MICROBIOLOGY

MA, PhD
Graduate Program

Student Handbook
2022-23

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

WELCOME! 4

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MICROBIOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENT 4
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL 4
THE COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES (CNS) 5
THE INTERDISCIPLINARY LIFE SCIENCES GRADUATE PROGRAMS (ILSGP) 5

THE MICROBIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM (MIC) 5

MICROBIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION 6
THE MICROBIOLOGY GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (GSC) 6

DEGREES OFFERED 7

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) 7
REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION 7
ADMISSION TO MICROBIOLOGY FROM BIOCHEMISTRY (BCH) OR CELL AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY (CMB) GRADUATE PROGRAMS 7
ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A PH.D. IN THE MICROBIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM 7
DEGREE MILESTONES 8
PROGRESS TOWARDS DEGREE 8
LABORATORY ROTATIONS 8
PERMANENT LABORATORIES 9
CORE COURSES 10
CORE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 11
ADDITIONAL REQUIRED COURSEWORK 12
QUALIFYING EXAMINATION 13
ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY 16
Dissertation Committee: *17*
Acting Committee Chair *17*
Designating an Acting Committee Chair *18*
CHANGING DISSERTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS 18
REGISTRATION IN CANDIDACY STATUS 18
EXTENSIONS OF DOCTORAL CANDIDACY 18
ANNUAL MEETINGS WITH THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE 18
APPLICATION TO GRADUATE 19
PH.D. DISSERTATION AND FINAL ORAL EXAM/DISSERTATION DEFENSE 19
SUBMISSION OF FINAL DISSERTATION 20
TIMELINE OF THE PH.D. DEGREE 20
MASTER OF ARTS WITH THESIS (M.A.) 21

FINANCIAL SUPPORT 22

POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT STIPENDS 22
ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT 22
Graduate Research Assistantships *23*
Teaching Requirement *23*
Teaching Assistants (TA) *23*
ITA ENGLISH LANGUAGE CERTIFICATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 23
RE-APPOINTMENTS 23
LIMIT TO APPOINTMENT HOURS FOR ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT 23
ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT 24
UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS 24
COMPETITIVE NATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS 24
OTHER AID 24

GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES 25

CONTACT INFORMATION 25
Mailboxes *25*
Change of Address and Phone Number *25*
Email Information *25*
REQUIRED STUDENT TRAINING 25

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY....26
INCOMPLETE GRADES....26
HOLIDAY SCHEDULES....26
SECOND DEGREES....27
REGISTRATION....27
Full-time Student Status....27
Continuous Registration....27
Registration for Dissertation Hours....27
Registration Access Periods....27
Confirmation of Attendance....28
Late Registration....28
Adding/Dropping Courses....28
Registration Requirement for the Master's Students....28
LEAVE OF ABSENCE....28
WITHDRAWAL....28
Early Withdrawal from MIC Program During First Year....28
Withdrawal from MIC Program and University....29
OUT-OF-STATE/ NON-RESIDENT TUITION WAIVERS....29
Note for Fellowship Recipients....29
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE WAIVERS....29
STUDENT RECORDS....29
DISABILITY SERVICES....30
PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION POLICY....30

WHERE TO GO WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE....30

GRIEVANCE POLICY....31

CAMPUS SAFETY....32

SURE Walk....32
UT Austin Night Rides....32
EMERGENCIES....32
THE COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH CENTER – CRISIS SERVICES....32
FACILITY SERVICES....33

OTHER CONTACTS & CAMPUS SUPPORT RESOURCES....33

THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS....33
CNS OFFICE OF GRADUATE EDUCATION....33
FACULTY INNOVATION CENTER GRADUATE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (GSD)....33
CENTER FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH SUPPORT (CBRS)....33
RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE CAMPUS....33
TITLE IX....34
ILSGP GRADUATE STUDENT ASSEMBLY....34
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES....35

APPENDIX....35

GRADUATE STUDENT QUICK REFERENCE CHART....36
FORMS....38
MENTORSHIP AND OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES FOR STEM GRADUATE STUDENTS....39
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT....40

Welcome!

Welcome to the graduate program in Microbiology at The University of Texas at Austin. This handbook will serve as a resource for incoming and current graduate students in the program, acquainting you with the policies and procedures involved in obtaining an advanced degree. We look forward to working with you and supporting your progress towards a graduate degree in Microbiology. We encourage you to actively use this handbook throughout your studies. This handbook is a summary of university, program, and departmental policies. **This handbook contains guidelines applicable to the classes entering in Fall 2022 and subsequent years and replaces all preceding versions applicable to previous classes.**

Responsibilities of a Microbiology Graduate Student

Students are responsible for understanding and following the rules and policies that govern their academic degree. Diligent planning is required to ensure that all milestones, deadlines, and requirements of the degree are met. The Graduate School website is a centralized resource for information on policies, deadlines, and general doctoral degree requirements. Two University catalogs are essential references: The General Information Catalog and The Graduate Catalog. These catalogs are available online at catalog.utexas.edu/graduate. The policies and requirements governing graduate education are dynamic. **Students are well advised to stay in frequent contact with the Graduate Program Staff and default to them with any questions**.

Required Grade Point Average
Note that the Graduate School requires all graduate students to maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of at least 3.0. If a student's cumulative GPA falls below 3.0, the Graduate School will place them on academic probation. The student will have one semester to raise their cumulative GPA above 3.0 or they will be dismissed from the program.

In addition to the requirements of the Graduate School, the Microbiology Graduate Studies Committee (MIC GSC) has set additional requirements for the graduate program. These include:

- Performing all required rotations during the proscribed rotation periods during the first academic year. See *Laboratory Rotations* for additional details about this requirement.
- Attend and actively participate in all courses as defined by the course instructor. (Students may request and be granted accommodations for a documented disability. Please see the *Disability Services and Accommodations* for more information.)
- Fulfill all degree requirements outlined in this Graduate Program Handbook.

Failure to satisfy these requirements will result in a student not making satisfactory progress toward the degree. In this event, the student will be notified in writing by the Graduate Advisor. The letter will include immediate corrective actions necessary to continue making satisfactory progress towards the degree. If the student fails to take the corrective actions, the Microbiology GSC will be notified and may then recommend termination from the Microbiology Graduate Program.

The Graduate School

Graduate students are admitted to both the Microbiology Graduate Program and the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin. All graduate degrees are the responsibility of the Graduate School.

The Graduate School includes the Vice President and Dean of the Graduate School and staff, plus about one hundred Graduate Studies Committees. The Graduate School can be reached at (512) 471-4511 or GradStudentSvcs@austin.utexas.edu.

Each department or field of study offering a graduate degree has a Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) composed of active assistant professors, associate professors, and full professors (tenured and tenure-track faculty). Each Graduate Studies Committee sets policy and supervises its graduate program.

Approximately thirty faculty members from various Graduate Studies Committees, plus six graduate students, serve as representatives in the Graduate Assembly, the legislative body of the Graduate School.

There is also a student organization concerned with issues related to graduate study called the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA). Each graduate program may elect one representative to the Graduate Assembly, although any graduate student is welcome as a member.

The College of Natural Sciences (CNS)

Dr. David A. Vanden Bout is the Interim Dean of Natural Sciences. The Dean's office is in W.C. Hogg 3.134 and can be reached at (512) 471-3285. The website can be found here.

CNS is home to several organized research units and twelve academic departments, including Astronomy, Chemistry, Computer Sciences, Human Ecology, Integrative Biology, Marine Science, Mathematics, Molecular Biosciences, Neuroscience, Physics, and Statistics and Scientific Computation.

Please visit the CNS website for additional information about college-wide policies:
cns.utexas.edu/graduate-education/college-policies

The Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Graduate Programs (ILSGP)

Founded in 1997 as the Institute for Cellular and Molecular Biology (ICMB), the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Graduate Programs are a university-wide unit that supports the Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB), Biochemistry (BCH), and Microbiology (MIC) Graduate Programs. ILSGP-affiliated faculty members are from multiple departments within the College of Natural Sciences, the College of Engineering, College of Pharmacy, and the Dell Medical School.

In Fall 2020, the Department of Molecular Biosciences will become the administrative home for the ILSGP. An Executive Committee comprised of the Associate Chair for Graduate Education, GSC Chairs, Graduate Advisors, Graduate Program Administrator, faculty representatives from different disciplines, and a student representative provide oversight and guidance for graduate education.

US Mailing address:
The University of Texas at Austin
The Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Graduate Programs
100 E. 24th St.
Austin, TX 78712

Campus mailing address:
ILSGP, Mail Code A5000

The Microbiology Graduate Program (MIC)

The Microbiology Graduate Program administration is part of the Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Graduate Programs.

US mailing address:
The University of Texas at Austin
Microbiology Graduate Program
100 E. 24th St.
Austin, TX 78712

Campus mailing address:
Microbiology Graduate Program, A5000
Phone number: (512) 471-2150

Microbiology Graduate Program Administration

Graduate Studies Committee Chair (GSC): Bryan Davies, Ph.D.
bwdavies@austin.utexas.edu | | 512-471-5535 | NMS 3.118
The GSC Chair oversees the Microbiology Graduate Studies Committee, which is a committee of all Microbiology faculty members that sets policy concerning academics and degree requirements for the program. The GSC Chair also oversees graduate admissions for the program.

Graduate Advisor: Despoina Mavridou, Ph.D.
despoina.mavridou@austin.utexas.edu | 512 475 6864 | NMS 3.116
The Graduate Advisor is a faculty member appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School to advise Microbiology doctoral students (generally in the sense of clarifying policy or granting exceptions to policy), to monitor their academic progress, and to represent the Graduate School in matters relating to graduate students.

Graduate Program Staff:
Graduate Program Manager: Tiffo Carmichael
tiffocarmichael@austin.utexas.edu | ilsgrad@austin.utexas.edu | 512-232-9660 | NHB 2.602

Graduate Coordinator: Elizabeth Davis
elizabethirene@austin.utexas.edu | ilsgrad@austin.utexas.edu | 512-232-9488 | NHB 2.608

The Graduate Program Manager and Graduate Coordinator are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the programs. Some of their duties include responding to inquiries, facilitating degree processes, handling petitions and special requests, monitoring degree progress, student academic employment and fellowships, processing registration, and maintaining student and program records. The Graduate Administrator and Coordinator also implement the recruitment and admission process for applicants to the CMB program. They are responsible for event planning, orientation activities, and supporting the administrative needs of new students throughout the first year.
In addition, they are available to assist students with other ad-hoc issues or concerns. Most questions concerning the program can be addressed to the Graduate Program Staff, who will consult with the Graduate Program Advisor and GSC Chair as necessary.

The Microbiology Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

The Microbiology Graduate Program is administered through an executive committee that represents the forty faculty members of the Graduate Studies Committee. These members are drawn from diverse departments, with faculty primarily from Molecular Biosciences. The committee bears responsibility under its chairperson and the Dean of the Graduate School for graduate study in the program.

