

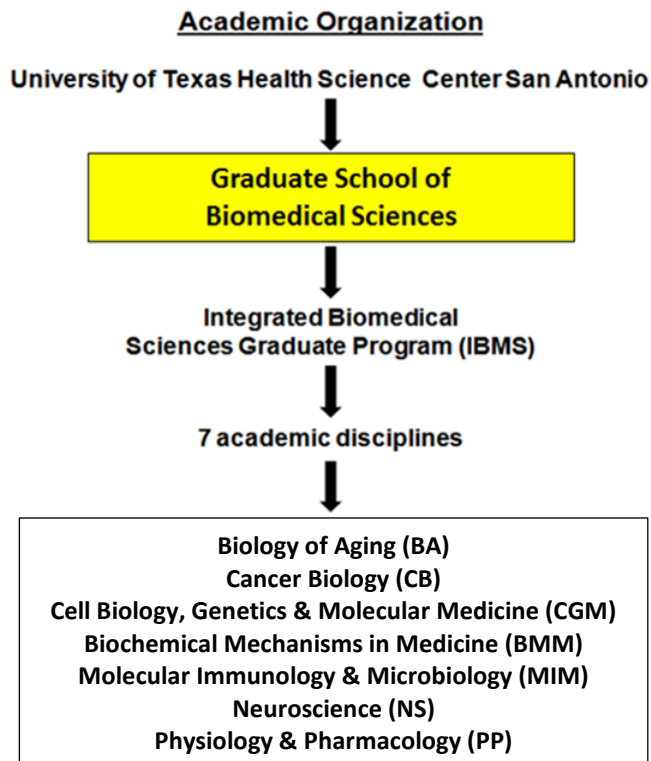
Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBMS) Graduate Program

Handbook of Policies and Procedures

(Revised 09-13-2022)

Preface

This Handbook is designed 1) to describe the academic and administrative structure that serves as the framework for the Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBMS) Graduate Program, and 2) to define for IBMS Ph.D. students and faculty mentors the mechanics for meeting the programmatic expectations and achieving the milestones required for graduation.



As noted in the figure to left, the Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBMS) Graduate Program is a Ph.D.-granting program in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) of UT Health San Antonio. Several hundred faculty members from throughout 6 basic science departments of the GSBS, as well as from several clinical departments and off-campus institutions, are members of the IBMS program. Each year, students are admitted into the IBMS Graduate Program.

Based on the research interests of individual members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty, seven thematic “disciplines” have been designated that provide a structure and mechanism to foster interactions and facilitate teaching and research collaborations among faculty members and students with common interests. Therefore, each faculty member has an affiliation with

one or more IBMS discipline(s).

Each IBMS graduate student is a member of the IBMS Graduate Program and has access to all offerings of the Program, regardless of discipline affiliation. However, all students are required to identify one of the disciplines of the Program as their “primary discipline-of-interest”, and as such will follow a particular core curriculum, or Plan of Study, provided by the executive leadership of the chosen discipline. This core curriculum can accommodate certain modifications so as to most closely serve the needs of the student. Assurance that programmatic guidelines are met by IBMS graduate students is the primary responsibility of the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS). Appropriate coordination and communication is in place to ensure that discipline activities remain consistent with the expectations and requirements of the IBMS Graduate Program.

The 3 sections included in this Handbook describe: 1) The administrative structure of the IBMS Graduate Program pertinent to both students and faculty; 2) The processes and procedures for all IBMS students to meet graduation requirements; and 3) Guidelines that are customized to ensure that the discipline-specific educational needs of students are met.

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I. Organizational Structure of the IBMS Graduate Program

The general organizational structure of the Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBMS) Graduate Program is summarized in the Preface of this document. The rights and responsibilities of the IBMS Graduate Faculty, as well as the structure and function of IBMS committees, are described below. **The IBMS Assistant Program Director (APD)** will provide support, as needed, to the IBMS Program Director and to the Chair of the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies. The APD will serve as Chair of the IBMS Discipline Coordinators Council and maintain a modified version of the IBMS Handbook for use by the IBMS discipline coordinators.

A. Program Director

The **Program Director (PD)** of the IBMS Graduate Program is appointed by and reports to the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS). The PD is responsible for the administration, monitoring, review and evaluation of the IBMS Graduate Program according to criteria and schedules established by the agencies requiring such reviews, *e.g.*, the UT System, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The PD also serves as liaison between the IBMS Graduate Program and the accreditation agencies, the IBMS COGS and the six Basic Science Departments, and the Dean of the GSBS.

In addition, the PD will:

- Maintain, and revise when required, the IBMS program pages of the **University catalog**.
- Collect, evaluate, and submit **programmatic data and assessments** needed by the GSBS Dean's Office (*i.e.*, Director of Academic Assessment and Compliance) for reports to UT System and accreditation agencies (*e.g.*, THECB, SACS).
- Oversee the organization of **new student orientation** activities.
- Facilitate requests for **appointments to IBMS Graduate Faculty**.
- Perform periodic **review of IBMS Graduate Faculty**.
- Perform periodic **review of the IBMS program and its disciplines** as required by the THECB.
- Organize periodic meetings with the IBMS Graduate Faculty and students in order to provide opportunities for updates and discussion of programmatic issues.
- Work with the IBMS COGS chair to improve the quality of the Program, and for resolving problems that impede the ability of the IBMS students to progress successfully to graduation.
- Make recommendations to the Dean of the GSBS regarding **administrative support** required by the IBMS program to execute the functions of the committees and the IBMS disciplines; this includes both financial and personnel support. The Graduate Dean's Office will provide support based on documented time, effort and commitment of faculty in leadership positions in the IBMS program and, where appropriate and in consultation with the relevant department chairs, provide through the annual budgeting process monetary compensation for faculty and administrator time.
- Be a member of the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies, non-voting, *ex officio*.
- Be a member of the Discipline Coordinators Council, non-voting, *ex officio*.

B. COGS Chair

The **Chair of the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS)** is selected by the COGS membership and is responsible for developing and implementing all policies, guidelines and procedures that are required to provide an effective academic framework for the Program so as to ensure the effective movement of students through their academic milestones.

In addition, the IBMS COGS chair will:

- Maintain the **IBMS Handbook of Policies and Procedures**, including adding updates when new or revised policies or procedures are enacted by the IBMS COGS.
- Preside over monthly meetings with the IBMS COGS.
- Ensure **communication** and interactions between IBMS COGS and IBMS Program Director.
- Write and seek approval for new **IBMS student policies and procedures**.
- Ensure effective **implementation** of IBMS student policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- Ensure effective and timely academic progress by all IBMS students by maintaining a framework of **administrative and programmatic continuity**; coordinate actions and activities of discipline directors and their academic coordinators.
- Oversee operations of **IBMS subcommittees** (*e.g.*, Student Recruitment, Student Admissions, Curriculum).
- Serve as the Student Advisor for IBMS students during their first academic year until students choose a dissertation mentor and discipline. Once a student chooses a primary discipline affiliation, the director (or designee) of that discipline will serve as Student Advisor.
- Serve as course director of IBMS 5008 **Laboratory Rotations**; Facilitate and coordinate i) selections by students of Laboratory Rotation Advisors, ii) submissions of rotation reports by students, and iii) submissions of evaluations by rotation advisors.
- Facilitate and coordinate selections by students of permanent faculty **dissertation mentors and discipline affiliations**.
- Ensure timely **posting of grades** for IBMS courses.
- Serve as the IBMS program representative on the **Graduate Faculty Council**.
- Oversee activities of the IBMS Student Council, including approval of its chair and membership.

C. IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS)

• Membership

Directors of the 7 IBMS disciplines (described in the next section).

Chair, IBMS Student Council; non-voting.

Director, IBMS Program, *ex officio*, non-voting

Assistant Director, IBMS Program (and Chair of the Council of Discipline Coordinators), non-voting

Senior Associate Dean; *ex officio*, non-voting.

Directors of the DDS/PhD and MD/PhD programs invited as needed; *ex officio*, non-voting.

COGS Chair/Chair-elect: Determined via election by voting COGS members.

Term: 2 yr as Chair (no term limit); new Chair must serve as Chair-elect for one yr.

- **Responsibilities**

COGS will develop policies and procedures for the IBMS Graduate Program and will oversee the activities of the IBMS Student Admissions Committee, Student Recruitment Committee and the Curriculum Committee. COGS will provide the organization and facilitate the communication between students and faculty, and among faculty members of all disciplines necessary to promote the primary missions of the IBMS Graduate Program; and to ensure consistency, cohesiveness, integration and quality control across disciplines.

The IBMS COGS will be responsible for providing “a carefully planned and systematic program of study and a degree plan” (language taken from THECB criteria for new doctoral programs) for students in the IBMS Graduate Program. It will establish the academic requirements and processes for: a) Matriculating high quality students into the Program; b) Providing a high quality curriculum with requisite coursework; c) Granting approvals of student Dissertation Mentor selections and dissertation supervising committee memberships; d) Advancing students to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree; and e) Ensuring that research goals are met that are consistent with graduates from an exemplary Ph.D. program. IBMS COGS will also support MD/PhD and DDS/PhD advisory committees in developing Plans of Study for dual-degree students who enter the IBMS Graduate Program.

The IBMS COGS will make recommendations to the Dean of the GSBS, via the IBMS Program Director, for faculty members to be appointed to the IBMS Graduate Faculty (see **Supplement I of this Handbook**).

The IBMS COGS will make a periodic review, at least every five years, of all IBMS Graduate Faculty with respect to their participation in and contributions to the IBMS Graduate Program (expectations described in **Supplement IA of this Handbook**). Results of such reviews will be reported to the Dean of the GSBS, via the IBMS Program Director, with recommendations regarding IBMS faculty members as warranted by the results of the review.

- **COGS Meetings**

COGS will meet once a month unless there is insufficient business to justify a meeting. When necessary and appropriate, the Chair of COGS may call for a special meeting of the committee to discuss and/or vote on critical issues regarding graduate students or the graduate program. Such critical issues include, but are not limited to: student dismissal decisions, removal of individuals from the graduate faculty, major curriculum changes and other substantive changes to the program. Meetings will be conducted as follows:

- *Rules of Procedure:* Robert’s Rules of Order for small groups.
- *Agenda:* Copies of the meeting agenda will be sent to COGS members prior to a meeting. No action will be taken at an COGS meeting unless the item of business was on the published agenda. Exceptions to this requires the unanimous consent of members of COGS present.
- *Voting:* A quorum of voting COGS members must be present to conduct official business. One-half plus one of the COGS members constitutes a quorum. A motion is considered passed when it is approved by a majority of those COGS members present and voting.
- *Minutes:* The Chair of COGS and a recording secretary shall compile and sign the minutes of each COGS meeting. Members of COGS will be allowed to request revisions prior to approval. The minutes will be filed in the office of the IBMS Assistant Program Director and distributed to all COGS members.

D. Thematic Disciplines

The IBMS is composed of 7 thematic disciplines as follows:

- Biology of Aging [BA]
- Cancer Biology [CB]
- Cell Biology, Genetics & Molecular Medicine [CGM]
- Biochemical Mechanisms in Medicine [BMM]
- Molecular Immunology & Microbiology [MIM]
- Neuroscience [NS]
- Physiology & Pharmacology [P&P]

• Discipline Membership

An IBMS Discipline is composed of faculty members with shared academic and research interests who 1) Have received approvals to seek membership on the IBMS Graduate Faculty by the chair of the department in which they hold their primary appointments; 2) Have provided evidence of their qualifications for training graduate students and are subsequently approved for appointment as members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty (**Supplement I of this Handbook**); and 3) Have officially declared their affiliations with particular disciplines based on their scientific expertise and qualifications for training students of those disciplines.

IBMS Graduate Faculty members may declare affiliations with more than one discipline; a primary discipline affiliation would indicate significant participation in, and contributions to, the operations of that discipline (*e.g.*, teaching and committee service). A secondary discipline affiliation would be indicative of a faculty member who occasionally participates in discipline operations. A faculty member may indicate dual primary discipline affiliations if contributions to two disciplines are equivalent. In some instances, where a faculty member has strong ties to additional groups of faculty and their research interests, additional disciplines beyond primary and secondary may be selected as “other affiliations”.

Each Discipline will have a discipline executive committee (see **Supplement II of this Handbook** for the internal organization/function of disciplines) with a Director (**Supplement III of this Handbook**), Deputy Director and Student Advisor (usually the Discipline Director or Deputy Director).

• Responsibilities

Discipline faculty, through their respective executive committees, are responsible for directing, monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the students’ graduate education according to policies and procedures established by the IBMS COGS. Each Discipline is responsible for providing a specific Plan of Study and a timeline expected of its students. Furthermore, Disciplines will report student progress to the IBMS COGS (*e.g.*, reports of major student advances or failures in academic progress such as Qualifying Exam results, Admissions to Candidacy, Research Progress, Defense of Dissertations, etc.) and, where appropriate, seek COGS approvals. Although the overall structure and procedures of the individual disciplines are designed to promote integration and collaboration among all IBMS disciplines, in order to provide the most effective training to its students, there may be certain “discipline-specific” expectations. Furthermore, although the disciplines of the IBMS Graduate Program are not academically aligned with any specific department, strong administrative relationships with the departmental structure is maintained by the membership of IBMS Graduate Faculty with particular academic departments.

- **Discipline Name Changes**

Discipline name change procedure for the IBMS program:

1. Discussion among the discipline leadership, faculty, and students to choose a suitable new name for the discipline.
2. Discussion and approval of the name change by the IBMS COGS.
3. Discussion and approval of the name change by the Council of Chairs.
4. Submission of a memo from the discipline director to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs of the GSBS indicating the reason for the name change and the steps taken to inform the faculty and students of the name change. Additionally, students must be given the option to remain under the current discipline name if they so choose. Copies of communications with the students as supporting documentation must be submitted with the memo to the Associate Dean. Include an effective date after consulting with the Assistant Director of the IBMS program.
5. Final approval by the Associate Dean and/or Dean of the GSBS.
6. Implementation of the name change with the Registrar in coordination with changes to IMPACT, the GSBS website, PeopleSoft, etc.

- **Internal Organization and Function of Each Discipline**

The internal organization and function of each discipline is described in **Supplement II of this Handbook**. Briefly, Discipline Directors (DD) are selected by COGS from a list of nominees solicited from the relevant discipline faculty membership. DDs serve 3-year terms; there are no term limits. DDs are responsible for keeping the IBMS COGS informed regarding the status of all students in their disciplines. The DD (or designee) will serve as Student Advisor for all students who enter that Discipline and will serve to advise students with regard to the appropriate Plan of Study and any other academic process required of the students.

