**I. Introduction**

This handbook developed by the Health Science Center Office of Research and Graduate Education outlines the activities, requirements, and standards for students in their first year of graduate education for a PhD in the Biomedical sciences. The Biomedical Sciences Graduate Programs (BSGP) include 7 degree-granting PhD programs:

* 1. Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
  2. Cancer Cell Biology
  3. Cell and Integrative Physiology
  4. Exercise Physiology
  5. Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis
  6. Neuroscience
  7. Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences

As an undifferentiated student, you will take a core curriculum providing a general knowledge base for further study in these programs, and you will rotate through at least 3 laboratories in order to select a mentor for your dissertation research, and ultimately select a program that will guide you through the remainder of your graduate education.

At the end of this first semester, students will have learned to:

* Integrate molecular, cellular, and integrative systems concepts
* Critically interpret the current scientific literature
* Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills

Demonstrate technical skills in conducting scientific experimentation

* Articulate, verbally and in writing, the understanding of concepts during scientific discussions
* Discuss relevant scientific ethical issues presented as case studies
* Engage with fellow students and faculty and demonstrate teamwork

This handbook governs your activities while in the undifferentiated portion of the graduate program as well as global policies and useful information common to all graduate programs. If this information needs to be amended you will be informed in writing of the change and will be governed by the new information. The information in this handbook supplements the information that can be found in the WVU Graduate Catalog. This catalog can be found online at: <http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/>. You are responsible for the information in both the catalog and this handbook. In some cases our standards are more specific than those listed in the graduate catalog. When these standards are different, you will be governed and evaluated based on the Handbook for the first year of the BSGP. Once you transition into your dissertation laboratory and join one of the 7 Biomedical graduate programs, you will receive an additional handout with program specific information.

## II. Office of Research & Graduate Education

The Assistant VP for Graduate Education, and staff assistants in the HSC Office of Research & Graduate Education administer the first year of graduate training.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lisa Salati, PhD  Assistant VP for Graduate Education | 2267 HSS | (304) 293-7759 | [lsalati@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:lsalati@hsc.wvu.edu) |
| Andrew Flinn  Assistant Director of HSC Graduate Education | 2271 HSS | (304) 293-7116 | [arflinn@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:arflinn@hsc.wvu.edu) |
| Lea Ann Defenbaugh  Program Specialist | 2271 HSS | (304) 293-4437 | [ldefenbaugh@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:ldefenbaugh@hsc.wvu.edu) |
| Penny Phillips  Administrative Assistant | 2271 HSS | (304) 293-6231 | [pphillips@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:pphillips@hsc.wvu.edu) |

*NOTE: The University and our Office will communicate with you throughout your training via your WVU MIX email address. We will not use other email addresses. You must activate this account. If you do not plan on exclusively using this account then you need to forward it to an account that you prefer to use. Periodic checking of the MIX account will not suffice and you will be accountable for any missed communications.*

**III. Entry into the First Year of the BSGP**

All students interested in a PhD in one of the 7 BSGPs applies via a common application and a common admissions committee reviews the application. The admission’s committee is composed of representatives from each of the 7 BSGPs and a graduate student representative. Applications are screened on the basis of overall GPA, GPA in science and math courses, GRE scores, personal statement, research experience, and letters of recommendation. Applicants who have a breadth of coursework in chemistry, biology, and math through calculus are given preference. Qualified applicants are interviewed prior to a final decision on acceptance.

**IV. Orientation**

You will start your graduate studies with a seven-day program known as Boot Camp that will prepare you to successfully transition into graduate studies, allow you to interact personally and at social events with faculty and resident students, and allow you to enjoy the outdoors. The objectives of the Boot Camp experience are for the student to be able to:

1. Decipher the experimental design of a journal article
2. Present a figure from a journal article
3. Actively participate in a journal club
4. Describe expectations on performance in research
5. Use Ref works and obtain journal articles when not within the WVU computing system
6. Use the NCBI website to do basic searches for genetic information
7. Handle experimental animals and operate in the animal quarters in compliance of federal and WVU rules
8. Describe the steps that go into using human samples, tissues and subjects in Biomedical research
9. Use SOLE to obtain course information and graduate program information
10. Know when and how to use the Carruth Center
11. Work in a laboratory in compliance with Federal and WVU rules
12. Know what information needs to be in a lab notebook, know who owns the notebook, and know the rules governing the use of that notebook.
13. Describe the purpose of the Individual Development Plan (IDP), take the survey, convey the results to their advisor, and make plans for the future to improve their skills.
14. Describe the factors that play into establishing a good reputation in science

**V. Curriculum**

**A. Core Courses**

1. Fall semester

Students take a common curriculum for the first semester in graduate school. The required courses are:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Code** | **Credits** |
| Foundations for Contemporary Biomedical Research 1\* | BMS 793A | 4 |
| Foundations for Contemporary Biomedical Research 2\* | BMS 793B | 4 |
| Cellular Methods | BMS 706 | 1 |
| Discussion on Scientific Integrity | BMS 700 | 1 |
| Short laboratory experiences | BMS 791A | 2 |

\*These courses run consecutively.

*a. Foundations for Contemporary Biomedical Research 1 and 2*

The purpose of these courses is to impart a fundamental understanding of the functional components of a cell, and the basis for regulation of cellular processes and organ systems. The knowledge base is developed in an interactive faculty-student environment that requires interpretation and rational speculation to apply general concepts to specific situations and stimulate creative scientific thought.

Objectives

* Impart a fundamental knowledge base
* Integrate molecular, cellular and physiological concepts
* Illustrate relevance through clinical examples
* Illustrate current relevance via the literature
* Stimulate student engagement and critical thinking

Assessable Skills

* Understand important concepts, their significance and illustrate mastery with examples.
* Apply the conceptual principles discussed to novel situations.
* Design and interpret experiments to test molecular, cellular and physiological mechanisms.
* Verbally articulate understanding of concepts during scientific discussion(s).
* Demonstrate teamwork and problem-solving.

*b. Cellular Methods*

The goal of this course is to familiarize the first year Biomedical Sciences students with the most current technologies found in the literature. Additionally, students will develop the critical thinking skills required to evaluate data and begin to synthesize an experimental design for a research project directed at a novel research question. This is achieved by presentations on methods and having a journal club session with a paper that uses this method. This course is integrated with the material presented in Foundations for contemporary Biomedical research. The paper used for the journal club portion is chosen to compliment the lecture material in the Foundations course.

## Objectives

*The students will be able to:*

* Recognize, evaluate, and interpret data generated through various techniques
* Compare and contrast available techniques that are best suited for addressing a particular research inquiry
* Be cognizant of the limitations of those techniques
* Construct a set of experiments sufficient to examine a particular biological phenomenon

*c. Discussions on scientific integrity*

As a graduate student at West Virginia University, you are required to meet particular federal and University-wide standards regarding the responsible conduct of research (RCR). To meet these standards, all graduate students take this course their first semester at WVU. This course together with the lecture on laboratory notebooks, cover the required subjects specified by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In addition, you must complete an online RCR course offered by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI). You can take the course anytime after receipt of your acceptance but it must be completed within 30 days of the beginning of your initial semester- the passing grade is 80%. Failure to do so may affect your status within the College and the University in general.

The Office of Research Integrity and Compliance (ORIC) will publish a training list derived from the CITI website database of those who have taken the training. This list will be published daily on the ORIC website ([http://oric.research.wvu.edu](http://oric.research.wvu.edu/)) in the “Training Lists” section. To remain in compliance with NIH standards, you will need to retake the CITI training every 3 years that you are active in research at WVU.

*d. Short laboratory rotations*

There are four main objectives for the short lab experience:

1. To aid in choosing a laboratory for your dissertation research
2. To learn the research area of other laboratories in the Health Sciences Center so that you can interact scientifically with the members of that laboratory
3. To aid you in selecting faculty members for your dissertation committee.
4. To learn techniques involved in research.

## Research Profile of Available Mentors: Before Boot Camp, you will receive a booklet of one-page research profiles of the available faculty. Arrive at Boot Camp prepared to identify at least three faculty with whom you would like to conduct a short lab experience. During Boot Camp, you will have the opportunity to meet with the faculty and learn about their research. Please discuss rotation projects and dissertation possibilities with available faculty if you are interested in rotating in their laboratory.

