where possible, the student will present their research at the usual seminar time. If this cannot be arranged, the Department Chair will work with the Mentor to arrange a suitable time. The seminar presentation will be followed soon thereafter by the oral defense of the dissertation. **Please note:** The student is granted only one attempt to defend the dissertation.

**Thesis Defense**  
An oral exam is required for the M.S. degree. This exam covers all work offered for the degree; however, major emphasis will be on the thesis research. The exam is given only after authorization by the Graduate College Dean. All Departmental faculty members are invited to participate, but only the Committee members vote as to whether the student passed. **Please note:** The student is granted only one attempt to defend the thesis.
Reports/Forms/to-dos
Below is a detailed list of reports, forms, and to-dos that must be completed. Forms can be found on either the Graduate College or Department websites. Please note: It is the student’s responsibility to upload to the MI Graduate Students D2L Dropbox all documents listed below.

Links
Graduate College website: http://graduate.ouhsc.edu/CurrentStudents/FormsandGuidelines.aspx
Department website: https://www.oumedicine.com/mi/resources

End of Year 1

Letter of Expectation – Mentor will generate this letter
This letter must be signed by both the student and the Mentor prior to fall enrollment.

Talent Release Form – Graduate College website

MI Graduate Student Guidelines Agreement – Department website
The student must sign, acknowledging they have read the Graduate Student Guidelines.

Request for Approval of Advisory Committee – Department website
Students are strongly encouraged to complete this during the summer semester (due no later than October 1).

Criminal Background Check (CBC) – contact Graduate College with questions
A CBC is required annually. Upload proof of completion.

Year 2: Fall Semester

Individual Development Plan (IDP) – Department website
The student must complete an IDP every fall semester. This is an NIH requirement for students who are supported on federal funds. The IDP must be filled out with the cooperation of the Mentor and updated annually. This document is intended for the student to be in charge of their career and to deliberately plan the activities that will provide them with the skills they need to develop in order to be successful. The IDP must be completed/updated annually by October 1. Refer to the Department website for instructions and template.

Doctoral Advisory Conference Report – Graduate College website
During the initial Committee meeting, within the first semester of enrollment in the Department (no later than November 1), the Committee and student must outline the course of study by completing the Doctoral Advisory Conference Report. This Report outlines graduate courses completed, transferred, and to be taken, as well as any deficiencies that need to be satisfied in order for the student to complete the program. If changes are necessary later in the student’s career, a memo requesting an amendment to this Report must be submitted to the Graduate College by the GSL.
Committee Evaluation Report – Department website
During the initial Committee meeting, within the first semester of enrollment in the Department (no later than November 1), the student must present their research project for feedback in the development of their pre-proposal. The student must collect the completed Reports from every Committee member and upload to D2L.

Year 2: Spring Semester
Pre-proposal Assessment – Exam Committee Chair will summarize Committee’s feedback
Both the student and the Exam Committee Chair must sign this document.

Application for General Exam (Qualifying Examination) – Graduate College website
The student must complete the Application and collect signatures from all Exam Committee members. Please note: The Application must be submitted to both the D2L Dropbox as well as the Graduate College at least ten business days before the exam.

QE written examination results – Department website
Upon successful completion of the written examination, the student must collect a signature from the Chair of the Exam Committee, indicating Pass performance.

QE oral defense results – Department website
Upon completion of the oral examination, the student must collect signatures from every member of the Exam Committee, indicating Pass/Fail performance. This form must be uploaded to D2L within 24 hours of completing the oral examination.

Request for Approval of Doctoral Committee – Graduate College website
Once the student has passed the Qualifying Examination, they will need to complete the Request for Approval of Doctoral Committee, signed by all Committee members.

Year 3 – Final Year: Summer Session
To do: schedule a meeting with the GSL every summer in either July or August.

Criminal Background Check (CBC) – contact Graduate College with questions
A CBC is required annually. Upload proof of completion.

Year 3 – Final Year: Biannual requirement
Committee Evaluation Report – Department website
The Committee and student must meet and review the student’s academic and research progress at least twice a year. It is also recommended that a meeting be held approximately six months prior to the anticipated completion of the requirements for the degree. Twice annually (every six months) at each meeting, every Committee member must complete and sign the Committee Evaluation Report. The student must bring copies of the Reports to the following Committee meeting. The student must upload copies of the Reports to D2L.
Year 3 – Final Year: Annual requirements

Individual Development Plan (IDP) – Department website
The student must complete an IDP every fall semester by October 1. This is an NIH requirement for students who are supported on federal funds. The IDP must be filled out with the cooperation of the Mentor and updated annually. Refer to the Department website for instructions and template.