A list of GSC members is available at utdirect.utexas.edu/apps/ogs/auth/gsc/nlogon/gsc_members.

Degrees Offered

The Microbiology Graduate Program is designed for students seeking a Ph.D.; however, under certain rare circumstances with the consent of the PI and Graduate Advisor, a Master of Arts with Thesis may be allowed. Dual degrees are generally not allowed and only under certain circumstances that must be approved by the PI, Graduate Advisor and GSC Chair.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

The Ph.D. program prepares students for a career in research by emphasizing scholarship and original research. By the submission of a dissertation, students demonstrate a mature knowledge of the field and that they can design and execute original research.

Requirements for Admission

To be considered for graduate admission to the University of Texas at Austin, candidates must meet the minimum requirements set by the Graduate School and the Microbiology Graduate Program. The Microbiology Graduate Program expects applicants to have a science degree and have successfully completed at least one year each of biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics. Students with any deficiencies in these areas should remedy them before applying to the program

The Microbiology Graduate Program only accepts students seeking a Ph.D. Admission is only offered in the fall semester of each academic year. Please see the program website for additional details about admissions requirements and procedures: ils.utexas.edu/microbiology/prospective-students

Commitment to Diversity
The Microbiology Graduate Program is committed to providing educational opportunities to students from diverse backgrounds. Students of all backgrounds, and especially students underrepresented in the sciences, are encouraged to apply for admission to the graduate program. In addition to the support from our department, the University of Texas at Austin offers fellowships to promote graduate study and diversity. Please also see *Resources that Support a Safe and Inclusive Campus.*

Admission to Microbiology from Biochemistry (BCH) or Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB) Graduate Programs

The GSC Chair and the Graduate Advisor must approve transfers to the Micro program from the BCH or CMB graduate programs. Approval is granted on a case-by-case basis and dependent on academic and research performance prior to the transfer request. Transfers for first-year students are typically performed at the end of the first summer, upon completion of a full year in the original program. Students who are considering changing programs should consult with the Graduate Advisor and the Graduate Program Staff at the beginning of deliberations.

Academic Requirements for a Ph.D. in the Microbiology Graduate Program

- Cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Completion of the core courses with a grade of at least a B or above
- Completion of BIO 391 Grant Writing course in the fall of second year
- Completion of one Microbiology elective course in the second or third year
- Continuous membership in a permanent lab after completion of three lab rotations in the first-year

- One semester as a teaching assistant (TA) (preferably completed by the end of the fourth year).
    - Note: To TA, students must first attend a TA workshop offered at the beginning of each fall and spring semester. Students who have not fulfilled this requirement cannot TA.
- International Students: successful completion of ITA English Language Certification exam and workshop
- Successful completion of qualifying exam in the spring of second year
- Admission to candidacy (after completion of qualifying exam; spring or summer of second year)
- Concurrent registration in Dissertation Hours every long semester from admittance to candidacy through graduation
- Annual meetings with dissertation committee
    - Note: Before making a recommendation to extend PhD candidacy or to defend, the dissertation committee will evaluate the student's progress towards degree, including the student's scientific output in the form of peer reviewed publication(s) as first or co-first author, and presentation of poster/oral presentation(s) at scientific meetings.
- Successful completion of dissertation and final defense

Additional information about Microbiology Ph.D. requirements are referenced in the Graduate Catalog at catalog.utexas.edu/graduate/fields-of-study/natural-sciences/microbiology/degree-requirements.

Degree Milestones

The UT Austin Graduate School has set up a web-based system of Milestones that should be achieved during the Ph.D. Students should review these Milestones upon starting the degree program and check them periodically throughout their degree. Students are responsible for tracking completion of their degree Milestones. Students may view the current Microbiology Graduate Program Milestones at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/milestones.

Progress Towards Degree

All students are expected to make reasonable progress towards the degree. Among other situations, any of the following could be cause for dismissal from the Microbiology program due to failure to progress:

- Core courses not successfully completed by May of second year;
- Qualifying Exam not completed by end of second year
- Admission to candidacy not initiated by start of third year
- Annual Committee Meetings not conducted annually
- Dissertation not completed within three years of admission to candidacy.

Laboratory Rotations

During the first nine months in the program, students are required to perform rotation projects in the laboratories of at least three ILSGP-affiliated faculty. These rotations broaden laboratory experience and will help students find the research area and permanent laboratory that best suits them. Students are required to spend at least 20 hours per week working in the lab for each rotation. At the end of each rotation, the faculty member completes a rotation evaluation of the student's performance. These evaluations are shared with the Graduate Advisors and determine whether the the student will receive credit for research hours.

2022/23 Laboratory Rotation Schedule

June 1, 2022 – August 22, 2022	Early Summer Rotation
September 6, 2022 – November 11, 2022	First Rotation
November 14, 2022 – January 27, 2023	Second Rotation
January 30, 2023 – April 22, 2023	Third Rotation

Rotations are arranged through mutual agreement between the student and the faculty member (Principal Investigator or 'PI') of the lab in which the rotation is arranged. Students should contact potential rotation supervisors well in advance of the start of each rotation period. Students should discuss potential funding with PIs when a rotation is being negotiated. It is crucial that students understand how they will be funded should they pursue their Ph.D. in that lab.

Faculty members must be part of the Biochemistry (BCH), Cell and Molecular Biology (CMB) or Microbiology (MIC) GSCs to accept a MIC student for a rotation. **Changes to an assigned rotation may be made only with permission of the Graduate Advisor**. It is not an option to remain in a laboratory for longer than the designated rotation period, nor are students permitted or to begin a rotation later than the mandated start date, unless approved by the Graduate Advisor. Failure to participate in or to complete the required rotations may result in termination from the program. **If issues arise during a rotation period, the student should consult with the Graduate Advisor.** The Graduate Advisor will evaluate the concerns and recommend an appropriate course of action, which may include approval to change labs.

Once a PI agrees to accept a student for a rotation, a *Rotation Agreement* form is required to document this. The student is responsible for obtaining all required signatures on the *Rotation Agreement* Form, including those of the PI and the Graduate Advisor before submitting the completed form to the Graduate Program Staff. The *Rotation Agreement* form is due to the Graduate Program Staff by the start date of the rotation period.

Permanent Laboratories

At the end of the final rotation, students will choose which laboratory to work in on a permanent basis. This is done after careful consideration and consultation the supervising professor (also known as Primary Investigator or PI) of the lab. Students who begin their studies in Fall 2022 will join a permanent lab **by May 5, 2023.** ILSGP financial support ends on May 31, 2023 for these first-year students. Subsequent support becomes the responsibility of the permanent lab (starting on June 1, 2023).

Students who begin their studies during the early summer rotation period must join a permanent lab at the end of the second rotation period. ILSGP financial support will end on January 31, 2023, and subsequent support is the responsibility of the permanent lab (starting on **February 1, 2023**).

It is program policy that first-year students may not be appointed as Teaching Assistants (TA); therefore, PIs are expected to support a first-year MIC student as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) in the summer of 2023.

If students have not made arrangements to join a permanent lab by the end of the first nine months in the program, they will be notified that the next six weeks constitute their last in the program, unless they find a permanent lab before this six-week period ends. Students must petition the Graduate Advisor to perform a 4th rotation and to receive financial support during the 4th rotation by the deadline to submit the *Permanent Lab Agreement*. Financial support will depend on funding availability.

After a PI agrees to accept a student into a permanent laboratory, a *Permanent Lab Agreement* form is required to document this. The student is responsible for obtaining all required signatures on the Permanent Lab Agreement form, including those of the PI and the GSC Chair before submitting the completed form to the Graduate Program Staff. Students will be notified via email of the deadline to submit the *Permanent Lab Agreement* form.

Once in a permanent laboratory, students may change to another laboratory; however, any change must be discussed with and approved by the Graduate Adviser and GSC Chair. The new PI must be a member in good standing of the MIC GSC. If the student selects a supervising professor that is not a member of the MIC GSC, that faculty member must request to be added to the MIC GSC. If the new supervising professor is a member of the GSC for the CMB or BCH program, the student may transfer to the new graduate program, pending approval of the Graduate Advisors.

Co-PI Rule
It is possible to have two faculty members listed as supervisors (co-PIs). A student may designate one as primary supervisor or may have them listed equally as co-supervisors; in which case they will have equal responsibility for the student's progress. However, if one of the supervisors is not a member of the MIC GSC, that faculty member cannot be the primary supervisor. He or she can be a co-supervisor or a secondary supervisor. Students should inform the Graduate Advisor and Graduate Program Staff if they plan to have a co-PI.

Leaving a Permanent Lab
If, for any reason, a student desires to end their association with their permanent laboratory, they are strongly encouraged to contact their Graduate Advisor before notifying the PI of their decision to leave their lab to determine the best course of action. Students will be allowed a maximum of two months to find another laboratory. While a student is without a laboratory, they may not continue to work toward the Ph.D. and may not have financial support unless through a TA position. The new PI must be a member in good standing of the CMB GSC and must petition the Graduate Advisor asking that the student be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program. Students in such situations are strongly encouraged to contact their Graduate Advisor before notifying the PI of their decision to leave their lab.

If a PI comes to the conclusion that they need to end their association with a student, the PI is encouraged to contact the student's Graduate Advisor to determine the most reasonable course of action, which should involve documented warnings that precede the formal decision to end the student's tenure in the PI's lab. If the student is supported as a GRA by the PI at the time of the formal decision, the PI is strongly encouraged to continue the support until the end of the semester. If this is not possible, the PI must provide support for at least one month. During the period of continued support and at the discretion of the PI, the student may be expected to continue to work on the PI's funded research projects. Students in such situations are strongly encouraged to contact their Graduate Advisor as soon as their PI gives them a first warning.

Core Courses

Effective Fall 2022, the standard core courses are:
- BIO 395J Genes, Genomes, and Gene Expression
- MOL 290C Introduction to Biostatistics & Computational Analysis (strongly recommended)
- MOL 190C Responsible Conduct of Research (strongly recommended)

The Spring 2023 standard core course is:
- BIO 395M Advanced Microbiology

In addition, students are required to take one of the following courses in the spring of their first-year:

- BCH 394P Bioinformatics
- BCH 394 Structure and Function of Proteins and Nucleic Acids
- BIO 395F Genetics
- BIO 395H Cell Biology
- BIO 395G Graduate Biochemistry

Substitutions to this list of courses may be possible, however, students must provide a rationale and obtain approval in writing from the Graduate Advisor prior to registration.

If a student earns less than a B (3.0) in any of the core courses, they will need to retake the course. If it is necessary to repeat a core course, it must be taken at the very next opportunity that the course is offered. The core courses may not be taken more than twice. Note that the Graduate School requires a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to remain in good standing. Failure to pass a core course that is being re-taken for the second time and/or failure to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher will result in dismissal from the program.

