



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER  
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences™

# GSBS Catalog

**Student Handbook  
& Policy Manual**

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**TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**  
GSBS Catalog: Student Handbook & Policy Manual

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# *ADMINISTRATION*

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**Thomas Pressley, Ph.D.**, Interim Dean  
**Thomas Abbruscato, Ph.D.**, Associate Dean  
**Michael Blanton, Ph.D.**, Associate Dean  
**Charles Miller, Ph.D.**, Associate Dean  
**Pamela Johnson, M.B.A.**, Assistant Dean  
**Karen Smith, B.A.**, Associate Director  
**Amy Boren, B.A.**, Unit Supervisor  
**Lynn Tatum, M.A.**, Unit Coordinator

## *Preface*

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The purpose of this publication is to assemble a set of guidelines, instructions and information concerning the operational procedures of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS). The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences reserves the right to make changes as necessary without notice although every effort will be made to notify programs/concentrations and students when changes are made. Specific programs (Biotechnology, Biomedical Sciences and Pharmaceutical Sciences) or concentrations within the Biomedical Sciences program (Cell & Molecular Biology, Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, Medical Microbiology, Pharmacology & Neurosciences, Physiology) may enact stricter guidelines and policies for their graduate students.

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Programs and Concentrations reserve the right to institute, after due notice and during the course of a student's work toward a degree, any new ruling which may be necessary for the good of the University and therefore, ultimately, of recipients of its degrees. Normally a student may graduate under the provisions of the catalog in effect at the time of enrollment in the GSBS. The GSBS also reserves the right to make changes in courses as needed. The right to make changes in tuition and fees is reserved as regulated by the Board of Regents.

Students with disabilities who need assistance should contact the Office of Students Services in Room 2C400, or by phone at 806.743.2300.

## *Accreditation*

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Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, and professional degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. The Commission should be contacted only if there is evidence that appears to support the institution's significant non-compliance with a requirement or standard.

## *Mission Statement*

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**The Mission of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center** is to improve the health of people by providing educational opportunities for students and health care professionals, advancing knowledge through scholarship and research, and providing patient care and service.

In support of the institutional mission, the **Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences** strives to provide superior graduate education as well as leadership in increasing knowledge and understanding through scholarship and research. The **mission** of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is to educate the next generation of scientists and health-related professionals in a dynamic and productive research environment that fosters creativity and discovery.

The faculty and staff of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences are committed to:

- Providing the larger academic community, as well as future employers, with graduates who are highly competent, independent, ethical researchers and teachers;
- Demonstrating in all pursuits honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and commitment to academic freedom;
- Ensuring that GSBS faculty, staff and students are supported in their efforts with state-of-the-art resources, facilities, and training opportunities;
- Serving as leaders in the community for the advancement of knowledge related to the basic biomedical and related health sciences.

## *Administrative Structure*

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GSBS is one of six schools within the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC). The primary faculty within GSBS are faculty who have appointments with either the School of Medicine (SOM) or the School of Pharmacy (SOP). In order to function efficiently the GSBS faculty and students operate daily out of the corresponding SOM departments. The Chair of each department works with GSBS to help oversee the programs.

GSBS contains three Programs of study as well as six concentrations, which are defined under the Graduate Programs section of this handbook.

The responsibility for the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is under the GSBS Interim Dean, Thomas Pressley, Ph.D. The day-to-day management of the GSBS is under the auspices of the Associate Deans: Thomas Abbruscato, Ph.D.; Michael Blanton, Ph.D.; Charles Miller, Ph.D.; and an Assistant Dean, Pamela Johnson, M.B.A.

Graduate affairs are discussed and developed through a Graduate Council which consists of two elected representatives from the Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Biotechnology programs; two representatives from each research concentration within the Biomedical Sciences Program; an ex officio member from the TTU Graduate School and an ex officio graduate student member. The GSBS Dean is the chair of the Graduate Council, which operates in an advisory capacity to the dean.

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is administratively separate from the Texas Tech University (TTU) Graduate School. However, under agreement with the TTU Graduate School, they administer the thesis/dissertation process for GSBS students.

## *Graduate Programs*

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In June of 2009, the Texas Higher Education Coordinator Board approved merging several of the doctoral and master programs on the Lubbock campus into a Biomedical Sciences Program. The new program consists of six concentrations which are defined as the research areas within the program. Students entering into the Biomedical Sciences Program are required to select a concentration at the end of their first year.

GSBS programs leading to the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees are:

### Doctoral Degrees:

- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Biomedical Sciences

### Master Degrees:

- Biotechnology
- Biomedical Sciences
- Pharmaceutical Sciences

Areas of Concentrations for the Biomedical Sciences Program include:

Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics  
Cell & Molecular Biology  
Pre-Medical Sciences (Master's only)  
Medical Microbiology  
Pharmacology & Neuroscience  
Physiology

For additional information please contact the GSBS Admissions Office at:  
[graduate.school@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:graduate.school@ttuhsc.edu).

**For a complete list of courses and course descriptions, please see the [Course Listing](#) on the GSBS website.**

# TTUHSC GSBS STUDENT HANDBOOK

## *Admissions*

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**Admission to a Master's or Doctoral Program.** Admission to any graduate degree program is granted by the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences upon the recommendation of the GSBS admissions committee and the program/concentration faculty. The applicant must have been in good standing in the school last attended. Only students who have submitted completed applications will be considered for admission. A completed application consists of the following:

1. Application to Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences: preferably at least three months prior to date of intended enrollment). Applications are received on-line at: <http://www.ttuhsbc.edu/gsbs/academics/admissions.aspx>. Falsification of application information will void admission to Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. All sections of the online application must be completed, and it must be submitted **prior** to the application closing date which can be found on the website listed above.

Applications are made online using Merlin and must be completed by the stated deadline. Review will be completed by the program/concentration and by the admissions committee and offers will be made in accordance with the committee's recommendation and by approval of the Dean. Matriculation will occur in the fall semester. Exceptions to these guidelines will be taken on a case by case basis; with support from a faculty mentor, and upon the admission committee's review and recommendation followed by approval of the Dean.

2. Official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score report no more than five years old. This is a requirement for all applicants for degree programs regardless of educational background. In accordance with [Texas Education Code §51.842](#), the applicant's performance on a standardized test is not to be used in the admissions or competitive scholarship process as the sole criterion to end consideration of the applicant. Information about the GRE may be obtained from the Educational Testing Service, PO Box 6000, Princeton NJ 08541-6000 or [www.gre.org](http://www.gre.org). All test scores must be sent directly from the Education Testing Service to the TTUHSC Office of the Registrar, not the department. Photocopies or scanned copies of GRE scores are not accepted. The institution code for Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center is 6851.
3. TOEFL or IELTS: International students must submit TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing Service) scores. Minimum acceptable scores for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are 213 on the computer-based test, 79 on the internet-based test, and 550 on the paper test. The minimum acceptable International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) score is 6.5. This test is waived only for graduates of a four year U.S. degree from an accredited US university or applicants who are citizens of a country where English is the native language. TTUHSC's institutional code is 6851 . Scores must be no more than 2 years old.

4. Official transcripts:
  - a. US applicants must have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in the United States. US applicants must submit an official transcript from each college or university attended. All degrees earned must appear on an official transcript.
  - b. International applicants must provide a course-by-course evaluation of all coursework taken at degree-granting institutions recognized by their government/governmental ministry. An international applicant who, because of current enrollment, cannot provide a final course-by-course transcript evaluation at the time of application must submit transcript evaluations of all completed study. Consideration may then be given for admission upon the condition that a final course by course transcript evaluation is provided prior to enrollment. Applicants must submit at least six semesters of coursework to be eligible for admission consideration. The applicant must have been in good standing in all schools attended at final matriculation. An international applicant must provide official transcripts from attendance at any U.S. university. It is recommended that international students utilize the transcript services listed on the on-line application. Do not send international transcripts and marksheets to Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.
5. Reference letters: Two letters of reference using the form provided with the online application **or** by written letter. All letters of reference must be mailed. We do not accept faxes or emails.
6. Immunization record: All applicants born after December 31, 1956, are required to provide proof of two immunizations for measles, mumps and rubella. Non-U.S. residents from countries with a high prevalence of tuberculosis should receive a T-spot test for tuberculosis. This requirement is in accordance with recommendations from the American College Health Association and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Provisions for immunizations requirements and implementation procedures for all TTUHSC employees, volunteers, and students come under HSC OP 75.11.
7. Financial Statement and Bank Statement: International applicants must document financial support for at least the first year of school. Emailed and faxed copies are discouraged.
8. Oath of Residency: All applicants complete an Oath of Residency form provided through the online application
9. Essay: All applicants submit a written essay through the on-line application.
10. Application Fee: A one-time nonrefundable application fee for graduate study (currently \$45 for both domestic and international applicants).
11. Passport: A copy of an international applicant's passport assists in processing the I-20.
12. A \$50 placement guarantee fee is required upon an offer of admissions.

Application files will not be evaluated until all the above requirements have been met. Applicants will be notified when an admission decision has been made. Three general categories of criteria are used to evaluate all applicants for admission:

1. Academic records: All academic records may be considered.
2. Test Scores: Scores on the General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Each score is considered separately with percentile scores viewed by broad major.
3. Individual Profile: Profiles may include recommendations, research background, motivation, multilingual proficiency, undergraduate institution, presentations, portfolios, and interviews. Admission committees may also consider work experience, demonstrated commitment to a particular field or study and community involvement.

SEVIS – International students, exchange visitors and scholars attending school or conducting research in the United States are required to pay a SEVIS fee prior to obtaining their visas. The fee is associated with the Student Exchange and Visitor Information System (SEVIS) and took effect September 1, 2004. The SEVIS fee is not reimbursable by TTUHSC.

## *Enrollment*

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Students who have been granted admission to the GSBS are expected to register for course work whether or not they contemplate degree work. Failure to register in the term for which admission is granted requires the student to reapply for admission. Registration information is provided during new student orientation prior to the beginning of the Fall semester. Graduate students are permitted to register at any time beginning with the first day of advance registration. Advance registration usually begins in April for the summer and fall sessions and in November for the spring semester. Online registration is available to all admitted students. Instructions for registration and add-drop procedures can be found on the [registrar's website](#). Students applying for a doctoral degree in the Biomedical Sciences program may apply to a specific concentration, or they may apply as undeclared. Undeclared students must select a concentration by the end of their first Spring semester. Currently, the undeclared option is not available for masters students.

**Core Curriculum.** The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences implemented a one-semester core curriculum for Ph.D. students in the fall of 2011. This curriculum was designed to give all GSBS students a unified and coordinated foundation that would serve as a basis for further study in individual disciplines within the biomedical sciences. This curriculum is designed to accommodate both undeclared students and students who have declared interests in specific concentrations. Core curriculum courses will be taken during the first semester of the first year, and include Molecules, Cells, Genes, Biomedical Seminar Series, and Introduction to Biomedical Research. Additionally, GSBS students are required to complete a course in ethics (GSBS 5101, Responsible Conduct in Research) in the second semester. The Pharmaceutical Sciences program in Amarillo and the Premedical Sciences master's program in Lubbock have separate curriculum requirements, and therefore are not affected by the policies outlined here. For more information please see the [Core Curriculum Policy](#).

**Changes in Schedule and Withdrawal.** A graduate student who wishes to add or drop a course must initiate such action with their graduate advisor. Students should follow the academic calendar for deadlines associated with add/drop and withdrawing from a course. A student who no longer attends a course without an official withdrawal will receive an F in that course.

**Full-Time Study.** GSBS semesters are 16 weeks (45 contact hours for a 3 semester-credit-hour course). **The general rule is that a student may not earn more than 1 hour of credit for each week of the enrollment period.** Any exceptions to this rule must have the prior approval from the GSBS Office. Normal full-time enrollment varies between 9 and 13 hours for doctoral students and 9 and 16 hours for Masters and temporary students during the regular semester. The minimum enrollment for full-time graduate status is 9 hours in the semester. Normally, the maximum allowable hours per semester is 13 for doctoral students, 16 for Masters and temporary students, and 6 in the summer term. Full-time enrollment for the summer term is 6 hours. Students on fellowships, assistantships, or other appointments designed for the support of graduate study must enroll for at least 9 hours in each regular semester and at least 6 hours in the summer term.

If a student is devoting full time to research, using university facilities and faculty time, the schedule should reflect at least 9 hours enrollment (6 hours in the summer term).

Registration in an individual study, research, or similar course implies an expected level of effort on the part of the student comparable to that associated with an organized class with the same credit value.

A doctoral student not on campus who is required to register solely for the purpose of satisfying a continuous enrollment requirement need not register for more than 1 credit hour during each term. However, a doctoral student not on campus who is involved in internship, research, or another type of academic study should register for credit hours in proportion to the teaching effort required of the graduate faculty.

**Maximum Allowable Graduate Hours.** Students not making timely progress toward completion of a graduate degree are subject to termination by the GSBS Office. The Texas Legislature has capped formula fundable graduate hours and imposed sanctions upon universities permitting registration for excess hours. Doctoral students beyond the maximum allowable graduate hours as determined by the Texas Legislature (129 hours) may be required to pay out-of-state tuition, regardless of residence status. The GSBS Office must approve exceptions or extensions in advance. (See [129 Hour Rule](#)).

**Registration.** Students are required to register for appropriate courses in every semester (including summer) in which they expect to receive assistance, use the facilities of the university, or take comprehensive examinations.

The number of hours for which students must enroll in each semester depends on their level of involvement in research and their use of university facilities and faculty time. Students in residence who are devoting full-time to research should enroll for 9 to 12 hours.

**Registration Without Credit (Auditing).** Persons who wish to audit a course for no grade must obtain written permission from the GSBS Office and the instructor on the [Permission to Audit Course without Credit](#) form. Those who audit a course do so for the purpose of hearing or seeing only; he/she will not receive a grade or credit in the course. Students who audit a course will not be listed on the class roll, and no notation of the audit will be made on the student's transcript. Students must pay a \$10 fee for the privilege of auditing a course.

**Registration by Faculty and Staff.** Full-time members of the faculty and staff of Texas Tech University or Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) may enroll for courses by permission of the course director, and by completion of the GSBS application. In registering for graduate work, they become subject to the regulations of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. However, no member of the faculty who has held rank higher than instructor at TTUHSC is eligible to pursue a graduate degree program at this institution unless prior approval of the GSBS Office is given.

**Registration by Undergraduates.** An undergraduate student who is within 12 hours of graduation and who has at least a B average in the major subject may enroll for courses carrying graduate credit, subject to the approval and certification of an acceptable grade point average and the approval of the GSBS Office. The [Approval for Graduate Credit](#) form must be approved by the GSBS Office prior to registration. No course taken without this approval may be counted for

graduate credit. With the approval of the GSBS Office, students may take graduate courses for undergraduate credit. Students may not, however, receive both graduate and undergraduate credit for the same course, except for up to 9 hours for an approved joint undergraduate and graduate degree program.

An undergraduate who is permitted to enroll for graduate work as indicated above is required to take the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) in the first semester of enrollment in graduate courses if the test has not been taken during the previous five years.

The maximum amount of work that may be scheduled by an undergraduate who is taking courses for graduate credit is 16 hours in a semester or 6 hours in the summer term, including graduate and undergraduate work. Undergraduates permitted to enroll for graduate work are expected to receive their bachelor's degree within a year of their first graduate enrollment.

An undergraduate may not receive credit for more than 12 semester hours of GSBS coursework completed prior to admission to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences as an applicant for a graduate degree.

***Semester of Graduation.*** There are three official graduation dates: May, August and December. Every candidate for a graduate degree must be registered in the GSBS in the semester of graduation. Failure to graduate at the expected time requires additional registrations as may be necessary until graduation. Doctoral students who have been admitted to candidacy and accumulated 120 hours may be eligible to reduce hours during their last year (see [129 Hour Rule](#)). Masters students are required to register for 9 hours. Off-campus students may register for 1 hour of thesis, dissertation, or research until graduation. Students receiving financial assistance should consult financial aid prior to reducing hours.