## Selecting a Rotation Mentor: On the last day of Boot Camp, you will submit to Dr. Salati the names of three faculty members with whom you would like to rotate during the first rotation. Approximately 2 weeks before each of the next 2 short lab experiences in the fall semester, we will ask you to again submit three names of faculty (rank order) with whom you would like to rotate. While you will most likely receive your first choice, we reserve the option to match you with your second or third choice based on competition with other first-year students for the same faculty mentor and research interests.

## Schedule: During the 1st semester of Year 1, you will do three short lab experiences of 5 weeks each. The schedule for these rotations is as follows:

1st rotation - August 17 to September 18

2nd rotation - September 21 to October 23

3rd rotation – October 26 to December 4

If you have not matched with a dissertation mentor by December/January of Year 1, you will conduct rotations during the spring semester until a match is finalized. Please discuss with your rotation mentor about conducting research during University spring break.

At the start of each lab experience, you should meet with the faculty member and set up a daily work schedule. At this time, you may also receive additional materials to read in preparation for your experiments.

*NOTE: Usually only one student will rotate in any given laboratory during each rotation. There may be an exception or two. Some faculty may host two students at a time.*

*NOTE: Due to time constraints with obtaining security clearance for rotations at NIOSH, please indicate your desire to do a short lab experience before or shortly after arriving at WVU. You must submit a security clearance form before conducting a rotation or dissertation research at NIOSH. It takes time to obtain a security clearance at NIOSH. Please be aware that a dozen or more people at NIOSH and CDC are involved in the submission and approval processes. Therefore, NIOSH staff request that only those students who are really interested in the research faculty at NIOSH submit this form. If you are seriously considering doing research at NIOSH, you will need to talk to NIOSH faculty for the proper form.*

2. Spring Semester

Students who have chosen a graduate program: in the spring semester you take courses and activities as required by that program. Consult with your program director and dissertation advisor for information on these courses.

Students who have not yet entered a graduate program and that may still need to do additional short rotations: you will take the following curriculum:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Code** | **Credits** |
| Molecular Genetics | BMS 715 | 3 |
| Elective |  | 3-4 |
| Research | BMS 797 | 2-3 |

Your advisor will help you choose an elective that will build toward your ultimate area of interest. A suggestion for the elective is one of the program specific courses that are offered for first year students. You need to register for a total of 9 credits to be a full time student.

3. Summer Session

*a. Year 1*

By this point you will have transitioned into a graduate program. During the summer most student take only 3 credits of research. You will register for the research credits that use your programs course code.

*b. Year 2*

This summer, all students enroll in the scientific writing course. Your schedule will be:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course** | **Code** | **Credits** |
| Scientific Writing | BMS 720 | 1 |
| Research | XXX 797 | 2 |

*Scientific Writing*

This course is divided into 2 parts. The purpose of the first part of the Scientific Writing course is to introduce students to scientific writing using a standard journal format and a simple set of data. Students may use their own data or a sample data set that will be provided to write a paper based on the format used in the Journal of Neuroscience. Although, not all students will submit manuscripts to this journal, it provides a relatively straightforward structure and format that can be generalized to other journals. The background, details, methods, and data analysis in the paper will come from the student’s own research area and will be evaluated by their mentor.

The purpose of the second part of the Scientific Writing course is to introduce students to the grant writing process using a standard NIH predoctoral grant application format and a simple set of preliminary data. Students may use a sample data set, unless you have your own data, and write the scientific portion of a grant proposal based on the format used by the NIH for a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Predoctoral Fellowship (F31). The scientific details in the grant application will come from the student’s own research area and will be evaluated by their mentor.

## B. Transfer of Graduate Credits/Courses

As a Ph.D. student, you may transfer all credits with a B- grade or better with preference to those credits that apply directly to your graduate curriculum. Only graduate credits earned at academic institutions accredited at the graduate level may be transferred. WVU HSC Admissions & Records must receive an original transcript from the transferring institution. Transferred credits/courses may substitute for required courses in the first-year core curriculum and for advanced courses required by our seven Ph.D. training programs.

When transferring credits, please provide information about the course(s) you want to transfer and include the name of the institution with address and zip code, the course number and name, and course description/syllabus as published by that institution. Please make reference to the WVU course it may replace if it meets a course requirement. Attach the original transcript from the transferring academic institution to this form and deliver in hand to the Office of Research & Graduate Education (2271 HSS) for final approval. Final decisions regarding substitution of required courses with transferred courses will be made by the Course Coordinators, Graduate Admissions Committee, and/or your Graduate Director or Graduate Program Scholarship Committee, with the assistance of personnel in the Office of Research & Graduate Education.

**C. Other Program Activities**

1. Seminars and Journal Club

In addition to formal course work, students will attend weekly seminars and journal clubs. In general, the student will attend the seminars and journal clubs that are attended by the members of their host laboratory or as recommended by their host mentor. Students are welcome to attend additional seminars that are of interest but they should be keenly aware not to spend undo amounts of time in seminars at the expense of getting to know the laboratory and completing assigned laboratory work.

2. Individual Development Plan (IDP)

The IDP provides resources to help you evaluate your skills and interests in:

* Scientific Knowledge
* Research Skills
* Communication (writing and speaking)
* Professionalism
* Management and Leadership
* Responsible Conduct of Research
* Career advancement

This information will be used to build the necessary skill set and to help in decisions regarding your future career options. The role of the dissertation mentor is to help you to either achieve these skills or identify resources that can augment your skills or inform your career decisions. The IDP is to be reviewed annually.

The Biomedical graduate program will use the IDP at Science Careers (<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/>). All incoming Biomedical students will complete this IDP and discuss their results with a faculty advisor during Boot Camp, the week before school starts. Once you join a laboratory, you are to annually retake the IDP and review the results with your mentor. You will complete the IDP Annual Review form (available under Forms) and use this in your discussions with your mentor. The mentor should sign the form and copies are to be placed in your file kept by the graduate program and in your file kept by the Office of Research & Graduate Education.

The IDP will be required in all training grants and many pre-doctoral fellowships starting October 2014. The Behavioral and Biomedical Sciences (BBS) NIH-T32 supported training program has developed their own IDP form and this one will substitute for the Science Careers IDP for students in that training program.

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## D. Registration

To receive/maintain a stipend and full tuition coverage, you must register for a minimum of 9 credits in the fall and spring semesters and for a minimum of 3 credits in summer semester. You must be registered in every semester until completion of the dissertation defense, or request a leave of absence, at which time your stipend and tuition coverage will be suspended.

STAR Web registration system: <http://registrar.wvu.edu/courses>

## Registration Process

1. Point your browser to <http://www.mix.wvu.edu/>
2. You will see the “Mountaineer information Xpress” with the MIX Login Screen
3. Enter your Username and Password. If your MIX account is [jdoe@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:jdoe@mix.wvu.edu), then your Username is Jdoe. Your password is your 2-digit day of birth and the last 4 digits of your WVU ID.
4. Click “OK”
5. On the next page, click the STAR tab on the top
6. Click “Click here to enter STAR”
7. Select the Student Services, Housing & Financial Aid link. You are now connected to STAR.
8. Select Registration link
9. Click on Select Term link. Use the pull down option to select desired term. Click on Submit
10. Select Add or Drop Classes link
11. Enter each CRN in the blocks and click on the Submit Changes button
12. You can review your schedule by selecting the Student Schedule or Student Detail Schedule links
13. If you are in STAR longer than 20 minutes MIX will time-out due to inactivity on the MIX pages

*Note: students may not take courses outside of the recommendation of the graduate program (i.e. physical education, music, dance) without the written permission of the Assistant VP for Graduate Education.*

# VI. Selection of Faculty Dissertation Mentor and Graduate Program

## A. Selection of Faculty Dissertation Mentor

You have the opportunity to select a faculty mentor and graduate program by the December of Year 1 or during the spring semester. You will be asked to submit in rank order three names of faculty with whom you would like to conduct your dissertation research. The Graduate Directors, Departmental Chairs, and the Office of Research & Graduate Education can assist you in the selection of a mentor. Final acceptance into the mentor’s laboratory is at the discretion of the mentor.