Core Course Descriptions

BIO 395J Genes, Genomes, and Gene Expression
Explore how genomes are maintained, propagated, and converted to functional RNAs and proteins. Understand the primary literature that has led to key advances in these research areas and the experimental approaches that are currently being used to forge new advances. Appreciate the current frontiers in these areas and explore the boundaries; what questions have known or hypothesized answers, and what questions remain to be answered by the next group of researchers and students.

MOL 190C Responsible Conduct of Research
This course will provide formal training in the ethical and responsible conduct of research in the disciplines represented in the ILSGP graduate programs. Such training is required for researchers funded by training grants and federal fellowship awards, but is also vital for trainees embarking on their careers in scientific research. The class will be taught by a team of faculty with experience in research training and mentorship, using a discussion and case-study based approach. The topics covered will include professional development of trainees, research misconduct, conflicts of interest, collaborations, mentor/mentee responsibilities, authorship and publication, peer-review, data management, animal, and human subject research, as well as contemporary ethical issues such as racism and inequity in science.

MOL 290C Introduction to Biostatistics & Computational Analysis
This course will introduce first year Ph.D. students in the ILSGP graduate programs to the basic concepts and practices of statistics, programming, quantitative data analysis and data visualization as they apply to research in biochemistry, cell and molecular biology, and microbiology. Quantitative data analysis skills are increasingly critical in these research fields, so this course is intended to provide the foundation for developing these skills and prepare for more advanced coursework. Students will learn in an interactive, hands-on manner using the widely used languages R and Python, and build up to executing an independent data analysis project working in teams.

BIO 395M Advanced Microbiology
This course will explore technical and conceptual aspects of modern microbiology. Students will read, comprehend, and present findings from primary literature. An emphasis is placed on experimental methods and design. Students will submit written work outlining new hypotheses and methods for investigation based on current literature. Students will lead discussions on career opportunities and

development with the class and industry professionals. Three lecture hours a week for one semester. Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of instructor and the graduate adviser.

BCH 394 Structure and Dynamics of Protein and Nucleic Acids
This course is designed to give students the tools they need to be successful in a career in research in biochemistry and related disciplines by building a strong foundation to understand structure/function relationships in biological macromolecules. Students are expected to have a basic knowledge of protein and nucleic acid structure at the introductory biochemistry level. Learning is facilitated by computer simulation of reaction kinetics, which provides the basis to learn kinetics but also gives the most robust and comprehensive methods of fitting data to test models.

BIO 394P Bioinformatics
An introduction to systems biology and bioinformatics, emphasizing quantitative analysis of high-throughput biological data, and covering typical data, data analysis, and computer algorithms. Topics will include introductory probability and statistics, basics of Python programming, protein and nucleic acid sequence analysis, genome sequencing and assembly, proteomics, synthetic biology, analysis of large-scale gene expression data, data clustering, biological pattern recognition, and gene and protein networks.

BIO 395F Genetics
This course will focus on modern molecular genetic concepts and the scientific process, with analyses involving genetic mechanisms in biological systems and disease. Instruction will take place through lectures and reading/discussing primary literature. Students will develop and write their own independent research proposal involving primarily genetic topics and methodologies. BIO 395F goes beyond just learning modern genetics and techniques, aiming to provide students with additional skills that can be utilized in careers involving scientific research, obtaining funding, and writing and communication.

BIO 395H Cell Biology
This course will involve an in-depth immersion in the current scientific literature exploring how basic cell biological processes (vesicle trafficking, cytoskeletal remodeling, etc.) contribute to the physiology of organisms, how fundamental molecular mechanisms drive cellular and subcellular behaviors, and how these mechanisms go awry in the course of human disease.

BIO 395G Graduate Biochemistry
This graduate-level course is designed for students interested in dissecting biological problems at the molecular level, and in the tools and methods that drive the process of discovery. Detailed consideration of the structure and function of proteins, with discussion of enzyme mechanisms and kinetics, the biochemistry of energy production, and the metabolism of lipids and nucleotides.

Additional Required Coursework

BIO 391 Grant Writing and Presentation Skills
In preparation for the qualifying exam, second-year students are required to take BIO 391 Grant Writing & Presentation Skills. BIO 391 is a writing-intensive course for second-year graduate student in the fall semester that involves writing of an NIH-style grant proposal on their own research, presentation of the proposal to the class, and practice in identifying specific aims in research areas outside their primary area. The class is taken by students in the Microbiology, Biochemistry, and Cell and Molecular Biology Programs.

Microbiology Elective
One additional Microbiology specific elective course is required, and may be taken in the second or third year but no later than the fourth year of study. Students typically take one of the three approved elective courses, which are Advanced Virology, Molecular Immunology, and Advanced Immunology.

Students may petition to have a different course to count towards their elective requirement, but must do so in consultation with their PI and Graduate Advisor.

Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Exam, often called the "Qual" or "Prelim", is a major milestone in the Ph.D. program. The purpose of the Qualifying Examination is to evaluate a graduate student's aptitude to perform original and independent research, and to write a doctoral dissertation. The examination provides a means for a faculty committee to assess the student's mastery of concepts and methodological approaches by evaluating the student's (1) general knowledge and fundamental understanding of Microbiology, (2) ability to design, articulate, explain and defend the proposed aims and research approach of their dissertation research. The goal of the Qualifying Examination is to ensure that the student has achieved a sufficiently high level of knowledge and skills necessary for successful completion of a Ph.D. dissertation.

To proceed with the Qualifying Exam, a Microbiology graduate student must:

- Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0
- Have completed all core courses with a grade of B or above
- Be assigned to a permanent laboratory
- If an international student, have passed the ITA English Language Certification and be eligible for employment "with student contact"

Qualifying Examination Timeline and Procedures

1. All graduate students in their second year who have passed the appropriate number of required courses will take the Qualifying Exam to advance to candidacy. The Qualifying Exam is normally taken in the spring semester of a student's second year. If a student has not met the requirements outlined above, the Qualifying Exam may be delayed to within three months of completing these requirements. If the student is completing any core courses in the spring semester of their second year, they may not conduct the Qualifying Exam until the subsequent summer term, after they have met all course requirements. Students who are not prepared to take the Qualifying Exam by the end of their second year must write an explanatory letter of appeal to the GSC Chair and Graduate Advisor and will be assigned a probationary status until further notice.

2. An informational meeting about the Qualifying Exam will be held in the fall semester of each year. At this meeting, students will review the timetable and guidelines in effect for the Qualifying Exam, as well as the expectations and exam process, as outlined below:

    a. At the beginning of the spring semester (usually in January), exam-eligible graduate students will submit (i) a one-paragraph summary (100-200 words) of their intended research proposal (abstract), and (ii) a list of four faculty members who might be appropriate to serve on their examination committee. These faculty will be selected in consultation with their PI. Selected faculty members must be members of the MIC GSC. The Graduate Advisor will use this information to form the student's Qualifying Exam Committee. Students will receive instructions and a deadline to submit these require items from the Graduate Advisor and/or the Graduate Program Staff.

    b. The student will be notified of the composition of their Qualifying Exam committee within 30 days after submission of their abstract. Upon learning the members of their exam committee, the student is responsible for scheduling their Qualifying Examination, which involves polling the committee members and their PI for their availability for a two-hour timeslot. If the student's PI cannot attend the exam, they will be required to provide the examining committee chair with a short statement describing the student's progress. The **deadline for the written portion of the exam**

is relative to each student's exam date (see *Written Proposal* below); students are responsible for meeting their relative deadlines. The Graduate Program Staff will provide the committee chair with the *Qualifying Exam Results* form and the student's transcript in advance of the exam.

Qualifying Exam Format
The Qualifying Exam consists of **written** and **oral** components. Both written components are submitted prior to the Qualifying Exam and form a large basis of the oral exam.

Written Proposal:

1. The **Written Proposal,** based on a topic of choice but usually aligned to the student's dissertation research, must be submitted to the Graduate Program Staff, and distributed to faculty members of the examination committee no less than **14 days before** the Qualifying Exam. In writing the proposal, the student is expected to consult with their advisor, but the work must be entirely their own. For example, a student is not allowed to copy sections of their advisor's research grant proposals. In addition, a student must propose at least one set of experiments that have NOT been suggested to them by their advisor.

    a. The **Written Proposal** should be modeled on and follow the format of a NIH F31 pre-doctoral fellowship application. As a guide, the general format of the Written Proposal is listed below, but students should download the F31 application guide to obtain additional information about the contents and formatting of these applications. The proposal will consist of the following sections. (Note that the margins on all sides cannot be less than ½", and the allowable fonts no smaller than Times 12, or Georgia or Arial 11. All information presented in figures and tables must be legible and easily readable by all committee members.)

    b. The **Specific Aims** page should describe concisely the Specific Aims of the proposal, including broad, long-term objectives and the specific goals of the proposed research to test a stated hypothesis. A Specific Aims page often includes one or two introductory paragraphs followed by the objective and description of each of three aims, which together form the basis of the research undertaken in the proposal. This is limited to one page.

    c. The **Research Strategy** section, including all tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts, is limited to six pages. This section should address the significance of the proposed studies, including the background leading to the proposed research projects; and the approach (including preliminary results, if any) will be used to provide experimental support of the proposed hypothesis. The precise format of this section can vary, but students should include the rationale of each proposed project, a discussion of the experimental or methodological approach, expected/anticipated results, interpretations, conclusions and significance, potential pitfalls, and alternative approaches.

    d. A **Literature Cited** section (no explicit page limit) must be included in the Written Proposal, and students are expected to have read each of the papers listed in this section.

Whereas students may seek input on their Written Proposal, <u>the student must write the entire document</u>. The student is responsible for being knowledgeable about and defending the entire contents of the Written Proposal. **<u>Faculty advisors, and other faculty members, may read, discuss, and make general comments on the Written Proposal but may not write,</u>**

edit or in any way directly prepare a student's materials. Peers may provide edits for grammar, clarity, style, and spelling, but they cannot write any part of the document.

Oral Component:

1. The oral component of the Qualifying Exam should be scheduled to last two hours. Students are not allowed to bring refreshments for their exam committee to the Qualifying Exam. At the beginning of the meeting, the student will be excused and the exam committee will briefly discuss the materials that were submitted by the student, and the specific exam format and questioning procedures. Additionally, the committee will discuss the student's academic standing and progress, and the student's faculty advisor should be asked for input about these issues. **If the faculty advisor cannot attend the exam, he/she will be asked to submit written comments to the committee chair, which should be shared with the committee at this time.** The student will re-enter to begin the oral presentation of the proposal. At the completion of both proposals, the student will again exit and the committee will discuss the outcome of the exam; the committee should ask the PI again for input. The committee will ask questions throughout the presentation. At the completion of the presentation, and after all questions have been addressed, the student will again exit and the committee will discuss the outcome of the exam; the committee should ask the PI again for input. Following this input, the committee may also ask the PI to leave the room for the remainder of the deliberation period. Students will receive outcomes for both the written and oral portions of the exam.