E. IBMS Graduate Faculty

- **Membership and Appointment**

All UT Health San Antonio faculty members are eligible to be appointed to the IBMS Graduate Faculty. Individuals from non-HSC institutions may also be eligible for appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty, but **must first receive adjunct appointments** to the faculty of a HSC department before consideration. Every request by a faculty member for appointment to the Graduate Faculty must first be approved by the chair of the candidate's department of primary faculty appointment. Requests for appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty must follow the policies and procedures outlined in **Supplement I of this Handbook**. Credentials of all Graduate Faculty must be reviewed by the IBMS COGS every 5 years.

It is expected that any member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty who wishes to mentor graduate students must demonstrate sufficient research resources, a laboratory environment and research projects appropriate for the training of Ph.D. graduate students, as well as some mentoring experience. Under certain circumstances, a new IBMS Graduate Faculty member may be assigned a senior co-mentor to enhance graduate student training.

- **Rights and Responsibilities** (expanded in **Supplement I of this Handbook**)

Rights and Responsibilities of the IBMS Graduate Faculty:

- IBMS Graduate Faculty members may mentor or co-mentor IBMS graduate students.

- IBMS Graduate Faculty members may serve on student committees of IBMS students (*e.g.*, qualifying exam and dissertation committees).
 - Only IBMS Graduate Faculty members can act as directors of courses in the Plans of Study of IBMS disciplines. Non-Graduate Faculty can serve as instructors but cannot take on primary responsibilities in directing or organizing such courses.
 - Only IBMS Graduate Faculty members can serve on IBMS graduate program committees (*e.g.*, COGS, admissions, recruitment, curriculum committees).
 - Only IBMS Graduate Faculty members can serve as Discipline Directors.
 - IBMS Graduate Faculty members are expected to have collegial interactions with other members of graduate faculty including, but not limited to, collaborative research, collaborative or interdisciplinary teaching, service on student examination or supervising committees, and other joint scholarly ventures.
- **Additional Discipline Affiliations Declared After Initial Appointment**

An IBMS Graduate Faculty member wishing to declare a discipline affiliation after initial appointment does not require full review. The member should request such an affiliation from the relevant Discipline Director who will obtain confirmation from the discipline's leadership. A research seminar to the discipline's faculty may be requested of the candidate. Subsequently, the DD will contact the IBMS Program Director so that appropriate revisions are made to the IBMS faculty roster and website. Changes in discipline affiliations can be initiated by faculty members.
 - **Procedure for Removal of Discipline Faculty**

Removal of a discipline faculty member will be determined by the Discipline Executive Committee.
 - **Recommendation to Remove IBMS Faculty**

The IBMS COGS will make the recommendation to the Graduate Dean to terminate the IBMS appointment of a faculty member.

F. IBMS Student Recruitment Committee

- **Membership**

Membership will be composed of individuals who represent the 7 IBMS disciplines, as well as IBMS leadership. The committee will make recommendations to the IBMS COGS regarding student recruitment. Membership will include:

 - One GSBS department chair who will represent the Council of Chairs
 - One IBMS discipline director who will serve as the liaison between the committee and the IBMS COGS
 - Seven members representing each of the 7 disciplines; typically these members are the chairs of the local discipline recruitment committees; terms set by discipline leadership
 - Chair of the IBMS Admissions Committee
 - One member of the Council of Discipline Coordinators, non-voting
 - One member of the GSBS Dean's Office serving as liaison with the Dean's Office, non-voting

- Director, IBMS Program, *ex officio*, non-voting
- Two student representatives selected by the IBMS Student Council and approved by the IBMS COGS Chair, non-voting
- Chair/Chair-elect selected by the Recruitment Committee membership and approved by the IBMS COGS; 2 year term, no term limits; new Chair should serve as Chair-elect for one yr.

- **Responsibilities**

In collaboration with assigned persons in the Graduate Dean's office, members of this committee are responsible for organizing and coordinating all IBMS recruiting activities including IBMS interview weekends, and recruiting activities performed at relevant scientific conferences or at undergraduate campuses. The Recruitment Committee will oversee the maintenance of the IBMS website. The IBMS Student Recruitment Committee will make recommendations regarding recruitment strategies to the IBMS COGS, who will subsequently engage the Dean and/or Associate Dean for Student Affairs in order to garner the support of the GSBS Dean's office.

The IBMS Student Recruitment Committee will meet throughout the year as often as deemed necessary, most frequently during the application and interviewing season. The committee may request additional individuals to attend specific meetings who have specific knowledge and expertise that may be deemed useful. Reports and recommendations of each meeting of the Student Recruitment Committee will be sent to the Chair of the IBMS COGS for dissemination to the full COGS membership.

- **Discipline Recruitment Activities**

Each discipline should have a "local" committee that will implement recommendations of the IBMS Student Recruitment Committee at the discipline level. The IBMS Recruitment Committee will proactively invite input from discipline recruitment committees and will consider requests, ideas, suggestions and concerns. The organization and implementation of specific (local) recruiting activities, however, will remain the full responsibility of each discipline's student recruitment committee.

G. IBMS Student Admissions Committee

- **Membership**

- Three faculty members from each of the IBMS disciplines appointed by discipline executive committees
- One member of the Council of Discipline Coordinators, non-voting
- Associate Dean for Student Affairs; *ex officio*, non-voting
- Chair/Chair-elect selected by the Admissions Committee membership and approved by the IBMS COGS; 2 year term, no term limit; new Chair should serve as Chair-elect for one yr.
- Director, IBMS Program, *ex officio*, non-voting

- **Responsibilities**

Review all applications for admission to the IBMS Graduate Program, identify the most highly qualified students to interview, and ultimately to recommend applicants to the Dean of the GSBS for admission. The IBMS Admissions Committee will make recommendations to the IBMS COGS regarding admission requirements, as well as the mechanics of processing applications.

H. IBMS Curriculum Committee

- **Membership**

- One faculty member from each IBMS discipline appointed by discipline executive committees.
- Director of IBMS 5000 *Fundamentals of Biomedical Sciences*; as *ex officio*, non-voting.
- One IBMS student representative selected by the IBMS Student Council and approved by the IBMS COGS Chair; non-voting.
- One member of the Council of Discipline Coordinators, non-voting.
- Chair/Chair elect is selected by the Curriculum Committee membership and approved by the IBMS COGS; 2 year term, no term limit; new Chair should serve as Chair-elect for one yr.
- Director, IBMS Program, *ex officio*, non-voting

- **Responsibilities**

In consultation with and under the authority of the IBMS COGS, the IBMS Curriculum Committee is responsible for all aspects of the curriculum including the development and oversight of core courses applicable to all IBMS students; elimination of redundant courses; requests for new course approvals, coordinated scheduling of all courses; and evaluation of all courses (a SACS requirement). This committee will assist Discipline Directors in executing their responsibilities with regard to discipline-related courses and the developing and/or changing of Plans of Study.

I. Council of Chairs

- **Membership**

The chairs of the Basic Science Departments of Biochemistry & Structural Biology; Cell Systems & Anatomy; Cellular & Integrative Physiology; Microbiology, Immunology & Molecular Genetics; Molecular Medicine; Pharmacology; and the chairs of the Departments of Pathology; and Population Health Sciences.

Assistant Director, IBMS Graduate Program, *ex officio*, non-voting

Dean, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

- **Responsibilities**

In addition to its role in matters of departmental administration and budget in relation to the GSBS Dean's Office, the Council of Chairs will provide guidance to the IBMS COGS in the development and implementation of IBMS program policies and procedures. In addition to its role in activities associated with graduate education and faculty development, the Council of Chairs is will counsel the Dean and IBMS Program Director on various aspects of the IBMS Graduate Program.

J. IBMS Student Council

- **Membership**

- One student elected by and representing students from each of the seven disciplines of the IBMS doctoral program. Representatives from each IBMS discipline can be either self-nominated or nominated by a peer or faculty member. Nominations will be approved by the IBMS COGS chair. Upon confirmation, each student representative must notify the students within their represented discipline of their position.

- The Chair is selected by voting members of the Council for a one-year term; no term limit, but cannot be elected if dissertation defense/graduation is anticipated during the current academic year. The Student Council chair will be approved by the IBMS COGS chair.
 - In the case that the president of the Graduate Student Association is a doctoral student in the IBMS program, that student is strongly encouraged to serve as a Student Council representative for their program.
- **Responsibilities**
 - The IBMS Student Council chair will schedule Council meetings and communicate the results of those meetings to the IBMS COGS. The Council will be required to meet once a month (as needed) to discuss student or faculty concerns within the IBMS Graduate Program.
 - The representatives are responsible for surveying the students within their disciplines to determine whether there are any specific issues that need to be addressed by the IBMS COGS. They will also be responsible for distributing any important information from the Student Council among the students in their discipline. The members of the Student Council will be required to make a concerted effort to attend every Council meeting.
 - In interacting with the COGS, the Student Council chair will be responsible for communicating the conclusions of the monthly Council meetings, and relaying any important information from the COGS back to the students. The Student Council chair should be present at the beginning of every COGS meeting, but may be excused in the case that the COGS needs to discuss sensitive topics or personal student matters.

K. IBMS Council of Discipline Coordinators

- **Membership**
 - Academic Coordinators who represents each of the 7 IBMS disciplines.
 - IBMS Assistant Program Director, acting as Chair
 - IBMS Senior Program Coordinator(s)
 - IBMS Program Director; *ex officio*, non-voting
 - IBMS COGS chair; *ex officio*, non-voting

- **Responsibilities**

Monthly meetings of the Discipline Coordinators Council will allow the exchange of information and insights for the purpose of enhancing the administrative effectiveness and efficiency of the IBMS Graduate Program.

Maintain a Handbook of Operating Procedures that will ensure continuity and consistency in operations, across all disciplines, of the IBMS Graduate Program.

II. Student Progression and Sequential Procedures of the IBMS Graduate Program

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH STUDENT TO ADHERE TO THE TIMELINE DICTATED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE PLANS OF STUDY AND TO SUBMIT ALL DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED TO VERIFY APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC PROGRESS IN THE IBMS GRADUATE PROGRAM. A DELAY IN THE PROGRESSION DESCRIBED BELOW COULD RESULT IN A STUDENT RECEIVING A GRADE OF UNSATISFACTORY (“U”) FOR RESEARCH/ACADEMIC PROGRESS, AND POSSIBLY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF A STUDENT’S DISCIPLINE, AND/OR THE IBMS COGS, MAY GRANT A TEMPORARY DELAY DUE TO EXTREME OR EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

The following describes the general expectations and requirements of all students enrolled in the Integrated Biomedical Sciences (IBMS) Graduate Program. It is based on the general guidelines that are stated in the University/GSBS catalog. <http://catalog.uthscsa.edu/biomedicalsciences/> Although these minimal expectations are provided as a guide to students and faculty, it is understood that one of the strengths of the IBMS Graduate Program is its flexibility and adaptability with regard to the needs of individual students.

A. Milestone and Compact Agreements Between Graduate Students and Their Dissertation Mentors

- Certain documents must be completed and submitted in order to comply with UT System and GSBS mandates designed to ensure productivity and accountability, and to provide evidence to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) that the requirements and expectations of the IBMS Graduate Program are readily available and transparent. Two important documents are 1) the **Milestone Agreement** (sample form shown in **Supplement IV of this Handbook**); and 2) the **Student-Mentor Compact** (sample form shown in **Supplement V of this Handbook**).
- Pre-doctoral training entails both formal education that provides advanced scientific knowledge and theory, as well as research training under the supervision of one or more investigators who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities as a Dissertation Mentor. A positive mentoring relationship between a pre-doctoral student and his/her Dissertation Mentor is a vital component of the student's preparation for a successful career in the biomedical sciences.
- Students who pursue a graduate degree in the IBMS Graduate Program are expected to share the responsibility for their own scientific and professional development and to aggressively take advantage of the training experience provided. Students should expect that their faculty mentors will provide expert guidance and scientific training, serve as role models with regard to work ethic and integrity, and provide instruction in the responsible conduct of research and research ethics.
- Therefore, **by the end of the Year 1 Spring semester** and annually thereafter, a formal meeting and discussion between a student and his/her Dissertation Mentor is expected in order to ensure the integrity of the set of guiding principles and milestones that are intended to promote and support a positive mentoring relationship. For Ph.D. students, this meeting will be documented by the signing and official filing of the Student-Mentor Compact (official form submitted via the IMPACT website). Although the Compact is not a legally binding contract, with their signatures, both the student and the mentor confirm that all topics listed in the Compact have been discussed and that they are committed to uphold the principles agreed upon. The signed form is to be reviewed by the student's discipline executive committee and then filed in the office of the discipline's Academic Coordinator.

In addition to the Student-Mentor Compact, and also by the end of the student's Year 1 Spring semester, a student is expected to review/discuss with the Dissertation Mentor the official IBMS Milestones Agreement (official form posted submitted via the IMPACT website; signed form also to be filed in the **office of the discipline's Academic Coordinator**). This document is provided for the purpose of confirming that a student and the student's Dissertation Mentor have been clearly informed that certain programmatic milestones are expected prior to receiving the Ph.D. degree and that there is an expected timeline to complete these milestones. That is, a student is expected to reach particular milestones within a specified time period in order to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress through the Program. Failure to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress may result in a student losing funding, being placed on academic probation, or dismissal from the program.

B. Plans of Study and IBMS Coursework - Overview

Full-time student status requires class enrollment of **12.0 SCH per semester**. Prior to graduation, every student must have enrolled in a **minimum of 72.0 total SCH**. It is expected that students will graduate with **no more than 130 SCH**.

Each IBMS discipline will develop, in consultation with the IBMS Curriculum Committee, a Plan of Study for its students. Each Plan will be reviewed and approved by the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies, who will forward the Plan to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs of the GSBS, who will then forward the Plan to the Office of the Registrar for final approval and inclusion in the university catalog. Any significant proposed change in a Plan of Study must follow the same approval process.

Each student will follow a Plan of Study provided by the student's chosen discipline.

In any Plan of Study, there may be three types of courses:

- i. Required IBMS courses taken by all graduate students in the IBMS Graduate Program.
- ii. Required discipline-specific courses taken by students who choose a particular Discipline.
- iii. Advanced elective courses that may be selected from the curricula of any IBMS discipline following approval by the student's supervising professor and/or the student's discipline leadership (discipline director or discipline executive committee).