## ***General Information***

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**Academic Probation and Dismissal.** Every student enrolled in the GSBS, whether working toward a degree or not, is required to maintain a high level of performance and to comply fully with policies of the institution. The GSBS reserves the right to place on probation or to dismiss any graduate student who does not maintain satisfactory academic standing or who fails to conform to the regulations of the TTUHSC.

If a graduate student's GPA for a particular semester falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. Additional details may be found in the [Academic Probation](#) policy.

Students who have been dismissed must appeal to the GSBS if reinstatement is desired. Procedures to appeal the academic dismissal are found in the [Appeals \(Non-Grades\) Policy](#). A student may also be dismissed for unprofessional conduct such as cheating or plagiarism. Appeals for this type of dismissal are subject to the provisions under the Code of Student Conduct. See the [Student Affairs Handbook](#) and the [Dismissal Policy](#) for further information.

**Annual Review.** The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences requires faculty to conduct a formal review of their students' progress at least once a year. Any student not making satisfactory progress toward the degree may be placed on probation and given conditions to stay in the GSBS program. Continued unsatisfactory progress in any area of a student's work will be cause for dismissal.

**Attendance.** Whenever attendance and/or participation forms a basis for a portion or all of a course grade, students must be provided with explicit written information (within the course syllabus) during the first week of classes. Such information shall be specific with regard to the penalty incurred for each absence and the means, if any, to compensate for the absence. It should be recognized that there may be certain situations where the student may not be permitted to make up the absence(s). Excused absences are determined by the course director.

**Extracurricular Activities.** Graduate students may participate in extracurricular activities within university policies. The Graduate Student Association and the Student Government Association offer many opportunities for participation. Students are also encouraged to participate in the annual Student Research Week during the first week of March. It consists of three consecutive days of poster competitions and guest seminars. It is also a time when faculty will not hold classes or exams (unless an exception has been granted prior to the beginning of the Spring semester, by the GSBS Dean) so that all GSBS students can participate and gain experience presenting a poster.

**Grades.** The grades used in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) are: A, B, C, D, and F and all grades are used in computing grade point averages. Instructors may NOT choose to add a plus or a minus to the grade. Graduate credit is given for courses completed with grades of A, B, and C; however, individual program/concentrations may require a student to retake courses in which a “C” was obtained.

Graduate faculty have the option to use pass-fail grades (P and F) for individually arranged courses, professional seminars, and certain other courses. Student committees and/or the advisor (if student committees have not been established) may approve graduate students to take elective courses as pass-fail, however, no more than one-fourth of a student’s course work may be graded pass-fail.

Students wishing to take a course pass-fail must get approval from their committee and notify the GSBS office prior to registering for the course. A student must declare the intent to take a course pass-fail no later than the last day on which a grade of W is automatically given for courses dropped. A student who has chosen to take a course pass-fail may not subsequently change to a letter-graded basis. Graded courses that students elect to take pass-fail will be converted using the following scale: A, B = Pass; C, D, F = Fail. A grade of F received on a course taken pass-fail will be computed into the grade point average. The names of students taking a course pass-fail will not be made known to the instructor.

The graduate faculty within the program/concentration in which the major or minor will be declared, will decide whether courses taken under the pass-fail system shall count toward satisfying the degree requirements.

**Grade Requirement for Graduation.** The minimum requirement for graduation is a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all courses taken for graduate credit, exclusive of the credits for the thesis/dissertation.

No final grade assigned for a graduate-level course may be raised unless an error has been made. Substituting another course for one completed with a low grade is not permitted.

Work completed at another graduate school with a grade less than B will not be accepted, nor will grades of Pass or Satisfactory. Grades on transferred work will not contribute to the grade average on courses completed at TTUHSC.

Procedures to appeal a grade may be found in the [Appeals](#) (Grades) policy.

**Grading Symbols CR, I, W, and WF.** The symbol “CR” (credit) is normally assigned for every enrollment for a master’s thesis or doctor’s dissertation until the completed document has been approved by the student’s committee and accepted by the GSBS Office. At that time a letter grade will be entered for the final enrollment. Faculty may elect to grade the last 6 hours of thesis (12 hours of dissertation) by preparing a grade change form if a portion of those hours were taken in a previous semester.

“CR” may be given by a professor when a student’s work in other individual research courses is not finished but is satisfactorily in progress at the end of a semester. When the research is completed, a standard letter grade should be entered for the final semester.

The symbol “I” (incomplete) may be given by a faculty member when a student’s work in a course has not been completed at the end of a semester and when failure to complete the work has been due to causes beyond the student’s control. It is not used as a substitute for an F. **When the “I” is given, the instructor should file a memo with the GSBS Office specifying the reasons for the grade and the work remaining to be done.** When there is no action on the part of the student for a year, the “I” will automatically become an F.

When a student officially withdraws from a course by the specified date early in the term, a grade of “W” (withdraw) will be assigned. A withdrawal after the specified date will result in a grade of “W” or “WF” (withdraw/fail), according to the assessment of the student’s work in the course up to the time of the official withdrawal. If the withdrawal is after the deadline for an automatic “W”, the students must provide the registrar’s office with completed grade change form with a grade of “W” or “WF” at the time of the official withdrawal. A student who no longer attends a course without an official withdrawal will receive an F in that course. The grade of “W” does not affect a GPA, but a “WF” is calculated into a GPA.

**Graduation Fee.** Early in the semester of graduation, the candidate will pay a graduation fee to cover the cost of printing the diploma and renting the cap and gown. This fee is paid again if the student does not graduate in the semester in which the fee was paid.

**Leave of Absence.** Any student who fails to register for three consecutive semesters (12 months) and who does not have an official leave of absence from study is subject to review for readmission by the standards in effect at the time of reconsideration. Official leave of absence, which is granted by the GSBS Office upon recommendation of the graduate advisor or advisory committee Chair, may be granted only in cases of serious medical conditions and other exceptional reasons. Normally, leaves of absence will not exceed one year. Leaves of absence do not extend the maximum time allowed for completion of the degree.

**Proficiency in English.** A student found deficient in English may be required to satisfactorily complete certain specified courses in English usage (without graduate credit) before being considered for admission to candidacy for a graduate degree.

**Responsibility of Students.** Each graduate student is expected to become thoroughly familiar with academic guidelines, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences regulations and degree requirements. Failure to follow the regulations and requirements almost inevitably results in complications for which the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences cannot assume responsibility.

To facilitate communications, GSBS solely utilizes the TTUHSC-assigned e-mail account (i.e. first.last@ttuhsc.edu). It is the student’s responsibility to check this account for important information and notifications.

A number of GSBS courses require a laptop computer and therefore it is strongly recommended that all incoming students obtain an appropriate laptop computer. You can see recommended configurations requirements page at:

[http://www.ttuhsu.edu/som/cbb/documents/CMB\\_LaptopRequirements.pdf](http://www.ttuhsu.edu/som/cbb/documents/CMB_LaptopRequirements.pdf)

**Scholarships.** The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) seeks to continually recruit and retain the best quality student. In support of that goal, GSBS offers various scholarships throughout the year. Information on all of our scholarships can be found on our website under the Current Students page: <http://www.ttuhsu.edu/gsb/current/scholarships.aspx>

**Statement of Intention to Graduate.** A student planning to graduate must file in the GSBS office a [Statement of Intention to Graduate](#) at the beginning of the semester of intended graduation. No candidate's name will be placed on a tentative list for graduation for any graduation date unless this statement has been received at the GSBS Office by the specified deadline. The deadline to file the intent to graduate is posted on the GSBS website under [Graduation Deadlines](#).

A candidate who fails to graduate at the expected time is required to file a new [Statement of Intention to Graduate](#) for any subsequent graduation.

Students are also required to complete the HSC Intent to Graduate on the Student Services website: <http://www.ttuhsu.edu/student-services/commencement/default.aspx>

**Switching from M.S. to Ph.D. track.** M.S. students wishing to be considered for Ph.D. track must have completed two semesters (Fall and Spring) of course work at TTUHSC. Once second semester grades are available in the Banner system, the program may request admission to PhD track via online Fast-track admissions process (submission should include copy of transcript and a letter of support from program advisor). A majority vote of GSBS Admissions Committee in favor of track switch is needed for a positive recommendation to be forwarded to the GSBS Dean or designee (Associate Dean). Decisions by the Dean may be made as early as June, however, the effective date for the official switch to PhD will be Sept 1. Students approved to switch from the M.S. to Ph.D. will receive stipend support from GSBS for 1 year followed by 50/50 split (GSBS / PI or department) until completion of the doctoral requirements. Funding from the GSBS will always begin September 1. Departments or grants may pick up funding over the summer term once the Dean has approved the request.

**Note:** Current students that complete a master's degree within a GSBS concentration and wish to apply to the doctoral program may do so by reapplying to the GSBS. If accepted into the doctoral program, the research assistantship will be funded by the GSBS for 2 years followed by a 50/50 split between the GSBS and the department/PI.

**Transferring within GSBS Programs/Concentrations.** Students who want to change their academic area – that is, transfer from one program/concentration to another within GSBS – should first notify their current graduate advisor of their intent to transfer. Once notification has been given, the student should contact the graduate advisor of the new program or concentration they wish to enter. If the program/concentration is willing to accept the student, the student should have the new graduate advisor approve the transfer by signing the [Application for Change in Major](#) form. Once the form has been signed by the new graduate advisor, the form must be approved by the GSBS Office.

Students can change their academic major at any time during a term; however, it will not be effective until the beginning of the following term.

Only students in good standing may transfer into another academic area within GSBS. Students who have been dismissed may reapply to another graduate program through the application process, but they may not utilize the [Application for Change in Major](#) form.

**Transfer Credit.** There is no automatic transfer of credit from another university toward a graduate degree within the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. In general, all such work is subject to review and approval by the graduate advisor within the academic area and by the GSBS Office. No work completed with a grade of less than B will be considered. All students must submit an official transcript along with the request for transfer.

Students may petition for approval of a graduate level course taken at another institution to satisfy a program/concentration requirement by providing documentation that the course is equivalent to a GSBS course which satisfies the requirement. The request to substitute a course should be submitted to the graduate advisor in the first semester after matriculation. If approved by the graduate program committee, the request will be forwarded to the GSBS Office for final approval.

Experiential credit is only approved in advance for matriculated GSBS students who may spend a semester learning research techniques in an approved laboratory outside of the institution and this must be requested in writing to the GSBS Office on a case-by-case basis. For credit to be awarded the GSBS Office will determine how much credit may be earned and it will be awarded under a Special Topics course number.

Graduate credit is not granted for courses taken by correspondence.

**Undeclared Students.** At the earliest possible date, whether that be before or after New Student Orientation, the GSBS Dean or a designee will meet with each undeclared student and advise them regarding 1st-year course selection, lab rotations, GSBS policy for selecting a concentration, and other academic issues.

The GSBS strongly encourages students to meet with graduate advisors from each concentration. During the GSBS advising session the student will be provided with contact information for each of these advisors. Undeclared students are advised to rotate through the laboratories of graduate faculty members before selecting a concentration (by mutual agreement with concentration). After a rotation has been completed, selection of a concentration must occur no later than the last class day of the Summer semester and no earlier than the first class day of Spring semester. The “Application for Change in Major” form should be prepared by the student and relevant graduate advisor and submitted to the GSBS office for final approval by the Dean.

The requirements specified in this selection policy are intended to balance the wishes of the student with access/representation of each of the Biomedical Sciences Program concentrations.

**Waiving Requirements.** Each program/concentration has specific requirements of graduate students outside the general requirements of GSBS. Graduate students may petition to waive a specific requirement (a course) if the student has taken a similar course. For waiving Core Curriculum courses see the [Core Curriculum policy](#). Approval for waiving requirements is considered within each academic area. General guidelines for this process are as follows (check with the graduate advisor for specific guidelines):

1. The student petitions their graduate advisor in writing, describing the course he or she wishes to waive and the pertinent details on the course previously taken (the course must have been completed within a certain amount of time as determined by the faculty within the academic area).

2. The student must provide an original transcript from the previous institution clearly displaying that the course was taken and satisfactorily passed with a “B” or better.
3. The student must also provide a complete syllabus for the previously taken course in order for the graduate advisor to determine if the content of the course is substantially similar to the course in which a waiver is being requested.
4. The graduate advisor will present all of this information to the graduate faculty committee who will decide if the request will be granted or denied.
5. In cases where the graduate faculty committee cannot decide the appropriateness of the request, they may require the student to take and pass a comprehensive examination on the contents of the course.

Courses that are waived do not reflect on the student’s HSC transcript nor do the credit hours count toward the degree. Documentation for waiving a course will be maintained in the student’s academic area. GSBS will not receive or retain any documentation regarding requests to waive individual requirements.

## *Degree Programs*

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### *The Master’s Degree*

**Prerequisites.** A substantial body of undergraduate work in the major subject and considerable breadth of background are essential for graduate study. Therefore, students whose undergraduate programs are considered deficient in breadth or depth may be required to complete additional preparatory work without degree credit. Such undergraduate “leveling” courses must be completed with a grade of C or better.

**Degree Checklist.** It is recommended that students utilize the [Degree Checklist](#) throughout their entire study to ensure they meet required milestones for their degree.

**Basic Plans for the Master’s Program.** The GSBS master’s programs are comprised of at least 24 semester hours of graduate work (which may include a thesis) in a subject which has been approved and for which the student has, or completes without degree credit, the necessary prerequisites for a graduate major.

There are two basic plans for the master’s degree:

1. A minimum of 24 hours of graduate course work plus 6 hours of thesis (6000). The courses for the master’s degree with a thesis should be approved by the research mentor (committee chair) and not the graduate advisor.
2. A minimum of 36 hours of graduate course work without a thesis.

A minimum of 6 hours of research (7000) is required for the master’s degree. Up to 6 hours of research may count toward the total number of hours required for the degree (24 – thesis masters; 36 – nonthesis masters).

The option to offer thesis or non-thesis degrees is a program/concentration-specific decision.

**Filing the Official Degree Plan and Admission to Candidacy.** After the first semester of enrollment (as soon as 9 to 12 semester hours of the work listed in the degree plan have been completed), the student should submit to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences a [Master’s](#)

[Degree Plan & Application for Admission to Candidacy](#). Delay in submission of a degree plan may result in postponement of admission to candidacy and graduation.

When the student receives an approved copy of the *Master's Degree & Application for Admission to Candidacy* from the GSBS Office, he or she is expected to follow it as the basis of all subsequent enrollments. Substitution of courses can be made upon submission of a signed copy of the [Changes to the Degree Plan](#) and the approval of the GSBS Office.

Approval of a Master's Degree Plan and Application for Admission to Candidacy form does not, however, constitute admission to candidacy for a master's degree. It merely signifies that the proposed plan will be acceptable if the student satisfies all of the regulations of the GSBS and all of the requirements connected with the degree plan.

Admission to candidacy will be automatically granted at such time as all of the following requirements have been met.

1. All conditions relating to admission to the program/concentration have been met including the submission of the [Master's Degree Plan & Application for Admission to Candidacy](#) form.
2. At least 9 semester hours of the graduate work required for the master's degree have been completed (exclusive of transfer courses).
3. All required leveling work has been completed with C or better grades.
4. An average grade of 3.0 or better has been maintained in all courses comprising the official program exclusive of leveling work.
5. The general field of the thesis has been stated and approved. If applicable.
6. Work to date is acceptable to the faculty concerned, as attested by their approval of the application for admission to candidacy.
7. The entire degree plan conforms to the general requirements of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the requirements of the particular degree.