2. **The student should prepare a 15-minute presentation, with a maximum of 15 slides, for each of the written component.** This brief presentation will introduce the background material, and the proposed research goals and projects. The presentation should include an introduction that states the broad research question(s), an overview of the present state of knowledge, and the background work leading to the proposed projects, questions, and hypotheses. This should be followed by a description of each of the specific aims, the experimental approach, and anticipated results. **Students may practice their presentation in front of any audience they choose.**

3. During and after each presentation, the examiners will question the student to assess the student's depth of knowledge in the topic areas and understanding of the experimental approaches. The committee will ask general questions as well as questions pertaining to the specific topic areas. Students may be asked to draw or explain concepts using the whiteboard. One purpose of the exam is to probe a student's breadth and depth of knowledge, so the committee may spend more time on areas where it is not clear whether the student has extensive knowledge, and correspondingly less time on areas where the student demonstrates expertise.

Questions during the exam are likely to be on topics including (but not limited to)

- Previous published work from the same lab and other labs that relates to the proposed work
- Unpublished work from the same lab that relates to the proposed work
- All methods that are planned for use in the proposed work
- Alternative methods that may be used if necessary
- Alternative models that may emerge from the expected results or unexpected results
- Additional research that could distinguish between alternative models
- Potential future directions of the research plan

Composition of the Qualifying Examination Committee:

The Qualifying Exam Committee will be comprised of three Microbiology GSC faculty members. Ideally, at least one of these will be selected from the list of four submitted by the student and who

has expertise in the general area covered in the student's Written Proposal. The student's faculty advisor is encouraged to attend the Qualifying Exam but is not obliged to do so. If the faculty advisor cannot attend the exam, he/she will be asked to submit written comments to the committee chair, which will be shared with the committee at the exam. If in attendance, the faculty adviser is expected to be a silent observer and may speak only by permission of members of the exam committee.

Qualifying Exam Outcomes and Consequences:
At the conclusion of the examination (usually when committee members have no further questions), the student will again be asked to leave the room. If present, the PI will be asked for any additional input and then s/he may also be asked to leave the room. The committee will then deliberate the outcome of the examination. The entire committee as a group will then call the student back into the room to convey its decision. The student's advisor, if s/he has exited the room, may come back into the room along with the student. The examination committee will record the outcome and its evaluation on the *Qualifying Examination Results* form, provided by the Graduate Program Staff. This form will be included in the student's permanent file and a copy shall also be provided to the student.

Possible outcomes are:

1. Pass;
2. Conditional Pass (with conditions specified by the exam committee);
3. Re-examination of one or more parts of the Qualifying Exam at a later date;
4. Termination of work toward the Ph.D.

A student may pass the Qualifying Exam unconditionally, or may fail one or more portions (*e.g.,* the Written Proposal) of the exam. Additionally, the committee may vote to conditionally pass the student but ask for revisions of the written components or for the student to take additional coursework. (Serving as a TA for a course in an area that the student was deemed deficient cannot be a requirement for a conditional pass.)

Re-examination Procedures and Rules
In the event of a failing performance, and at the discretion of the Qualifying Exam Committee, the student will be advised of deficiencies and may be allowed to retake one or both portions of the Qualifying Exam. A student given the option to repeat the Qualifying Exam must do so within three months of the original exam, except in exceptional circumstances requiring exemption by the MIC GSC Chair. At least one member of the student's original Qualifying Exam Committee must agree to serve on the subsequent exam committee. All three members may re-serve. The PI may request to the MIC GSC Chair that one or two members of the committee be replaced. A student who fails to pass the relevant portions of the examination a second time must leave the graduate program by the end of the following long semester. A student who is not offered the option of re-examination must terminate work towards a Ph.D. and may not re-register for courses in the MIC Graduate Program. A student advised to take a terminal Master's degree may register only for those courses counted toward the Masters of Arts with Thesis degree and must complete the courses within a year.

Admission to Candidacy

Once a student successfully completes the Qualifying Exam, they will apply for, and be admitted to candidacy. Students are expected to do so by the end of the second year. There may be a small number of students who are not able to complete their Qualifying Exam with the rest of their cohort. In such cases, the student must reach candidacy by the end of the third year (sixth long semester). Failure to meet this benchmark will result in loss of good standing in the program. Any exceptions require approval of the Graduate Advisor, and must be communicated to the Graduate Program Staff. The Graduate School will notify the student via email when their *Candidacy Application* is approved. Additional information about requirements for admission to candidacy may be found on the Graduate School website

Requirements for Admission to Candidacy:
Admission to Ph.D. candidacy has four requirements:

- Completion of all core courses with a grade of B or above
- A cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0
- Successful completion of the Qualifying Exam
- Submission and final approval of a *Candidacy Application*.

Dissertation Committee:
Before submitting a *Candidacy Application*, students will need to form an official dissertation committee. The committee will have three primary responsibilities:

- General supervision of the student's research
- To monitor degree progress
- To certify that an acceptable dissertation is submitted when the student completes the degree

Students may retain Qualifying Exam Committee members as their Dissertation Committee; however, this is not a requirement. Students should consult with their PI and Graduate Program Advisor to form a suitable Dissertation Committee. Students should explicitly confirm with proposed committee members that they agree to serve on the Dissertation Committee before submitting the *Candidacy Application*. Any changes in committee membership should be made prior to application for candidacy.

Microbiology Dissertation must be composed of at least four members; inclusive of the student's PI and three additional faculty. Additional faculty members are allowed but not required. At least one of the additional three members must be outside of the student's primary GSC. If it is not possible to acquire a committee member outside of the student's GSC, then at least one member must be outside of their primary department or track. Approval from the Graduate School may be required in this event. In the event a student has more than one supervisor, an additional faculty member is strongly encouraged.

If a student elects to have a scholar from off-campus serve on the Dissertation Committee, they must be appropriately credentialed to serve on a dissertation committee. Students should consult with the Graduate Advisor for approval prior to contacting faculty members outside of UT Austin. This off-campus committee member would satisfy the outside member requirement for Dissertation Committees, would not have to travel to UT, and can may participate in the committee meetings and defense remotely via teleconference (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.)

Acting Committee Chair
Students will designate an "**Acting Committee Chair"** when forming a dissertation committee.

The Acting Committee Chair will be a faculty member of the student's choosing, but is not their PI. The Acting Committee Chair's role is to advocate for the student and to help mediate conflicts between the student and PI, particularly related to research progress and graduation time.

Please see additional details below:

- The student will work in the PI's lab, so the PI and student will decide the student's specific research project.
- The PI will provide the main scientific guidance on the project, being most familiar with the investigation; the PI will continue to be the formal supervisor of the dissertation, and will be listed as such on the candidacy application, dissertation, and defense paperwork.
- The PI will provide funding for support of the student.

- A faculty member of the student's GSC, but one outside the student's lab, will be designated "Acting Committee Chair" and will:
    - Provide scientific input at annual meetings and on a more frequent basis, as warranted,
    - Together with the PI, student, and other members of the committee, set expectations for the project consistent with the general expectations for a PhD in biological sciences,
    - Make sure the expectations of the student are kept consistent,
    - Work with the PI and other members of the committee to monitor the student's progress toward this established set of expectations, and to communicate the committee's evaluation to the student,
    - Submit the written dissertation committee evaluation form each year;
    - Work with the PI to ensure that the student gets the professional development they seek, given their proposed career path (including but not limited to meeting opportunities, appropriate publication authorship, etc.).

Designating an Acting Committee Chair
Students must submit the *Dissertation Committee Membership* form to designate an acting chair.

Changing Dissertation Committee Members

It is sometimes necessary to change the membership of the Dissertation Committee prior to completion of the dissertation. Changes for the sole purpose of constituting a more compliant committee will not be approved. Changes in the committee must be completed well in advance of the dissertation defense. Before changes will be approved, the Graduate Advisor and the Graduate Dean must approve the *Request for a Doctoral Committee Change* form. Consult the Graduate Program Staff prior to filing a request for a change in committee membership.

Registration in Candidacy Status

Once admitted to candidacy, students no will longer register for "Advanced Study and Research" but instead must be registered for "Dissertation Hours" every long semester. All subsequent semesters, until graduation, students will take Dissertation Hours with a course number ending with a "W" (BIO 399W, BIO 699W, BIO 999W).

Extensions of Doctoral Candidacy

The Graduate School requires that the candidacy of each doctoral student be reviewed by their GSC after two years, and annually thereafter. Graduate advisers are notified when students are due for a review via an electronic document in the EASI SIS Routing Inbox. Based upon review by the student's dissertation committee and the GSC, a decision to either extend or terminate candidacy will be reached. The graduate adviser will either submit the request for extension via the electronic document to the Graduate School, or by means of petition, the GSC Chair will notify the Graduate School of the recommendation to terminate the student.

Annual Meetings with the Dissertation Committee

Once a student has been admitted to candidacy, they are required to meet annually with their Dissertation Committee to review their progress. The first annual meeting with the Dissertation Committee should be held within the next long semester (typically by the end of the fall semester) following admission to candidacy. Subsequent annual meetings should be held in the fall semester of each academic year; however, committee meetings may also take place in the spring semesters, at the discretion of the committee. Students are responsible for coordinating a meeting date and

time with faculty. Following the annual meeting, the Acting Committee Chair will complete an evaluation form, with input from all the committee members, including the PI. This form will be endorsed by the committee and must be returned to the Graduate Program Staff. The signed form and written recommendations will be included in the student's record.

If a student has not completed the dissertation within three years of admission to candidacy, the results of the annual review will be presented with recommendations to the Microbiology GSC. The GSC will then decide what actions may be required to address degree progress.

Although the supervising professor provides day-to-day guidance, all committee members are expected to be available for consultation so feel free to ask for advice from any faculty member.

Application to Graduate

Prior to graduation, all students are required to notify the Graduate School of their intent to complete their degree by submitting the online *Graduation Application*. This requirement applies to students completing a Ph.D. or the M.A. in Microbiology. The application must be submitted by the published deadline during the semester when the student intends to graduate. Visit the Graduate School website at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation for information about current deadlines.

Ph.D. Dissertation and Final Oral Exam/Dissertation Defense

The written thesis (dissertation) is expected to be a document covering the body of work produced by the student. Students are encouraged include an introductory chapter, which serves as a starting point to consider the research. The introductory chapter should lay out the relevant knowledge in the field, which is typically accumulated from prior work from the student's lab and others. It also may include a brief map of the student's work and main conclusions. The introductory chapter will be followed by one or more chapters describing the Ph.D. research. Students are also encouraged to include a chapter, typically at the end of the dissertation, that provides a new view of the field (conclusions) and a direction for future research (prospectus).