Graduate Faculty that are available to become Dissertation (Research) Mentors are selected by the Office of Research & Graduate Education in consultation with the graduate directors and departmental chairs. The criteria to be an available mentor are:

To mentor a student the faculty investigator should:

1. Want to mentor a new student in his/her laboratory
2. Have extramural funding to support the student’s stipend or the demonstration of submitted and pending grant applications within the past year
3. Have money for research supplies to support a student’s dissertation research
4. Have an active research laboratory as identified by recent (within one year) publications.

Other considerations taken into account when assigning student mentorship:

1. Association (by the participating faculty mentor) with Institutional Fellowship Opportunities, such as the NSF IGERT, NanoSafe, the WVCTSI, or an NIH T32 training grant
2. Student supported by a Teaching Assistantship (TA)
3. Number of current students in the investigator’s laboratory

*NOTE: It is a requirement to match with a faculty mentor who will guide you to completion of your Ph.D. dissertation research. You are responsible to find/match with a faculty mentor. Lack of fulfillment of this requirement may lead to dismissal from the IGPBMS.*

## B. Selection of a Graduate Program

After matching with a faculty mentor, please make the selection of a graduate program based on your individual career interests and the advice of your faculty mento*r.* Successful entry into a graduate program requires approval of that graduate program.

Upon entry into a specific Ph.D. training program, you are now under the auspices of that graduate program until completion of the Ph.D. degree. The table below lists the seven PhD degree-granting graduate programs and their directors.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Graduate Programs | Graduate Director |
| Biochemistry & Molecular Biology | F. Bradley Hillgartner |
| Cancer Cell Biology | Scott Weed |
| Cellular & Integrative Physiology | Robert Brock |
| Exercise Physiology | John Hollander |
| Immunology & Microbial Pathogenesis | John Barnett |
| Neuroscience | Richard Dey |
| Pharmaceutical & Pharmacological Science | Grazyna Sklarz |

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# C. Selection of the Dissertation Advisory Committee

# The Dissertation Advisory committee is generally selected in the Fall of the second year. Together with your dissertation advisor, you will select at least 5 faculty members to function as your dissertation advisory committee. These individuals will meet with you at least annually to provide you feedback on your research and evaluate your progress toward completion of your degree. This is the committee that administers both the Dissertation proposal defense (candidacy exam) and the final defense. Per University guidelines, one member of this committee but be from a program outside of the student’s program and the majority of the members must be full members of the graduate faculty. The Chair of the committee must be a full-time WVU employee. This policy can be viewed at: <http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/advisingcoursesdegrees/degree_regulations/#committeestext>

# The inclusion of the dissertation advisor as a member of this committee varies between the 7 Biomedical graduate programs. The student should consult the individual program handbooks for the program policy.

# VII. Work Schedule, Sick Leave, Vacation, and Leave of Absence Policy

*The first day of your graduate studies is the first day of your career as a scientist. It is a big step-up from your undergraduate years and requires your ultimate commitment.*

## A. Work Schedule

Your first year of study focuses primarily on didactic education. In the fall semester, you can expect to follow the academic calendar of the University for your December holidays. During the week of Thanksgiving. University classes are not in session but research is still going on. Discuss, your work schedule for this week with the faculty member with whom you are rotating. The same is true in the Spring semester, if you are still rotating in laboratories, discuss expectations for spring break with your host mentor. Make sure that you are clear on the expectations each host mentor has for you. These expectations are likely to vary between laboratories. Mentors are made aware of the guideline of approximately 20 h per week in the laboratory during the short rotations. For safety, you should avoid working in the laboratory by yourself.

**B. Sick Leave**

Graduate students do not receive a specified number of sick days per pay cycle or calendar year. You are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle so that you are not sick. In addition, headaches and small malaises should not be used as reasons to not be in class or lab. Regardless of your state of health, your responsibilities remain the same and you will need to make up missed work by working weekends and evenings. Please become familiar with any policies with regard to absenteeism in the syllabi of your courses and in your chosen Ph.D. graduate program. If you are truly sick for a journal club, class, or exam, please inform the faculty member in charge of that activity. This can be accomplished by phone or email or in person and should be done before the class or meeting. Do not assume that informing your mentor or a single faculty member of your absence will result in that absence being communicated to other faculty. Each faculty member with whom you have a class or other obligation must be informed individually for each absence.

**C. Vacation**

Once you have entered a specific graduate program, the vacation schedule for the University calendar no longer applies. Discuss the expectations on vacation with your mentor. These expectations are likely to vary among research laboratories so it is important to establish these expectations upon entry in the laboratory. You should be aware that these decisions are made in your best interest and for safety and efficient conduct of experiments.

**D. Leave of Absence**

The Health Science Center has a defined policy to deal with extended periods of time outside of the laboratory or class, generally greater than 2 weeks. Termed a leave of absence, a student may need to take such a leave due to grave illness, pregnancy, or family crisis. Please consult this policy when considering such a leave. In some circumstances, the leave may be imposed upon the student administratively due to academic issues or policy violations. Procedures for this are detailed in this policy and there are forms for documenting all types of leave and any expectations or requirements upon your return.

*The Ph.D. degree is awarded based on completion of original dissertation research and not time served in the program. Undue time spent away from the University will hamper your progress in research.*

**VIII. Academic and Professional Standards**

**A. Academic standards**

1. Standards

It is expected that students will perform satisfactorily on all required courses. To remain in good standing in the Ph.D. program a student is required to maintain the following standards:

a. An overall grade point average of 3.0 in graduate level coursework. Note that this is higher than the university standard of 2.75.

b. Removal of any incomplete grades within one semester or summer session of their award, unless special permission is granted by the Assistant Vice President for Research. Failure to remove an incomplete within one semester results in a permanent F on your transcript and this F figures into the GPA.

d. Satisfactory written comments describing the student’s performance in short rotations.

Failure to comply with these standards will result in the student being placed on academic probation and may result in dismissal from the graduate program.

## 2. Grading System and Reporting of Grades

Courses are graded as follows: A, B, C, D, or F, and P (pass) or F (fail). The Course Coordinator may submit letter grades with + or -, but your grade point average (GPA) is calculated using the basic letter grade. Grades of D and F are not acceptable for course credit toward a graduate degree but are used in calculating the GPA. Letter grades are given for the short lab experience in Year 1. Research 797 is graded S/U; U’s in research are not counted for the calculation of the GPA. The first unsatisfactory (U) grade for 797 results in placement on probation; a second U in research 797 is grounds for dismissal from the graduate program.

The grade of Incomplete (I) is given when the instructor believes that the course work is incomplete. All incompletes must be removed within the next semester of the calendar year; however, an individual instructor may require their removal within a shorter time period. If you receive an incomplete grade, you must contact the faculty member who issued the incomplete to discuss its removal. If an incomplete is not rectified within the next semester, it will be changed to a grade of F (IF). Changing an Incomplete grade requires a Grade Modification Form that should be submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Education. The instructor of the course, the director of the graduate program, and the Assistant VP for Graduate Education must sign these forms. If removal of an Incomplete (I) grade cannot be met within the appropriate time frame, a written request from the faculty instructor must be made to the Registrar’s Office.