**Residence.** Study leading to a graduate degree involves sustained residence as well as the successful completion of course work. Residence is credited for work done on the campus of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and for certain types of course (theses, internships, individual study, or other such course) when offered by TTUHSC faculty. Ordinarily, the minimum residence for any master's degree is a full academic year of graduate work completed on a TTUHSC campus. Part-time enrollment is evaluated on an individual basis.

**Research Thesis and Defense.** The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences strongly encourages each student to write and defend a research thesis. No student should expect the defense to be based solely on performance in the classroom. A final public oral examination (defense) may be scheduled after the thesis has been read by the advisory committee. The examination may not be administered until at least three weeks have elapsed following the candidate's submission to the GSBS of the notification form giving the time, place, and other information pertaining to the defense. The [Instructions and forms](#) are available on the GSBS website.

The thesis defense is conducted by the advisory committee and a representative of the GSBS Dean. All members of the committee participate fully in the examination and cast a vote. Faculty other than members of the committee may participate in the examination but have no vote in determining the outcome. At the conclusion of the defense, the [Thesis Oral Defense Signature Form](#) should be forwarded to the GSBS Office.

A student who does not receive a satisfactory evaluation may be assessed once again after an interval of four months or more. At the discretion of the student's advisory committee, a student who receives a satisfactory evaluation but who does not graduate within 12 months may be required to repeat the assessment.

A manual entitled [Thesis – Dissertation Formatting Guidelines](#) is available for additional information on writing styles for the thesis. Deadlines and more information on this process are available through the GSBS website on the [current student page](#).

**Non-Thesis Final Comprehensive Evaluation.** The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences strongly encourages a final comprehensive evaluation for all non-thesis students in a master's program. Thesis students typically defend their thesis in lieu of a final comprehensive written examination. The final evaluation (written or oral) should require a synthesis and application of knowledge acquired during the course of study and research leading to the master's degree.

A student is eligible to undergo evaluation only after having been admitted to candidacy by the GSBS Office. As soon as possible after the evaluation, a written report of the outcome should be sent to the GSBS Office. A student who does not receive a satisfactory evaluation may be assessed once again after an interval of four months or more. The student must earn a grade of B or better on the comprehensive evaluation to qualify for graduation. At the discretion of the program/concentration concerned, a student who receives a satisfactory evaluation but who does not graduate within 12 months may be required to repeat the assessment.

**Time Limit.** Work credited toward a master's degree must be completed within six years. Students whose graduate study here is interrupted by military service will be granted an extension of time for the period of their military duty, not exceeding five years.

## *The Doctoral Degree*

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**Admission to Doctoral Study.** Admission to doctoral study is restricted to applicants whose backgrounds show definite promise of success on this, the highest level of academic endeavor.

**Degree Checklist.** It is recommended that students utilize the [Degree Checklist](#) throughout their entire study to ensure they meet required milestones for their degree.

**Years of Study.** A minimum of three years of graduate study beyond the bachelor's degree is required for the doctorate. Work completed for the master's degree may be considered as a part of this period if it forms a logical sequence in the entire degree program. Ordinarily, credit will not be given for work completed more than seven years prior to admission to the doctoral program at TTUHSC. Exceptions to this policy will require written justification by the graduate advisor and approval by the GSBS Office.

Work completed in the doctoral program of another recognized graduate school will be considered on the recommendation of the graduate advisor, but no assurance can be given that such work will reduce the course or residence requirements. In no case can transferred credit reduce the minimum residence (see Residence Requirements).

Doctoral study cannot be calculated solely in terms of credit hours, but the program for the doctorate requires the completion of 72 or more semester hours of work beyond the bachelor's degree. Typically the 72 credit hours is broken down into 48 didactic hours; 12 hours

(maximum) of research and 12 hours (maximum) of dissertation. Prior approval by the dean is required for any exceptions.

**Major and Minor.** The GSBS does not require a formal minor, however, the student may pursue a minor or one may be required by the student's advisory committee or by the graduate faculty in which the major is taken. If a minor is taken, it must include at least 15 graduate hours in a program outside the student's major. The minor will be declared in the student's Program for the Doctoral Degree. If a minor is taken, the major requires a minimum of 45 semester hours. Taking a minor does not extend the number of hours allowed by the [129 Hour Rule](#).

Courses listed for the major will be primarily in one academic area. However, courses from other academic areas may be included if they provide coherent support for the courses in the major. If a formal minor is declared, a faculty member with advanced knowledge in the area of the minor must be represented on the student's doctoral committee and material from the minor must be covered on the qualifying examination.

**Residence Requirement.** The intent of doctoral residency is to ensure that doctoral students benefit from and contribute to the complete spectrum of educational and professional opportunities provided by the graduate faculty. When establishing residency, the student should interact with faculty and peers by regularly attending courses, conferences, and seminars, and utilize the library facilities and resources needed to support excellence in graduate education. Doctoral candidates must complete at least three (3) years of full-time graduate level work beyond the baccalaureate degree (or one year beyond the master's degree), of which at least one academic year – the residency year – must be spent in residence on the TTUHSC campus. The residence requirement is fulfilled by the completion of at least 9 hours of course work in each of the two long terms and 6 hours in the summer. Other patterns for fulfilling residency requirements require approval of the GSBS Office.

**Filing a Degree Plan.** The [Doctoral Degree Plan](#) will be submitted to the GSBS during the Spring Semester of the second year of work. Revisions of the plan are permitted as needed by submitting the [Changes to the Degree Plan](#) form.

**Advisory Committee.** As soon as an applicant's program/concentration has been determined, an advisory committee of at least four members of the graduate faculty will be appointed by the GSBS Office on the recommendation of the graduate advisor. This committee will meet at least annually with the applicant and will direct his or her work at all stages. The chair of a student's committee must hold a primary or associate appointment in the program/concentration from which the student will receive the doctorate. Students may elect to have a co-chair, who must have a graduate faculty appointment. It is strongly recommended that one of the committee members be outside the student's concentration and preferably a prominent scientist from another institution in the field of the dissertation research.

**Qualifying Examination.** The qualifying examination for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree is one of the major features of the doctoral program and will be administered in the major area of study. The examination requires a synthesis and application of knowledge acquired during the course of study for the doctoral degree; consequently, satisfactory performance in course work does not necessarily guarantee successful performance on the qualifying examination. A student is eligible to stand for this examination after receiving approval of the doctoral degree plan from the GSBS Office and completing most of the course work prescribed by the approved plan. Students may take the qualifying examination as soon as

they have completed core coursework. Although students should see program/concentration guidelines for specific details. Students must take this examination within one calendar year of completing all requirements listed on the degree plan. Failure to do so will be cause for dismissal from the program. At least four months must intervene between the qualifying examination and the final examination (dissertation defense).

The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to ensure that students have mastered the fundamentals in a major area of interest, and they are adequately prepared to begin working full-time on doctoral research. The exam in most program/concentrations comprises the preparation of a written research proposal and an oral defense of the proposal to a faculty committee. The Qualifying Examination normally is prepared and administered by the candidate's advisory committee. The Graduate Program in Pharmaceutical Sciences requires both a written and oral qualifying exam. The written qualifying exam will be administered to students who have completed the core curriculum. The oral qualifying exam must be completed within 12 months of the written exam.

*Procedure When the Examination Is Satisfactory.* If the Qualifying Examination is considered satisfactory, the chairperson of the advisory committee will send the [Admission to Candidacy](#) form to the GSBS Office for consideration by the Graduate Council. This recommendation should be forwarded as soon as possible after all the above requirements have been met.

*Procedure When the Examination Is Not Satisfactory.* If the Qualifying Examination is not satisfactory, the chairperson of the advisory committee will notify the GSBS Office in writing. An applicant who does not pass the qualifying examination may be permitted to repeat it once, after a lapse of at least four months, and not more than twelve months from the date of the unsatisfactory examination. Failure to pass the qualifying examination within the specified time will result in dismissal from the program irrespective of performance in other aspects of doctoral study.

**Admission to Candidacy.** Authority for admitting an applicant to candidacy for a doctoral degree is vested in the Graduate Council. Upon receipt of an [Admission to Candidacy Request](#) form from the advisory committee, the GSBS Office will submit it to the Graduate Council for approval.

By written communication, the GSBS Office will transmit the results of the council's action to the applicant and to the chairperson of the advisory committee. A student must be admitted to candidacy for the doctorate at least four months prior to the proposed graduation date.

**Dissertations.** A dissertation is required of every candidate for a doctoral degree. Successful performance in other areas does not necessarily guarantee the acceptance of a dissertation. Additional information such as formatting guidelines, posting public announcements and grading requirements are outlined in the Dissertations & Theses policy.

**Final Defense.** A final public oral examination, usually over the general field of the dissertation is required of every candidate for the doctorate. It may be scheduled a suitable time after the dissertation (not necessarily the final copy) has been read by the advisory committee. The TTU Graduate School requires three weeks notification prior to the oral examination. The required [Doctoral Exam/Defense Notification Form](#) noting the time, place, and other information pertaining to the examination is available on the [GSBS website](#). The examination is conducted by the advisory committee and a representative of the GSBS Dean. All members of the committee participate fully in the examination and cast a vote. Faculty members other than members of the committee, including the Dean's representative, may participate in the

examination, but have no vote in determining the outcome. At the conclusion of the examination, the chairperson of the advisory committee will send the [\*Dissertation Oral Signature Defense Form\*](#) to the GSBS Office, giving the result of the examination.

**Publication of Student Work.** Research is an integral facet of graduate study, and students are encouraged to seek publication of work done in pursuit of advanced degrees. Many theses and dissertations completed at TTUHSC are eventually published. In research where close collaboration with faculty advisors occurs, it is entirely appropriate in some disciplines for publications to be coauthored. In those disciplines where authorship order is not always alphabetical, the student will generally be first author in publications resulting from a thesis or dissertation. In cases of considerable revision or addition of other data, order of authorship should be subject to mutual agreement, based on the nature and extent of contribution by the parties concerned, and in accordance with accepted practice in the discipline.

The faculty member may choose to use the data in pursuing publication when the student was supported in full or in part by the university or through a faculty grant to do the research involved, or when a faculty member contributed to the work in a way that is substantially above and beyond that normally expected of a major advisor, and the student elects not to pursue publication within a reasonable time, the faculty member must list the student as coauthor according to the conventions of the discipline involved and the relative extent of contribution or additional work required.

**Time Limit.** All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within a period of eight consecutive calendar years, or four years from admission to candidacy, whichever comes first. Graduate credit for course work taken at TTUHSC more than eight calendar years old at the time of the final oral examination may not be used to satisfy degree requirements. Absent an extension, the student may be permitted to retake the qualifying examination, and, upon passing that examination, be readmitted to candidacy by the Graduate Council for some period of time not to exceed four years.

## *The GSBS Oath*

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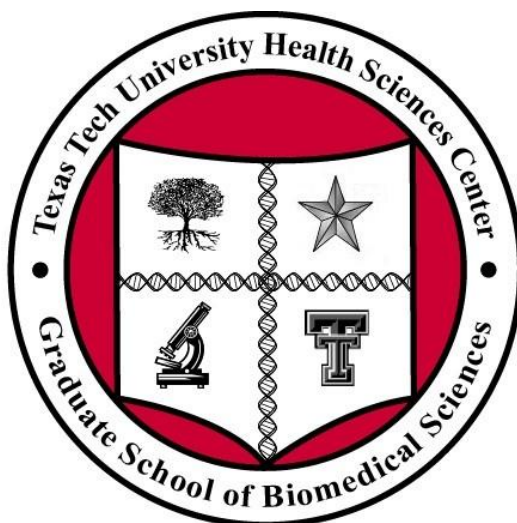
I acknowledge that the mission of scientific research is a true and noble calling to discover truths that are hidden and to reveal wisdom yet unknown, always for the greater good. I welcome the privilege and opportunity to join in this mission and to dedicate the talents that I have and the education that I have gained to this higher purpose. Moreover, I pledge to use this knowledge and wisdom I have achieved only for the improvement of life. In this journey of discovery, I promise to always be honest, accurate and fair, in all things and in all matters, and to always conduct my affairs with excellence and ambition.

## *The GSBS Symbol*

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### Symbol Description:

The shield of the GSBS represents our dedication to protect life through scientific advancements in research. The double helix divides the shield into four quadrants and connects all forms of life. At the top left, the tree symbolizes the scientific process, where knowledge has deep roots, and a strong base, and the thin branches of solitary ideas give rise to seeds, which leave the tree and start new lines of thought. The star at the right represents the direction a scientist must follow as new avenues of research are revealed to us. At the bottom left, a microscope shows the scientists' commitment to look deeper for explanations. The Double T at the bottom right represents Texas Tech University Health Science Center, the institution that has taught us these lessons.



# ***POLICIES and PROCEDURES***

## ***129 Hour Rule***

Purpose: To define enrollment limits sanctioned by the Texas Legislature and outline the process for doctoral students approaching maximum limits. *Master's students may not reduce hours unless they are designated by the GSBS office as "off-campus" students. Master's students that are designated as off-campus students should review the guidelines under "semester of graduation" within the Enrollment section.* Reduced enrollment hours may affect financial aid status; students are encouraged to check with financial aid, scholarship and loan officers before taking the reduced hours

1. The degree plan for **doctoral students** must be submitted by the end of the second year of doctoral work. Each program document must be signed by the graduate advisor certifying that the degree will be completed within the maximum fundable hours. The program document will be forwarded to the GSBS Office for final approval and implementation.
2. A formal review of all doctoral students will be instituted annually by the student's graduate advisory committee:
  - a. if progress is satisfactory, there must be a report, signed by the committee chairman, and the graduate advisor, which will be forwarded to the GSBS Office
  - b. if progress is unsatisfactory, the student may be terminated;
  - c. Accumulation of excess hours while failing to complete the degree will constitute unsatisfactory progress.
3. Minimum enrollment for:
  - a. On-campus, non-assistantship students will be 6 hours in the regular semester (and 3 hours in the summer term).
  - b. Students with assistantships will be 9 hours in each regular semester (6 hours in the summer term).
4. Once a student has passed candidacy and accumulated 120 hours, the student may register for 3 hours each semester for up to one year.  
Ex.            3 hours- Fall;    3 hours – Spring;    3 hours - Summer

NOTE: If student elects the 3-3-3 enrollment and does not complete the degree requirements within that period, the student must resume full-time status (9 hours per long semester).

5. Students accumulating 130+ hours will pay out-of-state tuition (full-cost) and forfeit any GSBS state stipend.
6. Out-of-state tuition may be waived for students exceeding the 130 hours if those students entered the doctoral program with excessive hours from a master's degree. Requests for tuition waivers must be approved by the GSBS Office.
7. Students must be admitted to candidacy at least four months prior to graduation.
8. All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within a period of eight consecutive calendar years.

## *Academic Probation*

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**Purpose:** To ensure understanding of the academic performance standards set forth by the GSBS.

Every student enrolled in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, whether working toward a degree or not, is required to maintain a high level of performance and to comply fully with policies of the institution. The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences reserves the right to place on probation or to dismiss any graduate student who does not maintain satisfactory academic standing or who fails to conform to the regulations of TTUHSC.

1. If a student's graduate GPA for a particular semester falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on academic probation. The student must make a 3.0 GPA or better in the next semester in which he or she is enrolled. Failure to do so, or to maintain a 3.0 current GPA in each succeeding semester, may result in academic dismissal from TTUHSC. Regulations governing scholastic probation are based on semester grade-point averages and will be applied regardless of overall grade-point average.
2. Academic programs or concentrations may apply standards for probation and suspension higher than those established by the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Such standards are to be approved by the GSBS Office, and actions based thereon are to be recommended by the graduate advisor and forwarded to the GSBS Office.
3. The minimum requirement for graduation is a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all courses taken for graduate credit, exclusive of the credits for the thesis/dissertation.