All students completing the Ph.D. in Microbiology must successfully present and defend their dissertation to their Dissertation Committee to graduate. The defense consists of two parts. The first is a public seminar that is open to all faculty and students. Immediately following the seminar, students meet privately with the Dissertation Committee to respond to questions from the committee members.

The final form of the dissertation must be circulated to the Dissertation Committee at least *four weeks* prior to the anticipated date of the final oral exam. When each member of the committee has had an opportunity to read the draft and agrees that it is ready to defend, students may schedule the final oral exam. **It is the student's responsibility to coordinate an appropriate defense date, time, and location.** A *Request for Final Oral Examination* must then be signed by the participating Dissertation Committee members and submitted to the Graduate School at least *two weeks* prior to the defense date.

The student, committee chair, and Graduate Program Staff will be notified via email when the Graduate School approves the *Request for Final Oral Examination*. The Graduate School staff will email instructions for *Report of the Dissertation Committee* form. This form records the outcome of the student's final oral examination and must be signed by all the committee members following the defense. **It is then the student's responsibility to obtain all necessary signatures and to submit the completed report form to the Graduate School.**

Students preparing to defend their dissertation should consult with the Graduate Program Staff about necessary forms and procedures, as well as review the instructions on the Graduate School website: gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation/deadlines-and-submission-instructions.

Submission of Final Dissertation

Graduating students are required to publish their thesis, report, dissertation, or treatise digitally by uploading a single PDF to the Texas Digital Library (TDL). The final document must be in a format acceptable to the Graduate School, and detailed information about formatting specifications can be found at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/theses-and-dissertations/digital-submission-requirement - formatting. In addition to uploading the final dissertation to the Texas Digital Library, students are also required to submit a printed copy of the following documents, knowns as the *Required Printed Pages*, to the Graduate School:

- The *Report of Dissertation Committee* with signatures of the supervising committee - no proxy signatures allowed. ALL committee members and the GSC Chair (or representative) must sign the report.
- A Statement on Research with Human Participants form; and
- Any requests to Delay Publication.

The *Required Printed Pages* and final dissertation are due to the Graduate School by 3:00pm on the relevant deadline for each semester. These documents are a requirement for graduation**. If a student does not submit all required materials by the published deadline for a given term, they will not graduate during that semester.**

Visit gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation for a list of current deadlines.

Timeline of the Ph.D. Degree

This is an example of a typical degree plan, and may be subject to variation.

First Year

Fall semester
Attend ILSGP Annual Retreat and Graduate Program Orientation
Complete Core Courses
Complete Laboratory Rotations

Spring Semester
Complete Core Courses
Complete Laboratory Rotations
Complete ITA English Language Certification (International students only)
Choose a permanent laboratory (May)
End of May: financial support from ILSGP ends
First of June: newly assigned permanent laboratory assumes financial responsibility of student
End of August: TA workshop (if appointed as a TA for the first time in the fall of the second year)

Second Year

Fall semester
Complete BIO 391: Grant Writing and Presentation Skills
Complete Required Elective (may be completed in second or third year)

Spring semester
Complete Required Elective (may be completed in second or third year)
Take and pass Qualifying Exam
Apply for Candidacy (end of spring semester, if all requirements are complete)

Third Year

Fall semester

Required Elective (may be completed in second or third year)
Enroll in Dissertation Hours after admittance to candidacy and every semester through graduation.
First Annual Committee Meeting with Dissertation Committee (must be conducted within 6 months of passing the Qualifying Exam)

Spring semester

Complete Required Elective (may be completed in second or third year)

Fourth Year to Graduation

Conduct Annual meeting with Dissertation Committee
Completion of TA requirement (may be completed any time after student's first year)
Enroll in Dissertation Hours after admittance to candidacy and every semester through graduation.

Final semester

Apply to graduate by the published deadline
Schedule final defense with committee and submit *Request for Final Oral Examination* to Graduate School
Complete and defend dissertation
Submit final dissertation to Texas Digital Libraries
Meet all deadlines required by Graduate School

Master of Arts with Thesis (M.A.)

The Master of Arts with Thesis involves original research carried out under the supervision of a member of the Microbiology GSC. This option is allowed only under certain circumstances and requires the permission of the research supervisor and the Graduate Advisor. Students who are approved to complete a Master of Arts in lieu of the Ph.D. must notify the Graduate Program Staff of this decision. The Graduate Program Staff will create a *Program of Work* to certify completion of the M.A. requirements. The *Program of Work* must be approved by the Graduate Advisor and Graduate School.

Academic Requirements of the Master of Arts with Thesis

- Completion of core courses with a grade of at least a B and an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher;
- Completion of required Microbiology elective;
- Completed 1 long semester TA requirement;
- Total of at least 30 semester hours of course work with the following requirements:
    - 21 hours must be graduate-level course work,
    - 18 hours must be in the major area,
    - 6 must be in supporting work (non-core biology/chemistry graduate or upper division course).
    - Completion of BIO 698A and 698B thesis courses; Must be enrolled in the 698B course the same semester as graduation

All work for a MA must have been initiated no earlier than six years before date of degree.
Once a student has 30 hours of graded course work, they may then have up to six hours of CR/NC.
Approval of the Graduate Advisor is required prior to registration for a CR/NC course.
No course counted toward any other degree may be counted towards a master's degree.

Master of Arts Thesis Committee

The primary supervising faculty (PI) and one other MIC GSC member will serve as readers of the M.A. thesis. It is the student's responsibility to arrange for the second reader. Any faculty member asked to be a reader should have an interest in the topic.

The readers must be allowed at least two weeks to read the thesis and return it to the student. Revisions are often necessary, so it is pertinent that the student provide the thesis to their readers well in advance of the final deadline to submit the thesis to the Graduate School. Graduating students must submit all required materials and upload a final copy of their thesis to the Texas Digital Libraries by the published deadlines for each term. Current deadlines and requirements graduation can be found at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/graduation.

Financial Support

Entering graduate students are supported for the first nine months by the ILSGP as Graduate Research Assistants (GRA). These positions provide a stipend, access to university health insurance, and tuition remission for up to 9 credits during each fall and spring semester or up to 3 credits during the summer semester. First-year students must meet all requirements for employment and must be completing the required laboratory rotations to remain eligible for GRA positions. Continued financial support becomes the responsibility of the permanent laboratory starting on June 1 of the first academic year**.** The primary means of support for continuing CMB students is through appointment as a Teaching Assistant (TA), Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), or receipt of a University Fellowship or external fellowship (NIH, NSF, etc.). Upon joining a permanent lab, it is the student's responsibility to discuss their stipend and source of support with the PI. When selecting laboratories, students should also inquire as to the availability of summer support from grants as TA positions are very limited during the summer.

Policy for Graduate Student Stipends

The MIC program and CNS policies require that students be paid at least at the level of their first-year student stipend for the duration of their Ph.D. The Microbiology Graduate Program first-year student annual stipend rate for 2022/23 is $32,500. Financial support includes funding for in-state tuition for up to 9 credits each fall/spring and for up to 3 credits each summer term plus access to university health insurance. It is the preference of the MIC Graduate Program that PIs choose to raise their student's stipends to remain in line with the first-year student stipend of incoming students, as the first-year student compensation may increase from year to year.
Certain fellowships and grants may provide students with higher stipends and it is customary for PIs to discuss expected stipend rates with students.

CNS policy indicates that the minimum stipend should be no less than the TA stipend for that fiscal year or the first-year stipend rate, whichever is higher, and must include tuition and fees as stipulated by the Graduate School and Vice-President for Research. If a student serves as a TA, CMB Graduate Program policy requires that the PI supplement the student's stipend so that it is in line with their first-year student stipend rate. CNS policies on graduate student employment and stipends can be found at cns.utexas.edu/graduate-education/college-policies/academic-employment.

Academic Employment

Below is a description of the most common forms of benefits-eligible academic employment available to Microbiology graduate students: Graduate Research Assistantships and Teaching Assistantships. Questions about employment may be directed to the MBS Human Resources staff

(MBS_HR@austin.utexas.edu) and/or the Graduate Program Staff. Additional information is available at gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment.

Graduate Research Assistantships
Many faculty members have research grants that allow them to appoint students as graduate research assistants. Students should be in communication with their PI concerning the availability of continued grant support and the availability of GRA appointments. To be eligible for a Graduate Research Assistant position, students must be in good academic standing, be making satisfactory progress, and enroll in a minimum of 9 credits during each of the long semesters (fall and spring) and a minimum of 3 credits during the summer semester.

Teaching Requirement
The MIC Graduate Program requires that all students must be appointed as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for at least one semester by no later than their fourth year. Students will be required to complete this before graduation, but not before admission to candidacy. This is to allow increased flexibility in scheduling without compromising the standard timetable for advancement to candidacy.

Teaching Assistants (TA)
Program policy states that Microbiology graduate students entering in 2022/23 may only be appointed as a TA for a total of three semesters during their graduate studies. Exceptions to this rule require advance approval by the MIC Graduate Advisor.

The Microbiology Graduate Program does not directly control TA assignments, but coordinates with the Biology Instructional Office to make TA assignments for graduate students. Each semester, the Graduate Program Staff will survey faculty about the need for TA appointments. Requests for TA positions must be made by the supervising faculty (not the student) directly to the Graduate Program Staff. All students must complete a mandatory TA training workshop prior to their first TA appointment. This workshop is offered at the start of each fall and spring semester and is coordinated by the Biology Instructional Office (BIO).

ITA English Language Certification for International Students

UT Austin conducts English Certification for TAs whose first language is not English. The Microbiology program requires this certification of all international students, regardless of whether they serve as teaching assistants. All international students admitted to the Microbiology graduate program are anticipated to unconditionally pass the Oral English Proficiency Assessment and be "certified with student contact." Students must be certified to be employed "with student contact" before being admitted to candidacy. Under certain circumstances, international students may be exempt from the requirement to complete the ITA English-Language Certification exam.

Additional information can be found at global.utexas.edu/english-language-center/about/department-resources. ILSGP will sponsor the registration cost for ITA English-Language Certification. Please also consult the Graduate Program Staff prior to registration.

Re-Appointments

Re-appointment as a TA or GRA is contingent on satisfactory progress towards the degree. This includes compliance with the schedule set by the graduate program and demonstrated effectiveness as a TA or GRA.

Limit to Appointment Hours for Academic Employment

Appointments for academic employment as a GRA/TA/AI or grader may not exceed a cumulative total of 20 hours per week during the first two long semesters (fall and spring) of graduate study at UT Austin, and no more than 30 hours per week during the subsequent semesters, including summer. International students may only work as many as 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters. Additional guidance about requirements for Graduate Research Assistants can be found at gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/student-employment/conditions.

Additional Employment and Outside Employment

Microbiology graduate students are not allowed to have outside employment such as part-time positions in restaurants, retail, etc. or any type of job that interferes with completion of coursework or research. On occasion, students may have 5-10 hours of additional or outside employment that is related to their role as graduate students, such as paid grader positions, but only after the completion of the first year. International students are not eligible for additional employment beyond their current GRA or TA appointment. Before accepting any additional on-campus employment graduate students should first consult their supervising professor and/or the Graduate Program Staff. Information about this can be found on the UT Human Resources website at hr.utexas.edu/current/compliance/outside-employment.

University Fellowships

Each year the Graduate School accepts nominations from each graduate program for a variety of competitive University Fellowships. Many awards offer year-long stipends, and some provide generous compensation. The supervising professor will nominate a student based on research accomplishments and promise of research excellence. The Graduate Advisor evaluates nominees and determines which may be sent forward to the Graduate School. Nominees for these awards are selected based on the strength of their applications and on their records of performance. Additional information about available awards can be found at gradschool.utexas.edu/finances/fellowships. Questions about fellowships may be directed to the Graduate Program Staff.

Competitive National Fellowships

All first-year students are encouraged to apply for federally funded competitive national fellowships, such as the NIH or NSF Pre-doctoral Fellowships or the Howard Hughes Pre-doctoral Fellowship. These fellowships are prestigious and often offer financial support for several years of graduate education. Students are also encouraged to explore and apply to fellowship programs on their own for which they may be uniquely qualified. Please visit www.nsf.gov/funding and www.grants.nih.gov/grants/oer.htm for more information.

Other Aid

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (finaid.utexas.edu) administers several long-term loan programs, the College Work-Study Program (for which graduate students are eligible), and a short-term loan program for registration and other emergency needs. Assistance with part-time or full- time job placement is also offered for students or student spouses. Student Accounts Receivable can provide information about institutional tuition/emergency loans and tuition and fee rates as well as information regarding fee payment and deadlines, loans, tax credits, etc. The Graduate Program Staff will email notices of additional scholarships and fellowships that become available throughout the year.

Additional fellowships opportunities are published on the CMB program website at ils.utexas.edu/cmb/current-students/fellowships. Should further funding opportunities become available during the academic year, announcements will be shared by the Graduate Program Staff.

General Information and Policies

Contact Information

Mailboxes
All student mailboxes correspond with their lab's mailbox. First-year students will need to routinely update their directory information to reflect what lab they are rotating in so that they receive mail. All MBS labs' mailboxes are in the mailroom of NHB 2.606.

Change of Address and Phone Number
It is important that all directory information be kept up to date; and students should update their personal contact information via UT Direct. Students must list a phone number where voice mail messages may be left. To update personal information, please visit Texas OneStop.

Email Information
The MIC Graduate Program and the University of Texas uses e-mail as the primary method of communication with students, therefore it is imperative that students maintain a current email address. Graduate students are expected to regularly monitor their email accounts and **failure to check email may result in missing time-critical information**. UT Austin does not mandate students create a utexas.edu email account, however, **all students who are employed as GRAs or TAs are required to establish a UT email account**. Information about establishing a UT email address can be found at get.utmail.utexas.edu. Please notify the Graduate Program Staff of any changes in email address.

Required Student Training

The University of Texas requires safety training for laboratory employees, which includes all ILSGP graduate students. MIC students are required to follow these safety classes prior to beginning their first lab rotation. The required safety courses offered by the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHS) and are:

- OH 101 Hazard Communication
- OH 102 Hazard Communication (Site-Specific)
- OH 201 Laboratory Safety
- OH 202 Hazardous Waste Management
- OH 207 Biological Safety
- FF 205 Fire Extinguisher Use

Students may register for and complete the above courses online at ehs.utexas.edu/training/lab-training-requirements.php.

Students may register for and complete the above courses online at ehs.utexas.edu/training/lab-training-requirements.php.

The Fire Prevention Services Office sponsors the Fire Extinguisher Use course, with more information at fireprevention.utexas.edu/fire-safety/portable-fire-extinguisher-training. Animal Use Training, and Radiological Health are on-campus classes and are typically offered at the start of every fall semester.

In addition, all academic graduate student employees must complete the following University-wide trainings:

- Title IX Basics
- Sexual Misconduct Prevention
- Information Security Awareness
- Compliance & Ethics Program at UT Austin

New students must satisfy the above requirements within the first 30 days of beginning their studies.

Academic Integrity

Ethical conduct is expected of every student in the Microbiology program. It is important that students conduct themselves and their studies in a manner that aligns with the university's Honor Code and its standard of academic integrity. Students will be held accountable for their conduct and decision-making. **The Microbiology Graduate Program has a zero-tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. If a student is found participating in any form of academic dishonesty, they will face immediate dismissal from the program.** Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, misrepresenting facts, and falsification of academic work, research, data, or records.

Incomplete Grades

If a student does not complete all the assignments in a course before the end of the course, the instructor may report the symbol X (incomplete) to the registrar in place of a grade. The student must then complete the course requirements by the last class day in his or her next long-session semester of enrollment. The instructor must report a final grade through the Online Grade Change system by the end of the grade-reporting period in that semester. If these deadlines are not met, the symbol X is converted to the symbol I (permanent incomplete). If the student is not enrolled during a long-session semester for twenty-four months following the end of the semester in which the X is reported and the instructor does not report a final grade, then the symbol X is converted to the symbol I. The symbol I cannot be converted to a grade. When the symbol I is recorded, the symbol X also remains on the student's record. The period for completion of course requirements may be extended only under unusual circumstances beyond the student's control and only upon the recommendation of the instructor and the approval of the Graduate Dean. The instructor of record must make requests for an extension of X to the Graduate Dean through the submission of a completed "Update to Student Academic Record" form. This request must provide reasons why the student was unable to complete the course work by the last class day in his or her next long-session semester of enrollment after receiving the X.

Note: TAs and GRAs may acquire no more than one temporary incomplete grade (X) and one permanent incomplete grade (I), or two temporary incompletes (X).

Holiday Schedules

Graduate students do not have the same break schedules as undergraduates. All Microbiology graduate students are paid continuously through the December, spring, and May breaks, and thus, have the same work schedule and holiday schedule as university staff. The holiday schedule for university staff is published at www.utexas.edu/hr/holiday. **Graduate students should communicate with their faculty supervisors about expectations for holiday schedules.** Note: The relative tranquility of campus during breaks is very conducive to research progress in the laboratory.

Second Degrees

Microbiology students will not be allowed to work toward or obtain a second degree outside of the Microbiology program (e.g., a Master's degree in a separate graduate program) without the written consent of their supervising professor and the graduate advisor.

Registration

In general, students must be enrolled for classes whenever they are receiving services from the University, such as course instruction, faculty interaction, employment, and fellowship or training grant stipends. Please read the following section carefully and check with the Graduate Program Staff with any questions regarding course load requirements.

Additional information about registration policies is published on the Graduate School website at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies. International students should also consult UT International Student and Scholar Services for more information about registration and immigration requirements: global.utexas.edu/isss.

Full-time Student Status
The Graduate School at The University of Texas at Austin recognizes nine semester hours during a long session semester (fall and spring) and three hours during a summer session as a minimum full-time course load. Graduate students who must register and remain registered for a full-time course load include holders of Graduate School-administered fellowships and scholarships; assistant instructors, teaching assistants, academic assistants, assistants, graduate research assistants, and tutors; students living in university housing; students receiving certain student loans; and international students.

Continuous Registration
The Graduate School requires that all graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin be continuously registered and pay tuition and fees for all long semesters (fall and spring) of each academic year until completion of the degree. Additional information about this policy is published at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/continuous-registration.

Registration for Dissertation Hours
Once admitted to candidacy, students must register for dissertation hours every long semester until graduation: BIO 399W, BIO 699W, or BIO 999W. Registration for BIO 999W fulfills the 9-credit requirement for Teaching Assistants, Graduate Research Assistants, fellowship recipients, and international students.

Registration Access Periods
Graduate students may register for courses during prescribed registration access periods set by the Registrar published in the university Course Schedule. Each student should check their *Registration Information Sheet* (RIS) for information about the specific dates and times when they may access the enrollment system. The RIS will list any active registration bars that must be cleared prior to enrollment for a given term.

Note for GRAs, TAs, and Fellowship Recipients: Students appointed as a GRA/TA/AI must be registered for the minimum required number credit hours before the appointment will be processed and approved by HR. Similarly, fellowship recipients must complete registration before award funds will be distributed. **Failure to register on-time may result in delayed stipend disbursements**.

Confirmation of Attendance
Following registration and payment of all tuition and fees, students must take further action to confirm attendance. Once the tuition billing balance is changed to zero, students must visit MyTuitionBill in UT Direct and select the "Confirm Attendance" option to secure registration. This step must be completed during registration for every semester. **Failure to confirm attendance will result in enrollment being cancelled by the university.**

Late Registration
If a student misses the regular registration periods, they may be able to register late, but will be responsible for paying any late fees assessed by the Registrar**. Late registration fees may range between $25 and $200.** Late registration takes place during the first four class days of each long semester and during the first two class days of each summer session. Registration after the 12th class day (or fourth class day in summer) is permitted only in rare and unusual circumstances. All late registrations require the approval of the Graduate Advisor and submission of a *Request for Late Registration* form to the Graduate School. Please consult the Graduate Program Staff for assistance with late registrations.

Adding/Dropping Courses

Students may add and drop courses during the add/drop period without penalty. After the 12th class day, a student cannot add a class without petitioning the Graduate School. Petitions of this nature are not often approved, so students are advised to enroll before the add/drop period ends. Students who need to drop a course after the 12th class day deadline will not be reimbursed for the cost of the course. Students who must add a course to keep full-time status due to TA/GRA obligations may have to pay for the additional course.

Registration Requirement for the Master's Students
During the last two semesters before graduation, master's students must be registered in thesis courses, BCH 698A (3 credits) and BCH 698B (3 credits). BCH 698A may only be taken once and must be taken before BCH 698B. Students must be registered for 698B during the semester in which the thesis is submitted.

Leave of Absence

Students not yet in candidacy must obtain authorization from the Graduate Advisor for a leave of absence. Those admitted to candidacy must receive approval from the Graduate Dean and the Graduate Advisor for a leave of absence. An *Authorization for Leave of Absence* form must be submitted to the Graduate School and it is the responsibility of the student to obtain all necessary signatures on the form.

A student on approved leave must apply for readmission to return to the University, but readmission during the approved period is automatic and the application fee is waived. A student on leave may not use any University facilities; nor is he/she entitled to receive advice from any member of the faculty. A leave of absence does not alter the time limits for degrees or course work. Additional information is published on the Graduate School website at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/leaves-of-absence.

Withdrawal

Early Withdrawal from MIC Program During First Year
Early withdrawal from the program may result in a requirement to pay tuition for that semester. Students should consult with the Graduate Advisor and notify the Graduate Program Staff if they are considering leaving the program during the first academic year.

Withdrawal from MIC Program and University
Students who drop their entire course load by definition withdraw from The University of Texas at Austin for the semester. To withdraw from the Graduate School, the student must file a *Withdrawal and Refund Request* form with the Dean of the Graduate School, which may be obtained from the Graduate School in Main 101 or from GradStudentSvcs@austin.utexas.edu. The form must be signed by the Graduate Advisor, and the student is responsible for obtaining all necessary signatures. Students withdrawing from the university should also notify the Graduate Program Staff of their decision.

Withdrawal from the university before the last class day of a semester will result in a requirement to personally pay the tuition for that semester. Withdrawals during a semester cancel most UT payments of tuition and tuition waivers. These cancelations result in a large balance due which UT Austin will bill to the student. This information does not apply to medical withdrawals. Additional information about withdrawal, including for medical reasons, is published at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/policies/withdrawals.

Out-Of-State/ Non-Resident Tuition Waivers

Employment as a TA or GRA qualifies non-Texas residents and international students for resident (in-state) tuition rates. To ensure the non-resident portion of the tuition bill is removed, students must request an employment waiver. The employment waiver is available online via UT Direct and must be completed *every* semester during registration and before the tuition bill is paid. Students may access the waiver form at utdirect.utexas.edu/acct/fb/waivers/rte_request.WBX.

Note for Fellowship Recipients
Recipients of University Continuing Graduate Fellowships, PGEF award (or Provost's Graduate Excellence Fellowships) should **not** complete the employment waiver form during semesters of fellowship support. Recipients of *external* fellowships should notify the Graduate Program Staff of their funding and provide a copy of the award letter, as this information is required to request a tuition waiver from the Graduate School and College of Natural Sciences. The Graduate Program Staff will request a waiver for fellowships recipients.

International Student Health Insurance Waivers

The University of Texas Board of Regents requires all international students in a F-1, F-2, J-1, or J-2 visa status to have health insurance coverage which complies with the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). For this reason, enrollment in the UT Student Health Insurance Plan (AcademicBlue) is automatic at the time of registration, and the cost of the policy is included in the student's tuition and fee bill. In certain cases, students holding comparable coverage may be eligible to waive enrollment in the UT Student Health Insurance Plan. Additional information is available at global.utexas.edu/isss/advising-services/insurance/waivers.

Student Records

The Graduate Program Staff maintains the official program records of all Microbiology graduate students. Students are responsible for submitting all required documentation or forms necessary to ensure their record is accurate and up-to-date. Records are subject to the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).** Members of the MIC GSC, any faculty member appointed to the dissertation committee, and the Graduate Program Staff will have access to student files. Other university personnel may be authorized by the Graduate Advisor to access student records, if their assistance is required to carry out necessary administrative responsibilities related to graduate studies.

More information about FERPA and privacy may be found at registrar.utexas.edu/staff/ferpa.

Each student file may contain:

- Admission Documents
- Curriculum Vitae
- Laboratory Rogation Agreement forms
- Permanent Laboratory form
- Qualifying Exam Results form
- Safety Training Certifications (e.g., Hazard Communication, Radiological Health, Laboratory Safety and Fire Extinguisher)
- TA Evaluations
    - Each time that a student assists in a course, the supervising faculty member fills out an evaluation of their performance. Students may request that copies of these evaluations be placed in their files. Students may also prepare a statement that will be appended to the evaluation and become part of the file.
- Annual Meeting of Dissertation Committee forms
- Other items that provide a record of the student's activities and progress. Students are encouraged to place reprints of any published articles in their files.

Disability Services

The University of Texas at Austin is committed to providing every necessary resource to students with disabilities. Persons with a disability and who have special academic circumstances – whether permanent or temporary – may visit the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) web site at diversity.utexas.edu/disability.

The Microbiology Graduate Program is committed to accommodating students with documented disabilities. However, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for any accommodations with the course instructor. The student must secure a letter from SSD, present it to the instructor, and formulate an appropriate accommodation plan with the instructor. See the SSD guidelines for additional details.

Parental Accommodation Policy

The College of Natural Sciences recognizes that some graduate students start or expand families during their time in our graduate programs. CNS offers four types of accommodations for graduate students with growing families: Academic Accommodations, Teaching Assistant Accommodations, Graduate Research Assistant Accommodations, and Parental Leave. These accommodations are available to full-time students (enrolled for at least nine credit hours each long semester and three hours in summer). It is the responsibility of a graduate student anticipating a birth or adoption to inform their Graduate Advisor and/or GSC Chair, and their research supervisor of any anticipated accommodation needs as early as possible. The full policy and faculty contacts in each department can be found at cns.utexas.edu/graduate-education/college-policies/parental-accommodations.

Where to Go When Problems Arise

Graduate students are encouraged to discuss concerns with their Graduate Advisor, Graduate Program Administrator, supervising professor (PI), or Graduate Studies Committee Chair. The University also provides several support services for graduate students:

The **Office of the Student Ombudsman** provides a neutral, impartial, and confidential environment for students to express concerns related to life at the University of Texas at Austin. The office can

assist graduate students with university-related difficulties, and help identify pathways and options for conflict resolution. More information is available at utexas.edu/student/ombuds.

The **UT Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC)** provides a variety of services for graduate students, including individual counseling, psychiatric care, self-care, crisis intervention, support groups, and workshops. The Counseling and Mental Health Center is a confidential resource for all UT students. More information is available at cmhc.utexas.edu. A confidential 24/7 Crisis Line may be reached at 512-471-CALL (2255).

The **Behavior Concerns and COVID Advice Line** (BCCAL) is a service that provides faculty, students, and staff an opportunity to discuss their concerns about another individual's behavior. Trained BCCAL staff will provide appropriate guidance and resource referrals to address the situation. Referrals to BCCAL are confidential. This service is a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). An individual can either call the line at 512-232-5050 or report their concerns using the online submission form at besafe.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line.

Texas Global and **International Student & Scholar Services** (ISSS) provide advice, programs, information, and services to the international community, including incoming graduate students. Questions and concerns about immigration policy, visa requirements, employment restrictions, etc. should be addressed to the Texas Global and ISSS staff. Students may visit global.utexas.edu/isss for more information.

Student Emergency Services (SES) in the Office of the Dean of Students serves as a primary point of contact for students and their families and assists with navigating campus and community resources. SES can help students by offering: information regarding course load reductions or full withdrawals, emergency funds, short-term emergency housing, referrals to appropriate campus offices, discrete notifications to professors regarding absences, and coordination with families. More information can be found at deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency.

Grievance Policy

Procedures for handling graduate student grievances are outlined on the Graduate School's grievances webpage. The policies described there are based upon the following principles:

> *Graduate students have the right to seek redress of any grievance related to academic or nonacademic matters. Every effort should be made to resolve grievances informally between the student and the faculty member involved or with the assistance of the graduate adviser, Graduate Studies Committee chair, or department chair.*

The Microbiology graduate program leadership understands that grievances with faculty, staff, or peers are very difficult for graduate students, and strives to ensure that students are comfortable reaching out for help. The following hierarchy is recommended when seeking assistance:

1. Graduate Advisor
2. Graduate Program Administrator or Coordinator
3. ILSGP Executive Committee
4. Associate Chair for Graduate Education
5. Molecular Biosciences Department Chair

The comfort-level of the student and/or severity or urgency of the situation may merit escalation of the grievance up the hierarchy.

In situations where the grievance cannot be resolved informally at the program/department level, students have recourse through formal procedures that vary, depending on the type of grievance. Four main categories of grievances are:

- Academic Grievances (examples include: adherence to degree requirements, changes in supervising committee membership, situations involving program termination)
- Non-academic grievances (primarily issues involving either discrimination or misconduct)
- Employment Grievances for Teaching Assistants and Assistant Instructors (issues related to the academic freedom of individual TAs, non-renewal of a TA or AI position, withholding of salary or promotion)
- Employment disputes involving Graduate Research Assistants

Procedures for addressing each type of grievance listed above is available at cns.utexas.edu/images/CNS/graduate_students/Grad_Student_Grievance_Policies-CNS-June_2017_2.pdf.

Campus Safety

The **Office of Campus Safety & Security** oversees the offices of Emergency Preparedness, Environmental Health and Safety, Fire Prevention Services, Parking and Transportation, and the University of Texas at Austin Police Department. Students should explore their website to learn more about safety and security on campus: utexas.edu/safety.

SURE Walk
SURE Walk is dedicated to reducing all forms of interpersonal violence for the campus community. The program is organized by the UT Student Government and provides safe walks and rides home, to decrease the risk of any form of assault occurring. Additionally, we also aim to educate the community on assault, consent, healthy relationships, and resources for survivors of assault. More information can be found at utsg.org/sure-walk-1.

UT Austin Night Rides
UT Night Rides provides a Lyft ride from the main campus to students' homes. Rides are available every day from 11:00pm – 4:00am. Locations for this service mirror current UT Shuttles routes for West Campus, Far West, Lake Austin, North Riverside, Lake Shore, Crossing Place, and Intramural Fields as well as mainline Route 10, serving the Red River area. All UT Night Rides must originate from main campus only. Visit parking.utexas.edu/night for more information.

Emergencies

For emergencies, the University also has a dedicated phone number, 512-232-9999, and website: emergency.utexas.edu. Students can also sign up for text message alerts for emergencies. **If there is have an emergency anywhere on campus, call 911.** The call will be routed to the correct dispatch office according to location.

The Counseling and Mental Health Center – Crisis Services
During regular business hours (M-F, 8-5), students seeking CMHC services or who are experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis should call (512) 471-3515 and choose option 3.

For crises after hours or on weekends please call the **CMHC Crisis Line at (512) 471-2255**, which is available 24/7.

Facility Services

All facility related emergencies should be reported to the Facilities Service Center at 512-471-2020. This includes reports about building outages or access issues, water line issues. General inquiries about maintenance, landscape issues, or requests for service may be directed to facilities@austin.utexas.edu.

Other Contacts & Campus Support Resources

The Office of the Dean of Students

The Office of the Dean of Students (http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/contact.php) provides a variety of student support services along with opportunities for leadership experience, diverse student work environments, engaging programming and specialized resources.

CNS Office of Graduate Education

The CNS Office of Graduate Education provides a variety of services to current students, including professional development and career support, orientation and trainings, and opportunities to participate in STEM outreach programs at local middle school and high schools. Visit cns.utexas.edu/graduate-education for more information.

Faculty Innovation Center Graduate Student Development Program (GSD)

The GSD Program is an initiative of the Office of the Provost, the Graduate School, and the Faculty Innovation Center (FIC). GSD provides opportunities to advance graduate students' pedagogical, academic, and professional progress, including support for drafting a teaching statement and creating a teaching portfolio. More information is available at facultyinnovate.utexas.edu/gsd.

Center for Biomedical Research Support (CBRS)

The Center for Biomedical Research Support (CBRS) provides access to cutting-edge technology and expert advice to enhance research. CBRS oversees several core research facilities critical for research activities on campus. Graduate students are also eligible to take the short courses and workshops offered by CBRS throughout the year. More information is available at research.utexas.edu/cbrs.

Resources that Support a Safe and Inclusive Campus

The Microbiology Graduate Program, the University of Texas, and the College of Natural Sciences want all graduate students to benefit from supportive, inclusive, and safe classroom and research experiences. The following resources are available to support this goal:

- CNS Diversity and Inclusion Resources and Initiatives
- Campus Climate Response Team (CCRT) (report a bias incident)
- Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE)
- Title IX Office
- Gender and Sexuality Center

The **Molecular Biosciences Department Diversity and Inclusion Committee** focuses on issues concerning climate, conduct, and diversity within the graduate programs and wider research community. Comprised of faculty, staff, graduate students, and post-docs, the committee aims to

promote diversity at all levels within the department. The committee works to provide appropriate resources and trainings and to develop initiatives that support a positive and safe environment for all community members. The committee can be reached at mbs_di_committee@utlists.utexas.edu.

Students Against Racism and Discrimination in Natural and Engineering Sciences (**SARDINES**) is a grassroots organization of graduate students working to identify and rectify causes of inequity within the Molecular Biosciences (MBS) department and graduate program. We are committed to advocating for students who face unique and systemic challenges due to a fundamental aspect of their identity. These groups include, though are not limited to, students who identify as members of underrepresented groups (Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander), members of the LGBTQIA+ community, women, students with disabilities, international students, and members of religious minority groups. We work closely with the MBS Graduate Student Association (GSA) and the MBS Diversity and Inclusion committee to accomplish actionable goals that promote an equitable and inclusive environment where all scientists can flourish. Our current goals include increasing representation of diverse speakers in our departmental seminar series, generating a Student Rights document, producing educational resources on antiracism, and distributing these to our scientific community, and coordinating outreach to the greater Austin community. Please contact utsardines@utexas.edu for more information and to get involved.

Title IX

The **Title IX Office** is committed to creating and fostering a campus environment free from all forms of sex discrimination. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. Title IX protects all members of our campus community who experience sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, interpersonal violence (including dating and domestic violence), stalking, or discrimination on the basis of pregnancy.

Dean Knopf is the Title IX liaison for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the college, and can be contacted directly with questions or concerns: danknopf@austin.utexas.edu.

Graduate students appointed in academic positions as Teaching Assistants, Assistant Instructors, or Graduate Research Assistants are deemed "responsible employees" under UT policies. **Every responsible employee is required to promptly report Title-IX incidents that they experience or hear about if these incidents involve UT-Austin students, faculty, or staff**. As responsible employees, graduate students may not offer or maintain confidentiality after learning of such incidents. Responsible employees have the duty to report these privately to the Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator, using the contact information found here. Graduate students should familiarize themselves with the *Policy on Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence and Stalking*.

ILSGP Graduate Student Assembly

The ILS Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) is composed of a group of ILS graduate students who organize events for the ILS community and facilitate communication between graduate students and faculty. GSA oversees student-led events such as Pints with Professors, Chips and Dip, a Fall Tailgate, and a Spring Picnic. Most importantly, the GSA serves as the voice of graduate students within the ILSGP and university at large. GSA is actively involved in the recognition of developing issues pertaining to students and informing the ILS Executive Committee of ideas or concerns emanating from the ILS student body. GSA meetings happen each semester and all ILS graduate students are welcome to attend. Elections for GSA positions happen at the begging of each Summer semester. To contact the ILSGP GSA Representatives, email ils.gsa@utexas.edu.

Additional Resources

Links to additional resources and programs available to students can be found on the ILSGP website at ils.utexas.edu/graduate-programs-home/resources.

APPENDIX

Graduate Student Quick Reference Chart

Issue/Concerns Related to:	Who to Contact:	Where to Find Information:
ACADEMIC		
Registration: Bars Access Periods Confirmation of Attendance	Graduate Coordinators	Registration Information Sheet Course Schedule MyTuitionBill
Post-Registration: Non-Resident Tuition Waivers Health Insurance Waiver (for international students)	Graduate Coordinators International Student Insurance Office	UT Direct Texas Global
Course Selection	Graduate Advisor	Graduate Program Handbooks
Lab Rotations Finding a Permanent Lab	Graduate Advisor	Graduate Program Handbooks
Forming a Dissertation Committee	Graduate Advisor	Graduate Program Handbooks
Issues with PI/Supervisor or Dissertation Committee	Graduate Advisor *(or other contact recommended by Grievance Policy)*	Grievance Policy Conflict Management Resources
Degree Progress	Graduate Advisor	
Graduation & Defense Proceedings	Graduate Coordinators Graduate School Student Services	Graduate School
FUNDING		
Tuition Payments/Bills	Graduate Coordinators Tuition Billing	MyTuitionBill What I Owe
Payroll Payments	MBS Human Resources (HR) Graduate Coordinators	Payroll Services Human Resource Service Center Where's My Check
Health Insurance: General questions	MBS Human Resources (HR) Graduate Coordinators	AHP Website (AcademicBlue) Human Resource Service Center
Health Insurance: Benefits & Enrollment	Human Resource Service Center (HRSC) AHP Customer Service: 1-855-247-7587 Graduate Coordinators	HRSC Website AcademicBlue (AHP)
University Fellowships: Applying for awards	Graduate Fellowship Administrator, Elizabeth Korves Graduate Coordinators	Graduate School CMB Program Website
University Fellowships: Receiving Funds	Graduate Fellowship Administrator, Elizabeth Korves Graduate Coordinators	Graduate School: Information for Current Fellows Instructions for Non-Payroll Direct Deposit
Academic Employment (GRA/TA)	MBS Human Resources (HR) Graduate Coordinators	Graduate Program Handbook Graduate School

Teaching Assistant Positions	Graduate Coordinators	Graduate Program Handbook Handbook of Operation Procedures
STUDENT LIFE		
Buildings: Access/Entry Facility Issues (safety, repairs) Room Reservations	Lab Manager(s) Building Manager + Lab Manager MBS Administrative Assistant	Environmental Health & Safety Facilities Services
Interpersonal Violence (physical or sexual assault, stalking, abuse)	*Emergencies: Call 911* Title IX Office: File a Report UT Victims' Advocates: 512-232-9699 UT Police Dept: 512-471-4441	UT Counseling & Mental Health Center Student Emergency Services Title IX Office
Campus Safety	*Emergencies: Call 911* UT Police Dept: 512-471-4441 Sure Walk: 512-232-9255 UT Night Rides LiveSafe at UT Austin	Campus Safety Office
Mental Health Support	UT Counseling & Mental Health Center (CMHC) UT CMHC Crisis Line: 512-471-CALL (2255)	UT Counseling & Mental Health Center Graduate Student Mental Health Resources Guide
Mental Health/ Behavioral Health Concerns	Behavioral Concern Advice Line (BCAL)	Campus Safety Office UT Counseling & Mental Health Center
Personal Emergencies Emergency Funds	Student Emergency Services Student Emergency Fund	Dean of Students Office

Forms

Graduate Program Forms: (CMB, MIC, BCH Students Only)

The following forms are enabled for e-signatures via DocuSign PowerForms. Please contact the Graduate Program Staff with questions about submitting documents.

- Lab Rotation Agreement
- Permanent Lab Agreement
- Dissertation Committee Membership
- Annual Committee Meeting Form
- Request for Final Oral Examination
- Report of Dissertation Committee

Graduate School Forms:

- Candidacy Application
- Request to Change Doctoral Committee
- Doctoral Graduation Application
- Master's Graduation Application
- Authorization for Leave of Absence
- Petition for Leave of Absence
- Request for Late Registration of Graduate Students

Additional forms are available on the Graduate School website at gradschool.utexas.edu/academics/forms.

Mentorship and Outreach Opportunities for STEM Graduate Students

In-Person Opportunities:

Summer Undergraduate Program for Experimental Research (SUPER)
A 10-week program that provides summer research opportunities at the University of Texas at Austin. The program is available to rising Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors who are considering a career in life-science research. The program is organized by the ICMB and graduate students are welcome to contact the Graduate Program Staff for information about participating.

Texas STEM Connections:
Portal to connect with K-20 educators, classrooms, out of school time programs, and other volunteer opportunities in STEM.

Science Buddies Program:
Most volunteer opportunities only take a few hours of commitment.
Volunteers can work remotely in the Ask an Expert Program, where graduate students and post docs can answer questions from kids and parents on the forum.

Present your PhD Thesis to a 12 Year-Old
The UT Graduate Science Outreach group facilitates this program that places PhD students and scientists in elementary and secondary classrooms to share their discoveries and provide real-world examples to complement classroom science topics.

Undergraduate Mentoring:
Graduate students can serve as mentors for undergraduates interested in attending graduate school through the College of Natural Sciences mentor programs.

Remote Opportunities:

National Summer Undergraduate Research Project:
A community-driven initiative to create rewarding remote summer research opportunities for BIPOC undergraduate students in the microbial sciences.

Skype a Scientist:
Program that matches scientists with K-12 classrooms. Once matched, volunteers will video chat with the classroom for a 30 to 60-minute session. The format is Q&A style so that the kids feel they have had direct contact with scientists. The program aims to put a friendly face to science and make science less intimidating and more accessible. Volunteers do not need to prepare a lecture, and are encouraged to just have a conversation!

Science in the Classroom:
Science in the Classroom is looking for graduate students, postdocs, and anyone with an advanced graduate degree to help us annotate scientific research papers. We are also looking for expert high school and undergraduate teachers to help us package and present this content in the best way possible.

Conflict Management

Interpersonal conflicts in the workplace or classroom are often challenging. Learning to constructively address disagreement is essential to maintaining a positive and respectful learning environment. The following is a list of resources related to conflict management. Many of these are designed to empower you to resolve conflicts rather than provide a solution for you.

Confidential Resources

- Office of the University Ombuds
- Employee Assistance Program
- Counseling & Mental Health Center

Resources for Mediation and Facilitation

- Office of the University Ombuds (confidential)
- Conflict Management & Dispute Resolution Office
- University of Texas Project on Conflict Resolution
- Strategic Workforce Solutions

Resources for Training on Effective Communication

- Student Employee Excellence Development Program
- Leadership and Ethics Institute
- University of Texas Project on Conflict Resolution
- Preparing for Difficult Conversations (Employee Assistance Program)
- Dealing with Difficult People (Human Resources)
- How to Prepare for a Difficult Conversation (Human Resources)

Resources for Legal Issues and Grievance Procedures at UT

- Legal Services for Students
- Graduate School Grievance Resources