Typical Timeline:

Year 1 Fall semester: All students will **complete the common core courses** (IBMS 5000 Fundamentals of Biomedical Sciences, INTD 5082 Responsible Conduct of Research and IBMS 5008 Laboratory Rotations). **By the end of the Fall semester of Year 1**, each student will 1) **select a permanent dissertation mentor**; and 2) **select a particular IBMS discipline and its Plan of Study**.

Year 1 Spring semester: Beginning in the Year 1 Spring semester, it is crucial that students **maintain close communication with the academic coordinators of their chosen disciplines** in order to become aware of required coursework and other discipline-specific expectations. The **typical Plan of Study** will include a mixture of discipline-specific courses and IBMS required courses (*e.g.*, CSBL 5095 Experimental Design and Analysis, IBMS 6090 Seminar **and** IBMS 6097 Research, **and** IBMS 7010 Journal Club/Student Presentations).

Year 2: The curriculum will include a mixture of recurring IBMS courses and discipline-specific courses, with the **Qualifying Examination (IBMS 7001)** taking place in the **Spring semester**, followed immediately by **Admission to Candidacy**

Years 3-5: The curriculum includes a mixture of recurring IBMS courses and discipline-specific courses. Approval of a student's **Dissertation Supervising Committee membership** and the student's **first meeting** with the approved committee must take place **prior to the end of the Fall semester** in order to maintain a Satisfactory (S) grade in IBMS 6097 (Research/Academic Progress). Typically, at the first meeting the student should discuss the content of the dissertation research proposal so that it can be submitted to the IBMS Graduate Program and the GSBS Dean **prior to the end of the Fall semester**. At the discretion of the student's discipline leadership, a short delay into the Spring semester may be granted for submission of the dissertation research proposal and posting of a Satisfactory (S) grade in IBMS 6097. Once the committee membership and research proposal are approved, enrollment in the **two required semesters of Dissertation credit (IBMS 7099)** may commence.

Final hours. Once a student has reached a stage in his/her research program, when the dissertation defense and graduation are imminent (usually in the fifth year of study), a student may enroll in Final Hours. An official form must be submitted requesting enrollment in Final Hours. This allows a student the one-time opportunity to register for 3 credit hours of Dissertation while still maintaining full-time student status, thus reducing tuition costs. Students enrolled in final hours are expected to maintain active participation in discipline and laboratory activities. **Final Hours may not be taken more than once.** If a student does not graduate during the semester when enrolled in final hours, full-time enrollment (12.0 credit hours) must resume in all subsequent semesters.

C. Laboratory Rotations (IBMS 5008)

Laboratory Rotations is an S/U graded course, IBMS 5008; the COGS chair serves as its course director. Generally, by the end of **Year 1 Fall semester**, students will complete **three laboratory rotations** with faculty members who have the resources/funding necessary to offer themselves as potential dissertation mentors. Thus, following completion of laboratory rotations, students will officially request a permanent Dissertation Mentor and an IBMS discipline. The process and expectations of the laboratory rotations are described in **Supplement VI of this Handbook**.

D. Selection of IBMS Discipline and Dissertation Mentor

Each student in the IBMS Graduate Program will be provided a relevant, academically integrated and flexible curriculum that suits the student's needs. Thus, a **Plan of Study** is offered by each IBMS discipline. Selection of an IBMS Discipline is made concurrently with the selection of a Dissertation Mentor who usually has an active affiliation with that Discipline. That is, following completion of the laboratory rotation requirement, **generally by the end of the Year 1 Fall semester** and in consultation with the newly approved Dissertation Mentor, each IBMS graduate student will select, **using the IMPACT website**, a Discipline and its associated Plan of Study. Occasionally, a student may request an additional rotation(s) that exceeds the minimum number required; in which case a delay in the selection of a Discipline and Dissertation Mentor may be allowed. Furthermore, until such time as a discipline has been officially chosen/assigned, a student will remain the academic responsibility of the IBMS Program Director.

Selection of a particular Discipline does not restrict a student from participating in activities or coursework associated with any other IBMS discipline. Furthermore, regardless of discipline affiliation, every student is **expected to participate** in relevant activities of the primary department of the Dissertation Mentor, for example attending departmental seminars, retreats and celebrations.

E. Temporary Supervising Committee

At the end of a student's **Year 1 Spring semester**, each discipline may assign, in consultation with the student's Dissertation Mentor, a Temporary Supervising Committee (TSC) whose members are to assist the student in developing ideas for a dissertation research project. During the year prior to the formation of the student's official Dissertation Supervising Committee, the TSC may meet as required to assess the student's research progress and serve as the core of the student's Qualifying Examination Committee.

F. Qualifying Examination (see Supplement VII of this Handbook for details).

The purpose of the QE is to determine if students are prepared (*i.e.*, are "qualified") to successfully progress through the remaining years of their training, and is a key requirement for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.

The Qualifying Exam (QE) is an S/U graded course in the IBMS curriculum (IBMS 7001), is required of all IBMS Ph.D. students, and is to be completed during the Spring semester of a student's second year in the IBMS program. This timeline may vary slightly for MD/PhD or DDS/PhD students.

Briefly, the QE process is to be overseen by a **5-member QE faculty committee** composed of members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty. The Temporary Supervising Committee (previous section), minus the Dissertation Mentor, may serve as the 2-member core of the exam committee; a third member will be chosen by the student; the fourth and fifth members will be identified by the discipline executive committee using a process determined by discipline leadership. One member should have a primary discipline affiliation different from the student's discipline.

Although the exact logistics of the exam may differ slightly among the IBMS disciplines, the process, in general, requires that a student identify a relevant scientific problem, write a proposal that describes hypothesis-driven experimentation to solve the problem, and culminates with an oral defense-of-proposal. Student Dissertation Mentors may attend oral defenses, but are considered to be guests and not members of the examining committee; and should only ask questions when invited by the QE committee chair. Discipline Directors must ensure that outcomes of QEs are reported to COGS using the COGS approved reporting form. Successful completion of the QE is required for Admission to Candidacy and continuation in the IBMS Ph.D. program.

G. Admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D.

During the Year 2 Spring semester, and **after passing the Qualifying Examination**, a student must petition, via the student's discipline executive committee, approval by the IBMS COGS for Admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D. degree. **The approval process is accomplished via the electronic form found on the IMPACT website.** Approval by COGS for Admission to Candidacy is based on 3 criteria:

1. Successful completion of the Qualifying Examination (evidenced by approval indicated by members of a student's QE committee).
2. A positive endorsement of the student's potential for performing successful independent research (indicated by the online approval of the Dissertation Mentor).
3. Verification of satisfactory academic standing, including a 3.0 grade point average in course work.
Students cannot advance to candidacy while on academic probation.

When all criteria are met, the IBMS COGS will recommend to the Dean of the GSBS that a student be admitted to candidacy. Admission to Candidacy requires final approval by the Dean.

H. Dissertation Research and the Student's Dissertation Supervising Committee

• Overview

Immediately following approval for Admission to Candidacy, and in consultation with his/her Dissertation Mentor, a student is to form a Dissertation Supervising Committee. This committee, whose membership must be approved by the student's discipline leadership, must provide the expertise necessary to ensure appropriate scientific and academic guidance to a student by monitoring research activities and by reporting research progress **at least once per semester**. Each student is to prepare a Dissertation Research Proposal that is submitted to the student's Dissertation Supervising Committee, detailing a feasible research project that is likely to result in significant publishable contributions to the student's field. Finally, when the Dissertation Supervising Committee is satisfied that the research accomplished by a student is of sufficient quality and quantity, formal permission will be granted to the student to write the dissertation. In general, the quality of the

candidate's writing should be equivalent to that found in reputable refereed journals.

The members of the Dissertation Supervising Committee should be given a reasonable period of time in which to evaluate the dissertation (generally on the order of 3 weeks). Once the Dissertation Supervising Committee judges the dissertation to be acceptable, the student will identify an appropriate date for a seminar presentation and examination (defense).

Students are advised to review graduation information and administrative timelines found on the GSBS website.

- **Formation and Membership of the Dissertation Supervising Committee**

Request for approval of the Dissertation Supervising Committee is made via the IMPACT website.

Following successful completion of the Qualifying Examination and Admission to Candidacy, and early in the Year 3 Fall semester, a student is expected to request local approval from the student's discipline executive committee for the membership of a Dissertation Supervising Committee (DSC). Then, **prior to the last day of the Year 3 Fall semester** of the IBMS program, a student is expected to submit a request for official approval for the DSC membership from the IBMS COGS and the GSBS Dean. This request is obtained via the IMPACT website and occurs **concurrently with submission of the Dissertation Research Proposal**. Except for the Dissertation Mentor, the faculty membership of any previous advisory committees need not be retained (such as a Temporary Supervising Committee). The DSC serves as an important resource of scientific expertise, assists the student in furthering the development of the dissertation research project, and is responsible for certifying to COGS and the GSBS that a student has carried out meritorious research of the caliber appropriate for a Ph.D. dissertation. The DSC is expected to assess the student's research progress (at least once per semester).

DSC membership

The membership of a student's Dissertation Supervising Committee should provide the expertise necessary to ensure appropriate scientific and academic guidance to the student. Membership must be approved by the student's discipline executive committee, the IBMS COGS, and by the Dean of the GSBS.

The minimum composition of student dissertation committees should reflect the following:

1. The student's Dissertation Mentor, now to be referred to as the Supervising Professor.
2. Two members from the IBMS Graduate Faculty with primary affiliations in any IBMS discipline.
3. One member from the IBMS Graduate Faculty with a primary affiliation in a discipline other than that of the student's chosen discipline.
4. One member from an institution of higher education or research institute approved by the student's discipline and holding no faculty appointment at the UTHSCSA.

Additional members from the institution may be added if a particular expertise is required. Changes in the membership of the DSC are allowed at any time but are subject to the approval by the discipline's executive committee and the Graduate Faculty Dean.

- **Preparation and Approval of the Dissertation Research Proposal**

Request for approval of the Dissertation Research Proposal is made via the IMPACT website.

Approval of the Dissertation Research Proposal should be obtained **before the end of the Year 3 Fall semester**. This is not to say that a student should wait until the end of the Year 3 Fall semester to write the proposal; it is to the student's advantage to prepare the proposal as early as possible, and can be initiated even before being admitted into candidacy. The purpose of preparing and getting approval for a dissertation proposal is to ensure that the student has a feasible research project that represents a likely significant contribution to his/her chosen field. Having a well-written proposal will also facilitate the submission of fellowship applications (F-grants) that might result in acquiring funds for supporting the student's research. Following presentation of the research proposal to the Dissertation Supervising Committee, the student will modify the content until it is acceptable to the Committee. The format of the written proposal is the same for all disciplines, but the exact approval process might be slightly different among disciplines. That is, in some disciplines the proposal may be presented to the full discipline faculty as part of the approval process. Once approved by the DSC, **the research proposal is to be submitted via the IMPACT website** (with all DSC signatures except the outside committee member). Electronic approvals will be obtained from the IBMS COGS chair and the GSBS Dean for both the membership of the student's **Dissertation Supervising Committee** (including the official naming of the Supervising Professor); thus, an electronic version of the Dissertation Proposal is submitted concurrently.

Failure to receive GSBS approval for both the Dissertation Supervising Committee and the Dissertation Research Proposal by the last day of the Year 3 Fall semester will result in the posting of an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for IBMS 6097 Research/Academic Progress. Requests for extensions of this deadline must be fully justified and submitted to the student's discipline executive committee prior to the end of the Fall semester.

Once the Graduate Dean approves a student's dissertation committee composition and dissertation proposal, **amendments to either may require re-approval** if such changes involve the deletion or addition of a committee member, or a substantial revision to the candidate's dissertation research project (such as an addition/deletion of a specific aim). Re-approvals are not necessary if alterations in the research plan do not substantially change the general context of the dissertation proposal. Amendments to the DSC membership or dissertation proposal should be requested via the IMPACT website.

Enrolling for Dissertation Credit (IBMS 7099). Once a student's dissertation proposal and Dissertation Supervising Committee membership are approved by the GSBS, enrollment in the Dissertation Course is allowed. A **minimum of 2 semesters of IBMS 7099** is required by the Graduate School for graduation.

- **Meetings of the Dissertation Supervising Committee**

Students are required to meet with their Dissertation Supervising Committees (except for the outside member) **at least once per semester**. After each committee meeting, the student will update the outside member on the student's research progress.

Extensions. Rare requests to discipline leadership for extensions of the end-of-semester deadline may be allowed for **up to 30 days into the following semester** only if justified; since students have a six-month semester in which to hold a meeting, justification should generally not include committee scheduling difficulties or inability to organize a presentation in a timely way. If an extension is allowed, a grade of Incomplete (I) should be posted for IBMS 6097 at the end of the semester in which the

meeting is missed, and should only be changed to Satisfactory (S) if the student abides by the requirements of the extension. When an extended-deadline meeting takes place at the beginning of a semester, the expectation is that it does not count as the meeting for that semester, and another meeting will be convened by the end of the current semester.

Additional meetings may be required as determined by a student's discipline executive committee and/or the student's Supervising Professor.

Written reports of all meetings with the Dissertation Supervising Committee must be submitted to the office of the Discipline Director/Discipline Coordinator and kept on file. Copies of all reports must be submitted to the IBMS Graduate Program office. It is the responsibility of the student to send summaries of the meeting outcomes to the outside committee member.

Failure to meet with the Dissertation Supervising Committee during a particular semester will result in the posting of an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for IBMS 6097 Research/Academic Progress.

- **Writing the Dissertation and Registering for Final Hours**

Students are advised to review graduation information and administrative timelines found on the GSBS website.

http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/current_students/graduation-information

When the Dissertation Supervising Committee is satisfied that the research accomplished by a student is of sufficient quality and quantity to constitute a significant contribution to the field (*i.e.*, the area of the student's studies), formal permission is to be granted to the student to write his/her dissertation. It is expected that the student will have submitted a first-authored research paper to a peer-reviewed journal before the oral defense. However, in recognition of the complex nature of some projects, the Supervising Professor, on advisement by the student's dissertation committee, may petition the IBMS COGS to defer the submission of a first-authored paper until after the oral defense and the Ph.D. degree conferral. The petition will include an explanation for the lack of publication to date and the plan for a forthcoming first-author submission.

The Supervising Professor should notify the Discipline Director, in writing, that a student has been given permission to write the dissertation. The format of the dissertation must conform to the style and format guidelines of the GSBS. Prior to drafting the dissertation, usually during the semester prior to defense-of-dissertation, these guidelines are made available from the Associate Dean of Student Affairs by way of **required dissertation training**. Without evidence of this training, the dissertation will not be accepted by the Graduate School.