**Any student who has been suspended must appeal to the GSBS Office if reinstatement is desired. Refer to the [Appeals \(Non-Grades\) policy](#) for specific details and procedures.**

## *Admission to Doctoral Candidacy*

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**Purpose:** Admission to Candidacy indicates that a doctoral student has completed all coursework and has passed a comprehensive exam attaining the graduate level to begin working on their dissertation manuscript.

### **Completing the Admission to Candidacy Form**

**STEP 1:** Verify the student is eligible for candidacy.

- A Doctoral Committee must be appointed prior to Admission to Candidacy
- Students must have successfully completed the comprehensive qualifying examination certified by the doctoral committee.
- All enrollment requirements for admission to candidacy have been met and the student:
  - Has been continuously enrolled since entering the program
  - Has no "I" on their record
  - Has a minimum 3.00 overall GPA
- The student's degree plan must be on file with the GSBS office.
- Once candidacy is approved, the student may enroll in dissertation hours in the following semester. Students may not enroll in dissertation hours until the semester following

effective admission to candidacy. Once the student enrolls for dissertation hours, they must be continuously enrolled in dissertation hours every semester until graduation.

**STEP 2:** Complete the [Admission to Doctoral Candidacy](#) form

**STEP 3:** Approvals (completed by the GSBS Office)

- **GSBS Graduate Council Rep:** Signed after approved at Graduate Council meeting
- **GSBS Office:** Signed after approved at Graduate Council

## *Appeals (Grades)*

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**Purpose:** To define the appeals process for GSBS courses when the grade assigned as a final course grade does not reflect what the student has earned according to the criteria for grading as outlined by the instructor of the course.

Faculty members are vested with the authority to establish course requirements and standards of performance. It is the responsibility of faculty to articulate and communicate course requirements and standards of performance to students at the beginning of each course and apply all grading criteria uniformly and in a timely manner. Final grades posted on-line by faculty are presumed to be accurate and final. A student, who has questions about a grade received in a course, should ordinarily seek to resolve the issue by first consulting with the instructor. If the issue has not been resolved after consultation with the instructor, and the student believes there are grounds for appealing the grade, the student may invoke the grade-appeal procedure outlined below.

### **PROCEDURE FOR GRADE APPEALS**

The grade appeals procedure is designed to give the student the opportunity to correct a perceived injustice. It should be utilized only when the student contends that the final course grade assigned by the instructor is arbitrary or capricious. It is not to be used to challenge grades on individual assignments. "Arbitrary or capricious" implies that:

1. The student has been assigned a grade on the basis of something other than his or her performance in the course
2. Standards utilized in the determination of the student's grade are more exacting or demanding than those applied to other students in the course
3. The grade is based upon standards that are significant, unannounced and unreasonable departures from those articulated in the course description distributed at the beginning of the course

The grade appeals policy is not applicable when it is the instructor's judgment about the quality of the student's work that is at issue. The assessment of the quality of the student's academic performance is one of the major responsibilities of TTUHSC faculty members and is solely and properly their responsibility. A student who is uncertain about whether a grade should be appealed or who needs additional information about the grade appeals process should contact the GSBS office.

The burden of proof is always on the student appellant to prove that a change of grade is appropriate action in his or her case. Students must adhere to the timelines delineated in this policy or lose the right to appeal.

### **Informal Appeal Process**

The student must begin the grade appeals process by contacting the instructor in an attempt to resolve the disagreement in an informal and cooperative atmosphere. This discussion should take place as soon as possible but no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> class day after the beginning of the following semester. If the student and instructor cannot, after consultation, reach a satisfactory resolution within the designated time period, the student may begin the formal grade appeal process.

### **Formal Appeal Process**

1. Following the failure to reach resolution through the informal grade appeals process and not later than the 15<sup>th</sup> class day of the semester, the student must complete an [Intent to Formally Appeal a Grade](#) Form. The form is available on the GSBS website. On the form, the student will be asked to
  - a. verify that he or she has been unsuccessful in reaching a resolution through the informal appeals process
  - b. precisely and specifically state the reasons for the appeal
  - c. offer suggestions as to what the student would consider a fair resolution of the appeal, with supporting reason or reasons.

The form should be submitted to the GSBS Office where the Dean will delegate responsibility to a GSBS Associate Dean. Copies of the form will be distributed to the student and the instructor. The instructor will be asked to respond in writing to the grade appeal.

2. The instructor will submit within five (5) class days of receipt of the appeal, a written response to the GSBS Associate Dean with a copy to the student. The GSBS Associate Dean will attempt to resolve the appeal within five class days through conferencing with the instructor and student appellant. If not resolved within five (5) class days, the GSBS Associate Dean will appoint an ad hoc Student Grade Appeal Committee that will consider the appeal. The Student Grade Appeal Committee consisting of a committee chair, two (2) committee members from the graduate faculty membership and two (2) graduate students will be appointed by the GSBS Associate Dean. The GSBS Associate Dean will also appoint an administrative staff person to take minutes of the meetings. This staff person will not be a voting member. Both parties can petition to have individuals selected to the committee.
3. Within five (5) class days after the Student Grade Appeal Committee has been appointed, the student appellant (consulting if desired with a faculty advisor) and the instructor(s) involved should submit a brief written summary of the evidence to the chair of the Grade Appeal Committee. Based upon the evidence presented and any additional evidence requested by the Committee, the Grade Appeal Committee will meet to decide if there are grounds for a hearing. The designated staff person will take minutes of the meeting and copies of any evidence presented shall become part of the record.

- a. If the Grade Appeal Committee decides by a simple majority vote (at which a quorum is present) that there are grounds for a hearing, a formal hearing will be scheduled no sooner than 10 class days and no later than 20 class days after the notice of a hearing is given to the instructor and student. The student appellant and the instructor shall be notified in writing of the procedures that will be followed during the hearing.
- b. If the Grade Appeal Committee decides by a simple majority vote (at which a quorum is present) that there are no grounds for a hearing, the appeal goes to step 5 of the process and, if certified, the grade remains unchanged.

In either case, the student and the instructor shall be notified within two (2) class days of the committee's decision. Copies of the meeting minutes shall accompany the notification of the decision. Should a hearing be necessary, the committee chair will notify the student and instructor at least three (3) days prior to the hearing date. The Grade Appeal Committee cannot change a grade without a full hearing as described in Step 4.

4. If a hearing is to be held, the Grade Appeal Committee will conduct the hearing at which both the student and involved instructor(s) must be present. The student may also elect to have a faculty advisor present. In the event that either the student or the faculty member is absent at the time of the appeal hearing due to illness, resignation or any other reason found valid by the Grade Appeal Committee, the committee may proceed with the hearing or delay the hearing until a more appropriate time. Evidence and testimony may be presented and the instructor whose grade is being appealed and the student appellant may present witnesses, evidence, and testimony. The faculty member and the student shall place all available pertinent grade records and student class work in the hands of the Grade Appeal Committee. The instructor whose grade is being appealed and the student appellant shall have the opportunity to question witnesses. All written correspondence related to the grade appeal shall be presented by the parties. Neither party may be represented by legal counsel at these proceedings. The student's faculty advisor may privately counsel the student but may not address the committee or question witnesses. NO one else shall be permitted to attend the deliberations. All members of the Grade Appeal Committee must be present at the hearing in order to cast their vote. Minutes of the hearing must be kept.

One of three outcomes is allowed as a result of the hearing:

- a. If a minimum of three (of the five) Committee members vote in favor to change the grade and the Dean concurs with the decision and certifies the process, the grade shall be changed as indicated in Step 6.
- b. If two or less members of the Grade Appeal Committee vote in favor to change the grade no grade change shall be mandated.
- c. In the event the faculty member concerned refuses to participate in the appeals procedure or refuses to provide available materials essential for the appeals procedure, the Grade Appeal Committee may, by simple majority vote initiate the grade change.

The committee Chair shall so inform the instructor of its decision by written memorandum, with copies to the student appellant, the department chairperson, and the Dean. The written memorandum shall be transmitted within five class days of the hearing and shall include a description of the process followed from informal appeals through the hearing decision, copies of all materials presented, and a copy of all minutes of the hearing meetings.

5. The Dean shall review the process, all related materials, and minutes within five class days of the receipt of all materials.
  - a. If the Dean certifies that the policy was followed, the grade appeal is completed. If indicated by the Grade Appeal Committee in its findings, grade changes are initiated as indicated in Step 6.
  - b. If the Dean finds substantive errors in the process which could have reasonably altered the decision reached, reconsideration by a separate Grade Appeal Committee shall be initiated by the Dean. The reconsideration shall begin at Step 4 of this process.

The Dean shall advise all parties of the outcome of the process review. The Dean cannot reverse the decision of the Grade Appeal Committee but can only send it to a second committee based upon procedural errors.

6. Changes of grade shall be initiated as follows:
  - a. If the Grade Appeal Committee rules in favor of a grade change the Dean shall request the faculty member to change the grade within five class days after the Dean's certification of the process.
  - b. If three or more members of the committee voted for a grade change (or simple majority if the faculty member refuses to participate) and the faculty member does not initiate a grade change within five class days of the request by the Dean, the Dean shall forward the committee's determination of grade change to the registrar, who shall then change the grade.
7. Decisions reached through this process are final, and may not be appealed.
8. Confidentiality – The Grade Appeal Committee shall not retain in their possession any personal files, materials received during the appeal procedure, or notes taken during the hearing. The administrative staff person will collect all materials and return them to the GSBS office to retain in a confidential file.

No party, committee member, or other participant or observer in the appeal procedure shall reveal any facts, documents, or testimony gained through participating in or observing the hearing to any other person, unless required by a court of law to do so or upon the advice of the TTUHSC's legal counsel.

## *Appeals (Non-Grades)*

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Purpose: To define the process for students to resolve and/or file a complaint regarding academic issues other than grades or academic dishonesty.

It is the policy of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences to affirm the right of its students to a prompt and fair resolution of a complaint or grievance. This policy applies to specific grievances arising from matters affecting students' academic standing and performance, other than grades (see the Grade Appeals policy) and academic dishonesty (see the [Code of Student Conduct](#)). Such matters include a dispute concerning some aspect of academic involvement arising from an administrative or faculty decision which the graduate student claims is unjust. Appeals under this procedure shall include, but are not limited to, academic probation and suspension, course requirements, graduation/degree requirements, thesis/dissertation committee and/or advisor decisions.

### **EARLY RESOLUTION**

1. A graduate student must attempt to resolve any grievance first with the faculty member, supervisory committee, administrator, or other students involved.
2. If after earnest attempts the grievance remains unresolved, the graduate student should discuss the grievance with the graduate advisor and/or Department Chair. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties concerned by discussions at the departmental level, the graduate student may further discuss the alleged violations with an Associate Dean, appointed by the GSBS Dean (hereafter called the "GSBS Associate Dean"). If the grievance is satisfactorily resolved by any of the above discussions, the terms of the resolution shall be reduced to writing and signed by the graduate student, respondent, and administrative superior involved in negotiations.

### **FORMAL COMPLAINT**

1. If the grievance is not resolved by the above discussions, the graduate student may pursue the matter further by submitting a written statement to the GSBS Associate Dean. The grievance must be submitted to the GSBS Associate Dean within 6 months of the time that the graduate student knows of the matter prompting the grievance, or the graduate student relinquishes any opportunity to pursue the grievance. The written grievance shall include a clear, concise statement of the policy or procedures violated, and the redress requested. The GSBS Associate Dean shall forward a copy of the grievance to the respondent. Within 10 working days after receipt of the grievance, the respondent shall provide the GSBS Associate Dean with a copy of his or her written response.
2. Upon receipt of the written response, the GSBS Associate Dean shall, within 10 working days, appoint an ad hoc grievance committee to hear and make a decision regarding the grievance. The GSBS Associate Dean shall appoint, from the membership of the Graduate Faculty, a committee chair and 2 committee members. Two graduate students will also be appointed by the GSBS Associate Dean to serve on the grievance committee. The GSBS Associate Dean will also appoint an administrative staff person to take minutes of the meetings. This staff person will not be a voting member. Both parties can petition to have individuals selected to the committee.

3. Barring extenuating circumstances, the hearing shall be scheduled within 20 working days after the appointment of the ad hoc grievance committee.

## **GUIDELINES FOR AD HOC GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

### **1. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES**

- a. Notice of the time and place of the hearing shall be given by the chair to the graduate students and the respondent not less than 10 days prior to the hearing.
- b. The notice shall include the written grievance and the written response of the respondent.
- c. A copy of the procedures guiding the hearing (Student Appeals Policy) shall accompany the notice.
- d. The following must be submitted by each party to the chair at least five (5) working days prior to the hearing:
  - A copy of all written supporting documentation that the party will present at the hearing,
  - A list of witnesses to be called by the party. Each party is responsible for ensuring that witnesses are at the hearing, and
  - The name of any advocate who will accompany the party to the hearing and whether the advocate is an attorney.

### **2. HEARING PROCEDURE**

- a. At the hearing, each party may be accompanied by an advocate, who may advise the party but not participate in the hearing.
- b. All hearings shall be closed except for parties to the grievance and their advocates.
- c. The evidence shall be presented by the graduate student and then by the respondent at the hearing.
- d. The parties and the committee shall have the opportunity to question all witnesses. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply, and any evidence relevant to a fair determination of the charges may be admitted.
- e. Following the presentation of evidence, the committee will permit each party to present a brief closing statement.
- f. The committee will meet in closed session to render a decision.
- g. The committee's written decision shall be forwarded to the GSBS Associate Dean within 10 working days from the conclusion of the hearing.

## **APPEAL**

1. If the graduate student is not satisfied with the decision of the ad hoc committee, a written appeal may be submitted to the GSBS Dean. Any appeal at this level shall be on the basis of the complete written record only.
2. The GSBS Dean shall make a decision on the matter within 10 working days from the date of the receipt of the appeal. The decision shall be forwarded in writing to the parties and the ad hoc committee chair. The decision of the GSBS Dean is final.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. The Ad Hoc Grievance Committee shall not retain in their possession any personal files, materials received during the appeal procedure, or notes taken during the hearing. The

administrative staff person will collect all materials and return them to the GSBS office to retain in a confidential file.

2. No party, committee member, or other participant or observer in the appeal procedure shall reveal any facts, documents, or testimony gained through participating in or observing the hearing to any other person, unless required by a court of law to do so or upon the advice of the TTUHSC's legal counsel.

## ***Core Curriculum***

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*\*This policy applies only to the GSBS Ph.D. programs in Lubbock, Texas.*

### **Overview**

All biomedical science fields recognize the need for high levels of integration of scientific knowledge to accelerate opportunities for basic and translational research. Toward that end, full-time research is preceded by a curriculum that introduces scientific facts and provides opportunities for the development of critical thinking, synthesis of information, development of factual knowledge, and the ability to read and comprehend original literature. These skills serve as a foundation for all concentrations/programs in the GSBS.

### **Curriculum Design and Courses**

The Core Curriculum consists of the five Core Courses taken in the first semester. GSBS requires that all doctoral students take all core courses in the first semester of enrollment and Responsible Conduct of Research in the second semester.

### **CORE CURRICULUM COURSES:**

1. **GSBS 5471 — CORE I: MOLECULES** – This course offers a broad coverage of biochemistry with an emphasis on structure and function of macromolecules, biosynthesis of small molecule precursors of macromolecules, and the pathways of intermediary metabolism.
2. **GSBS 5372 — CORE II: CELLS** – The structure/function relationships that underlie basic cellular processes, including translation protein trafficking, cytoskeletal organization and motility, cell adhesion, and cell division.
3. **GSBS 5373 — CORE III: GENES** – Teaches essential scientific concepts underlying the field of Molecular biology and Molecular Genetics.
4. **GSBS 5174 — CORE IV: BIOMEDICAL SEMINAR SERIES** – Students will attend and participate in seminars.
5. **GSBS 5099/5275 — CORE V: INTRODUCTION TO BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH** – Introduces the first-year graduate student to the fundamental principles and techniques in basic biomedical research.