Outline of first publication
The student must upload the outline once, prior to their first annual review.
Please note: At the first Annual Review, following the QE, the student should be able to present to their Committee an outline of a primary research publication (not a review article) and discuss the experiments needed to finish and submit the manuscript. Failure to do this should raise concerns regarding the student’s progress on the project, feasibility of the project, and/or the quality or quantity of mentoring. Assigning a “U” for that semester should be seriously considered unless there are mitigating circumstances.

Research Progress Report – template outlined below
Once a year (before the Annual Review), the student must report to their Committee on their research progress. Failure to submit a satisfactory Report may result in a “U” for the semester. This Report will allow the Committee to more effectively gauge the student’s progress toward a set of previously stated goals, to efficiently identify barriers to the submission of the student’s first/next scientific manuscript, and to help the Committee more effectively assist the student in developing a set of new goals for the next period. The student must submit the completed Report to both the D2L Dropbox and their Committee at least one week prior to the Annual Review.

The Research Progress Report should be organized into four sections, described below. The length of this Report should be one to three pages, single-spaced, and may include figures. Reprints of manuscripts accepted, drafts of manuscripts in preparation (near completion) should also be included as addendums/attachments.

1. Current Goals and Rationale
The scientific goals and rationale for the current period are to be listed in the report exactly as established at the previous Committee meeting. Students preparing a report for their first Committee meeting should work with their Mentor to establish their working hypothesis and specific aims of their research project.

2. Progress Toward the Current Goals
For each goal, the student should provide a description of the progress made toward that goal. For goals that have not been met completely, the student should include a discussion of the obstacles that may have prevented them from achieving the specified goal(s). Members of the Committee understand
that many factors may affect the student’s progress toward a goal, including its technical feasibility, the time required to meet alternate goals, and the effect of any changes made to the direction of the student’s project.

3. **Additional Progress (Optional)**
   The student may provide a description of any additional scientific progress during the previous period. The progress described in this section would not ordinarily be associated with a current goal but could form the basis of a new goal. The student may also include discussion of other scholarly activities during the previous period, including submission of fellowship applications, meeting attendance, scientific presentations, awards, honors, and/or establishment of new collaborations.

4. **Proposed New Goals and Rationale**
   The student should propose 2-3 new scientific goals to be achieved during the next period. These new goals should also address potential barriers that must be overcome for the student to submit a peer-reviewed manuscript for publication. These proposed goals will be refined through discussion of the Research Progress Report by the student and the Committee during the meeting. For new scientific goals that may be viewed as a new direction or deviation from current dissertation work, the student must detail rationale (one or two sentences) for why this new scientific goal is necessary.

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**Annual Student Evaluation Form** – [Graduate College website]
Once a year, the Mentor and Committee must evaluate and report on the student’s progress in meeting degree requirements. The student must upload a copy to D2L.

**Mentor Summary Report** – [Department website]
Once a year, the Mentor will provide a Report to the Department summarizing the progress of their student(s) toward completion of their degree. The Department faculty will review each Report and evaluate the progress of every Departmental graduate student. If there are any concerns about research, publications/presentations or professionalism, the Mentor should describe these in detail in the Report.

Once the student has advanced to candidacy, the Mentor should also summarize what the Committee feels the student needs to accomplish in order to have a defensible dissertation. The Mentor should also give their best estimate of when that might occur.

**Please note:** The Report should first be vetted with Committee members and then made available to the student prior to the Department meeting. Both the student and the Mentor will sign the Report. The student must upload a signed copy to D2L.

**Student Seminar Evaluation** – [Department website]
The student must present one Seminar every year (either spring or fall semester). An Evaluation of the presentation must be completed by each Committee member. The student must upload the completed evaluations to D2L.
Year 7 (or year before final semester, whichever comes first)

To-do

☐ Request Graduate College complete a Graduation Check to ensure correct number of Doctoral Dissertation Research hours and identify any discrepancies.
☐ Check the OUHSC Academic Calendar for graduation deadlines.
☐ Prepare dissertation writing plan, consisting of a title, a list of chapters with titles, and a proposed timeline for completion of each chapter. Copies of the plan must be brought to the final Committee meeting prior to the anticipated defense.

Upload to D2L Dropbox

☐ Dissertation writing plan
   Upload before final Committee meeting.