When writing the dissertation, a student should submit drafts to the Supervising Professor until they are both satisfied that it is a well-written document containing all of the experimental and background information promised to the Dissertation Supervising Committee. Once the Supervising Professor approves a final draft of the dissertation, complete copies are to be submitted to each member of the Dissertation Supervising Committee, including the external member. The members of the Dissertation Supervising Committee should be given a reasonable period of time, **usually three weeks**, in which to evaluate the dissertation. In the event that two or more members of the Supervising Committee feel that the dissertation is not suitable for defense, a student must make appropriate changes, prior to scheduling the final defense, until the committee is satisfied. When the Dissertation Supervising Committee judges the dissertation to be suitable for defense, a student must submit a **Request for Final Oral Examination (via the IMPACT website)**, with all of the appropriate signatures, indicating

approval of the dissertation and the examination date to the Office of the GSBS Dean. Copies of this form, plus dissertation abstract and vita, must be received by the Dean's Office **at least two weeks before the dissertation defense date**. COGS is the arbiter of disputes that cannot be resolved between a student and Supervising Committee.

A student must complete all degree requirements in order to allow the COGS chair to present the student's credentials to the Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) for final review. The GFC meets on the second Friday of each month. Therefore, degree requirements must be met so that the COGS recommendation can be considered no later than the May meeting of the GFC so that the degree can be conferred in May, thus allowing the student to "walk the stage" at the May graduation ceremony. This would require that the dissertation defense occurs no later than the end of April as suggested by the Graduation Timeline posted on the GSBS website (see above).

Final Hours. Normally, all Ph.D. students must be enrolled as full-time students (*i.e.*, 12 credit hours in the both Fall and Spring semesters). During a student's last semester, while finishing and defending his/her dissertation, a student may register for three credit hours (*i.e.*, Final Hours). That is, once a student has reached a stage in his/her research program, when the dissertation defense and graduation are imminent (usually in the fifth year of study), a student may enroll in Final Hours. Enrolling in Final Hours is not required for graduation, but allows a student the **one-time** opportunity to register for 3 credits hours while still maintaining full-time student status, thus reducing tuition costs. It is expected, however, that although a student would not officially enroll in the usual required courses while taking Final Hours, the student **will continue to attend the usual journal clubs and seminars**. Furthermore, **Final Hours may not be taken more than once**; thus, if a student does not defend and graduate in that semester, he/she must resume enrolling in the 12.0 minimum credit hours required of a full-time student and resume enrollment in IBMS 7010 and IBMS 6090.

● **Defense of Dissertation**

Public Seminar - The student will present a public seminar that summarizes his/her dissertation research accomplishments. A public announcement of the Dissertation Defense will be distributed by the Office of the GSBS Dean so that all interested persons may attend the public seminar. At the seminar, the candidate will field questions from members of the audience who are not on the Dissertation Supervising Committee.

Closed-door Defense - Following the public seminar, the candidate will meet with the Dissertation Supervising Committee in a closed-door session for an intensive and detailed oral examination of the dissertation research. The committee members will vote on the candidate's success or failure to adequately defend the dissertation research; the committee members record their votes by signing and submitting the **online Report on the Final Oral Examination**. A recommendation to grant the Ph.D. is forwarded to the Graduate Faculty Council for its consideration.

More than one vote for failure indicates failure of the examination. If a student fails the Dissertation Defense, the Dissertation Supervising Committee should submit a recommendation regarding corrective action; COGS will consider the recommendation and determine what action should be taken.

Approval of Written Dissertation - The DSC members must also indicate their approval of the final written dissertation document by placing their signatures on the "Approval Page" of the dissertation. **Should extensive revisions of the dissertation be required** by the DSC, the Supervising Professor may withhold his/her signature on the Approval Page until all of the necessary changes are made to the dissertation. Under these circumstances, each member of the DSC should be given the option to review

revisions in the dissertation prior to the certification of the final document by the Supervising Professor. Once requested revisions are made and the Approval Page is signed by members of the committee, the student should submit the signed form, via the Discipline Director, to the IBMS COGS. **Even if the student passes the Dissertation Defense, the final version of the dissertation must be approved by the Dissertation Supervising Committee before COGS will consider a recommendation that the degree be awarded.**

If the Dissertation Supervising Committee, without dissent, approves a student's written dissertation and its defense, the Discipline Director may forward that recommendation to IBMS COGS without a formal vote of the discipline's executive committee. However, if one or more members of the DSC votes to deny approval of a student's dissertation or defense, the Supervising Professor must recommend that the Discipline Director call a meeting of the discipline's executive committee to discuss the outcome and resolve issues regarding that outcome.

The COGS chair-signed approval forms are forwarded to the GSBS Dean. The Dean's signature and the approval of the dissertation by the Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences are required before the degree can be awarded.

- **Registering *In Absentia* (INTD 1000)**

Students must be registered for the semester in which they defend their dissertations. However, a special registration arrangement may be made for students who defend their dissertation or thesis after the last Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) meeting of the semester.

A student who successfully defends the dissertation, but misses the final meeting of the GFC (second Friday of each month), may register for **one credit hour for the next semester**. The student may then drop the one credit hour and register *In Absentia* for the coming semester. This must be accomplished before the first class day of the new semester. Registration *In Absentia* should be designated as **zero credit hours** and the student will be charged a **\$25 fee**.

I. Evaluating Student Academic Progress

Each IBMS discipline will review the academic progress of its students at least twice per year, usually at the end of the fall and spring semesters. However, if at any time a Graduate Faculty member perceives that a student is not making sufficient progress in the program, the matter can be brought to the attention of the Discipline Director so that the situation may be addressed promptly.

When a student's progress is being reviewed and it is anticipated that the review may result in an action that will negatively affect the status of the student in the program (*e.g.*, dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program), the student who is the subject of that review will 1) be informed that such a review will be taking place; and 2) be asked to provide any relevant information or documentation that the student feels the Discipline's executive committee should consider during its deliberations. Furthermore, the Discipline Director will invite the Supervising Professor to the meeting in order to obtain additional information about the student's academic progress. The student will be notified of the outcome of the evaluation as soon as is possible.

The following six sections describe expectations that reflect **satisfactory academic progress**:

- **Grade Point Average**

All students are expected to maintain a 3.0 GPA and a final overall GPA of 3.0 is required for graduation from the GSBS. Any student whose GPA drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation (S/U courses are not included in the GPA calculation). If a student receives a "C" in any course, the student's

discipline executive committee may recommend remediation. The manner and timeframe for rectifying the academic deficit will be decided in consultation with the appropriate Course Director and will be communicated in writing to the student by the Discipline Director. That is, remediation may be satisfied by retaking the course (particularly if the “C” grade results in an overall GPA of less than the minimal 3.0 which is required for graduation) or may consist of some other process (taking an exemption exam, writing a paper, etc.). Grades earned by remediation may replace the original grade for purposes of calculating the GPA, but the original grade remains on the transcript.

A student who receives a “D” or “F” in any course will be placed on academic probation and must undergo remediation in a manner and timeframe decided by the student’s discipline executive committee in consultation with the appropriate Course Director. Requirements of the remediation must be communicated in writing to the student by the Discipline Director. Remediation may be satisfied by retaking the course or parts of the course or may consist of some other process (taking an exemption exam, writing a paper, etc.). Moreover, unsuccessful remediation of a “D” or “F” grade is grounds for recommending dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program to the GSBS Dean.

- **“Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory” Coursework**

For certain courses, student performance is reported as Unsatisfactory (U) or Satisfactory (S) or Honors (H). If a student does not show an appropriate level of participation and proficiency in these courses and receives a “U”, the student’s discipline executive committee will place the student on academic probation. Moreover, if a student receives two “U”s in successive semesters, the Discipline’s executive committee must consider this as grounds for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program. If dismissal appears warranted, the student will be notified and a recommendation for such an action will be submitted to the Chair of the IBMS COGS.

- **Qualifying Examination Outcomes**

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree must pass IBMS 7001 (see **Supplement VII of this Handbook**). Qualifying Exam Committee members will evaluate student performance based on 1) the preparation and oral defense of a research proposal designed to answer an experimental question, as well as 2) the student's demonstration of adequate general knowledge associated with aspects of the proposal. The chair of the QE Committee will report the deliberations of the committee to the Discipline Director; the discipline’s academic coordinator will forward the report to the Assistant Director of the IBMS Graduate Program for archiving. A grade of Unsatisfactory (U) or Satisfactory (S) or Honors (H) will be posted for performance in the QE.

A grade of “U” in IBMS 7001 must be brought to the IBMS COGS as an agenda item for discussion at its next meeting and is grounds for dismissal of the student from the IBMS Graduate Program.

- **Research/Academic Progress**

Each semester, a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) or Satisfactory (S) or Honors (H) is posted for research/academic performance (IBMS 6097). The grade is determined by two factors. First, each semester the student's Supervising Professor will submit a recommendation for an “H” or “S” or “U” to the Discipline Director. This determination is made in consultation with the student's Dissertation Supervising Committee via reports of committee meetings submitted each semester and based upon the student's overall performance in the laboratory including experimental progress, academic development, effort and, when appropriate, progress in writing the dissertation research proposal or research dissertation. Second, satisfactory research/academic progress reflects a student’s adherence to the expectations of the IBMS Graduate Program, the student’s discipline, and the Student-Mentor

Compact and Milestones Agreement. This includes satisfying programmatic requirements, filing required forms and documentation, and progressing through the program according to the expected timeline.

- **Research Committee Meetings**

Each student must meet with his/her Dissertation Supervising Committee **at least once each semester** to present and discuss progress in research activities. Additional meetings may be required as determined by the student's Discipline Executive Committee and/or the student's Supervising Professor. At research committee meetings, a student should provide each member of the committee with a written progress report that includes a statement of the aims of the research project/dissertation proposal, the progress that was made since the previous committee meeting toward satisfying the aims and an outline of future plans (this information can be provided as prescribed by the student's discipline leadership as either a formal written report or in a printed Pdf conversion of the slides used during the student's presentation). During the meeting, the student should summarize the project background, relevant published work that has an impact on the research and the results that he/she has obtained with emphasis on the experimental findings made since the last meeting. Data in the form of figures and tables summarizing recent progress is generally appropriate. Members of the Dissertation Supervising Committee will record their evaluations of student progress using the official IBMS committee meeting report form.

Failure to meet with the Dissertation Supervising Committee during a particular semester will result in the posting of an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for IBMS 6097 Research/Academic Progress.

If a student can present acceptable justification to the Discipline Director for a delayed committee meeting, a grade of incomplete (I) may be posted until the meeting can be held. If the student does not rectify the situation by holding a Committee meeting **within 30 days following the first day of the next semester** in which a meeting should have been held, the research grade shall be changed from incomplete to unsatisfactory (U), and the student will be placed on academic probation. **A student who receives two "U"s in Research/Academic Progress may be considered for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program.**

- **Expected Time-to-Completion of Degree Requirements**

Ph.D. students are usually expected to complete their degree requirements, including the dissertation defense, in **approximately five years of full-time study**. If a student has not defended the dissertation before completing six years of full-time studies, he/she may be considered for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program for lack of research/academic progress. A student may request that the discipline extend the limit of six years for degree completion, but such a waiver will be granted only for exceptional circumstances.

UT System requirements: All Ph.D. students must enroll in a **minimum of 72 total credit hours** in order to graduate. It should also be noted that the UT System requires that Ph.D. students reach graduation **prior to achieving 130 credit hours** (the "130 hour rule"). After 130 credits hours, students may be required to pay out-of-state tuition.

J. Withdrawal or Leave of Absence (LOA) from the IBMS Graduate Program

A student who wishes to withdraw from the IBMS Graduate Program should confer with the Director of the student's discipline in order to establish the circumstances resulting in the decision to withdraw, and if the student should consider whether a complete break from the Program is appropriate, or if a

Leave of Absence is more appropriate. The student must then submit a written request to the IBMS COGS Chair, with copy to the Director of the student's discipline. The COGS Chair will forward the request to the Dean of the GSBS. The step-by-step procedure for requesting LOA is as follows:

1. The student will submit a letter requesting a LOA to the Chair of the IBMS COGS. The letter needs to include the reason for a student's request (explanations do not have to go into great detail) and the expected time of the student's return. A LOA is allowed for **up to one year**, at which time the student will be allowed to return to the program. A copy of this letter should be sent to the director of the student's discipline.
2. A meeting between the student and the chair of the IBMS COGS is recommended.
3. The chair of the IBMS COGS will confirm that all relevant people have been informed that the request has been made (*i.e.*, discipline director and dissertation mentor).
4. The student's request and the COGS chair's recommendation will be sent to the GSBS Dean.
5. Once this process is completed, the student must pick up a **withdrawal/clearance form from the Registrar's Office and complete the form including all required signatures.**
6. The student will receive a letter from the GSBS Dean (copied to the IBMS COGS chair and IBMS Program Director) indicating approval of the request for LOA.

K. Change of Degree Objective – Ph.D. to M.S.

• Voluntary change of degree objective

An IBMS graduate student who has initiated Ph.D. studies and is in **satisfactory academic standing** may request a change in degree objective to the Master of Science. The request should be made to the student's discipline executive committee following consultation with the student's dissertation mentor, and may be the result of changing personal, family, medical, academic or career needs. Recommendations for change in degree objective should then be **submitted in writing by a student's discipline director to the IBMS COGS chair**, indicating confirmation that the student's dissertation mentor has been consulted and is in favor of granting the request. Typically, requests will be forwarded from the COGS chair to the GSBS Dean for final approval and processing.

• Mandatory change of degree objective

An IBMS graduate student who has initiated Ph.D. studies, and has academic difficulties resulting in **unsatisfactory academic standing/progress**, may request a change in degree objective to the Master of Science. This recommendation may be submitted by the student's discipline executive committee to COGS *in lieu* of a recommendation for dismissal from the IBMS Graduate Program for 1) failing grades amounting to a grade point average of less than 3.0 (must include a remediation plan for purposes of increasing the GPA to 3.0); 2) failing the Qualifying Examination; or 3) receiving 2 grades of Unsatisfactory (U) in IBMS 6097 (Research/Academic progress). The request should be made following consultation with the student's dissertation mentor and with the student's discipline director. The recommendation to allow the change in degree objective should be **submitted in writing by the student's discipline director to the chair of the IBMS COGS**, indicating the exact reason for the request, that the student has been made aware of the circumstances leading to this recommendation, and confirming that the student's dissertation mentor has been consulted and is in favor of granting the request. The recommendation will be presented to the IBMS COGS, and a vote to approve or disapprove will determine if the requested change in degree objective is to be granted, or if a recommendation to dismiss is to be considered.