OPTING OUT OF CORE CURRICULUM COURSES. Students with exceptional undergraduate training or experience may request to opt out of individual courses. Approval to waive a core curriculum course is a two-part process. First, the student should apply for a waiver of credit transfer from his or her graduate advisor (the GSBS Dean for undeclared students or the

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particular Concentration's Director for declared students), following the process outlined in "Waiving Program Requirements" or the "Transfer Credit" policy. Finally, the request must be submitted to the GSBS curriculum committee for final approval. The request from the student must be made prior to the first day of class. The curriculum committee will notify the student and graduate advisor prior to the 12<sup>th</sup> day of class.

Students who have a Masters degree in Biomedical Sciences or an M. D. degree may also opt out of individual courses. The student must submit a written request to the graduate program committee within his or her program/concentration. The graduate program committee will seek approval from the program course director of courses for which the waiver is being requested and will forward the recommendations to waive core curriculum courses to the GSBS Dean for final approval.

### PROBATION AND DISMISSAL

- GSBS students are required to maintain a minimum overall grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. If a student fails to maintain the required minimum GPA, she or he will be placed on academic probation. For more information, see the [academic probation](#) policy.
- Students may also be placed on probation for not completing the Core Courses within the first semester.
- Students may not drop a Core Course for academic reasons (reasonable exceptions will be made for sickness, etc., at the discretion of the GSBS Dean).
- Students receiving a grade of C or below in Core Course I, II or III will be required to repeat the course.
- Students receiving grades of C or below in two or more Core Courses will be at risk of dismissal.

TUTORING. One-on-one tutoring is available through the GSBS. Students should contact their mentors and the GSBS Assistant Dean when tutors are needed. Some group tutoring is also available and conducted by course directors or organized through the graduate student association (GSA).

OTHER REQUIREMENTS. All GSBS students are required to take the ethics course (GSBS 5101, Responsible Conduct of Research). Most programs/concentrations also have a statistics course requirement; GSBS offers the GSBS 5310 Introduction to Statistical Methods course, though other courses may meet the requirement.

## *Course Evaluation and Review*

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**Purpose:** To secure regular and systematic information regarding student satisfaction of courses to improve overall instructional performance.

In order to increase subsequent program/concentration effectiveness and to assess participant satisfaction with each particular course, on-line evaluations will be solicited from all students at the end of each semester. The main goals of the evaluations are to provide information to instructors about how effectively their teaching is for student learning and to help them improve their teaching.

**Course Evaluations:** Evaluations are conducted around the last two weeks prior to the exam week of each academic term. The GSBS office sends emails (including the direct link to the online survey) to students requesting that they participate in the evaluations. Evaluations are conducted in such a way as to encourage a high rate of return and thoughtful responses from students. Evaluation results and comments are available to the instructor with no identifying information; therefore, all evaluations are completely anonymous and confidential. The GSBS office maintains a separate list to record who has submitted an evaluation so reminder email can be sent to the non-respondents. **Note:** Independent studies, thesis, dissertation, and research courses are not evaluated. Courses with enrollment of less than three in a semester are not released independently. The results of those evaluations are merged with the next year's results for that course and are released when there are 3 or more responses for that course.

**Course reviews:** Once course evaluations have been collected by the GSBS office, they are e-mailed to the course directors. The course directors have 2 weeks to have a wrap-up meeting with all instructors of the course and provide a summary (to the GSBS office) which includes 1) Changes to the course from the prior year, 2) Addressing student complaints, 3) evaluate how the course compared to last year's student evaluation, and 4) provide ideas or recommendations proposed for next year to improve the course.

The curriculum committee reviews student evaluations and the course director summaries at the end of the Spring and Fall semesters.

**Curriculum committee:** The curriculum committee consists of one GSBS faculty from the Biotechnology & Pharmaceutical Sciences programs and one faculty from each concentration within the Biomedical Sciences Program as well as 4 students. The positions are appointed by the GSBS Dean and serve 3-year terms. This committee makes recommendations to the course director if there are serious issues mentioned in the evaluations. The committee also compares prior year evaluations to verify that issues have been addressed.

**Distribution of results:** Results shall be reported according to the following guidelines:

- Department chairs, graduate advisors and course directors will receive only the evaluation summaries for the courses they oversee.
- Faculty providing instruction in a course will receive their individual faculty evaluation along with the overall course summary.
- Academic coordinators will receive confidential copies to file 1) in the course file (required by SACS) and 2) in individual faculty files (for promotion and review)

**Use of evaluations:** The curriculum committee systematically reviews evaluation results to assess program/concentration effectiveness and inform, as appropriate, graduate advisors and instructors of evaluation results and take steps to correct any deficiencies. Ongoing course evaluation helps identify potential areas for improvement, determines training effectiveness, and helps shape future curriculum and course updates.

## *Course File Maintenance*

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Purpose: To outline information that should be maintained for each course taught within the GSBS.

A completed course file is kept for each graduate course offered in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. All official course files are maintained in the department in which the course is taught.

The file includes the following:

1. Course syllabus utilizing the GSBS Template available [online](#).
2. Required assignments / notes.
3. A copy of each test administered.
4. One sample item for each course activity. Student names are to be removed from each sample and faculty are encouraged to ask the student for permission to place the item in the course file.
5. Copy of the course evaluation.
6. Roster of all faculty teaching in the course.
7. Number of students enrolled and grade distribution.

It is the responsibility of each department to maintain the course files in a locked and secure location. Each department should designate an individual who will be responsible to collect the documentation. Course directors may use the following as a guideline for gathering the information:

2. Two months after the first day of class, submit the faculty roster and copies of all course materials (required assignments, lecture notes and syllabus).
3. After each exam, submit a copy of the test that was administered.
4. At the end of the course, the course director should submit:
  - a. sample items for each course activity (such as papers, projects, exams, etc.).
  - b. number of students enrolled and the grade distribution
  - c. copies of the course evaluations

Departments may choose to burn all the information onto a CD's. Course files should be maintained in an active file for 3 years and archived for an additional two years. Five years after the course has been taught all course materials may be discarded.

## *Dismissal*

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Purpose: To outline conditions or circumstances that may provide sufficient cause for dismissal of graduate students.

The following conditions or circumstances may provide sufficient cause for dismissal of a student from the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

Graduate students who:

- do not maintain an acceptable GPA or make adequate academic progress as defined by the program/concentration;
- do not maintain an acceptable GPA as defined by the [Academic Probation Policy](#)
- engage in academic or research misconduct; or
- engage in illegal, fraudulent, or unethical behavior as defined in the Student Affairs Handbook - Code of Professional and Academic Conduct.
- have not completed the 4 required core courses by the end of the second year .

There may also be other unusual situations in which a student may be dismissed. In each case, the dismissal should follow the following procedures:

### **Lack of Adequate Academic Progress**

Failure to maintain an acceptable GPA will result in academic warning, probation or dismissal according to the GSBS Academic Probation policy. In addition, students who have not been placed on probation, but who are not making adequate academic progress must be warned in writing of the possibility of dismissal. They will be given a clear statement about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the problem. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students. If the student does not meet the requirements within the time frame specified, he/she may be dismissed. Upon recommendation from the graduate advisor, the GSBS Office will notify the student of their dismissal. Students may appeal this dismissal following the procedures outlined in the [Appeals \(Non-Grades\) Policy](#).

### **Academic or Research Misconduct/Illegal, Fraudulent, or Unethical Behavior**

The process for dismissing students as a result of academic or research misconduct; or as a result of illegal, fraudulent, or unethical behavior is outlined in the [Student Affairs Handbook](#) - Code of Professional and Academic Conduct.

Allegations of scientific misconduct (fraud, dishonesty, scientific misconduct, or misconduct in science) will be investigated by the TTUHSC Research Integrity Officer as outlined in HSC OP 73.07 Honesty in Research & Allegations of Scientific Misconduct. Scientific misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or other practices that materially deviate from those that are commonly accepted within the scientific and academic communities for proposing, conducting, or reporting research. It also includes other material deviations from accepted scientific practices such as failure to report unethical research practices, obstruction of another's research, violation of confidentiality, intentional deception, omission or research dishonesty, repeated incidents of regulatory noncompliance and misuse of research funds. It does not include honest errors or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

### **Other Situations**

A regularly admitted graduate student who has not been registered for three consecutive semesters (including the summer term) is dismissed unless a leave of absence has been approved.

Any student who does not complete all requirements for a graduate degree within the time limit (See Time Limit sections: [MS](#) or [PhD](#)) will be dismissed.

Graduate Advisors may recommend dismissing students for situations other than those specified above. When doing so, the graduate advisor must notify the student in writing of the possibility of dismissal. If it is possible for the student to rectify the situation, he/she must be given a clear statement about what must be done within a specified time period to alleviate the problem. These expectations must be reasonable and consistent with expectations held for all students. If the student does not meet the requirements within the time frame specified, he/she may be dismissed.

If the situation cannot be rectified, the graduate advisor will send justification for the dismissal to the GSBS Office. If warranted, the GSBS Office will notify the student in writing of the grounds for dismissal and the date when the dismissal will be effective. This will normally be the end of the semester in which the student is enrolled, but the circumstances of the dismissal will be important in determining this date.

Students may appeal their dismissal by following the procedures outlined in the Graduate Student [Appeals \(Non-Grades\) Policy](#).

## *Dissertations & Theses*

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Purpose: To define requirements of the dissertations and theses for graduate students.

**Dissertations.** A dissertation is required of every candidate for a doctoral degree. The dissertation work must earn a grade of at least B in order to qualify the student for graduation.

The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences strongly recommends that each student be required to present and defend a dissertation proposal before his or her committee early in the course of the research. The subject of the dissertation must be approved by the advisory committee and the GSBS Office *at least four months* before the candidate's proposed date of graduation. The dissertation must demonstrate a mastery of the techniques of research, a thorough understanding of the subject matter and its background, and a high degree of skill in organizing and presenting the materials. The dissertation should embody a significant contribution of new information to a subject or a substantial reevaluation of existing knowledge, presented in a scholarly style. The work on the dissertation is constantly under the supervision of the advisory committee and any other faculty the committee or GSBS Office may consider necessary. A copy of the dissertation should be presented to the committee members and the dean's representative at least two weeks prior to the defense.

**Thesis.** The master's thesis is expected to represent independent work by the student, conducted under the supervision of the committee, and to be written clearly and concisely. As soon as the student's area for thesis research has been determined, an advisory committee will be appointed by the GSBS Office upon the recommendation of the advisory chair. The committee must consist of at least three members of the TTUHSC Graduate Faculty. More than one disapproving vote from the committee members shall constitute failure of the examination. The student must earn a grade of B or better on thesis work to qualify for graduation. A copy of the thesis should be presented to the committee members and the dean's representative at least two weeks prior to the defense.

**Grading.** Dissertation and Thesis hours are graded with a CR except for the last semester in which a letter grade is assigned. At the instructor's discretion, a letter grade may be assigned to the last 12 hours of dissertation (6 hours of thesis.)

**Hours.** Registration for at least 6 hours of 6000 is required for the master's thesis and at least 12 hours of 8000 for a doctoral dissertation. Once thesis/dissertation hours have begun, a student must be enrolled in such courses every semester until graduation unless granted an official leave of absence. Students may not enroll in thesis or dissertation courses before formal admission to a degree program by the GSBS Office.

**Reference Manual.** A manual entitled [\*Thesis – Dissertation Formatting Guidelines\*](#) is available. All manuscripts must conform to the published policies. The final copy of the dissertation must be submitted electronically to the ETD website. Dissertations/theses must be accompanied by an abstract of no more than 350 words.

One copy of the dissertation/thesis is required by GSBS which will be forwarded to the TTUHSC Library. Additional copies may be required by the advisory committee. The GSBS Office recommends utilizing [www.thesisondemand.com](http://www.thesisondemand.com) to purchase bound copies. The required copy should be mailed directly to the GSBS Office at: TTUHSC-GSBS, 3601 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Lubbock, TX 79430. Once the order has been placed, a copy of the receipt should be forwarded to [pamela.johnson@ttuhsc.edu](mailto:pamela.johnson@ttuhsc.edu).

**Fees.** Early in the semester of graduation, the candidate will pay the HSC Bursar's Office a document fee to cover the cost of uploading and storing the thesis to the ETD website.

**Dissertation Announcements:**

Coordinators should notify the GSBS office of all defenses at least 6 weeks prior to the defense for posting to the GSBS on-line event calendar. The GSBS office will forward the notification to all GSBS faculty. Faculty interested in attending the defense at an off-site location should notify coordinators at least 4 weeks prior to the defense so room arrangements can be made and techlink secured. Two (2) weeks prior to the defense, coordinators should prepare and forward a copy of the [dissertation announcement template](#) to the GSBS office for circulation to all GSBS faculty and students. GSBS will post to the announcement page; however, coordinators will be responsible for posting on the TV monitors and bulletin boards, etc.

# *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*

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Purpose: To inform the students and parents of Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.

## **Overview**

[Family Policy Compliance Office \(FPCO\) Home](#)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
  - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
  - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
  - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
  - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
  - Accrediting organizations;
  - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
  - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
  - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

## **Directory Information**

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

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For additional information or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.

Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

## *Graduate Academic Review*

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**Purpose:** The main objective of ongoing, continuous assessment is to provide a mechanism for improving the quality of graduate program/concentrations at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS).

Graduate Academic reviews consist of two interrelated activities. The first is a formal review, which occurs every 5 years. The second is continuous, ongoing assessment of key program/concentration outcomes, as identified by the graduate faculty of each academic area. Collection and analysis of data related to these outcomes, as well as resulting changes, are reported to the GSBS Office annually. At the time of the next formal review, a summary of these reports are included in the self-study.

The formal review process comprises five major components: a self-study prepared by the graduate faculty, an external assessment report, the review committee's evaluative report and recommendations, and program/concentration faculty's response to that report, and an action plan resulting from a post-review meeting of the GSBS review committee chair, graduate advisor, Department Chairs that house the program/concentration and the GSBS Associate Dean. Biennially, the program/concentration reports to the GSBS on progress toward implementing the action plan formulated from the 5-year review.

Complementing the formal review is continuous, ongoing outcomes assessment. Outcomes assessment focuses primarily on student learning. It asks and answers the questions:

1. What do we want our students to know and be able to do when they graduate?
2. How well does our program/concentration promote that learning?

Its purpose is to monitor whether a program/concentration is achieving its goals so that where goals are not being met, changes and improvements can be made. This process begins when graduate faculty identify the major objectives of their program/concentration, the more specific outcomes derived from these objectives, and the data that must be collected and analyzed to determine whether those outcomes are being achieved. To the extent possible, the data are supplied by the GSBS and other university sources. However, some data- e.g., data aggregated about student performance on prelims, the final oral defense, etc. – must be collected within each academic area.

Once outcomes and relevant data sources have been identified, the next step is to develop an outcomes assessment plan. The plan should identify which outcomes will be assessed over the five-year cycle between formal reviews. Annually, the graduate advisor or another faculty

member designated by the department Chair reports to the GSBS, within Weave, as to which outcomes were assessed, what the findings were, and any resulting improvements. A summary of these reports, as well as the assessment plan, becomes part of the self-study for the next formal review.

## Biennial Reports on Action Plans

Each academic area will be reviewed on a five-year interval. Every two years in May between formal reviews, each graduate advisor will be asked to provide a brief summary of progress made on the “action items” listed: What, if any, items are behind schedule, and what are the hindrances to their timely completion? What strategies have been developed to address these hindrances (e.g., modifying the action item, seeking other resources to fund the action item, etc.)? Is there anything the GSBS office or TTUHSC administration can do to help you address any uncompleted action items?