☐ Letter of Recommendation Consent Form – Graduate College website
   Please note: When the student asks faculty members to write letters of recommendation, they must first fill out the Letter of Recommendation Consent Form, granting faculty authorization to include personally identifiable information from their education records (grades, GPA, etc.).

Final Semester

To-do

☐ Schedule final Committee meeting authorizing compilation of the dissertation.
☐ Distribute a reading copy to the Mentor first, for feedback and approval.
☐ Once Mentor approves, distribute the reading copy to Committee at least three weeks prior to submitting the Committee Approval of Dissertation Date.
☐ Once the Committee has approved the reading copy, make arrangements (date, time, location) for final Seminar presentation, and ensure that at least four Committee members will be present.
☐ Once the Committee has approved the reading copy, submit the following documentation to the Graduate College at least ten days prior to defense date:
   ☐ Approved reading copy of dissertation.
   ☐ Committee Approval of Dissertation Date, signed by the entire Committee.
   ☐ Dissertation Defense Announcement and Abstract.
☐ Submit the Committee-approved reading copy online through OUHSC ProQuest ETD Administrator (see Graduate College website for more information).
☐ If substantial revisions are required, provide Committee members updated reading copies, with corrections/revisions incorporated, at least three days prior to the defense.
☐ Complete the Application for Graduation to apply for diploma and transcript.
☐ Provide to the Graduate College receipts showing that all fees have been paid.
☐ Pick up graduation packet from Graduate College.
☐ Submit Dissertation Thesis Checklist Form Receipt to Graduate College.
☐ Confirm that Mentor received Authority for the Comprehensive/Final Examination Form from the Graduate College.
☐ Make arrangements with the Graduate College to pick up paperwork no later than the day prior to the scheduled defense.
☐ Complete Final Oral Defense as part of Seminar presentation.
☐ Complete Final Oral Examination with Committee, immediately following Seminar presentation.
☐ Collect Committee signatures on the Authority Form for final exam results. (Please note: The Graduate College will generate this form once the student has submitted a reading copy and requested the dissertation date)
☐ Make any changes to dissertation, as suggested by the Committee.
☐ Within 72 hours after the defense, return the Authority Form, with the results signed by all Committee members, to the Graduate College.
☐ Confirm that Mentor submitted to the Graduate College a change in grade form for dissertation hours from “X” to “S.”
☐ Within 60 days after passing the dissertation defense, submit dissertation to the Graduate College and pay microfilm fee.
☐ Submit a final copy of the completed dissertation to the GSL.
☐ Schedule and conduct an exit interview with the GSL.

Upload to D2L Dropbox
☐ Committee Approval of Dissertation Date – Graduate College website
   Must be submitted at least ten days prior to defense date.
☐ Dissertation Defense Announcement – Graduate College website
   Must be submitted at least ten days prior to defense date.
☐ Abstract
   No more than 350 words.
☐ Committee signatures on final examination result – Graduate College generates form
   Due within 72 hours, or three business days, after the exam.
☐ Dissertation
   Final version.
☐ Updated CV
   Upon successful completion of the dissertation.
II. FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND AWARDS

Graduate Assistantships
The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center has established Graduate Assistantships for enrolled graduate students to help departments with their teaching and research activities. Each Ph.D. student receives a support stipend. Tuition is paid for both in-state and out-of-state doctoral students who have a full-time graduate assistantship and are enrolled full time (six hours/semester for the fall and spring sessions, and three hours for the summer session). Either the Department or OMRF pays the cost of student medical insurance. There is no tuition waiver or other support for M.S. candidates. Out-of-state students receive in-state tuition rates.

NIH Training Grant
A number of the stipends available in the Department are funded through the Departmental NIH Training Grants. They are available to exceptional students who have proven themselves in academics and in research. Applicants are nominated by their Mentor and selected on a competitive basis by a committee composed of faculty mentors on each of the individual training grants.

Scholars Program
The Department has funds available to support career development activities for graduate students. These activities must be tied to specific goals outlined in the student’s IDP. Students are eligible to apply for funds once they have passed the QE and are classified as a doctoral dissertation student. Contact the GSL for additional information.
III. OPERATING PROCEDURES

Equipment, Chemicals, Media and Other Supplies
Specialized, intricate, and expensive equipment in the common equipment rooms should be handled with caution. Anyone who has not been instructed on the use and care of equipment should ask the owner for information before using.