*NOTE: You cannot graduate with a D or F grade on your Plan of Study. You must retake the course and improve the grade to graduate. Both grades will count toward your GPA on your transcript, and the higher grade will be placed in the Plan of Study.*

*NOTE: A first unsatisfactory (U) grade in research 797 is a warning grade. A second U is grounds for dismissal from the IGPBMS.*

**B. Professional Standards**

Graduate students in the 7 Biomedical Graduate Programs, the MS in Biomedical Sciences, the MS in Health Sciences, and first year students in the Biomedical Science Graduate Program are expected to adhere to the following standards of behavior throughout their tenure in graduate school. This code governs student behavior in classrooms, research endeavors, academic and professional gatherings and travel, and in their daily conduct outside of the University. In addition to the code outlined below, all students will uphold the WVU Student Conduct and Discipline Policy. This code can be found at: <http://campuslife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct>

1. Academic Integrity

Students will:

* not plagiarize the work of others either by directly copying that work or by summarizing the thoughts of others as their own;
* not cheat on any examinations, on academic assignments and activities, and will not provide unauthorized help to others during an examination or graded academic assignment;
* not alter examination scores, answer sheets, other graded materials, or their academic record;
* adhere to the University policies on academic integrity (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/enrollmentandregistration/#academicdishonestytext>)

2. Scientific Integrity

Students will:

* have actually carried out experiments as reported;
* represent their best understanding of their work in their descriptions and analyses of it;
* accurately describe methods used in experiments;
* not report the work of others as if it were their own;
* in their publications adequately summarize previous relevant work;
* when acting as reviewers will treat submitted manuscripts and grant applications confidentially and avoid inappropriate use; and
* disclose financial and other interests that might present a conflict-of-interest in their various activities such as reporting research results, serving as reviewers, and mentoring students;
* adhere to the University Research Integrity Procedures that can be viewed at: [http://www.wvu.edu/~lawfac/mmcdiarmid/aic/Final%20RIC%20Policy%20WVU%205-9-11.pdf](http://www.wvu.edu/%7Elawfac/mmcdiarmid/aic/Final%20RIC%20Policy%20WVU%205-9-11.pdf)

3. Scientific citizenship

Students will:

* strive to provide timely, efficient and high-quality work;
* function as an effective and respectful team member in the performance of collaborative research;
* strive to always acknowledge the contributions of their co-workers;
* strive to keep all work areas clean, organized, and conducive to high-quality research;
* respect shared work areas and reagents and insure that steps are taken to replenish reagents when they are in low supply;
* refrain from activities that might be disruptive to the work of others, including playing music, conversation, telephone calls
* be attentive in presentations by their colleagues and provide constructive criticism as appropriate;
* seek and accept criticism without reprisal or defensiveness;
* strive to address and remedy situations as they arise and to follow through on all promises and commitments to co-workers;
* wear appropriate clothing in the laboratory and other research settings that is consistent with federal, state, and University regulations;
* speak-up and report any practice, condition, or situation, that may cause harm or that is against federal, state, and University regulations;
* when traveling as a representative of the University and laboratory, the student will behave in a professional manner, uphold the rules of the laboratory with respect to the sharing of data, report expenses in a truthful manner, and refrain from frivolous use of travel funds for meals or modes of transportation that are unnecessary.

4. Professional interactions

Students will:

* strive to increase their knowledge and expertise in order to maintain qualifications consistent with the highest standards available in their discipline;
* accept and adapt to the continual change inherent in the creation and delivery of knowledge;
* be appropriate in dress, language and demeanor at all time and avoid language and dress that is offensive to others;
* respect and protect all students’, staff, faculty, study participants’, and patient’s rights to privacy and confidentiality;
* minimize personal text messaging, e-mailing, telephone calls, and social media while at work;
* respond to all communications in a timely manner;
* listen carefully and to be thoughtful and respectful in all forms of communication and during the attendance of seminars;
* provide training and experience to advance the scientific skills and knowledge of ethical research practices for any trainee under their supervision;
* treat all individuals in a caring, respectful, professional, and empathetic manner.

**C. Graduate Programs Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (GP-CAPS)**

1. GP-CAPS Membership

During your first year in graduate school, student compliance with these academic and professional standards is monitored by GP-CAPS. This committee has representatives from all 7 Biomedical PhD programs and the clinical and translational science graduate programs. Following the first year, issues related to academic or professionals standards are first evaluated by the program faculty and then for issues of dismissal or appeals by GP-CAPS.

2. Student Review and Appeals Policy

Students have the right to due process in all decisions regarding their grades, evaluations, and status in graduate school. Appeals of decisions regarding the above must follow a standard set of procedures. Because the 7 Biomedical PhD programs are not department bases, the appeals procedure is slightly different than the procedure found in the Graduate Catalog. The procedure for you to use is found in the appendix under Student Review and Appeals Policy. You should familiarize yourself with this policy before you need to use it.

# IX. Financial Package and Fees

## A. Stipend & Tuition Coverage

As a PhD student, you will receive a stipend (currently $25,000), full tuition coverage, and WVU student health insurance, the latter includes hospitalization and disability, throughout your training period if you maintain a GPA of 3.00, successfully pass the qualifying examination and dissertation proposal, and demonstrate excellent progress toward completion of PhD dissertation research. The Office of Research & Graduate Education pays the stipends for the first, 22 months (e.g., August 6, 2015 to June 30, 2017). The University pays in arrears, so your first paycheck will arrive on September 1. In Year 3 of training (2nd year in your mentor’s laboratory), your stipend will be paid from your mentor’s grant or start-up funds, from an institutional training grant, (e.g. T32, NSF IGERT, WVU NanoSafe), or from an individual pre-doctoral fellowship (NIH, American Heart Association, etc.), which you are expected to write. If these financial sources become unavailable, your mentor’s department, your specific graduate program, or the Office of Research & Graduate Education will provide your stipend support assuming you are in good academic standing and continue to perform satisfactorily in research.

*NOTE: Continued stipend support is reviewed annually and is dependent on good academic standing (minimum GPA of 3.00) and demonstration of satisfactory progress toward completion of dissertation research.*

*NOTE: Graduate study is a full-time commitment. Outside employment will detract from your academic efforts and is not allowed. The first day of graduate studies is the first day of your scientific career!!*

## B. Student Health Insurance

Coverage of health insurance, primarily hospitalization and disability, starts on August 11. We will provide a temporary health insurance card the week of orientation. You should receive an official health insurance card in the mail later in the year. The insurance only covers you, the student. If you wish to add family, you can purchase extra insurance. The cost (we pay) per student is ~$800. An on-campus representative will be at our orientation on August 6th. Please familiarize yourself with the terms of this coverage and make sure that it is satisfactory to meet your medical needs. If it is not, you may purchase separate insurance independently. If you choose to use a different insurer you must fill out the University waiver (<http://studentinsurance.wvu.edu/waiver>) or you will be charged for the University student insurance. For Fall 2015, the waiver is due August 3, 2015. International students should pay particular attention to the terms of the student insurance, as coverage for health related expenses in the United States is very different than in most other countries.

Questions or inquiries about health insurance:Aetna customer service: 1-866-654-2338, [www.aetnastudenthealth.com](http://www.aetnastudenthealth.com) once at this website, find our institution. Email address: [sio@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sio@mail.wvu.edu) or call (304) 293-6815.

## C. Fees

You must pay fees by Friday before the start of each semester to avoid a late charge. Payment may be made by credit card or banking information for an electronic check payment.

# X. Graduation Requirements

## A. Successful Completion of the Ph.D. Degree Requires:

1. 3.00 GPA, no D’s or F’s and S’s in research
2. Proper registration and payment of fees
3. Passage of the benchmark exams:
4. Qualifying (preliminary) Examination
5. Dissertation Proposal (candidacy exam)
6. Dissertation Defense
7. Annual reports of completion of the IDP and advisory committee meetings
8. First-Author manuscript
9. Submission of required Approval Forms
10. Electronic Submission of Dissertation
11. Application for Graduation and Diploma Form
12. Exit interview with Assistant VP for Graduate Education

## B. Full-Time Student Status

To receive a stipend, you are required to register for a minimum of 9 credits for the fall and spring semesters and 3 credits for the summer semester. Credit hours exceeding 16 require prior approval by the Associate Provost of WVU. Remember, fees must be paid before the start of each semester to avoid a penalty.

## C. Ph.D. Examinations and Defense

The three main examinations that must be passed for partial fulfillment of the Ph.D. degree are the qualifying examination, the research proposal (candidacy exam), and the dissertation defense. The individual graduate programs conduct these examinations.

### 1. Qualifying (preliminary) Examination

The Qualifying Exam is usually given after most formal coursework has been completed. In general, the qualifying examination will test your scientific knowledge pertinent to your chosen PhD training program. The individual graduate programs conduct these examinations at different times and use different formats; please consult the rules and regulations of each of our seven PhD training programs. Upon completion of this exam, committee members sign the appropriate form, and you submit the form to your program, and to the Office of Research and Graduate Education, and keep a copy for yourself.