● **Procedure**

IBMS students who change their degree objective from IBMS Ph.D. to IBMS M.S. are expected to adhere to the following guidelines and procedures:

1. Beginning when the request for change of degree objective is granted, the student must adhere to the timeline for completing the M.S. degree requirements, and coursework and research expectations provided by the student's discipline executive committee.
2. Under no circumstances will the student be allowed to continue for more than 2 additional years to degree conferral. In order to maintain full-time student status on the M.S. track, a student must enroll in **no fewer than 8.0 SCH per semester**; a total of no fewer than **30 total SCH is required for conferral of an M.S. degree**.
3. In general, M.S. students will be expected to complete all coursework established by the discipline for the Ph.D. Plan of Study; exemptions and exceptions may be granted if approved by the discipline's executive committee.
4. No Qualifying Examination is required for the M.S. degree.
5. The student must submit an Advancement to Candidacy for the M.S. degree form to the GSBS Dean's office.
6. The composition of the student's research supervising committee, now to be referred to as the Thesis Supervising Committee, **must be approved** by the discipline executive committee and the GSBS Dean's office. The Thesis Supervising Committee will establish the research accomplishments required prior to defense of thesis.
7. The student must seek approval for Advancement to Candidacy for the M.S. degree. A student may not advance to candidacy while on academic probation.
8. The student must submit a Thesis research proposal to the GSBS Dean's office; this proposal can be the same as the original Ph.D. proposal, or if appropriate, a revised version of the original proposal.
9. One semester of IBMS 6098 (Thesis) is required prior to graduation.
10. The student should have no expectation of financial support/stipend on the M.S. degree track.

L. Change of Dissertation Mentor

If at any time during an IBMS student's course of study, a student wishes to change from an approved Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor to another Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor, the following process must be followed:

1. Only members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty are eligible to train IBMS graduate students; therefore, any change of mentor must be to the laboratory of a member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty.
2. Prior to making an official request, a student should send written notification of the intent to change mentor to the student's original Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor (with copy to Discipline Director). A face-to-face meeting between the student and the student's mentor is encouraged but not required.
3. Prior to making the official request, the student should notify, in writing, the chair of the IBMS COGS that the request for a change of mentor is about to be submitted. This notification is to include the reason for making the request. An informal interview with the student may be requested by the COGS chair.

4. The COGS chair will confirm that the student is in satisfactory academic standing.
5. The COGS chair will ensure that all relevant parties are aware of the impending student request. This will include: The student's original mentor; the student's proposed new mentor; the student's Discipline Director; the student's future Discipline Director (if a change in discipline will also be requested); and the GSBS Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
6. In the event that a student wishes to leave the laboratory of a faculty member, but has not yet identified a new Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor, the student may request the opportunity to perform 1-2 short laboratory rotations (no more than 4 weeks each) in the laboratories of prospective future mentors. Enrollment in IBMS 5008 is not required.
7. Once a new mentor has been identified, a request for change of mentor must be completed via the IMPACT website.
8. Consideration of the request:
 - The proposed new mentor must 1) be willing to have the student enter his/her laboratory as a full-time Ph.D. trainee; and 2) be financially able to support, for the foreseeable future, the research activities of the student.
 - If all relevant parties are in agreement that the request should be approved, the IBMS COGS chair will grant approval.
 - If, however, all parties involved are not in agreement, the COGS chair will bring the request to the full membership of COGS for their deliberation and advice.
 - Final approval for the change of mentor will be given by the chair of the IBMS COGS and the GSBS Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
9. Financial considerations:
 - Upon approval of the request to change mentors, all financial responsibility for the student will rest with the new Dissertation Mentor/Supervising Professor (*e.g.*, stipend, tuition and fees etc.). Therefore, the financial status of the new mentor (*i.e.*, grant funding and other resources) will be considered by the Dean's office during its deliberations, and the administrative transfer of financial responsibility will be accomplished as soon as possible.
 - If the student requires laboratory rotations prior to requesting a particular faculty member, the Office of the GSBS Dean will be called upon to provide bridge funding until a new mentor is approved.

M. Dissertation Mentor Leaves UTHSA

If an IBMS Graduate Faculty Member serving as the dissertation mentor for an IBMS graduate student takes a position at another university, and is therefore to leave the UTHSA, several possible actions may be taken by the student and the IBMS COGS. The following is a description of the academic options available that the student may request; the financial aspects to this process will include negotiations with the Dean of the GSBS. A checklist of information needed by the Deans office, and should be included with the request, is provided as **Supplement VIII** in this Handbook (or can be obtained from the Assistant IBMS Director).

Option 1. Students who have not yet been admitted to candidacy.

a. Student in the first or second year. A student who has selected a dissertation mentor, but is in the first or second year of the program, and therefore not fully committed to a dissertation project, will likely seek a new IBMS faculty mentor. A simple notification forwarded to the IBMS COGS chair and the student's current Discipline Director is all that is necessary to initiate the change of mentor process. Once receiving such a notification, the IBMS COGS chair should notify the Associate Dean for Students that the change of mentor process has been initiated. The student will request the new mentor via the IMPACT website, following the full mentor selection approval process including the vetting of the faculty member for financial capability. A short laboratory rotation may be desirable prior to assignment of the new mentor, but is not required. If the change of mentor includes a change of discipline affiliation, the student may be required to enroll in additional coursework to satisfy the Plan of Study of the new discipline or the recommendations of the new mentor.

If a student wishes to follow the current dissertation mentor to the new institution, Option 2a or 2b below should be considered.

Option 2. Students who have been admitted to candidacy.

a. Student early in research. This option would most likely involve a third year student who has passed the QE and was recently admitted to candidacy, has not yet submitted a dissertation research proposal, and has made minimal research progress. The student may request a change of mentor as described in Option 1 above, thus beginning a new research project with a new dissertation mentor. If the change in mentor includes a change in discipline affiliation, the student may be required to enroll in additional coursework to satisfy the Plan of Study of the new discipline; the new discipline must determine whether to accept the QE outcome of the original discipline or to require re-examination.

Alternatively, a student may request withdrawal from the IBMS Graduate Program in order to move with the faculty member to the new institution in order to become a student in the new institution.

b. Student nearing completion of research project. This two-part option would most likely involve a fourth or fifth year student who has made substantial progress toward completion of the research project and has received approval for the dissertation research proposal and the membership of the Dissertation Supervising Committee. Such a student may therefore wish to retain his/her current dissertation mentor and graduate from the IBMS Graduate Program. **Two possibilities can be considered:** *i)* The student may complete the research project at the mentor's new institution; or *ii)* The student may complete the research project at the UTHSA. In either case, sufficient documentation must be provided to the IBMS COGS by the dissertation mentor and student to guarantee that all IBMS requirements are met (**See checklist in Supplement VIII in this Handbook**).

i) If the student is to complete the research project at the faculty mentor's new institution, circumstances must be put in place and approved by the IBMS COGS and the GSBS Associate Dean for Students that guarantees that the student remains in contact with the dissertation supervising committee (including required semesterly committee meetings); that the discipline's recurring courses are completed or suitable replacement activities are identified at the new institution; and that all IBMS Graduate Program requirements for graduation are met. The student's dissertation mentor would remain financially responsible for the student

(*i.e.*, stipend, tuition, fees, etc.), and would be responsible for working with the appropriate financial administrators and GSBS Dean's Office to ensure that necessary financial support is made available to the student.

- ii)* If the student is to complete the research project at the UTHSA, circumstances must be put in place and approved by the IBMS COGS and the GSBS Associate Dean for Students that guarantees that the student is given the resources (*i.e.*, laboratory space) that would allow effective continuation of the student's research. In addition, a local member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty would be assigned as co-mentor to oversee the day-to-day activities of the student's research and to ensure effective communication with the student's dissertation mentor. Each semester until graduation, the dissertation mentor will arrange and be available for meetings of the student with the student's dissertation supervising committee; the mentor will attend the dissertation defense. The student's mentor would remain financially responsible for the student (*i.e.*, stipend, tuition, fees, etc.), and would work with appropriate financial administrators and the GSBS Dean's Office to create necessary accounts to support the student.

N. Relationship between IBMS Graduate Program and D.D.S/Ph.D. and M.D./Ph.D. programs

Formal review and acceptance of applications into the DDS/PhD and MD/PhD programs will be the primary responsibility of the relevant dual degree programs. It is understood that acceptance of a student into either the MD/PhD or DDS/PhD dual degree program is, by proxy, acceptance into any of the PhD programs of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. However, the intention of a student to seek training with a member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty must be made known to the IBMS Program Director and the Director of the faculty member's discipline as soon as that information becomes available. Financial responsibility for the graduate school phase of a dual degree student's studies shifts to the GSBS/Supervising Professor once the student is enrolled full-time in the Plan of Study of one of the IBMS disciplines. Furthermore, although the requirements for the PhD are similar to those imposed on "conventional" PhD students (see previous sections of this Handbook), certain changes in the course requirements can be expected as listed below. Typically, each dual degree student will receive a customized Plan of Study.

When entering the Graduate School phase of their studies (following the second year of the School of Dentistry or School of Medicine curriculum), dual degree (DDS/PhD and MD/PhD) students in an IBMS discipline will undertake an "abbreviated" course load in deference to the coursework that they have already taken in their clinical curricula. The IBMS Curriculum Committee has recommended the following:

- a. Dual degree students will be excused from IBMS 5000 (Fundamentals of Biomedical Sciences). Information contained in this course has already been given to the students during their 2 years of medical school.
- b. Oversight of laboratory rotation requirements will be the responsibility of the dual degree programs, and interwoven into the student's clinical curriculum during Years 1 and 2. Therefore, enrollment in IBMS 5008 is not required.
- c. Prior to beginning graduate studies, MD/PhD students are expected to complete the Step 1 USMLE examination. However, students are also expected to begin research activities with the selected Supervising Professor as soon as is feasible. Full-time registration in graduate courses will commence in the Fall semester of a student's third year in the MD/PhD program, referred to as the GS1 year.

- d. MD/PhD and DDS/PhD students will be expected, once their graduate studies have commenced, to enroll in all courses required by their discipline that are delineated in a Plan of Study tailored to the needs of the dual degree students.
- e. Generally, dual degree students are expected to enroll in IBMS 7001 (Qualifying Examination) during the Fall semester of the GS2 year, although, with justification, the QE may be delayed but no later than during Spring of their GS2 year.
- f. Dual degree students must submit requests for Admission to Candidacy to the Dean of the GSBS. Similar to conventional PhD students, this request should be made via the IMPACT website, and requires approvals obtained from the student's QE Committee, the student's Dissertation Mentor, and the student's Discipline Director.
- g. Dual degree students will be expected to enroll in a minimum of two semesters of Dissertation credit (IBMS 7099); this is required of all graduates of the IBMS Graduate Program.

Once the QE is completed, and Admission to Candidacy is granted, the dual degree student must receive approval for the membership of the official Dissertation Supervising Committee, a research proposal, and ultimately for the dissertation.

O. Outside employment

Graduate students receiving stipends are discouraged from seeking outside employment.

P. Student Vacation Policy

Because of the unique relationship between a graduate student's status as a full-time student and as a half-time employee of the University of Texas, **Graduate Research Assistants do not accrue official vacation or sick leave.** The policy of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is that each student will be allowed to take only official GSBS holidays. However, students of the IBMS Graduate Program may be given permission by their Dissertation Mentors/Supervising Professors to take time off for up to 7 additional days during the year. Additional time off, including extended sick leave, personal leave, or time for international travel to visit family must be approved by a student's discipline leadership and may be allowed on a case-by-case basis, and an understanding that there will be no lapse in satisfying academic requirements.

Q. Student Travel

The costs incurred by students for travel to and expenses of scientific meetings are usually assumed by the Supervising Professor. However, numerous departmental and GSBS travel awards are available on a competitive basis. The costs which will be reimbursed are limited to those allowed by the University Rules and Regulations. A Request for Travel Authorization should be completed prior to paying any meeting registration fees.

R. Academic Integrity and Professionalism

The IBMS Graduate Program and its students must adhere to the Procedures and Regulations Governing Student Conduct stated in the current UT Health San Antonio Student Catalog and as prescribed by the UT System Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents. Students are responsible for knowing and observing all Procedures and Regulations. Failure to become familiar with the rules of integrity and professionalism will not be accepted as justification for misconduct.

Academic Misconduct. The IBMS Program expects all students to exhibit the highest standards of conduct, honesty, and professionalism. Academic misconduct includes activities that undermine the

academic integrity of the institution. The University may discipline a student for academic misconduct as outlined in the UT Health San Antonio **Catalog** and **Handbook of Operating Procedures**. Academic misconduct may involve misuse of information obtained from any presentations from any individual, hard-copy, or electronic sources, whether originating from a department or school of UT Health San Antonio or from outside the University. Academic misconduct also applies to inappropriate representation of research results (including lab experiments, data collection, and analyses). All cases of academic misconduct must be reported to the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) who will assess the seriousness of the violation and determine the nature of the penalty required. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Cheating. During any academic exercise, any attempt to use or provide unauthorized assistance, materials, information, or access in any form is considered cheating and is expressly forbidden.

Fabrication. Falsification of any information or data including, but not limited to, records or reports, laboratory results, data analyses, or citations to the sources of information.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's work as one's own. Ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. The adoption or reproduction of ideas, opinions, theories, formulas, graphics, or research results of another person without acknowledgment is expressly forbidden. Credit must be given to others whenever:

- Quoting the works of another
- Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theories
- Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinions, results, or theories of others
- Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material
- Offering materials assembled or collected by others

Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline as prescribed by the UT System Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents and as stated in the current UT Health San Antonio Student Catalog. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such an act.

S. Amendments to This Handbook

Changes to these policies and procedures may be suggested, in writing, to the Chair of the IBMS COGS from any member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty. A suggested amendment will be considered by the COGS following normal procedures for voting. If the amendment is approved by COGS, the COGS chair will send an appropriate memo to all members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty to inform them of the revision and will amend this document accordingly.