Periodic graduate academic reviews give the school important information about the strengths and weaknesses of academic areas such as: the quality and accomplishments of its graduate students; the future resource needs and its contribution to the mission of the university. These reviews are designed to help faculty and administrators gain a clear understanding of the following:

1. The academic purpose within TTUHSC and GSBS.
2. Objectives and outcomes (faculty expectations) for the program/concentration. The effectiveness in achieving these purposes & outcomes.
3. The overall quality.
4. The faculty’s vision, i.e., future aims and changes necessary to achieve those aims.

### Schedule of GSBS Academic Reviews

Cell & Molecular Biology	2011
Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics	2011
Physiology	2012
Pharmacology & Neuroscience	2013
Medical Microbiology	2014
Biotechnology	2014
Pharmaceutical Sciences	2015

### Sections included in this policy

[Review Process Timeline](#)

[Review Format](#)

[Task of the Internal and External Reviewers](#)

[Guidelines for Internal and External Reviewers](#)

[Biennial Reports on Action Plans](#)

[Attachment A: Suggested Faculty Activity Report Template](#)

[Attachment B: Graduate Academic Review Assessment Form](#)

## Review Process Timeline

- Jun 1**     **Notification of Review:** The GSBS Office will schedule a meeting with the Graduate Advisor and his/her Department Chair to discuss the review process and the review guidelines.
- Jul 1**     The Department Chair will submit to the GSBS office the names of the Data Subcommittee faculty along with the names and contact information for possible external reviewers. The GSBS Review Committee will finalize the external reviewer list and provide it to the GSBS Office, which will be responsible for contacting the external reviewers and securing their cooperation.
- Preparation of the Review Document:** The document should follow the format shown in the next section. The Department Chair may designate a team of faculty members, considered the Data Subcommittee, to prepare the Graduate Academic Review Document. This subcommittee should have a chair appointed by the Department Chair. However, the Department Chair should be actively involved in overseeing its preparation and is responsible for the content, accuracy, and completeness of the report. All current graduate faculty members of the program/concentration being reviewed should be involved in the preparation of the report. The participation of enrolled students, alumni and professional staff is highly encouraged. The report should be evaluative rather than simply descriptive. It should incorporate not only an analysis of incoming students, time to degree, attrition rates, etc. but also a summary of the program/concentration's continuous and ongoing outcomes assessment and the faculty's vision for the future. To ensure that GSBS meets FERPA regulations, please ensure that all student information does not include private information such as SSNs.
- Selection of GSBS Review Committee Members:** The GSBS Office will appoint one graduate faculty member from each program/concentration (excluding faculty of area being reviewed) plus 2 students to comprise the GSBS review committee.
- Oct 1**     **Submission of Program/Concentration Review Document:** The review document should be forwarded to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (2B106) along with an electronic version on CD-ROM or Flash in Portable Document Format (PDF). The GSBS Office will review the document and may request that revisions be made if it is incomplete or simply descriptive. The report should address the appropriateness of the academic goals, the quality of the students, and those elements influencing student success: mentoring, research, the faculty, the curriculum, professional development opportunities, facilities, and student funding. The report should also summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the program/concentration and make recommendations for improvements. The GSBS office will send copies to the GSBS review committee and the external reviewers. The original document will remain in the GSBS Office (2B106).
- Oct 5**     **External Reviews:** External reviews are done entirely off-site. However, we can arrange conference calls between the GSBS Review Committee and the external reviewer if desired. Two external reviews will be done per academic area.

- Oct 15**      **The Review Process:** The GSBS Associate Dean will meet with the GSBS review committee members within the first two weeks of October. At this meeting instructions and advice on the review process, including an optional review template (Attachment B) will be given and the Associate Dean will appoint a chair from its membership.
- Dec 1**      **Preliminary Report Due:** A draft of the preliminary report from the GSBS review committee chair should be submitted to the GSBS office.
- Dec 1**      **External Report Due:** Copies of the external review report are provided to the GSBS review committee chair.
- Jan 1**      **Documentation Distributed:** Copies of the GSBS review committee’s preliminary report and the external reports will be provided to the Graduate Advisor, Department Chair and Data Subcommittee Chair, with a request for a written response from the program/concentration faculty. The response outlines the means and timetable by which the faculty plans to implement the recommendations of the GSBS review committee and specifies any additional resources needed to do so.
- Jan 15**     **Post-review Meeting:** The GSBS Associate Dean will schedule a meeting with the Graduate Advisor, the Department Chair, Data Subcommittee Chair (if applicable) and the Chair of the GSBS review committee for the beginning of February. At this meeting, the Chair of the GSBS review committee summarizes the committee findings, and the graduate advisor and Department Chair summarize the faculty’s response.
- Mar 1**      **Executive Summary Report:** The Chair of the GSBS review committee should incorporate the responses from the external reviewers and/or add any relevant information provided at the post-review meeting by the Graduate Advisor and/or Chairs to the executive summary report. The final executive summary report will be forwarded to the GSBS Office by March 1.
- May 1**      **Issuance of Response Statement (Action Plan):** The GSBS Associate Dean will submit an action plan (as developed and agreed upon at the post-review meeting). This plan will outline what improvements will be made and who will supply any resources needed to implement them. This action is circulated to all participants in the post-review meeting to make sure that all parties agree on its contents. A copy of this plan will be forwarded to the GSBS Dean.

## **Review Format**

**\*\* All data should be collected for the prior five academic years \*\***

### **PROGRAM/CONCENTRATION OVERVIEW**

- 1.1 Title of Program/Concentration
- 1.2 Department Name
- 1.3 Brief History and Mission: Provide a brief history of the development of the graduate program/concentration. Briefly describe the mission.

- 1.4 Degree Objectives and Outcomes: List the objectives and outcomes (faculty expectations) for the program/concentration.

## **GRADUATE CURRICULA**

- 2.1 Course offerings and their enrollment during the review period.
- 2.2 Describe any significant changes in curriculum and instruction since the last review. Explain the reason for the changes, such as different needs of students, shifts or emphasis in the discipline, changes in faculty, perceived weaknesses in the curricula, problems with facilities, etc.
- 2.3 List required courses: First-year curriculum, statistics, ethics, etc.
- 2.4 What specifically is done to facilitate critical thinking and problem solving to prepare graduates for a wide variety of positions in academics and other environments?

## **FACULTY**

- 3.1 Alphabetical list, by rank (graduate faculty status level), of graduate faculty members in the program/concentration including a statement of how many new faculty members have been hired since last review.
- 3.2 Faculty Activity Report (see Attachment A) for each faculty that summarized the past five years of relevant activities including:
  - 3.2.1 Education
  - 3.2.2 Teaching – list all courses taught; number of hours lectured per year in graduate courses; student enrollment in course taught
  - 3.2.3 Committee responsibilities
    - 3.2.3.1 Number of advisory committees that each member has served or chaired during the past 5 years, including the students name and when student graduated
    - 3.2.3.2 Service to GSBS committees; graduate council, chair of recruitment committee, core curriculum committee, etc.
  - 3.2.4 Honors and Awards
  - 3.2.5 Major Publications - Number of scholarly publications during the period of review (excluding abstracts)
  - 3.2.6 Funded Projects / Grants - Active external and internal grants and contracts
  - 3.2.7 Service – should include any program/concentration, university, professional and community service activities (grant review panels, editorial boards, leadership positions in professional societies)
- 3.3 *Advising*: Describe how and when faculty advisors are assigned to graduate students, as well as any guidance that new faculty are given in directing graduate student research.
- 3.4 *Faculty Quality*: Describe the ways in which the department evaluates the quality of its graduate faculty (e.g., teaching evaluations, peer review, publications, research grants, graduate students advised and their time to degree) and how it uses the results of these evaluations.

- 3.5 *Faculty Distribution*: Is the department staffed adequately to meet the needs of various fields of specialization in your discipline? If not, please provide a realistic plan for how an appropriate distribution of faculty could be achieved across specializations offered.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

- 4.1 Data Collection – admission criteria
- 4.1.1 Number of applications for last 5 years
  - 4.1.2 Percent of applicants offered that actually matriculated
  - 4.1.3 List of where students came from (previous schools)
- 4.2 Data Collection - student information:
- 4.2.1 Students graduated during the review period, graduate GPA's and attrition rates
  - 4.2.2 Average time and credit hours per degree
  - 4.2.3 Students during the review period that have received national and university recognition, including fellowships, scholarships, departmental and other awards (include name, type and amount of awards received)
  - 4.2.4 Number and percent of doctoral graduates employed in the field (or in a post-doctoral position) within one year of graduation and the average length of time to secure the job.
  - 4.2.5 Present position and place of employment of students graduating from the academic area during the review period
  - 4.2.6 Publications & presentations by student
- 4.2 Quality: Comment on how you evaluate and assess the quality and performance of your graduate students. Referring to the above data, comment on student quality and trends over the past 5 years. What specific measures does the department use to evaluate the quality of entering students? (For example, what use is made of the GPA or of standardized test scores such as the GRE?). Are your students as good as you would like them to be? If not, what are the contributing factors? What are the specific admissions criteria for masters and doctoral students? Provide summary of recruitment efforts.
- 4.3 Degrees Granted: Comment on the trends in the number of degrees awarded annually and the average length of time required to complete each degree. What is currently the approximate attrition rate? What has been the trend in attrition over the past five years? If attrition has been increasing, what measures, if any, have been taken to address that increase?
- 4.4 Need/Placement: Describe past, present and anticipated future need for graduates in the TTUHSC community, region and nation. Report any information you have on the level of employer satisfaction with your graduates and the students post graduate performance (if available). Describe the level and kinds of assistance you offer in the placement of your graduates. Assess the strength of student demand for your program/concentration over the last five years.
- 4.5 Funding: Describe the stipend support packages available for your students and the approximate annual number of stipends awarded.

## CURRENT RESEARCH

- 5.1 Current Research: Provide a brief description of significant ongoing research in your program/concentration, including the number of post-docs in the labs. Indicate the major strengths or emphases of this research. Describe three to five major research accomplishments over the past five years by faculty and/or graduate students and any new research emphases planned for the near future (through new faculty hires, redirection of current faculty's research, etc.)
- 5.2 External Research Support: Evaluate the level of external funding for research. Are graduate faculty competing effectively for external support? What were the levels of outside funding in research grants and other grants (a) at the time of the last review, and (b) the current year? Comment on any trends.
- 5.3 Research Development: What is being done to encourage and develop research collaborations with faculty performing similar research elsewhere in the university? Also, please describe deficiencies in facilities and resources that impede the attempts to reach research objectives and any plans to address these deficiencies.

## CONCLUSION – (maximum two-page summary)

- 6.1 Summarize the major strengths and weaknesses of the graduate program/concentration and the challenges and opportunities it faces in the foreseeable future. Include summary information (highlights and challenges) captured in WEAVE online annual reports.
- 6.2 Briefly describe the vision/strategic plan for the immediate future: Project the major goals for the next five years.

## APPENDICES – could include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 7.1 Strategic plan to improve/maintain the program/concentration
- 7.2 Specific graduate program/concentration guidelines
- 7.3 Weave on-line reports for 5 years

## Task of the Internal and External Reviewers

**Assessment**: The task of the reviewers is to formulate objective judgments of the quality and effectiveness of the academic area. This evaluation is concerned mainly with the quality of graduate education received by students.

**Sources**: The GSBS review committee is encouraged to focus attention on questions regarding the relationship of program/concentrations to the goals of the university. It is the task of the reviewers to single out those features that merit special commendation, and to make recommendations where there is room for improvement. Reviewers should formulate their evaluations not only from the review document, but also from interviews with the graduate advisor, his/her departmental chair, other graduate faculty members, and the students.

**The Executive Summary Report**: The findings and recommendations of the GSBS review committee should take the format of a concise one to two-page executive summary. Overall observations, reputation, strengths/commendations, weaknesses/recommendations, and value of the program/concentration to the mission of the university should be included in this report. **Specific and prioritized recommendations should be made regarding what is needed to**

**strengthen areas that have weaknesses, or perhaps what is needed to further strengthen an excellent program/concentration.** The GSBS review committee should rate the program/concentration under review and provide an overall assessment similar to the following:

- Excellent
- Satisfactory
- Needs improvement

## **Guidelines for Internal & External Reviewers**

During the review of a graduate academic area, reviewers are encouraged to evaluate with respect to the areas shown below. Reviewers should approach this evaluation with the same seriousness and thoroughness as if they were performing peer review of a manuscript or extramural grant application. Reviewers are encouraged to give a numeric rating for each area and the optional review template may be useful in this area. Reviewers should not feel confined to the areas specified and can examine and comment on other areas that they deem important to the review process. The primary goal of the review is to provide the university, graduate school and graduate program/concentration under review with a meaningful and critical assessment of the academic area.

### **Overview and Vision**

Reviewers should examine the mission and vision of the graduate program/concentration, paying special attention to academic planning, organization, size, and success at achieving the stated mission.

### **Faculty Productivity**

Factors that should be considered include: faculty resources, particularly external research funding; faculty publication records, scholarship, and awards; faculty external recognition.

### **Quality and Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates**

Factors that should be considered include: student recruitment, student retention, applicant pool, placement of graduates, career success of former students, and student productivity.

### **Curriculum**

Factors that should be considered are: degree requirements, course offerings and frequency, areas of specialization, nature and type of qualifying exams.

### **Recommendations & Suggestions**

Provide recommendations and suggestions for improvement.

### **External Review Reports**

External Reviewers may use whatever format they prefer to submit their review to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. If you do not have a preferred method, we will provide you with a template that may be utilized.

Implemented July 2006

## Suggested Faculty Activity Report Template

### General Guidelines/Instructions

Each Faculty Member Report Document submission:

- Should be limited to no more than a total of five pages
- Should provide a concise, balanced, and brief document that summarized the past five years of relevant activities

**Name**  
**Faculty Activity Report**  
**Last Five Years through Current APR Year**  
**(e.g., 2005 to 2010)**

#### Education

- List degrees earned, major, and each year degree was attained.

#### Teaching (last five years only)

- List all GSBS courses taught during the review period.
- Provide semester and year that course was taught.

*Example:*

2009-2010	Fall/Spring		Enrollment
		GPHY 230 Introduction to Statistics	_____
		GPHY 290 Research Methods	_____
		GPHY 320 Learning and Motivation	_____

Please provide any chair and committee responsibilities, along with all individual instruction/mentoring activities that you provide in this section.

- On doctoral dissertations, please specific student name, degree, dissertation title, and date of completion
- On master's thesis, please specify number chaired and number of memberships.

#### Honors and Awards (last five years only)

- List awards and honors received along with the year that it was bestowed.

#### Major Publications/Scholarly Work (last five years only)

#### Funded Projects/Grants (last five years only)

#### Service (last five years only)

- List service activities and years provided.  
Should include any unit, college, university, professional, and community service activities

Please Note: Full faculty CVs should also be made available to the external reviewers.