### 2. Dissertation Proposal Defense (candidacy exam)

Successful defense of a proposal outlining your dissertation research marks the entrance to PhD candidacy in your graduate program. Timely completion of this benchmark not only provides a guide for the remainder of your research but also provides an excellent springboard from which to apply for an external fellowship. The Proposal Defense begins with the preparation of a grant application, often times in the style of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) or American Heart Association (AHA) pre-doctoral fellowship. Portions of this grant application will be drafted during the *Scientific Writing* course. The proposed research is presented in a formal seminar to the faculty, graduate students, and other interested people, followed by an oral defense of the proposal to your dissertation committee.

It is recommended that the proposal be defended early in your third year in graduate school. If you fail the defense exam, you have the opportunity to retake the defense one more time after petitioning your dissertation committee for a retake. Successful defense of the research proposal must occur on or before the last working day of Year 3, which is usually the 3rd Friday in August.  Failure to do so will lead to the loss of stipend support and/or dismissal from the IGPBMS.  Individual graduate programs may require that the Dissertation Proposal Defense occur at an earlier date. With successful completion of the dissertation proposal, you have advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree and also have started the 5-year clock for completion of the degree.

Before or usually after defense of the proposal, you should seek a fellowship from a national funding agency.  Your Dissertation Proposal provides the cornerstone of an application for an individual pre-doctoral fellowship from agencies, such as the NIH (F31, F31 diversity) and the AHA.  Successful defense of your Dissertation Proposal strengthens your ability to obtain a pre-doctoral fellowship because the research plan has received an internal critique.  Examples of deadline dates for a Ruth Kirschstein NRSA F31 application to NIH are the first weeks of April, August, and December; the F31 diversity fellowship deadlines are the first weeks of May, September, and January.  Deadlines for an AHA pre-doctoral fellowship are in January and July. Consult with your Graduate Director for other opportunities and their deadlines that are pertinent to your discipline.

*NOTE: Successful defense of the research proposal must occur on or before the last working day of Year 3, which is usually the 3rd Friday in August.  Failure to do so may lead to the loss of stipend support and/or dismissal from the IGPBMS.*

### 3. Dissertation Defense

You defend your dissertation research for the Ph.D. degree by writing a dissertation, presenting it orally in front of a public forum, and defending it in private to your dissertation committee. Your dissertation research must be original and make a contribution to the scientific literature. To pass, you must receive the approval of 4 of the 5 members on your committee. You are required to electronically submit the dissertation to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) program at WVU - <http://thesis.wvu.edu/>.

*Note: All committee members must be present at the defense. Please see the University regulations controlling this exam.* [*http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/advisingcoursesdegrees/degree\_regulations/#thesesdissertationstext*](http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/advisingcoursesdegrees/degree_regulations/#thesesdissertationstext)

*Note: You must have at least one first-author manuscript, based on your Ph.D. dissertation research, published or accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal* ***before*** *you defend your dissertation research. In the case of joint first-author manuscripts, the manuscript can only fulfill this requirement for one author. Please note that the order of authors in some chemical journals is different than in most biological journals. Therefore, it is important for you and your faculty mentor to identify that the content of the journal article is based on your dissertation research and that you are the primary author.*

**D. Time limit to degree**

University policy states that if you do not successfully defend your dissertation research within 5 years of reaching PhD candidacy, you must retake the Proposal Defense.  For more information see: <http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/advisingcoursesdegrees/degree_regulations/#timelimitstext>

## E. Exit Interview

The exit interview is conducted with the Assistant VP for Graduate Education shortly after the successful defense of the dissertation. The interview is collegial and will allow you to express your opinions about your graduate experiences. All expressed opinions are confidential. The purpose of the interview is to use your constructive criticisms in a positive way to improve both your graduate program and the overriding support of graduate programs by the HSC and WVU. You will be sent a form prior to the interview to fill out. In this form, you will be asked for contact information for both you and 2 people who do not live with you but that would be able to find you should we lose contact. This is part of our effort to track our alumni. Tracking is necessary not only for continued program improvement but to meet both University and Federal standards for evaluating the long-term success of our training strategies.

## F. Investiture/Commencement

Graduates can attend the graduation ceremony for the School of Medicine or School of Pharmacy. These ceremonies are held on Saturday/Sunday in the second week of May. The School of Medicine ceremony features the graduates of 6 of the Biomedical graduate programs, the MD/PhD Scholars Program, and the MD program. The School of Pharmacy ceremony features graduates of the Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences PhD program and the PharmD program. At these ceremonies, the student’s advisor places the PhD hood on the graduate and the Ethical Affirmation for Scientists is recited. This oath was originated at WVU and was published in the journal, *Science,* in 2003.

# Appendix

* 1. Signature form
  2. Student review and appeals policy
  3. Leave of absence policy
  4. Forms – these can be found on the Research and Graduate Education website. Each form has instructions for when it should be used. Without exception, students should make triplicates of each form. They should turn in one copy to their graduate program, one copy to the Office of Research and Graduate Education, and keep a copy for themselves. The following is a list of forms in the approximate order in which you will use them. There are additional forms on the website but they are not used by all students.

1. IDP Reporting Form
2. Evaluation Form for Short Rotations
3. Committee Approval Form
4. Qualifying (Preliminary) Exam Form
5. Plan of Study
6. Dissertation Proposal Defense (Candidacy Exam) Form
7. Graduation Application
8. Shuttle Sheet Request Form

**WVU Health Science Center**

**Acknowledgement Form for entering graduate students**

As an entering graduate student, I agree to review the policies and procedure published in the student handbook provided to me at orientation and available on-line as well as the additional information in the on-line Student Conduct Code listed below. I understand that I may seek discussion and clarification of these documents from the Assistant VP for Graduate Education at the Health Science Center. Please be sure to review these specific policies and sign each statement below.

Name: (printed or typed) Date:

**The Student Handbook for Graduate Students in the Biomedical Sciences Graduate Programs at the WVU Health Science Center.**

I have read and understand the Handbook of the Biomedical Graduate Programs at the WVU Health Science Center; both the information within this handbook and on-line catalogs and policies to which this handbook refers. These include but are not limited to:

* + WVU Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/>), and
  + Campus Student Code (<http://campuslife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct>).

I agree to abide by the requirements outlined in this document as well as the University requirements governing these degrees.

Signature:

**Academic and Professional Standards**

I pledge to adhere to the Academic and Professional standards for graduate students (section VIII of this Handbook) and to maintain the highest standard of scientific integrity in all that I do.

Signature:

**Federal, State, and University Requirements for Laboratory Conduct**

I agree to adhere to all Federal, State, and University policies and requirements for the conduct of work in the laboratory. I will remain up-to-date on all certifications for both laboratory conduct and the responsible conduct of research.

Signature:

**Student Review Policy for Graduate Programs in the School of Medicine**

*This policy only applies to students enrolled in the following Graduate Programs:*

**Graduate Program Director**

Undifferentiated 1st Year Biomedical Sciences Minnear

Masters Master of Health Sciences Salati

Biomedical Sciences Minnear

Clinical and Translational Science Minnear

**Director** **Chairperson**

Doctoral Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Hillgartner Schaller

Cancer Cell Biology Weed

Cellular and Integrative Physiology Brock Siderovski

Exercise Physiology Hollander Alway

Immunology & Microbial Pathogenesis Barnett Barnett

Neuroscience Dey Dey

Pharmaceutical & Pharmacological Sciences Pathway***1*** Szklarz Lockman

Combined M.D./Ph.D. Scholars Training Program***2*** Siderovski

Each graduate program is responsible for monitoring the progress of its own students, identifying deficiencies, and recommending paths for remediation.  Students receive evaluations on a semester basis through coursework and research grades, and at least annually via program review and for Ph.D. students, meetings of their dissertation advisory committee. Whereas individual programs may have unique expectations of their students, many requirements are common to all programs. The following review process is designed to encourage high standards of scholarship and integrity, ensure due process, and provide opportunities for redemption. This process also recognizes and affirms the unique aspects of discipline-specific research training that is embraced by individual graduate programs.