HANDBOOK SUPPLEMENTS

Supplement I

Procedure: Appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty

(originally approved 9-12-14; revised 9-15-15)

Authorization of IBMS Graduate Faculty appointment. A formal process for appointing individuals to the IBMS Graduate Faculty is necessary in order to satisfy the documentation and compliance requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Evaluation of individuals for appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty is under the purview of the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS). Final approval for appointments to the Graduate Faculty is given by the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

Request for appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty. Only individuals with faculty appointments at UT Health San Antonio may be granted IBMS Graduate Faculty status. Any full-time primary member of the UT Health San Antonio faculty, regardless of school, may request appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty. **An individual from other institutions must first obtain an adjunct faculty appointment in a department of UT Health San Antonio.** Criteria for evaluating applications to the IBMS Graduate Faculty are described in the section on Responsibilities and Expectations (below). The process of requesting Graduate Faculty status is as follows:

1. **Contact IBMS Assistant Program Director (APD).** Requests for appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty must be made via the IMPACT website. Prior to engaging the IMPACT website, candidates should contact the Assistant Director of the IBMS Graduate Program for guidance and instructions.
2. **Request for IBMS Graduate Faculty Appointment.** Candidates must complete and submit the online *IBMS Request for IBMS Graduate Faculty Appointment* application by logging into the IMPACT website found at <https://gsbsdev.uthscsa.edu/ibms> (a copy of the candidate's CV must be uploaded into IMPACT as part of the application). **All information requested on the form must be provided.**
3. **Automated approval workflow:** The submitted application will first be routed by IMPACT for approval to the chair of the candidate's department in which he/she holds a primary faculty appointment. If approved by the candidate's department chair, the request will be routed to the IBMS Assistant Program Director (APD) for distribution to primary and secondary IBMS COGS reviewers (see below); once reviews are returned to the APD, the reviews are forwarded to the full membership of the IBMS COGS with a request for a vote for approval or denial of the request. The APD will report the outcome of the vote to the COGS chair, who will send a recommendation to the IBMS Program Director. The final recommendation will then be sent to the Dean of the GSBS.
4. **General review process:** The Director of the IBMS discipline for which the candidate has indicated a primary interest will serve as the primary reviewer of the candidate's request; the Director of the secondary discipline of interest will serve as secondary reviewer. Each are invited to meet with the candidate if deemed necessary. The primary and secondary reviewers will provide a joint recommendation to the APD who will forward the recommendation to the full COGS membership for a vote. The outcome of the vote will be reported to the COGS chair. If there is a clear consensus, the COGS chair will forward the recommendation to the IBMS Program Director for submission to the Dean of the GSBS. If there is no clear consensus by COGS, the recommendation will be discussed at the next meeting of COGS.
- 5a. **Standard review:** In cases when a candidate has not recently been vetted by members of the Graduate Faculty (*e.g.*, faculty from UT Health San Antonio clinical departments or adjunct faculty from other institutions), a full review of the candidate's application will be performed by the IBMS COGS.

A research seminar presentation will be required of the candidate, particularly if he/she expects to enter into mentoring relationships with graduate students (*i.e.*, serve as Dissertation Mentor). The seminar should provide information required for thorough evaluation of the candidate's academic credentials, qualifications and suitability for training a doctoral student. The director of the discipline cited by the candidate as the primary discipline of interest (and therefore the primary reviewer of the appointment request), will be responsible for making arrangements for the seminar presentation (*i.e.*, date, time, location). The seminar arrangements may be organized by the home department of the discipline director, or, upon request by the discipline director, by the Dean's office (via the IBMS Assistant Program Director). All members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty will be invited to the seminar, but particularly members of the IBMS COGS and discipline members with expertise in the area of the candidate's research interests.

Under certain circumstances, the recommendation for appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty may include that the new member be assigned a senior faculty member as co-mentor to enhance student training (recommendation of an appropriate co-mentor generally coming via the Discipline Director of the candidate's primary discipline in consultation with the appropriate department chair). It is the responsibility of the primary discipline to identify an appropriate co-mentor.

- 5b. **Expedited review:** Some appointments to the IBMS Graduate Faculty may be requested immediately following a candidate's recruitment and appointment to the faculty of a particular GSBS department. In such cases in which the candidate has recently presented credentials including a seminar and was vetted by the hiring department, the director of the candidate's primary discipline of interest should request expedited appointment, requiring only a vote of confirmation by the IBMS COGS and approval by the GSBS Dean.
6. The response to the request for IBMS Graduate Faculty status will be forwarded to the candidate by the GSBS Dean, with copy to the Chair of the candidate's primary department, to the Chair of the IBMS COGS, the IBMS Program Director, and to the Discipline Director(s) of the candidate's primary and secondary discipline affiliations.
7. Continuation of Graduate Faculty status must be confirmed by review **every 5 years**.

Responsibilities and Expectations of the IBMS Graduate Faculty

Every member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty must serve the missions of the graduate program by fulfilling certain responsibilities. Therefore, in order for an individual to be granted an appointment to the IBMS Graduate Faculty, "credentials" must be presented that serve as evidence that there is a capability and willingness of the candidate to meet the expectations of the program. Evaluation of these credentials not only will serve as the criteria when considering initial appointment to the Graduate Faculty, but also during subsequent 5-year reviews for continuation:

Responsibilities of IBMS Graduate Faculty:

1. Participate in IBMS (discipline) teaching responsibilities through participation in core, advanced and elective graduate courses. Act, as needed, as Course Director of courses in the IBMS curriculum. **Note:** Non-Graduate Faculty can participate as course instructors but cannot take on primary responsibilities for directing or organizing courses.
2. Participate in IBMS (discipline) seminar programs and journal clubs.
3. Serve, as needed, on student qualifying exam and dissertation research committees.

4. Serve, as needed, in the recruitment activities of prospective graduate students.
5. Serve, as needed, on IBMS COGS, admissions, recruitment and curriculum committees.
6. Serve their discipline, as needed, on any discipline-specific committees.
7. For those who wish to mentor students (*i.e.*, Dissertation Mentor), demonstrate a productive research program with evidence of scholarly accomplishments and a laboratory environment that are academically and intellectually appropriate for the pursuit of the Ph.D. degree. Scholarly accomplishments include such things as publication in peer-reviewed journals, invitations to contribute review articles and book chapters and invitations to make presentations at notable conferences, workshops and respected institutions of higher education.
8. For those who wish to mentor students (*i.e.*, Dissertation Mentor), demonstrate a record of intermediate/long term funding potential adequate for supporting the research program of a student.

Expectations of the Faculty

Responsibilities of the IBMS Graduate Program to the IBMS Graduate Faculty: Upon fulfilling their responsibilities to the IBMS graduate program, members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty should have certain minimal expectations of the graduate program. Responsibilities of the program to the faculty include:

1. The Disciplines will provide members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty with opportunities to engage in relevant student teaching, training and enrichment activities (*e.g.*, formal didactic lectures, laboratory demonstrations, journal club discussions, professional development sessions, etc.) so that the faculty member may acquire necessary credentials for promotion and tenure and for post-tenure evaluation.
2. IBMS Graduate Faculty members will be provided access to students with interest in their research, opportunities to supervise students in laboratory rotations and when a suitable match is made, to mentor and supervise students in dissertation research.
3. The IBMS COGS will support all efforts of the department chairs to provide opportunities for IBMS Graduate Faculty members to participate in professional activities that are important for promotion and tenure and for successful post-tenure review. Examples of such support include, but are not limited to, providing opportunities to serve on Discipline or IBMS committees, as well as in leadership roles within the IBMS Graduate Program. Further, the Disciplines, the IBMS COGS and/or the Graduate Dean's Office will document and provide such information as may be requested by the faculty member's department chair for evaluation purposes (*e.g.*, provide such information in the form of letters in support of the promotion and tenure process).

Supplement IA

Periodic Review of IBMS Graduate Faculty

(originally approved 12-18-16)

Every member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty must serve the missions of the graduate program by fulfilling certain responsibilities. Therefore, in order for an individual to continue as a member of the Graduate Faculty, his/her “credentials” must be periodically reviewed for evidence that there is continued capability and willingness of the member to meet the expectations of the program and evidence of service.

Process

The IBMS Graduate Faculty will be reviewed at **5-year intervals such that approximately 20% of members are reviewed each year**. The review of faculty members who have not yet reached their fifth year on the Graduate Faculty will not be reviewed until they reach their fifth year.

Ninety days before the time of a Graduate Faculty member’s review, the member will be notified that such a review will take place.

Review will be performed by a committee of peers identified by the IBMS COGS and chaired by the IBMS Program Director; the findings of the review committee will be reported to the IBMS COGS chair.

Upon request, members under review will be required to submit curriculum vitae to the chair of COGS that addresses the responsibilities listed below. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list and it is not essential for every member to participate in all of these activities.

Responsibilities of IBMS Graduate Faculty:

1. Participate in IBMS (discipline) teaching in core, advanced and elective graduate courses. Act, as needed, as Course Director of courses in the IBMS curriculum.
2. Participate in IBMS (discipline) seminar programs and journal clubs.
3. Serve, as needed, on student qualifying exam and dissertation research committees.
4. Serve, as needed, in the recruitment activities of prospective graduate students.
5. Serve, as needed, on IBMS COGS, admissions, recruitment and curriculum committees.
6. Serve their discipline, as needed, on any discipline-specific committees.
7. Provide a productive research program and a laboratory environment that are academically and intellectually appropriate for the pursuit of the Ph.D. degree.
8. For those who mentor students (*i.e.*, Supervising Professor), maintain a record of funding adequate for supporting the research program of graduate students.
9. Produce graduates who demonstrate significant scholarly accomplishments including publishing in peer-reviewed journals and review articles and book chapters, and presenting research accomplishments at notable conferences and workshops.

Notification of Results of the Review

The faculty member and the Director of the IBMS discipline in which the faculty member has a primary affiliation will be notified by the COGS chair regarding the outcome of the review.

Favorable recommendations will be forwarded to the faculty member’s department chair and to the Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

Recommendations for discontinuation of a Graduate Faculty appointment will be initially forwarded to the faculty member under review and the member's discipline director.

A negative recommendation may be appealed by the faculty member. Upon appeal, the member under review will be invited to provide additional information or documentation that might influence the final outcome of the review. The IBMS COGS chair will then distribute the recommendation, together with the additional information provided by the member under review, to COGS. The IBMS COGS will discuss all available information and whether to accept or reject the original recommendation. The outcome of the vote will be reported to the faculty member and the discipline director and is final. The recommendation will then be reported to the faculty member's department chair and the Dean of the GSBS.

Supplement II Internal IBMS Discipline Administration

(originally approved 7-18-14)

Although each Discipline of the IBMS Graduate Program should retain a certain autonomy so as to best meet the training needs of its students, the following administrative core structure, common to every Discipline, will provide a common language for discussions among students and faculty of different disciplines and to better ensure consistency, cohesiveness, integration and quality control across disciplines.

DISCIPLINE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (DEC)

Authority and Purpose: Each IBMS Discipline will have a Discipline Executive Committee (DEC) that will facilitate “local” academic administration so as to ensure the expected progress of students in the Discipline. Authority is given to the DEC by the IBMS COGS and the Dean of the GSBS to implement and administer policies and guidelines established by the IBMS Graduate Program; and to provide guidance and mentorship to students in a particular Discipline. In addition, through the Discipline Director, the DEC will have representation on the IBMS COGS, thus allowing effective communication, coordination and integration among the Disciplines of the IBMS.

Core members in each Discipline’s DEC include the Discipline Director, a Deputy Discipline Director, the appointed Discipline representatives of the IBMS Curriculum, Student Recruitment, and Student Admissions Committees, and the Discipline’s Academic Coordinator (non-voting). In addition to the core members of the DEC, the DEC may recruit other members of the Discipline into service and delegate responsibilities as needed to accomplish the academic goals of the Discipline. Broad participation in these activities should be encouraged among Discipline members.

One member of the DEC, not necessarily the Discipline Director, will be designated as “Student Advisor”. The Student Advisor will serve as the primary point of contact with the students in the Discipline and will serve as the liaison between the students and the DEC.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISCIPLINE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Provide students with advice and counsel to ensure the most effective and efficient strategies for advancing steadily through the IBMS Graduate Program and satisfying program requirements.
- Create the discipline-specific portion of the student’s curriculum and *Plan of Study*.
- Monitor all aspects of student academic progress and standing in the IBMS Graduate Program.
- Establish research committee meeting schedules and reporting mechanisms that guarantee timely evaluation of each student’s research progress (minimum of one committee meeting per semester).
- Provide processes, consistent with policies and expectations of the IBMS COGS, for seeking approval for student research committee memberships, research proposals and dissertation defenses.
- Mediate disputes between students and their Dissertation Mentors/research advisory committees.
- Provide data to the IBMS Program Director when needed for program assessments and reports to accrediting agencies.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF THE DISCIPLINE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Discipline Director (DD)

The DD will provide: 1) Coordination of Discipline-specific activities involving the academic programs of students in that Discipline; 2) Monitoring of academic progress by graduate students in the Discipline; 3) Advice and guidance given to students and Graduate Faculty of the Discipline; and 4) The submitting of recommendations for appointments to the IBMS Graduate Faculty. The DD will serve as the Discipline representative on the IBMS COGS.

The DD will be appointed via the process described in Supplement III below. Briefly, nominees will be gathered from the faculty members of a discipline and submitted to COGS for review and vote.

Term: 2 years; No term limit

B. Deputy Discipline Director

Deputy DDs will: 1) Provide assistance to the DD as needed; 2) Attend meetings of the IBMS COGS when the DD is unavailable.

Identified and appointed by the DEC of the discipline.

Term: 2 years; No term limit

C. IBMS Curriculum Committee Representative

One member of each Discipline Executive Committee will serve as its representative on the IBMS Curriculum Committee in order to maintain communication between the discipline and those creating and monitoring the IBMS curriculum.

Identified and appointed by the DEC of the discipline; appointment requires approval from chairs of departments in which nominees hold primary appointments.

Term: Concurrent with term of service on IBMS Curriculum Committee

D. IBMS Admissions Committee Representative

From among the three members of the Discipline who serve as its representatives on the IBMS Admissions Committee, one member will serve on the DEC in order to maintain communication between the discipline and those receiving and processing student applications to the IBMS Graduate Program.

Identified and appointed by the DEC of the discipline; appointments require approval from chairs of departments in which nominees hold primary appointments.

Term: Concurrent with term of service on IBMS Admissions Committee

E. IBMS Recruitment Committee Representative

The representative to the IBMS Student Recruitment Committee will serve on the DEC in order to maintain communication between the discipline and those organizing recruitment activities for the IBMS Graduate Program.

Identified and appointed by the DEC of the discipline; appointment requires approval from chairs of departments in which nominees hold primary appointments.