## Graduate Academic Review Assessment Form

Program/Concentration Name:
Date:
Name of Reviewer:

**Numerical Evaluation Range 1-10**  
**(1 - significant deficiencies; 10 excellent)**

*Section I*

Criteria for Assessment of Graduate Programs/Concentrations:

<b>Quality</b> of faculty research and scholarly activity		Student-faculty communication in general:	
Comments:		Comments:	
<b>Quantity</b> of faculty research and scholarly activity:		Time to degree	
Comments:		Comments:	
Effective organization and operation of the graduate program/concentration and use of staff and facilities:		Student and faculty awareness of degree requirements	
Comments:		Comments:	
Completeness and frequency of course offerings:		Quality of students - (background and performance):	
Comments:		Comments:	
		Total Points from Section I:	0

*Section II*

### Overview and Vision

Program/Concentration Planning	
Organization	
Size	
Achieving stated mission	

Mission & Vision
Comments:

### Faculty Productivity

External research funding	
Faculty publication records	
Faculty scholarships & awards	
Faculty external recognition	

Faculty Productivity
Comments:

### Quality & Quantity of Graduate Students and Graduates

Student recruitment	
Student retention	
Applicant pool	
Placement of graduates	
Career success of former students	
Student productivity	

Quality & Quantity of Graduate Students
Comments:

Total from Section II	0
Total from Section I (page 1)	0
GRAND TOTAL	0

### Features that merit special commendation:

--

### Interviews with Program Director, Chair, faculty members, students (if applicable):

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### Suggested improvement areas:

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### Other comments:

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### Overall Assessment:

Needs Improvement (total score less than 75)	Satisfactory (total score = 76 - 150)	Excellent (total score = 151 - 230)
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# *Graduate Awards*

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Purpose: To outline the qualifications and selections process for the GSBS Graduate Awards: Outstanding Graduate Student and the Dean's Recognition Award.

## **Requirements to qualify:**

The graduating student must be nominated by his or her respective program /concentration.

The student will be selected by accomplishments in the following areas:

- Educational merit (e.g. GPA, coursework, course load, etc.)
- Contributions made to TTUHSC and its students
- Contributions made to GSBS
- Contributions made to the student's laboratory
- Contributions made to the scientific discipline evidence by peer reviewed publications and meeting presentations
- Receipt of research funding and/or scholarships
- Community service
- Other awards received
- Attends GSBS Convocation and HSC Commencement
- Each applicant will be asked to submit a complete C.V./resume; two letters of recommendation; and a brief narrative describing the accomplishments they have made during their graduate career.

## **Selection Committee:**

From nominations submitted by GSBS students, the Dean will appoint a selection committee composed of seven members: five faculty and two students. The selection committee will choose two award recipients based on the criteria listed above. Dr. Michael Blanton serves as a non-voting member representing the GSBS.

## **Monetary Award:**

Award recipients may receive a plaque, a medallion, and /or a monetary or travel award. The amount of a monetary award will be determined by the GSBS office.

## **Outstanding GSBS Student – selected from doctoral nominations**

- Required to attend the GSBS Convocation and the HSC Commencement
- Serves as GSBS Convocation speaker
- Must provide text of speech for GSBS approval of content
- Carries the GSBS seal at the HSC Commencement

## **Dean's Recognition Award – selected from master of science nominations**

- Required to attend the GSBS Convocation and the HSC Commencement
- Reads the description of the GSBS seal at Convocation
- Carries the GSBS banner at the HSC Commencement

## *Leave for Student Employees*

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Purpose: To define Texas Statutes for vacation and sick leave for students and outline the policy established for GSBS students for time off.

1. Student employment is governed by the Government Code, Chapter 661 of the Texas Statutes. Excerpts from the Code are provided to assist the GSBS Faculty and Students. The complete document may be viewed at: <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/statutes.html>

### **SUBCHAPTER F. GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR VACATION LEAVE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES**

#### **661.152. Entitlement to Annual Vacation Leave**

(a) A state employee is entitled to a vacation in each fiscal year without a deduction in salary, **except for a state employee who is:**

(1) an employee of an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code, who:  
(A) is not employed to work at least 20 hours per week for a period of at least four and one-half months;  
or

(B) **is employed in a position for which the employee is required to be a student as a condition of the employment;** Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 279, § 19, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

### **SUBCHAPTER G. GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SICK LEAVE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES**

#### **661.201. Applicability**

(b) An employee of an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code, is eligible to accrue or take paid sick leave under this subchapter **only if the employee:**

(1) is employed to work at least 20 hours per week for a period of at least four and one-half months; and

(2) **is not employed in a position for which the employee is required to be a student as a condition of the employment.** Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 279, § 19, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

#### **2. Additional GSBS information:**

- a. Students must be registered every semester or be on an approved official leave of absence (medical or personal).
- b. Mentors have at their discretion the ability to grant up to 10 work days of personal leave utilizing a flexible schedule for each student employee per academic year. Work days are as defined by the GSBS calendar and exclude holidays. Personal leave may not be accumulated and shall not be carried forward to the next year.
- c. If a student employee desires leave exceeding the 10 days as described above, such approval must be granted by the advisor/mentor and Assistant Dean prior to such time as the leave has been taken. If extended leave is approved, a supplemental form will be submitted to Human Resources for Leave without Pay.
- d. If extended leave is taken without prior approval of the advisor/mentor and Assistant Dean, the student employee is subject to disciplinary actions including but not limited to, termination.
- e. No personal leave shall be granted during the Fall or Spring semesters; exceptions to this policy must have GSBS approval.

- f. Leave periods for either students or employees will not extend the maximum time requirement to complete a degree.
- g. The enforcement of this policy will be the responsibility of the mentor to document personal leave days for each of their students.

Requests for personal leave exceeding 10 days per academic year must have GSBS approval prior to the leave date. The personal leave form should be used to request such approval. Records of personal leave less than 10 days should be maintained by the concentration or program. It is highly recommended that the concentrations/programs use the [personal leave form](#) to track student's accumulated absence from the lab.

## ***MD/PhD Guidelines***

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Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and the School of Medicine offer a combined MD/PhD degree program for eligible students interested in training preparatory to a career in Biomedical Research/Academic Medicine.

**The following policies and guidelines have been established for this program:**

APPLICATION, INTERVIEW & SELECTION PROCESS: Students will apply through the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) @ <http://www.aamc.org/students/amcas/start.htm>. It is highly recommended that the student mention their research interest in their personal statement submitted with the AMCAS application. This information will assist the GSBS in selecting appropriate faculty to interview the applicant. A secondary SOM application is also required and information can be found at <https://www.ttuhschool.edu/som/admissions/secondaryapp/default.asp>. The secondary application fee is \$50.00.

Once a student has applied to AMCAS, the selection committees from both schools invite selected applicants for interviews. The MD/PhD interviews are coordinated through the School of Medicine's Admissions Office. The interview is tailored to match the interests of the applicant and will include one or more graduate faculty members, the GSBS Associate Dean, and one current MD/PhD student. Additional details of the review process are described in Attachments A-B.

Concentrations available within the MD/PhD program include: Cell & Molecular Biology, Biochemistry & Molecular Genetics, Medical Microbiology, Pharmacology & Neuroscience and Physiology.

The GSBS faculty that conduct interviews with prospective MD/PhD applicants will return an evaluation form to the GSBS. The forms will be used by the GSBS Dean and/or Associate Dean to rank the prospective applicants. The selection criteria will be based on three general categories: academic record, acceptable test scores and the individual profile which includes, but is not limited to, recommendations, research background, motivation, and interviews. The GSBS Associate Dean and the SOM Associate Dean for Admissions (or a designated representative) will meet to determine the rankings and make offers as early November. The number of offers will vary depending on the availability of stipends.

**ASSISTANTSHIP:** Students will be recruited nationwide for the MD/PhD program. In keeping with state regulations, the School of Medicine allows up to 10% of students to be out-of-state residents. Students accepted into this program will receive a Research Assistantship as long as the student maintains the high standards set forth by the retention criteria of the program. A student may receive a stipend for up to a maximum of 8 years, however it is expected that at the end of seven years, the student will have completed all the requirements of both the MD and PhD programs. Students receiving a Research Assistantship are considered employees at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (50% FTE) and qualify for in-state tuition, certain fee waivers and health insurance benefits. Research Assistantship positions do not accrue sick leave or vacation. Payment of the assistantship will come from the SOM for the first 2 years. The GSBS, the academic department and/or the research mentor’s grant will fund the assistantship while the student completes the PhD portion of the degree. Payment of the assistantship will transfer back to SOM as the student begins the last two years of Medical School.

**TUITION:** Tuition scholarships are paid through the School of Medicine during MD enrollment. During the PhD enrollment, tuition scholarships are paid by the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. All fees are paid by the student. When new students are admitted, a memo will be forwarded to the Bursar’s office authorizing tuition scholarships. The Texas Education Code (Sec. 54.065) also allows for in-state tuition for non-residents and citizens of countries other than the United States of America. For additional information please reference the bursar’s website: [www.fiscal.ttuhsu.edu/busserv/bursar](http://www.fiscal.ttuhsu.edu/busserv/bursar)

**ENROLLMENT PATTERN:** The MD/PhD curriculum is flexible to accommodate the academic needs of the students, most commonly the need for increased research time. Students commonly enter the program after receiving their bachelor’s degree. However, students may enter after one or two years in medical school or in pre-doctoral education and training. In these latter cases, adjustments are made in the curricular plan to optimize the approach for the student. Typically, the pattern for enrollment is as follows:

<u>Term</u>	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
Summer	GSBS	GSBS
Fall	SOM	SOM
Spring	SOM	SOM

Students typically arrive in the summer after graduation from college and begin a laboratory rotation in a field close to their prior research or in a field they are seriously considering for their doctoral dissertation. This rotation allows them to adjust to the campus and begin learning about the variety of possibilities for future research. In early August, MD/PhD students matriculate in the medical school and begin two years of course work. During the summer following the first year of medical school, the student has approximately two months for another laboratory rotation. Commonly after taking the USMLE Part I examination at the end of the second medical school year, the student returns to the laboratory to begin the full-time research project. Students will then arrange with their chosen advisor an appropriate time to begin their thesis research, which will begin no more than two weeks after the student has taken USMLE Step 1. Any student who fails to obtain a passing score in USMLE Step 1 will be dismissed from the MD/PhD program and will fall under guidelines for Step 1 failure published in the TTUHSC SOM Student Handbook. Students who successfully complete the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of medical school will have completed 30 hours of credit that will be applied to the GSBS transcript and will have the 1<sup>st</sup> year graduate curriculum waived. The PhD requirements of the GSBS and the concentration in which the student has selected will apply.

In consultation with the student and the basic science academic director/advisor, a clinical co-advisor will also be identified, preferably in the first year. The GSBS Associate Dean will serve as the facilitator of this process. This clinical advisor will be a part of the student committee, however, s/he will only have voting rights if they also hold a graduate faculty appointment.

In the third year, the student will work intensively on their doctoral research project. Most of the students at the end of the 3rd year or early in the 4<sup>th</sup> year have completed their course work. The course requirements are determined by the individual concentrations and may vary depending on the area of research. Generally by the time the coursework is completed, the student is well established in research with his or her thesis mentor. The length of time that is required to complete the research, write a dissertation and defend can vary. No influence is exerted by the concentration to attempt to shorten this phase of training. When the students are engaged in their research, they are subject to the same rules and expectations as any other doctoral students within that concentration. In addition to the preparatory work accomplished in the first two years while in medical school, the students commonly spend three and a half to four years in their graduate training. Students may not start their clinical rotations until the dissertation has been successfully defended.

Students are encouraged to arrange shadowing experiences with their clinical mentor throughout their research project to maintain the clinical skills they obtained in the Early Clinical Experience blocks. The clinical clerkships will be completed on the campus where the doctoral research project was conducted.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION: Acceptable MCAT, GRE, and GPA scores are required. Previous research experience and motivation will be key features in the evaluation. The GRE is encouraged of all students applying to the MD/PhD program. In some cases the GRE requirement may be waived by the academic department based on the MCAT score.

RETENTION CRITERIA: Students in the MD/PhD program must maintain:

- SOM grades of Honors or High Pass in at least 2 of 4 didactic blocks from each of the first two years of the curriculum and at least a Pass in the other two blocks. Students in the MD/PhD program must also obtain at least a grade of Pass in the Early Clinical Experience I and II blocks and any other curricular requirements.
- GSBS grades of B or better in each course
- GSBS Cumulative GPA of 3.5 or better

Any student who fails to maintain the standards described above during Year 1 of the medical school curriculum will meet with the MD/PhD evaluation committee. The MD/PhD committee will determine the appropriate course of action, which may result in the student being placed on academic probation. A student who is on probation after Year 1 and who fails to maintain these standards in Year 2 of the medical school curriculum will be dismissed from the MD/PhD program. The requirements to maintain a funded status in the MD/PhD program are at a higher level than those for retention in either the School of Medicine or the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. The student may withdraw from one or the other of the two Schools and continue in the School of their choice if they continue to meet its standards of performance and conduct. Any student who withdraws from the PhD component of the program must apply for early reinstatement to medical school through the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. An Exit Interview with a representative from the Operating Committee is required of all students withdrawing from the program.

THE MD/PHD OPERATING COMMITTEE consists of the Dean of the GSBS, the GSBS Associate Dean (the Chair of this committee), the Dean of the School of Medicine, and the SOM

Associate Dean for Admissions (or a designee named by the SOM Dean). In addition, the following members will be appointed in January by the GSBS Dean to serve 3 year terms. These appointments will be staggered to provide for continuity of the committees work:

- representatives from the faculty of the clinical departments of the School of Medicine (2),
- graduate faculty representatives from the GSBS doctoral concentrations (2) and
- One MD/PhD student.

The faculty members will be selected because of their experience with the MD/PhD program and their expertise in certain scientific areas. Student participation serves to bring the perspective of the students to the deliberations of this body and, in turn, is helpful in the career training of the students. The student will be a full voting member. The SOM Director of Admissions and the GSBS Assistant Dean will staff the committee and will not be voting members.

The Operating Committee has a number of critical responsibilities:

1. The members serve as liaisons to academic departments or interdisciplinary programs;
2. It reviews and advises on guidelines and general management decisions;
3. The members are available as advisors to the students;
4. In regard to individuals and any problem which may arise, the members may serve in an advisory function or sometimes as active intermediaries; and
5. A representative from the committee will conduct exit interviews for students withdrawing from the program.

**STUDENT EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE:** The MD/PhD student along with the student's major advisor, Graduate Advisor, SOM Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and the SOM Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will attend annual reviews conducted by the GSBS Associate Dean in June of every year. The evaluation is signed by the student, the GSBS Associate Dean, and the SOM Associate Dean, and is maintained in the student's GSBS and SOM files. A copy of the signed evaluation is also provided to the student. A standardized form (Attachment C) is used to reflect grades for the term, an account of the student's motivation, initiative, participation and overall level of scholarship and research aptitude. The committee also advises on the future program components and timelines. Notification of probationary or dismissal status is also made in writing. Should a student perform unsatisfactorily in a term in which he/she is on probation, the student is subject to dismissal from the MD/PhD program. Dismissal from the combined degree program, or voluntary withdrawal shall result in discontinuance of the student's stipend.

The Student Evaluation Subcommittee will also be responsible for reviewing student grades after each semester or block, especially for students on academic probation. The Associate Dean will report to the Operating Committee in June of every year on the progress of the students.