When the student is working in an area not assigned to them permanently, they are expected to keep the area clean at all times and to remove all materials when they have finished. All equipment they use which is not theirs should be clean and in good working condition when they return it. Equipment in general equipment rooms must be kept clean! Flagrant abuse of common equipment can be cause for dismissal.

Office supplies are for faculty use only. Each graduate student is expected to supply their own notebooks, paper, pencil, etc. Official letterheads and envelopes are given to students by their Mentor for official business only.

Offices
Offices and laboratory spaces are to be used as such and are at no time to be used as a social hall. Do not enter the Departmental offices after hours without first getting permission from the Office Manager or a faculty member.

Research Space, Equipment and Supplies
It is anticipated that research activities will be supported by funds from research grants. Each graduate student is given laboratory space, materials and equipment needed to carry on their experimentation. This is provided by the Department or the Mentor. Departmental preparation and work rooms should not be used for research space. The research supplies and equipment in the laboratory space assigned to the student, or that in the Mentor’s laboratory, is not the student’s to loan to others. Requests for such loans, and also for the use of equipment in other laboratories, should be made to or through the Mentor or the faculty member who is responsible. Research supplies and equipment are not the student’s personal property.

When core areas and equipment are shared by many individuals, please respect others who are working with this equipment or in this area. Leave the equipment in good working condition and clean up the area before leaving. Students should be sure to discard cultures and supplies placed in constant temperature rooms after they have finished with them. All research materials that are stored in the ultra-low temperature freezers must be labeled and put in appropriate containers. Do not put loose vials in racks or in bags in the freezers.

Students should coordinate all Departmental equipment repairs through the faculty member responsible for the piece of equipment. Inform one of these individuals before making any contact with Site Support regarding repair of the equipment. The student should consult with the Department Chair before moving equipment from their Mentor’s
lab to any site that is not assigned to their Mentor. If the student wishes to move Departmental equipment, they should also consult with the Department Chair.

**Safety**

All possible precautions should be taken to avoid any accident, whether from flood, fire, or noxious odor, that would affect those next door or on the floor below. All experimental designs should be carefully checked by the student’s supervisor before the experiment gets under way. If the student needs to leave the room for as long as 10 minutes while equipment is being used, someone nearby should be made aware of the absence in case of an accident. If at all possible, do not leave water running overnight. If this is necessary, please have a faculty member check the apparatus for safety before leaving.

Everyone who works with known or potential pathogens should be aware of possible hazards and take all precautions possible to prevent laboratory infections. This includes the protection of those who work in the laboratory, as well as colleagues who work nearby or merely pass down the hall. It is mandatory that the student report all laboratory accidents and injuries to their Mentor. Eating, drinking, application of cosmetics and smoking are not allowed in the laboratory.

All laboratory personnel are required to attend initial and yearly refresher courses offered by the Radiation Safety Office, the Animal Facility and the Environmental Health and Safety Office. In addition, the student should have available in their own laboratory written Standard Operating Procedures for handling of infectious agents, as well as an MSDS sheet for each chemical in the laboratory. The student should become familiar with the procedures that are specific to their own area in order to conduct research in a safe manner.

All graduate students who have potential contact with human blood, or other materials that are potentially infected with the hepatitis B virus (HBV), will be offered HBV immunization free of charge. Students who choose not be vaccinated must sign a declination form. For more information about the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Regulations and the Policy adapted by the College of Medicine please contact the GSL.
IV. PERSONAL

Benefits
Student appointments are considered temporary and persons holding such appointments are not eligible for employment benefits. Workmen’s Compensation applies when actually performing work for which they are paid.

Departmental Staff Meetings
Departmental graduate students elect one representative to attend Departmental Staff Meetings. The term of representation is one year; the representative may be re-elected.

Income tax
Any question that may arise concerning the tax status (both State and Federal) of students receiving compensation in any form from Research Grants, State funds, etc., should be referred to the OUHSC Office of Financial Services.

Keys
Building access cards and room keys will be provided to incoming graduate students to allow access to the work area(s) to which they are assigned. Keys are obtained from the Office Manager on recommendation of, and approval by, the Mentor. All keys are the property of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Keys should never be duplicated, never be loaned to other individuals, and must be turned in upon completion of graduate studies or termination.

Student Hours and Outside Employment
Classwork and research frequently require time not encompassed in a “40 hour week.” The student should be clearly informed by their mentor of expectations regarding the student’s coursework and research project (see “Letter of Expectations”). Employment outside of the University is not allowed due to the demanding nature of biomedical research. However, under certain circumstances, students may request written permission from the GSL and Department Chair for off-site work, if the job does not impede completion of the dissertation.