Term: Concurrent with term of service on IBMS Admissions Committee

Supplement III

Identification and Appointment of Discipline Directors

(Approved 4-21-14, Revised 2-11-2019)

When it is necessary to replace a discipline director for any reason, the new discipline director will be identified and appointed by the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies using the following procedure:

1. The director, deputy director, or other member of the discipline leadership of the discipline in need of a new director will contact the chair of the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies to request that the process for the selection of a new director be initiated. The chair of COGS will notify the members of COGS that the process has been initiated.
2. The chair of COGS will distribute an announcement to all the members of the discipline indicating that the search for a new discipline director has been initiated and that nominations and self-nominations are welcome. Any member of the faculty who wishes to be considered must first receive approval from the chair of the department in which he/she holds a primary appointment. Additional qualified candidates may also be nominated by the relevant discipline leadership and affiliated department chair(s). The COGS chair will request from each nominee, a CV and a paragraph summarizing the nominee's qualifications.
3. After one week, the names of the individuals received by the COGS chair will be forwarded along with their CVs and qualification documents, to the director or deputy director of the discipline in need of a new director and to the department chair(s) affiliated with the discipline. The discipline director or deputy director along with the affiliated department chair(s) will deliberate and choose one nominee to recommend to the COGS chair.
4. The nominee recommended by the discipline in step 3 will then be presented to the full membership of COGS for discussion and a vote of confirmation, followed by official appointment. If the nominee is not confirmed or if it is agreed by COGS that further consideration or additional candidates are required, the process will be repeated from step 2.

Expedited procedure to identify an Interim Discipline Director:

1. The Discipline Executive Committee (DEC) will identify a discipline faculty member who the committee believes would be suitable to serve as the Interim Discipline Director of the discipline. In most cases, this would be the discipline Deputy Director.
2. Once the DEC has identified this candidate, the DEC will contact the IBMS COGS Chair to nominate this candidate to serve as the discipline's Interim Discipline Director. The DEC will include a brief nomination paragraph to highlight the nominee's qualifications along with the nominee's CV.
3. The IBMS COGS Chair will then send the nomination and documents to the IBMS COGS for approval.

Supplement IV
Milestones Agreement
(approved 5-15-16)

Sample Milestones Agreement (official form available on IMPACT)

Integrated Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program

Discipline: _____

Discipline

This document is provided for the purpose of confirming that a student and the student's Supervising Professor have been clearly informed that certain programmatic milestones are expected prior to receiving the Ph.D. degree, and that there is an expected timeline to complete these milestones. That is, a student is expected to reach particular milestones within a specified time period in order to demonstrate satisfactory progress through the program. It is also expected that each IBMS discipline will make any revisions in this document to accommodate the needs of its program and to its discipline-specific curriculum. A student who demonstrates unsatisfactory academic progress may lose funding, be placed on academic probation, or be dismissed from the program.

Academic Advising

Upon entering the _____ discipline of the IBMS Graduate Program, the
Discipline

Discipline Director, or the Director's appointee, will serve as **Graduate Advisor** for all students in the Discipline. Once a student is granted approval for entering the laboratory of an approved member of the IBMS Graduate Faculty, advising responsibilities will be shared between the Supervising Professor and the Graduate Advisor.

In order to ensure that students remain in good academic standing and make satisfactory progress through the program, advisors are responsible for the following:

- Presenting a clear timetable to the student for completing course requirements, examinations, and other requirements.
- Ensuring that meetings between the student and Dissertation Supervising Committee occur each semester, and reporting of student progress to the _____ Discipline
Discipline
Executive Committee, and included in the program's annual doctoral progress report.
- Ensuring required coursework is completed; provide suggestions regarding elective course selections.
- Providing the student with assistance in assembling research and qualifying exam committees.
- Providing the student, when necessary, with clarification regarding the requirements for successful completion of dissertation research, the written dissertation, and defense of dissertation.
- Periodically reviewing the student's Plan of Study to determine if the student is making progress consistent with the expectations of the program; and work with the Discipline Director, the Supervising Professor, and student to determine if modifications are necessary.
- Providing the student with opportunities and information to optimize the student's future career success

Milestones checklist for all Ph.D. Students in the _____ Discipline

Discipline

Complete laboratory rotations and select Discipline and Supervising Professor.	Year 1
Complete required IBMS and discipline core coursework.	Years 1-2
Discuss and complete <i>Student-Mentor Compact</i> and <i>Milestones Agreement</i> with Dissertation Mentor before the end of the Spring semester of Year 1.	Year 1, Spring semester (review annually)
Select and seek approval for Temporary Supervising Committee (if applicable)	Year 2, Fall semester
Report research progress; evaluation reported to DEC. Complete required coursework.	Year 2, Fall semester (and each semester thereafter)
Complete Qualifying Examination successfully.	Year 2, Spring semester
Advance to candidacy by submitting required paperwork (immediately following QE).	Year 2, Spring semester
Complete advanced elective coursework.	Years 2-3
Select and seek approval for Dissertation Supervising Committee by DEC.	Year 3, Fall semester
Submit Dissertation Proposal with required paperwork for approval by Dissertation Supervising Committee, DEC, and Graduate Dean.	Year 3, Fall semester
Enroll for required 2 semesters of dissertation credit (IBMS 7099).	Year 4-5
Participate in dissertation preparation workshop prior to defense semester.	Year 5, Fall Semester
Complete dissertation research; dissertation should be written and successfully defended, and approved by Dissertation Committee (timing is approximate).	Year 5, Spring Semester
Dissertation accepted by Graduate School.	Year 5, Spring Semester
File all paperwork required for degree conferral and graduation.	Year 5, Spring Semester
Submit exit survey to Associate Dean for Student Affairs.	Year 5, Spring Semester

We have read this form and have had the opportunity to discuss the information contained within it. We understand the academic milestones that the student is expected to reach in order to successfully complete the requirements of the IBMS doctoral program, as well as the expected timeline for completing these milestones.

Student's Signature

Date

Supervising Professor's Signature

Date

Discipline Director's Signature

Date

Supplement V
Student-Mentor Compact
(approved 5-15-16)

UT Health San Antonio
Sample Compact Between Graduate Students and Their Mentor
(official form available from discipline coordinator)

Pre-doctoral training entails both formal education in advanced scientific knowledge and theory, and research training under the supervision of one or more investigators who are qualified to fulfill the responsibilities of a mentor. A positive mentoring relationship between a pre-doctoral student and a Supervising Professor is a vital component of student preparation for a successful biomedical career.

Students who pursue a biomedical graduate degree are expected to take appropriate responsibility for their own scientific and professional development. However, Graduate Faculty who mentor students are expected to fulfill certain responsibilities such as providing academic guidance and scientific training, instruction in the responsible conduct of research and research ethics, and financial support.

This compact offers a set of guiding principles intended to promote and support the development of a positive mentoring relationship between a pre-doctoral student and his/her Supervising Professor. For Ph.D. students, this compact will also include the completed Discipline-specific individualized **Milestone Agreement Form**. The purpose of completing these documents is to guarantee that both students and their Supervising Professors clearly understand the exact milestones and accomplishments required to be granted the Ph.D. As mandated by the U.T. System, the individualized Milestone Agreement Form should be provided in an electronic format consistent with protections provided by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Prior to the end of the Spring semester of Year 1, students should have 1) discussed with their Supervising Professors each of the topics listed on pages 2 – 4 of this document and 2) submitted the attached form to the Director of their Disciplines. This individualized compact should describe specific commitments and detailed processes that are understood by both the student and the Supervising Professor with regard to reaching the Discipline-specific milestones and accomplishing the goals of the students' Plans of Study.

With their signatures, both the Supervising Professors and the students confirm that all topics listed have been discussed and they are committed to uphold the principles agreed upon in this individualized compact. Once approved by the student's discipline executive committee, the compact will be placed in the student's file held in the Discipline's administrative office, and made available to the IBMS Program Director upon request.

It is understood that this is a living document, and that responsibilities and expectations of various students and mentors may differ. Portions of this compact may be revised to reflect additional expectation agreed upon. Also, various aspects of a student's pursuit of degree can change over time and therefore this compact should be reviewed regularly (e.g., once a year) and modified as needed. Similarly, the Milestone Agreement Form is to be reviewed regularly.

DEFINING STUDENT AND MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS
(student and mentor should fill this out together)

Frequency and Methods of Communication between Supervising Professor and Student (How often will student and mentor meet? How should updates or changes in expectations and issues be communicated?)

Research/Training-Related and Professional Development of the Student (What is the student's project? Is there a specific person who will oversee training other than the PI and to what degree will the student assist with other projects in the lab? What constitutes professional development?)

Common Laboratory Responsibilities (Which tasks and duties are shared among all lab members, including the student?)

Notebooks and Data (What is the policy of the laboratory related to the storage of data and laboratory notebooks?)

Work Hours/Attendance in the Laboratory (How many hours per week is the student expected to work in the laboratory?)

Authorship Policies (What is the policy that constitutes authorship in the lab? How is the order of authors determined in a manuscript or abstract?)

Manuscripts expected for Graduation (Are there specific expectations for the number of manuscripts (published, submitted and/or in preparation), and the student's authorship position (*e.g.*, first author on these manuscripts, required for the student to graduate?)

Intellectual Policy Issues: Disclosure, Patent Rights and Publishing Research Discoveries (What is the policy for patents that come out of the student's work?)

Selection of a Thesis/Dissertation Committee (What is the process for determining the subject of the dissertation and the membership of the dissertation committee?)

Attendance of Professional and Scientific Meetings (Under which conditions can a student travel to a Regional, National, or International scientific meeting? For example, only if the student or student's work is presenting? Who covers the cost and what will be covered?)

Career and Professional Development / Job Search and Placement / Individualized Career Development Plan (What is the career choice of the student and what arrangements can be made to allow the student to participate in courses, workshops, etc. for their particular interests without compromising their research training?)

Time off for Illness or University Holidays (In light of GSBS policy that, except for official University holidays, graduate students should not expect time off, what is the laboratory policy for vacations, holidays, and personal days?)

Conflict Resolution and Student Complaint Policies (refer to Student Catalogues; GSBS website)

Additional Topics

SIGNATURES:

We have discussed all the above topics and made the mutually agreed upon additions, specifications and changes.

We acknowledge our joint intention to re-evaluate the compact, the agreed upon milestones and the degree completion date at least once a year throughout the student's period of academic standing.

Student's Name

Signature of Student

Date

Supervising Professor's Name

Signature of Supervising Professor

Date

This compact has been adapted from the UT System Health Institutions Compact Between Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors and the AAMC's Compact Between Biomedical Graduate Students and Their Research Advisors (December 2008).

Supplement VI

IBMS Laboratory Rotations (IBMS 5008)

(approved 8-21-2015, revised 4-23-2020)

Overview

One of the main goals of first year IBMS PhD students is to identify a suitable Dissertation Mentor and laboratory for pursuing their doctoral studies. Therefore, laboratory rotations are required in order to acquaint students with the variety of research topics studied by faculty members in the graduate program, and to allow students some first-hand exposure to areas of research that they may wish to pursue. In addition, laboratory rotations allow students the opportunity to explore the laboratory environments created by potential faculty mentors (and their laboratory personnel) in order to assess compatibility. Conversely, faculty members who serve as rotation mentors have an opportunity to evaluate students wishing to do their PhD research in their laboratories. Given the limited time of each laboratory rotation, no one expects the research performed to be of such significance as to result in publication, but the experience should give the students an understanding of future expectations, and exposure to new experimental strategies and methodologies that may prove useful in the students' eventual dissertation research projects.

Choice of rotation laboratories, made via the **IMPACT website** (<https://gsbsdev.uthscsa.edu/ibms/>), is based upon each student's specific research interests, consideration of the prospective Dissertation Mentor's ability to support a student for his/her dissertation research, and consultation with the student's faculty advisors. Students will choose faculty members with whom they wish to rotate based on information that they gather from faculty research summaries found on the GSBS and IBMS discipline websites (<http://gsbs.uthscsa.edu/faculty/>), from published papers in the scientific literature, and by speaking with faculty members during orientation week and during the semester. Students should also make good use of guidance provided by discipline faculty advisors, the Course Director of the Laboratory Rotation course (IBMS 5008), and by speaking with individual research faculty. **Students must be proactive in visiting faculty members to discuss their research and the possibility of doing rotations in their laboratory.**

Once rotations are completed, students will request, via the IMPACT website, a permanent faculty mentor with whom they wish to perform their dissertation research projects. Entry into a laboratory requires mutual agreement between each student and the proposed faculty mentor. The appropriate online form for requesting assignment of a faculty mentor must be completed and signed by both the student and the proposed faculty mentor, and submitted to the Chair of the IBMS Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS). At that time, a student must also specify a primary discipline of interest (usually a discipline with which the faculty mentor is affiliated). Completion of this process is expected by the end of the first Fall semester of the Program, although with the approval of the Course Director of IBMS 5008 and the Chair of COGS an additional rotation may be performed in the Spring semester.

Logistics of Rotations

1. Each rotation will be 5 or 6 weeks long; each student will complete the equivalent of 3 rotations. The exact dates assigned to each rotation period will be posted at the beginning of each academic year.
2. If the student and rotation mentor are in 100% agreement that the student will join the mentor's laboratory, then the student can combine two consecutive 5-week rotations to generate one 10-week rotation in the specific faculty rotation mentor's lab provided this is mutually agreed upon by the student, the faculty rotation mentor, and the IBMS 5008 Course Director. A **formal rotation extension request** must be submitted via e-mail to the IBMS 5008 Course Director to request approval.

3. In order to meet the minimum rotation requirement, a student must complete: Three 5- or 6-week rotations or one 5- or 6-week rotation plus one 10- or 11-week rotation (permission for the latter option must be obtained from the IBMS 5008 course director). Every student must rotate through at least two different laboratories.
4. Under special circumstances, and with the approval of the IBMS 5008 Course Director and the IBMS Program Director, a student may be allowed to perform an additional rotation at the beginning of the subsequent (Spring) semester. If a student is unable to identify a suitable permanent faculty mentor by the end of the first year, this would be considered a failure to progress in the program and may be grounds for dismissal as determined by the IBMS COGS.

Grading

- Grading is based on a system of H (Honors) or S (Satisfactory) or U (Unsatisfactory).

Each five-week rotation will have a value of 1.0 semester credit hour (SCH) and will be graded by the faculty mentor of the rotation. If two five-week periods are combined for a single rotation, this will equal 2 SCH and will be given a single grade.

Faculty rotation advisors will be responsible for reporting a student's grade to the Course Director **within one week** after the student completes a rotation (see Evaluation below). At the end of the semester, the Course Director will post, on the Registrar's grade site, a single grade representing the average grade for all rotations performed during the semester. Two of three rotations must receive a grade of Satisfactory (S) in order for the student to receive a grade of "S" for IBMS 5008. If a student receives a "U" for IBMS 5008, he/she will be put on academic probation, and will be reviewed by the Committee on Graduate Studies.