1PPS degree is awarded by the WVU School of Pharmacy

2only applies during the Ph.D. phase of the M.D./Ph.D. training program

**Definitions**

Candidacy exam: This is also called the defense of the dissertation proposal. This exam involves the preparation of a written document outlining the plans for the student’s dissertation research. The document is written in the style of a fellowship application. The student presents a seminar to the faculty describing their plans and then meets separately with their dissertation advisory committee to defend their ideas. The student can retake this exam one time without consequence. For Ph.D. students, the exam must be completed prior to the first day of class of the Fall Semester of their fourth year in graduate school; individual programs may impose an earlier deadline and this deadline is binding. For M.D./Ph.D. students, the exam must be completed by the end of the fall semester of the second year after beginning the research phase of their curriculum.

Dissertation mentor: This is the faculty member that is the advisor for the student’s dissertation research. This individual must be a full member of the Graduate faculty and is either the principal investigator of the laboratory in which the research is conducted or is a collaborator of the scientist in whose laboratory the research is conducted.

Dissertation advisory committee: This is a group of at least 5 graduate faculty that oversee the progress of the student during their dissertation research. At least 3 members must be faculty from the student’s graduate program. The student, in consultation with their dissertation mentor, selects the committee members. The committee meets at least annually. During these meetings, the student presents their research progress and plans for the future. The committee provides feedback on this and reviews the student’s progress on the Plan of Study and their academic achievement. The results of this meeting are recorded on an evaluation form that becomes part of the student’s file.

Graduate Programs-Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (GP-CAPS): is composed of biomedical sciences faculty from the HSC who hold regular membership on the graduate faculty and includes representatives from both the Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy. The Vice-President for Health Sciences Research and Graduate Education appoints the faculty to serve on GP-CAPS. The primary role of this committee is to ensure that student performance concerns are managed equitably and consistently across the graduate programs served by this policy.

Graduate Program Director: this is the faculty member responsible for coordinating the activities of the graduate program. The biomedical graduate programs have interdepartmental faculty membership; therefore the Assistant VP for Graduate Education provides administrative oversight of the graduate programs, rather than a department chair.

Student’s file: The student’s file contains their application, transcripts, graduate forms, correspondence, and other relevant communications or notifications. The file is kept in duplicate with one copy residing with the graduate program and the second copy in the Office of Research and Graduate Education. Students are instructed to provide copies of all forms, for example, the plan of study, the committee meeting evaluation, etc. for both files.

Undifferentiated first year students: The 7 biomedical Ph.D. programs recruit students via an undifferentiated admissions process. Applicants are screened and admitted by an admission’s committee made up of representatives of all 7 programs. The students take a common first semester curriculum and do research rotations to choose a dissertation mentor. Once a dissertation mentor is selected, the student requests admission to one of the 7 biomedical graduate programs and from that point the student is governed by the handbook for the specific graduate program. Choice of mentor and graduate program occurs by the end of the fall semester or during the spring semester.

Probation, Suspension and Dismissal: Definitions of these terms can be found in the University Graduate Catalog. The exception to this is that the GPA requirement for the graduate programs governed by this policy is 3.0.

*http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/enrollmentandregistration/#probationsuspensiontext*

**1. Documentation of Problem**

* The dissertation mentor, the dissertation advisory committee, an instructor of a class, or a faculty member affiliated with the student’s graduate program may initiate the performance review of a graduate student.

• Unsatisfactory performance by a graduate student includes, but is not limited to:

* + inability to maintain a GPA of 3.0, or achieve minimum grades of “B” in required courses
  + inadequate research progress, as judged by the mentor, dissertation committee or a grade of “U” in research (a combination of two “U” grades in research (*xxx797*) or dissertation (*xxx798*) is grounds for dismissal)
  + failure to complete benchmarks in a timely manner (i.e., qualifying exam, proposal defense)
  + reaching the limit on time to degree (5 years post the candidacy exam for Ph.D. students and 8 years total in the program for both M.S. and Ph.D. students)
  + poor attendance/participation as specified by graduate program handbooks or course syllabi at required program activities (i.e., journal clubs and seminars)
  + unapproved extended or multiple absences
  + violations of the WVU Student Code of Conduct (<http://campuslife.wvu.edu/r/download/180235>)
* Problem(s) must be brought to the attention of the graduate Program Director and documented in the student’s file. Documentation can include:
* an unsatisfactory grade on the transcript,
* a letter from the student’s dissertation mentor or another faculty member,
* the evaluation report of the student’s dissertation advisory committee meeting

**Notes:**

1. Review of students during the undifferentiated portion of the Biomedical graduate program, the M.S. in Biomedical Science, the M.S. in Health Sciences, and the M.S. in Clinical and Translational Sciences, is performed by GP-CAPS.

2. Once a student has entered one of the 7 Biomedical PhD programs, documentation of problems and initial review are handled first by the program.

3. Once a student has had their first meeting with their dissertation advisory committee, recommendations to dismiss the student should originate from this committee.

**2. Graduate Program Level Review**

* Student notification: Within 5 business days of notification of the problem, the Program Director sends the student a letter describing the unsatisfactory performance, measures necessary to correct the deficiency, and a timeline for correction. Note: This and all subsequent communication with the student are sent via email and the student must sign and return a copy of the letter to document his or her understanding of the concern/s and, if applicable, acceptance of conditions for remediation.

• Ascertaining student’s side of the story: The Program Director meets with the student to ascertain his/her viewpoint on the problem and ability to correct the deficiencies. Any mitigating circumstances are noted and a written summary of this meeting, co-signed by the student, is placed in the student’s personnel files.

* Determining the need for additional courses of action: The Program Director discusses the student’s situation with the mentor and dissertation advisory committee, if formed, to determine if any additional courses of action are necessary. The student can be present at all or part of this meeting by the request of the Program Director, mentor or dissertation advisory committee. The student is informed in writing (via email) of the results of this meeting and is given the opportunity to provide more information or rebut the recommendation either in writing or in person. If the problem does not involve a gross infraction of University policy, the case does not proceed beyond the Graduate Program level. Likewise, sanctions that do not include probation, suspension or dismissal are handled at the Graduate Program level so long as the student accepts the remediation.

• Deficiencies that are not corrected within the timeline established in the remediation letter, and cases that result in recommendations for probation, suspension or dismissal are referred to the graduate faculty of the specific graduate program or subcommittee thereof.

* A minimum of three members of the student’s dissertation advisory committee, including the mentor, and a representative from the HSC Office of Research and Graduate Education must attend the faculty meeting to assist in determining a course of action. Student may be asked to submit a written explanation, and/or to appear before the graduate faculty subcommittee.
* Potential outcomes of the Graduate Program Level Review are:
  + a penalty may be imposed, such as receiving a grade of zero for an examination
  + the student may be placed on probation, with requirements set forth in writing for the student to remediate deficiencies and remove probationary status
  + the student may be suspended (administrative leave of absence) from the program with specific directions on how to be reinstated
  + a Ph.D. student may be demoted to the Master’s in Biomedical Sciences program
  + the student may be recommended for dismissal from the training laboratory and/or graduate program
* The Program Director reports all major infractions of institutional research procedures, and all recommendations for probation, suspension, or dismissal resulting from the Program Level Review, in writing, to the Chairperson of the GP-CAPS. The report indicates the concern, the program faculty findings and actions/recommendations, and the student’s response, if any. The student is provided a copy of this report and is given the opportunity to provide a written rebuttal of the letter and/or appear before GP-CAPS to explain their position.

**Note:** Plagiarism and other forms of academic/research dishonesty, including but not limited to falsifying data or academic credentials, are also referred to the West Virginia University Office of Student Conduct and/or the Office of Academic Integrity ([*http://oric.research.wvu.edu/academic-integrity*](http://oric.research.wvu.edu/academic-integrity)*).*

**3. GP-CAPS Level Review**

• GP-CAPS meets at the end of each semester to review the academic and professional performance of first year-undifferentiated students, M.S. Students, and others brought to their attention by a graduate program. Special meetings can be called to handle significant problems that occur outside of this meeting time.

• In the case of reports originating from graduate programs, GP-CAPS may request to meet with the student prior to rendering their decison. If the student is asked or chooses to appear before the GP-CAPS, s/he may be accompanied by a peer or faculty member of their choosing that is affiliated with the Health Sciences Center. This individual may confer with the student, but may neither speak for the student nor participate in the proceedings directly, unless requested to do so by the GP-CAPS.

• The Assistant VP for Graduate Education and graduate Program Director participate in the GP-CAPS meeting, but are *ex-officio*, non-voting members.

• GP-CAPS may:

* concur with the graduate program’s findings and actions/recommendations
* impose different actions or penalties based on the same findings or on additional findings
* determine if a student recommended for dismissal from a graduate program can switch to a different program, and establish conditions associated with this change, if any.
* For M.S. students and students in the first year of the biomedical Ph.D. program, progress reviews as well as all recommendations will originate with GP-CAPS. For these students, GP-CAPS may:
* determine that the student has met standard and advances to the next semester of the curriculum
* impose remediation, probation, suspension, or dismissal based on their findings

• The GP-CAPS Chairperson reports the Committee’s findings and decisons, in writing, to the student, the Program Director and the Dean of Medicine or, for students in the Pharmaceutical & Pharmacological Sciences pathway, the Dean of Pharmacy. The Dean of Medicine adjudicates all matters pertaining to M.D./Ph.D. students, regardless of their graduate program.

**4. Dean’s Review and Decision**

• The Dean (or his/her designee) accepts, rejects, or modifies the GP-CAPS’ decison.

* The Dean notifies the student, Program Director and Assistant VP for Graduate Education of his/her decision by written letter, and explains the student’s rights of appeal. The student must acknowledge receipt of the Dean’s decision by signing and returning the letter.

**1. Appeals Process: General Information**

• Students may appeal any academic penalty or sanction imposed by an instructor, the institution or its constituent academic units, as prescribed in the *“Rights, Penalties and Appeals”* section of the West Virginia University Health Science Center Catalog.

• The Dean (or his/her designee) is the final level of appeal for grade penalties, exclusion from class, final course grades, and academic probation. The Vice President for Health Sciences is the final level of appeal for dismissal from a graduate program, not including suspension and probation imposed for failure to maintain minimum academic requirements (i.e., GPA).

• When a penalty is imposed for academic dishonesty, the University’s Academic Dishonesty procedure is followed, as prescribed under WVU Board of Governors Policy 31, concurrent with Policy 15.

**2. Appeals of Academic Penalties, excluding those related to Academic Dishonesty**

**A. Informal Appeal of Graduate Program Level Actions or Recommendations**

* Student receives written notice of (*i*) final grade; (*ii*) failure to meet or maintain academic standards; (*iii*) methods, if any, by which the student may correct the failure; and/or (*iv*) nature of penalty imposed.
* Within 5 business days of final grade posting to the student’s record or receipt of written notice of a penalty, the student meets with the Instructor or Program Director who assigned the penalty, and attempts to resolve the issue. Any evidence provided by the student is reviewed, and the Instructor or Program Director upholds or overturns the original grade or penalty. The student is informed within 5 business days of the outcome of their appeal. If the student is satisfied, the case is closed. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, s/he may file an appeal with the Assistant VP for Graduate Education.

**Note:** If the Instructor or Program Director is not available, or the nature of the problem makes the discussion with the Instructor or Program Director uncomfortable, the student may file their appeal directly with the Assistant VP for Graduate Education, within 5 business days of the issuance of the grade or penalty.

**B. Formal Appeal of Graduate Program Level Actions or Recommendations**

**Note:** This section refers to recommendations or actions that do not involve probation, suspension or dismissal as these decisions are reviewed by GP-CAPS prior to being imposed.

* Within 5 business days of the Instructor’s or Program Director’s decision, the student may formally appeal (in writing) to the Assistant VP for Graduate Education. The student must provide all documentation and evidence forming the basis of the appeal.
* The Assistant VP for Graduate Education makes the decision to uphold or rescind the grade/penalty, and informs the student and Instructor or Program Director, in writing, within 5 business days.
* If the student remains dissatisfied, s/he may file another formal appeal, in writing, to the Dean within 5 business days of receipt of the decision letter from the Assistant VP for Graduate Education.
* The Dean reviews the case and makes a final decision within 15 business days of receipt of the appeal, except when adherence to this time period is impracticable, in which case the time period may be extended as warranted by particular circumstances. The student, Instructor or Program Director, and Assistant VP for Graduate Education are notified, in writing.

**C. Formal Appeal of Decisions Rendered by the GP-CAPS:**

* Students may appeal determinations rendered by the GP-CAPS provided the appeal is made, in writing, to the Dean within 10 business days of receipt of the GP-CAPS Chairperson’s letter.
* The Dean reviews the report from GP-CAPS and may choose to accept, reject, or modify the recommendation. Alternatively, at his or her discretion, the Dean may appoint a faculty committee composed of three or more faculty members, including at least one faculty member from outside the student’s graduate program, to render an opinion. This committee will make their recommendation within 10 business days.
* The Dean reviews the committee’s recommendation and informs the student, Program Director and the Assistant VP for Graduate Education of the outcome of the appeal within 10 business days. If the Dean decides to uphold dismissal from a graduate program or the School, the student may file a final appeal to the Provost.

**D. Formal Appeal of Dismissal:**

* The student may appeal their dismissal to the Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs within 5 business days of the Dean’s decision. The student will be required to supply evidence and establish grounds for the appeal.
* The Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs reviews the case and renders a final decision within 30 days of his/her receipt of such appeal, except when adherence to this time period is impracticable, in which case the time period may be extended as warranted by particular circumstances.

# Long-Term Leave of Absence Policy for HSC Graduate Programs

## Introduction and Definition

Under certain circumstances, graduate students may request or have imposed a long-term leave of absence (LOA) during which they are **recessed without stipend** from the program for a specified duration. There are several categories under which a student may petition for a leave of absence: medical, personal, and academic. In addition, an administrative leave of absence may be enforced due to serious academic or professional deficiencies.

A long term LOA is a period greater than 1 calendar month duration during which time the student is not engaged in significant productive activity toward the degree. The LOA may last up to 1 year. WVU policy is that students can only be inactive in their program for 1 year after which time they would need to reapply for admission.

## Policy

The request for the long-term LOA should be presented in writing to the Graduate Program Director and reviewed by the Program’s faculty or subcommittee who will then recommend to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs (Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy and Public Health) or the Assistant Vice President for Graduate Education (Medicine) the terms under which the student may return to the program. Following the agreed upon time of absence, a student in need of more time in recess will be officially withdrawn from the program, unless the above administrative groups grant an extension because of special circumstances. Once withdrawn from the program, individuals must reapply for and gain admission to resume their studies.

## Types of Leave and Procedures

**Student-initiated leaves:**

**Procedure:**  Request for a LOA must be initiated in writing. Student-initiated LOA requests use the Long-term LOA form. The student and the student’s advisor (if applicable) should sign the form and present it to the Graduate Program Director. The request will be reviewed by the Program Director, Program Faculty and/or subcommittee and appropriate Dean. Upon acceptance of the request the student will be notified in writing and the letter will contain any applicable requirements for return to the program. Upon return to the program, the student presents any required documentation to the Graduate Director. Once the return is accepted, the Graduate Director signs the LOA form indicating that the leave is over. If a student chooses not to return from the LOA, they should submit a letter to the Graduate Director indicating this fact.

**Medical LOA:** This type of LOA is reserved for acute medical problems of a physical or mental health nature affecting the student or a first-degree relative requiring intense medical care. In order to return to the program, the student will present a letter of release from the treating physician clearly stating that they are fit to return to the rigors of a graduate program. For **Parental LOA**, see below under exceptions.

**Personal LOA:** This type of LOA is used for reasons of a personal nature affecting the student's ability to be successful in the program. These may include, but are not limited to requests regarding family-related issues unrelated to health, visa issues, or a reconsideration of career direction.

**Academic LOA:**  This type of LOA is reserved for students who desire a recess from the program while currently unsatisfactory in a course prior to the issue of a final evaluation in that course. Student’s leaving the program for this reason will have specific requirements for their return, which will generally involve successful remediation of their knowledge base. Return to the program will involve evaluation of the remediation as well as the entire academic record. Students who fail to successfully meet the criteria stipulated in the letter granting the leave may not be permitted to return. Should a student be permitted to return to the program, the Graduate Program will recommend if the student returns on academic probation or in good academic and professional standing. Students, who are recommended not to return to the program, must reapply and gain admission in order to resume.

**Administrative-initiated leave:**

**Procedure:**  The administrator (Graduate Director, advisor, Dean) initiates this request in writing. The LOA should indicate the reason for the leave, the length of the leave, and any requirements for return. LOA requests should be approved by the Graduate Director and appropriate Dean prior to presentation to the student. The student should sign the letter indicating that they understand the terms. Upon return to the program, the student presents any required documentation to the Graduate Director. Once the return is accepted, the Graduate Director signs the LOA form indicating that the leave is over. If a student chooses not to return from the LOA, they should submit a letter to the Graduate Director indicating this fact.

**Administrative LOA:** This type of LOA is imposed by the Graduate Director and/or appropriate Dean for that Graduate Program due to academic or professional deficiencies, such as failure to progress in research, inattention to the academic or professional standards of a graduate student, or unexplained absence from the program of greater than 1 week. This type of LOA will be part of the student’s permanent record.

## Exceptions/Conditions

**LOA with stipend:** In some circumstances, the student may not be in residence in the program for greater than one month but may be able to achieve significant progress toward the degree. During this time, the student may remain on stipend. Such agreements should be documented in writing and include:

1. Reason for leave

2. Duration and timing of leave

3. Planned activities during leave

4. Planned method of communication during the leave

The letter documenting these conditions must be signed by the Graduate Director and placed in the student’s file.

**Parental LOA:** This is a LOA due to the birth or adoption of a child. Stipend should remain intact for the duration of the leave term as specified below.

6 Weeks individual, unless doctor- ordered

8 weeks total per family if both parents are enrolled in HSC graduate programs

**Extension of time in the program or to meet program-specific requirements:** If the student is unable to complete the degree within the University time limit for attaining the degree, they may petition for an extension equal to the time of the LOA. Petitions must be presented to the Graduate Director in writing 6 months prior to the end of this limit. Petitions for extensions of other program specific activities such as candidacy exams, seminars, etc. should also be handled in writing and occur prior to the semester in which the activity is to take place.

**Exceptions to the above:** Programs that are accredited may have specific residency requirements and the rules of the accrediting agency supersede these institutional guidelines.

**Failure to return:**  If a student fails to return from the LOA on the specified time and has not made any request for an extension, they shall be immediately withdrawn from the program. Reentry into the program will require a new application for admission.

**Forms**

IDP Reporting Form

Evaluation Form for Short Rotations

Committee Approval Form

Qualifying (Preliminary) Exam Form

Plan of Study

Dissertation Proposal Defense (Candidacy Exam) Form

Graduation Application

Shuttle Sheet Request Form

**myIDP – Individual Development Plan**

**http://myidp.sciencecareers.org/**

**Skills Assessment for Date**

**Directions for the student:** The IDP needs to be completed annually. This form provides a record of that. Once you have completed the online assessment transfer your scores onto Part 1 of this form. In Part 2, indicate your plans for the coming year under each area. It is possible that you do not have plans for some areas, that is fine just indicate that. Discuss both sections with your advisor. To protect your privacy, only Part 2 needs to be submitted for inclusion in your file. Have your advisor sign the last page and as always keep a copy for yourself, give a copy to the Research Office, and give a copy to your graduate director for inclusion in your file kept by the program.

**Part 1.** **Skills Assessment**

Rate your accomplishment in each area using the numerical scale where

1= highly deficient

5 = highly proficient

Use the full range of scores. It is expected that you will be deficient in many areas – that is why you are seeking graduate training. Some areas are not pertinent to your goals, discuss this your advisor and don’t rate yourself in these areas. Some areas will require postdoctoral training to achieve proficiency, remember that when rating your proficiency and you may want to leave some of these areas blank as well.

**Scientific knowledge**

Broad based knowledge of science 1 2 3 4 5

Deep knowledge of my specific research area 1 2 3 4 5

Critical evaluation of scientific literature 1 2 3 4 5

**Research Skills**

Technical skills related to my specific research area 1 2 3 4 5

Experimental design 1 2 3 4 5

Statistical analysis 1 2 3 4 5

Interpretation of data 1 2 3 4 5

Creativity/innovative thinking 1 2 3 4 5

Navigating the peer review process 1 2 3 4 5

**Communication**

Basic writing and editing 1 2 3 4 5

Writing scientific publications 1 2 3 4 5

Writing grant proposals 1 2 3 4 5

Writing for nonscientists 1 2 3 4 5

Speaking clearly and effectively 1 2 3 4 5

Presenting research to scientists 1 2 3 4 5

Presenting to nonscientists 1 2 3 4 5

Teaching in a classroom setting 1 2 3 4 5

Training and mentoring individuals 1 2 3 4 5

Seeking advice from advisors and mentors 1 2 3 4 5

Negotiating difficult conversations 1 2 3 4 5

**Professionalism**

Demonstrating workplace etiquette 1 2 3 4 5

Complying with rules and regulations 1 2 3 4 5

Upholding commitments and meeting deadlines 1 2 3 4 5

Maintaining positive relationships with colleagues 1 2 3 4 5

Contributing to discipline (e.g., member of professional society\*) 1 2 3 4 5

Contributing to institution (e.g. participate on committee) 1 2 3 4 5

\*This can include student chapters of these societies or specific groups that have been developed here, i.e., Cell Biology Training Program

**Management and Leadership Skills**

Providing instruction and guidance 1 2 3 4 5

Providing constructive feedback 1 2 3 4 5

Dealing with conflict 1 2 3 4 5

Planning and organizing projects 1 2 3 4 5

Time management 1 2 3 4 5

Developing/managing budgets 1 2 3 4 5

Managing data and resources 1 2 3 4 5

Delegating responsibilities 1 2 3 4 5

Leading and motivating others 1 2 3 4 5

Creating vision and goals 1 2 3 4 5

Serving as a role model 1 2 3 4 5

**Responsible Conduct of Research**

Careful recordkeeping practices 1 2 3 4 5

Understanding of data ownership/sharing issues 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrating responsible authorship and publication practices 1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrating responsible conduct in animal research 1 2 3 4 5

Can identify and address research misconduct 1 2 3 4 5

Can identify and manage conflict of interest 1 2 3 4 5

**Career Planning**

How to maintain a professional network 1 2 3 4 5

How to identify career options 1 2 3 4 5

How to prepare application materials 1 2 3 4 5

How to interview 1 2 3 4 5

How to negotiate 1 2 3 4 5

**myIDP – Plans for the coming year**

**Part 2.** For the Student: In each box, type or write what you plan to do to increase your skills in this area. It is OK to leave some areas blank in any given year. If your advisor has additional ideas, add them to the box.

You only need to submit Parts 2 and 3 for inclusion in your file. Have your advisor sign the last page and as always keep a copy for yourself, give a copy to the Research Office, and give a copy to your graduate director for inclusion in your file kept by the program.

|  |
| --- |
| **Scientific Knowledge** |
|  |
| **Research Skills** |
|  |
| **Communication** |
|  |
| **Professionalism** |
|  |
| **Management and Leadership Skills** |
|  |
| **Responsible Conduct of Research** |
|  |
| **Career Advancement** |
|  |
| **Career Goals:** |
|  |

**Part 3. Review of IDP with Dissertation Advisor:**

For the Advisor: The signature of the Dissertation Advisor on this line means that they have reviewed the results of the skills assessment (Part 1) and the plans for the year (Part 2) with the student.

Signature of Dissertation Advisor:

Date:

|  |
| --- |
| Additional comments from the advisor (optional): |
|  |

**Request for a long-term leave of absence**

Name:

Graduate Program:

Type of leave:

Personal

Medical

Academic

Administrative

Person initiating request:

Date of the start of leave:

Date of anticipated return:

Reason for request:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Signature of student:

Signature of advisor:

**Upon return from the leave**

Date of return:

Fulfillment of requirements for return:

Signature of Graduate Director:

Signature of Student:

Note: this form will be placed in the student’s file