Security
When leaving the laboratory unoccupied for any length of time, make certain that the door is locked. Keep all valuable personal property under lock and key.

Termination Procedure
When students complete their graduate studies, or otherwise terminate, they are responsible for returning to the appropriate offices all University property assigned to them. Students should consult the Office Manager for essential paperwork in this regard.
V. POLICIES

Academic Appeals
This policy outlines the procedure to request a hearing for appeals related to evaluation in a course, thesis or dissertation defense, general or comprehensive exam. It also outlines the appeal process for a suspension or dismissal or under the Student Professional Behavior in an Academic Program Policy, and the appeal of decisions resulting in dismissal, expulsion, or suspension from a program. The sole basis for an academic appeal is an alleged prejudiced or capricious evaluation or decision. Policy and procedure details are in Appendix C of the Faculty Handbook at www.ouhsc.edu/provost/documents/FacultyHandbookOUHSC.pdf.

Academic Misconduct Code
The code describes academic misconduct as acts intended to improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement and includes but is not limited to acts such as cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, fraud, destruction, bribery or intimidation, assisting others in any act proscribed by this Code, or attempting to engage in such acts. The policy and procedures related to academic misconduct are detailed in the Academic Misconduct Code found in Appendix C of the Faculty Handbook at www.ouhsc.edu/provost/documents/FacultyHandbookOUHSC.pdf.

Accommodation on the Basis of Disability
The University of Oklahoma is committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunity and full participation for students with disabilities. Accommodations on the basis of disability are available by contacting the Disability Resource Center (DRC) by email at drc@ou.edu or by calling (405) 325-3852 or Voice (405) 325-4173/TDD. Information on policies and registration with the Disability Resource Center may be found on the DRC website at www.ou.edu/drc. Students requesting accommodations related to work in a course must contact the DRC as soon as possible; accommodations are not made retroactively.

Adjustment for Pregnancy/Childbirth Related Issues
Students needing modifications or adjustments to course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues should contact the college’s Assistant/Associate Dean for Student Affairs (or academic advisor) as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. See www.ou.edu/content/eoo/pregnancyfaqs.html for commonly asked questions.

Computers
University policy requires, and the Office of Civil Rights expects, that any portable computing device that is used for University business is encrypted and registered in accordance with the Health Sciences Center’s Portable Computing Device Security policy and the Wireless Access Standard requirements. University business includes but is not limited to using OUHSC email; accessing ePHI; and creating, storing, or sharing, treatment notes, medical records, and case notes from classroom or clinical experiences. Therefore, all Graduate College students are now required to comply with the University’s Secure Network Access Program (SNAP), and as such if they use any personal devices, such as laptops or tablets for example, they must register these devices with Information
Technology (IT) and take them to a Device Security Clinic for encryption. Policies are found by clicking on the following links:


Copyright
This syllabus and all related course material are protected under US Copyright Law and may not be further disseminated in any form or format without the prior explicit written consent of the faculty member. Failure to comply with this provision may subject the student to disciplinary action and/or state or federal action.

Course Drop/University Withdrawal
The student is responsible for submitting required University paperwork before the deadlines shown in the Academic Calendar online at http://ouhsc.edu/admissions. Missed homework and examination grades will be entered as a grade of zero if a student fails to formally drop the course or withdraw from the University.

Course exemption or transfer of credit
Before a student can be exempted from a core course, they must first take an exemption examination, unless there are certain circumstances (i.e., M.S. degree in area, etc.). The examination should be on the basis of pass/fail and the student must get 70% of the overall examination correct to receive a pass/exemption. The main objective is to make sure that the student is proficient in that particular area in order to avoid difficulties with the rest of the Graduate Program. The exemption examination should be taken prior to, or within the first week of, the semester that the course is being offered. A student can have on their transcript information indicating that an exemption was made. It will be assigned the letter E on the transcript.

If a student has been accepted into the Department and has taken graduate courses elsewhere, these hours may be considered for transfer.

Criminal Background Check (CBC)
The Graduate College Criminal Background Check (CBC) policy can be found in the OUHSC Forms, Handbooks and Policies page, http://students.ouhsc.edu/formsandpolicies.aspx. The CBC policy requires that the Graduate College obtain national criminal background checks on all enrolled graduate students, and conditionally accepted applicants, prior to full admission and at least annually thereafter for every continuing student. Contact the Graduate College with any questions or concerns.