- Rotation Project Report

After completion of each rotation, students must prepare a project report **in consultation with the faculty rotation mentor**. As a guide, the report should include the names of the student and of the faculty mentor, the project title, the rotation number (1st – 3rd), background information and rationale for doing the studies, the hypothesis being tested, the results (positive or negative), and any conclusions. The report should then be uploaded to the graduate school's IMPACT website **no later than 3 days following** the completion of the rotation. The student should provide a copy of the final project report to the faculty rotation mentor.

- Evaluation of Rotations

After completion of each rotation the faculty rotation mentor will provide, via the IMPACT website and in addition to giving a grade of "S" or "H" or "U" (*i.e.*, Satisfactory or Honors or Unsatisfactory), a written evaluation of the student's performance during the rotation. The evaluation will address specific criteria listed on the evaluation form. The faculty mentor may add additional comments. Once the faculty member and student discuss the evaluation, the form will require the student's signature. Rotation evaluations will be kept in the student's file.

Students may evaluate and make comments regarding the faculty mentor for each rotation using specific criteria as listed on the evaluation form found on the IMPACT website.

Supplement VII Qualifying Examination (IBMS 7001)

(approved 8-21-15, revised 7-8-2019)

Objective: The purpose of the Qualifying Examination (QE) is to determine if a student has met programmatic expectations with regard to: i) Acquiring a level of scientific reasoning and a knowledge base in his/her field of study appropriate for a graduate student at the current stage of training; ii) Demonstrating skills of problem-solving and development of experimental strategies designed to test hypotheses associated with a specific scientific problem; and iii) Demonstrating the ability to defend experimental strategies proposed for solving scientific problems. Successful completion of the QE is required for Admission to Candidacy and continuation in the IBMS Ph.D. program.

Modular Structure: IBMS 7001 is divided into 7 modules that are overseen by the 7 IBMS Disciplines as follows: IBMS 7001-2BA Biology of Aging; IBMS 7001-3CB Cancer Biology; IBMS 7001-4CGM Cell Biology, Genetics & Molecular Medicine; IBMS 7001-5MIM Molecular Immunology & Microbiology; IBMS 7001-6BMM Biochemical Mechanisms in Medicine; IBMS 7001-7NS Neuroscience; IBMS 7001-8PP Physiology & Pharmacology. Each IBMS Discipline is responsible for providing its students with a detailed description of the examination process, and for ensuring that the programmatic expectations and goals of the QE are met.

Expectations: The Qualifying Exam (QE) is an S/U graded course in the IBMS curriculum (IBMS 7001), is required of all IBMS Ph.D. students, and **must be completed during the Spring semester of a Ph.D. student's second year in the IBMS program**. This timeline may vary slightly for dual-degree students. A student's Discipline Director/Academic Advisor will indicate in which of the IBMS 7001 modules the student should enroll. Failure to complete the QE during the specified semester may result in an Unsatisfactory (U) being posted on the student's transcript and could delay the student's admission to candidacy. Deviation from the expected timeline is possible only if justified and approved by a student's Discipline leadership in consultation with the student's Dissertation Mentor. Therefore, a student who does not complete the QE in the appropriate semester may receive a grade of Incomplete (I) until the exam is completed. Each IBMS discipline may determine the detailed logistics required for the administration of the QE process for its students so as to achieve the goals of the discipline while satisfying the expectations of the IBMS graduate program.

Minimal expectations in the design and administration of the QE include the following: 1) Prior to initiation of the QE, the expectations and process of the exam will be provided to the students. 2) Members of the IBMS Graduate Faculty will be identified and approved by the Discipline leadership who will serve as the QE Committee and who will administer and report outcomes of the examination. 3) A relevant unsolved problem in the biomedical sciences will be identified that is approved by the Discipline QE Committee and will serve as the basis for the examination. **The QE question must be based on an idea conceived and developed by the student without help from the supervising professor, and must not duplicate any aims in his/her mentor's active or pending grants.** A written declaration from the student should be submitted to the examination committee in order to clarify the relationship between the proposed research and that of the student's Dissertation Mentor's research. 4) An hypothesis-driven research proposal will be written by the student that describes experimental strategies for solving the QE problem. 5) An oral defense-of-proposal will examine the student's problem-solving process, and the soundness of the student's experimental design. Student Dissertation Mentors may attend oral defenses, but are considered to be guests and not members of the examining committee; and should only ask questions when invited by the QE committee chair.

Grading: Following the oral defense of the proposal, and based on clear criteria set by the discipline to satisfy the expectations of the discipline and the IBMS graduate program, the QE faculty committee will discuss the

outcome and determine if Honors, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory is to be recommended to the student's Discipline Director. This grade, posted for the IBMS 7001 course, should represent the consensus of the examination committee. In addition, **the COGS-approved QE reporting form should be submitted** by the chair of the QE committee to the Discipline leadership indicating any recommendations that may be required to enhance the academic progress of the student. The Discipline Director is responsible for ensuring that the report is filed with the Assistant Director of the IBMS Graduate Program. Successful completion of the QE is required for Admission to Candidacy and continuation in the IBMS Ph.D. program.

- In the event that a student passes the QE, a grade of Satisfactory (S) or a grade of Honors (H) will be posted for IBMS 7001 by the student's discipline director on the Registrar's grade site.
- In the event that a student fails the QE, a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) may be posted for IBMS 7001. Alternatively, a grade of Incomplete (I) may be posted, and a **maximum of one remediation examination** will be allowed (timing and logistics provided by discipline leadership, but **generally within 60 days of the original exam**). If a student successfully passes the second attempt, the grade of "I" will be changed to Satisfactory (S).
- If a student does not successfully remediate, a grade of Unsatisfactory (U) will be posted for IBMS 7001. The report from the QE committee to the Discipline leadership should include a recommendation regarding whether the student should be considered for dismissal from the program by the Dean of the GSBS, or that a transfer into a Master's level degree track should be considered.

Preparing a Qualifying Examination Proposal: The following outline is a general guide for preparing the research proposal for the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination. **It is advisable for a student to confer with the Discipline Director for additional specific criteria that may be added by a student's discipline leadership.** The format is similar to that required by most grant agencies. The **MAXIMUM** length of the proposal is **10 single-spaced pages** (excluding title page, abstract, illustrations and references), although disciplines may have different page limits so students should check with their discipline leadership.

Title Page - title; name of candidate; graduate program and discipline

Abstract (approx. 400 words) – summary of objectives, protocol, and significance of the proposal.

Research Plan - (limit to 10 single-spaced pages; check page limitation with discipline leadership):

- 1. Specific Aims** (approximately 1 page) - The overall hypothesis and objective of the proposal should be clearly stated. Present 2-4 testable hypotheses (*e.g.*, Specific Aims).
- 2. Background** (approximately 2-3 pages) - The work of others that led to the overall hypothesis should be described, citing the most relevant references. A clear rationale should be provided for the importance of solving the research problem, along with its potential impact on current perceptions in the field.
- 3. Experimental Design** (remaining pages) - Each Specific Aim that is outlined in the first section (above), should have a parallel section in the Experimental Design section. Describe experimental strategies designed to accomplish each aim. Possible pitfalls to the proposed design and alternative experimental strategies should be noted. Regarding methods, sufficient detail should be provided to allow the reader the opportunity to critically evaluate the experimental approach chosen. However, lengthy descriptions of methods common to the field (*e.g.*, details concerning the formulation of phosphate-buffered saline, or the performance of SDS-PAGE) should not be included.

4. References - Citations should be numbered consecutively as they are cited in the text, and references should be arranged in numerical order. Use accepted formats and be consistent. Use standard accepted abbreviations for the names of journals.

Supplement VIII

Change of Primary Institution by IBMS Graduate Faculty Member

Modified Student Plan of Study Checklist

Student Name: IBMS Discipline Plan of Study: Year entered IBMS, Fall: Current IBMS Mentor Name: Mentor's New Institution (Department, School, Institution):		
Check one of the following:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Student wishes to identify a new IBMS dissertation mentor and research project. New Dissertation Mentor:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Student requests approval to withdraw from IBMS Graduate Program to move with mentor and enroll in new institution.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Student requests approval to remain at UTHSA while completing research project with original dissertation mentor. Approved Co-mentor:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Student requests approval to move with dissertation mentor to new institution, but remain enrolled in, and graduate from, the IBMS Graduate Program.		
For continuing students: If student requests to continue as IBMS graduate student and retain original dissertation mentor, submit answers to the following questions.		
Have all Discipline Core Courses and Electives been completed? If not, what is left to be completed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the student completed the IBMS Milestones Agreement and Student/Mentor Compact (expected completion Spring Semester Year 1)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the student successfully completed the Qualifying Exam (expected completion Spring Semester Year 2)? If yes, what was the date of the exam? If no, what is the anticipated semester for the exam?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes Date:	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the student Advanced to Candidacy (expected completion Spring Semester Year 2)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the student formed an IBMS-approved Dissertation Supervising Committee (DSC) (expected completion Fall Semester Year 3)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Has the student submitted a DSC-approved research proposal to the GSBS via IMPACT (expected completion Fall Semester Year 3)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Is the student aware of the required meetings of the Dissertation Supervising Committee each semester beginning no later than Fall Semester Year 3? Yes No

Discipline-specific guidelines that extend but do not contradict IBMS guidelines:

Is the student aware of responsibilities connected with Recurring Courses so as to receive future grades of Satisfactory (S)? Yes No

- IBMS 6090 Seminar:
Discipline-specific expectations consistent with course syllabus –

- IBMS 6097 Research:
Discipline-specific expectations consistent with course syllabus –

- IBMS 7010 Journal Club:
Discipline-specific expectations consistent with course syllabus –

- Other discipline-specific courses:

Is the student aware of the required meetings of the Dissertation Supervising Committee each semester? Yes No

Has the student completed required electives? Yes No

Has the student completed 2 semesters of dissertation? Yes No

Has the student/mentor proposed a dissertation defense date (must be held at UTHSA)? Yes No
Anticipated Date:

Additional Information and Requirements:

Moving costs will be arranged/covered by Mentor

Stipend, tuition and fees, health insurance will be arranged/covered by Mentor

Travel costs between institutions will be arranged/covered by Mentor

Note: It is expected that UTHSA students who complete their dissertation research at other institutions **must return at least once per year to the home institution (UTHSA)** to hold dissertation supervising committee meetings, and to present their final Dissertation Defense.

Supplement IX
Policy for the Transfer of Students into the IBMS
during Faculty Recruitment

(Approved 02-11-2019; Amended 11-08-2021)

During the recruitment of faculty members from other institutions to UT Health San Antonio, there are instances where the faculty member may have existing Ph.D. graduate students who wish to transfer to UT Health San Antonio along with their mentor. During this process, the graduate students may wish to transfer from the Ph.D. program at another institution, into the IBMS Ph.D. program. In this case, the following policy will be considered for students at all levels (i.e. those who have not yet passed their qualifying examination and are not yet advanced to candidacy and those who have passed their qualifying examination and are advanced to candidacy).

For all students wishing to transfer to the IBMS from another institution during a faculty recruitment, the following steps will be required:

1. All students must apply for admission to the IBMS program using the online submission system.
2. The student's application will be reviewed by the chair of the department of the new faculty recruit and the chair of the IBMS admissions committee. The chair of the IBMS admissions committee will additionally request further review of the application by two members of the IBMS admissions committee. Based on the **three reviews** collected from members of the IBMS admissions committee, the chair may make a recommendation to the COGS chair to accept the student into the IBMS program. The COGS chair will then approve or deny the recommendation of acceptance with or without consulting with the full COGS. An approval of the recommendation of acceptance would then go to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval.
3. If the student is recommended for admission, the student would then choose a discipline for their study and the discipline would be responsible for creating a modified plan of study for the student consistent with the requirements of the IBMS and the discipline. It will be the discipline's decision whether students who are not yet advanced to candidacy or who are advanced to candidacy will be required to take additional courses or fulfill specific requirements.

Supplement X
Policy for Individual Students who Join the IBMS
Program from Other Graduate Programs

(Approved 03-11-2019)

There may be instances when students who are pursuing biomedical doctoral degrees from other institutions may wish to pursue their graduate work at UT Health San Antonio in the IBMS program. In this case, the following policy will be considered for these students.

1. These students must apply for admission to the IBMS program using the online submission system following the normal deadlines, the normal admissions review and interview processes, and the normal admissions process and timeline.
2. Once the student has gained admission to the IBMS, the student will enroll in the normal course work required of all first year IBMS students including IBMS 5000-Fundamentals of Biomedical Sciences and IBMS 5008-Laboratory Rotations. If the student wishes to be exempt from IBMS 5000, the student must contact the course director and submit full course syllabi for the potentially overlapping courses the student has previously taken at his/her previous institution. If desired, the IBMS 5000 course director may consult with the IBMS COGS in making his/her decision.
3. The student will perform laboratory rotations in the normal manner and identify his/her supervising professor and discipline following the normal timeline.
4. Once a mentor and discipline have been determined, it will be up to the discipline executive committee to decide which discipline-specific courses will be required. Recurring IBMS courses required of all students cannot be exempted (IBMS 6090-Seminar, IBMS 6097-Research, IBMS 7010-Student Journal Club and Research Presentation, IBMS 7099-Dissertation). It is expected that the mentor and discipline will work together with the student to create a modified plan of study for the student depending on his/her previous course work.
5. If the student has passed his/her qualifying examination at the previous institution, it will be up to the discipline to decide if it will accept the qualifying examination from the other institution or if the student will be required to re-take the qualifying examination in the discipline. The qualifying examination taken by the student at the previous institution should adhere to the general IBMS qualifying examination criteria (below).

IBMS criteria for the qualifying examination (Supplement VII, criteria 3-5): **3)** A relevant unsolved problem in the biomedical sciences will be identified that is approved by the Discipline QE Committee and will serve as the basis for the examination. The QE question must be based on an idea conceived and developed by the student without help from the supervising professor, and must not duplicate any aims in his/her mentor's active or pending grants. A written declaration from the student should be submitted to the examination committee in order to clarify the relationship between the proposed research and that of the student's Dissertation Mentor's research. **4)** An hypothesis-driven research proposal will be written by the student that describes experimental strategies for solving the QE problem. **5)** An oral defense-of-proposal will examine the student's problem-solving process, and the soundness of the student's experimental design.

Supplement XI

Discipline-Specific Guidelines and Curriculum

See your Discipline Director or Discipline Coordinator for a summary of additional expectations that are specific to your discipline.