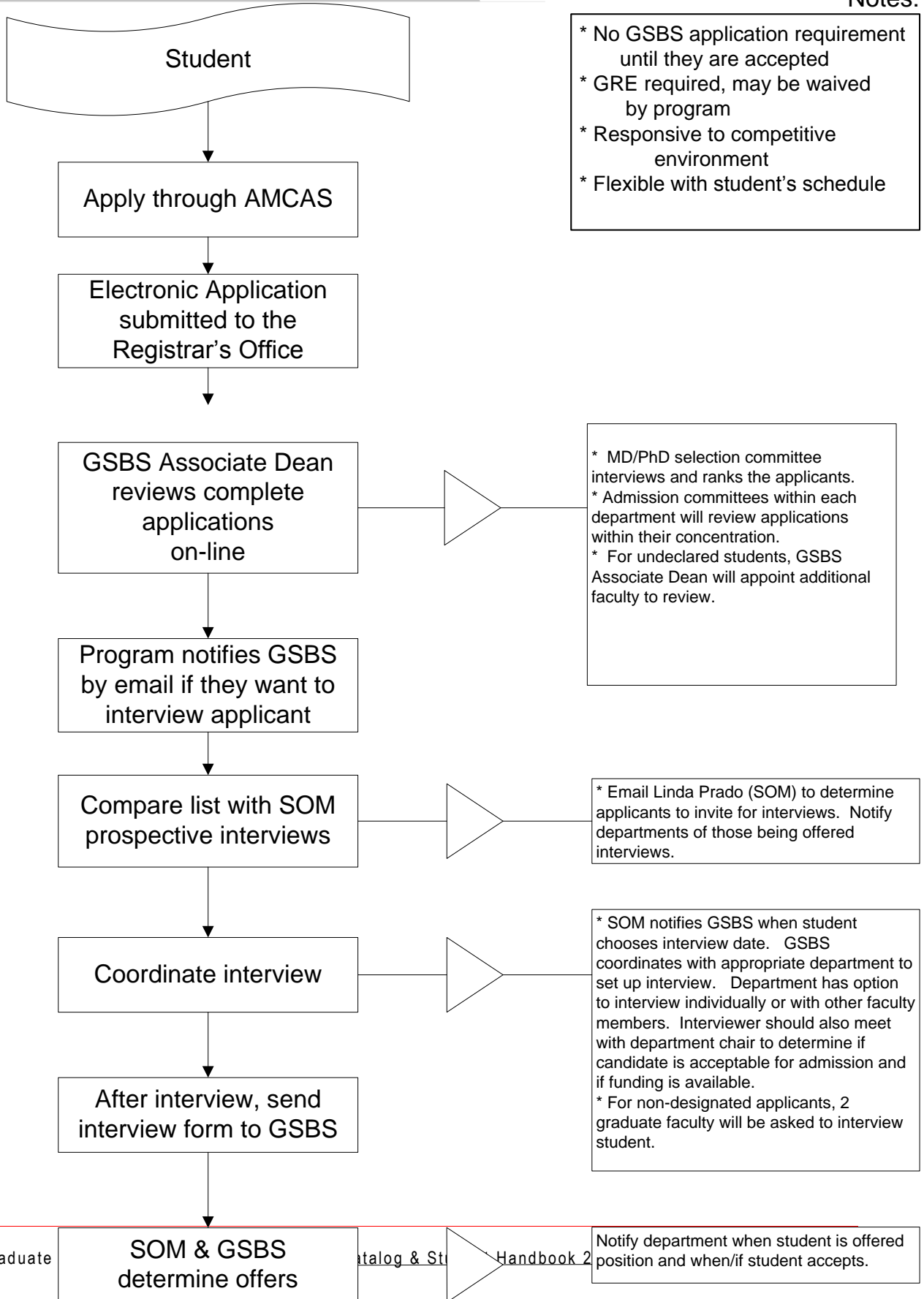
**DIPLOMA:** Upon completion of the PhD requirements, MD/PhD students will receive their PhD diploma at the next designated graduation date (May, August or December). Students are encouraged to attend the GSBS convocation ceremony the following May. However, they will not attend Commencement exercises until completion of the MD degree. At that time, they will receive special recognition.

The School of Medicine and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences reserve the right to make changes in the MD/PhD program. Changes in policies and procedures will not be altered retrospectively and thus matriculated students will complete the MD/PhD program according to requirements in effect at the time of admission.

Revised and amended: July 2000, May 2008, April 2010

# MD/PhD Process

Notes:



- \* No GSBS application requirement until they are accepted
- \* GRE required, may be waived by program
- \* Responsive to competitive environment
- \* Flexible with student's schedule

\* MD/PhD selection committee interviews and ranks the applicants.  
 \* Admission committees within each department will review applications within their concentration.  
 \* For undeclared students, GSBS Associate Dean will appoint additional faculty to review.

\* Email Linda Prado (SOM) to determine applicants to invite for interviews. Notify departments of those being offered interviews.

\* SOM notifies GSBS when student chooses interview date. GSBS coordinates with appropriate department to set up interview. Department has option to interview individually or with other faculty members. Interviewer should also meet with department chair to determine if candidate is acceptable for admission and if funding is available.  
 \* For non-designated applicants, 2 graduate faculty will be asked to interview student.

Notify department when student is offered position and when/if student accepts.

APPLICANT:	SS #:
Interview Date:	Interviewer:

RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS - Section I	
Shows a high level of self motivation involving past work or research experiences	
Shows a high commitment to PhD program	
Previous research experience:	

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION, INTELLECTUALISM, & APPEARANCE - Section II	
Ability to speak constructively and with clarity	
Additional Comments:	

LETTERS OF EVALUATION	
Comments:	

Other Comments:	<b>Admission Priority:</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	High
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not eligible for admission

\*\*\* Please return to GSBS Office, MS 6206 \*\*\*



## *Programs (New, Terminating & Changing Delivery Format)*

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Purpose: To outline the procedure for initiating and developing new degree programs, for changing delivery format for degree programs, and for terminating existing degree programs.

### 1. Proposing New Programs

- a. Although a proposal for a new graduate degree program commonly originates at the departmental level, development of the proposal should be preceded by conferences with the GSBS Dean and Health Sciences Center President, who will encourage or discourage continued development of the proposal on the basis of university priorities.
- b. Once a department receives encouragement or approval to develop a new degree program, it will prepare a proposal in accordance with the guidelines of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), which is available from the [THECB Web site](#). If the proposal includes delivery of all or part of the program through distance learning, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) *Substantive Change Procedures*, available on the [SACS Web site](#), will be consulted and followed. Highest priorities for consideration of new programs shall be given to:
  1. Adequacy of faculty and facilities to undertake the program;
  2. Cost and relative impact on existing programs;
  3. Numbers and kinds of students who likely will enter the program if approved;
  4. Market relevance for the academic degree;
  5. Long-term market and educational sustainability; and
  6. Allocation of resources within the state and university in consideration of priorities.
- d. The proposal first should have the review and approval of the department and then be forwarded to the GSBS Office. The GSBS Office will send the proposal to the Graduate Council for review and approval at the next monthly graduate council meeting.
- e. A proposal for a new graduate degree program is reviewed by members of the Graduate Council. The graduate council may recommend approval or it may send the proposal back for revisions and/or clarification before making a recommendation to the GSBS Dean. Proposals approved at the Graduate Council level are forwarded to the GSBS Dean for review and approval.
- f. If approved by the GSBS Dean, the proposal will be forwarded through the President to the Board of Regents for final review at the university level. At any one of the review stages, a proposal may be rejected or sent back to the originating department for revision and/or additional information.
- g. If the proposal is approved through all university levels, it will be transmitted by the Office of the President to the THECB for final review. The staff of the THECB requests a minimum of three months for review prior to Board action although, frequently, a longer timeline is needed.
- h. Prior to offering any distance education or off-campus courses or programs for the first time, GSBS must submit an Institutional Plan for Distance Education and Off-Campus Instruction to the THECB for approval ([THECB Rules and Regulations, Chapter 4, Subchapter E, "Approval of Distance Education and Off-Campus Instruction for Public Colleges and Universities."](#))

## **2. Reviewing Courses for New Programs**

- a. Any new courses proposed as part of new program proposals will be reviewed as all other new courses are reviewed: with the understanding that final approval is dependent upon THECB acceptance of the new program.
- b. Proposed new courses must be submitted using the [Course Approval Form](#) and forwarded with the program proposal so that both courses and the overall program description may be treated as a package.
- c. The GSBS Office will hold the course applications until the Board of Regents and the THECB approve the programs. The office will then complete the paperwork and send to the Registrar's Office where the courses will be entered on the THECB inventory.
- d. New courses proposed as a part of a new degree program will not be included in catalog copy until the program is approved by the THECB. New courses must be approved by Graduate Council prior to December 31 in order to be added to the course catalog and to be available for the upcoming scholastic year.

## **3. Changing Method of Delivery of Existing Programs**

- a. Changes in method of delivery of existing programs that result in 50 percent or more of the program being offered via electronic telecommunications require prior approval by the Board of Regents and subsequent notification to the THECB. These changes also require prior SACS notification and approval and the submission of a substantive change prospectus. The Substantive Change Procedures, which may be obtained from the SACS Web site, should be submitted along with the request to change the method of delivery of the existing degree program. The Office of the President will notify SACS six months prior to the anticipated implementation of the modified degree program.
- b. The following routing is required to approve changes in method of delivery: Department, GSBS Office, Graduate Council, President and Board of Regents.

## **4. Termination of Existing Programs**

- a. A program may be terminated for various reasons, but such action will be preceded by full study and consultation by the parties concerned. Persistent under-enrollment, loss of critical faculty, a shift in priorities, or financial exigency are some of the issues that might lead to termination of programs.
- b. Before any program is terminated, the rationale for such action will be presented and considered by the program involved and its department Chair and GSBS Dean. When the necessity for action has been established, the Graduate Council will review the proposed change for graduate programs. After such review, the GSBS Dean will render the final decision in consultation with the President.
- c. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will be notified by the GSBS Office of any program termination.

For more institutional information reference [HSC OP 60.11 \(New Degree Programs, Change in Delivery Format, and Degree Program Termination\)](#)

## *Recruitment & Retention*

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Purpose: To describe recruitment and retention strategies for GSBS

### **RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES**

**GSBS Website:** This is an effective tool for exposing prospective students to the programs available in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. The GSBS website has links to webpages for each program/ concentration.

**Online Applications:** Students are also able to apply to the Graduate School electronically via the website.

**Research Assistantships:** Many GSBS students receive a Research Assistantship which helps them financially and classifies them as employees of TTUHSC. This classification qualifies them for in-state tuition and health insurance benefits.

**Competitive Scholarship:** Exempts a student from payment of nonresident tuition over and above resident tuition. Student must be awarded a competitive scholarship of at least \$1,000 for the academic year or summer of their enrollment and be either a nonresident or citizen of a country other than the United States. Student must compete with other students including Texas residents and the award must be made through a duly recognized scholarship committee. Certification is sent to the HSC Student Business Services Office, Room 2C188 from the Financial Aid Office.

**Regional and National Recruiting:** GSBS attends various school career fairs and national science conferences to attract a wide range of students.

**Local Recruiting Events:** GSBS offers many on-site events that draw students regionally and nationally.

**Student Research Week.** An interdisciplinary forum designed to:

- stimulate exchange of research information among students
- highlight exceptional research performed by students in training
- expose students to the latest research advancements through seminars presented by distinguished biomedical scientists
- recruit regional students into our graduate degree program
- award scholarships in various categories of the poster presentations

**School of Pharmacy Research Days.** A forum for faculty, graduate students, research interns, postdocs, technicians, and residents to interact and exchange ideas for possible collaborations. It is a mixture of oral presentations from leading scientists that are invited and faculty and poster presentations from students, postdocs and residents. This meeting provides an opportunity for graduate students to showcase their research work and provides opportunity for faculty/student interaction.

**Summer Accelerated Biomedical Research (SABR) Internships.** Available to students interested in pursuing a career in basic biomedical research. The SABR Internships are intensive, 10 week opportunities for students to perform basic biomedical research while receiving a stipend. This summer program is located in Lubbock, Texas.

**Amarillo Biomedical Research Internships (ABRI).** Available to students interested in pursuing a career in biomedical research. ABRI is a 10 week program of intense research organized by the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Pharmacy in conjunction with the Pharmaceutical Sciences Program through the graduate school. Each student receives a stipend during the internship

**Annual Tour and Dinner.** Every year GSBS invites top TTU students to an evening of lab tours and dinner with some of our faculty. Students are targeted from undergraduate areas of study that naturally lend to getting a graduate degree in Biomedical Sciences.

### **Endowments and Scholarships:**

- Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS)
- AT&T Chancellor's Graduate Fellowships established in 1997.
- Dean's Scholar Award – established in 2006
- GSBS Endowed Scholarship established in 2000
- Mary Lou Clements Scholarship established in 2000

**Recruitment Budget:** A small fund is allocated for the recruitment of students. Expenses include:

- Travel for faculty and staff to attend recruitment fairs
- Site visits for prospective students for special events
- Scholarships for students who place in the poster presentation during the TTUHSC Student Research Week
- Recruitment displays, brochures and giveaways
- Miscellaneous SABR Expenses

## ***Research Assistantships***

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**Purpose:** To outline the Texas Education Code and to list benefits provided to research assistantship positions.

**Texas Education Code Statute: Section 54.063.** A teaching assistant or research assistant of any institution of higher education and the spouse and children of such a teaching assistant or research assistant are entitled to register in a state institution of higher education by paying the tuition fees and other fees or charges required for Texas residents under Section 54.063 of this code, without regard to the length of time the assistant has resided in Texas if the assistant is employed at least one-half time in a teaching or research assistant position which is related to the assistant's degree program under rules and regulations established by the employer institution.

Students employed as teaching or research assistants employed at least half time by any public institution of higher education in a degree program-related position may pay the same tuition while attending any public institution of higher education as a resident of Texas for themselves, their spouses, and their dependent children, regardless of the length of residence in the state. The institution which employs the students shall determine whether or not the students' jobs relate to their degree programs. If the spouse or children attend an institution other than the one employing the research or teaching assistant, they must provide proof of his or her current employment to the college they attend. It is the intent of this rule that employment be for the duration of the period of enrollment for which a waiver is awarded.

**Enrollment.** Students on research assistantships must be full-time students. The minimum enrollment for full-time graduate status is 9 hours in the regular semester and at least 6 hours in the summer term. Students on assistantships must matriculate every semester or the assistantship will be temporarily suspended until the next semester of matriculation. All doctoral students upon acceptance into GSBS, regardless of academic standing, will have a research assistantship funded either by the GSBS or the department. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Dean.

**Fee Waivers.** Students must be appointed before the 12<sup>th</sup> class day of the fall or spring semester (4<sup>th</sup> class day of the summer term) as a benefits eligible research assistant with employment of at least one-half time to be eligible for fee waivers. Fee waiver forms must be completed EVERY semester and submitted to the Bursar's office for processing. The student must be employed for 4 ½ months in a semester to qualify for the waivers. If the student leaves early or does not meet the 4 ½ month criteria, the fee waivers will be revoked and the student will be required to pay the balance due.

1. **Fee Assistance Program:** Exempts, by Board of Regents action, the student from the payment of Institutional Tuition Student Services Fee, Information Technology Fee, Library Fee, University Fee, Recreation Center Fee, and Course Fees.
2. **Non-Resident State Tuition Exemption Form:** Exempts a student from the payment of non-resident tuition over and above the state resident rate.
3. **Medical Services Waiver Form:** Waives the student from payment of the Medical Services Fee.

**Fee Waivers forms are maintained by the TTUHSC Bursar's office and available on the Bursar's office website.**

**For additional information on student employment, please refer to HSC OP 70.27 – Appointment of Student Employees**

## *Student Health Information*

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Purpose: To define the availability of health services to graduate students.

1. **STUDENT FEES:** All HSC students are required to pay the TTUHSC Medical Services Fee each semester. With this fee, you can access healthcare in the clinic and see a nurse or physician at no charge for minimal or limited minor problems. Students who hold Research Assistantships may elect to waive the medical services fee since they are considered employees and are eligible for employee health benefits. More information on this fee and its benefits can be located at the [Student Services Site](#).
  
2. **REQUIRED HEALTH INSURANCE:** All GSBS students are required to have adequate health insurance, which is separate from the Medical Services Fee. GSBS will occasionally require students to bring their insurance cards to the office to prove insurance coverage. Options for health insurance include:
  - a. Research Assistantships are eligible to pay for employee health benefits. You must visit Human Resources to sign up for this insurance.
  - b. Students may purchase the HSC Academic Health Plan. For more information on this plan see the [Student Services Site](#).
  - c. Students may purchase health insurance outside of the HSC.
  - d. Students may be covered by their family insurance plan.