Enrollment (Full-Time, Maximum and Minimum)
For Graduate Research Assistants (GRA) holding at least a 0.25 FTE appointment, full time enrollment is six semester hours in the fall and spring semesters and three semester hours for the summer session. An exception may be made if the enrollment is in the thesis or dissertation research in the regular semesters and the student’s effort in research is accurately gauged as two hours of research credit. However, enrollment in thesis or dissertation research cannot be for less
than two semester hours. A student is classified as a GRA if they receive a stipend of $500 or more per month.

**Grade Performance Guidelines**

The grade of “I” (Incomplete) is a neutral grade and is not given in lieu of the standard letter grade A through F. It is intended as a temporary grade to be used when a student who, for reasons satisfactory to the instructor, is unable to complete certain identifiable requirements of a course and who cannot be assigned any other grade. If by the end of one year no change in grade has been submitted, the grade of “I” will become a permanent grade on the student’s record.

The grade of “X” will be submitted for MI 5980 and MI 6980 until such time as the thesis or dissertation has been accepted. At that time, the grade of “S” will be awarded for the accepted thesis or dissertation and all previous grades of “X” will be changed to the grade of “S.”

Students receiving less than a “B” grade in a Departmental core course must petition the Department to remediate the course or otherwise improve their overall GPA to 3.0. If the petition is granted the student, Mentor and course coordinator must submit a plan for remediation, and the student must successfully complete the plan within a stipulated time.

If a student makes less than a “B” in more than one Departmental course, they are subject to dismissal.

If the unsatisfactory grade “U” is received in a Departmental course, the student may petition to the faculty to remain in the program.

Any student receiving a “D” or “F” in any course has to repeat the course.

All students are expected to maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or greater. Students who fail to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 will be put on probation by the Graduate College. The student will be required to bring their GPA to an overall 3.0 or greater in the next nine hours of graded course work that is completed. If a student fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 after this period, they may be denied further enrollment.

The Department may recommend dismissal of a student from a graduate program even though a 3.00 grade point average has been maintained. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to:

1. Failure to obtain a Mentor within the stipulated time limitations
2. Failure to make timely progress toward the degree
3. Failure to perform in course work, qualifying examination or research in an acceptable manner

If a student feels they have received a prejudiced or capricious evaluation by an instructor, and this conflict can be resolved within the department, the student may appeal to the Appeals Board of the Graduate College. The details of this policy are posted on the Departmental website.
HIPAA Compliance
The University of Oklahoma complies with all federal and state laws related to the confidentiality of patient medical information, including the Privacy and Security Regulations issued pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Students are required to comply with these laws and related University policies and procedures, including the HIPAA Privacy and Security policies (http://ouhsc.edu/hipaa/policies.asp and https://www.ouhsc.edu/compliance/hipaa-security-policy/default.asp). Students are required to complete the University's mandatory annual HIPAA training (http://ouhsc.edu/hipaa/) and must also comply with the related policies and procedures of their departments and any facilities in which they rotate.

Leave of Absence
Refer to the Graduate College Bulletin for policy and procedure on requesting a leave of absence.

Professional Behavior in an Academic Program
Ethical and professional behaviors are considered a core competency in an academic program and, thus are key factors in good academic standing. Upon acceptance of an offer of admission, the student commits to comply with all professional conduct regulations established by the University, respective college, and program. The complete University policy is at www.ouhsc.edu/provost/documents/FacultyHandbookOUHSC.pdf. Check the Graduate College Policies and Procedures for additional guidance on student professionalism, http://graduate.ouhsc.edu/CurrentStudents/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx.

Responsible Conduct of Research
Students, as members of the University community, have the responsibility to ensure that integrity and ethical standards in any activity with which they are associated directly or any activity of which there is sufficient knowledge to determine its appropriateness. Students are governed by the Policy on Ethics in Research (Faculty Handbook Section 3.25) at www.ouhsc.edu/provost/documents/FacultyHandbookOUHSC.pdf.

Sexual Misconduct
For concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including Advocates-On-Call 24/7, counseling services, mutual “No Contact orders,” scheduling adjustments, and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office at (405) 325-2215 (8AM-5PM) or the Sexual Assault Response Team at (405) 605-0013 (24/7).

Travel
Check the Graduate College Policies and Procedures for guidance on student travel policy, http://graduate.ouhsc.edu/CurrentStudents/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx.